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Anne Grondeux

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Review of: Cassiodorus. *Institutiones humanarum litterarum.* *Textus Φ Δ.*

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Review of

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The *Institutiones* by Cassiodorus († c. 580) is a major work for the diffusion of knowledge in the medieval West (on Cassiodorus, one can learn much from the excellent chapter by Maïeul Cappuyns in Baudrillard 1949, and from the noteworthy synthesis by James O'Donnell 1979). This work circulated in several versions, one of which was authentic, i.e. in the form intended by Cassiodorus himself

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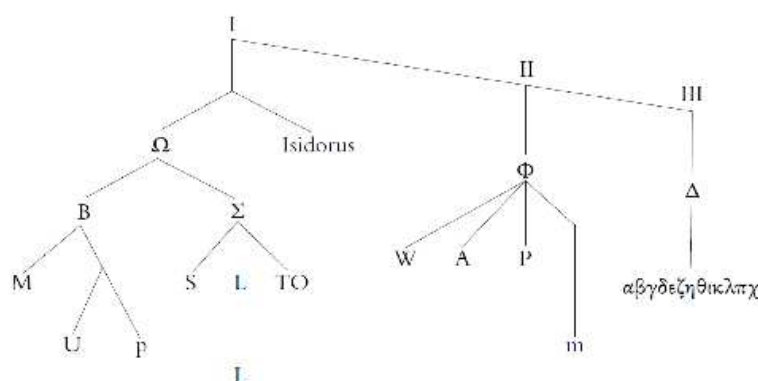
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(tradition Ω , grouping together the *Divine Institutions*, Book I, and the *Secular Institutions*, Book II), the other two being interpolated, Φ and Δ , which only convey Book II. What justifies the new edition of the Φ and Δ versions by Ilaria Morresi (henceforth IM) is the fact that these texts, whose enrichments met the expectations of Carolingian scholars (p. 146*), were distributed incomparably more widely than the authentic version, preserved in nine manuscripts (compared with around sixty for Book I when it circulated alone, twelve for the Φ witnesses, and twenty-three for the Δ). The history of the *Institutiones* is well known since the work of Pierre Courcelle, who showed that the divergences of Φ and Δ from Ω could be explained by the fact that these texts went back to a state prior to Ω , the famous draft described in his 1942 article, “Histoire d’un brouillon cassiodorien”. This intuition was made possible by the excellent edition by Roger A.B. Mynors published in 1937, who, having identified the three traditions, produced the edition of the authentic form Ω , on the basis of the three ancient manuscripts B (Bamberg, Staatbibl. Patr. 61), U (Vatican, BAV, Urb. Lat. 67), M (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, 660), while giving access to the other two, Φ and Δ . Since then, research on Cassiodorus and the various versions of the text has continued to develop (see in particular Holtz 1984). The article by Ilaria Morresi 2018, from which we borrow the family tree on page 217, is also worth consulting:



IM’s edition is preceded by an extensive introduction, to be completed by Morresi 2023. The introduction (the general outline is given at the end of this contribution) provides the essential historical background to the text, which is indebted to Mynors, Courcelle and Holtz. It

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includes the elements that distinguish the versions (pp. 12*, 25*: extracts from Martianus Capella and Boethius, the *Computus Paschalis*, Severianus' *Praecepta artis rhetoricae* for Φ , Quintilian, Boethius, Euclid, and refined diagrams for Δ), the circulation of Book II (p. 18*), the importance of Boethius in these two series of additions (pp. 17*, 27* in particular), important insights into earlier editions (in particular that of the Maurist Jean Garet, p. 13*), developments on diagrams (already studied by Morresi (2021, 2020), etc.), and so on. The additions made to the Cassiodorian base take the form of both end-of-chapter insertions and end-of-text appendices. The introduction also discusses (p. 15* ff.) the typology of Cassiodorian changes that characterise the transition from ω (the draft) to Ω . The best-known of these have already been described many times, the best example being Cassiodorus's evolving knowledge of Priscian: "At first he thought that Priscian had written in Greek. Later, he obtained the IG from which he reproduced extracts in his *De orthographia* and corrected his error", as Louis Holtz puts it (1981: 245; and see IM p. 16*). Consequently, in the Ω manuscripts, Priscian is a *Latin* grammarian, whereas in the manuscripts of the Φ and Δ recensions, which descend from the draft, Priscian is a *Greek* author. The edition is thus that of two complex *corpora*, composed of different texts deriving from the same base, the Cassiodorian draft, and conceived according to similar aims of augmenting this base with scholarly material. It thus enables us to measure the substantial work carried out on the basis of Cassiodorus' ω , in a context where it is usually rare to access an author's draft, and highlights the dimension of work in progress which in fact characterises the whole undertaking of the *Institutiones* (see in particular p. 22*, and n. 28). IM provides some very interesting insights into the respective dating of the two interpolated redactions, placing Φ at the turn of the sixth to seventh centuries, at the very moment when Vivarium disappeared, and highlighting the extreme complexity of Δ , where it is impossible to disentangle what is Vivarian from what is Carolingian. The *Institutiones* were indeed an inspiration to Carolingian scholars: Alcuin and Raban Maur are among the foremost intellectuals who bear witness to the circulation of Text II (p. 133*), particularly in

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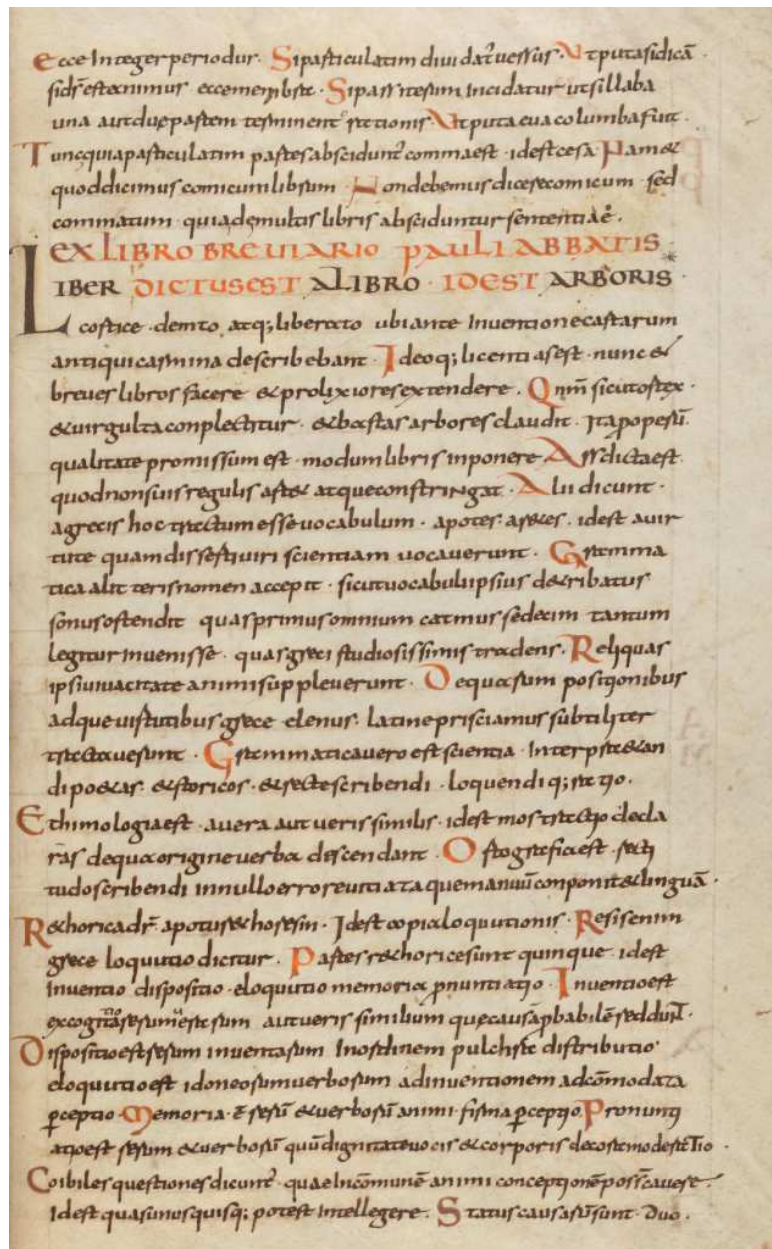
terms of rhetoric and dialectic, thus contributing to the spread of Boethius' thought.

One of the distinguishing features of the version Δ is the inclusion of extracts dealing with geometry, taken from a Latin translation of Euclid. These extracts can be traced back to the Vivarium, and cannot be attributed to the Corbie circle as Menso Folkerts intended (p. 41*). Their presence in the *Liber glossarum* also demonstrates their late-antique character, and it is regrettable that IM does not make full use of these connections to confirm the Vivarian origin of these extracts (cf. Fabio Troncarelli 2016).

The edition by IM was an opportunity to take up another important issue, the implications of which had probably not been seen before. Thus on p. 19*, IM describes the birth of the *Institutiones* in the shadow of the Vivarium library, which was in the process of being built up, as evidenced by the uncertainty over Priscian's status as a Greek or Latin author: the change from ω to Ω reflects the growth of the library. She then proposes to distinguish (p. 20*) [2.2] “uno stadio intermedio tra ω e Ω : la testimonianza di Isidoro e Paulus abbas” (= $\omega 1$), situating these two authors as the earliest indirect witnesses to Ω and to the text in general.

Reopening the issue of the Cassiodorian recensions was an opportunity to give due consideration to these early attestations, which were indeed crucial to the early dissemination of the *Institutiones*. It is therefore a pity that IM should accept, without discussion, the existence of a supposed *liber breuiarius*. The authentic version, which is attested by Isidore of Seville, is also attested, in the form of extracts, in the Erfurt manuscript, Ampl. 2°10, in a short section entitled *Ex libro breuiario Pauli abbatis*, but also in the lost manuscript †Chartres 92, which is not mentioned here. IM therefore deduces the existence of a *liber breuiarius* attributable to an untraceable Abbot Paul (“l'autore del Liber breuiarius resta un personaggio di difficile definizione e collocazione incerta”, p. 21* n. 26). For this text, IM refers to both Holtz 1984 and Barbero 1993, but without specifying that their hypotheses were

very different: for L. Holtz, “Paul” could correspond to Paul Diacre, whereas for G. Barbero, it could be Alcuin.



UB Erfurt, Dep. Erf., CA 2° 10

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Let's look at the case again. The existence of this hypothetical Abbot Paul leads us to postulate three levels of excerption. (1) Cassiodorus selects extracts to compose his *Institutiones*; (2) an “Abbot Paul” abbreviates Cassiodorus; (3) an anonymous person produces the extracts entitled “*Ex libro breuiario Pauli abbatis*“. We propose to remove one of these levels by reading the title preserved in the Erfurt manuscript as follows: *Ex libro breuiario Flauii abbatis*. The use of the uncial explains the corruption of this *Flauii*, which referred to Flavius Magnus

Aurelius Cassiodorus, the founding father of Vivarium, but obviously had no meaning for the copyists, into *Pauli*.

Restoring the title affixed to δ (which IM does not specify must be the model common to Erfurt and †Chartres) puts an end to the search for this fictitious Paul, and places the extracts immediately after their Cassiodorian model. The expression *liber breuiarius* conveniently refers to the *Institutiones*, a compendium of antique knowledge.

A comparison between the Erfurt extracts and the several Cassiodorian recensions shows that in 14 cases the extracts deviate in a free manner from their model, whatever it may be; in 13 cases the model is unmistakably of the Ω family (see in particular the passage *Graece Helenus, Latine Priscianus subtiliter tractauerunt* = $\Omega\delta$ vs. *Helenus and Priscianus suptiliter Attico sermone locuti sunt* = $\Phi\Delta$); in 3 cases the text is common with $\Phi\Delta$. The extracts below are numbered according to our edition in preparation:

δ	Cassiod. Ω	Cassiod. $\Phi\Delta$
5a ad regulas quasdam huius doctrinae	ad quasdam regulas doctrinae huius	ad regulas quasdam huius doctrinae
9a amicus noster uir disertissimus Mutianus	uir disertissimus Mutianus	amicus noster uir disertissimus Mutianus
9d mulciunt	mulcient	mulciunt

The most significant point is obviously the qualification of Mutianus, one of the three translators who worked at the Vivarium for Cassiodorus, described as a scholar and a friend in the draft ω , as a scholar in the authentic version, according to the classic *damnatio memoriae* procedure that has caused much ink to flow since Courcelle (1942: 78). It makes ω_1 an extremely close version of Cassiodorus, a final state before the official version Ω was released.

However, if the presence of this recension ω_1 in Seville is rightly postulated, one automatically has to wonder how this extremely rare treasure arrived directly from Vivarium. It is therefore regrettable that no mention is made of Leander of Seville, a friend of the Pope Gregory the Great since their stay in Constantinople, and the dedicatee of his *Moralia in Iob*: it was indeed Gregory who managed the dispersal of Cassiodorus's library (Courcelle 1943: 305), and it was clearly he who sent Leander, among the other volumes he sent him (see also recently C. Weidmann 2021) this revised copy of the draft, which can only have come from Cassiodorus himself. Maintaining this hypothesized Paul leads IM to leave open two conflicting possibilities: either "Paul" had access to Ω_1 , or "Paul" is the author of a Carolingian assemblage that uses the same version as Isidore: this would then be a redaction for which we have absolutely no trace of circulation, which is, when one thinks about it, quite questionable. The article by Cinato-Grondeux 2018 is cited as a purely scientific guarantee: "le uniche altre attestazioni della sua attività emergono dal *Liber glossarum*, la nota compilazione enciclopedica di VIII secolo, in cui proprio a Paulus abbas sono attribuite alcune glosse di argomento grammaticale e ortografico (cfr A. Grondeux – F. Cinato, "Nouvelles hypothèses ... (2018) 61-100)". The article by Cinato-Grondeux 2018 demonstrates that the birth of the *Liber glossarum* should be shifted from the eighth to the seventh century, so that the extracts entitled *Ex libro breuiario* cannot be Carolingian but, like Isidore's *Etymologies*, descend from the copy transmitted by Gregory to Leander.

These points of detail in no way detract from the methodical and precise work carried out by IM to provide access to the $\Phi\Delta$ texts, an access now made more reliable by the extraordinary work carried out on these prolific traditions, which paved the way for Cassiodorus' Carolingian continuators. Indeed, it was above all through their extended and expanded versions that Cassiodorus's *Institutiones* became a key point of passage for antique knowledge to the medieval West.

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