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MARCUS OF ORVIETO'S *LIBER DE MORALITATIBUS*

The *Liber de Moralitatibus* is a work in the literary genre of exempla literature, that is a source book compiled for the use of preachers. The author or compiler of this work, Marcus of Orvieto, is known only from an inscription in two Vatican manuscripts, namely Vat. Lat. 5935 and Vat. Lat. 636 and in the latter codex his name is inked over. I could find no evidence of Marcus's existence in Sbaralea's work on the *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum*. However, Faucon in his inventory of the Papal Library at Avignon describes one of the manuscripts as «Item, liber de mortalitatibus (sic!) septem Martini De Urbevetani Ordinis Minorum», where 'mortalitatibus' and 'Martini' are on the fringes of the target even if they don't hit the bull's eye. In his description of the manuscripts of Rome's Biblioteca Angelica, Narducci suggested it might be the work of Giles of Rome, which is probably the source from which Glorieux gleaned the attribution to Giles.

There seems little doubt that Marcus was a Franciscan. In addition to the colophon of the two Vatican manuscripts, there is much internal evidence to substantiate his status as a Friar Minor. While he frequently refers to anecdotes about Sts. Benedict and Dominic, the allusions to Francis of Assisi are far more abundant. He cites faithfully from Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*.

There is some evidence that Marcus studied at Paris¹ since he alludes to the Parisian masters on several occasions in such a way that one would

¹ Cfr. Tract. I, Intro. n. 3: «semper probantes per veras Scripturae sacrae auctoritates et per sanctos sive glossas vel etiam magistrorum Parisiensium expositiones iuxta quod Dominus melius ministrabit»; cfr. Tract. VI, cap. 40 n. 3: «secundum magistros Parisienses, notantur septem effectus verae poenitentiae», cfr. Tract. VI, cap. 126 n. 2:

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believe that he had heard these things first hand. It is likewise possible that Marcus was among the audience at some of Bonaventure's sermons when he preached in Paris, two of which are cited in the second treatise, namely 'De elementis', chapter 19 paragraph 2 and chapter 21 paragraph 10. According to the Quaracchi edition of Bonaventure's works, the audience for the former sermon was the King of France and his court, for the latter it was the Friars Minor in Paris.

In the introduction we learn that his patron was Benedict Gaetani, cardinal deacon of St. Nicholas in carcere Tulliano, who later became Pope Boniface VIII. This would date Marcus's work somewhere between 1280-1290. I stumbled across this work in Vat. Lat. 5935 in doing my description of some 100 manuscripts from the Vaticanus Latinus collection during the first six months of 1989. I had initially thought that this was a discovery of sorts, but I believe now that Professor John Friedman had gotten there before me. He has published the Latin text and an English translation of Marcus's chapter on the Peacock.²

It seems that Marcus's work enjoyed a good bit of popularity since it has survived in some 17 manuscripts. None of the 'Incipitaria' sources which I have been able to consult has a complete list and some cite manuscripts which do not contain Marcus's work and in this I am beholden to the expertise of the librarians in Wolfenbeuttel, the Bodleian in Oxford and the Bibliotheca Nazionale of Madrid, as well as my good friend Roland Hissette who sent me a film of a manuscript in the Cologne Archives, which contains excerpts from Isidore's *Etymologia* but nothing of Marcus's work. The above-mentioned libraries do not seem to have copies of Marcus's work. The listings I have consulted are Thorndike-Kibre's *Incipits of Scientific Writings*, Bloomfield's *Incipits on Virtues and Vices*, *Scriptorium*, *Vivarium* etc. none of which has a complete list. Eight manuscripts (one partial) are found in Italy, four (one partial) in Spain, two in Paris, one in Munich, one in Oxford and one in Switzerland.

«Quod ipsum faciebat sancta Genovefa Parisius et infirmitates fugabat, ut habetur in vita eius et a magistris Parisiensibus et in scriptis eorum».

² J. FRIEDMAN, «Peacocks and Preachers: Analytic Technique in Marcus of Orvieto's Liber de moralitatibus, Vatican lat. MS 5935», in *Beasts and Birds of the Middle Ages*, W.B. CLARK, M.T. MCMUNN (eds.), Philadelphia: Univ. Pennsylvania Press 1989, pp. 179-196.

Prior to the task of composing a critical text, I first did soundings by collating all the manuscripts for one question in each of the seven treatises in order to substantiate my choice of which manuscripts were best for collating and composing the text. I have chosen five manuscripts, namely Assisi 243, Paris Bibl. Nat. lat. 3332, Oxford New College 157 Padua Antoniana 388 and Vat. Lat. 5935. The Assisi manuscript has marginal annotations marking the changes of folia which may indicate that the autograph or apograph was originally lodged at the librerie in Paris or Bologna. I should note that the Assisi manuscript notes changes of folia and not *peciae* because there are 152 folia in this manuscript and annotations marking 145 'changes of folia', hence they could hardly have been *pecia* indications.

Of the four manuscripts collated, the Assisi and New College manuscripts are closely associated as are the Paris and Vatican codices, the Padua manuscript changes allegiance. The non-collated manuscripts are either represented by the collated manuscripts or have many faulty readings or simply abbreviate and truncate quotations, particularly from scripture. Some have missing quires. I went to Spain in February of 1998 to examine the four Catalan/Spanish manuscripts particularly since I was unable to obtain microfilms of them. In Tortosa, I was surprised to find that only the last half of the manuscript has survived. It begins in the middle of chapter 31 (On the Lion) paragraph 32 of Treatise V 'On the animals'. The Florence manuscript contains only a partial text, beginning with the treatise 'De avibus'.

The *Liber de Moralitatibus* is divided into seven treatises dealing with the celestial bodies, the elements, birds, fish, animals, plants and precious stones. Marcus's tactic is first to give a physical description of the specific item he's treating and in this he shows heavy dependence on Bartholomew of England's *De proprietatibus rerum*, the critical edition of which is being undertaken, as I understand it, by Professors Meier of Munster, Van den Abeelen of Louvain-la-Neuve and their colleagues. Their task is a difficult one, since Bartholomew's work has survived in hundreds of manuscripts. These physical descriptions reported by Marcus are gleaned (generally via Bartholomew) from Isidore's *Etymologia*, Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, Aristotle's *De animalibus*, Avicenna's *Canon medicinae* and his *De animalibus*, Nicholas of Damasco's *De plantis*, Ambrose's and Basil's works on the *Hexaemeron*, Bede, Constantinus Africanus's *Viaticum*, Dioscorides, Isaac Israeli's *De dietis*, Papias's *Vocabularium* and

Platearius *Breviarium medicinae*, a ‘Lapidarius’ who is Marbodius Redonensis, author of a treatise *De gemmis* and ‘Physiologus’ edited by Francis Carmody in the 1940s. There are also allusions to Albumasar and Alfraganus. Marcus refers to Bartholomew rather frequently as ‘auctor’ and in several instances as ‘auctor Proprietatum’ [e. g. Tr. V cap. 29 n. 4].

After listing the physical description of, for example the birds, fish, plants, Marcus proceeds to do his ‘moralizing’, most often by relating what the physical descriptions ‘signify’ which he bolsters up with ‘exempla’. In moving to the moral or spiritual significance Marcus adduces appropriate Scripture quotes, ordinary, interlineary and continuous Glosses, quotations from Ambrose, Augustine, Anselm, Basil, Bede, Bernard, Bonaventure, Cassianus, Cassiodorus, the *Decretum Gratiani* and the *Decretales* of Gregory IX, Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory the Great, Hugh of St. Victor, John Chrysostom, John Damascene, Jerome, Rabanus Maurus, Richard of St. Victor and Seneca, plus the Roman Breviary and Missal. I’ve been trying now for 5 years to track down all the sources and have found all but approximately 10%.

I confess to being a proponent of standardized orthography, but sometimes I have despaired of finding solutions, especially when Latin dictionaries disagree among themselves and with various authors as in the editions of Isidore and Pliny. For example, the use of the aspirate ‘h’ is troublesome at times, Marcus spells ‘ordeum’ (barley) without the ‘h’ and lists it under the letter ‘o’; he spells ‘arena’ (sand) without the ‘h’ where other authors spell it ‘harena’. This is especially vexacious regarding plants where some of the ancient and medieval listings are simply unknown species to the moderns and the spelling varies widely, such that I often don’t know where to start in using search engines such as CETEDOC and the CD-Roms for Migne. I have gotten some help from Willem Daems’s *Nomina Simplicium Medicinarum* but he too ‘succumbs’ to variant spellings. My tentative solution is to favor Marcus’s orthography such as I find it in the manuscripts with a note as to the variant spellings in Isidore, Pliny and/or the dictionaries.

More substantial are difficulties occurring when, if we are to believe printed editions, Marcus’s text is clearly at variance with the texts he cites. Sometimes the allusions in Orvieto’s surviving text are clearly wrong. What to do? I am inclined to take the reading of the manuscripts and simply make a note quoting the text of the edition alluded to.

Another difficulty consists in Marcus’s citing of the Scriptural

glosses. At the suggestion of Professor Froehlich of Princeton Theological Seminary, I first checked the 1481 Strassbourg edition and found about one-third of the citations. Subsequently, I went to Nicholas of Lyra thinking that, although Nicholas followed Marcus in time, the latter might have had access to a set of Glosses at the disposal of the Friars Minor which was subsequently gathered and edited by Nicholas. I found precious few more citations in Lyranus such that approximately half of them are still not found. I used a copy of Hugh of St. Cher's *Postillae* at Catholic University in Washington, DC and located a number of citations there. However, there are still a number of citations attributed to Glosses which I was unable to find, which leads me to believe that Marcus had a much-expanded text of Scriptural glosses.

A comparable problem exists with Marcus's allusions to Isidore. Either Marcus had a book of the *Etymology* which was much longer and more detailed than the text of Lindsay or Migne. Or perhaps there existed a commentary or 'glosses' on Isidore's work which Marcus attributed to Isidore himself. Marcus has a penchant for citing an author in the first of several paragraphs and then saying "et dicit idem" or "et dicunt iidem" where subsequently it is not clear who the 'idem' and 'iidem' were. I am also convinced that Marcus frequently conflates or confuses the authorities he purports to cite. For example, he attributes a passage to Pliny, where the text cited comes from Dioscorides or Platearius. I have had considerable difficulty tracking down allusions to Constantine the African. I found several citations in his *De gradibus*, but only one or the other after having read his entire *Viaticum*. The big problem is that there are no modern complete editions of many of these authors.

It seems certain that Marcus was using florilegia. I find some evidence of this, wherein quotations are truncated or summarized even though they purport to be direct citations. This is to say nothing about false attributions to authors such as Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome, all too common in the literature of the Middle Ages. Typically, the authenticity of the author and work were of less interest to medieval authors than the substance of the quotation to which they alluded.

I have virtually exhausted the sources listed in CLCLT-5, especially since this concentrates on authentic works already in modern critical editions. I have had some success in perusing the CD-Roms containing Patrologia Latina. I also consulted the Tübingen program listing classical Latin authors now available on CD-Roms. I have used concordances

whenever available, e. g. of Seneca and Ovid. I have searched the on-line texts of Pliny and Rabanus Maurus. For the rest of the unfound sources, I believe I have done quite enough, especially since in many instances it may be a 'wild goose chase', for example, in cases where Marcus may be citing works now lost to us or buried in manuscripts awaiting critical editions. I owe a big debt of gratitude to all the librarians who have graciously helped me at Emory University, the University of Kentucky, the University of Tennessee, the library of the Smithsonian, the library of Congress and the library at Catholic University. I am also indebted to Jack Zupko and his family for their hospitality, as well as to Prof. Therese Druart of Catholic University.

The edition of the *Liber de Moralitatibus* is forthcoming from the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University.

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