

Ἐπιούσιος.

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THE word *ἐπιούσιος* seems never to have been fully incorporated into the language. Not found earlier than the New Testament, it has, even in later ecclesiastical Greek, the position of a quoted rather than an adopted word. For the discussion of its usage and meaning, we are confined, therefore, to the New Testament. Here it is found but twice, and practically but once, for in Matt. vi. 11 and Luke xi. 3 it represents a single unknown Aramaic original in the Lord's Prayer. Origen thought that it was coined by the Evangelists, — *ἔοικε πεπλᾶσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν εὐαγγελιστῶν*; but if Matthew and Luke wrote independently of each other, it would hardly have been coined by both of them, and probably was not by either.

In regard to the etymology of the word, we might make short work of it, so far as Greek is concerned, if we could adopt the desperate conjecture of Dr. Cureton, who thinks that *ἐπιούσιος* was formed from the Aramaic by transliteration.¹ I do not propose to join in the endless discussion as to whether the verbal element is found in *εἰμί* or *εἴμι*. I consider it sufficiently settled by evidence cited in Thayer's Lexicon (p. 241) that the word is derived from *ἐπί* and *εἴμι*. Those who adopt this derivation generally take it immediately from *ἐπιούσα* with *ἡμέρα* understood. It is at this point that I wish to re-open the discussion. I take the brief and clear statement of Winer (Grammar, p. 97, Thayer's ed.): "*Ἐπιούσιος* has probably direct relation to the fem. (*ἡ*) *ἐπιούσα*, sc. *ἡμέρα*, and accordingly *ἄρτος ἐπιούσιος* means 'bread for the following day.'" To this there are two objections:—

1. The adjective formed by *-ιος* from *ἐπιούσα* would regularly be *ἐπιουσαῖος*, like *δευτεραῖος* (Acts xxviii. 13), *τεταρταῖος* (John xi. 39), *δεκαταῖος*, etc. This objection seems to have originated with Salmasius. Bishop Lightfoot questions the validity of it on two grounds: "The termination *-αῖος* in all these adjectives is suggested by the long

¹ See Preface to his edition of the Curetonian Syriac Version, "Remains of a very Antient Recension," etc., p. xviii.

-α or -η of the primitives from which they are derived, *δεντέρα, τρίτη*, etc.; and the short ending of *ἐπιούσα* is not a parallel case. Moreover, the meaning is not the same; for the adjectives in -αῖος fix a date, e.g. *τεταρταῖος ἦλθεν*, 'he came on the fourth day,' whereas the sense which we require here is much more general, implying simply *possession* or connection."²

One may be pardoned for expressing some surprise at this paragraph, for (1) What evidence have we that the quantity of the nominative ending was regarded? These adjectives are formed on the original *ā* stem, as their deviation from *η* shows. The stem-ending was long in all first-declension feminines, and always so appeared in the genitive and dative cases, whatever the quantity of the nominative. I have here and there lighted on the following examples of adjectives in -αῖος from short-ending feminines of this declension: *ἀρουραῖος, ἀελλαῖος, ἀμαξαῖος, ἐχιθναῖος, θαλασσαιῖος, μελισσαιῖος, μοιραῖος, Πισαῖος, χαλαζαῖος, Æolic Μοισαῖος*. True, we have adjectives in -ιος from nouns of short endings, as *δίψιος*, and not *διψαῖος*, from *δίψᾱ*; but we also have those in -ιος from nouns of long endings, as *τίμιος, ἐσπέριος, ἡμέριος*, and never *τιμαῖος*, etc. Without doubt, there are more adjectives in -αῖος from long-vowel nouns than from short, but I suppose there are a great many more feminine substantives ending in -η and -ā than in -ᾱ. Further, while the final stem-vowel is long in the primaries, it is *shortened* in forming the diphthong *αι*. Otherwise the ending would be -ᾱος. How, then, is -αῖος even "suggested" more by a long nominative ending than by a short one? (2) These numerical adjectives are not confined to the fixing of dates, as the lexicons abundantly show. Their suffix -ιος is general and indefinite. When they agree with the subject of a verb, as commonly, the date-force is inferential. *Τεταρταῖος ἦλθεν* is literally "a fourth-day man he came." *Ἄρτος τεταρταῖος* would mean "bread of the fourth day," and *ἄρτος ἐπιουσαῖος* "bread of the next day." For the very reason that they all imply *ἡμέρα* in their primaries, they would attract a new-comer, like *ἐπιουσαῖος*, to their form.

2. The second, and more serious, objection to the meaning "for the following day" is the incongruity which it introduces. This will be made sufficiently apparent by simply reading the two passages: "Give us this day our bread for the morrow"; "Give us day by day our bread for the morrow." There have been various attempts to

² On a Fresh Revision of the English New Testament. 3d edition, p. 222. Appendix i.

explain away this incongruity. In the "Cambridge Bible for Schools" one finds in the volume on Matthew, "bread for the coming day, *i.e.* for the day now beginning," which seems like an ingenious method for abolishing the distinction between to-day and to-morrow. For we must not evade the fixed usage of ἡ ἐπιούσα (ἡμέρα), 'the next, the following day,' as in Acts xvi. 11, xx. 15, xxi. 18. It is important to add that ἐπιούσιος, if it come directly from ἡ ἐπιούσα, cannot mean 'daily,' for its legitimate development of meaning would be to 'future,' not 'daily.' How, then, can one rationally say, "Give us this day (day by day) our bread for to-morrow"? One may easily, in different connections, say things that are seemingly incompatible and yet admit of explanation; but unless a paradox is aimed at, it is not to be expected that in the same breath one should utter what makes an absurd or incongruous first impression. In such a case first impressions should rule.

Let us try to reach the true meaning of ἐπιούσιος by disconnecting it from the notion of "day," and seeing what it would mean as a participial adjective agreeing with ἄρτος. The explanation of its form certainly does not require the intervention of the feminine participle ἐπιούσα, though this is allowable. The stem ἐπιοντ- and suffix -ιος, with regular euphonic changes, would bring ἐπιόντιος, ἐπιόνσιος, ἐπιούσιος. By not bringing in ἐπιούσα we avoid the objections to the rendering "for the morrow," and are left free to choose from the meanings of the participle ἐπιών. Ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον is substantially ἄρτον ἐπιόντα, just as ἐθελούσιος is practically equivalent to ἐθέλων, and ἐκούσιος to ἐκών. This last pair we find in the New Testament. Paul writes to the Corinthians, Εἰ γὰρ ἐκὼν τοῦτο πράσσω (1 Cor. ix. 17), but to Philemon ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἐκούσιον (14). The forms ἐθελούσιος and ἐπιούσιος would mark adjectival as distinguished from participial use, turning a single act into a general or habitual state. I cannot assent to the remark of Lightfoot (p. 223), "No motive existed for introducing an adjective by the side of ἐπιών, sufficiently powerful to produce the result in an advanced stage of the language, when the fertility of creating new forms had been greatly impaired." Such *a priori* decisions must be received with great caution. And do not new forms abound in the later times of a language, when word-making becomes more conscious, as the language itself is more the object of study, and writers try to escape the monotony of a fixed vocabulary? At any rate, the New Testament, though a small volume, contains nearly nine hundred words not found in Greek literature before (and including) Aristotle. Most of these bear obvious marks of derivation,

showing themselves to be comparatively recent, and not old popular words lifted into literary use.

The existence of the participle, then, does not forbid the existence of the similar adjective. Ἐπ-ιών means on-coming. This, generalized, might denote constant succession, and then τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον would mean "our constant supply of bread"; in colloquial parlance, "our bread right along."

One cannot be quite satisfied with any explanation of this word that does not suggest some Hebrew equivalent or Aramaic original. Now, if it contains the notion of a constant supply of need, a continuous bestowment, then we naturally look for some Hebrew expression for continual, perhaps daily, work and service. At once we think of the "continual" offerings and the daily services of the sanctuary. The "continual burnt-offering" which was to be offered "day by day" (Ex. xxix. 38, 42) was עֲלֹת תָּמִיד, "offering of continuance." In the same use of תָּמִיד we find "men of continuance" (Ez. xxxix. 14), *i.e.* men employed in regular constant work; "diet of continuance," given to Jehoiachin "every day" (Jer. lii. 34), and even "bread of continuance" (Num. iv. 7), applied to the shewbread. So much was תָּמִיד used in association with the daily burnt-offering that in later usage it stands alone for the offering itself. In Dan. viii. 11, 12, 13; xi. 31; xii. 11, it is, literally, the "continuance" that is "taken away." Our common version has it, the "daily sacrifice"; the Revision more accurately, the "continual burnt-offering."

תָּמִיד is usually translated in the Septuagint by διαπαντός, as, οἱ ἄρτοι οἱ διαπαντός, Num. iv. 7; several times, mostly in later usage, by ἐνδελειχισμός, as, θυσίαν ἐνδελειχισμοῦ, Ex. xxix. 42; ὀλοκαυτώσεις ἐνδελειχισμοῦ, 2 Esdr. iii. 5. The most remarkable translation is in Num. iv. 16, ἡ θυσία ἡ καθ' ἡμέραν, which seems to be the beginning of that confusion of meanings—continual, daily—amounting to a side-development, that has come down to our day. It is noticeable that no adjective is used in these renderings. Whether ἐπιούσιος would have been sometimes used, if in existence, we need not inquire. The usual phrase in the Vulgate is *juge sacrificium*—this adjective being used by Horace to describe a perennial fountain, *jugis aquae fons* (Sat. ii. 6, 2).

This meaning of ἐπιούσιος, which is, to say the least, illustrated by the Hebrew, seems to be confirmed by three ancient versions, and at the same time throws light on the versions themselves. In the oldest extant Syriac version, the Curetonian, the passage in Matthew is

translated by Cureton himself thus : "And our bread constant of the day give us"; in Luke, "And give to us bread continual of every day." The words "constant" and "continual" represent the same Syriac word. The discussion of it — its etymology and use elsewhere — I must leave to those who understand Syriac. Taken by itself, it seems at first thought to lack fitness as descriptive of bread ; but interpreted by the "continual" daily services of the Hebrew ritual, and by the habit of speech which calls the constant things of life "daily," it seems not unsuitable in the prayer : "Give us this day, and day by day, our continual, ever-needed, ever-coming, never-failing bread."

In the Gothic version Matt. vi. 11 (the corresponding passage in Luke is lost) reads : *Hlaih unsarana pana sinteinan gif uns himma daga* : which may be Englished, with no regard to the Greek, word for word : "Bread ours the continual give us this day." *Sinteinan* (nom. *sinteins*) is given in all the glossaries as 'daily.' Massmann, however, and Bernhardt (1884) give two meanings, 'immerwährend, täglich.' Leo Meyer in his "Gothische Sprache" (p. 98 *et al.*) gives 'fortwährend, täglich.' No one would question its connection with *sinteino*, a common adverb meaning 'always.' This is found in Mark v. 5 for the original *διαπαντός*, in xiv. 7 for *πάντοτε*, in xv. 8 for *ἀεί*. It is derived by a regular suffix from *sinteins*, yet this latter comes from no word for day, so far as we know. The Gothic remains do not afford us such a derivative from *dags*, as *dagaleiks*. The root of *sinteins* is probably the same as of the Latin *sem-per*. May it not also be the same as in the Anglo-Saxon *sin-gal*, 'continual,' and *sin-niht*, 'night after night' (*Béowulf*, 161)? If *sinteins* means 'daily,' the meaning must come from 'continual.' Probably the chief reason for making *sinteins* mean 'daily,' is that *seiteins*, a collateral form, is used in 2 Cor. xi. 28 for ἡ καθ' ἡμέραν, where Paul speaks of "that which presseth upon me *daily*, anxiety for all the churches." But here *sinteins* might have its proper meaning of 'continual' without wandering far from the Greek original. Indeed, it can mean 'daily' only as any word denoting constant succession might mean hourly, or yearly, or every minute, according to the connection.³

The third ancient version to be considered — or shall we call it a bundle of versions? — is the Old Latin. Here we find in Matthew

³ Leo Meyer in the *Zeitschrift für vergl. Sprachforschung*, VII. 402, discusses this word, but with no allusion to its bearing against the etymology of *ἐπιούσιος* which he advocates, viz. *ἐπι ὧν*.

"Panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis hodie"; and in Luke "Panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis cotidie."⁴ Whence came this 'cotidianum'? Certainly not from a literal translation of ἐπιούσιος, considered by itself. If the Evangelists had wanted a Greek word to express 'daily,' there was one ready to hand, found in the writers of that time, and even in the New Testament. James comes very near ἄρτος ἐφήμερος when he says (ii. 15), "If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food" — τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς. The Latin Vulgate for this is, of course, "victu quotidiano." In the absence of any such original in the Lord's Prayer, it is possible to account for the 'cotidianum' either by the influence of the context — the σήμερον of Matthew, and particularly the καθ' ἡμέραν of Luke, serving to attract and specialize the general idea of 'continual' — or by a larger association with continual worship through daily offerings, or in a more general way by the tendency to speak of the ordinary, constant things of life as 'daily.' It can hardly be that 'cotidianum' came from ἐπιούσιον in the sense of 'for the morrow'; for the legitimate development of *crastinus*, as I have already said, would be to *futurus*, as Jerome says, on this very passage, "*crastinum id est futurum.*"

In regard to the Peshito Syriac, it is generally supposed that it gets the meaning "bread of our necessity" from the etymology ἐπιούσιον; but is it quite certain that the meaning 'needful' could not come from 'continual' through the notion of constant supply — constant and, by implication, ever-needed?

What shall be said of that one word MAHAR that has come down to us from the Gospel according to the Hebrews? In the first place, Jerome, who is our sole authority for it, did not accept it as a correct translation of ἐπιούσιος. He was familiar with that Gospel. He says, "Quod nuper in Graecum de Hebraeo sermone transtulimus, et quod vocatur plerisque Matthaei authenticum."⁵ He also states that Origen often uses it. Further, the extant fragments of this Gospel are so scanty that modern scholars have hardly the means of reversing the decision of Jerome. As given in Hilgenfeld's edition, the latest accessible to me, they contain only twenty-five Hebrew words,

⁴ Old Latin Biblical Texts; No. III. The Four Gospels. By Henry J. White. Clarendon Press, 1888. Codex *Monacensis* (q). Some codices — I do not know how many — have in Luke the error of 'hodie' instead of 'cotidie.' The received Vulgate text has also 'hodie' in Luke, but the best text, Codex *Amiatinus*, has 'cotidie.'

⁵ Hieron. *Opp. omni.*, VII. 77 (Comm. on Matt. xii. 13).

and, with all the Greek and Latin interpretations, occupy but two and a half pages.⁶ If we had the whole, or a large part, we might, perhaps determine the general faithfulness of the version, and that would help to settle its value in the case of this word. As it is, knowing the liability of ancient, as well as modern, versions to error, we can hardly give much weight to mere scraps of an almost unknown version discredited by both Origen and Jerome.

That the view which I advocate as to the meaning of *ἐπιούσιος* has not been much favored by commentators, early or late, must be admitted. In the list of more than seventy names noticed by Tholuck in his "Sermon on the Mount" not one appears to accept it. There is, however, one great name which he omits, and the omission is the more surprising because Tholuck himself had already edited the Commentary, from which I copy Calvin's entire discussion of the word: "Quia Dei benignitas continuo tenore ad nos pascendos fluit, panis quem ministrat vocatur *ἐπιούσιος*, hoc est, superveniens: sic enim interpretari licet. Tantundem ergo valet hoc nomen acsi dictum esset: Domine, quum quotidie novis alimentis opus habeat vita nostra, ne assidue ea largiendo unquam fatigeris."⁷

The foregoing pages were written before the publication of Chase's "The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church." I will not undertake, in a few closing lines, to give the consideration which his discussion of *ἐπιούσιος* deserves. A very brief résumé of his pages, mostly in my own words, will be sufficient to show the bearing of my views on his positions.

Ἐπιούσιος, coming as it does from ἡ *ἐπιούσα*, introduces tautology into the prayer, and is "alien to its simplicity of language." It probably, then, does not belong to the earliest prayer, but is "due to liturgical use." The original clause, "Our bread of the day give to us," was changed to "our bread for the coming day," to adapt the prayer to use at evening. This "working hypothesis" is supported (1) by the τῆς *ἐφημέρου τροφῆς* of James ii. 15; (2) by the absence of any word for *ἐπιούσιος* in Ephrem's allusion to the prayer; (3) by the inadequacy of the Old Syriac 'continual' as a translation of *ἐπιούσιος*; and (4) by the *mahar* of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which points to evening service.⁸

⁶ Novum Testamentum extra canonem receptum. Fasc. IV., ed. 2, 1884, p. 15.

⁷ Ioannis Calvini in Harmoniam ex Matthæo, Marco et Luca compositam Commentarii. Ed. Tholuck, Berolini, 1833. Vol. I. p. 169.

⁸ Texts and Studies. Vol. I., No. 3, The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church. By Frederic Henry Chase, B.D. Cambridge, 1891, pp. 42-53.

Mr. Chase's hypothesis is presented with a modest ingenuity that almost fascinates one ; but it seems to me that if we restore to *ἐπιούσιος* the meaning found in the Old Syriac, the hypothesis is no longer needed. The tautology complained of arises from connecting *ἐπιούσιος* directly with *ἡ ἐπιούσα*. All other tautology is due to translation, the disabilities of which ought not to be charged to the original. "Day by day our daily" is tautological, in a narrow sense, but "day by day our constant supply" is not, in any sense. With the correct meaning of *ἐπιούσιος*, not only tautology, but the glaring incongruity of which I have spoken, also disappears. Nor does the hypothesis seem to be securely based on liturgical need. If I should venture to mark out a liturgical development of the clause, I should by no means omit from the primary the idea of constant supply contained in *ἐπιούσιος*. To this might very naturally be added *σήμερον* for morning prayer, and the more general *τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν* for other occasions. If, however, *ἐπιούσιος* means 'of the coming day,' and that means 'of the present day,' why should *σήμερον* ever have been added? Mr. Chase's answer is, "There meets us a double rendering of the original word" (p. 47). But if we give to *ἐπιούσιος* the meaning advocated in this paper, there is no room for the tautology of a "double rendering," and no need of reconstructing the clause as we now find it, further than to acknowledge the varying traditions of *σήμερον* and *τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν*.