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# The Expositio in Epistolas Beati Pauli Ex Operibus S. Augustini by Florus in Strasbourg, BNU MS.0.309

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THE *EXPOSITIO IN EPISTOLAS BEATI PAULI EX OPERIBUS S. AUGUSTINI* BY FLORUS  
IN STRASBOURG, BNU MS.0.309\*

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to correct the catalogue description for Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire MS.0.309. While the catalogue identifies the contents of the manuscript as a compilation of comments on Paul's epistles collected by Bede, the work is actually a similar collection by Florus of Lyon. The article contains an overview of previous scholarship identifying and distinguishing these two collections, as well as a corrected description of the contents of Strasbourg 309 based on the author's examination.

Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire MS.0.309 (formerly Latin MS 257) begins with a prologue that reads as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Liber iste compilatus est a Beda, venerabili presbitero et doctore Anglorum, de diversis libris sancti Augustini episcopi ex his que dixerat in epistolis beati Pauli apostoli, et appellatur florum ex merito sue pulcritudinis, dulcedinis, suavitatis, utilitatis, edificationis, spiritualis gracie et doctrine, ubi auctor de suo nil penitus admiscuisse, sed de prefati doctoris dictis omnia collegisse et in corpus hujus voluminis nexuisse serie lectionis manifeste probatur. (fol. 1r)

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\* Forthcoming in *Revue Bénédictine* (2014).

<sup>1</sup> The following is based on my own first-hand examination of the manuscript, as well as the entry in *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France: Départements, Tome XLVII, Strasbourg* (Paris, 1923), pp. 134-35; online at *Calames: Online Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts in French University and Research Libraries*, Abes: Agence bibliographique de l'enseignement supérieur, 2007, <http://www.calames.abes.fr>, accessed July 2012. I would like to thank Daniel BORNEMANN and the staff of the Strasbourg Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire for permission to examine the manuscript; Joshua WESTGARD for discussing this manuscript with me before my examination; as well as Pierre-Maurice BOGAERT and Paul-Irénée FRANSEN for their useful comments; any remaining mistakes are my own.

This prologue is transcribed in the *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, where the manuscript is identified as “Bedæ venerabilis liber florum.”<sup>2</sup> A shorter description of the contents has been pasted inside the front binding cover of the manuscript: “Explicatio in quasdam Pauli epistolas | authore venerabili Beda | olim J. D. Brunneri nunc Ed. Reussii | 1845.” Presumably, all of these identifications refer to Bede’s *Collectio ex opusculis beati Augustini in epistulas Pauli apostoli*, which provided a major anthology of patristic biblical interpretation by combining in one work Augustine’s major comments on the Pauline Epistles.<sup>3</sup> Yet, contrary to the claims of the medieval prologue, nineteenth-century note, and modern catalogues, Strasbourg 309 contains no content by Bede; instead, it contains the similar, later anthology known as the *Expositio in epistolas Beati Pauli ex operibus S. Augustini* by Florus of Lyon.<sup>4</sup> Despite independent projects intent on the identification and collation of manuscripts containing the anthologies by both Bede and Florus, to my knowledge, Strasbourg 309 has

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<sup>2</sup> *Catalogue général*, p. 134; and entry in *Calames*.

<sup>3</sup> An edition of this text is in preparation for the CCSL; for an English translation based on the most authoritative manuscripts, see *Bede the Venerable: Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine on the Letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul*, trans. David HURST, Cistercian Studies Series 183 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1999). See also Eligius DEKKERS and Emilius GAAR, *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Turnhout, 1995), no. 1360; John J. MACHIELSEN, *Clavis Patristica Pseudepigraphorum Medii Aevi*, 5 vols. (Turnhout, 1990-2004), vol. II, no. 2013; Richard SHARPE, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540*, Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin 1 (Turnhout, 1997; corr. repr. 2001), p. 71; and Michael GORMAN, “The Canon of Bede’s Works and the World of Pseudo-Bede,” *Revue Bénédictine* 111 (2001), pp. 399-445, at 403, no. 21.

<sup>4</sup> To date, only excerpts from Paul’s Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians have been edited, in *Flori Lugdunensis Expositio in epistolas Beati Pauli ex operibus S. Augustini, pars III*, ed. P. I. FRANSEN, L. DE CONINCK, B. COPPIETERS ’T WALLANT, and R. DEMEULENAERE, CCCM 220B (Turnhout, 2011); the rest of the edition is in preparation for the CCCM; cf. J-P. MIGNE, *Patrologia latina* (Paris, 1880), vol. 119, cols. 279-420. On Florus and his works, see esp. studies in the special issue of *Revue Bénédictine* 119, fasc. 2 (2009); *Flori Lugdunensis Collectio ex dictis XII Patrum*, ed. P. I. FRANSEN, B. COPPIETERS ’T WALLANT, and R. DEMEULENAERE, 3 vols., CCCM 193-193B (Turnhout, 2002-2007); and *Flori Lugdunensis Expositio*, ed. FRANSEN, DE CONINCK, COPPIETERS ’T WALLANT, and DEMEULENAERE.

remained unidentified in scholarship, and the *Catalog général* has remained uncorrected.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the present article, therefore, is to correct the catalogue entry for Strasbourg 309 with a discussion of the correct contents of the manuscript.

From the medieval period through to modern scholarship, the two florilegia by Bede and Florus, both containing excerpts of Augustine's comments on the Pauline Epistles, have often been confused. Both florilegia are also related to the similar sixth-century collection by Eugippius, which exacerbates problems of identifying the various manuscripts, as well as Florus' other compilations from the writings of the Fathers.<sup>6</sup> In 1926, André Wilmart provided two extended analyses that distinguished and identified the contents of the collections by Bede and Florus, and several subsequent studies have helped to resolve the confusion, although errors of attribution still occur.<sup>7</sup> Such misconceptions, for example, seem to lie behind Geoffrey Boussard's 1499 publication of Florus' *Expositio* with a mistaken attribution to Bede, M. A.

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<sup>5</sup> See studies cited in the two previous notes, as well as M. L. W. LAISTNER, with H. H. KING, *A Hand-List of Bede Manuscripts* (Ithaca, 1943), which will be replaced by a new handlist in preparation by George Hardin BROWN and Joshua WESTGARD (see the preliminary *Census of Bede Manuscripts*, 2010-2012, <https://sites.google.com/site/censusofbedemss/>, accessed July 2012). Oversight of Strasbourg 309 in scholarship on Florus may be due to the later date of the manuscript (s. xiii), since the Corpus Christianorum edition of the *Expositio* (cited in n. 4) relies only on manuscripts s. ix-xi.

<sup>6</sup> See esp. Michael M. GORMAN, "The Manuscript Tradition of Eugippius' *Excerpta ex operibus sancti Augustini*," *Revue Bénédictine* 92 (1982), pp. 7-32 and 229-65; repr. Michael M. GORMAN, *The Manuscript Traditions of the Works of St Augustine*, *Millennio Medievale* 27, Reprints 2 (Florence, 2001), pp. 105-67; Paul-Irénée FRANSEN, "D'Eugippius à Bède le Vénérable à propos de Leurs florilèges Augustiniens," *Revue Bénédictine* 97 (1987), pp. 187-94; and *Flori Lugdunensis Collectio*, ed. FRANSEN, COPPIETERS 'T WALLANT, and DEMEULENAERE, esp. vol. I, vii-x and pp. xi-xii, n. 9.

<sup>7</sup> See André WILMART, "La collection de Bède le Vénérable sur l'Apôtre," *Revue Bénédictine* 38 (1926), pp. 16-52 and "Sommaire de l'exposition de Florus sur les épîtres," *Revue Bénédictine* 38 (1926), pp. 205-16; I. FRANSEN, "Description de la collection de Bède le Vénérable sur l'Apôtre," *Revue Bénédictine* 71 (1961), pp. 22-70; FRANSEN, "D'Eugippius à Bède le Vénérable"; and Eligius DEKKERS, "Quelques notes sur les florilèges augustiniens anciens et médiévaux," *Augustiniana* 40 (1990), pp. 27-44, at 32-33.

Shaaber's reference to this edition under Bede's name, and (following Shaaber) Richard Sharpe's further, recent misidentification of the printing.<sup>8</sup>

Strasbourg 309 is made up of 109 parchment leaves, now measuring 387 x 250 mm, the leaves having been trimmed. It has a binding of pigskin and wood, with metal embossments on the corners and in the center of the cover. The main text is written in dark brown ink, laid out in two regular columns, though words sometimes spill into the margins and space between columns. The main scripts of the manuscript are dated to the thirteenth century, though the last leaf (109r-109v) contains a later script. At the bottom of folio 109r, a fourteenth-century scribe has written, "Anno Domini M<sup>o</sup> CCC<sup>o</sup> XX<sup>o</sup> verberaverunt se fere omnes christiani in Bud... Anno post M<sup>o</sup> CCC<sup>o</sup> XXI<sup>o</sup> combusti fuerunt omnes leprosi"; the ink for the word indicating the provenance is smudged to illegibility. Damage exists from various holes in the folios, water around the edges, as well as binder trimming, which has cut off parts of notes in the margins at the top and sides of the pages. Modern provenance is indicated by the note pasted to the inside front cover, which attributes ownership to Jean-Daniel Brunner (1756-1844), pastor of l'Église française de la Communion d'Augsbourg in Strasbourg, and, at the time of the note, Édouard Reuss (1804-1891), professor of theology at the Université de Strasbourg.<sup>9</sup>

Some additional characteristics of the manuscript and its scripts, not recorded in the catalogue entry, are also noteworthy. In the *Expositio*, besides the main script, red ink is used for

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<sup>8</sup> *Diui Augustini in sacras Pauli epistolas noua et hactenus abscondita interpretatio per Venerabilem Bedam ex innumeris illius codicibus mira industria suumoquam laborem collecta*, ed. Geoffrey BOUSSARD (Paris, 1499); M. A. SHAABER, *Check-list of Works of British Authors Printed Abroad, In Languages Other than English, to 1641* (New York, 1975), p. 25, no. B498; and SHARPE, *Handlist*, p. 71.

<sup>9</sup> See Rudolf REUSS, *Magister Johann-Daniel Brunner: Ein Lebensbild aus der protestantischen Kirche und Schule Strassburgs, 1756-1844* (Strasbourg, 1894); and Jean Marcel VINCENT, *Leben und Werk des frühen Eduard Reuss: Ein Beitrag zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen der Bibelkritik im zweiten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1990).

incipits and explicits, to indicate the source before each comment, decorative initials, as well as marginal notes that signal biblical references within the commentary. Such use of red ink, however, ends after folio 100r, most conspicuous in the absence of any decorative initials, even when they were planned but not added (e.g. fols. 108r-109v). Most peculiar, the scribe has often written in the margins and in between columns of text a form of the letter N with a flourishing, elongated descender, sometimes in dark brown ink, sometimes in red ink (e.g. fol. 22v); many pages have one mark, others (e.g. fol. 16r) have multiple. These marks do not appear to be regular, and there seems to be no discernible pattern to them. Some of the descenders at the bottom of the main text have the same elongated flourishes as the N marks. At the bottom of the first column on folio 108r, the script changes, after the explicit for Augustine's commentary on Galatians. The new script begins at the top of the second column, with the series of definitions and etymologies. In the right-hand margin of this same page there is a series of dry-point etchings of the capital letter A, likely the product of scribal practice.

Despite the spurious attribution to Bede, the entry in the *Catalogue général* for Strasbourg 309 accurately lists the order of contents: folios 1r-99r contain the *Expositio* of Florus, followed by Augustine's *Expositio in Epistola Sancti Pauli ad Galathas* (99r-108r), a series of Latin definitions and etymologies (108r-109v), and sixty-three Latin verses (109v). Explicits and incipits for the individual sections of the *Expositio* appear on folios 1r, 17r, 32r, 44v, 52v, 57v, 59v, 73r, 79v, 81r, and 99r. This copy of Florus' *Expositio* is incomplete, lacking the sections on Paul's Epistles to the Romans and the two to the Corinthians; this text thus begins with the section on Galatians. Nonetheless, the prologue on folio 1r causes pause: despite the manuscript lacking Augustinian excerpts on the first three books of the Pauline corpus, the prologue seems to stand for the complete anthology.

Because the entry in the *Catalogue général* records only the incipits and verse beginnings for each Pauline epistle addressed in the commentary, it is not surprising that Strasbourg 309 has remained incorrectly identified for so long, since only an examination of the specific contents of each individual commentary section reveals the selection's correspondence with other copies of Florus' *Expositio*. As transcribed in the catalogue, after the incipit for each new section of the collection, the commentary does begin by providing the first verse(s) of the biblical book before the Augustinian excerpts are given. I have, therefore, compared all incipits, explicits, as well as individual excerpts in Strasbourg 309 with those from the collections by Bede and Florus, and the contents correspond with the latter in every case. It is hoped that this fresh identification of the contents of Strasbourg 309 will be of use to scholars of Bede and Florus—especially for establishing the texts, histories, and transmissions of the two florilegia—as well as scholars of the transmission of the works of Augustine.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the essays collected and reprinted in GORMAN, *Manuscript Traditions*.