Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism

Sanctus [sader, or]

edited by

H. B. Clarke and Mary Brennan

Ab S. 199/200 – S. 201/202
Seiten verkehrt eingeheftet – sind
ist aber komplett

7. IRISH GRAMMARIANS AND THE CONTINENT
IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Louis Holtz

Wherever grammatical manuals increase in number, it is a sign that there is a direct interest in the study of language, an attempt to put language into scholarly form. Whenever there is such an interest in Latin, this is something of international concern arising from a need to master the language that was par excellence the medium for communicating what was written. There was a need for the Western Church to communicate within itself, a need for political and administrative communication, a need for diplomacy between States or within the same State. Thus, in the Carolingian period, we find that all parts of the Frankish kingdom abounded with normative treatises that furnished the basic equipment for a real intellectual renewal. It was through contact with these that scholars acquired their own expertise and then taught pupils in their turn.

The Carolingians copied such manuals enthusiastically. What were they and where did they come from? Their great diversity is striking. Now certainly all inspiration came directly or indirectly from the grammarians of late Antiquity: first and foremost Donatus, but also Diomedes, Phocas, Servius and Priscian. These late antique authors, if they were to be used with profit, had to be brought up to date. Carolingian scholars were very lucky in being able to rely on the paraphrases and commentaries of earlier centuries. Alongside Donatus are found not only the African Pompeius, but also Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville or Julian of Toledo, all of whom, on various grounds, had put forward in their own day and age certain ways of reading and interpreting Donatus. In their turn the Carolingian scholars began to write their own contemporary handbooks, drawing on the work of previous commentators.

Nothing resembles a grammatical manual quite so much as another grammatical manual. Among the many grammatical writings, frequently anonymous, transmitted to us in continental collections of the eighth and ninth centuries, we can perceive that some are decidedly older than they seem at first sight. Thus M. Roger, the first editor of Malsachan,[1] assigned this grammar to the age of Charlemagne, whereas it has now been clearly proved that it was written round about 700,[2] more likely earlier than later, and that there is presumptive evidence that it was composed not on the Continent, but in Ireland itself.[3] Similarly a still unedited commentary on Donatus, which survives only in a ninth-century manuscript in the Biblioteca ambrosiana at Milan (MS. L.22 sup., originally at Bobbio), must be assigned not, as R. Sabbadini thought,[4] to the ninth century but to the seventh, because the text contains an Old Irish gloss that certainly predates the changes that characterized this language round about 700.[5] M. Manitius himself was caught out here: he suggested that this gloss was written in Hebrew.[6]

The well attested existence of texts composed for pedagogic purposes in Ireland before the year 700 leads one to look again at the broad question of the nature of Irish culture at a time when there was little or no scholarship anywhere in the West. We ought to be able to obtain a clearer view of just how insular influences benefited the Carolingian Empire and of what should be ascribed to the Irish and what to the English. We ought to be able to define the character of the relations between Ireland and the Continent in the Merovingian period.

On this question, given the technical, impersonal and objective form of grammatical manuals and their apparently timeless quality, we have to proceed with caution. We have in a way to work backwards, from the well known to the relatively unknown. This is what I am going to do in the first part of my paper, where I shall take up the position of someone seeking to clarify the situation, for I know very well that the present fashion is to minimize Irish influence. In working backwards, I am going to start by pinpointing some chronological stages. Then, in the second and much shorter part of my paper, I shall try to work forwards and offer a general view of the processes that led the Irish to create for themselves, by at least the seventh century, an environment in which the cultural inheritance of the ancient world could be preserved and renewed.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *   *   *</p>

Not all the texts that passed through these islands were necessarily written in these islands. Thus the Insular features of ninth-century continental manuscripts are not enough in themselves to determine whether any given anonymous text was composed in these islands or was simply transmitted by way of them. The distinctive abbreviations and false readings can easily be those of the copyist and not characteristic of the author himself. In my opinion, if we are going to prove that an anonymous text was written in these islands, we need more than palaeographical evidence; we need a whole series of linguistic facts and figures. Lacking precise historical landmarks, we have also to be able to depict a particular background of learning and, in the case of grammatical texts, to identify certain characteristic lexical and doctrinal elements.

This method can have very fruitful results, which I shall here summarize. There are at least a dozen major pre-Carolingian grammatical texts that come from the general area of these islands. All of them have the internal and external characteristics that I have defined: palaeographical features, association with similar texts in manuscript collections, linguistic indications, a distinctive background of learning, of teaching methods and of references. Let us eliminate for the time being from this number those technical writings that are incontestably Anglo-Saxon in origin—the works attributed to Aldhelm, Bede, Boniface and Tatwine.[7] Of the remaining texts, not all date from the seventh century. It is difficult to establish a relative chronology for those that are later. Nevertheless it does seem that two of our anonymous texts form part of a grammatical chain of descent: the <u>Sapientia a sapore</u> (trans-

<p style="text-align:center">136</p>

mitted by MS. 317 of the Bibliothèque municipale at Nancy[8] and two Munich manuscripts [9]) and the Ars bernensis.[10] These texts can be dated to the first part of the eighth century. The grammar of Amiens (transmitted by MS. 426 of the Bibliothèque municipale at Amiens[11]) and, connected with it, the Donatus ortigraphus [12] appear to be later than the two previous texts. These four anonymous texts have the common characteristic of citing passages very freely from the grammarian Virgil.

We are left then with five texts dating from before 700. These are the Milan anonymous and Malsachan already mentioned, Virgil the grammarian, the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum (an edition of which is being prepared by B. Bischoff[13]) and finally the grammar of Asper,[14] to which B. Löfstedt has recently drawn attention in an article in the Festschrift presented to L. Bieler.[15] Five is a respectable number when one remembers that not a single grammatical manual was written in Merovingian Gaul between the sixth and the eighth centuries.[16]

So far only Malsachan has appeared in a satisfactory critical edition. Virgil, for example, was edited by J. Huemer, following A. Mai, in 1886. This was a largely premature edition and has to be completed by consulting the Virgiliana of T. Stangl, which appeared in 1891.[17] There is no doubt as to the Irish origin of the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum and of the anonymous of Milan: the Hiberno-Latin usages are extremely numerous. On the other hand, for Asper and especially for Virgil the question remains open. It cannot be avoided in a paper discussing the contacts between Irish grammarians and the Continent in the seventh century.

$$* \quad * \quad * \quad * \quad *$$

These two works have in common a totally Insular manuscript ancestry. But, after all, Consentius has a totally Insular manuscript ancestry as well, yet he wrote his treatise at the beginning of the fifth century near Narbonne. Nonetheless, Consentius's latinity, taste, sources and references enable us to place him unhesitatingly in the grammatical tradition of the Western Empire. On the other hand the only evidence to suggest that Virgil came from Toulouse is the late reference in Abbo of Fleury, who attributes to a Virgilius tolosanus a manual on computus, or perhaps simply on weights and measures, of which we now have no trace whatsoever.[18] We do not know whether in Abbo's mind this Virgilius tolosanus was, or was not, confused with the author of the Epitomae and the Epistolae. The short treatise in which Abbo mentions Virgil, the Explanatio in calculo Victorii,[19] could have been composed round about 980, that is to say, at a time when the surprising work of Virgil the grammarian had long since fallen into oblivion, even though it had been cited by the first Carolingian scholars such as Peter of Pisa and Clement.

Since Mai, a whole saga has been built around this reference in Abbo of Fleury.[20] In particular the Epitomae and the Epistolae have been scrutinized for allusions that could corroborate the epithet tolosanus used by Abbo.

Arguments have indeed been found; they are well known and I shall summarize them briefly.

A striking expression occurs in the first pages of the Epitomae, which deal with the letters (littera) of the alphabet. Virgil's account has reached what grammarians traditionally call the potestas litterarum, that is to say, the meanings of the letters. 'De potestate autem', says Virgil, 'quia magna ex parte legestum est, bigerro sermone clefabo'.[21] Now the adjective bigerro has been construed as a reference to the district of Bigorre in the Pyrenees— near enough to Toulouse. But it is not simply a question of bigerro; the whole expression is unusual. Clefabo is a hapax legomenon that is not repeated, save a little further on by the substantive clefium. What is the meaning of clefare and clefium? The most admirable feature of Huemer's edition is that, faced with a text as difficult as this one, he understood it almost completely. Hardly ever does he employ the crux desperationis, even with Virgil, where the forms of words are so uncertain. In place of the enigmatic bigerro I propose to read bigenero.[22] This has an obvious palaeographical explanation— the confusion of n and r in Irish minuscule—and the emendation would suit very well the sequence of ideas in the passage. For even if Virgil was a native of Bigorre, it is hard to see how his technical discussion on the letters of the alphabet could give any indication of the idiom spoken in such a small locality. On the other hand, if one reads bigenero, then (translating) Virgil says as follows: 'Everyone knows the number of the letters (?); few people are ignorant of their shape; as to the meanings of the letters, seeing that the principal division has been indicated (for legestum refers back to digestum), my treatment will have a double aspect'. Now what is the usual division? It is that which is made between vowels and consonants. In reality Virgil's treatment is anticipated in what follows: first the vowels and then the consonants. In this controverted phrase Virgil says simply that he is going to conform to the traditional division and that his treatment will deal with two classes of letter—bigenero sermone.

However this may be, no one has the right to build an entire chapter of literary history with such fragile straws as these two isolated adjectives, Abbo's tolosanus and in a similar context bigerro. Everything that scholars of the last century wrote about Virgil's circle at Toulouse is completely undermined and the whole business must be restarted on a new basis.

This is not what I wish to do here; besides it will be a long-drawnout enterprise.[23] In a text such as Virgil's the slightest manuscript variant has to be considered, no matter how absurd it may seem. Moreover, since Huemer and Stangl, more pieces of indirect evidence have been discovered. Let us await a new edition,[24] which will have to combine at once the qualities of K. Barwick's work on Charisius and of M. W. Herren's on the Hisperica famina,[25] that is to say, it will have to use all of the indirect sources and examine the text word by word and phrase by phrase in a commentary, as well as the author's latinity and teaching.

We cannot prejudge the results of such an enterprise. Nonetheless, it seems to me that certain facts have accumulated, which can now serve as a guide to research on Virgil the grammarian and which are of a sufficiently general bearing to figure in our present enquiry. I shall refer to three of them.

The first of these facts is a chronological one. This author, who used to be tossed about from the sixth century to the eighth at the caprice of the experts, is now quite definitely anchored in the seventh century. Manitius,[26] following Stangl, had already said so clearly, but without making the most of the evidence for the terminus post quem. The terminus ante is shown by the use of the Etymologiae of Isidore in the eleventh epitome,[27] which deals precisely with the origins of words. A malicious allusion by the Anglo-Saxon Aldhelm provides the terminus post quem.

In the letter addressed to Ehfrid written between 668 (the date of the arrival of Theodore and Hadrian) and 690 (the date of Theodore's death) Aldhelm, writing to a correspondent who was about to go back to Ireland where his studies had kept him for six years, congratulates himself that, thanks to the settlement of scholars sent from Rome to the land of the Saxons, they no longer have to go to misty Ireland for what they can henceforward find at home. To express these ideas Aldhelm uses a style that is of such preciosity and lexically so recherché that it can only be a pastiche. He finishes this letter on Ireland with the following statement: 'If my page is convicted of having expressed only vain blusterings by means of insipid chatter, "may it be worthy", in the words of the poet, "of stuttering (as Glingius said) like the prattler who tries to make himself scarce"' ('... ut versidicus ait, "Digna fiat [fante Glingio] gurgo fugax fambulo"').[28] The citation of Glingius in this peculiar Latin is in fact a citation of Virgil, who provides the final jest for the author of this extremely humorous letter. Aldhelm himself had been taught by the Irish and he knew what he was talking about when he gave it to be understood that nothing characterized Irish style better than that of Virgilius Maro.

The second fact relating to Virgilius to which I should like to draw attention is that the transmission of the Epitomae and the Epistolae did go from Ireland to the Continent. We have no evidence that would allow us to say that these writings, before being found in Ireland, were to be found on the Continent. Briefly, if by any chance Virgil was continental in origin (which I do not believe), it would have to be admitted that these curious writings were composed not when the author was still on the Continent, but only after he had crossed over to Ireland. In examining his writings we must therefore give priority to all the known facts of Hiberno-Latin language and civilization. P. Grosjean has pointed out several:[29] the fact, for example, that many people bore famous names, such as Cicero, Donatus, Virgil, Horatius Flaccus and Quintilianus. This tendency to indulge in a game of literary disguise is also to be found in the Irish author who wrote the De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae in 655. This author himself takes the name Augustinus, calls his master Eusebius (he is referring to St Jerome), and addresses his work to 'venerandissimis urbium et monasteriorum episcopis et presbyteris maxime carthaginensium'. Under the name Carthaginensium is hidden the latinization of St Carthach (or Carthagus). Irish spirituality will explain the high place given to the Hebrews by Virgil. A great number of scholarly words in his vocabulary were borrowed from Hebrew. This is because seventh-century Irishmen had read St Augustine and St Jerome, besides Flavius Josephus in Cassiodorus's translation, and because they subscribed fully to the thesis upheld since Philo of Alexandria, transmitted by Origen and passed on by the Western Fathers, according to which profane wisdom owed its

treasures to Hebrew wisdom, from which it had borrowed everything. On another level, just as Latin was enriched by terms borrowed from Greek, an outstanding feature of the works of Columbanus himself, it equally received terms of Hebrew origin, drawn largely from Jerome. Thus I am unable to subscribe to the opinion of Bischoff,[30] who is quite willing to see Virgil as a converted Spanish Jew. To my mind, only seventh-century Ireland will account for Virgilius Maro, although there did exist, as we shall see shortly, certain special links between Spain and Ireland in the field of grammar.

But the most important fact, in my judgement, is that Virgil's work is primarily that of a grammarian. It is necessary to draw a distinction between what is classical in his teaching and what is unusual, strange and bordering on the fantastic in his conception of language. Everything that appears to us as literary elaboration is nothing more than a form of extrapolation, often removed by a few degrees, from the very simple bases of traditional teaching. Such teaching is to be found in the scholars of late Antiquity, notably in the works of Pompeius, who was greatly appreciated by the Irish for the meticulous care with which he strove to justify all things down to the last detail.

In this period knowledge was scarcely conceived other than in the perspective of salvation. Every other form of knowledge was shrouded in secrecy or was the prerogative of a small circle of initiates, who forged their own special language and were the unwitting descendants of the Asiani, those recondite orators of the ancient world. The rules of the Latin grammarians were narrowly framed. A knowledge of them would later enable men of the Carolingian age to rediscover a classical and correct Latin and furthermore to reunite a tiny élite with the classical authors of Antiquity. For Virgil these same rules provided a kind of spring-board that allowed him to think of Latin not as a closed system, but as one that was in the course of development. There was not one form of Latin, but a dozen forms,[31] twelve ways of saying 'fire'. We are surprised by this curious statement, with which the Epitomae begin. Yet it is no more than homage paid to the literary language. Were there not, with poets ever since Homer, twelve ways or more of designating the sea, the earth, war, a ship, weapons—in short, all the objects seized upon by poets? Virgil's illusion was to believe, or to affect to believe, that it depended on one man alone to enrich, renew or create language. Conscious of the eminent value of auctoritas, he was reduced to pretending that his teaching was supported by numerous authorities. This is why he surrounded himself with a whole galaxy of fictional classical authors with prestigious names such as Cicero, Donatus, Aeneas and Horace. These were mere figments of his imagination and were present only to illustrate his own conception of the Latin language.

In an Ireland dominated religiously, culturally and even politically by monasticism, Virgil's novelty consisted in the fact that he took up again the idea of a learning that was completely profane, or at least free of any bond of allegiance to the Church. Nothing in these writings refers directly to the existence of monasteries, which were certainly centres of culture, except in so far as schools are taken for granted throughout. But these were schools where a man felt free and open to ideas, even if this prospect opened only on to mirages. The literary mythology highlighted by the author served as

a form of security. The ancient world was in the background, holding up cultural archetypes. Through the intermediaries of Troy, Rome and Donatus, Virgil's creative imagination was reunited, beyond the culture of his own age, with the great symbols of the ancient world. I do not think that Virgil was what in the seventeenth century would be called a 'free-thinker' or a 'libertine', but he did transfer his enthusiasm from things Christian to things classical. This transference would not have been possible without the discovery all around him of the intrinsic wealth contained in grammar.

We have indeed to hypothesize that Virgil's case was not exceptional. The rediscovery of an autonomous and objective culture, finding its rationale in itself and not in any service to the faith, was not only his but that of a whole generation. How are we to explain such a phenomenon in seventh-century Ireland? Can this rediscovery be placed even before the 650s, which is a reasonably acceptable date for Virgil's floruit?

<p align="center">*   *   *   *   *</p>

Another seventh-century grammatical text provides us with the key to the problem. The Anonymus ad Cuimnanum is presented technically as a commentary on Donatus's Partes maiores, whose text is recalled in the form of lemmas. But the significance of the work goes far beyond that of grammatical teaching. Bischoff has already shown the highly original character of the preface.[32] On the one hand it assigns grammar to its place—and this is first place—in the division of the sciences, but on the other hand—and this is undoubtedly the most interesting aspect—the author puts forward a genuine plea in favour of profane knowledge, by sheltering beneath the authority of Augustine's De doctrina christiana and of Jerome himself, a pupil of Donatus. We have here an Irish reply to Gregory the Great's famous statement: 'It is wholly scandalous to submit the words of the heavenly Revelation to the rules of Donatus'.[33] The anonymous author cites Gregory, but he also reproduces the passages in which St Jerome declared, not without pride, that he had been a pupil of Donatus.[34]

I am struck by all the ideas and statements that connect Virgil with the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum. Like Virgil, the Anonymous recognizes the precedence of the Hebrews over the Greeks and Romans: 'The arts and languages', he says, 'were originally entrusted to Adam, of whom it is written that he possessed the spirit of wisdom. Later', adds the author, 'Greek scholars claimed their discovery'.[35] But what is particular to the Anonymous is that his conception of autonomous knowledge needs to be defended against the criticisms of all those who fear that, in favouring the liberal arts, what is being favoured is pagan error. Supporting himself on Augustine, the author replies that knowledge is 'an outer covering, a vessel ready to receive any sort of liquid'.[36]

There is no lack of polemic in Virgil, but the opposing parties were schools of grammarians and their arguments are almost dateless. Here, on the contrary, one's impression is that the argument lies between the partisans

<p align="center">141</p>

of a rigid monasticism aimed at prayer, meditation and ásceticism—partisans who regard all forms of study not directed to Holy Scripture as a permanent danger—and on the other side those who have understood that knowledge, represented by grammar, is a necessity for a deeper appreciation even of Holy Scripture and for its transmission. Our author belongs to the latter party, which accepts the risk of seeing the liberal arts assume their independence.

Thus, working backwards, the problem presented by the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum seems to be somewhat earlier than that presented by the writings of Virgil. With Virgil everything happens as if knowledge no longer had any opponents. With the Anonymous the opponents are still active.

Certainly the debate is conducted wholly on the issue of grammar and it can be summed up as follows: Is it necessary to study Donatus? The anonymous author's reply is clear and it is this: it is necessary to study not just Donatus, but all the grammarians of former times.

The terminus ante for the Anonymous is, as for Virgil, the works of Isidore, whose name is expressly mentioned. The grammatical sources of the Anonymous are, however, a good deal clearer than those of Virgil. They are Charisius, Diomedes, Probus, Servius, Pompeius and Priscian's De nomine, pronomine et verbo—in brief, all the great grammarians of late Antiquity. Since when had these grammarians become known in Ireland?

<div align="center">*   *   *   *   *</div>

The answer is provided indirectly by another Irish grammarian, Asper, whom I mentioned above. If we are working backwards, his little manual, published by H. Hagen,[37] stands as the most ancient witness to grammatical teaching in Ireland. In fact Asper is earlier than not only the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum, which cites him, but also Virgil. Sufficient attention has not been paid hitherto to a piece of evidence supplied by the Epitomae, where we read the following: 'As for those who wish to write on the parts of speech, I do not know on what authority they rely—perhaps Glengus and his treatise, who was followed by Asporius. Speech should be taken in the sense of language and words; it is customary to divide it into eight parts'.[38]

This Asperius or Asporius who, according to Virgil, wrote a treatise on the parts of speech, is thus named by the author at the head of his work, in the first epitome entitled De sapientia. Here Virgil claims, just like the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum in its preface, to go beyond the technicalities of grammatical teaching in order to aim at a higher purpose. It is curious that, of all the grammarians named by Virgil, Asperius is the only genuine example, for Honoratus, Donatus and the other scholars who appear in his writings are not the ancient authors, but belong to the phantom gallery to which I referred above. Named in the first epitome, admittedly after Glengus or Glingius who had, as we have seen, a symbolic value for Aldhelm as well, Asperius has the role of guiding spirit for Virgil's technical expertise.

The reference to Asper that we read in Virgil is doubly significant. On the one hand Virgil cites Asper without naming him in connection with the declension of Tartarus.[39] On the other hand Asper himself seems to be the source for the bizarre terminology used by all our Irish writers for supines.

Supines, supina or participialia, are called by Asper, Virgil and the rest typicialia, a word that Virgil explains as a derivative from typus, wherein we recognize the Greek typos. It was long believed that Virgil was the author of this terminology. Yet it was used before him by Asper, which proves, parenthetically, that Virgil is not necessarily the inventor of all the surprising elements in his teaching.[40]

If we place Virgil chronologically about 650, we are forced to place Asper at a still earlier date. Further, if the reference in the first epitome is to have any meaning, then the work in question must have been already well known. There is no trace of Isidore in Asper and, one might say, nothing that suggests recourse to grammatical sources such as Charisius, Diomedes, Probus or Sacerdos. The only authors he appears to know are some commentators on Donatus, such as Servius and perhaps the Explanationes of the pseudo-Sergius.[41]

The sole terminus ante that I can put forward is represented by the Institutiones of Cassiodorus. The latter recommended certain fixed norms to his disciples for the use of praepositiones utriusque casus. 'For verbs', says Cassiodorus, 'that are accompanied by a preposition governing the accusative and the ablative, pay scrupulous attention to the ideas of rest and movement, for it is principally on this point that copyists who are ignorant of grammar lay themselves open to error. Indeed it is the incorrect addition or subtraction of the letter m that confuses the whole phrase'.[42]

Cassiodorus was laying down the principle. After in, followed according to the context by the accusative or the ablative, correctness depends on the presence or absence of the termination -m. It is a pretty humble sort of teaching, which was being aimed at practice rather than at theory. We find the same formulation in Asper in his chapter on the preposition, when he says to his pupil: 'Pay attention! With accusative prepositions you should take care that there is not one letter too few; with ablative prepositions you should beware of adding a letter'.[43] The idea is the same and the expression similar: Cassiodorus wrote 'm' litteram ... addas aut demas; Asper wrote una littera subtrahatur ... addatur.

Even so, how was one to know with prepositions utriusque casus whether the ablative or the accusative was required? Cassiodorus had spoken in terms of rest or movement. But these notions were not sufficiently clear-cut for Asper and this, in my opinion, pinpoints the chronological and even the geographical boundary of Asper's manual. He says as follows: 'The accusative is used when movement is suggested by a step, a verb, an injury, a fall, an effort or a fit of temper; the ablative when a word is uttered without emotion, when an action is performed without effort or does not go wrong, and in all cases where things go in the right direction'.[44] These curious criteria have nothing grammatical about them: indeed the norms seem to be wholly psychological. As I see it, there is no longer any link with a living linguistic tradition, but an entirely artificial approach—evidence, then, that this manual was not written by a Latin-speaking author.

Thus, in my opinion, Asper's manual was written between the appearance of Cassiodorus's Institutiones, which must date from the years 551–62, and the floruit of Virgil a century later. But since Virgil's reference points strongly to a work that already had a certain reputation, there is every likelihood that Asper's manual is contemporary with Columbanus and can be dated to approximately 600. A clear indication in favour of an early date is the echo that this manual transmits of monastic life and of the ideal that its author must have shared with those for whom he had written—the ideal of severe asceticism. In contrast to Donatus's manual, Asper's short tract bears witness to a total preoccupation with spiritual salvation. The traditional examples of the ars antiqua are everywhere replaced by terms evoking the monastic life. In stead of magister, iustus is declined—a highly symbolic change; instead of musa, ecclesia is declined; instead of scamnum, ieiunium is declined. In short, even in learning, the monk did not take his eyes off the monastic ideal and the study of grammar was not going to distract him from it. Likewise chrisma is the model for Greek words in -ma; for verbs the examples are ieiunare, orare and legere. It is a whole programme of life and, if legere already occurs as a model in Donatus, we can guess that here it was a question of reading something quite different from the classics. In the same way quotations from the Psalms replace the verses of Virgil. Donatus has undergone a conversion to asceticism.

It is certainly not easy to judge from the style and knowledge of the author and on the basis of a manual that sticks to technicalities. Nevertheless nothing can hide the pursuit of style or the quest for rare and elegant expressions that we encounter in the correspondence of Columbanus, who on this point is nearer to Virgil or to the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum than to Asper.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *   *   *</p>

Can we reach back any earlier than Asper, any earlier than the end of the sixth century or the beginning of the seventh? We undoubtedly can if we examine Asper's sources. I have studied, by way of Asper and the other Irish grammarians, the version of Donatus used in Ireland and have found that at an early date there were two versions.

The first version occurs in Asper, in Malsachan and in the Ars bernensis and it represents something of a synthesis between the Ars minor of Donatus and the Partes maiores. This ancient version appears to be older than Asper himself, since he uses it without being its author. Accordingly it is not too risky to state that Donatus was probably being studied in Ireland in the second half of the sixth century. I am not in a position to say more about this, except that a synthesis based on Donatus's two books represented a conscious pedagogic project. This synthesis could have been worked out in Ireland; it could, according to a hypothesis that I have developed elsewhere,[45] have been of Spanish origin.

The second version of Donatus that I have encountered in Ireland is that on which both the author of the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum and the anonymous of Milan worked. It is a highly interpolated version, which means that it has

been intensively restructured as a mnemonic aid. In fact the author of the
Anonymus ad Cuimnanum was addressing disciples who knew by heart the text
that he was explaining to them. Furthermore this version contains specific
lessons, some of which seem to me to be of continental origin. For example,
the teaching about prepositions is illustrated by two verses by the poet Virgil,
which do not fulfil this function in any other surviving grammatical text. It
seems difficult to accept that these citations from Virgil could have been added
by Irish grammarians, when other evidence shows that they were incapable
of correct restoration of the verses of Virgil cited by Donatus himself. Thus
it is likely that this second Irish version originated in a late antique school
where Virgil's poetry was still being taught and explained.

This is as far back as the surviving documents can take us. I am now
going, in a shorter section of this paper, to base my remarks on the chronology
I have just established and try to summarize what happened.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *   *   *</p>

In an archaic period the work of Asper seems to show us an Ireland closed
in on itself. The general process of opening up the country and of rediscovering
the ideal of an independent body of learning suggests closer contact with the
Continent, even if the Continent had not much living and contemporary cultural
nourishment to offer.

One can understand the mechanics of this gradual process. Scripture and
the liturgy were in Latin, the language of the Church and the language of
prayer. The conversion of Ireland resulted in the adoption of Latin as a
language of education. But Celtic speech did not disappear and in Ireland
Latin remained as a foreign language that had to be learnt and still more
studied in order to read in particular the Fathers, scriptural exegesis and
the fundamental books of the Western Church. Inevitably the Irish tried to
systematize the study of Latin. They had recourse to the Latin grammarians
themselves and to start with they adopted the manual being used everywhere
in the West, that of Donatus.

But this manual was not well suited to their needs, for it was not intended
to teach Latin to someone who did not speak it. Moreover it was a completely
secular manual. More than anywhere else in the West it was therefore
necessary to bring Donatus up to date by adapting his work. Asper comes into
this first phase, that in which the Irish discovered, adopted and adapted to
their own ideals the fundamental technical instruments.

Then there came a point when such a manual was not enough. Donatus
was a summary of all ancient grammar. The Irish of the seventh century were
no longer content with this summary: they wanted to have a comprehensive
grammar. Their continental contemporaries were in no position to teach
them. They could not get scholars to come to them because there were none
on the Continent, but they could get books that had been written in previous
generations. The starting point of the cultural movement of the seventh century
was therefore grammar, which the Irish found necessary in order to deepen

their faith. In short, they were the ones who carried out most exactly the programme laid down by Cassiodorus.

But when did this great influx of grammar books from the Continent to Ireland begin? My answer is, after Asper. Perhaps it happened in the life-time of Columbanus, though I doubt it; very probably it happened in the next generation, that is to say, in the second quarter of the seventh century. Of course there had always been some contacts with Rome. Asper himself mentions aqueducts three times in his short manual and he makes us think of those pilgrims from these islands who gasped in admiration in the Roman countryside at the most visible reminders of ancient civilization. Neverthe-less it is likely that the arrival of large numbers of ancient manuals in Ireland is connected with the start of the Irish mission on the Continent.

Three countries in particular supplied Ireland with manuals. As for Italy, several decades after its foundation by Columbanus in 613, Bobbio began to play its role as an Irish outpost in northern Italy and as a staging post on the road linking the pope in Rome to the island of saints and scholars. Signs of this Irish search for grammatical knowledge are still to be seen on manu-scripts that did not cross the seas: for example, on MS. lat. 2 in the Biblio-teca nazionale at Naples,[46] where an Irish hand of the late seventh century has recopied, at the bottom of a page left blank by the original scribe in the fifth century, the opening of a treatise by Servius. Bobbio is the likely intermediary whereby authors such as Charisius and Diomedes were known in Ireland by the time of the Anonymus ad Ciumnanum. At the end of the century Malsachan wrote an independent grammar that presupposes a thorough knowledge of Diomedes, Charisius and Consentius. In certain cases the Irish of this period may have had at their disposal more complete versions of these authors than those that have come down to us. Bischoff has shown this to be true, for instance, of Diomedes.[47]

But the shortest road from Italy to Ireland ran through Gaul. It was probably via Gaul that the Ars of Consentius came to these islands. He was a grammarian particularly dear to the Irish and it is easy to explain why: it is because Consentius had drawn on the same source as Donatus for writing his grammar. Irish grammarians thus got hold of a text that appeared to them like a less concise and less allusive Donatus. One can see, for example, Malsachan superimposing and finally combining the formulae of Donatus and the very similar ones of Consentius.

It was also from Gaul that Irish scholars must have obtained the version of Donatus's Partes maiores that is to be found in the hands of the author of the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum. By comparing the various traditions of Donatus, I discerned the close relationship between this insular version, which later became common, and a copy of Donatus that I believe to have been made in the region of Lyon in the early ninth century and based on a fifth-century manuscript.[48] I think that at Lyon—a town where very ancient manuscripts were preserved, as was shown by the late and much regretted E. A. Lowe in one of his finest studies[49]—a copy of this early version of Donatus could have been made by an Irish pilgrim who was passing through, and that this copy was the ancestor of our second Irish version of Donatus.

Moreover the Irish were aware of what remained of intellectual life in Gaul. Take, for example, Dynamius of Marseille, whose influence has been demonstrated by P. Riché.[50] His memory was a living one to the author of the Anonymus ad Cuimnanum, who saw in Dynamius a veritable orator putting his art at the service of the faith.

All the same, the country from which seventh-century Irish scholars profited most was Spain. By way of Spain the Irish received very quickly the work of Pompeius Africanus, of which I have found an echo in Virgil the grammarian. But above all Spain provided the works of the Spanish authors themselves. In this period, when the Irish put themselves to school with Donatus and his fellow grammarians, Spain alone remained a living centre of intellectual culture, in direct contact with the traditions of ancient teaching. Isidore's work was, as I have already said, known very early in Ireland and perhaps the Irish were among the first outside Spain to have made use of the Etymologiae. But Isidore was not the only author of whom they were able to take advantage. In the Universitätsbibliothek at Basel there is a manuscript (F.III.15.d) copied in Ireland in the eighth century that contains a treatise on figures of speech attributed to an Isidorus Iunior. This text has recently been edited and commented on by U. Schindel of Göttingen.[51] His analysis shows that this treatise represents the rewriting in Spain between 653 and 704 of a more ancient treatise, which we shall call β as Schindel does and which served as a source both for book i of the Etymologiae of Isidore and for the grammar of Julian of Toledo. The treatise, as reworked by Isidorus Iunior, was cited by Adomnán of Iona in 704, whereas Bede,[52] when he was composing his De schematibus et tropis, had access to the older β.

This proves that there were special connections between Spain and these islands. Of course this does not mean that a treatise had only to appear in Spain for it to be immediately adopted in these islands. Neither Aldhelm nor Bede had access to the grammar of Julian of Toledo, despite some deceptive resemblances that are best explained by common sources that today have been partly lost to us.

* * * * *

In conclusion I hope that I have shown that the study of Hiberno-Latin grammatical texts is an excellent standpoint from which to assess the cultural achievement of the Irish during the seventh century. This was the period in which Ireland gathered its treasure of grammatical texts and accumulated materials that initially the country kept for itself. It follows from what I have said that any direct link between the ancient schools and the Irish schools of the seventh century must be regarded as highly improbable. The Irish re-created conditions for study inspired by the ancient schools, but from books rather than from any living traditions that might have been preserved.

A time came when these materials, avidly digested by Irish scholars, began to flow back to the Continent. Just as the conversion of Ireland to Catholicism preceded its discovery of the inheritance of the ancient world, so

did the Irish mission on the Continent precede and indeed condition the search for documents and <u>a fortiori</u> precede and condition the return of books to the Continent. But when these two movements of books going to and coming from Ireland are analysed, they take on a breadth that one could never have suspected in advance. Thus, having discovered St Jerome thanks to the Bible, the Irish began to discover Virgil and Terence thanks to Donatus. True, the effects were felt only by certain scholars such as Adomnán of Iona, but this discovery was in the logic of things.

When the time came, very rapidly, for books to be returned, the first beneficiaries of Irish learning were the Anglo-Saxons. I have found in the grammars of Tatwine and Boniface elements that support my contention that their version of Donatus came partly via that used in the <u>Anonymus ad Cuimnanum</u>. This conclusion agrees with what was recognized by Aldhelm himself. The second beneficiaries of these cultural rediscoveries were the Lombards, who took advantage of the influence of the Irish centre at Bobbio. Later it was to be the Carolingians, who took lessons from insular scholars whose precise nationality cannot always be distinguished.

The return of books did not put a stop to their continued migration to Ireland. The Carolingian Renaissance, for example, did not fail to affect the Irish of Ireland, any more than the latter ignored the Anglo-Saxon achievement of the eighth century. But this would be a subject for another paper. I prefer to conclude by emphasizing that the Irish, in this vast movement of borrowing and exchange, did not give back exactly what they had received. In the words of the parable, they multiplied their talents and stamped their mark on the ancient authors. Texts that had been understood, commented on, or at least read they and their first Anglo-Saxon pupils brought back to the Continent, pen in hand, thereby making easier the task of the Carolingians. They had received only books; they returned not only books, but also scholars.

REFERENCES

1. <u>Ars Malsachani, traité du verbe publié d'après le MS. latin 13026 de la Bibliothèque nationale</u> (Paris, 1905).

2. Since Roger's time the interpretation of Irish glosses has provided secure dating evidence. Compare the second editor of Malsachan, B. Löfstedt (<u>Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus</u> [Uppsala, 1965]), who in addition to the Paris manuscript (P) made use of the important body of grammatical material in Naples, Biblioteca nazionale MS. IV.A.34, in which a more complete version of the treatise includes three chapters that are absent from P: <u>De oratione</u>, <u>De nomine</u> and <u>De pronomine</u>.

3. This conclusion seems to be inevitable when the <u>Ars</u> of Malsachan is put back into the sequence of grammars of Irish origin. I am referring in advance of publication to the chapter that I have devoted to Malsachan in my forthcoming book, <u>Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical en Occident jusqu'à l'époque carolingienne</u>, which contains a critical edition of the <u>Artes Donati</u>.

4. 'Spogli ambrosiani latini', <u>Studi italiani di filologia classica</u>, 11 (1903), pp. 165-85.

5. B. Bischoff, 'Il monachesimo irlandese nei suoi rapporti col continente' in Il monachesimo nell'alto medioevo e la formazione della civiltà occidentale (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 4, Spoleto, 1957), pp. 121-38, reprinted in his Mittelalterliche Studien: ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte, 1 (Stuttgart, 1966), pp. 195-205.

6. Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters, 1 (Munich, 1911), p. 521, n. 1.

7. Aldhelm, De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis (Mon. Germ. hist., Auct. antiq., 15, pp. 59-204); Bede, De orthographia (Corpus Christianorum, 123A, pp. 1-57), De arte metrica and De schematibus et tropis (Corpus Christianorum, 123A, pp. 60-171); Boniface, Ars grammatica (ed. A. Mai in Classicorum auctorum e vaticanis codicibus editorum, 7 [Rome, 1835], pp. 475ff.), a new edition of which, prepared by B. Löfstedt, is forthcoming; Tatwine, Ars Tatuini de partibus orationis (Corpus Christianorum, 133, pp. 3-141).

8. A. Collignon, 'Note sur une grammaire latine du VIIIe siècle', Revue de philologie, 7 (1883), pp. 13ff.

9. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MSS. Codices latini Monacensis 6415, fos. 1-44v (of the ninth century); 6413, fos. 22-4 (of the ninth-tenth century).

10. H. Hagen (ed.), Anecdota helvetica ... (Grammatici latini, 8, Leipzig, 1870), pp. 62-142.

11. Löfstedt, Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus, pp. 23ff.

12. Ibid., pp. 166ff.

13. See B. Bischoff, 'Eine verschollene Einteilung der Wissenschaften', Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge, 25 (1958), pp. 5-20, reprinted in his Mittelalterliche Studien, 1, pp. 273-88, especially p. 282, n. 33.

14. The text was published in Hagen, Anecdota helvetica, pp. 39-61.

15. 'Zur Grammatik des Asper Minor' in J. J. O'Meara and B. Naumann (eds.), Latin Script and Letters, A.D. 400-900: Festschrift presented to Ludwig Bieler on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday (Leiden, 1976), pp. 132-40.

16. The only work from Merovingian Gaul in the field of grammar seems to have been the short tract De dubiis nominibus (H. Keil [ed.], Artium scriptores minores [Grammatici latini, 5, Leipzig, 1868], pp. 571-94), whose latest editor, F. Glorie (Corpus Christianorum, 133A, pp. 745-820) places its origin in the province of Bordeaux towards the end of the sixth century.

17. J. Huemer (ed.), Virgilii Maronis grammatici opera (Leipzig, 1886); T. Stangl, Virgiliana: die grammatischen Schriften des Galliers Virgilius Maro (Munich, 1891). Since the Dublin colloquy a new edition of Virgil has been brought out in Italy by G. Polara and L. Carusio, Virgilio Marone grammatico, epitomi ed epistole (Naples, 1979), with an Italian translation.

18. The reference in Abbo of Fleury was noticed for the first time by A. Mai (Classicorum auctorum e vaticanis codicibus editorum, 5 [Rome, 1833], p. 349) in his edition of Abbo's Quaestiones grammaticales (= Patr. lat., 139, cols. 521-34).

19. This work, which occurs in at least seven manuscripts, is still unedited, apart from the extracts published in W. Christ, 'Über das argumentum calculandi des Victorius und dessen Commentar', Sitzungsberichte der königlichen-bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München for 1863, 1, pp. 132-52.

20. From A. F. Ozanam (La civilisation chrétienne chez les Francs [Paris, 1849]) to M. Roger (L'enseignement des lettres latines d'Ausone à Alcuin [Paris, 1905]), Virgil was produced as a witness to the mediocrity of Latin culture in Merovingian Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries.

21. Epitome 2 (ed. Huemer, p. 8, lines 12-13).

22. M. W. Herren in an article written in 1970 but published in 1976 ('Bigerro sermone clefabo: notes on the life of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus', Classica et mediaevalia, 31 [1970], pp. 253-7), which was unknown to me when these lines were being written, suggests the reading bigero in the sense of 'double', a hypothesis that has the advantage over my own of economy in making a correction.

23. Since the Dublin colloquy M. W. Herren has published a complete restate-ment reviewing all the theories that have been in circulation on the dates and origins of Virgil: 'Some new light on the life of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus'. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, 79 (1979), section C, pp. 27-71, with an exhaustive bibliography.

24. Polara's edition (see n. 17 above) has the merit of offering a more complete and correct text than Huemer's. But, if it was produced by a sound technician in critical editing, it still falls short of reasonable expectations, since the editor was not sufficiently heedful either of the linguistic facts of Hiberno-Latin, or of the literary style cultivated by Virgil. Thus what I was saying in 1977 remains true in 1981. An edition of Virgil is in the course of preparation by B. Löfstedt.

25. M. W. Herren, The Hisperica famina, I: the A-text (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts, 31, Toronto, 1974).

26. Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur, 1, p. 121.

27. Stangl demonstrated (Virgiliana, pp. 13ff.) that what Huemer took to be the fourteenth epitome was in fact the eleventh and that the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth epitomes are lost.

28. Mon. Germ. hist., Auct. antiq., 15, p. 493, lines 16ff.: 'Si vero quippiam, inscitia suppeditante garrula, frontose convincitur pagina prompsisse, ut versidicus ait ...'.

29. 'Sur quelques exégètes irlandais du VIIe siècle', Sacris erudiri, 7 (1955), pp. 67-98.

30. Bischoff has stressed many times the relationship between Virgil and Ireland, but without denying this individual a continental origin. See, for example, 'Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla' in Isidoriana: estudios sobre San Isidoro de Sevilla en el XIV centenario de su nacimiento (León, 1961), pp. 317-44, reprinted in his Mittelalterliche Studien, 1, pp. 171-94, especially p. 182.

31. Virgil, epitome 1 (ed. Huemer, p. 5, lines 17ff.).

32. See n. 13 above.

33. Moralia in Iob, Epistola missoria, § 5 (Patr. lat., 75, col. 516): 'indignum vehementer existimo, ut verba caelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati'.

34. Here are the references: Jerome, Chronicon, anno post Abraham natum 2370 (= A.D. 354) (ed. R. Helm, Eusebius Werke, 7, part I [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, 24, Leipzig, 1913], p. 239 and part II [ibid., 34, 1926], p. 747); Commentaria in Abacuc, ii. 3 (Patr. lat., 25, col. 1329) and Apologia adversus libros Rufini, i. 16 (Patr. lat., 23, cols. 409ff.).

35. St Paul in Carinthia MS. 2. 1, fo. 21v, cols. a-b: 'Sciendum est omnes artes et omnes linguas et omnes scientias primitus fuisse ac divi[ni]tus in Adam, qui spiritum sapientiae habuisse scribitur ... Quae sapientes Grecorum postea ut inventa propria sibi vindicavere'.

36. Ibid., fo. 23, col. a: 'Scientia exterior est more vassis omni parati liquori ab eo bibere volenti'.

37. Anecdota helvetica, pp. 39-61. The oldest manuscripts call him Asperius or Asporius.

38. Virgil, epitome 1 (ed. Huemer, p. 5, lines 12ff.): 'At vero qui partes orationum caraxare volunt, nescio qua auctoritate animantur, nisi forte ut Glengus tractavit, quem Asporius secutus est, orationes pro sermonibus eloquentionibusque accipiendae sunt, quae in octo partes findi soleant'.

39. The words used by Virgil, 'Tartarum autem neutrale, quod solius inferni est, in plurali numero habet Tartara, Tartara, Tartara reliquis nondum receptis' (ep. 1 [ed. Huemer, p. 120, lines 28ff.]) seem to me to be an echo of Asper's teaching: 'Nominativo haec Tartara, accusativo haec Tartara, vocativo O Tartara. Nam et reliquorum casuum declinationis in hoc nomine in plurali numero non tam facile dictum invenimus' (Ars grammatici [ed. Hagen, p. 45, lines 16ff.]).

40. Asper, Ars grammatici (ed. Hagen, p. 52, line 6); Virgil, epitome 9 (ed. Huemer, p. 70, line 22; p. 71, lines 9ff.). This notion is to be found in the works of other insular grammarians.

41. H. Keil (ed.), Probi, Donati, Servii qui feruntur de arte grammatica libri (Grammatici latini, 4, Leipzig, 1864), pp. 486-565.

42. Institutiones, i. xv (9) (ed. R. A. B. Mynors, Cassiodori senatoris Institutiones [Oxford, 1937], p. 46, lines 7ff.): 'In verbis quae accusativis et ablativis praepositionibus serviunt, situm motumque diligenter observa, quoniam

librarii grammaticae artis expertes ibi maxime probantur errare;   nam si
m litteram inconvenienter addas aut demas, dictio tota confusa est'.

43.   Ars grammatici (ed. Hagen, p. 58, lines 21ff.;   p. 61, lines 2ff.):
'Sic ergo semper observandum est, ut hae praepositiones sive in singulari
numero sive in plurali non alterius casus declinationi, nisi accusativi serviant,
ita ut, cum praepositiones ipsae praeponantur nominibus, de declinatione
casus accusativi nec una littera subtrahatur ... Quaelibet ergo nomina verbis
istis, quae comprehendimus, volueris conplicare [read applicare according to
Löfstedt, 'Zur Grammatik des Asper Minor', p. 138], semper ablativi casus
declinationi serviunt, ita ut nec una littera addatur'.

44.   Ibid. (ed. Hagen, p. 59, lines 6ff., 21ff., 31):   'tunc accusativo casui
serviunt, quando aut gressu aut verbo aut iniuria aut lapsu aut labore aut ira
motus adsignatur ... Ablativo vero casui tunc hae propositiones serviunt,
quando nihil cum iracundia dicitur, nihil cum labore fit vel non ad malum
curritur ... quoties ad bonam partem gressus dirigitur ...'.

45.   See n. 3 above.

46.   Naples, Biblioteca nazionale MS. lat. 2 (formerly Vindobonensis 16), fo.
139v, the beginning of the De finalibus by Servius (ed. Keil, Probi, Donati,
Servii, pp. 449-55).   See also E. A. Lowe, Codices Latini Antiquiores: a
Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century (11
vols. and Supplement, Oxford, 1934-71), nos. 397a and b, 398.

47.   See A. Klotz, Scaenicorum Romanorum fragmenta, 1 (Munich, 1953), pp.
4ff.

48.   The version in question is to be found in Leiden, Universiteits-Bibliotheek,
Bibl. publ. lat. MS. 122 (source L of the Artes Donati).

49.   Codices lugdunenses antiquissimi (Lyon, 1924).

50.   Education and Culture in the Barbarian West (Columbia, 1976), pp. 202ff.

51.   Die lateinischen Figurenlehren des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts und Donats
Vergilkommentar (Göttingen, 1975).   Compare my article, 'À l'école de Donat
de saint Augustin à Bède', Latomus, 36 (1977), pp. 522-38.

52.   Schindel, op. cit., p. 95 and his 'Die Quellen von Bedas Figurenlehre',
Classica et mediaevalia, 29 (1968), pp. 169-86.