# The Harklean Syriac of 1 Timothy 3:16

# Covering Verses Translating Εὐσέβεια

Graham G. Thomason, March 2019. Revised 15 January 2023 Available on <a href="https://www.FarAboveAll.com">www.FarAboveAll.com</a>

### Introduction

This article forms part of a study of the reading of 1 Timothy 3:16. We wish to establish whether the reading is *God was manifested in the flesh* (the traditional reading) or *He was manifested in the flesh*, as given in most modern Bibles. Elsewhere we have investigated the Bible manuscript evidence the lectionary evidence and the Church Father evidence<sup>1</sup>. The present study is concerned with the Harklean (also spelled Harkleian<sup>2</sup>) Syriac version, dated AD 616.

## The issue simplified, in English only

There is a Greek word meaning *godliness* or *piety* which occurs 15 times in the New Testament. In the Harklean Syriac it has the literal translation *beauty-of-fear* 14 times, and just *fear* once. One of the 14 cases is 1 Timothy 3:16, where the word *piety / beauty-of-fear* is followed by *God* in Greek, and by *God* in the Harklean Syriac. Yet there are critics who claim that the word *God* is to be disallowed in translating the Harklean in 1 Timothy 3:16, because of an apparent rule that if the verse is 1 Tim 3:16 – and this verse only – then the Syriac for *piety* changes from *beauty-of-fear* to *beauty-of-fear-of-God*, with the result that *God* is eliminated in the English of the Harklean – swallowed up in the word *piety*. Readers must assess the fairness of this for themselves. We simply present the issue in a factual way, by presenting the Greek and Syriac of the relevant verses.

# The issue as expressed by Burgon

This study is a verification of an observation made by Dean John William Burgon, in *The Revision Revised* on page 489, quoting in the following summary the editor of the Version, the Rev. Henry Deane, of S. John's College, Oxford:

To the VIIth century [A.D. 616] belongs the HARKLEIAN (or PHILIOXENIAN) Version; concerning which see above, page 450. "That Θεός was the reading of the manuscripts from which this version was made, is put beyond reach of doubt by the fact that in twelve\* of the other places where εὐσέβεια occurs, the words καλλ ('God') are found without the addition of καλλ ('God'). It is noteworthy, that on the thirteenth occasion (1 Tim. ii. 2), where the Peschito reads 'fear of God', the Harkleian reads 'fear' only.\*\* On the other hand, the Harkleian margin of Acts iii. 12 expressly states that εὐσέβεια is the Greek equivalent of καλλ ('beauty-of-fear'). This effectually establishes the fact that the author of the Harkleian recension found Θεός in his Greek manuscript of 1 Tim. iii. 16"

\* Burgon, or rather Rev. Henry Deane, omits 1 Timothy 6:11, but we include it, so covering all occurrences of εὐσέβεια.

\*\* It is the Harkleian that corresponds to the Greek (which does not contain the word for 'God' in 1 Tim. ii. 2). The Peschito adds the word for 'God'. But we are not particularly concerned with the Peschito here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For the Bible and lectionary manuscripts, see <a href="www.faraboveall.com/015\_Textual/01\_Textual.html">www.faraboveall.com/015\_Textual/01\_Textual.html</a>; Church Father investigations are in progress at the time of writing, but see <a href="www.berenddeboer.net/article/1\_timothy\_3\_16.html">www.berenddeboer.net/article/1\_timothy\_3\_16.html</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Burgon spells it *Harkleian*, and we retain that spelling quoting him and in our remarks following. Elsewhere, we use the more usual spelling *Harklean*. The translator is spelled *Thomas of Harqel* in Wikipedia. We also retain Burgon's spelling *Peschito* (another Syriac translation) when quoting him, but the more common *Peshitta* elsewhere.

# Typographic note.

The Syriac *alef* is rendered in a standard font, which is an Estrangela font, by  $\approx$  in this document, but in the scans we reproduce, it is in a Serta font. For readers not familiar with Syriac, but attempting to at least match Syriac words in our description with those in the Harklean publication, the table below shows equivalent words.

		Our font (Estrangela)	Harklean book	Transcription
			printed font (Serta)	
Beauty of	<b>1</b>	graph	Louga	shafirut
Fear [of]	<b>j</b> piety	ניידעף(אי)	وسكم(١)	dechilat(a)
God		حساح	<u>/o//</u>	Aloha

The letter in the round brackets in the Syriac makes the word determinate (the fear / fear), otherwise it is in a construct form (fear-of). So the *inclusion* word in square brackets in the English corresponds to the *absence* of the bracketed letter in the Syriac.

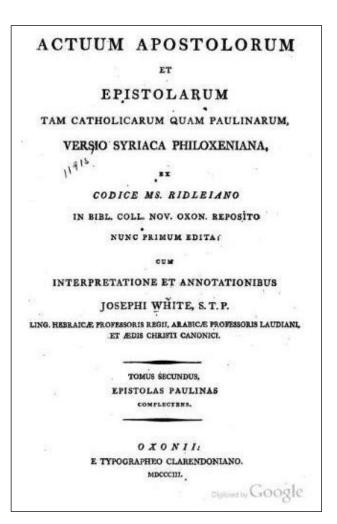
### **Translation note**

Readers should note that the English word "godliness" (used in the AV and FarAboveAll translations) is not a translation of a word, or phrase, containing the word "God" in Greek or Syriac. To avoid confusion, we translate the Greek and Syriac equivalents by "piety" in this study. Similarly, we replace "godly" by "pious".

# The Harklean Syriac Text

A scan of a printed edition of the Harklean Syriac is available online (see our References). The two volumes were digitized by Google, and are for personal, non-profit use, so we request that Google's Usage Guidelines are respected. The title pages shown below.

# GULIELMO HENRICO CAVENDISH DUCI DE PORTLAND, ACADEMIÆ OXONIENSIS CANCELLARIO &c. GENERIS ANTIQUITATE ET TITULIS CLARISSIMO, SAPIENTIA AUTEM CONSILIORUM IN REPUBLICA ADMINISTRANDA, HUMANITATE ANIMI ET COMITATE MORUM, MULTO ETIAM CLARIORI, HANCCE ACTUUM APOSTOLORUM ET EPISTOLARUM VERSIONEM SYRIACAM, NUNC PRIMUM SUB AUSPICIIS ACADEMIÆ SUÆ EDITAM DAT DICAT DEDICAT



# The Verse-by-Verse Study of the Translations of Εὐσέβεια in the Harklean Syriac

JOSEPHUS WHITE.

Coogle Google

We consider all verses where the Greek contains the word εὐσέβεια. We will consider 1 Tim 3:16 last. In each case, we first give the Greek from the Majority Text (Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine Textform 2005) and an English translation of the Greek, from the *FarAboveAll* translation (but using the word "piety" rather than "godliness", and "pious" rather than "godly" as explained above).

### Acts 3:12

Ίδὼν δὲ Πέτρος ἀπεκρίνατο πρὸς τὸν λαόν, Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται, τί θαυμάζετε ἐπὶ τούτῳ, ἢ ἡμῖν τί ἀτενίζετε, ὡς ἰδία δυνάμει ἢ εὐσεβεία πεποιηκόσιν τοῦ περιπατεῖν αὐτόν;

And when Peter saw *this*, he answered the people, "You Israelite men, why are you astonished at this, or why do you look at us so intently as if it were by our own power or piety that we made him walk?

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol I, electronic page n43, printed page number 15):

```
العلود المراحد المراد حديم المراد ال
```

The translation of εὐσέβεια is פאבים אל העלא. The marginal note expressly confirms this, as Burgon observed.

## 1 Timothy 2:2

ύπερ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἤρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ <mark>εὐσεβείᾳ</mark> καὶ σεμνότητι.

for kings and all those in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and calm life in all piety and solemnity,

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol II, electronic page n283, printed page number 274):

```
مجمع إبا مصل إمرهم إدره المجموع وحقاد. II. . مجمع إبا مصل إمرهم المحمود المجموع وحده ومداد المحمود ومحمود المحمود ومحمود المحمود المح
```

The translation of εὐσέβεια is κωμως (so without in this case).

### 1 Timothy 4:7 and 4:8

<sup>7</sup>Τοὺς δὲ βεβήλους καὶ γραώδεις μύθους παραιτοῦ. Γύμναζε δὲ σεαυτὸν πρὸς <mark>εὐσέβειαν</mark>-

<sup>8</sup>ή γὰρ σωματικὴ γυμνασία πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐστὶν ἀφέλιμος· ἡ δὲ <mark>εὐσέβεια</mark> πρὸς πάντα ἀφέλιμός ἐστιν, ἐπαγγελίαν ἔχουσα ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης.

<sup>7</sup>But reject profane and old wives' tales and exercise yourself *rather* to piety.

<sup>8</sup>For physical exercise is beneficial in a minor matter, but piety is beneficial in all respects, having the promise of present and future life.

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol II, electronic page n287, printed page number 279):

```
ون محمد ما العمر المعرف المن المن محمد من محمل الم كنوا و المحرد المعرف المعرف المحرد المحرد المعرف المحرد المحرد
```

In both cases, the translation of εὐσέβεια is καλίων δοίων.

# 1 Timothy 6:3, 6:5, 6:6, 6:11

<sup>3</sup>Εἴ τις ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖ, καὶ μὴ προσέρχεται ὑγιαίνουσιν λόγοις, τοῖς τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, καὶ τῆ κατ' εὐσέβειαν διδασκαλία, <sup>4</sup>... <sup>5</sup>διαπαρατριβαὶ διεφθαρμένων ἀνθρώπων τὸν νοῦν, καὶ ἀπεστερημένων τῆς ἀληθείας, νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν. Ἀφίστασο ἀπὸ τῶν τοιούτων. <sup>6</sup>Έστιν δὲ πορισμὸς μέγας ἡ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας· <sup>7</sup>... <sup>8</sup>... <sup>9</sup>... <sup>10</sup>... <sup>11</sup>Σὺ δέ, ὧ ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ, ταῦτα φεῦγε· δίωκε δὲ δικαιοσύνην, εὐσέβειαν, πίστιν, ἀγάπην, ὑπομονήν, πραότητα.

<sup>3</sup>If anyone teaches another doctrine and does not adhere to sound words – those of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the pious doctrine – <sup>4</sup>... <sup>5</sup>vain arguments of men corrupt in mind and devoid of the truth, who reckon piety to be a means of gain. Do not associate with such. <sup>6</sup>But piety with independence is an important means of gain. <sup>7</sup>... <sup>8</sup>... <sup>9</sup>... <sup>10</sup>... <sup>11</sup>But you, O man of God, flee from these *things*, and pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol II, electronic pages n293-295, printed page numbers 284-286)

3 کی وروسی نی رسی استساله محدی وال نیاز حقال سحقداد المحب وطوير وسح معمد صعسان محفده عماد المعموما المرمان معملا مسر لا مسرم نهد. إلا موسه 4 حدّ مامهم مكال بصبه مورد سعمر سيدر ية بعلى ضعديما وصعم المناه من المستعم مسحك و مصراد مركب معيزاد بقدرع بالهدال إلمان من معمرها استحل الأسع مع الراب محيد المده الع المروزاز زدما معيزما بسكار: حم معيزما سعممال الر صرم ربير المحيع حدمور بيدم من إها إنهم ضرم طربع. در إلم كر إلى اتسم المحسم الد المكن بسعق ا كي منه بع برحع كعدمز بعكم صعبها محصرا و ٥٥ والمال المال المال المال معلى المال ال المعم إطهدت لحسيعا ديهممرا مطحبا مصرا مه مع وحدمه صعدر إلهامة وللعدم مسعل حمد والنقب حر الزيزية إحدة مع معدمان مصده حمي العره 11 حرومل هيمان إلى إبع إبع وأه حزيما الحدول حد محمد حروى، زوق بع حمز ويممال معينما يسكم المحدمان 11 سمحرا محسدوسمال. محسممال المفع المصر مسعيد

In all these cases, the translation of εὐσέβεια is κωμα.

# 2 Timothy 3:5

ἔχοντες μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας, τὴν δὲ δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἠρνημένοι· καὶ τούτους ἀποτρέπου. having a form of piety, but having denied the power of it. From these also turn away.

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol II, electronic page n305, printed page number 296)

The translation of εὐσέβεια is κωμων.

### **Titus 1:1**

Παῦλος, δοῦλος θεοῦ, ἀπόστολος δὲ Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, κατὰ πίστιν ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν,

From Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and acknowledgment of the truth which is in accordance with piety,

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol II, electronic page n311, printed page number 303)

The translation of εὐσέβεια is κωμλω.

### 2 Peter 1:3

ώς πάντα ήμῖν τῆς θείας δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ <mark>εὐσέβειαν</mark> δεδωρημένης, διὰ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ καλέσαντος ήμᾶς διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς·

since his divine power has bestowed on us everything *pertaining* to life and piety through acknowledgment of him *who* called us through glory and virtue,

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol I, electronic page n259, printed page number 231)

```
من بحدول [ك] بسلا كرم بحد معدود مدل بدور دور معدود المعدود المعدود معدود المعدود المع
```

The translation of εὐσέβεια is καιμο ποίωσε.

### 2 Peter 1:6 and 1:7

ἐν δὲ τῇ γνώσει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐγκρατείᾳ τὴν ὑπομονήν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ὑπομονῇ τὴν <mark>εὐσέβειαν</mark>, <sup>7</sup>ἐν δὲ τῇ <mark>εὐσεβεία</mark> τὴν φιλαδελφίαν, ἐν δὲ τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ τὴν ἀγάπην.

and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, endurance, and in *your* endurance, piety, <sup>7</sup> and in *your* piety, brotherly affection, and in *your* brotherly affection, love.

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol I, electronic page n261, printed page number 232)

In both cases, the translation of εὐσέβεια is καλίων δοίων.

### 2 Peter 3:11

Τούτων οὖν πάντων λυομένων, ποταποὺς δεῖ ὑπάρχειν ὑμᾶς ἐν ἀγίαις ἀναστροφαῖς καὶ εὐσεβείαις,

Seeing that all these *things* are to be dissolved, then, what kind of *people* should you be in holy conduct and piety,

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol I, electronic page 269, printed page numbers 240-241)

The translation of εὐσέβεια is κωμων.

\*\*\*\* We now come to the crux of the matter. Does 1 Timothy 3:16 read God or not? \*\*\*\*

### 1 Timothy 3:16

## Majority Text (Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine Textform 2005, FarAboveAll English)

Καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ἄφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξη.

[A pillar and base of the truth,] and confessedly great, is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world and taken up in glory.

Harklean Syriac (archive.org Vol. II, electronic page n287, printed page number 278):

We have shown that in all other verses the translation of εὐσέβεια is عصنه المعنه . And so is it here. The word following عصنه , namely جماح, is never used anywhere else to part-translate εὐσέβεια, which means that neither is it here. The word خماح is a stand-alone word, God, in 1 Tim 3:16. There is no justification for swallowing it up in the translation of εὐσέβεια.

The Harklean version therefore reads

the mystery of godliness towards God, who was manifested in the flesh

which must have come from a Greek reading of

τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί

or perhaps (though no Greek manuscript<sup>3</sup> contains it)

τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον θεὸς ος ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί

and certainly not

τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον δς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> I.e. not one out of 584 we have examined, these being almost all known, and all that are available in online scans. See our summary on <a href="https://www.faraboveall.com/015\_Textual/01\_Textual.html">www.faraboveall.com/015\_Textual/01\_Textual/01\_Textual.html</a>.

We have shown that Burgon's astute observation is correct, and that Bishop Ellicott (the chairman of the Revising Committee) has put the Harklean version on the wrong side of the dispute<sup>4</sup>.

The Revising Committee for the Revised Version adopted the  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}_{\zeta}$  έφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί (he was manifested in the flesh) reading partly through Ellicott's– or rather his informants' – misinformation. The error has persisted to modern times. The *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1971 edition, by Bruce Metzger, which attempts to justify the Nestle-Aland / United Bible Societies reading  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}_{\zeta}$ , and which will have been consulted by many a translator, states that "all ancient versions presuppose  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}_{\zeta}$  or  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}$ ". The Harklean is one example showing the falsity of the statement; for the other ancient versions supporting  $\theta$ εός (Georgian and Slavonic), see Burgon's *The Revision Revised*. Burgon shows that the bulk of the other ancient versions (Latin, Peshitta, Coptic, Ethiopic and Armenian) support  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}$  not  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}_{\zeta}$ , and so do not support the Nestle-Aland / United Bible Societies reading. Only the Gothic supports  $\hat{\mathbf{o}}_{\zeta}$ .

### References

The Harklean Syriac is available online. We found a link on this page <a href="http://syri.ac/bibliography/379437680">http://syri.ac/bibliography/379437680</a>

which links to this volume for Paul's epistles:

https://archive.org/details/ActuumApostolorumEtEpistolarumTamCa2/page/n287

For Acts and the Catholic Epistles, the link is:

https://archive.org/details/ActuumApostolorumEtEpistolarumTamCa/page/n31

The Revision Revised J. W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, originally published 1883.

https://archive.org/details/revisionrevised00burggoog

[UBS-Commentary] Bruce Metzger, in cooperation with The United Bible Societies,

A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament

published by and obtainable from

Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, P.O. Box 810340, 7000 Stuttgart 80, Germany.

ISBN 3 438 06010 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For Bishop Ellicott's position, see *The Revision Revised*, p. 429 (where the Harklean is called the Philoxenian).