

XXIV. Vergilian Glosses in the Stonyhurst *Medulla*

ROBERT T. MEYER

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Some of the *Medulla lemmata* with their definitions go back ultimately to such early glossaries as *Abavus* and *Abstrusa*, which were originally batches of *glossae collectae* on the text of Vergil. Even when the definitions have been translated into Middle English they betray their Latin origin. Thanks to the preservation of the early glossaries we can trace many of these items to their ultimate source.*

The name *Medulla* as a textbook may require some explanation. Latin *medulla* meant "pith, marrow," by a transferred meaning became "substance, sum," and finally "abridgement, compendium, summary." This actually is a clipped title, the term *grammatica* being understood. The full title is to be found in some of the mediaeval manuscript catalogues: *Medulla grammatica*, *Medulla grammaticae*, or even the Greek form *Medulla grammatikēs*.¹ So, literally *Medulla grammaticae*, the "marrow of grammar," the sum total of "what every school boy ought to know," in this case, a compendium of the Latin language. For example, St. John's College, Cambridge MS. no. 72 is described:

Medulla grammaticae, cent. xv. Contents: Hec est regula pro toto libro: versus: fructum grammaticae pueris do sub breuitate. Hic liber intitulatur qui ab auctoribus nuncupatur *Medulla grammaticae*. A, prepositio, anglice, *pro*. Explicit fol. 118^b: Zoticus, a, um: Iste liber finiebatur 16mo die mensis Decembris A.D. 1468.²

* I am under obligation to the American Philosophical Society for a generous grant for the research on this project, as well as a grant from the Catholic University of America which also gave me a sabbatical leave for this purpose at the University of Michigan during the period February-June, 1959. Cf. also the *Year Book of the American Philosophical Society*, 1960, 633-34.

¹ *Catalogue of Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London 1808), Nos. 1738, 2257. *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the years 1854-75* (London 1877), No. 24,640.

² M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge 1913) 95-96.

I mention this particular manuscript because it would be very close to the Stonyhurst *Medulla* in age and textual content. There are other fanciful names for glossaries, e.g. the *Promptorium parvulorum* (an English-Latin dictionary) the "Children's Storehouse or Repository," *Manipulus vocabulorum*, "Handful of Vocables" (1570), the *Alvearie*, the "Beehive" of John Baret (1580). An interesting preface to the last-named work gives the reason for its name:

Thus within a yeare or two (he had set his students to extract passages from the Classics and to arrange them under heads) they had gathered together a great volume, which for the apt similitude betweene the good scholars and diligent bees in gathering their wax and hony into their hive, I called then their *Alvearie*, both for a memoriall by whom it was made, and also by this name to incourage others to the like diligence, for that they should not see their worthy prayse for the same, unworthily drowned in oblivion. . .³

The Stonyhurst *Medulla* is so named because it is preserved at the Jesuit College of Stonyhurst in Lancashire County, England.⁴ This manuscript has been dated on palaeographical grounds by the late Robin Flower of the Manuscript Room of the British Museum as antedating 1400. It is thus described by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts:

STONYHURST 18. *Vocabularium Latino-Anglicum*. Folio, vellum, consisting of 71 leaves, written in double columns of the fifteenth century. (Here follow ten or a dozen items from the glossary to indicate its nature.)⁵

Someone made entries, a sort of expense account on the flyleaf of the manuscript.

Stanton: In primis anno Domini M.CCCC.LXX.IIJ in festo Purificationibus Beatae Mariae Virginis in cera ij lb. 1e lb. vii d. Summa xiiij d.

Item: die Dominica proxima post festum Purificationis in oblationibus ij d. ob.

This memorandum has no connection with the rest of the manuscript; it simply records the purchase of some wax on Candlemas

³ J. Baret, *An Alvearie* . . . (Londinii 1580), *Praef.*

⁴ Rev. John Gerard, S. J., *Stonyhurst College: its Life beyond the Seas, 1794-1894* . . . (Belfast 1894) 261, mentions this glossary as *Vocabularium Latino-Anglicum* of the fifteenth century.

⁵ *Second Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London 1874) 145.

Day, 1473, and the following Sunday offering of two pence. Thus ends the short-lived expense account. The remainder of the folio is left blank, except for the heavy offset from the decorated capitals *U*, *X*, *Y*, and *Z* at the beginnings of their respective sections on the opposite folio 70^v. The manuscript has no signature of any kind indicative of former owners' names. One marginal gloss on fol. 60^v reads *manifeste* in a different hand from that of the text. It may have been added as a catch-word to the text, which here reads: *singillatim .i. manifeste*. Some *probationes pennae* are to be found on fol. 40 where someone practised (?) making *S*'s on the right hand margin. Pen tracings are also to be found on the foot of fol. 62.

The manuscript glossary is written in the calligraphic book-hand characteristic of the English and French schools of writing in the late fourteenth century. Each column contains 38 to 40 lines of script copied continuously. There is no ornament save the capital letters at the head of each section of the glossary. These are plainly adorned with a series of fine pen strokes extending into the margin parallel to the column. All the letters in the glossary are subdivided except the four above mentioned, coming at the end of the alphabet. So the letter *B* (fol. 8^v-10^v) has the following seven subdivisions: *Ba-*, *Be-*, *Bi-*, *Bl-*, *Bo-*, *Br-*, and *Bu-*. The alphabetization of the items takes into account only the first three letters of each word; we have not yet reached the stage of complete alphabetization which we find in the modern dictionary. So, under *Bi-* we take three *lemmata* in order:

Bidental: *locus ubi fulmen cadit*.

Biennium: *spacium duorum annorum*.

Biennis: of two *zere*, (fol. 9^v)

whereas in a modern dictionary *biennis* would precede *biennium*. As may be seen in the examples thus far given, the glossary is not exactly a Latin-English dictionary, since a good many *lemmata* are defined in Latin. We shall soon see how these definitions in Latin are a great help in determining the ultimate source of the glossary.

The *Medulla* gives some indication of declension and conjugation as do our dictionaries today: nominative and genitive singular are quoted for the noun; the first person and the ending of the second person indicative active for the verb, thus indicating

the conjugation to which they belong. Adverbs and adjectives are not compared, but in the case of irregular (i.e. suppletive) comparison, each form occurs in its proper place in the glossary. The definition of the verb is always given in the infinitive form, whether it be in Latin or English. E.g. *attingo*, *gis*: *comprehendere*; *aucupor*, *aris*: *to take foules* (fol. 8).

Concerning the authorship of the *Medulla* we can say nothing. We can assign this work to no one man, any more than we can say that Sir James A. H. Murray is the author of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The authors of our glossary are many nameless persons in a long tradition: teachers, students, monks, friars, secular clerks who expounded the classics and the scriptures in the cloister and in the schools. There must be a good many manuscripts of the *Medulla*; Way mentioned some sixteen, all of them in a more or less fragmentary condition.⁶ However the textual history of these mediaeval glossaries differs greatly from that of the literary texts, or even the non-literary materials such as the bestiaries or the lapidaries which have come down quite intact. The glossary-scribe often combined glossaries, and at each stage in glossary compilation there would be a reshuffling, often resulting in a better alphabetical arrangement. During such a process items might be added or lost; there are cases where the wrong definitions were copied for the *lemmata*.

Now it is a misnomer to call the *Medulla* a Latin-English dictionary, since many of the Latin words are defined in Latin. Nor are all the *lemmata* Latin words for that matter; Greek and even Hebrew terms were also defined. These *lemmata* are written of course in Latin letters, and are often indicated as Greek by a small *g* and a suprascript *e*: *g^e*. Then *acros g^e*: *mons l^e* stands for *acros*, *graece*: *mons*, *latine*. In some few instances the English definition is marked *a^e* for *anglice*. So, as a matter of fact, the glossary begins as did St. John's College, Cambridge, MS. no. 72: *a*, *anglice*: *fro*. There are also some Hebrew *lemmata*, marked sometimes *ebraice*, *hebrayce*, some of these words being defined in both Greek and Latin: *Choeleth*, *hebraice*: *ecclesiastes*, *graece*, *consonator*, *latine* (fol. 14). But quite often the Hebrew proper

⁶ *Promptorium Parvulorum* sive Clericorum; lexicon Anglo-Latinum princeps, auctore Fratre Galfrido Grammatico dicto e Predicatoribus Lenne Episcopi, Northfolciensi, A.D. circa M.CCCC.XL. Olim e Prelis Pynsonianis editum, nunc ab integro, commentariolis subjectis, ad fidem codicum recensuit Albertus Way (Londinii, Sumpt. Soc. Camdenensis, 1845) xxii-l.

names are simply given with their Latin interpretation and no other marking: *Melchisedec .i. rex iustus* (fol. 40). Ultimately a good many of these *lemmata* with their definitions were taken from the Bible, classical, and patristic writers. We have valuable keys to such research in a number of early glossaries which still keep the order of the *lemmata* with the definitions in the same order in which they occurred in the original texts from which they came. When such collections of glosses (*glossae collectae*) were combined to form a large *glossarium* (body of *glossae collectae* from separate works), they were recast in alphabetical order to make them easier for reference. Once this was done it became increasingly harder to identify their ultimate sources. Now the *Medulla* drew largely for its material upon earlier Latin Anglo-Saxon glossaries, known as *Épinal*, *Erfurt*, *Corpus*, and *Leyden* glossaries. Lindsay had predicted that in the course of time these Old English glossaries would be proved to be the nucleus of more than one glossary of the English group.⁷ But the *Medulla* had another source and this was the famous *Abstrusa* glossary, so called from its first word. This is a very fascinating glossary, which derives in part from a learned Vergil commentary.⁸ For us its great interest is in the form of the words, occurring often in the same case-ending as in the text of Vergil. That alone in a body of glosses might unmistakably point back to a Vergilian provenance. But when the *Medulla* has taken *lemmata* and their definitions from *Abstrusa*, the forms are normalized, as can be illustrated from a few examples: *arbusta: arboreta* in *Abstrusa* 20.43 is from *Eclogues* 1.39:

. . . ipsa haec arbusta vocabant.

and the *Medulla* has the same definition, slightly recast: *arbustum .i. arboretum* (fol. 6). Again, *Abstrusa* 22.53: *Averni; inferni* for *Aen.* 4.512, but *Medulla*, *Avernus .i. infernus* (fol. 8). Again, *Abstrusa* 97.39 has: *insontem: innocentem*, which every school boy knows is from the second *Aeneid*, 84: but *Medulla: insons, tis, innocens* (fol. 34).

Of course a good many of the Latin definitions are translated into Middle English, but many of them are such accurate translations of the *Abstrusa* definition in Latin, that we must accept this

⁷ W. M. Lindsay, *The Corpus, Épinal, Erfurt, and Leyden Glossaries* (Oxford 1921) 2.

⁸ Cf. J. F. Mountford, "Glossa, Glossary (Latin)," *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford 1949) 389.

glossary as the ultimate source of our Vergil items. Nothing is said of the tradition by which these definitions have come down to us, and in the present state of our knowledge of glossography, we can often postulate with certainty only the ultimate sources. It is hoped that with the publication of more glossaries of this nature we will be able to trace the line of descent more clearly. The form of the *lemma* in an early glossary like *Abstrusa* is a pretty safe guide as to its source. We cannot always have a word defined and quoted as in the *Liber glossarum* (239.24):

reboare: resonare. Vergilius "reboantque siluae cicades,"

a direct reference to *Georgics* 3.223. It will be noticed that here too the *Lib. Gloss.* has a normalized form of the verb, does not quote the form as it occurred in Vergil, whereas *Abstrusa* (162.34) had: *reboant: resonant*.

Space does not permit me to quote any more than a very few of the more obvious Vergilian glosses to be found in the *Medulla*, with the corresponding entry in *Abstrusa* or in the *Liber glossarum* and the ultimate passage in Vergil.

| <i>Medulla</i> | <i>Abstrusa</i> or <i>Liber glossarum</i> | Vergil |
|---|--|-----------|
| antrum, uel tra .i. spel- unca fol. 5 | antrum: spelunca. 17.11 | A. 1.166 |
| Adventinus: quidam mons in Roma. fol. 2 | Aventinus: mons in urbe Roma. 22.53 | A. 7.657 |
| bustum: a graue, ignis uel lignorum strues ubi corpora mortuorum cremantur. fol. 10 ^v | bustum: lignorum strues ubi corpora mortuorum cremantur. 26.26 | A. 11.201 |
| musso, as: dubito. fol. 43 | mussant: dubitant L. Gl. 224.31 | A. 11.345 |
| postumus: qui natus est post obitum patris. fol. 51 | postumus: post mortem patris natus. 146.34 | A. 6.763 |
| protinus: antiquus fol. 52 | | |
| priscus: idem. <i>ibid.</i> | prisca: antiqua. 151.45 | A. 6.878 |
| sudus, a, um: serenus uel clarus. fol. 63 ^v | sudum: serenum. 178.28 | G. 4.77 |
| trifaux: qui habet tres fauces. fol. 67 | trifaucis: tria guttura habens. L. Gl. 251.4 | A. 6.417 |

| <i>Medulla</i> | <i>Abstrusa</i> or <i>Liber glossarum</i> | Vergil |
|--|--|------------------|
| amurca: darstes of oile. fol. 4 ^v | amurca: faex olei. <i>L. Gl.</i> 166.15 | <i>G.</i> 3.448 |
| ango, is: constreyne. fol. 5 | angit: constringit. 17.9 ⁹ | <i>G.</i> 3.497 |
| caminus: a furneys. fol. 11 ^v | caminus: fornax. 27.24 | <i>A.</i> 3.580 |
| enodis: wypout knotte. fol. 24 | enodis: sine nodo. 63.17 | <i>G.</i> 2.78 |
| forceps: tongus of a smyþ. fol. 28 ^v | forceps: forfices fabri. <i>L. Gl.</i> 202.10 | <i>G.</i> 4.175 |
| mactus, a, um: eched more. fol. 39 | mactus: multum auctus. 112.28 | <i>A.</i> 9.641 |
| onager: a wylde asse. fol. 45 ^v | onager: asinus silvaticus. 132.36 | <i>G.</i> 3.409 |
| ffebe: þe mone. fol. 27 ^v | Phoebe: luna. 138.34 | <i>A.</i> 10.216 |
| sceptrum: kyngeserde. fol. 58 ^v | sceptrum: virga regalis. 167.18 | <i>A.</i> 1.653 |
| semesus: half etynge. fol. 59 | semesam: semicomestam. <i>L. Gl.</i> 244.6 | <i>A.</i> 3.244 |
| vector, oris: a berare. fol. 68 | vector: portator. 189.30 | <i>E.</i> 4.38 |
| umbo, nis: mydil of schylde. fol. 70 | umbo: media pars scuti. 194.50 | <i>A.</i> 2.546 |

It will be seen what a close correspondence there is in the definitions, both Latin and English, between those of the *Medulla* and *Abstrusa*. The scribe who incorporated the Vergil material in *Abstrusa*, allowing the *lemmata* to keep the case endings of the original text, was unwittingly giving us the key to the solution of a problem in lexicography. The English schoolboy of the late fourteenth century with such a manuscript glossary in his hand was able to read Vergil along with his Cato and Donatus.

⁹ MS. consignat; cod. corr. Nettleship, *Journ. Phil.* 17 (1888)121.