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THE SUPPOSED AUTOGRAPHA OF JOHN THE SCOT

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In the fifth part of Ludwig Traube's Palaeographische Forschungen, (which I had the honor of publishing after that great scholar's death)1 evidence was presented for Traube's apparently certain discovery of the very handwriting of John the Scot. In manuscripts of Reims, of Laon, and of Bamberg, he had observed certain marginal notes which were neither omitted sections nor glosses, but rather the author's own amplifications and embellishments of his work. Johannes had made such additions to his De Divisione Naturae in the Reims manuscript, and they all appear in that of Bamberg. In the latter manuscript there are fresh additions—or enlargements as I shall call them in the present paper—which have similarly been absorbed into the text in two manuscripts now in Paris. We thus have, in an interesting series, the author's successive recensions of his work. One of the shorter forms is the basis of the text published by Thomas Gale in 1681; the most complete form was edited by H. J. Floss in 1852 from the Paris manuscripts.² Though not venturing to carry out Traube's elaborate plans for treatment of the subject, I attempted to corroborate his belief that the notes were in the hand of Johannes. The evidence seemed conclusive to me at the time, and was not

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¹ In Abh. d. k. b. Akad. d. Wiss., philos.-philol. u. hist. Classe, München, XXVI (1912).

² In Migne, Patrologia Latina, vol. 122 (1865).

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questioned, so far as I know, in any subsequent publication. In the summers of 1912 and 1913, however, I examined the manuscripts of John the Scot in Paris, in Reims, in Laon, and in Bamberg, and became convinced, most reluctantly, that his autograph is yet to be found. I here present the chain of facts that make this conclusion inevitable.³

Let us start with the hypothesis that the marginal notes discovered by Traube are in the hand of Johannes himself and let us support this hypothesis until it becomes too heavy to bear. Our first document is the Reims Manuscript 875 (=R) of the De Divisione Naturae. This is the work of some six or seven writers, whose hands are sometimes hard to tell apart. Though it is the briefest and hence the earliest form of the text that I have found, it is not the original draft of the work. The scribes could not have taken it from the author's dictation, for they commit errors of various sorts that presuppose the existence of a text that they were copying.⁴ This text, which is as near to the original as our present information permits us to come, I will call O.

Besides making corrections and additions in their copy of O, the scribes also insert marginal notes that have all the characteristics of the author's own amplifications of his work. This fact does not militate against our present hypothesis, if we assume that Johannes added these marginalia, or caused them to be added, in O, and that the scribes of R, at first forgetting to include them in the text of their new copy, later wrote them in the margin.⁵ In some cases, as we might expect, a different ink is used. The insular hand (=I), which we are assuming to be that of Johannes,

corrects minor errors in these enlargements now and then.⁵ This fact is entirely in accord with our hypothesis.

A number of enlargements omitted by the writers of the text were supplied not by them but by special correctors, who were assigned, it would seem, considerable portions of the manuscript to revise. Particularly important among these wide-ranging correctors are two hands that I will call r^1 and r^2 . The former is a largish hand with some slight traces of Insular habits.7 r2 is very similar, and indeed may be merely a smaller variety of r^{l} . In the specimen that I have reproduced, as is true of both r^1 and r^2 elsewhere, correction by I may be observed.⁸ In all, I detected, or thought I detected, five or six correcting hands, which sometimes supplement stretches of text written by others, sometimes supplement their own text, and, in all the cases under discussion, add notes of the author which were evidently in the margin of O. It is sometimes hard to be sure whether r is the text-hand or not. The point is not vitally important. The main fact is that several different kinds of correcting hand make, either in their own texts or in those of others, the kind of additions or enlargements with which we are specially concerned. However, as we have seen, we can still retain our hypothesis by supposing that I is the hand of Johannes, while r represents various correctors who copied from Oenlargements added there by Johannes or at his direction.

But we have now to note an intimate connection between I and r. They collaborate on the same notes. Plate V (fol. $285^{\rm v}$) shows us an enlargement that begins in the hand $(=r^3)$ that writes the text. It extends through substantiam (1.3), then is succeeded by I (ex his—horum est), then returns (Ibi—superans), and finally gives way to I once more (dum—esse). The interesting possibility

³ I have confined my illustrations almost entirely to passages exhibited in the plates. I have notes of many other examples quite as pertinent, but do not include them here, believing that those presented amply prove my point.

⁴ For an example, see Plate I (fol. 273). In the last regular line of the page, after writing caelestis essentiae particeps est, the scribe first omitted the words de die—caelestis essentiae particeps est (an exceedingly easy haplography) and then added them, with signs of reference, in the margin immediately below. As the error is one of sight and not of hearing, he must have had a text before him.

⁵ Plate II (fol. 231^v) contains a striking instance. After the citation of St. Basil, the author bethinks him of another possible interpretation of his words (An aliud ex verbis ipsius—intelligendum) and sets it forth in the enlargement. It is not probable, I believe, that the author dictated this forthwith to the scribe. As the existence of O has been proved, it is more natural to assume that the enlargement had already been inserted there.

⁶ E.g., fol. 59 (I have no photograph). The added *quodam* in 1.10 of fol. 231 (Plate II) is not by I. See below, note 10. *Ut arbitror* in the right margin seems exactly the thing that an author tucks in when revising and qualifying his work. But see below p. 138.

⁷ Plate III contains a specimen (fol. 64). At first this hand looks like that of the text, but it is really different. The corrections are, I believe, by r^1 himself. They had been made in O, I infer, but at first were not observed by r^1 . The heading *De agere et pati* is by a hand of the thirteenth century or later (=h).

^{*} See Plate IV (fol. 15). As in the previous specimen, this hand is similar to that of the text, but not identical with it. The hand h adds three headings.

at once suggests itself that Johannes could write two kinds of script—that of his native country, and that practised at Reims. Just so, many Germans today use both their national cursive. and a modified form of the Roman style. This supposition, however, is shattered by the further discovery that I is completed by different forms of r. In the case just cited, we see the interplay of I and r^3 . On another page, fol. 49 (Plate VI). I writes thirteen lines of an enlargement in the right margin (through seu finis), and then is relieved by r1 (similater-incorporea est). Similarly, I is succeeded by r^2 (fol. 56, Plate VII), unless, once more, this is merely r^1 writing small. In these two cases, the purpose of the change of hand is plain. The note, though begun by I, is too long to be finished in that script; the smaller continental variety is therefore employed. Now if I (Johannes, by our present supposition,) saw this fact when part way through, and if he could write the hand r³ as well as the Insular style, why did he not finish the note in r^3 ? As he could hardly have commanded two varieties of continental, the script of r^1 (r^2) is not his own. And since r^3 would have answered the purpose just as well, we must further conclude that this, too, is not his; otherwise he would have used it. Furthermore, as we have seen, I corrects enlargements added by r. If Johannes could write in the continental style, why did he not make his corrections in that script? It follows that none of the continental varieties is his, but that they are the hands of collaborating scribes. I calls in r^1 (r^2) when he sees that space is running short. In the alternation of I and r^3 , no motive is discernible beyond mere caprice. Did Johannes play with some scribe in this fashion?

Our initial hypothesis must now be confronted with a rival supposition, namely, that I is not the hand of Johannes, but that of one of his scribes—an important corrector, to be sure—who works in close conjunction with the other writers and correctors. This new hypothesis accounts for all the facts that we have considered, and more easily disposes of the difficulties. I, like the different continental scribes, is engaged in writing in R corrections

and enlargements taken from O. Possibly two or more stages are represented by O, r starting with an earlier, and I supplementing from a more complete form—but into that terra incognita of fresh hypothesis we need not enter. I's procedure, at any rate, seems exactly like that of r. Thus his practice of calling in a variety of r to complete a note too large for the space is paralleled by r^4 , the writer of the text on fol. 231° (Plate II), who uses up a legitimate amount of his margin and then has r^5 finish it, with signs of references, on the following page. The latter scribe uses a finer hand, and has no difficulty in completing the note with a decent margin to spare.

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Surely in the scribal play illustrated in Plate V, I is acting more like a fellow-worker than the author of the work. Likewise on another page, we note corrections and minor enlargements by the text-hand, then similar changes by I, and, finally, corrections of I by the text-hand. If Johannes wished to change cogitationes to operationes, it is strange that he did not do it himself rather than beckon to some scribe to insert the word; another correction, nisi, added above the line, is made in the hand of I. In short, r and I are two different scribes collaborating on what would appear to be a rather difficult original or set of originals.

Moreover, if I is Johannes, he does not understand his own text. In *De Divisione Naturae* i. 49 (Migne P.L. exxii, 491 A) we read:

Omnium hominum una cademque ovota est. Omnes enim unam participant essentiam, ac per hoc, quia omnibus communis est, nullius proprie est. Corpus autem commune omnium hominum non est. Nam unusquisque suum proprium possidet corpus, non et ovotav. Igitur communis est, et corpus commune non est.

This passage forms part of one of the enlargements of I. In it he writes omnis for omnes, and Non et ovoiae igitur communis est for non et ovoiav. Igitur communis est. These are understandable errors for any scribe, but not for the author of the work, to make. Others occur elsewhere in the Insular hand; I have not recorded many, but I made no systematic search.

¹¹ Fol. 58^v (Plate IX).

³ See above, note 6

¹⁰ Fol. 232 (Plate VIII). r^5 then collated the work of r^4 with O, adding quodam in 1.10, and perhaps correcting consequentius to consequentias in 1.12.

We now come to the most startling consideration of all, namely, that there are two varieties of insular script in the book. The first variety, which I will now call i^1 , is exhibited in all the plates thus far presented. It is loose, pointed, flowing, with few abbreviations or ligatures specially characteristic of Irish script. With only one or two exceptions, it uses a d with a curved shaft. The other variety (i²), as Plate X (fol. 106) shows, is at once more compact and regular, and more cursive, with more of the specifically Irish traits: it has a straight-shafted d. Furthermore, the two hands appear in different portions of the manuscript. il is confined to foll. 1-80° (=quires I-X) and foll. 113-318° (=quires XV-XLI), while i^2 appears only in foll. 81-112° (= quires XI-XIV) and foll. 319-358 (= guires XLII-XLVI. In the sections corrected by i^2 , we note the same features as in the other parts. i2 inserts many long enlargements and makes many minor corrections. He is supplemented in one of his own enlargements by $r^{2,12}$ On another page, he is corrected by r^2 , or possibly the text-hand.¹³

Our last resort, if we are still to look for the autograph of John the Scot in the various hands of Reims, is to suppose that, if not i^1 , it is i^2 . This is indeed the hand that Traube believed was the author's; it happened that almost all of the photographs taken for Traube contain enlargements by i^2 and not by i^1 . Yet if i^2 is Johannes, why does that hand never correct the sections assigned to i^1 ? Of the two, i^1 seems more free, more individual, more like an author's, unless that author be also a calligraphist. But if we imagine that i^1 is Johannes, why does he never appear in the sections assigned to i^2 ?

Our chain of evidence draws us to the conclusion that neither i^1 nor i^2 is Johannes, but that both are scribes employed by him, together with others, to correct and enlarge the manuscripts of his works. The two Insular writers were very possibly the most important of his workmen, for he entrusted most of the revision to them. Their task was done in intimate cooperation with the other scribes. They would call them in to finish their notes if considerations of space demanded, or, now and then, merely to

indulge in a pastime of alternate writing. Perhaps it was the difficulty of deciphering the original that induced a scribe to appeal more frequently than usual for help from a fellow-craftsman. I have confined my discussion to the manuscript 875 of Reims, but the two Insular hands appear also in the manuscripts of Bamberg and of Laon.¹⁴

After all is said and done, the great value of Traube's discovery remains. It is positive that the enlargements in the manuscripts were made at the direction of the author himself. They present to the modern editor of the De Divisione Naturae the fascinating task of distinguishing the different revisions, and of following the growth of the subject in Johannes' mind. The best way, I believe, would be to print on the left-hand page the enlarged form of the text, for that is the form in which the author wished his work to be known to posterity. On the right-hand page, the briefest form, the nearest approach to his original draft, might be given, with indication, in the critical apparatus, of the successive stages by which the final text was reached. Possibly further research may reveal O, or even the hand of Johannes himself. For the present, we at least have accessible—if the contents of the libraries of Reims and of Laon are accessible—the material for preparing a highly accurate and well-nigh unique edition of one of the masterpieces of medieval philosophy.

¹² See fol. 81, Plate XI (=Plate I in Pal. Forsch.).

¹³ Fol. 106 (Plate X).

¹¹ For i² in the Bamberg MS, see Pal. Forsch., Plates III-VIII. For i¹ in the Laon MS, see Pal. Forsch., Plate X.

Plate I. Fol. 273.

Plate II. Fol. 231v.

Plate III. Fol. 64.

Plate IV. Fol. 15.

Plate V. Fol. 285v.

Plate VI. Fol. 49.

Plate VII. Fol. 56.

Plate VIII. Fol. 232. Plate IX. Fol. 58v.

Plate X. Fol. 106.

Plate XI. Fol. 81 ($=Pal.\ Forsch.$, Plate I).

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