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HUGH OF ST. CHER'S POSTILL ON THE BOOK OF BARUCH: THE WORK OF A MEDIEVAL COMPILER OR BIBLICAL EXEGETE?

The Dominican regent master at Paris, Hugh of St. Cher, began to supervise the composition of his *Postillae in totam Bibliam* at the Dominican house of St. Jacques in Paris sometime in 1230 and had presumably completed it with the help of his Dominican confreres by 1236. His postills enjoyed wide favor throughout the thirteenth century, and continued to circulate in printed editions until the mid-eighteenth century.¹ Unfortunately, no printed edition has ever been produced which casts any substantial light on Hugh's sources, many of which are anonymous. Until Hugh's sources have been identified, it will be difficult to assess his contribution except as a compiler.²

The purpose of this article is to identify first, the primary source of Hugh's postill on Baruch; and secondly, after having pinpointed Hugh's main source, to sort out what Hugh borrowed from what he contributed. Only in this way will we be able to distinguish Hugh the 'compiler' from Hugh the 'exegete'.

1. *The Canonicity of Baruch*

Before identifying Hugh's main source for his postill on Baruch, it seems necessary to focus briefly on the canonicity of the Book of Baruch, which remained in doubt from at least the time of Jerome until the Council of Trent, and

¹ The earliest printed editions of Hugh's *Postillae super totam Bibliam* were produced between 1498 and 1502. These editions were followed by the Parisian editions of 1532 and 1545; the last edition was printed at Venice in 1754. For a complete list of all printed editions, see Hain, *Repertorium Bibliographicum*, t. I, p. 434, n. 3175, and T. Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, t. II, Rome, 1975, p. 275, n. 1989.

² Cf. B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Notre Dame, 1964, p. 273.

beyond.³ In the prologue to his commentary on Jeremiah (his last work written between 415-420), Jerome tells us that he had resolved not to comment on Baruch or on the Letter of Jeremiah (chapter 6 of Baruch), as they were not in the Hebrew Bible.⁴ From the time that Jerome decided not to comment on Baruch until the early thirteenth century, no Christian scholar in the West seems to have produced a commentary.⁵ Even in the fourteenth century Baruch is still considered «of lesser authority» by Nicholas of Lyra, who writes in his first prologue on canonical and non-canonical books:

These are the books which are not in the canon, which the Church nevertheless includes as good and profitable books, but not as canonical; among which some are of greater authority, others are of lesser authority... Baruch and third and fourth Esdras are of lesser authority.⁶

Since Hugh does not formally treat the subject of Baruch's canonical status we must let the fact that Hugh comments on Baruch speak for itself. However, he could not have overlooked its somewhat ambiguous position in the Latin Vulgate Bible, particularly the fact that it was lacking in most Bibles before the thirteenth century.⁷

Hugh's Primary Source: the Dean of Salisbury's Text⁸

Hugh intended his postills as a supplement to the *Glossa Ordinaria*, which supplied the foundational materials for building his postills, however, it

could not possibly have served this purpose for the Book of Baruch, since it had never been glossed.⁹ The earliest known Latin commentary on Baruch was produced in Paris during the first quarter of the thirteenth century and is attributed to a certain «dean of Salisbury». After comparing the Dean of Salisbury's text with that of Hugh's, it is now clear that the Dean of Salisbury¹⁰ supplied Hugh with his major modern source. The Dean's text is slightly less than half the size of Hugh's postill, but roughly ninety percent of it is borrowed by Hugh anonymously. First it is necessary to set out the texts. The passages that I have selected are clearly related, and the common source in every case is the Dean of Salisbury (see examples A, B, C, and D).

The Dean's text on Baruch survives in three manuscripts conserved in Paris, London, and Klosterneuburg,¹¹ and is one of two surviving works bearing the attribution *Decanus Salesburgiensis*.¹² The Paris manuscript can be dated tentatively sometime between 1220 and 1230.¹³ Since it is not the original text but a copy, its original date of composition can be placed earlier, perhaps between the years 1200 and 1220. It is always found accompanying the biblical commentaries of Stephen Langton (most of which belong to «Series A» according to Friedrich Stegmüller),¹⁴ circulating alongside Langton's works as a supplement to his commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations.¹⁵ Although two of the manuscripts were written in an English hand, the work itself is clearly a product of the Paris schools.¹⁶ Whoever this medieval expositor may have been,¹⁷ it appears that his work originated in Paris, perhaps sometime

the question of Baruch's canonicity continued to be disputed by Protestants and Catholics alike even after the Council of Trent had decreed in 1548 that the deuterocanonical books possessed divine and canonical authority. For example, the Jesuit Cornelius a Lapide, who commented on Baruch in 1621, immediately raises the question of Baruch's canonicity in his opening question: «Quaeritur primo an Baruch sit liber canonicus». His aim was to rebut the polemical objections of certain Protestant and Catholic theologians who at the time were denying Baruch's place within the canon of Catholic Scripture. Cf. Cornelius a Lapide, *Commentarii in Sacram Scripturam*, Malta, 1847, t. VI, p. 976.

f. Jerome, in *Hieremiam*, Prologus, ed. S. Reiter, Turnhout, 1960 (CCSL 74) p. 1, l. 14-17; PL 24, 706. In the East, however, two Greek commentaries on Baruch have survived: a fifth century work by Theodoret, see PG 81, 760-780; and a seventh century work by Olympiodorus, see PG 93, 61-780.

Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Venice, 1603, t. I, *De canonicis et non canonicis libris*, C: «Isti sunt libri, qui non sunt in canone, quos tamen Ecclesia ut bonos et utiles libros admittit, non ut canonicos, inter quos sunt aliqui maioris auctoritatis, aliqui minoris... Minoris autem auctoritatis sunt Baruch, et tertius et quartus Esdras.»

f. P.-M. Bogaert, «Le nom de Baruch dans la littérature pseudépigraphique: l'Apocalypse syriaque et le livre deutérocanonique», in *La littérature juive entre Ténach et Mischna*, éd. W. C. van den Brink, Leiden, 1974 (*Recherches bibliques* 9), p. 56-72.

For the Latin text and introduction to the Dean of Salisbury's gloss on Baruch, see the author's article, «Baruch secundum Decanum Salesburgensem: Text and Introduction to the Earliest Latin Commentary on Baruch», *AHDLM*, 68 (2001), p. 250-295.

⁹ Cf. *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, Facsimile reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81 (reprinted, Turnhout, 1992), t. III, p. 215-219.

¹⁰ The Dean of Salisbury is hereafter referred to simply as 'the Dean'.

¹¹ Ms. Paris, BnF, lat. 393, f. 186^v-189^v; ms. London, Brit. Museum, Royal 2 E 12, f. 227^v-233^v; ms. Klosterneuburg 13, f. 94^v-100^v.

¹² The only other known work ascribed to a dean of Salisbury is the sermon, *Ad Hebraeos ix: Christus assistens pontifex futurorum bonorum introiit...* Sermo I, ed. F. Morenzoni, Turnhout, 1993 (CCCM 82A), p. 3-15; Morenzoni accepted this sermon as Thomas Chobham's.

¹³ I am grateful to Mrs. Patricia Stirnemann for this opinion on the date of ms. Paris, BnF, lat. 393.

¹⁴ F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium biblicum medii aevi*, Madrid-Barcelone, 1950-1980, t. V, p. 241-255, n. 7744.2, 7744-7765.

¹⁵ F. Stegmüller identified fifteen manuscripts, each of which contained commentaries by Langton on Jeremiah and Lamentations. In eleven of these manuscripts Jeremiah is followed by Lamentations; however, in only three of these eleven manuscripts Baruch follows Jeremiah and Lamentations. Cf. *Repertorium biblicum*, t. V, p. 279-282, n. 7828-7833.

¹⁶ For evidence indicating the Parisian provenance of the Dean's text, see author's article cited above (n. 8).

¹⁷ The most likely candidate is Richard Poore, who came to the post of dean of old Sarum, now Salisbury, direct from the schools of Paris, where he seems to have studied under Stephen Langton, probably between the years 1180 and 1190. According to P. Glorieux, he incepted as regent master of theology in 1213 (*La Faculté des Arts*, Paris, 1971, p. 391, n. 511). Richard served as dean of Salisbury for over eighteen years (1197-1215), after which time he was consecrated Bishop of Chichester, and later served as bishop of Salisbury until his death on April 15,