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Patristic Commentaries on Revelation

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THE PROBLEM OF ACCESSIBILITY

This article is designed to help scholars locate twenty-one commentaries on the Book of Revelation from the third through eighth centuries, which to a large extent are inaccessible to American biblical scholars.[1] Respect for the opinions of our Christian forefathers and their opinions regarding the Scriptures have contributed to the publication of on-going series like Ancient Christian Writers and Fathers of the Church, and to the sustained popularity of the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Father*s* series, first published over a century ago.[2]

Although the writers of the early church are by no means infallible in their interpretations of Scripture, their opinions often lend weight in theological controversies. For example, in matters of Bible prophecy, contemporary scholars continually bring the church fathers into their debates. This has been the case in the most recent discussions between futurists and preterists, between premillennialists and amillennialists, and between pretribulationists and

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[1] An early version of this article was delivered as a paper entitled "Ancient Commentaries on the Book of Revelation: A Bibliographical Guide" at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Dayton, Tennessee in March 2003.

[2] Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church, 10 vols. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1885-1896); Philip Schaff, ed., A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2 series of 14 volumes each (New York: Christian Literature, 1887-1894). These sets were reprinted by T & T Clark, Eerdmans, and Hendrickson publishers, and are available in several digital software programs. Fathers of the Church, published by Catholic University of America Press in Washington, D.C. currently

posttribulationists.[3] In these debates patristic texts are most often drawn from the aforementioned series that provide patristic literature in English translation. However, these translated texts represent a mere fraction of what ancient Christian writers have left behind. Most of the patristic literary monuments, especially ancient Biblical commentaries, are still in Greek and Latin.[4] Commentaries on the Book of Revelation vividly illustrate this point. Portions of at least twenty-one on the Book of Revelation exist from the third[5] through eighth centuries, but only three have been published in English: those of Victorinus (c. 260), Ecumenius (518), and Bede (c. 716); and two of these are problematic. The translation of Victorinus' commentary, having been completed in the nineteenth-century, was not based on a

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contains 116 volumes, and Ancient Christian Writers, published by Paulist Press contains 60 volumes.

[3] Paul L. King, "Premillennialism and the Early Church," in K. Neill Foster and David E. Fessenden, eds., Essays on Premillennialism: A Modern Reaffirmation of an Ancient Doctrine (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 2002), 1-12; Charles E. Hill, Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001); Grant R. Jeffrey, "What Did the Early Church Believe About the Second Coming?" in his Triumphal Return (Toronto: Frontier Research Publications, 2001), 55-74; Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation, Revised (Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 1998), 39-109; Larry Crutchfield, "Millennial Views of the Church Fathers," in Mal Couch, ed., Dictionary of Premillennial Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996), 255-9; Crutchfield, "Ages and Dispensations in the Ante-Nicene Fathers," in Roy B. Zuck, ed., Vital Prophetic Issues: Examining Promises and Problems in Eschatology (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1995), 44-60; Crutchfield, "The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation in the Apostolic Fathers," in Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy, eds., When the Trumpet Sounds (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995), 85-103; Jeffrey, "Prophetic Views Held by the Early Church," in his The Apocalypse (New York: Bantam, 1994), 383-402; Crutchfield, "Rudiments of Dispensationalism in the Ante-Nicene Period—Part I: Israel and the Church in the Ante-Nicene Fathers," Bibliotheca Sacra 144 (1987):254-76.

[4] Patristic biblical commentaries also exist in Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic. Series in the original languages include Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium over 500 volumes, Sources chrétienne (with French translations) over 400 volumes, Patrologiae, cursus completus, series Latina, 221 volumes, Corpus Christianorum series Latina over 175 volumes, Patrologiae, cursus completus, series Graeca, 161 volumes, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum over 90 volumes, and Patrologia Orientalis, over 40 volumes. Bibliographical information for most of these series is in the "Abbreviations" list.

[5] No Revelation commentaries are extant from the second century.

critical edition of the text. Because of this, the translation contains some statements that are not Victorinus' at all, but have proven to be recensions of Jerome dated about 398.[6] Bede's commentary, translated into English by Edward Marshall and published in London in 1878, has not been reprinted. Very few libraries in the United States own it, so it is virtually inaccessible to scholars in North America.[7]

The need for translations of these ancient commentaries on Revelation is great. By providing bibliographical information on twenty-one commentaries on the Book of Revelation from the third through eighth centuries, this article hopes to serve as an aid for perspective translators, a research tool for theologians and expositors, and a guide for librarians and bibliophiles seeking to acquire ancient Apocalypse commentaries.

The commentaries are listed chronologically by their Latin titles, with its corresponding English title in brackets. Where an English translation of a commentary exists, it is listed first, followed by critical editions indicated by the word "edition." Other printed editions are also listed, followed by the language in which they were published. Where a printed edition does not exist, the library that possesses a manuscript (MS) containing the commentary is listed, followed by the manuscript number.

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[6] The translation of the Apocalypse commentary of Victorinus of Pettua in ANF 7:344-60 was done by Robert E. Wallis before 1886. The critical edition by Iohannes Haussleiter, published in CSEL 49 in 1916, distinguished Victorinus' commentary from Jerome's recension of it.

[7] Bede's commentary has been critically edited recently by Roger Gryson in CCSL 121A. In 2006, Faith Wallis of McGill University was preparing a new translation forthcoming in the Translated Texts for Historians series from Liverpool University Press. In January 2008, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia informed me of his agreement to translate Bede's Apocalypse commentary for InterVarsity Press.

LIST OF COMMENTARIES

1. Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235)

Apologia pro apocalypsi et evangelio Joannis apostoli et evangelistae [Apology for the Apocalypse and Gospel of John the Apostle and Evangelist]. Fragments of this treatise have been preserved in the Greek Apocalypse commentary of Andrew of Caesarea, an anonymous thirteenth-century Arab Apocalypse commentary edited by H. Achelis, and a twelfth-century Syriac Apocalypse commentary by Dionysius Bar Salibi edited by I. Sedlacek. These fragments of Hippolytus' commentary have been isolated and translated into French in Pierre Prigent, "Hippolyte, commentateur de l'Apocalypse," Theologische Zeitschrift 28 (1972):391-412, and in Prigent and R. Stehly, "Les fragments du De Apocalypsi d'Hippolyte," Theologische Zeitschrift 29 (1973): 313-33. Hippolytus also wrote another defense of the Book of Revelation, entitled Capitula contra Gaium [Chapters Against Gaius]. Fragments from this treatise, also preserved in the commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi, are translated into English in John Gwynn, "Hippolytus and his 'Heads against Caius'," Hermathena: A Series of Papers on Literature, Science, and Philosophy by Members of Trinity College, Dublin. No. XIV (1888):397-418. A French translation is in Prigent, "Hippolyte, commentateur de l'Apocalypse," 407-412. German translations of the fragments are in Adolf Harnack, Die Gwynnschen Caius-und Hippolytus-Fragmente. Texte und Untersuchungen 6:3. Leipzig, 1890,121-33; and H. Achelis, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 1:2. Leipzig, 1897, 239-47.

2. Origen (d. 253) and Others

Scholia in Apocalypsin [Annotations on the Apocalypse]. In Constantin Diobouniotis

and Adolf Harnack, eds. Der Scholien-kommentar des Origenes zur Apokalypse Johannis. Texte und Untersuchungen 38:3. Leipzig, 1911. Greek edition. This contains citations from patristic works on the Apocalypse that have not been preserved, and has been attributed to Origen. However, not all of the scholia are his. It contains two citations from Irenaeus' Against Heresies 5, 28.2-30.2 (Scholia 38 & 39). Scholium 1 is a fragment of Didymus; and Scholium 25 contains a fragment from Clement of Alexandria's Stromata. Scholia 22 & 26, containing material related to the Trinitarian and Christological controversies, are believed to have been written after the year 300. A comprehensive study on its authorship has been written that by Eric Junod. "À propos des soi-disant scolies sur l'Apocalypse d'Origène." Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa 20 (1984):112-21. Emmendations to the edition are in J. Armitage Robinson, "Origen's Comments on the Apocalypse," Journal of Theological Studies 13 (1912): 295-297. The edited text of Origen's scholia continues in C. H. Turner, "Document. Origen Scholia in Apocalypsin," Journal of Theological Studies 25 (1923):1-16. Greek edition; Joel Courreau, trans. L'Apocalypse expliquee par Cesaire d'Arles. Scholies attribuée à Origène. Paris: Desclée de Brower, 1989. French. Twelve Homilies on the Apocalypse by Origen, a lost work distinguished from the scholia, is discussed in Joseph F. T. Kelly, "Early Medieval Evidence for Twelve Homilies by Origen on the Apocalypse," Vigiliae Christianae 39 (1985):273-9.

3. Victorinus of Pettau (260)

Commentarii in Apocalypsin [Commentaries on the Apocalypse]. This commentary was written about 260 by Victorinus of Pettau (Ptuj, Yugoslavia), who died in the Diocletian persecution around 304. ANF 7:344-60. English; Iohannes Haussleiter, ed. Victorini episcopi Petavionensis

opera. CSEL 49. Leipzig, 1916. Latin edition that includes Victorinus' commentary and Jerome's recension in parallel; Reprinted in PLS I:102-72; Martine Dulaey, ed. Victorin de Poetovio. Sur l'Apocalypse. SC 423. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1997. Latin with French translation; PL 5:317-44. Latin. In 1994, Dulaey was working on a new critical edition of the commentary for the Corpus Christianorum series. Notice of it is in the booklet "Corpus Christianorum: Volumes in Progress." Turnhout: Brepols, 1994, 11. By January 2008, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia had completed and submitted an English translation of Victorinus' Apocalypse commentary to InterVarsity Press for a new series of patristic biblical commentaries in translation. This new series will differ from their *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* in that it will provide translations of entire commentaries, not simply excerpts.

4. Tyconius (380)

Fragmenta Commentarii in Apocalypsim [Fragments of the Commentary on the Apocalypse]. Tyconius was a North African Donatist of the late fourth century. Francesco LoBue and G. G. Willis, eds. The Turin Fragments of Tyconius' Commentary on Revelation. Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, new series, no. 7. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1963. The Turin fragments. Latin; Reprinted in PLS 1:621-52. Fragments from Tyconius' commentary in a manuscript in Budapest, that are different from the Turin fragments, are edited in Roger Gryson. "Fragments inédits du commentaire de Tyconius sur l'Apocalypse." Revue Bénédictine 107 (1997):189-226. In 1994, E. Romero-Pose was working on a critical edition of Tyconius for Corpus Christianorum. Notice in "Corpus Christianorum: Volumes in Progress," 11. Much of Tyconius' commentary on

Revelation survived in early medieval Latin commentaries on Revelation, especially that of Beatus of Leibana. A tabulation of passages from Tyconius' commentary in the Revelation commentary of Beatus of Liebana is in Traugott Hahn. Tyconius-Studien. Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte des 4. Jahrhunderts. Leipzig, 1900. Reprinted. Aalen, 1971. A tabulation of passages of Tyconius' commentary in the Revelation commentary of Bede is in an appendix to Gerald Bonner's, "Saint Bede in the Tradition of Western Apocalyptic Commentary" in his Church and Faith in the Patristic Tradition. Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1996. Kenneth B. Steinhauser's The Apocalypse Commentary of Tyconius: A History of Its Reception and Influence. New York: Peter Lang, 1987, 266-316, provides the basis for a chapter and verse reconstruction of Tyconius' entire commentary.

5. Didymus the Blind (d. 398)

Fragmentum in Apocalypsim [Fragment on the Apocalypse]. In his commentary on Zechariah [SC 83:123; 84:654-5], Didymus of Alexandria in Egypt mentioned that he had written a commentary on Revelation. A fragment of it survives in Scholium 1 of Diobouniotis and Harnack, Der Scholien-kommentar des Origenes zur Apocalypse Iohannis. Greek.

6. Jerome (398)

Commentarii in Apocalypsin [Commentaries on the Apocalypse]. This is a recension of Victorinus' commentary on the Apocalypse. Jerome (d. 420) composed a short prologue and significantly changed Victorinus' comments on Revelation 21 & 22 to reflect his own anti-millenarian sentiments. Iohannes Haussleiter, ed. Victorini episcopi Petavionensis opera. CSEL 49. Leipzig, 1916. Latin edition; Reprinted in PLS 1:102-72; Dulaey, Victorin de Poetovio. Sur

l'Apocalypse. SC 423:124-131. Latin with French translation of Jerome's prologue and ending to Victorinus' commentary. By January 2008, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia had completed and submitted an English translation of Jerome's Apocalypse commentary to InterVarsity Press.

7. Ecumenius (518)

Commentarius in Apocalypsin [Commentary on the Apocalypse]. Ecumenius was either a lay rhetor of Isauria in Asia Minor, or bishop of Tricca (Thassaly). John C. Lamoreux, "The Provenance of Ecumenius' Commentary on the Apoclaypse," Vigiliae Christianae 52 (1998):88-108, argued that Ecumenius wrote his Greek commentary on the Apocalypse between 508 and 518, but others place it later in the sixth century. FC 112. English; Marc De Groote, ed. Oecvmenii Commentarivs in Apocalypsin. Traditio Exegetica Graeca 8. Louvain: Peeters, 1999. Greek edition; H.C. Hoskier, ed. The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1928. Greek edition. Scholia from the commentary were edited in De Groote, "Die Scholien aus dem Oecumenius-Kommentar zur Apokalypse," Sacris Erudiri 37 (1997): 111-31. By 2007, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia had completed and submitted to InterVarsity Press an English translation of Ecumenius' Apocalypse commentary.

8. Caesarius of Arles (537)

Explanatio in Apocalypsin [Explanation of the Apocalypse]. This series of homilies on the Book of Revelation by Caesarius, bishop of Arles in Gaul (d. 542), were composed between 510 and 537, but were probably never preached. They circulated for a long time

under the name of Augustine (d. 430). Germani Morin, ed. Sancti Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis opera omnia nunc primum in unum collecta, Vol. 2. Maredsous, 1942, 210-277. Latin edition; PL 35: 2415-52 (under the name of Augustine). Latin; Joel Courreau, trans. L'Apocalypse expliquee par Cesaire d'Arles. Scholies attribuée à Origène. Paris: Desclée de Brower, 1989. French; E. Romero-Pose, ed. Cesareo de Arles. Comentario al Apocalipsis. Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 1994. Spanish translation that includes extensive footnotes showing parallel passages from commentaries of Tyconius, Primasius, Bede, Beatus, and others. By 2007, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia had completed and submitted to InterVarsity Press an English translation of Caesarius' homilies on the Apocalypse. Homilies 4-6 of Caesarius on the Apocalypse, treating Rev 5:1-8:1, are translated in Francis X. Gumerlock, The Seven Seals of the Apocalypse: Medieval Texts in Translation, forthcoming by Medieval Institute Publications, Kalamazoo, MI in the TEAMS Commentary series.

9. Primasius of Hadrumetum (540)

Commentarius in Apocalypsin [Commentary on the Apocalypse]. Primasius of Hadrumetum in North Africa (Sousse, Tunisia) composed his Apocalypse commentary about 540. A.W. Adams, ed. Primasius episcopus Hadrumentinus. Commentarius in Apocalypsin. CCSL 92. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1985. Latin edition; PL 68:793-936. Latin.

10. Apringius of Béja (548)

Tractatus in Apocalypsin [Tract on the Apocalypse]. Apringius, a Spanish bishop, composed this tract on the Apocalypse between 531 and 548. Roger Gryson, ed. "Apringi Pacensis Episcopi Tractatus in Apocalypsin Fragmenta quae supersunt." CCSL 107: 33-97. Latin edition;

Marius Férotin, ed., Apringius de Béja: son commentaire de l'apocalypse écrit sous Theudis, roi des Wisigoths (531-48). Paris: A. Pricard, 1900. Latin and Spanish; PLS 4:1221-48. Latin; A. C. Vega, ed. "Apringii Pacensis Episcopi tractatus in Apocalypsin" in Scriptores Ecclesiastici Hispano-Latini Veteris et Medii Aevi, Fasc. X-XII. Madrid: Typis Augustinianis monasterii escurialensis, 1941; Alberto del Campo Hernandez, ed. Comentario al apocalipsis de Apringio de Beja: introduccion, texto latino y traduccion. Navarra, Spain: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1991. Latin and Spanish; PL 68:795-936. Latin. In January 2008, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia was revising his English translation of Apringius' Apocalypse commentary for publication by InterVarsity Press.

11. Cassiodorus (580)

Complexiones in Apocalypsin [Brief Explanations on the Apocalypse]. Cassiodorus (d. 580) wrote this abstract or summary of Revelation shortly before his death. It survives in only one manuscript. Roger Gryson, ed. CCSL 107:99-129. Latin edition; PL 70:1405-1418. Latin.

12. Andrew of Caesarea in Cappadocia (d. 614)

Commentarius in Apocalypsin [Commentary on the Apocalypse]. Andrew is believed to have written this Apocalypse commentary in the late sixth century definitely after the commentary of Ecumenius. Josef Schmid, ed. Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes, 1. Teil: Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia. Munich, 1955. Greek edition; PG 106:199-486. Greek with Latin translation. An 18th century illuminated manuscript of the commentary, written in the Slavonic language, entitled Interpretation of the Apocalypse by our Holy Father Andrew of Caesarea, is housed at the Church of the Nativity, Erie, Pennsylvania.

An abridgment of Andrew's commentary, preserved as an anonymous catena and incorrectly attributed to Ecumenius and Arethas of Caesarea in Cappadocia (d. 940), is in J.A. Cramer, ed., Catenae Graecorum Patrum in Novum Testamentum, Vol. 8: Catena in episotolas catholicas, accesserunt Oecumenii et Arethae commentarii in Apocalypsin. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967. Greek edition. By 2007, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia had completed and submitted to InterVarsity Press an English translation of Andrew's Apocalypse commentary. Many English quotations from Andrew's commentary are in Averky Taushev, The Apocalypse in the Teachings of Ancient Christianity. Seraphim Rose, trans. Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1985, 1995.

13. Pseudo-Jerome, Pseudo-Isidore (c. 600)

Commemoratorium de Apocalypsi Johannis Apostoli [Handbook on the Apocalypse of the Apostle John]. This handbook on the Apocalypse circulated under the names of Jerome and Isidore of Seville. Kenneth Steinhauser, in "Bemerkungen zum pseudo-heironymischen Commemoratorium in Apocalypsin," Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie 26 (1979):220-42 at 232-6, argued that it was written by a student of Cassiodorus at Viviarum around 600. Others believe it is Irish and date it in the seventh or early eighth century. Roger Gryson, ed., "Incerti auctoris commemoratorium de Apocalypsi Johannis Apostoli" CCSL 107: 159-229. Latin edition; Grazia Lo Menzo Rapisarda, ed. Incerti Auctoris: Commentarius in Apocalypsin. Catania, 1966. Latin. Reprinted in PLS 4:1850-63; K. Hartung, Ein Traktat zur Apokalypse des Apostels Johannes. Bamberg: Gustav Duckstein, 1904. Latin. Descriptions of it are in Joseph T. F. Kelly, "A Catalogue of Early Medieval Hiberno-Latin Biblical Commentaries," Traditio 45 (1989-1990):394-434 at 432-433; and Martin McNamara. Biblical

Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution. Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association 1. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1976, 143.

14. Unknown (6th-7th c.)

De septem sigillis [On the seven seals]. This short text interpreting the seven seals of Revelation was probably written in Spain between 500 and 633, but was for a long time was attributed to Alcuin of York (d. 804). E. Ann Matter, "The Pseudo-Alcuinian 'De Septem Sigillis': An Early Latin Apocalypse Exegesis" Traditio 36 (1980):111-37. Latin edition; PL 101:1169-70. Latin. An English translation is in Francis X. Gumerlock, The Seven Seals of the Apocalypse: Medieval Texts in Translation forthcoming from Medieval Institute Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan, TEAMS Commentary series.

15. Paterius (7th c.)

De Testimoniis in Apocalypsin S. Joannis Apostoli [Concerning Testimonies on the Apocalypse of Saint John the Apostle]. This is a compilation of Pope Gregory the Great's (d. 603) comments on Revelation by one of his disciples named Paterius. Gathered from writings of Gregory such as the Moralia on Job, homilies on Ezekiel, and the Pastoral Rule, it is arranged as a chapter and verse commentary on the Book of Revelation. PL 79:1107-22. Latin.

16. Pseudo-Cyril of Alexandria (7th c.)

Apocalypse Commentary. This Coptic commentary is contained in a manuscript in the J.P. Morgan Library in New York City. It claims to have been written by Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), but was composed after the Arab conquest of Egypt. Tito Orlandi, Omelie copte. Corona

Patrum 7. Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1981, 124-44. Italian; MS: Morgan 591. Coptic. Leslie S.B. MacCoull dates the commentary to the late sixth century or first half of the seventh century. Descriptions of the manuscript are in Leo Depuydt, Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library, Vol. 1 Louvain: Peeters, 1993, 302; and MacCoull, "MS. Morgan 591: The Apocalypse Commentary of Pseudo-Cyril of Alexandria," Studia Patristica 20 (1989): 33-9.

17. Bede (710)

Expositio Apocalypseos [Exposition of the Apocalypse]. Bede the Venerable (d. 735) of Jarrow, England wrote this Apocalypse commentary between 703 and 710. Edward Marshall, trans. The Explanation of the Apocalypse by Venerable Bede. Oxford and London: James Parker and Co., 1878. English; Roger Gryson, ed. Bedae Presbyteri. Expositio Apocalypseos. CCSL 121A. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001. Latin edition; J.A. Giles (d. 1884), ed. Venerabilis Bedae Opera quae supersunt omnia, Vol. 12. London, 1944, 337-452. Latin; PL 93:129-206. Latin. Different from his commentary on Revelation, Bede is believed to have also written Capitula in Apocalypsin [Chapter Headings on the Apocalypse], thirty-eight chapter headings for the book of Revelation. Gryson, Bedae Presbyteri. Expositio Apocalypseos. CCSL 121A:136-151. Latin edition. Faith Wallis of McGill University has prepared a new English translation of Bede's commentary and the chapter headings, to be published in a forthcoming volume of the "Translated Texts for Historians" series from Liverpool University Press. In 2008, William Weinrich of the Luther Academy in Latvia informed me that he is also preparing an English translation of Bede's Apocalypse commentary for InterVarsity Press.

18. Ambrose Autpert (778)

Expositio in Apocalypsin [Exposition of the Apocalypse]. Ambrose Autpert (d. 781) lived in a monastery in Gaul. Robert Weber, ed. Ambrosii Autperti opera. Expositionis in Apocalypsin Libri I-V. CCCM 27. Libri VI-X. CCSL 27A. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1975. Latin edition.

19. Beatus of Liebana (786)

Commentarius in Apocalypsin [Commentary on the Apocalypse]. Beatus (d. 798), from Liebana in northern Spain, is believed to have written three editions of this commentary— in 776, in 784, and a final version in 786. E. Romero-Pose, ed. Sancti Beati a Lieban commentarivs in Apocalypsin, 2 vols. Scriptores Graeci et Latini consilio Academiae Lynceorum editi. Rome: Typis Officinae Polygraphicae, 1985. Latin edition; Henry A. Sanders, ed. Beati in Apocalypsi libri duodecim. Papers and Mongraphs of the American Academy in Rome, Vol. 7. Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1930. Latin edition; Joaquin Gonzalez Echegaray, Alberto Del Campo y Leslie G. Freeman, eds. Obras Completas de Beato de Liebana. Madrid: Estudio Teologico de San Ildefonso, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1995. Latin edition with Spanish translation.

20. Unknown (8th c.)

De enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi Johannis [On the Mysteries of the Apocalypse of John]. This commentary is contained in the so-called Irish Reference Bible or Das Bibelwerk, a one-volume

commentary on the whole Bible from the late eighth century. Roger Gryson, ed., "De enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi Johannis," CCSL 107: 231-295. Latin edition. Descriptions of the commentary are in Joseph F. Kelly, "A Catalog of Early Medieval Hiberno-Latin Biblical Commentaries," Traditio 44 (1988): 538-571 at 552; and Kelly, "Bede and the Irish Exegetical Tradition on the Apocalypse," Revue Bénédictine 92 (1982):393-406 at 394-6.

21. Unknown (6th-8th c.?)

Commentary on the Apocalypse. In MS: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 17780. Latin manuscript. This manuscript, dated 1439, contains Caesarius of Arles' homilies on the Apocalypse, the pseudo-Jerome handbook on the Apocalyse, Bede's exposition of the Apocalypse, and another commentary on the Apocalypse whose attribution is uncertain. Since the manuscript contains Apocalyse commentaries, all of which are from the sixth through eighth centuries, perhaps the unidentified Apocalypse commentary is also from the same period. A description is in Roger Gryson, Commenataria minora in Apocalypsin Johannis. CCSL 107:167.

RELATED WORKS

There were several commentaries on Revelation written between the second and seventh centuries of which not even a fragment has survived. These include a commentary of Melito of Sardis in the second century, a fourth-century interpretation of Revelation by Nepos entitled Refutation of the Allegorists, fifth-century treatises on the Apocalypse by Gennadius of Marseilles and Vigilius of Thapsus, a commentary by Cominus Scotus of seventh-century

Ireland, and an anonymous commentary from the first half of the eighth century.[8] In addition, in the second century Theophilus of Antioch in a book against a certain Hermogenis, and Apollonius in an anti-Montanist literary work made use of testimonies from the Book of Revelation. These treatises, however, described by Eusebius in the early fourth century, are no longer extant.[9]

There are many works from the early church that are not commentaries on the Book of Revelation per se, but contain interpretations of its passages. For example, Dionysius of Alexandria's Two Books on the Promises is not a commentary but its whole focus was on the book of Revelation. Only fragments of it survived.[10] The late second century Letter to the Lyons Martyrs cites the Book of Revelation five times.[11] Interpreting chapter twenty on the millennium are Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho 80-81, Irenaeus' Against Heresies, Book 5, Tertullian's On the Resurrection of the Flesh 25 and Against Marcion, 3.24,[12] Commodianus'

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[8] Notices of Melito's commentary is in Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History, 4. 26. Christian Frederick Cruse, trans., The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilius (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 162. Nepos' commentary is mentioned by Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 7.24. Cruse, 295. Gennadius' commentary is mentioned in his other work On Illustrious Men 99. NPNF, 2nd series, 3:402. The commentary of Vigilius of Thapsus is mentioned in Cassiodorus' Institutiones 9. Cominus Scotus' commentary is mentioned in Joseph F. Kelly, "Bede and the Irish Exegetical Tradition on the Apocalypse" Revue Bénédictine 92 (1982):393-406 at 394. The lost commentary from the first half of the eighth century is mentioned in Roger Gryson, ed., Commentaria minora in Apocalypsin Johannis. CCSL 107:300.

[9] Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 4.24; 5.18. Cruse, 161, 202. For these observations in Eusebius I am indebted to William C. Weinrich, ed., Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XII. Revelation (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), xix-xxi.

[10] These fragments of Dionysius' Two Books on the Promises are translated in English in ANF 6:81-84 and C.L. Feltoe, St. Dionysius of Alexandria (London, 1918), 82-91. A Greek edition is in Feltoe's, The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria (Cambridge, 1904), 106-26.

[11] The letter is preserved in Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 5.1-2. Cruse, 169-182. Notice in Weinrich, Revelation, xix.

[12] Comments on Revelation 6 can be found in Tertullian's On the Soul, 55.4 and On Monogamy, 10.4.

Instructions 43, and Lactantius' Divine Institutes, Book 7. Cyprian of Carthage, in Three Books Against the Jews, Testimonies 36, used the description of the harlot of Babylon in Revelation 17 to teach that women should not adorn themselves in a worldly fashion. In addition, thirty different citations from the Book of Revelation in Cyprian's treatises and letters can be found.[13] These are all in English translation in the Ante-Nicene Fathers series.

In the third century Cyprian also interpreted Revelation 21 about New Jerusalem descending from heaven in his treatise On Mounts Sinai and Zion.[14] In the fourth century, Methodius of Olympus (d. 311) wrote a lengthy interpretation of Revelation 12 in Logos 8.4-13 of his Symposium, Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368) commented on Revelation 3:7 and 5:1 in an introduction to his tract on the Psalms, Ephraim the Syrian (d. 373) made mention of the seven seals, and Ambrosiaster (c. 384) refuted the Novatians with several pages of commentary on Revelation 2. In another place he answered a question related to Revelation 10:8-9.[15] Filastrius of Brixia (4th c.) and Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403) wrote about how the book of Revelation should be interpreted, and about a sect in the early church that did not accept its canonicity.[16]

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[13] A partial listing of citations from Revelation in Cyprian's letters is in Paul B. Harvey, Jr., "Approaching the Apocalypse: Augustine, Tyconius, and John's Revelation," Augustinian Studies 30:2 (1999):133-51 at 141 no. 27, 29.
[14] Cyrpian, De montibus Sina and Sion 10. Guilelmus Hartel, ed. CSEL 3, Part 3: 116.
[15] Herbert Musurillo, trans., St. Methodius. The Symposium A Treatise on Chastity. ACW 27 (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1958), 109-21; Hilary of Poitiers, Tractatus super psalmos. Antonius Zingerle, ed., S. Hilarii episcopi Pictaviensis. Tractatus super psalmos. CSEL 22. (Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1891), 7-8. Ephraem's comment is in John Gwynn, The Apocalypse of St. John in a Syriac Version Hitherto Unknown (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), ciii. Ambrosiaster's comments are in Alexander Souter, ed., Pseudo-Augustini. Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti cxxvii. CSEL 50. (Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1908), 129-30, 213-5.
[16] Filastrius of Brixia, Diversarum Hereseon Liber 60. F. Heylen, ed. CCSL 60:242-3; Epiphanius of Salamis, Panarion 51 & 77. Philip R. Amidon, trans., The Panarion of St. Epiphanius of Salamis: Selected Passages (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 177, 187-8, 346-7.

In the early fifth century, the Christian poet Prudentius incorporated themes from Revelation 4-5 into one of his poems, and Paul Orosius commented on Revelation 5 in his Defense Against the Pelagians.[17] Augustine (d. 430) interpreted Revelation 20 in book twenty of The City of God. John Cassian (d. 435) interpreted passages from Revelation 3 & 4 in his Conferences.[18] About 445, Quodvultdeus interpreted many passages of the book of Revelation in his Book on the Promises and Predictions of God.[19] In a question and answer manual on Biblical difficulties, Eucherius of Lyons (d. 450) interpreted the "seven spirits of God" in Revelation 1:4.[20] An anonymous treatise from Vandal North Africa defending the Trinity cited twelve passages from the Book of Revelation to show the equality of the Father and the Son.[21]

There is a Greek fragment of commentary on Revelation 22:3 edited in the works of Dionysius of Alexandria, but it is more likely to have been written by pseudo-Dionysius the Aeropagite about the year 500.[22] In the second half of the sixth century or in the seventh century, an anonymous author wrote De monogramma, an explanation of the number of the beast in Revelation 13:18.[23] A work attributed to Gregory the Great (d. 604) raised and answered a question about the relationship between the trumpet of 1 Thess 4:15 and the seven trumpets of Rev 8:6.[24] At least seven different prefaces to the Book of Revelation from early Latin Bibles

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[17] Prudentius, Carmina 7: Tituli Historiarum. Joannes Bergman, ed. CSEL 61:447; Paul Orosius, Defense Against the Pelagians, 15. FC 99:133-4.
[18] John Cassian, Conferences 3, 4, & 24. NPNF, 2nd series, 11.
[19] Quodvultdeus, Liber promissionum et praedictorum Dei. René Braun, ed. CCSL 60.
[20] Eucherius of Lyons, Instructionum libri duo. Carolus Wotke, ed. CSEL 31:139.
[21] Pseudo-Fulgentius, Pro Fide Catholica. PL 65:712.
[22] Charles Lett Feltoe, The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria (Cambrige, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 253. On its attribution to pseudo-Dionysius, Mauritius Geerard, Clavis Patrum Graecorum, Vol. 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1983), 196.
[23] De Monogramma. Roger Gryson, ed. CCSL 107:146-57.
[24] Gregory the Great (dubious), Concordia quorumdam testimoniorum s. scripturae 27. PL 79:674.

have been preserved, and one is identified as coming from Isidore of Seville (d. 636).[25] Julian of Toledo (d. 690) expounded upon the seventh trumpet of Revelation in his Prognostications of the End of the Age, and answered an apparent contradiction between 1 Thess 4:15-16 and Revelation 20:4 on the eternality of the kingdom of Christ.[26] And an anonymous work called The Escorial Fragment on the Heavenly Jerusalem (c. 750) contains a series of questions and answers on the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation 21.[27]

Much of the apocalyptic literature of the early church also contains interpretation of Revelation. These include texts like the apocryphal Revelation of Saint John the Theologian, the Apocalypse of Elijah, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius, the Apocalypse of Daniel, and the Andreas Salos Apocalypse.[28] Hippolytus, Pseudo-Ephraem, Pseudo-Epiphanius, Isidore of Seville (d. 635), and Bede all interpreted Revelation 11-13 in their writings about Antichrist.[29]

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[25] The prefaces are edited in Donatien de Bruyne, Préfaces de la Bible latine (Namur, Belgium: A. Godenne, 1920), 261-4. A bound photocopy of this hard to locate book is housed in the stacks of Butler Library at Columbia University in New York City.

[26] Julian of Toledo, Prognosticorum futuri saeculi libri tres III.15. J.N. Hillgarth, ed. CCSL 115: 91; Antikeimenon. Question 69. PL 96:697.

[27] A. Hilhorst, "The Escorial Fragment on the Heavenly Jerusalem," in R.I.A. Nip, H. van Dijk, E.M.C. van Houts, C.H. Kneepkens, and G.A.A. Kortekaas, eds., Media Latinitas: A Collection of essays to mark the occasion of the retirement of L.J. Engels (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 223-228.

[28] Revelation of Saint John the Theologian in ANF 8:582-6; Apocalypse of Elijah in David Frankfurter, Elijah in Upper Egypt: The Apocalypse of Elijah and Early Egyptian Christianity (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993); Apocalypse of Peter in A. Mingana, trans., Woodbrooke Studies, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, England: Heffer and Sons, 1931); Syriac Pseudo-Methodius and Slavonic Daniel in Paul J. Alexander, The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985); Matthias Henze, The Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel: Introduction, Text, and Commentary (Tübingen: Mohr, 2001).

[29] Hippolytus, Treatise on Christ and the Antichrist. ANF 5:204-219; Pseudo-Epiphanius, Sermon de Antichristo. Giuseppe Frasson, ed., Bibliotheca Armeniaca Textus et Studia 2. (Venezia: S. Lazzaro, 1976); Pseudo-Ephraem in Cameron Rhoades, trans., "On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World" (Washington, D.C: Pre-Trib Research Center, 1995);

Sermons are another valuable resource on interpretation of Revelation in the early church. For example, Sermon 21 of Chromatius of Aquileia (d. 407) is on Revelation 10:9-11, and the prologue to his sermons on Matthew's Gospel contain an explanation of Revelation 4:7.[30] Passages from the Apocalypse were read in churches between Easter and Pentecost in Spain and Rome in the seventh and eighth centuries.[31] Since many collections of ancient and medieval sermons have been organized around the church calendar, there may be Lenten homilies in these collections that include commentary on the passages from Revelation that were read in the liturgy.

A CHALLENGE FOR PROSPECTIVE TRANSLATORS

This article provided a location guide for twenty-one commentaries on the book of Revelation that had been written between the third and eighth centuries of the Christian era. I believe that English-speaking Christians would be greatly enriched if able to tap this vast reservoir of patristic Apocalypse commentary. At present, only three of the twenty-one commentaries are available in English translation. Although making them accessible in English translation will require that prospective translators possess facility in patristic Greek or

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Isidore of Seville, Sententiae 1.26. Pierre Cazier, ed. CCSL 111: 79-81; Bede, De tempore ratione 69: "De Temporibus Antichristi." T. Mommsen, ed. CCSL 123B: 538-9.

[30] Chromatius of Aquileia, Sermo de sancto Iohanne evangelista et apostolo. R. Étaix and J. Lemarié, eds. CCSL 9A: 97-99; Sermons on the Gospel of Matthew, Prologue. Stephen C. Carlson, trans. (2005) www.tertullian.org/fathers/chromatius.

[31] Kenneth B. Steinhauser, The Apocalypse Commentary of Tyconius: A History of Its Reception and Influence (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 156; John H. Van Engen, Rupert of Deutz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 275; Marcia C. Cohn Growdon, "The Narrative Sequence in the Preface to the Gerona Commentaries of Beatus on the Apocalypse," Ph.D. dissertation (Stanford University, 1976), 3; David C. Fowler, The Bible in Early English Literature (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 21-2.; Massey Hamilton Shepherd, The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse. Ecumenical Studies in Worship 6 (Richmond, VA:

ecclesiastical Latin, I do not believe such a goal is unrealistic. If just one of these commentaries were translated and published each year, this entire patristic treasury of Revelation commentaries could be available to English-speaking scholars within twenty years. Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACW — Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation. J. Quasten, J. C. Plumpe, W. J. Burghart, J. Dillon, and D. D. McManus, eds. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1946-present.

ANF — Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Church. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1885-1896. Numerous reprints by T & T Clark, Eerdmans, and Hendrickson.

CCCM — Corpus christianorum, continuatio medievalis. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953-present.

CCSL — Corpus christianorum, series latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953-present.

CSCO — Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium. I. B. Chabot, ed. Paris: Reipublicae, 1903-present.

CSEL — Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum. Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866-present.

FC — Fathers of the Church. New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1947-1949; New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1949-1960; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1960-present.

John Knox, 1960); Lucetta Mowry, "Revelation 4-5 and Early Christian Liturgical Usage,"

NPNF A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Philip Schaff, ed. 2 series of 14 volumes each. New York: Christian Literature, 1887-1894. Numerous reprints by T & T Clark, Eerdmans, and Hendrickson publishers.

PG Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca. J. P. Migne, ed. Paris: Petit-Montrouge, 1857-1866. Available in reprint from Brepols.

PL Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina. J. P. Migne, ed. Paris: Petit-Montrouge, 1844-1864. Available in reprint from Brepols. Available on CD as Chadwyk-Healey Patrologia Latina Database. Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company, 1996-2000.

PLS Patrologiae latinae, supplementum. 5 vols. Adalbert. Hamman, ed. Paris: Garnier Frères, 1958-1974.

SC Sources chrétiennes. Henry de Lubac & J. Daniélou, eds. Paris: Cerf, 1941-present.

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