

NOTE

CORPUS CHRISTIANORUM: THE GREEK SERIES

The publication of a book entitled *Iohannis Caesariensis presbyteri et grammatici opera quae supersunt*¹ would ordinarily fail to titillate the theological community. But apart from the fact that John of Caesarea was the first significant representative of neo-Chalcedonian Christology, this edition signalizes the beginning of a long-awaited series: it is the first volume in the Greek section of the monumental *Corpus christianorum*. This calls for (1) a sketch of CC's history, (2) a glance at the projected Greek series, and (3) a word on the present volume.

Almost thirty years ago, the Benedictine monks of St. Peter's Abbey, Steenbrugge, Belgium, in collaboration with the Brepols publishing firm, announced definite plans for "the issue . . . of a new collection of all early Christian texts, according to the best existing editions, more or less on the lines laid down by Dom Pitra and the Abbé Migne."² This New Migne, stretching to the front edge of the Carolingian Renaissance and promising the best possible critical edition of every early Christian text (not only works specifically patristic, but also conciliar, hagiographical, and liturgical texts, burial inscriptions, diplomas, etc.) as well as pertinent non-Christian authors, was an audacious undertaking. But it was stimulated by an unsatisfactory situation, frustrating to student and scholar: some texts were out of print, others simply out of reach; even if obtainable, Migne (*PL* and *PG*), for all its value, was a century old; *Sources chrétiennes* was in its infancy, and its first volumes could not supply a Greek text; earlier volumes of both the Vienna corpus (*CSEL*) and the Berlin (*GCS*) were beyond acquiring, and even these admirable series are far from complete and are not in every instance satisfactory.³

¹ Edited by Marcel Richard, with a supplement by Michel Aubineau (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977).

² The Editors, "A Proposed New Edition of Early Christian Texts," *Sacris erudiri* 1 (1948) 405-14, at 411; see also E. Dekkers, "Eine neue Ausgabe altchristlicher Texte," *TLZ* 74 (1949) 159-64, and my report in "Current Patristic Projects," *TS* 11 (1950) 259-61.

³ Not every scholar welcomed the project. Thus, J. H. Waszink ("A New Migne?" *VC* 3 [1949] 186-87) confessed himself at a loss to understand the relationship that was to exist between CC and *CSEL*; he felt that the Latin series, from the sheer speed of its issue, would necessarily "remain dependent on the different quality of its models" and so could not "attain to a uniform standard of scholarship"; he believed the editors would render a greater service if, in a harmonious relationship with the directors of *CSEL*, they gave us first-rate editions of ten or fifteen texts either omitted or inadequately edited therein.

A division into three series – Latin, Greek, and Oriental – was considered imperative. The Latin series would be the first to see the light of day, beginning in 1951 (such was the hope; the first volume appeared in 1953), with ten years thought sufficient for the publication of the contemplated 120 volumes from Tertullian to Bede (the estimate of volumes was later revised to 160, then to 175, again to 180). The projected rate of publication has not been maintained. In the twenty-four years between 1953 and the end of 1976, 85 volumes have appeared (an average of 3.5 a year)⁴ and the enumeration of the volumes (e.g., 162, 162A, 162B) indicates that the total number of Latin volumes will exceed 200.⁵

This is not the place to evaluate the Latin series. Here I mention simply that two distinguished textual critics, writing respectively in 1955 and 1976, have showered high praise on the project's products. Appraising the first five volumes to appear (1, 2, 36, 103, 104), Bernard Peebles, that gentle Catholic University scholar murdered so meaninglessly last year, was clearly impressed, not only by the courage and optimism of the enterprise, but specifically by R. Willem's skilful updating (*CCL* 36) of the Maurist edition (1680) of Augustine's *Tractatus* on John and by the solid foundation that the Tertullian volumes (*CCL* 1-2) offered for the total structure of the series.⁶ Reviewing sixteen later volumes (3, 4, 22, 29, 44, 46, 50, 50A, 68A, 69, 76, 76A, 77, 90, 91, 91A), Ludwig Bieler, who has done so much to recapture the Latin culture of medieval Ireland, repeatedly lauds the various editors: "careful and sober editing," "views always judicious," "careful and competent," "decision almost always right," "careful, conscientious and competent," "convincing," "excellent," "on every page [of a thousand-page text] evidence of great care, circumspection, accuracy and excellent judgment," "text will hardly be in need of alteration," "almost invariably right."⁷

⁴ In fairness, I should add that twenty-nine volumes have appeared in *Corpus christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis*, an extension and completion of *CCL*, in that it proposes to correct and complete *PL* 97-217. Add to those volumes a major work that is an intimate part of *CCCM*, A. Blaise's 1040-page *Lexicon latinitatis medii aevi*.

⁵ For the methodology of *CC*, the different ways of achieving an acceptable critical text for the series, see my report in *TS* 17 (1956) 71-74. On broad lines, prevailing policy calls for either (a) reprinting an existing edition with little or no change (e.g., *CCL* 103, 104), or (b) reworking such an edition while preserving its essential character (e.g., *CCL* 36), or (c) producing a genuinely new edition (e.g., some of the Tertullian works in *CCL* 1-2).

⁶ Cf. Bernard M. Peebles, "The Primitiae of the 'Corpus christianorum,'" *Traditio* 11 (1955) 421-27.

⁷ Cf. Ludwig Bieler, "Corpus christianorum (1)," *Scriptorium* 30 (1976) 58-84. This is the first of several chronicles Bieler has promised on *CCL* volumes. He does express unhappiness with aspects of several editions: in Vol. 46, R. Vander Plaetse's edition of

Happily, the general editors of *CC* have decided to launch the Greek series without awaiting the termination of the Latin. Once again it is a question of bringing together critical editions now scattered far and wide and of filling the lacunae of unedited and inadequately edited texts. A preliminary task was indispensable: to establish a *Clavis patrum Graecorum*, a kind of master plan corresponding to the *Clavis patrum Latinorum* (2nd ed.; Steenbrugge, 1961), the remarkable 640-page inventory of Latin ecclesiastical writers from Tertullian to Bede put together by Dom E. Dekkers. *CPG*'s content and structure would stem from the same principles that commanded *CPL*: (1) list the patristic writings that have come down to us, including fragments; (2) mention for each text the most useful editions, with a special place for *PG*; (3) offer bibliographies on the tradition and establishment of the text; (4) list ancient translations, not only Latin but Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Coptic, and Arabic; (5) indicate questionable authenticity.⁸ At least three content-volumes are envisaged. Only the second has appeared, by Maurice Geerard, *Scriptores saeculi IV*, a 708-page volume on the writers from Alexander of Alexandria to John Chrysostom; the third (fifth to eighth centuries) is in the press, the first (ante-Nicene) is in progress. A fourth volume may well be needed, to handle the Byzantine literature from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries. An indices-initia-tabulae volume is expected to conclude the *Clavis*.

CCG's principal aim for the next few years will be to repair the lacunae in *PG* and to re-edit *PG* editions that are totally inadequate, without however "refusing critical editions of texts which have already been satisfactorily edited if such new editions should be offered us."⁹ It is in line with this policy that, for the fourth century, volumes are being readied or planned on Amphilochius of Iconium; the commentary of Diodore of Tarsus on the Psalms; Chrysostom's commentaries on Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, Job, and Acts; the catechetical instructions of Cyril of Jerusalem. For the fifth century: works of Theodoret that have come down to us under the names of Justin and Cyril of Alexandria, as well as his compendium of heresies; Cyril of Alexandria's commentary on John and his treatise against Julian; the correspondence of Isidore of Pelusium; Macarius Magnes' *Apocriticus*. For the

Augustine's *Sermo de disciplina christiana*, and Vander Plaetse's and C. Beukers' edition of Augustine's *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*; in Vol. 68A, M. Gastaldo's edition of Prosper of Aquitaine's *Liber sententiarum*.

⁸ For further details see my report in "Literature of Christian Antiquity: 1967-1971," *TS* 33 (1972) 263-64.

⁹ So Marcel Richard in a 1976 Brepols booklet announcing the Greek series and reporting on preparations for most of the volumes I am listing here. A later publicity notice (1977?) lists twenty-five volumes "in press."

sixth century: Leontius of Byzantium's three books against the Monophysites and Eutychians, Ps.-Leontius' *De sectis*, and Leontius of Jerusalem's works against the Monophysites and Nestorians; Procopius of Gaza's commentaries on Ecclesiastes, the Octateuch, and Proverbs; Gregory of Agrigentum's commentary on Ecclesiastes; Pamphilus' *Questions and Answers*; the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschus. For the seventh century, we are promised the most important texts of Anastasius of Sinai, as well as the *Answers* of Maximus Confessor to the problems of Thalassius; for the ninth, the catecheses and letters of Theodore of Studium; for the thirteenth, the *Thesaurus* of Theognostus. Add to these the important apocryphal Acts of John, of Andrew, of Philip, of Peter.

It is in this context that the first CCG volume has been issued. Until recently, John of Caesarea was unknown save for a handful of allusions and citations in early Christian documents.¹⁰ Even now, the texts of John that Marcel Richard has been able to gather do not allow the latter to lend John more than minor status as a theologian. But the same texts offer important material for study of the theological controversies of the sixth century involving the Severian Monophysites, the Aphantodocetists, and the Manicheans.

The publication of Severus of Antioch's *Contra impium grammaticum* by J. Lebon (CSCO 93/94, 101/102, 111/112 [1929-38]) revealed the true figure of John the grammarian of Caesarea, author (a bit before 518) of a *Defense of the Council of Chalcedon* and one of the first representatives of the theological movement we call neo-Chalcedonianism. Of his life we know almost nothing. The *Defense* itself (as far as it can be partially reconstructed from citations in the Syriac version of Severus' *Contra impium grammaticum* and from Greek extracts of the *Synēgoriai* of Eulogius of Alexandria preserved in the florilegium *Doctrina patrum de incarnatione Verbi*) shows an author who, for all his warm attachment to Chalcedon, was terribly discreet: the extracts do not mention Leo's *Tome* nor do they cite explicitly the dogmatic formula of Chalcedon or (save once) the Council's acta.

Richard's research in the manuscripts and editions has brought together other texts from John's pen, edited in this volume after the *Apology's* Syriac texts (presented only in Lebon's Latin translation) and the Greek extracts from Eulogius. We have the *Seventeen Chapters against the Acephalous* (Monophysites), previously edited (1962) by S.

¹⁰ See, e.g., the two small references to John of Caesarea in Otto Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der althkirchlichen Literatur* 4 (1st and 2nd ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1924) 44 and n. 2, 73 n. 1; also the short notice by Berthold Altaner, *Patrologie* (6th ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1960) 472-73. Note that Bardenhewer (73 n. 1) confuses our author with John Chozibites, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine ca. 514-21.

Helmer—a small work which serves as a useful complement to the *Apology* fragments. Richard knows of no manuscript discovery after the five cited by Helmer. There is the treatise *Against the Aphthartodocetists*, incomplete, from one known manuscript, and that mutilated by “humidity, insects, perhaps rodents as well.” There are two short comments on John’s Gospel, from a catena on John in a manuscript of the tenth or eleventh century. The last four opuscles revolve around the Manicheans. The first two are homilies against the Manicheans; Richard sees no reason for rejecting their attribution to John. The third, *Conversation of John the Orthodox with a Manichean*, was edited by Michel Aubineau, who acceded to Richard’s request that he include it in CCG 1.¹¹ A point of interest: Richard identifies “John the Orthodox” with John of Caesarea, whereas Aubineau, without declaring that identification improbable, is apparently unconvinced by Richard’s “extremely adroit defense” and foresees the last word coming from specialists in Manicheism. Finally, Richard edits thirteen *Syllogisms of the Holy Fathers* against the Manicheans (probably an appendix rather than a work in its own right) from two recensions, one of which gives eleven syllogisms, the other ten (two of them not in the former recension). From the manuscript tradition, where the *Syllogisms* appear in close proximity to John’s writings, and from some confessedly inconclusive internal arguments, Richard thinks himself justified in attributing the *Syllogisms* with high probability to John of Caesarea.

The five valuable indexes—Scripture, authors and works, Latin names, Greek names, and Greek words—were compiled by friends of Richard and members of the Louvain center Hellenisme en Kristendom, as a loving memorial to the remarkable scholar who unfortunately did not live to see his final edition emerge from the press.

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¹¹ The *Conversation* is the only text in CCG 1 not edited by Richard. The discovery of three new manuscripts, each older than the single manuscript on which Cardinal Mai based the *editio princeps* (see Angelo Mai, *Nova patrum bibliotheca* 4/2 [Rome, 1847] 104–10; reproduced with Latin translation in *PG* 96, 1320–36), convinced Aubineau that it was time to produce a critical edition. The separate introductions to this text by Richard (xlv–liv) and Aubineau (109–16) are a fine example of scholarly disagreement in a gracious mode.