

# Jungs hermeneutic of doctrine - its theological significance

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**Hilary of Poitiers' "Ruled" Exegesis in His De Trinitate: A Case-Study of John 1:1–2**

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**Abstract:** This article studies the role of theological exegesis in interpreting the beginning of Scripture in the middle of the fifth century. It investigates Hilary of Poitiers' use of Scripture in Trinitarian controversies, his hermeneutical approach, and the way he used it. The article shows that Hilary's hermeneutics treated that Hilary's pneumatic Decretum theologum the particular reading of the opening of the Gospels. In this article, Hilary's hermeneutics is shown to have been well-enclosed. Encouraging the argues of Arius/Arrian (Athanasius), Hilary attempted to show that the Son was eternally born from the Father and therefore, one could not say that the Son was begotten at the moment of the beginning of the Son's existence. The Son already was "in the beginning".

**Keywords:** Hilary of Poitiers; theological exegesis; hermeneutics; John 1:1–2; Trinity; ergo regnatur dominus.

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## 1 Hilary, Scripture, and the Doctrine of Trinity

At very early date, particular Trinitarian controversies can be perceived as argumental function of scriptural exegesis. The first example of this is Hilary's hermeneutical statements on the doctrine of God, as well as on the correlative status of the Son of God. In this article, I will focus on the hermeneutical function of Hilary's hermeneutics. Hilary's hermeneutic is, too, in primarily an apologetic project.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Pöhl, "Schlechting in the Early African Church: The Lengthy War," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14 (2006): 1–24; and Pöhl, "African Christianity and Apollinarism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14 (2006): 25–48.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the discussion of the Council of Carthage in 397, where Hilary was present. There has been several studies, among them the highly influential work of Müller (Karl Müller, *Die Auseinandersetzung der christlichen Kirche mit den Arianern im 4. Jahrhundert* [Berlin, 1891]).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Pöhl, "Schlechting in the Early African Church," 10–11; Williams, *Origins of the End of the Heretic Arius* (Oxford, 1996); Williams, "The Last Days of Arius," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (1996): 105–125.

<sup>4</sup> See also Pöhl, "African Christianity and Apollinarism," 25–48.

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