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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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THE
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TYCONIUS' COMMENTARY
ON REVELATION

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FRANCESCO LO BUE
AND PREPARED FOR THE PRESS BY
G. G. WILLIS



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FOREWORD

Dr F. Lo Bue in the summer of 1937 presented a thesis consisting of an edition of the Turin fragment of Tyconius' Commentary on the Apocalypse with an introduction. He was in Oxford for the year 1953–4 on an Inter-Church Aid Scholarship and found that several scholars in England were working on the Latin Patristic Commentaries on Revelation. This encouraged him to put his edition of Tyconius' Commentary into publishable form. He returned at the end of his year in Oxford to Turin, where he died in 1955. After his death his work on Tyconius was found to consist of an introduction in Italian and the text with an apparatus. Mr J. A. Spranger translated the introduction into English, Dr G. G. Willis has corrected the text and apparatus, and Professor G. D. Kilpatrick has made additions to the bibliographies and contributed sundry suggestions. The spelling *Tyconius* is that used by Dr Lo Bue in his English correspondence.

A short account of Dr Lo Bue follows this Foreword; it owes much to information from the Rev. John Marsh of Mansfield College.

October 1962

G. D. KILPATRICK
G. G. WILLIS

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Francesco Lo Bue was born at Tripoli on 21 December 1914, and received his primary and secondary school education in the government schools at Cagliari, Florence, and Altamura. In 1932 he matriculated into the University of Pisa, and in the next year migrated to the University of Rome, became a member of the Waldensian Theological School, and read under Professor Alberto Pincherle, Professor of the History of Christianity. He graduated in Classical Literature in 1936 at Rome in the first class *summa cum laude*. In 1938 he graduated in Theology, and was appointed to teach Latin and Italian literature at the Waldensian *Liceo* at Torre Pellice. While holding this post he also served the Waldensian Church as a Pastor at Coazze and elsewhere.

In 1944 Lo Bue was compelled to abandon his post under Fascist pressure, and joined the Resistance Movement, devoting himself especially to the assistance of Italian political prisoners, of British prisoners-of-war who were evading capture by the Germans, and of French civilians in a concentration camp near Turin. He also officiated as chaplain to the Piedmontese Partisan Command.

In 1945 he was able to return to his post at the *Liceo* at Torre Pellice, and to resume his teaching and research. He devoted himself to studies in biblical literature (chiefly New Testament), and early Church History, in which he had always been keenly interested. His published works included a translation of William Faulkner's *These Thirteen*, a translation of John Middleton Murry's *Shakespeare*; one of R. H. Bainton's *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*; and a book *Che cosa è il Nuovo Testamento?* (What is the New Testament?). He was a contributor to the literary magazine *Il Ponte*, and to the theological review *Protestantismo*.

In 1953–4 he was at Oxford, holding an Inter-Church Aid Scholarship at Mansfield College. He died at Turin on 17 October 1955, leaving a widow and children.

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The study of the history of Christianity during the last fifty years is responsible for the increasing interest in the historical figure and religious personality of Tyconius Afer and the consequent reevaluation of his literary work.

Scholars have been led to interest themselves in our author by very different motives.

The different points of view from which researches have inevitably converged on the person and writings of Tyconius are mainly the following: the study of the influences of thought to which St Augustine was open and those especially which have left a trace in his ecclesiology;¹ the historical reconstruction of the various phases of the religious struggle which was taking place in Roman Africa, towards the end of the fourth century, between the Catholic and Donatist Churches, a struggle in which the position of our author appears so puzzling and controversial; the study of the various trains of thought which have successively held the field concerning the interpretation of the canonical Apocalypse.² Since the publication, in 1894, of the critical edition of the *Book of Rules*,³ of fundamental importance for the religious thought of Tyconius, the attention of scholars has been concentrated on his only other work of which we still possess something more than a mere title, namely the Commentary on the Apocalypse.⁴

¹ Among others, Professor Pincherle has studied this special aspect of the problem of Tyconius and at one time put forward somewhat daring hypotheses on the history of the spiritual evolution of St Augustine and of Tyconius himself.

² This last study has been carried out quite recently in a masterly manner by Professor Kamlah, especially for the period which actually concerns Tyconius.

³ See the Bibliography, p. 39.

⁴ Gennadius mentions two other works of Tyconius, the *De bello intestino* and the *Expositio diuersarum causarum*, in a short bio-bibliographical notice in which certain ideas characteristic of the Commentary on the Apocalypse also occur (*De uir. ill. 18*, ed. C. A. Bernoulli, Freiburg, 1895, pp. 68–9). The

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The restoration of the text of this work involves an arduous labour of reconstruction for anyone who may undertake it, with uncertain prospect of success.

Tyconius' Commentary, preserved only in the form of revisions, and in quotations by subsequent ecclesiastical writers not always literal and scarcely ever explicit, would seem to have lost in textual foundation what it has gained in influence on the thought of others.

The problem of the reconstruction of the text of the Commentary of Tyconius can be subdivided, as a matter of method, under five heads: the study one by one of the writings which depend more or less directly on the Tyconian archetype; establishing where possible their mutual relations; isolating those passages in which the thought of the Donatist writer seems apparent; determining which of these are preserved in the form of continued paraphrase and which as fragmentary extracts; and discovering the original text as far as possible by a careful synoptic procedure.¹

Moreover, this problem, by no means simple in itself, is rendered more complex by certain critical points of detail which scholars have duly noticed.²

Hahn's statement is therefore quite understandable when he, one of the foremost Tyconian scholars, says that any attempt to reconstitute the text of the lost work is doomed to failure.³

The outline of the presumed ideal content of the Commentary, as given by Hahn, should therefore be the last word in the

mention by John Tritemius of other writings of Tyconius (*De script. eccles.* ch. 92, in Fabricius' 'Bibl. Ecclesiastica', Hamburg, 1718, part II, p. 81 and part III, p. 27) is of unknown origin and therefore not to be relied upon.

¹ The texts which depend more or less, and more or less directly, on the lost work of Tyconius are these: the Commentary on the Apocalypse by Victorinus of Pettau (in the recension given by St Jerome) (VH), that by Primasius of Adrumetum (Pa), that by the Venerable Bede (Bd), that by Beatus of Libana (B) and also the pseudo-Augustinian Homilies on the Apocalypse (H) and the fragments of the Turin Codex (see the Bibliography, p. 39).

² E.g. Ramsay (see Bibliography, p. 40).

³ Cf. Hahn, *Tyconius-Studien*, p. 18.

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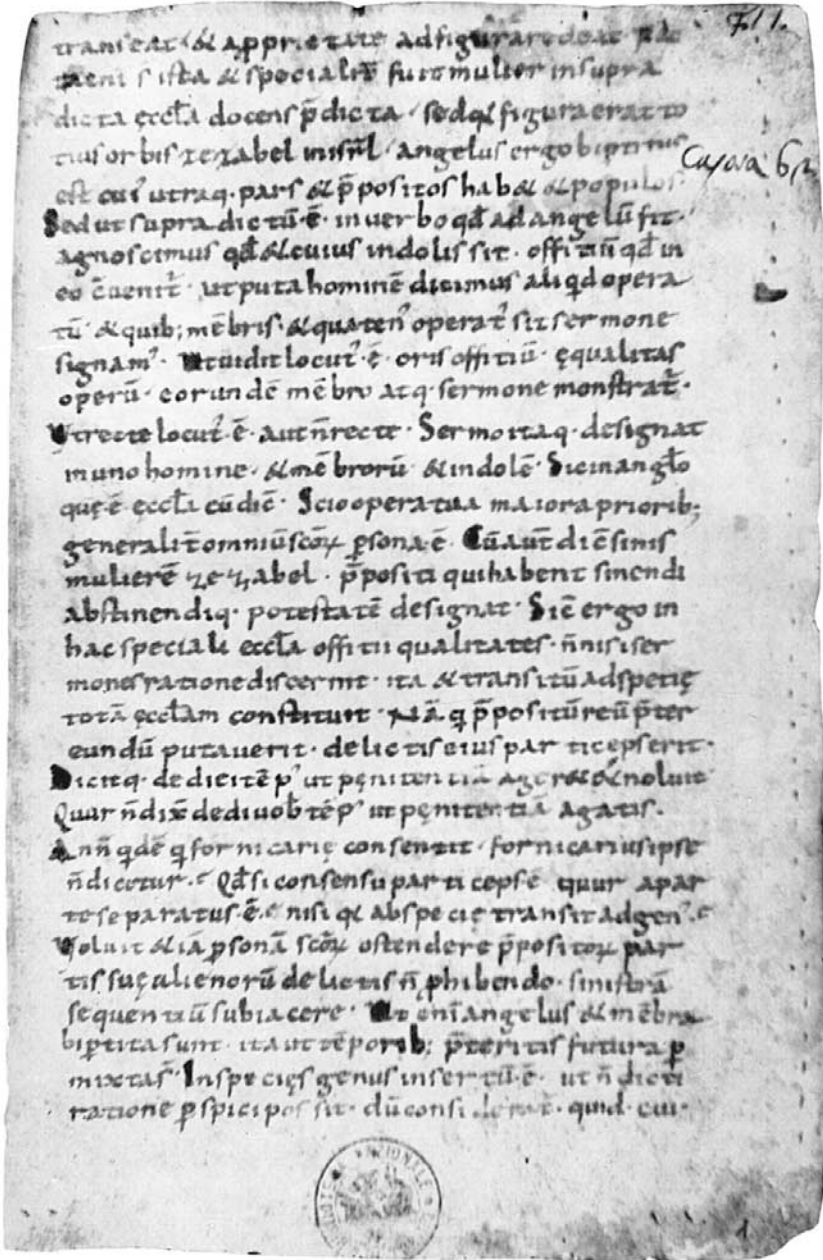
PREFACE

matter of organic reconstruction of Tyconius' work. But even this ideal reconstruction must be based on the identification of numerous passages substantially derived from Tyconius and preserved in subsequent Commentaries; and to effect this identification with a certain breadth and reliability of results we require that same detailed and patient evaluation of the sources which constitutes precisely the outstanding labour of a possible reconstruction of his text.¹ This is the reason why it would appear that the philological problem with which scholars are faced cannot be successfully evaded.

At any rate a noteworthy step forward towards the hoped-for solution of this problem was accomplished a few years ago by the publication of the first critical edition of the Commentary of Beatus of Libana, edited by Sanders.² This represents a long-sought aid, since it means that we possess a critical text of the work which, according to the unanimous opinion of scholars, is most largely based on Tyconius' work and renders him with the greatest fidelity. But there is yet another text, very different in itself and as regards its dimensions, which is indispensable for any attempt at restoration of the Donatist Commentary, and which still calls for critical study. This is the (fragmentary) Commentary on the Apocalypse contained in the Turin Codex F. IV. I. 18.

¹ Ramsay has exhaustively shown that the attempt to identify passages coming from Tyconius contained in later commentaries is distinctly hazardous unless one adheres strictly to scientific and philological method.

² Cf. Bibliography, p. 39.



I. Folio I, §§ 1–8 (see pp. 45–7).

uiuendo abstineant cū scriptū sit. Oportet hōre
 scire. ut peccati manifesti sint in uob. Iterū.
 Si autē dixerint uob ecce xps in cubiculis. no
 lite credere. necesse ē. eos diuersis errorib;
 uinci. q̄radicē ueritatis dimiserint. & se
 diabolo subiugarint. nā unde malis tanta
 diuinitas mala. ppria recipere cominat. dōdo
 cel. Aut unde iusti laudabiliore fierent. si q̄
 uincerent n̄ audirent neq. uiderent. Non mit
 tā sup uos alius pondus. Idē. sup id q̄ potestis sus
 tinere. Merū q̄ habetis. tene te. donec ueni. I.
 Quocirca q̄ scripsit uas opera mea usq. in finē. dabo
 ei potestātē sup gentes. Al pascale eas in uas gāfer
 rea. ut uas figuli conminuet. si ē. & ego accipi
 apatre meo. In xpo habet eccliam hanc potestātē.
 Si genū corpori eius adhaerit. habet q̄d filius
 hominis. dñi coherens accepit. qe cū illo om̄a nob
 doneuit. Et dabo ei stellam matutina. xps est
 stellam matutina. Quō q. xpm induit. in quod est
 xps efficit. Qui habet aures audiat. qd sp̄s di
 cat ecclesis. Et anḡlo ecclie q̄ scribit. q̄ scribit.
 Bēdīc q̄ habet septē sp̄s di. & septē stellas. nou
 opera tua qe nom̄ habet qd uiuēt. & mor tuus ē.
 Et si uigilans & confirmata cetera que moriturus eris.
 si enī inuenio opera tua plena corā dō meo. In m̄te
 habe ergo quomodo excepisti. & audisti. & custodi
 & penitentiā age. p̄ enī in q̄ habet. qd uiuēt
 sed mor tuus ē. si moritū nisi qui mor tuus eris cōm
 ferit. p̄ enī dicit confirmata que moriturus eris. &
 nisi q̄ in officio suo post moritū p̄manere p̄mittitur.
 p̄ enī confirmare potest. q̄ officii. & dō totū. & mi
 serit. p̄ enī inuenio opera tua plena corā dō meo.

