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IS DONATVS'S COMMENTARY ON VIRGIL LOST?

AELIVS DONATVS, the noted grammarian of the fourth century of our era, wrote commentaries on Terence and Virgil. The commentary on Terence has been preserved, though in a curiously heterogeneous form which thus far has defied analysis. The most plausible supposition is that our present text is a conflation of two commentaries, one by Donatus himself, and one by Euanthius, whose work was obviously utilized for part of the introductory note on comedy. But even if this is the right statement of the question, the question remains to be solved. The problem of the commentary on Virgil is, unfortunately, more simple, or at least is universally adjudged more simple. We have extant Donatus's life of Virgil, his dedicatory letter to Lucius Munatius, and his introductory remarks on Bucolic poetry. The commentary itself, save for scattered references in later grammarians, glossaries, and commentaries, has been lost.

Let us turn for the moment from Donatus to the chief source of our information about his commentary on Virgil—namely, Servius. Here another sphinx confronts us. In 1600 Pierre Daniel included in his edition of Virgil what he calls *Servii commentarii longe meliores et auctiores*. In certain manuscripts of the Servian commentary he had found numerous supplementary notes too valuable to be rejected as interpolations. He inferred, therefore, that the real and larger Servius was contained in these manuscripts, and that the text hitherto printed was merely an extract from the original commentary. This theory held the field for over two centuries and a half. Ribbeck, in the *Prolegomena* to his edition of Virgil,¹ did not dissent from it. But Thilo, in the Thilo-Hagen edition of Servius (1881), held that the real Servius is the briefer text (I will refer to it as S), while the *Scholia Danielis* (= D) are later editions, taken to be sure from the same valuable sources which Servius used. The combination, which we will call DS, was made, thinks Thilo, by some English or Irish scholar of the eighth century. Rival theories appeared, but Thilo's views were favoured by scholarly consensus, if that is determined by the approbation of Teuffel² and Schanz.³ Of late, a new suggestion, or rather a modification of

¹ Leipzig, 1866, pp. 104 sqq., 189 sqq.

³ *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, II. 1 (1899),

² *History of Roman Literature* (translated by Warr), Vol. II. (1892), pp. 396 sq.

pp. 87 sqq.

an old one,¹ has been proposed. Barwick,² emphasizing Thilo's proofs of the dissimilarity between *D* and *S*, seeks further to show that *D* no less than *S* has characteristic traits and unity of style. Therefore, the combination is not that of *S* with notes extracted by a later compiler from the numerous sources of *S*, but of *S* with another complete and independent commentary *D*, the author of which used the same sources as *S*. Moreover, Barwick argues, the commentary *D* preceded Servius; it may be placed chronologically between his work and that of Donatus. Its date would thus be about the third quarter of the fourth century. *DS*, the later compiler, who may well have lived in the British Isles, put together the two commentaries *S* and *D*.

Barwick's amendment strengthens Thilo's theory at a vulnerable point. For Thilo must assume that an insular scholar of the eighth century controlled such sources as Livius Andronicus, Ennius, Pacuvius, Lucilius, Cassius Hemina, and various works of Greek literature, or that he used a goodly number of commentaries and treatises of the Early Empire which cited the authors in question. The latter supposition is most dubious, the former is unthinkable. If, however, the valuable array of information and citation added by the compiler was already amassed in a single commentary *D*, the union of the two elements *S* and *D* on a tolerably careful and consistent plan is not too difficult an achievement for the early Middle Ages.

There can be no doubt that *D*, as Barwick says, is the earlier of the two commentaries. It can be shown in instance after instance that *S* has merely excerpted, with minor changes in phrasing, enough of a note of *D* to serve his purpose. This point has been hidden from the modern reader owing to Thilo's absurd method of constructing the text, in which *DS* is often dislocated and dismembered to suit the editor's view of what the original text contained. Were the *Scholia Danielis* printed just as the manuscripts give them, the relation of *S* to *D* would be obvious at a glance. They are so printed, in general, by Daniel and later editors, who thought, naturally enough, that *S* was an extract. So it is, but not from a larger work by the same author. Proof of this fact, once more, we owe to Thilo's careful analysis.³ To mention just one point of divergence, Servius, as his cross-references show, comments first on the *Aeneid* and then on the *Bucolics* and *Georgics*; in *D* the order is *Bucolics*, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*.

If *D*, then, precedes Servius and is the main source of Servius, who can

¹ Halfpap-Klotz, *Quaestiones Servianae*, 1882, p. 30. The same suspicion also occurred to Wessner. See Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, CXXXIX. (1908), p. 164: 'Wer alle diese Untersuchungen verfolgt, der gewinnt den Eindruck als wenn hinter mancherlei Werken, namentlich auch hinter gewissen Scholienmassen, ein Vergilkommentar stände, der infolge seiner Reichhaltigkeit eine gern und vielbenutzte Fundgrube bildete; ferner liegt der Gedanke nahe, dass in manchen Fällen, wo man jetzt Servius als Quelle ansieht, vielleicht eher jener Kommentar in

Frage gezogen werden müsste, dem dann eben Servius sehr viel entnommen hatte. Ich will mich mit dieser Bemerkung genügen und nur hinzufügen, dass es wohl lohnend und für einen erheblichen Teil der Scholienliteratur von Bedeutung sein möchte, diesen Dingen genauer nachzufolgen.'

² K. Barwick, *Zur Serviusfrage*, in *Philologus*, LXX. (1911), p. 106.

³ *Prolegomena* to the Thilo-Hagen edition of Servius, I., pp. v sqq.

its author be? One answer tempts us, as we think of possibilities in the fourth century. It is tempting to think that Aelius Donatus's commentary on Virgil is not lost, but has been read unwittingly by several generations of scholars in the larger Servius or Daniel.¹ Servius, all agree, borrowed extensively from Donatus.² He cited him not infrequently. True, he cites him only to refute him, but does not this practice flourish to-day? Get your facts from the big book and demolish the author's minor judgments when you can. The interpretations attributed by Servius to Donatus are in the main trivial, but doubtless, as Nettleship³ amongst others has declared, do not fairly represent the entire work of the earlier commentator. Now, Barwick points out that *D* is related to Donatus; indeed, he uses coincidences between *D* and Donatus's commentary on Terence to date *D* between Donatus and Servius.⁴ But these coincidences may also be explained by supposing Donatus the author both of the commentary on Terence and of *D*.

The similarity of *D* to the commentary on Terence, an attractive clue that needs a careful following, prompts us to look about for other points of contact between *D* and what is known of Donatus's commentary on Virgil. Some information is given in the letter in which Donatus dedicates his work to Lucius Munatius. I will translate this brief but important document:

'Aelius⁵ Donatus to Lucius Munatius, greeting,—

'I have examined the writings of almost all the scholars before me who were well versed in the works of Virgil, but in my earnest desire for brevity, of which I knew you to be fond, I have selected from the many matters only a few, preferring to incur the reader's righteous indignation for knowingly passing over numerous of the ancients' remarks rather than annoy him by filling my page with superfluities. You can listen, then, in this miscellany, to the pure voice of pristine authority. For though I have taken the opportunity here and there to insert my own explanations, I have wished, in fairness to those whose views I have rejected, to add their own words too. What, then, is the result? By briefly presenting these extracts from many sources, combined with my own interpretations, I can give the reader more pleasure, I believe, than he will derive from longer treatises elsewhere. Further, in selecting the best things from my authorities, I at once secure the interest of the reader by what

¹ I had reached the conclusions presented in this paper in 1914, before the revision of Teuffel by Kroll and Skutsch (Vol. III., 1913) was accessible to me. I naturally sympathize with the statement (p. 307) that 'man ist versucht, an Donats Vergilkommentar zu denken,' and that 'eine umfassende Prüfung dieser Frage wäre sehr erwünscht.' Wessner, apparently, is responsible for the article on Servius, and should be credited with the first statement of the proposition that I am here defending. He had not mentioned it in his review of Barwick's disserta-

tion (*De Iunio Filargirio Vergilii interprete*, in *Commentationes philologicae Ienenses*, VIII., 1909, pp. 57 sqq.); see *Berliner philologische Wochenschrift*, 1910, coll. 848 sqq.

² See Teuffel, *op. cit.* (1913), p. 305.

³ *The Works of Virgil*, edited by Conington and Nettleship, revised by Haverfield, I. (1898), p. xcii.

⁴ *Philologus*, *loc. cit.*, p. 122.

⁵ FL in the one manuscript (Paris, 11308, s. IX.) in which this letter is found. For the text see Brummer, *Vitae Vergilianae*, 1912, p. vii.

I select and save him from the tedium of what I have rejected. Do you, then, examine whether your prescriptions have been adequately fulfilled. For if, in the spirit of one of your remarks, the present work shows the way and lends a hand to the inexperienced teacher at the outset of his career, I have satisfied your behests; if not, do you ask of yourself what you miss in me. Farewell.'

From this introduction we may infer that Donatus's commentary on Virgil was a *Variorum* affair, with occasional judgments of his own. Was it necessarily brief? Perhaps we should so infer; yet possibly the author's protestation forestalls criticism of the undue length of his performance. I am reminded of Gislebertus Porretanus, who in the preface to his highly novel and dangerous commentary on Boethius's *Opuscula Sacra* expresses the fear that his arguments are so conventional that the reader will think them plagiarized from antiquity.¹ The commentary *D* compared with Servius is of course diffuse, but not more so, I believe, than Donatus's commentary on Terence. Nor is the letter to Munatius itself a model of conciseness. The other characteristics indicated by the writer fit *D* nicely; it is a *Variorum* commentary with valuable citation of ancient writers and expression of the compiler's own views. Another common feature may be deduced, not from the letter, but from the introduction on Bucolic poetry immediately following the life of Virgil. Donatus commented on the works of Virgil in the order *Bucolics*, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*, differing from Servius, but agreeing, as we have seen, with *D*.

The argument thus far proves merely a similarity between Donatus and *D* in certain important regards. So far as my investigation has gone, no essential differences have come to light. We now may examine the external evidence.

First, as we have noticed, there are direct citations of Donatus in Servius. If our theory is correct, the interpretations ascribed by Servius to Donatus should be found in *D*. That is nowhere, I believe, the case. Sometimes the citation of Donatus occurs in a note entirely by *S*. Sometimes the note is supplemented with remarks by *D* immediately preceding or following. Nowhere does *D* itself contain the comment called Donatus's by *S*. At first thought this fact seems adverse to our hypothesis. On the other hand, I have detected no cases in which *D* expressly subscribes to a view contrary to that which *S* attributes to Donatus. Indeed, a moment's consideration will show that our theory is not routed yet. We must not forget the operations of the compiler *DS*. Imagine just how he proceeded. He had before him Servius and Donatus. Finding a note in Donatus criticized by Servius, he selected for his compilation, which on the whole was intelligently made, not the note of Donatus but that of Servius, since the latter contained both the original comment and a criticism of it. Naturally we should not expect this comment to reappear in

¹ Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, LXIV., 1247: 'Quae autem a nobis scripta sunt, bene exercitatis lectoribus non modo rationibus firma, uerum etiam

scripturis authenticis adeo consona esse uidentur, ut nostra non tam inuenta quam furta esse credantur.

the part of *D* that survives in the compilation. There is hence no evidence in the citations of Servius against the supposition that *D* represents not all, but nearly all, of the commentary of Donatus.

We may note further the striking phenomenon that in the very criticisms of Servius the supplementary phrases of *D* occasionally appear. For example, in *Aeneid* VII. 1, Virgil says that Aeneas's nurse Caieta was buried 'on our shores' (*litoribus nostris*). *S*, appropriately quoting *Georgics* II. 89 (*non eadem arboribus pendet vindemia nostris*), takes *nostris* to mean *Italicis*, *non, ut Donatus ait, nauigabilibus*—what certainly is a foolish remark. Now just before *nauigabilibus* the manuscripts of *DS* have *in comparationem oceani*. We have refuted the view that *D* is a later set of additions from miscellaneous sources. We have agreed that the compiler is uniting Servius and a previous commentary *D*. We now must decide on the evidence of the present case, and others like it, whether this commentary is more naturally that of Donatus or that of some scholar writing after Donatus. The compiler *DS*, for the reasons just given, selects Servius's criticism rather than the comment in *D*. But he has also observed in *D* an additional phrase which, though not absolutely necessary, makes the meaning clearer. He therefore includes it. Would he have included it in what Servius expressly declares is Donatus's comment, had he not known that *D* was Donatus? Or would he have inserted in such a context a phrase of his own devising? It is far more natural to suppose that having both Servius and Donatus, he collated the two with some care, supplementing the former's criticisms of the latter from what he knew were Donatus's own words. Nor is this too scholarly a method to attribute to an editor of the early Middle Ages; the Berne Scholia descend from a distinctly elaborate compilation made by Adamnanus in the seventh century.

Of course, one may say, if the commentator proceeded thus intelligently, he might have inferred from Servius's direct statement and a comparison of the two notes that the other commentary at his disposal was that of Donatus; his manuscript of *D*, in this case, did not bear the name of Donatus in its title. We therefore need evidence apart from Servius of the existence of Donatus's commentary in the early Middle Ages. One bit of such evidence has long been accessible in Thilo.¹ In *Aeneid* I. 179, Virgil tells of the fire built by the shipwrecked Trojans, who then make ready to parch their grain and break it up with stones:

et torrere parant flammis et frangere saxo.

Servius remarks² that many find in this verse an instance of *hysteron proteron*, as they fail to see that the grain had been damaged by water, and hence had to be toasted first; he adds that grain is not infrequently warmed before grinding anyway. *D* supplements *S* with the comment that certain critics, to avoid a resort to *hysteron proteron*³ understand that some men did the toasting and

¹ *Op. cit.*, I., p. xv.

² Multi hysteron proteron putant, non respicientes superiora, etc.

³ Quidam ne hysteron proteron sit alios torrere, alios frangere, accipiunt.

some the grinding. Now in one of the manuscripts of *DS*, the famous *Turonensis* of Virgil,¹ appears the scholium :

Donatus dicit histeroproteron esse id est ordinem permutatum—sed Servius dicit non esse.

The scholiast of the *Turonensis*, therefore, had access to both Donatus and Servius. He read the notes in both and contrasted them, just as Servius contrasts his own view with that of 'many' unnamed commentators. He must have included Donatus among these, though not mentioning him directly. As in the cases where he does mention him, the latter's view does not appear in the part of *D* which *DS* has combined with Servius. But in this case we may infer that a note approving *hysteron proteron* had preceded the present fragment of *D*. The remark that some commentators resorted to a certain explanation in order not to recognize *hysteron proteron* suggests that *hysteron proteron* had just been recommended. I may add that in other instances the commentator *D* shows a weakness for this rhetorical figure.² Tiberius Claudius Donatus, on the other hand, rejects it here.³ I agree, then, with Thilo in regarding the note in the *Turonensis* as evidence of the existence of Donatus's commentary in the ninth century, and believe further that it tends to support our identification of Donatus with *D*.

There remain two pieces of external testimony in favour of our theory. One is furnished by *Codex Bernensis* 172, s. IX.-X. (formerly at Fleury). In this manuscript the works of Virgil are preceded by the so-called *Carmen Octauiani Caesaris* and other such matter, and are accompanied by the Berne Scholia for the *Bucolics* and the *Georgics* *DS* for *Aeneid* III.-XII., and nothing at all for *Aeneid* I.-II. This peculiar condition, taken with similar evidence in the other manuscripts, suggests that the compilation *DS* was originally divided into five volumes, and that only volumes 3, 4, and 5 were accessible to the writer of that codex from which the *Floriacensis*, the *Turonensis*, and other manuscripts descend. Now the notes in the *Floriacensis* are headed by Donatus's *Vita Vergilii* and the *Vita* of the Berne Scholia. The latter *Vita*, of course, is integrally connected with the Berne Scholia found subsequently in the manuscript. It presumably follows that Donatus's *Vita* belongs with the remaining commentary in the manuscript—namely, that of *DS*. If Donatus wrote the life, he wrote the scholia too. Of course, an important work like the *Vita* might be copied separately with texts of Virgil, as is admittedly the case in some of our manuscripts. We need, however, a careful examination of all

¹ *Bernensis* 165, s. IX. On the basis of a considerable study of the books of Tours, I should date this manuscript nearer the beginning than the middle of the ninth century. It exhibits what I would call the Alcuinian variety of the script developed at St. Martin's. It is not at all impossible that Alcuin superintended a special edition of the works of Virgil.

² E.g. on *Aeneid* VIII. 593, 611; XI. 243.

³ Ed. H. Georgii (1905), I. 41: 'hic errant male interpretantes et disputando pessime suum confitentur errorem dicendo praeposterum ordinatione posuisse Vergilium cum prius sit frangere saxo hoc est molere postea uero torrere flammis quasi panem coquere.'

the manuscripts containing the *Vita*, to see if notes of *D* or *DS* may not be found among whatever scholia they possess.

The most important witness to our theory that I can invoke is the *Liber Glossarum*. This lexicon, which according to the current view¹ was compiled about 750 in Spain, derives a goodly number of its definitions either from *DS* or, more probably, from *D* itself. I have noticed three cases in which material is ascribed to Donatus that we find, with significant correspondences of phrasing, in *D* or *DS*. For example, *D* has on *Eclogues* VIII. 27, a note on *grypes*, of which Servius excerpted the following:

genus ferarum in hyperboreis nascitur montibus. Omni parte leones sunt, alis et facie aquilis similes, equis uehementer infestae, Apollini consecratae.

This information is utilized, with changes in the wording, by both Philargyrius² and the Berne Scholia.³ They describe the gryphon, for instance, as *equis inimicissimus* or *semper equos adfectans*, thus giving the meaning of *equis uehementer infestae* in *DS*. But the *Liber Glossarum* says:

Grypes quadrupedes uolucres. Donatus ait grypides infestum equis apud Hyperboreos oriundum.

The author of the lexicon, then, cites here and elsewhere⁴ as Donatus what we find in *D*. The burden of proof rests on those who think that *D* is not Donatus but an intermediate link between Donatus and Servius. Seeing no compelling argument for the assumption of such an intermediary, I conclude that we have in *D* the very work of Donatus.

My theory, I admit, is in the stage of suggestion and plausibility rather than of certainty. Before we can speak of proof, or, if absolute proof is impossible, before we can grant the theory precedence of its rivals in the field of plausible conjecture, we must subject Servius to a thorough scrutiny, showing that all the evidence there contained comports with the theory and that none contradicts it. We must examine with the same purpose, among other material, Donatus's Terentian commentary, Macrobius, the *Mythographi Vaticani*, Isidore of Seville, and the various grammarians and commentators who refer to either Donatus or Servius. The *Liber Glossarum*, not all of which is published, may well contain further clues. Part of this wide territory will be covered before long in a dissertation by a member of the Harvard Graduate School. Pending that and similar studies, we should at least not be too certain that Donatus's commentary on Virgil is lost. E. K. RAND.

¹ See Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 1911, pp. 133 sq.

² Servius, edition Thilo-Hagen, III., 2, p. 149.

³ *Ibid.*, appar. criticus to l. 17.

⁴ I am indebted to Wessner in his review of Barwick (see above, p. 3, note 1) for the instance

here given. Wessner also cites *Georgics* I. 164. He is concerned here with supplementing Barwick's proof that Philargyrius used Donatus. The same material, which can be considerably increased, is still more valuable as evidence that *D* is identical with Donatus.