

The Barberini Manuscript of Georgius Syncellus (*Vat. Barb. Gr. 227*)

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THE CHRONICLE of Georgius Syncellus (*ca* 800), covering the period from Creation to the first year of the emperor Diocletian, is unique among such works of Byzantine chronography for its detailed treatment of antiquity, with frequent and often lengthy citation of sources. Syncellus is consequently our best and sometimes our only source for significant fragments of a number of ancient works otherwise wholly or partially lost. Of the many manuscripts that attest to the work of Syncellus, most contain only the latter third of the chronicle, from the time of Julius Caesar, followed by the continuation written by Theophanes.¹ This portion of Syncellus derives chiefly from Josephus and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Eusebius, and is of less interest and importance than the pre-Roman sections. The only complete manuscript of the entire work hitherto known is the famous Paris manuscript (Bibliothèque Nationale *gr.* 1711) written in the year 1021 and discovered by Isaac Casaubon about 1600.² From this manuscript Joseph Scaliger in 1606 published much of the material that he believed Syncellus had derived from the then lost first book of the chronicle of Eusebius.³ Jacob Goar based the 1652 *editio princeps* of Syncellus on *Paris* 1711, supplemented for the latter portion by *Paris suppl. gr.* 327 and *Barberini gr.* 234.⁴ William Dindorf's 1829 edition in the Bonn *Corpus* was based on Goar's text, although much improved by the collation of the fragmentary eleventh-century Paris manuscript (#1764) discovered by Bredow.⁵

¹ For the manuscript tradition of Theophanes, see the edition of Karl de Boor (Leipzig 1883–85), esp. I v–viii.

² See the correspondence with Casaubon in Scaliger's *Epistolae* (Frankfurt 1628), esp. 180–200.

³ *Thesaurus Temporum* (Leiden 1606, ed. post. Amsterdam 1658).

⁴ Goar's edition was published in the *Corpus Historiae Byzantinae* (Paris 1652, reprinted Venice 1729). His *Liber Peyrezianus* (*Paris suppl. gr.* 327) is a copy of *Vat. gr.* 987; and his *Barberinianus* (*Vat. Barb. gr.* 234) is a collation of *Vat. gr.* 154 and *Vat. Pal. gr.* 395.

⁵ G. Bredow, *Epistolae Parisienses* (Leipzig 1812) 154. Apart from the addition of the

Paris 1711 (A) and 1764 (B) derive from a common exemplar, but B is by far the superior copy. B preserves the more nearly correct reading against A in numerous individual cases. There are also many instances in A of omission through homoeoteleuton and the like, where B carries the full text. B is also a better witness to the format of the exemplar, with clearly separated titles in a special lettering and a majuscule script distinguishing some portions of the text (*e.g.*, the *Σποράδην* sections and the lists of bishops) from the rest. Unfortunately, the manuscript is badly truncated. Leaves that contained nearly a third of the work are missing from the beginning and the end, with several leaves also lost from the middle. Additional manuscript authority to supplement A, especially in the early portion of the work, would be a welcome discovery.

J. T. Milik has recently announced just such a discovery in *Vat. Barb. gr.* 227, which he examined in connection with his work on the pseudepigraphical books of *Enoch* and *Jubilees*, from which Syncellus preserves a number of fragments. The source of this discovery is apparently the list of manuscripts published by M. E. Colonna in 1956.⁶ The list includes *Barb.* 227 and seven other manuscripts in addition to *Paris* 1711 that Colonna puts forward as complete copies of the entire work. Albert-Marie Denis reproduced the list in his introduction to the Greek versions of the Jewish pseudepigrapha.⁷ H. J. de Jonge examined the Paris manuscripts included in the list and eliminated all but 1711.⁸ The remainder can be eliminated on the basis of their catalogue descriptions, with the exception of *Barb.* 227. J. T. Milik examined the Enochic material in the Barberini manuscript, which he found to be similar to the text of *Paris* 1711, but with a number of variants that he notes in dealing with these fragments.⁹

Seymour di Ricci's inventory of the Barberini collection, presumably Colonna's source, contains neither codicological description nor date for the manuscript, although Colonna dates it to the

readings of *Paris* 1764, Dindorf's text is little more than a redaction of Goar's. I am presently at work on a new edition for the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*.

⁶ M. E. Colonna, *Gli storici bizantini dal IV al XV secolo I: Storici profani* (Naples 1956) 54–55. The list is unreliable. Most of the mss. listed as complete in fact belong to the family of Theophanes mss. that contain Syncellus only from 566.11 Dindorf. Some are not manuscripts of Syncellus at all.

⁷ Albert-Marie Denis, *Introduction aux Pseudepigraphes grecs* (Leiden 1970) 18.

⁸ H. J. de Jonge in Albert-Marie Denis, ed., *Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt Graeca* (Leiden 1970).

⁹ J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch* (Oxford 1976) 73; "Recherches sur la version grecque du livre des Jubiles," *RBibl* 78 (1971) 548.

fifteenth century.¹⁰ Marcel Richard dated the manuscript at Milik's request to the sixteenth century.¹¹ It would be remarkable indeed if such a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century exemplar of Syncellus were among the Barberini collection, when both Leo Allacci and Jacob Goar, who had access to the Cardinal's library, could state unequivocally that they knew of no complete manuscript of Syncellus other than that in Paris.¹² In fact, *Barb.* 227 is a direct copy of *Paris* 1711, written in the seventeenth century, perhaps by or at the behest of just such a scholar as Allacci or Goar. Close examination of the manuscript in its entirety provides ample evidence for such a conclusion, disappointing as it may be.

Vat. Barb. gr. 227 consists of 358 leaves, measuring approximately 280 mm. high and 185 mm. broad, written twenty-one or twenty-two lines to the side, each side containing approximately as much text as one page of the Dindorf edition. The title is the same as that carried in *Paris* 1711, with one word omitted: *Ἐκλογή Χρονογραφίας ὑπὸ Γεωργίου μονάχου Συγκέλλου γεγονότος* (*om. Barb.*) *Ταρασίου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινοπόλεως ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι Διοκλητιανοῦ*. The text ends on f. 358^r with the subscription *Δόξα Θεῷ*. No such note appears in A or in any of the many manuscripts that contain the end of the work, and the exclamation may therefore be attributed to the copyist. There are two sets of marginalia in the manuscript. The first set were written at the time of copying, in the same hand as the text. In these notes, the copyist sometimes corrects errors in transcription, although not all such errors are so corrected; and sometimes he makes conjectural emendations. These conjectures he introduces by *γρ.* or *ἴσως*, rather than *leg.* or *fort.*¹³ Such Grecisms notwithstanding, the hand is of an occidental appearance, resembling printed texts of the early and middle seventeenth century. Letter forms are regular and evenly spaced, tilting slightly to the right. Although the common ligature for *ει* that one finds in both handwritten and printed texts of the period does not appear once, the ligatures for *ευ*, *ου*, *στ*, and the abbreviation for *δε* are exactly as one finds in seventeenth-century printed

¹⁰ Seymour di Ricci, "Liste sommaire des mss grecs de la Bibliotheca Barberina," *Revue des Bibliothèques* 17 (1907) 81–125. For #227 he notes only: "Georgii Syncelli chronicon cum variis lectionibus" (98).

¹¹ *RBibl* 78 (1971) 548.

¹² See Goar's preface, reprinted vol. II of Dindorf's edition, esp. 68–69; Leo Allacci, *Diatriba de Georgiis*, reprinted Fabricius-Harless, *Bibliotheca Graeca* 12 (Hamburg 1809) 28, first published as an appendix of Allacci's edition of Georgius Acropolites (Paris 1651).

¹³ See *infra* for discussion of the marginalia of both hands.

texts, more fixed and formal than their Renaissance predecessors. Accents, breathing marks, and iota-subscript are meticulously entered, as are long-vowel marks, even over diphthongs. The bottom right of the verso invariably contains the first word or phrase of the next page. No parallel for this hand can be found among the published handbooks of mediaeval and Renaissance Greek palaeography. Similar research materials for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century hands are not presently available. The type of material used for the copy, however, confirms the conclusion that *Barb.* 227 is a western product no earlier than the seventeenth century. Msgr Paul Canart has been kind enough to examine the manuscript. He reports that the paper bears a watermark not attested before the seventeenth century and that the material is probably of French origin.¹⁴

The date alone would lead one to suspect that the Barberini manuscript is a copy of the well known Paris exemplar. The textual evidence is decisive, consisting of shared errors in individual readings, numerous omissions where B supplies the missing text, and several instances of material imperfection in A with a corresponding peculiarity in the Barberini manuscript. In the following examples, references are to page and line of Dindorf's 1829 edition, with the *siglum* R representing *Barb.* 227.

110.17 πολιτῶν AR: Διοσπολιτῶν B || 123.1 προτάξει AR: συντάξει B || 148.4 τὸ ὄν AR: τῶ ὄντι B || 149.5 Εὐτύχιος AR: Εὐήχιος B || 177.3 πορεύεσθαι AR: πορευθῆναι B || 203.1 εἶδεν AR: καὶ ἰδὼν B || 229.19 συνθάλλοντα AR: συνθάλλοντα B || 248.19 καὶ ἐκκρίναι AR: μὴ ἐκκλῖναι B || 270.20 τὴν γῆν τῆς Ἰεριχω καὶ τῆς Γαὶ AR: τὴν Γαὶ καὶ τὴν Ἰεριχω B || 309.6 ἀφαιρεθῆναι AR: ἀφεθῆναι B || 334.12 Ζεύξιππος AR: Δέξιππος B || 393.12 Εὐιδᾶν Βαροχὰδ AR: Εὐειλάδ Μαροδᾶχ B || 398.4 Ῥώμος AR: νόμους B || 448.5 ἐγγράπτο AR: γέγραπται B || 505.3 εἰπόντων AR: εἰς Πόντον B || 533.11 Ἰώσηππον AR: Ἰώπηνην B || 585.18 ἀναιρέσεως AR: ἀνανεώσεως B || 622.18 σοι τοῦ πάθους AR: σου τὸ πάθος B.

¹⁴ Msgr Canart, by letter of 22 October 1979, compares the watermark (crowned horn) with numbers 2655–57 in Edward Heawood, *Watermarks Mainly of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Monumenta Chartae Papyraceae Historiam Illustrantia I [Hilversum 1950]). Nigel Wilson, by letter of 15 August 1979, agrees in dating the hand to the 17th century. I am most grateful for their attention to my inquiries.

There are more than twenty places where *Paris* 1764 supplies a portion of text that the copyist of *Paris* 1711 omitted when his eye skipped from one similar word or phrase to another. In each case *Barb.* 227 also omits that portion of text: 113.9, 123.10, 162.15, 172.5–6, 179.20–180.1, 194.15, 239.14–16, 242.10–11, 284.6–8, 285.10, 287.16–18, 290.17–18, 311.14, 342.4–5, 350.3–4, 391.10, 397.7, 399.7–8, 409.10–12, 429.6–7, 606.8, 640.18. *Barb.* 227 omits 458.19 to 459.3. *Paris* 1711 also omits these lines, the copyist supplying 459.1 to 459.3 in the margin. *Barb.* 227 has neither this nor any other of the myriad marginalia in *Paris* 1711. Hence *Barb.* 227 omits not only the many marginal comments that *Paris* 1711 and 1764 share, but also a number of titles and headings that **B** exhibits in the text and **A** in the margin (e.g., 232.12, 280.9, 286.5, 301.14).

Finally, there are several instances in which the copyist of the Barberini manuscript has indicated that a lacuna or other imperfection existed in his exemplar. In each case *Paris* 1711 exhibits the corresponding flaw. At 55.18 (f.27^v) *Barb.* reads ἔτι μέρος τι ἐν τοῖς Κορκυραίων ὄρεσι. In *Paris* 1711 (p.20) the dots correspond to a space left empty in the middle of the line where the parchment was too rough for writing. At 131.19 (f.62^r) *Barb.* has ἐκ^{||} αὐτοῦ. The double line is the copyist's usual mark of cross-reference for corrections or emendations noted in the margin. In this case he substitutes αὐτῶν so as to read ἐξ αὐτῶν συγγραμμάτων. **B** reads ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ συγγραμμάτων. In **A** at this point there is a hole in the parchment between ἐκ and αὐτοῦ. *Barb.* f.96^r reads at 211.21–22 τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ οὕτω προδιειλημμένων. **A** leaves a wide space corresponding to the dots (p.65), where there was a flaw in the parchment. The same phenomenon occurs on f.308^v where *Barb.* reads at 627.17 Παύλου καὶ _____ Σίλα, the line corresponding to an imperfection in the parchment on page 98 of *Paris* 1711. On f.352^r the text breaks off at 716.19 τὴν τε Νικο xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx and resumes at 723.3 τῷ γ' ἔτει Πρόβου. **A** p.226 ends with τὴν τε Νικο, and p.227 begins with τῷ γ' ἔτει Πρόβου. An entire leaf is missing from *Paris* 1711. **B** is not extant for this portion of the work, but the Theophanes-Syncellus family of manuscripts carries the missing text.

There can be no doubt but that *Barb.* 227 is a seventeenth-century copy of *Paris* 1711. It would be tedious to enumerate all the notes carried in the margin. A few examples will suffice to illustrate their character. The marginalia of both hands consist almost

exclusively of editorial corrections and conjectures based on the text of *Paris* 1711, rather than variant readings derived from some other source. The first set of notes belongs to the copyist. Many of these are simply corrections of some of the copyist's numerous errors in transcription. At 147.11 he restores *κατάρξασθαι* for *ἐπάρξασθαι*; similarly, 228.12 *ἐπιλελόγισται* for *ἐπιλογίζεται*; 300.8 *καθείλε* for *ἀνείλε*; 417.20 *ἴσως* for *ἴσους*; 540.18 *στρατόπεδα* for *στράτευμα*; 727.4 *Ἀλεξανδρείαν* for *Ἀλεξάνδρου*. In other cases the copyist offers emendations of apparently corrupt readings, usually indicating their conjectural status with *ἴσως* or *γράφετε*. At 160.15 he corrects *βρξγ'* to *γρξγ'*. At 176.12 he offers *δεῖ* for *δῆ*; similarly, 499.8 *οὕτως* for *οὗτος*; 578.7 *Λέπιδον* for *Ἐλπίδιον*.

The marginalia of the second hand are far more numerous. On folios 356^v and 357^r there are references to the readings of "Vat" and "Pal"—that is, *Vatican gr.* 154 and *Palatine gr.* 395. These readings may be drawn from *Barb.* 234, which was Goar's immediate source for these manuscripts, rather than from the documents themselves. Why these variants (e.g., *γόγης* for *γόης* in the Palatine manuscript at 731.4 and the omission of *νεωτέρους καὶ* in *Vat.* 154 at 731.6) are noted only here and not for the entire portion of the work included in those manuscripts is puzzling. Nevertheless, the remainder of the second set of notes are all based on recollection with *Paris* 1711. On 53^v and 54^r the annotator marks the text and writes *ΛΕΙΠΕΙ* at precisely the points (113.9 and 114.8) where *ΛΕΙΠΕΙ* appears in A (p.38). In the first case B supplies a line of text; in the second (not noted by Dindorf) there is neither additional text nor indication of a lacuna in B. In the places noted above where the copyist has marked a lacuna corresponding to some imperfection in *Paris* 1711, the second hand writes *nihil deest* or *nonnulla desunt*, as the case may be, with a detailed explanatory note on f.308^v: *nihil deest. quod in membranea est uacuum relictum est ex vitio pergamenti non defectis scripti*. In other instances the commentator clarifies confusion on the part of the copyist by precise reference to an ambivalent reading exactly as it can be found in *Paris* 1711. At 188.20 (85^r) the copyist has written *διατρέχοντα* in the text and *διατρέφοντα* in the margin. The second hand notes: *in textu διατρέφοντα et supra eadem manu correctum διατρέχοντα*. *Paris* 1711 p.58 in fact reads *διατρέφοντα*. Similarly at 281.1 (136^r) where *Barb.* reads *κατά*, the second hand writes: *μετά et supra correctum eadem manu κατά*, which is in fact the reading of A p.91. Elsewhere, the commentator corrects transcriptional errors of the copyist, often with the note

ita R (i.e., *Regius Parisiensis*), or he offers a conjectural emendation, or he does both. At 93.11 *Barb.* reads Ἐχέα. The commentator restores the Ἀχέα of **A**, then emends to Ἀχαΐα. At 200.21 *Barb.* reads ἐπί, corrected in the margin to εἶσω. The second hand restores the reading of **A**: *immo ἐγὼ ita u.c.* [*ut codex*]. At 361.8 **A** and **B** have the corruption Ἡλία τῆ ἐμέτερος for τῆ Νομίτωρος. *Barb.* reads Ἡλιάτῃ ἐμέτερος. The commentator notes (175^v): *lege καὶ Ἡλία τῆ Νομήτορος*. He strikes out the copyist's correction (578.7) of Ἐλπίδιον to Λέπιδον and notes: *ita R*.

The Greek letter forms of the second hand are markedly similar to those of the first, but not identical. The two hands are probably nearly contemporaneous. In the absence of research materials appropriate to the task, it is not possible to establish the identity of either writer. It does seem likely that the copy was executed expressly for the use of one of the several scholars of the early to middle seventeenth century, from Scaliger to Allacci and Goar, who were interested in the text of Syncellus and in active search of manuscript authorities. The fact that the manuscript found its way into the Barberini collection suggests the possibility that the copy belonged to Jacob Goar, for whom it would have served as a portable transcript of *Paris* 1711 while he was at work on his edition. He might then have donated the manuscript to the Cardinal in exchange for the assistance that he acknowledges in his preface.

All such speculation aside, it is clear that *Barb.* 227 is a direct seventeenth-century copy of *Paris* 1711. Its variant readings, both in the text and in the margins, derive from transcriptional error or editorial conjecture. The manuscript can not provide the independent witness to the text of Syncellus that we should like to have.

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