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Unicus and Unigenitus in the Latin Bible

The Nicene Question in the Translation of μονογενής

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ABSTRACT • The Latin rendering of Greek μονογενής has become a test case in debates about doctrinal influence on biblical translation. While many modern versions prefer "only" or "unique," the Vulgate normally uses *unigenitus* in the Johannine passages concerning Christ, a choice sometimes explained as an anti-Arian intervention inspired by Nicaea. This article tests that explanation against the lexical range of μονογενής, the Old Latin evidence, pre-Nicene usage, and the distribution of *unicus* and *unigenitus* in the Latin Bible. The evidence does not support a simple account in which Jerome replaced a neutral *unicus* with a doctrinally charged innovation. Old Latin witnesses already display both renderings, and Tertullian uses both *unicus* and *unigenitus* in Johannine contexts more than a century before Nicaea. Moreover, the Vulgate employs *unigenitus* for human beings who are only children and does not translate every occurrence of μονογενής by that term. The Nicene Creed could reinforce the association of *unigenitus* with begetting, but it neither created the word nor adequately explains its biblical distribution.

KEYWORDS • μονογενής – unicus – unigenitus – Vetus Latina – Vulgate – Jerome – Tertullian – Nicene Creed – John

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG • Die lateinische Wiedergabe des griechischen μονογενής ist zu einem Prüfstein in der Diskussion über den Einfluss dogmatischer Voraussetzungen auf Bibelübersetzungen geworden. Während viele moderne Übersetzungen „einzig" oder „einzigartig" bevorzugen, steht in der Vulgata in den johanneischen Aussagen über Christus regelmäßig *unigenitus*. Diese Wortwahl wird bisweilen mit dem antiarianischen Klima des vierten Jahrhunderts in Verbindung gebracht. Der vorliegende Beitrag überprüft diese Erklärung anhand des Bedeutungsspektrums von μονογενής, der altlateinischen Überlieferung, des vornizänischen Sprachgebrauchs sowie der Verteilung von *unicus* und *unigenitus* in der lateinischen Bibel. Die Befunde stützen keine einfache Rekonstruktion, wonach Hieronymus ein neutrales *unicus* durch eine dogmatisch geprägte Neuerung ersetzt habe. Altlateinische Zeugen bieten bereits beide Wiedergaben, und Tertullian verwendet sowohl *unicus* als auch *unigenitus* in johanneischen Zusammenhängen mehr als ein Jahrhundert vor Nizäa. Darüber hinaus bezeichnet *unigenitus* in der Vulgata auch Menschen, die das einzige Kind ihrer Eltern sind, während nicht jedes Vorkommen von μονογενής mit diesem Wort wiedergegeben wird. Das Bekenntnis von Nizäa konnte die mit der Zeugung verbundenen Konnotationen von *unigenitus* verstärken; es erklärt jedoch weder die Entstehung des lateinischen Terminus noch dessen biblische Verteilung hinreichend.

SCHLAGWÖRTER • μονογενής – unicus – unigenitus – Vetus Latina – Vulgata – Hieronymus – Tertullian – Bekenntnis von Nizäa – Johannesschriften

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1 A lexical question with a theological afterlife

The phrase *Filium Dei unigenitum* in the Latin Nicene Creed can easily seem the natural equivalent of the Greek τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ … μονογενῆ. The same association is familiar from the Latin Gospel of John, where *unigenitus* occurs in the passages traditionally rendered in English as "only-begotten": John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16 and 3:18. This convergence of creed and Gospel readily suggests a historical sequence. After Nicaea, it is argued, a translator or reviser chose *unigenitus* to protect the Son's eternal generation and to exclude an Arian reading. One influential explanation, formulated most clearly by Dale Moody,[1] attributes the Vulgate's Johannine preference for *unigenitus* to the anti-Arian climate of the fourth century: the term would have made the Nicene distinction between the Son as begotten and as made more explicit. This remains a historical inference, however, rather than a documented statement of Jerome's intention.

That explanation is attractive because it connects a lexical detail to a major doctrinal controversy. Yet it joins several distinct questions. What could μονογενής mean in Greek? Which Latin equivalents were available before and after 325? What did the translators or revisers of the Latin Bible write? Finally, how did conciliar usage affect the way an existing translation was heard? A theological reception may reinforce one semantic possibility without having caused the translation itself. Chronology alone cannot decide the matter.

The present inquiry therefore begins with distribution rather than intention. It compares the Johannine passages with the Synoptic occurrences and with selected Old Testament examples, then sets this evidence beside early Latin Christian usage. The result is less dramatic than claims of dogmatic bias, but historically more accurate: *unicus* and *unigenitus* belonged to an overlapping Latin vocabulary; their biblical distribution was never governed by a mechanical one-to-one rule; and Nicene theology sharpened a resonance that was already available.

2 What does μονογενής say—and what does it not say?

The adjective μονογενής is formed from μόνος and γένος, not directly from γεννάω. In classical and Hellenistic usage, it can denote an only member of a kind, an only child, or something unique. Modern lexicography accordingly gives "only" or "unique" as its basic value.[2] This is a key point, but etymology alone does not decide usage. A term for an

[1] Hugh A. G. Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John: Patristic Citations and Latin Gospel Manuscripts*, Oxford University Press 2008, 210; Philip Burton – Jon Balserak – Hugh Houghton – David Parker (eds.), *Vetus Latina Iohannes*, version 2.0, University of Birmingham, 2015, https://itseeweb.cal.bham.ac.uk/iohannes/vetuslatina/edition/index.html (accessed 1 October 2026).

[2] Moody includes Heb 11:17 among the passages in which he attributes the use of *unigenitus* to Jerome. This attribution is uncertain, however: Jerome's revision can be securely established only for the Gospels, while the reviser of the remaining New Testament books is unknown: Moody, "God's Only Son", 215; Hugh A. G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts*, Oxford University Press 2016, 35–37; Anna Persig, "The Vulgate New Testament Outside the Gospels", in Hugh A. G. Houghton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Latin Bible*, Oxford University Press 2023, 77–90.

only child necessarily implies parentage. In such a context, uniqueness and derivation are not mutually exclusive ideas, even if the adjective does not explicitly say the manner of begetting.

The New Testament distribution makes this clear. Luke uses μονογενής for the widow's only son (7:12), Jairus's only daughter (8:42), and the only son of a man in the crowd (9:38). The emphasis in each case is the irreplaceable status of the child. Hebrews likewise applies μονογενής to Isaac (11:17), whose uniqueness lies not in being Abraham's sole biological son but in his status as the bearer of the promise. In the Johannine writings the term is applied to the Son in relation to the Father (John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16, 3:18; 1 John 4:9). The immediate sense is still "only" or "unique," but the relational context gives that uniqueness theological weight. John 1:18 is especially complex: the textual variants μονογενὴς θεός and ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός already show that the history of the verse cannot be reduced to the translation of a single adjective.[3]

Two opposite simplifications should therefore be avoided. To translate μονογενής as "only" does not deny the Son's eternal generation, since that doctrine rests on a broader set of exegetical and theological judgments. Conversely, "only-begotten" is not a lexically neutral reproduction of the Greek adjective. It is a traditional interpretive rendering that brings the filial context, and especially its creedal reception, into the wording. Scholars have continued to disagree: while Dale Moody and Gerard Pendrick argued strongly for "only" or "unique," John Dahms maintained that Johannine usage still implied begetting.[4] The disagreement itself counsels precision. The lexical question and the dogmatic question intersect, but they are not identical.

3 The Latin repertoire before Nicaea

Latin offered more than one way to express the relevant notions. *Unicus* could mean sole, only, or singularly dear. Compounds such as *unigena* and *unigenitus* explicitly showed origin. Their coexistence is older than Christian doctrinal controversy.

Cicero's evidence is especially significant because *unigena* is not merely a formally comparable Latin compound. In his rendering of Plato's μονογενής (*Timaeus* 31b), he writes: *idcirco singularem deus hunc mundum atque unigenam procreavit* (*Timaeus* 12). The passage thus provides a pre-Christian Latin translation of the Greek adjective itself. Moreover, Cicero's coordination of *singularem* and *unigenam* suggests that the latter could convey more than numerical uniqueness alone, keeping an association with generation or origin. While this does not make *unigenitus* the standard classical rendering of μονογενής, it shows that Latin combined uniqueness and origin in a single compound

[3] Jerome, *Quaestiones hebraicae in Genesim*, ad Gen 22:2 (CCSL 72. 28). For the Hexaplaric evidence, see Frederick Field (ed.), *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, vol. 1, ad Gen 22:2 and 22:12. Aquila's μονογενής is attested at v. 2 and that of Symmachus at v. 12; the Septuagint has ἀγαπητός in vv. 2, 12 and 16.

[4] Houghton, *The Latin*, 35-37.

long before Nicaea.[5] The form is *unigena*, not *unigenitus*, but the passage proves that Latin could combine uniqueness and generation in a compound long before the Christian era.

Tertullian provides more direct evidence: his *Adversus Praxean*, written in the early third century, calls the Son both *primogenitus* and *unigenitus*: *primogenitus, ut ante omnia genitus, et unigenitus, ut solus ex Deo genitus* (7.1). Here the author himself interprets *unigenitus* through generation from God. Yet the same treatise does not use that word consistently when citing John. Tertullian can cite John 1:14 as *tanquam unigeniti a patre* (15.6), while elsewhere he has *gloriam quasi unici a patre* and speaks of the one "whom the Father alone begot," *quem solus pater genuit* (21.3). In his citations of John 3:16 and 3:18 he uses forms of *unicus* (21.6).[6]

This evidence has two consequences. First, *unigenitus* was neither coined at Nicaea nor introduced into Christian Latin as a response to Arianism. Second, a writer capable of explaining *unigenitus* explicitly in terms of begetting could still use *unicus* in the same theological and scriptural field. The alternatives were not yet markers of competing christological positions. They were overlapping resources, and their precise force depended on syntax, context, and exposition.

The varied Old Latin evidence does not support the reconstruction of a uniform pre-Vulgate stage in which μονογενής was consistently rendered *unicus*. Surviving manuscripts and patristic citations attest both *unicus* and *unigenitus* in the Johannine passages. For John 3:16, for example, *unicum* is attested in several Old Latin witnesses; *unigenitum* is also early and widespread. In John 1:18, *unicus* is more narrowly attested, while *unigenitus* became dominant.[7] Since the evidence is uneven and often mediated by later copying, the responsible conclusion is not that one form universally preceded the other, but that both circulated before the Vulgate achieved its later authority.

4 Distribution in the Latin biblical tradition

The contrast within the Gospels is familiar. The Vulgate uses *unicus* for the three Lukan occurrences referring to only children and *unigenitus* in the four principal Johannine passages about Christ. That pattern can look deliberately christological when seen in

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[5] Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC 1990, 5. The argument here concerns the 325 creed; the form commonly recited in Christian liturgy reflects the later Nicene-Constantinopolitan tradition.

[6] Marcellus of Ancyra, *Epistula ad Iulium*, preserved in Epiphanius, *Panarion* 72; Rufinus of Aquileia, *Commentarius in symbolum apostolorum* 6–8. Rufinus comments on *unicus Filius: unus ex uno natus est*; and subsequently, *unicus enim et solus est qui ita natus est*. The two witnesses should not be treated as though Rufinus were translating Marcellus directly, but as Greek and Latin attestations of the closely related Old Roman creedal tradition.

[7] Dale Moody, "God's Only Son: The Translation of John 3:16 in the Revised Standard Version", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 72 (1953), 213–219, here 214–216; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII* (Anchor Bible 29), Doubleday, Garden City, NY 1966, 13; Bernhard Lang, "Handbook of the Vulgate Bible and Its Reception", *Vulgata in Dialogue*, Special issue 2023, 465.

isolation. The Old Latin evidence, however, shows that Jerome did not create a new dichotomy between Luke and John. In the Lucan passages, the tradition is remarkably stable in its use of *unicus*, with no attestation of *unigenitus*, while both forms circulated widely in the Johannine passages before Jerome. The Vulgate therefore appears to have inherited this distribution from the Italian branch of the Old Latin tradition rather than to have introduced a new christological distinction.[8]

Passage	Greek expression	Old Latin evidence (selected)	Vulgate
Luke 7:12	υἱὸς μονογενής	*filius unicus*	*filius unicus*
Luke 8:42	θυγάτηρ μονογενής	*filia unica*	*filia unica*
Luke 9:38	μονογενής μοί ἐστιν	*unicus est mihi*	*unicus est mihi*
John 1:14	δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός	*tamquam unici* / *quasi unigeniti*	*quasi unigeniti a Patre*
John 1:18	μονογενὴς θεός / ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός	*unicus* / *unigenitus*	*unigenitus Filius*
John 3:16	τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ	*filium unicum* / *unigenitum*	*Filium suum unigenitum*
John 3:18	τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ	*unici* / *unigeniti*	*unigeniti Filii Dei*

The table does show a Vulgate preference: in John, *unigenitus* gives the four passages an obvious verbal unity. It does not show when each reading first entered the Latin tradition or who was responsible for it. Tertullian already knew both patterns, and the Old Latin evidence is mixed. The Vulgate may therefore have stabilized one side of an inherited variation rather than created a new distinction.

Hebrews 11:17 is especially instructive. Here τὸν μονογενῆ refers to Isaac, and the Vulgate renders the phrase as *et unigenitum offerebat*.[9] The verse therefore shows that, within the Vulgate New Testament itself, *unigenitus* could directly render μονογενής with a human referent. Although Isaac could be read typologically, this does not alter the immediate reference. The passage does not by itself disprove theological influence, but it weakens any strict opposition between a christological *unigenitus* and a non-christological *unicus*.

The Akedah provides a useful comparison. In Genesis 22:2 Jerome's translation reads: *Tolle filium tuum unigenitum, quem diligis, Isaac*. The Hebrew has יְחִידְךָ, followed separately by אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ, "whom you love." By rendering these expressions as *unigenitum* and *quem diligis*, the Latin preserves both Isaac's unique status and Abraham's love for him. The Septuagint instead uses ἀγαπητός for יָחִיד, but μονογενής was also an established

[8] Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7.1, 15.6, 21.3 and 21.6, ed. Ernest Evans, SPCK, London 1948. The treatise is normally dated to the early third century, commonly around 210–213.

[9] Henry George Liddell – Robert Scott – Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996, s.v. μονογενής; Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2000, 658.

Jewish Greek rendering of the Hebrew adjective: Aquila employs it in Genesis 22:2 and Symmachus in 22:12. Jerome's *unigenitus* is therefore readily intelligible within an older spectrum of Jewish and Christian translation, without requiring a christological motive.[10] Hebrews 11:17 completes the comparison: there Isaac is called μονογενής in the Greek New Testament and *unigenitum* in the Latin text. The correspondence thus applies directly to a human son; *unigenitus* was not intrinsically a title of the divine Son.

The same Hebrew adjective underlies the expressions of mourning in Jeremiah 6:26 and Amos 8:10. Significantly, in Genesis 22, Jeremiah 6:26 and Amos 8:10 the Septuagint has ἀγαπητός, while Jerome renders the Hebrew יָחִיד with forms of *unigenitus*. This suggests that he regarded *unigenitus* as a proper Latin equivalent of יָחִיד when the latter denoted an only child, independently of whether the Greek tradition used μονογενής or ἀγαπητός.[11]

The inverse phenomenon also occurs. In several Psalms where the Septuagint has μονογενής, the Latin Psalter has a form of *unicus*: *erue a framea … et de manu canis unicam meam* (Ps 21 [22]:21 Vg iuxta LXX), *unicus et pauper sum ego* (Ps 24 [25]:16), and *restitue … unicam meam* (Ps 34 [35]:17). Here the Greek adjective refers not to physical filiation but to the speaker's solitary or unique life. *Unicus* naturally preserves that sense. The contrast confirms that the Latin biblical tradition knows no one-to-one lexical rule: neither is μονογενής invariably rendered by *unigenitus*, nor does *unigenitus* exclusively translate μονογενής.

Translation is governed by context and inherited wording. In filial contexts, *unigenitus* naturally denotes an only child while highlighting birth; in contexts of singularity, *unicus* is more direct. The Johannine usage is theologically fitting, but that does not make it a doctrinal invention.

5 What may be attributed to Jerome?

The claim that "Jerome changed *unicus* into *unigenitus*" also assigns more textual control to one person than the evidence permits. Jerome revised the four Gospels in Rome around 382–384 at the request of Pope Damasus. He did not produce a fresh translation from beginning to end. His preface presents the work as a cautious correction of divergent Latin copies against Greek exemplars, and modern study confirms that the revision was light. It was based on an existing Old Latin form close to the textual tradition conventionally labelled type I. The continuity is so extensive that Jerome's individual alterations cannot always be identified with confidence.[12]

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[10] Moody, "God's Only Son", 213–219; Gerard Pendrick, ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗΣ, New Testament Studies 41 (1995), 587–600; John V. Dahms, "The Johannine Use of Monogenēs Reconsidered", *New Testament Studies* 29 (1983), 222–232.

[11] Cicero, *Timaeus* 12 (translating Plato, *Timaeus* 31b), ed. Remo Giomini, *M. Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia*, fasc. 46: *De divinatione*, *De fato*, Timaeus, Teubner, Leipzig 1975.

[12] The Greek New Testament is cited according to Barbara Aland et al. (eds.), *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed., Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 2012. The textual variants in John 1:18 are noted

This limitation matters in John. If both *unicus* and *unigenitus* were already available in Old Latin witnesses, the later Vulgate reading cannot automatically be treated as Jerome's invention. At most, he may have kept, selected, or helped to stabilize *unigenitus* in the four Johannine passages. Establishing even that more modest claim would require a secure reconstruction of his base text and the Greek and Latin manuscripts available to him. The surviving evidence does not allow us to infer a doctrinal motive merely from the form that became standard.

Nor should all New Testament occurrences in the Vulgate be indiscriminately attributed to Jerome. The revision of the Gospels is securely associated with him; the history of the remaining New Testament books is different and their revisers are uncertain. Thus 1 John 4:9 (*Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum*) belongs to the reception history of the Latin Bible, but it cannot simply be cited as another personal decision by Jerome.[13]

Jerome's own lexical explanation points in the same direction. In *Adversus Helvidium* 9, discussing only children and firstborn children, he writes: *unigenitus ille vocatur qui parentibus solus sit filius*—one is called "only-begotten" when he is the parents' sole son. Whatever theological meanings the term may carry elsewhere, this definition is straightforwardly familial. For Jerome, *unigenitus* could denote an only child without necessarily making a technical claim about divine generation. His usage therefore agrees with the Old Testament examples and weakens the claim that the word itself was a doctrinal code.

6 Nicaea: source of the translation or horizon of reception?

The Creed of Nicaea places μονογενής in a context shaped by verbs of begetting: the Son is "begotten from the Father, only-begotten" (γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς μονογενῆ) and later "begotten, not made" (γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα). Early Latin forms render this with *natum ex Patre unigenitum* and *natum, non factum*.[14] In this environment the *genitus* element of *unigenitus* could hardly remain inaudible. The creed did not merely identify the Son as unique; it interpreted his uniqueness within a confession of origin from the Father.

This fact explains the lasting theological force of *unigenitus*. Once the creedal and Johannine wordings were heard together, each could illuminate the other. A Latin reader reciting *Filium suum unigenitum* in John 3:16 after confessing *Filium Dei unigenitum* in the creed would naturally hear more than numerical uniqueness. Liturgical repetition and

here, but the textual problem itself is not examined, since it is distinct from the semantic and translation history of μονογενής.

[13] Houghton, *The Latin*, 31–34.

[14] The Vulgate is cited according to Robert Weber – Roger Gryson (eds.), *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, 5th ed., Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 2007; the Septuagint according to Alfred Rahlfs – Robert Hanhart (eds.), *Septuaginta*, rev. ed., Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 2006.

doctrinal commentary emphasized the Son's generation from the Father, and later translators inherited not an isolated adjective but a long intertextual tradition.

The continued use of *unicus* in the Western baptismal creed provides a further control. The Old Roman Symbol, from which the Apostles' Creed developed, is preserved in Greek by Marcellus of Ancyra with τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ and in Latin by Rufinus as *Filium eius unicum*. The received Apostles' Creed likewise retained *Filium eius unicum*. Of course, the Roman and Nicene creeds had distinct textual and liturgical histories, and no systematic harmonization need be assumed. This evidence shows, however, that *unicus* remained fully acceptable in a post-Nicene baptismal confession of Christ. Rufinus's exposition is particularly instructive, since he interprets the creed's *unicus Filius* in terms of the Son's incorporeal generation from the Father and distinguishes his natural sonship from the adoptive sonship of creatures. The adjective was therefore not perceived as intrinsically Arian or as excluding divine generation.[15]

Yet a horizon of reception is different from a historical source. Three observations prevent the stronger causal claim. A cognate compound, *unigena*, was already attested in non-Christian Latin before Nicaea; it occurs in pre-Nicene Christian reflection; and Tertullian already attaches it to Johannine language. Moreover, the Vulgate uses the word of human only children and chooses *unicus* for some occurrences of the Greek μονογενής. A systematic Nicene revision would have left a far more uniform text than the one we have.

The most that can responsibly be proposed is a process of selection and consolidation. The creed may have made *unigenitus* especially attractive in Johannine christological passages and may have contributed to the later authority of that wording. But proving such influence would require dated textual evidence showing a shift in frequency or preference across the fourth century. The mere fact that the Vulgate in its received form is later than 325 is not enough. Chronological sequence alone does not prove causation.

7 Conclusion

The translation history of μονογενής does not require a choice between ancient theology and modern lexical study. The Greek adjective normally marks someone or something as sole or unique; in a filial context, that uniqueness belongs to the relation of child and parent. Latin could express the first aspect directly with *unicus* and could bring the second into the foreground with *unigenitus*. Neither possibility was created by the fourth-century controversy.

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[15] For the Lucan evidence, see Adolf Jülicher – Walter Matzkow – Kurt Aland (eds.), *Itala. Das Neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung*, vol. 3: *Lucas-Evangelium*, 2nd rev. ed., de Gruyter, Berlin 1976, ad Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38. The apparatus shows an overwhelmingly stable use of *unicus* in these passages, with virtually no support for *unigenitus*. For the more varied Johannine evidence, see Jülicher – Matzkow – Aland, *Itala*, vol. 4: *Johannes-Evangelium*, de Gruyter, Berlin 1963, ad John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John*, 210; Burton, *Vetus Latina Iohannes*.

The evidence also corrects three recurrent claims. The Old Latin tradition did not uniformly use *unicus*, and Jerome did not simply replace it with *unigenitus*. The Latin term *unigenitus* was already in Christian use before Nicaea. Nor does its presence in the Vulgate invariably carry a technical christological sense. The mixed citations in Tertullian, the human referents of *unigenitus* in the Old Testament, and the use of *unicus* for μονογενής (LXX) all point to a flexible translation tradition.

The Vulgate's Johannine wording remains significant. By preferring *unigenitus* in a cluster of passages about the Son, the Latin text gave lexical coherence to a major christological theme, and the creed made the idea of begetting in that wording impossible to overlook. That is a history of mutual interpretation, not sufficient evidence of *eisegesis*. A more plausible conclusion is that Nicaea reinforced an existing Latin translation and secured its theological future.