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978-0-521-10824-9 - The Turin Fragments of Tyconius' Commentary on Revelation

Edited by Francesco Lo Bue

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## INTRODUCTION

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### I. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The earliest notice of the MS. is due to Amedeo Peyron who enriched the Turin Library with it, together with other vellum codices from the Monastery of Bobbio.<sup>1</sup>

Having noted among these Bobbio manuscripts the 'Anonimi Commentarii in Apocalypsin Fragmenta'<sup>2</sup> he gave the following description of our Codex:

Servatur in Bibliotheca Taurinensi huius Codicis (n. 62) lacinia multorum foliorum in 8<sup>o</sup> minimo, quam inveni inter Bobienses membranas. Scriptura facile pertinet ad saec. XIII. Commentarium contuli cum illis Bedae, Ambrosii, Ansberti, Andreae, Caesareae Archiepiscopi, Victorini, Aretae atque ab his plane differre uidi. Multa habet quae congruunt cum Anonymi Commentario in Apocalypsim edito inter opera D. Augustini tom. III in Appendice. Iam quum Anonymus breuiauerit Primasium episcopum, iure uideor asserere Bobiensem nihil esse nisi aliam Epitomen Commentarii Primasii quod uide in Bibl. Patrum Lugd. Tom. x.<sup>3</sup>

On the external characteristics of the MS. little or nothing has been added hitherto to the above notice.

Classified in Peyron's Catalogue as Bobbio Codex 62, it subsequently received the number F. IV. 1. 18 which it at present bears, although Ottino's Inventory, as also that of Sorbelli, proposed a different registration.

Some more details of an external nature may be added to those given by Peyron. The Codex consists of two fascicles, one containing chs. ii. 18–iv. 1 and the other vii. 16–xii. 6 of the Apocalypse. There is thus an internal lacuna, as well as a missing beginning and end.

The following characteristics are common to the two extant fragments: the hand is a book-gothic, neat and uniform, easy

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. Ottino, *I Codici Bobbiesi nella Bibl. Nazionale di Torino*.

<sup>2</sup> Amedeo Peyron, *M. T. Ciceronis orationum fragmenta* (Invent. p. 18, n. 62).

<sup>3</sup> Peyron, *op. cit.*, Adnotationes, p. 174.

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to read, in uninterrupted lines and with the more usual abbreviations nearly always occurring. The capitals are occasionally illuminated but always in a simple manner. A few corrections occur, an occasional marginal and interlinear addition (sometimes by a second hand) and only one note in the lower margin. The outer margins are blackened by the fire which damaged the Turin Library at the beginning of this century.

Certain other characteristics are also however worth noting. Besides traces of the fire, the first fascicle shows large patches of damp which have roughened the parchment and have to a certain extent spread and blackened the ink. This fascicle consists of three sheets, or 12 pages, each with 32 lines of writing. The second fascicle is of eight sheets (32 pages) and each page has 29 lines of writing.

This widening of the lines may be due to a change in the scribe's estimate of the available vellum: he may have been excessively cautious at first in his use of the material at his disposal. As for the internal lacuna, a plausible hypothesis may be put forward. Instead of assuming that a whole fascicle has been lost, as has been hitherto supposed, it may perhaps be simpler to consider the likelihood of the loss of the outer sheets of the first surviving fascicle. This would not only explain the central lacuna but also the lack of the initial portion. And the lack of proportion between the numbers of sheets in each fascicle would also be explained.

If we supposed, therefore, that the first fascicle consisted of eight sheets like the second, we should have the first 10 pages containing the commentary to Ap. i. 1–ii. 17: the 12 pages of the extant text would follow on these, and then ten more for chs. iv. 2–viii. 15. This gives in all 32 pages, as for the second fascicle. The amount of New Testament text which we may suppose to have been commented on in the five sheets which we have assumed to have been lost is not out of proportion to that actually surviving in the remaining three sheets. *Anyhow in a case like this a merely numerical relation is of doubtful value.*

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Nothing further can be added in support of the hypothesis, except that the damage caused by damp to the first fragment, and especially to its outer pages, might be connected with the loss of what we have supposed to have once been the first and last sheets of the fascicle.

## 2. DESIGNATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The fact that the beginning of the MS. is missing, and therefore also any superscription, renders all the designations that have been proposed somewhat arbitrary.

The titles so far suggested for the MS. are: *Anonymi Commentarii in Apocalypsin fragmenta* (Peyron), *Expositio Anonymi in Apocalypsim* (Ottino), *Tyconii Afri Fragmenta Commentarii in Apocalypsim* (Spicilegium Casinense), *Commentariorum in Apocalypsim fragmenta* (title derived from the present registration).

As regards the author, Peyron first thought of a summarizer of Primasius and Amelli subsequently of Tyconius himself. Certainly it is to the credit of the Benedictine editor that he should have simultaneously affirmed the Tyconian origin of the Commentary and its independence of the work of Primasius. But the attribution to Tyconius, too definite and perhaps too hasty, has been received by subsequent scholars with the greatest reserve.

## 3. EDITION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The only previous edition of the MS. is that of the Benedictines of Monte Cassino in the third volume of their *Spicilegium Casinense*.<sup>1</sup> The text is here accompanied by a somewhat rudimentary critical apparatus containing various suggestions of emendations and certain comments by the editor. In column

<sup>1</sup> In the present Essay I shall indicate by the symbol T the Codex, and not the edition in the *Spicilegium* which will be indicated by the abbreviation 'ed.' This also holds for the critical apparatus which I have added to the text (see Appendix).

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form, at the side, the Commentary of Primasius is given as it is preserved in an ancient Codex of Monte Cassino. At the foot are given the parallel passages met with in Bede's Commentary and in the pseudo-Augustinian Homilies on the Apocalypse. The Bible text of the Apocalypse has been systematically distinguished<sup>1</sup> and certain scriptural type quotations are indicated in italics.

The edition is by no means faultless. The critical apparatus is incomplete and the suggestions of emendations are inadequate to the requirements of the text. The palaeographic characteristics of the text itself have not all been noted (corrections and marginal and interlinear notes), although they help to contribute to a correct interpretation: nor has any attempt been made to render such an interpretation possible in cases where the meaning is completely obscure.

According to the editor, his registration of the parallel passages in Primasius, Bede and the pseudo-Augustinian Homilies is a claim to merit in the eyes of scholars. Nevertheless there is no constant reference to the Commentary of Beatus of Libana which is recognized as the most representative among those belonging to the Tyconian family, and which actually furnishes the text closest to T and the most useful aid to the work of emendation. It is in fact evident that the editor has not even seen the Spanish Commentary of which he occasionally refers to a few phrases for which he quotes Haussleiter.

Besides the defects already mentioned the edition contains not a few errors in the transcription of the MS. and misprints<sup>2</sup> and even some glaring oversights in the palaeographical notes. All this naturally makes it harder to understand a text which of itself is sufficiently difficult to interpret.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Apart from certain unimportant omissions.

<sup>2</sup> Of these I have noted at least thirty. There can be no doubt that the errors are due to lack of care in reading since there is never any reason for uncertainty here. Several of the misprints are obvious.

<sup>3</sup> As an Appendix to the volume of the *Spicilegium* there is a photographic facsimile of a page of the MS.

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## 4. THE VALUE OF THE MANUSCRIPT AS EVIDENCE

By this complex of circumstances, and by the conviction that the Tyconian passages in Beatus' Commentary could be identified at sight or at least without difficulty, as well as by the historical rather than the philological nature of his researches, Hahn was induced to undervalue the importance of T as even an approximate aid to the reconstruction of the lost work of Tyconius.<sup>1</sup> This judgement of his, remaining undisputed, weighed against the estimate of the Codex on the part of scholars until a more thorough examination of Tyconian problems by several other scholars had imposed a new and fairer method of valuation. First among these was Professor A. Pincherle in a paper published in 1925 in the periodical *Ricerche Religiose*. Concluding a review of the sources to be utilized for a possible reconstruction of Tyconius' Commentary he wrote:

As regards the critical question, it seems to me that from the remarks made hitherto we can at once conclude that in the reconstruction of the Commentary on the Apocalypse the critical basis of the agreement of the later commentators (mainly Beatus-Homilies-Primasius), subtracting what is due to Victorinus of Pettau (in St Jerome's recension), must be reinforced and completed by the other basis of criticism which calls for the agreement of the material thus collected with the fragments of the Turin Codex, the proper recognition of which is long overdue.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the necessity of a preliminary critical study of the MS. in question was becoming apparent; but such a study was not possible without the aid of a critical edition of Beatus' Commentary. It is now proposed to give, in the present Introduction, a first example of such a study.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hahn, *Tyconius-Studien*, pp. 14-18.

<sup>2</sup> A. Pincherle, 'Da Ticonio a S. Agostino', in *Ric. Religiose* (1925), p. 458.

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## II. THE PALAEOGRAPHY OF T

### I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The text presented by the Turin fragments is very incorrect orthographically and sometimes actually unintelligible. A valuable aid to the labour of critical revision is however supplied by the parallel passages in the other Commentaries on the Apocalypse which form part of the Tyconian group. A comparison with the work of Beatus of Libana is especially useful and instructive.

It is however necessary to proceed with caution in utilizing the analogies presented by these Commentaries: emendation of T must be kept within very narrow limits and restricted to the main purpose of making its text readable. We must not attempt to force the text by artificial means into more or less literal agreement with one or other of the Commentaries with which we are comparing it.

The problem of the reconstruction of the common Tyconian archetype must be faced later and perhaps solved in the case of certain passages by an actual synopsis of the various divergent readings.<sup>1</sup>

First of all, the independence of T should be maintained as far as possible, even where it is necessary to proceed by emendation. We must, that is, allow due weight to the contribution which T may make towards the possible reconstruction of the Donatist work; and we must remember moreover that many textual variants may be ultimately derived, as we have stated, from the Commentary of Tyconius itself and have affirmed themselves in the course of a centuries-old manuscript tradition.

It is quite true that the attempt to reconstruct this tradition seems to be a somewhat desperate venture. We do not know,

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand it is by no means impossible that some of the divergences are due to Tyconius himself and testify to the assistance of several editors of the ancient Donatist commentary.

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for instance, what the relation may have been between the text which Bede must have known at the beginning of the eighth century and that from which Beatus quoted so abundantly towards the end of the same century; nor the relation between these and the Tyconian exemplar which lay in the library at St Gallen<sup>1</sup> in the ninth century. We can only note their chronological proximity. We do not know the relation of this lost St Gallen codex with our Turin manuscript which came from Bobbio; we can only keep in mind the close historic ties which originally existed between Bobbio and St Gallen.

But, even though we may admit the truth of all this, it is also nevertheless true that the textual variants which distinguish the Turin Codex from the other Commentaries of the Tyconian family can sometimes afford glimpses of differing and successive phases of the otherwise unknown manuscript tradition. Some confirmation of this will in fact be given in what follows.

## 2. PALAEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

A complete review of these may be effected by means of the critical apparatus to the text of the Codex given in this edition. Here we merely give a summary classification.<sup>2</sup>

(i) *Orthography*(a) *Exchange of e and ae*

The most typical example is afforded by the use of the spellings *ecclesia* (= *aecclesia*), i.e. *ecclesia* and *equus* (= *aequus*), i.e. *equus*. The occurrence of these two words is so frequent and the presence of the diphthong so constant that I have ventured

<sup>1</sup> As Haussleiter has pointed out, the Commentary of Tyconius still formed part of the library of the St Gallen Monastery in the ninth century. The oldest Catalogue of this library has, under the number 242, the following indication: 'expositio tichonii donatistae in Apocalypsim vol. 1 uetus' (C. Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum antiquarum*, Bonn, 1885, p. 48).

<sup>2</sup> The figures which here normally follow the quotation of the text give the page and line numbers as they appear in the edition.



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to restore the correct spelling in the text without referring to it each time in the apparatus. Nevertheless it is right to mention this particular characteristic. Other examples are noted in the apparatus or, where possible, maintained in the text.

## (b) Exchange of -bt- and -pt-

This is of fairly frequent occurrence and shows a return to the radical form (e.g. *describtio*, i.e. *descriptio*; *scribtura*, i.e. *scriptura*). This has usually been maintained in the text.

## (c) Exchange of -ci- and -ti-

Also frequent, e.g. *naciones*, i.e. *nationes*, *offitium*, i.e. *officium*, also *speties*, i.e. *species*. In rare cases it may be considered as an orthographical irregularity, e.g. *fatio*, i.e. *facio* (p. 143, 4), *tocius*, i.e. *totius* (p. 186, 4).

## (ii) Errors

## (a) Punctuation

Rarely met with, except when accompanied by further and deeper corruptions of the text; e.g.

... *in ignem et sanguinem. iram Dei significat*

i.e. ... *in igne(m) et sanguine(m) iram Dei significat* (p. 90, 5-6)

*sua morte corruptit diabolus*, etc.

i.e. ... *sua morte corruptit. Diabolum*, etc. (p. 94, 4-5).

## (b) Noun terminations

(1) *-em*, *-am*, *-um* (*-ē*, *-ā*, *-ū*) for *-e*, *-a*, *-u*.

Quite frequent, as also the converse error.

(2) *-us* (*-ū*) for *-um* (*-ū*) and *-um* for *-us*.

e.g. *ingressus*, i.e. *ingressum* (p. 48, 10)

*diabolus*, i.e. *diabolum* (p. 94, 5)

(3) *-am* (*-ā*) for *-ae* (*e*) and *-ae* for *-am*.

e.g. *Laodiciam*, i.e. *Laodiciae* (p. 77, 8)

*personae*, i.e. *personam* (p. 95, 3)

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- (4) *-um* for *-em*, *-i* (?), *-ibus* (?).  
 e.g. *describitionum*, i.e. *describitionem* (p. 80, 1)  
*silentium*, i.e. *silentii* (?) (p. 84, 2)  
*sequentium*, i.e. *sequentibus* (?) (p. 47, 5)
- (5) *-es*, *-as* for *-is*.  
 e.g. *sermones*, i.e. *sermonis* (p. 46, 5)  
*ipsas diuitias*, i.e. *ipsis diuitiis* (p. 75, 7)
- (6) *-is* for *i*.  
 e.g. *scismaticis*, i.e. *scismatici* (p. 71, 11)  
*malis*, i.e. *mali* (p. 118, 2)
- (7) *-i* for *-o*, *-os*.  
 e.g. *Filii*, i.e. *Filio* (p. 73, 6)  
*iuditii tempus*, i.e. *iuditio tempus* (p. 174, 2)  
*praepositi*, i.e. *praepositos* (p. 46, 3)
- (8) *-um* for *-ud* and *-ud* for *-um*.  
 e.g. *illud*, i.e. *illum* (p. 71, 1)  
*alium*, i.e. *aliud* (p. 180, 7)
- (c) *Verbal endings*
- (1) *-ebit* for *-et*.  
 e.g. *desinebit*, i.e. *desinet* (p. 158, 5)
- (2) *-ebant* for *-unt*.  
 e.g. *fiabant*, i.e. *fiunt* (p. 61, 9)
- (3) *-ant* for *-abunt*.  
 e.g. *nouellant*, i.e. *nouellabunt* (p. 83, 1)
- (4) *-unt* for *-untur* (*-unt*).  
 e.g. *paciunt*, i.e. *patiuntur* (p. 159, 6)  
*dicunt*, i.e. *dicuntur* (p. 164, 7)
- (5) *-unt* for *-ere*.  
 e.g. *uiuunt*, i.e. *uiuere* (p. 62, 5)  
*cadunt*, i.e. *cadere* (p. 168, 4)
- (6) *-ari* for *-are* and *-ere* for *-eri*.  
 e.g. *uideri*, i.e. *uidere* (p. 62, 3)  
*perdocere*, i.e. *perdoceri* (p. 136, 6)