

must probably be the work of a Christian renegade. There are no traces of southern or Sicilian dialect, so we are forbidden the romantic conjecture that it had its birth at the court of Frederic II. There remains the equally interesting possibility that its author may have been one of the apostate Templars.

But whatever may have been the place and the environment of its origin, the document may well prove to be one of considerable interest and importance—perhaps to the student of early Gnostic literature, certainly to the student of mediaeval thought, and to those interested whether academically or practically in the relations between Islam and Christianity.

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#### NOTES ON THE *DE LAPSU VIRGINIS* OF NICETA.

AMONG the *opera dubia* in his admirable and epoch-making edition of the works of Niceta of Remesiana Dr A. E. Burn prints from two manuscripts of the seventh and tenth centuries a treatise inscribed *epistula Nicetae episcopi de lapsu Susannae devotae et cuiusdam lectoris*. It bears the same title in a MS of Einsiedeln (186 saec. xi), which he has not collated. In all three manuscripts is found a remarkable colophon in which this (revised) form of the text is attributed to Ambrose.

The same work, with considerable differences, especially in the direction of expansion, is found in many manuscripts of Ambrose and Jerome, and has been printed by Migne in *P. L.* xvi as a genuine work of the former Father. Dr Burn, being mainly and rightly concerned with the form attributed to Niceta, has not provided collations of MSS of the longer form: he has however printed a complete collation of the shorter form, with the text as it appears in Migne.

The treatise, whether it be founded on fact or be merely fiction, is one of the most interesting remains of Latin literature, and it seemed worth while to call attention, by the publication of a few notes about it, to the need which exists for a new edition of the longer form. It is desirable to find out exactly what the correct text of the longer form is, not only for its own sake, but also for the sake of the shorter form. Only when a complete collation has been made of all the old MSS of the longer form (or forms) will it be possible to say where this form took its rise, and what claim it has to be associated with Niceta, Ambrose, or Jerome.

I have not undertaken anything like a complete examination of catalogues of MSS for this article, but in the course of a partial examination of a few for another purpose I have noted various MSS. They are the following<sup>1</sup>:—(A) attributed to Ambrose; Avignon 276 (saec. x), Tours 340 (s. xv), München 496 (s. xv), Cambridge Trin. Coll. B. 4. 31 (s. xii), B. 4. 30 (s. xi–xii), Chartres 172 (s. xii), Oxford Bodl. 238 (s. xiv), 768 (s. xi–xii), 792 (s. xii), 757 (s. xiv–xv), St John's Coll. 163 (s. xii), Merton Coll. 47 (s. xv, ch. 9 only): (B) attributed to Jerome; St Omer 267 (s. ix), Köln LX (s. ix), Köln LIX (s. xii), München 4723 (s. xv), 15912 (s. xii–xiii), 18523<sup>b</sup> (s. xii), Trier 213 (s. xv), Troyes 558 (s. xii–xiii), 637 (s. xii), Escorial b iii 12 (s. xii), Madrid Biblioteca Nacional 11, 20 (s. xiv), Cambridge Kk III 24 (s. xii), Dd VII 2 (f. 349 vb. s. xv), London British Museum Harl. 3164 (s. xv f. 180 b), Holkham (Earl of Leicester's) 128 (s. xv). The numbers are about equal and the dates also. The oldest MSS known to me are those of St Omer and Köln, which support Jerome; the oldest in favour of Ambrose is that of Avignon. Italy does not appear to contain any old MS of the treatise at all; Spain knows only the attribution to Jerome. It seems improbable that Niceta issued two forms, and certain that neither Ambrose nor Jerome had anything to do with the treatise.

Of the MSS enumerated I possess a full collation of the Holkham MS (which was deposited in the Bodleian by the kindness of its owner), a fairly full collation of the Cambridge Dd VII 2 (which seems a worthless copy), and a full collation of portions of MSS Bodl. 768 and 792. These collations will be gladly put at the disposal of any editor of the longer form. A study of them has led me to the view that the Jerome form was the earlier revision of the pure Niceta, and that the Ambrose form is a revision of the Jerome form. Lord Leicester's MS, though of late date, is of high quality, as its readings and orthography shew. In the following passages it seems to have preserved the correct reading of the oldest form: p. 112, 10 (Burn) *passioni* (*passionis* Burn), p. 114, 1 *quod* (*quae* Burn), p. 116, 12 *Ut* (*Et* Burn), p. 116, 17 *hebescit* (*tabescit* Burn), p. 117, 17 *e* (*de* Burn), p. 118, 15 *polliceris* (*pollicita es* Burn), p. 119, 5 *ac* (*aut* Burn), p. 119, 14 *actu* (*facto* Burn), p. 122, 3 *ligna* (*lignum* Burn), p. 122, 9 *tuo hoc* (*tuo* Burn), p. 122, 13 *ecclesiam sanctam* (*sanctam ecclesiam* Burn), p. 122, 16 *mari* (*mare* Burn), p. 123, 6–8 follow the MS in punctuating thus—*paenitentia?* ' *Quae aut aequet . . . excedat; et . . . magnitudo*', p. 124, 18 *conuertimini* (*conuertemini* Burn)<sup>2</sup>.

ALEX. SOUTER.

<sup>1</sup> I borrow four from Dr Burn's Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Immediately on the completion of the collation of the Holkham MS, it was put into the hands of Dr Burn, but unfortunately too late for use in his edition. The above notes appear here with his approval.