

**Review on the Doctoral Dissertation entitled “Francis of Meyronnes’ *Tractatus de passione Domini*: Critical edition and analysis” by Riccardo Burgazzi.**

My overall opinion about Riccardo Burgazzi’s dissertation is the following: the topic can be defined as relevant for the scholarly research, since the *Tractatus de passione Domini* is an important piece of a quite popular late-medieval literary genre, and we have also to add, that during the last decade the scholarship around the popular devotional literature has been intensified. The dissertation is well-structured the analysis is logical and convincing; the critical edition has been made according to the accepted criteria. Even if there are some minor points that I will point out as problematic, my overall opinion is that the thesis offers new and original contribution to the scholarship.

The structure of the thesis is clear and logical: following the biography of the author (chapter 1), the dissertation describes the *Tractatus*, from the viewpoint of the typology of the text (2a), its sources (2b), and its Structure and Contents (2c), after a detailed description of the manuscript (3) we arrive to the text edition itself (II) and the Appendices. Nevertheless, some smaller changes could have been done in order to make it even more logical: I would have added after or before the biographical chapter a separate one on the historiography of the topic. Furthermore in my view it is more logical to describe the content and structure of a little known medieval text before defining its genre and sources. Moreover, I would like to add a small technical note: also the numbering could have been reconsidered, since some subchapters are divided in further sub- subchapters – that are not indicated in the Table of contents, but if one would like to refer to them, it becomes quite strange to speak about a chapter e.g. as 2/b/5.

The typology is fully convincing to me, Burgazzi puts the text in the right context, and uses most recent and reliable scholarly literature to understand the characteristics of his text.

However, also in this part I would like to mention two minor points. First, at page 38 we can read about two further writings by Francis of Meyronnes (*Planctus Beate Virginis* and a Sermon on the Passion) that seems to form a direct context of the *Tractatus* analyzed in the dissertation. Nevertheless I could find the only piece of information about them in the dissertation, namely that they are “still unedited and not yet studied”. I think at least a few paragraph could have been dedicated to these two texts, either here or in the first chapter. Another minor point: the author speaks about the motif of the “two swords” as “a very salient issue of his age” (p. 36), but we have to mention that the theory of the two swords have been a salient issue in obviously much before the *Tractatus* was composed. The presentation of the sources of the *Tractatus* is well-done and detailed, I would like to add only that also the Christological parts of the extremely popular *Legenda Aurea* (Golden Legend) could have been examined as possible sources or parallels of the *Tractatus*.

My competence allows me to say a few more words about two parts of the dissertations, firstly about the chapter 2b/4, entitled “The *Tractatus de Passione Domini* and the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*.” The analysis is fully convincing, and it demonstrates clearly that there is a strict textual relationship between the *Tractatus* and the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* (henceforth MVC), and the collation of the episode about archangel Michael in the garden of Gethsemane (pp. 58-60) proves that the two texts necessarily depend on each other, and I accept also the author’s statement namely that they are “even closer to each other than the correspondence between MVC and Massa’s *Extendit Manum*” (p. 57), that we have analyzed with Péter Tóth (Tóth-Falvay, 2014).

It is a wise methodological choice that the author does not decide previously the direction of the textual transmission, adding also a third option concerning an eventual common source – even if he deals with it in the chapter about the sources of Francis of Meyronnes’ work – and brings further arguments about the dating of the MVC. The

candidate sums up well the discussion about the two possible dates of the MVC (around 1300 or the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century), and at the end of the chapter arrives to a cautious conclusion that

“At present, we would wait for other documents, studies and data in order to be able to choose between the mentioned possibilities and we would suggest as the most likely the third hypothesis, namely that Francis of Meyronnes used the *MVC* as a source for his *Tractatus de Passione Domini*.” (p. 62)

I would like to add to this consideration that indeed there have been further studies published very recently that the author could not know at the time of the submission of the dissertation. Sarah McNamer, the scholar herself that proposed in 1990 the widely diffused dating for the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, recently had changed her position: already in her essay published at *Speculum* in 2009 – that has been quoted in the dissertation, but with a mistaken year as ‘1995’ – she modified tacitly and partly her dating, while in an article published in 2014 she explicitly withdrew her previous point, and defined her dating published in 1990, as “obsolete”.<sup>1</sup> Consequently we can state that a new consensus has started to be formed around the date of cca. 1300 of the MVC, and this fact excludes obviously the option that the author of the MVC could have used Francis Meyronnes’ work, written in 1318-1320. However this consideration does not diminish at all Burgazzi’s findings, since the *Tractatus* can be defined as one of the earliest explicit usages of the MVC in the textual level, and it can serve as an important additional argument for the dating of the MVC.

I would like to add another, minor comment for the part on the MVC. On p. 61 the author writes “...because the MVC are structured according to the hours...”, which is only partly true and relevant, since on the one hand, only the section on the Passion is structured

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<sup>1</sup> S. MCNAMER, *The Author of the Italian Meditations on the Life of Christ*, in *New Directions, in Manuscript Studies and Reading Practices: Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall's 80th Birthday*, ed. K. Kerby-Fulton, J. J. Thompson, S. Baechle Notre Dame 2014, 121-122

so, which is less than a third of the whole text; on the other hand, there are several other texts from the same period – partly quoted by the author – that deal with the passion according to the hours.

In chapter 2/b/5 (pp. 64-67) we can read an interesting investigation of a vernacular insertion in the Latin text of the Tractatus. The insertion itself is a short proverb, but what is striking that it is written in the Italian vernacular by a French author, in a manuscript of German origins. As the candidate demonstrates, the proverb is incomplete and meaningless in the form that can be read in the codex, so he tries to reconstruct it. The reconstruction and analysis of the Italian proverb seems plausible to me. Also the hypothesis that the proverb can come from an Italian variant of the MVC is interesting. Even if the Italian version of the MVC is less studied, and there is no critical edition, recent publications allow us to check it with high probability. A preliminary structural collation published online includes the most important Italian variants,<sup>2</sup> that can help the research among the Italian MSS. At the present state of research it seems that there are two important variants that are unpublished (Paris BnF: MS. Ital. 115 and Oxford Bodleian Library: Canon. Ital 174), but both of them seems to be isolated variants (even if recently it has been argued that one of them could have been the original version of the MVC), while one can relatively easily check the two most diffused Italian versions – that survived in many MSS, so we can with good probability assume that they could have been read by an author in France – in the publications by Bartolomeo Sorio and Francesco Sarri.<sup>3</sup> However, in my opinion it is not likely that Francis could have taken the proverb from an Italian manuscript of the MVC, since – as the Burgazzi himself demonstrated convincingly in the previous chapter – he used a Latin variant of the MVC, and it is not very

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<sup>2</sup> P. ERTL – E. KONRÁD – A. GERENCSÉR – Á. LUDMANN – D. FALVAY, *The Italian Variants of the Meditationes Vitae Christi: A Preliminary Structural Collation*, in *Italogramma* 2 (2013)

<http://italogramma.elte.hu/rivista><http://italogramma.elte.hu/rivista>

<sup>3</sup> B. SORIO, *Cento meditazioni di S. Bonaventura sulla vita di Gesu Cristo* Roma 1847, F. SARRI, *Le Meditazioni della vita di Cristo*, Milano 1933.

probable – even if we cannot entirely exclude it– that a medieval author would use the same work in two different languages.

As to the critical edition, I would limit to say that the publication of this text, conserved in a single MS is quite important for the literary history and for several philological considerations, expressed above. The text-edition itself is well-done, the format is well-defined, the apparatus and the endnotes are clearly structured. As to the form and criteria I have three small notes: first, the short Editorial note (p. 88) could have been more detailed, even if we can read that “this text has been undertaken according to the main guidelines of the Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis” and also the link is given in the footnote, but in my view at least the main points could have been synthetized also here. Second, the author states that he does not follow entirely these norms, “since the edition is based on only one manuscript, we did not follow the orthographic conventions regarding u/v and i/j, but we have preserved the orthography of the codex.” I would need more arguments for the reason of this modification, since the quoted guidelines simply put: “Spelling: We recommend the following orthographic conventions for the Latin text: u for u and v V for U and V i for i and j I for I and J” ([40], p. 11) and do not specify that in the case of *codex unicus* another method is to be used. Third, the CC CM requires three apparatuses, a biblical apparatus, a source apparatus and a critical apparatus. In the dissertation we can find all of them, but only the critical apparatus is allocated in footnotes, while the source apparatus and the biblical one are joined together in long end-note sections. I know that in MS word it is not easy to produce two or three separate sets of footnotes, but this typographic solution makes the critical edition much less “reader-friendly,” and there are some accessible technical solutions to solve this problem.

In conclusion I state that Burgazzi’s work meets the standard customarily required of a doctoral dissertation, and consequently I warmly recommend it for a public defense, and I propose the highest grade possible.

Questions for the public defense:

- 1) Could you present briefly the *Planctus* and the *Sermon on the Passion* on the basis of the secondary literature (Roth)?
- 2) How would you reformulate your point on the relationship between the *Tractatus* and the MVC on the basis of the new results on the dating of the MVC?
- 3) How do you explain your choice of spelling in the critical edition?

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