

Z · THE TRANSCRIPTIONS OF 1795 AND 1935 ≠ MARCO POLO

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Exemplum hoc exscriptum fuit a Codice Manuscripto Cartaceo Eminentissimi Domini Cardinalis de Zelada, qui eum benigne permisit mihi exscribendum, misitque Patavium curam prebente Eminentissimo Card. Stephano Borgia atque Excellentissimo D. Petro Pesaro Veneto apud S. Pontificem Legato. Codex judicatur scriptus Seculo XIV exeunte, vel XV ineunte. Descriptus autem fuit diligentia summa, et non sine labore magno, ob immanem characteris obscuritatem, a DD. Augustino Calzavara, et Benedicto Tonini Cathedralis hujus Ecclesie Patavine communi opera, collatusque, me presente, cum autographo : Descriptio absoluta fuit hac die 8. julij 1795.

Codex ipse Latinus, sed latinitate vero barbara, videtur esse versio, aut potius paraphrasis, exemplaris lingua Hetrusca, quod Florentiæ tenetur in Bibliotheca Magliabechiana, nomine Academicorum *De la Crusca*. Scriptio ipsa oscitantia summa peracta videtur, multis passim omissis, translatis, iteratis non modo verbis, sed sententijs. Interpres ipse, quicumque fuerit, ineptus homo fuisse videtur, credulus, somniator, fabulator, battologus, puer muliercula ; tot nugas interserit ; adeo ut singularibus, que solus ipse refert, tuta fides haberi non possit. Quare caute eorum usus faciendus erit : nihilominus nonnulla, saltem variantium nomine suppeditabit.

And on the title is written : Titulus hic est alterius characteris et recensioris.

The transcript which was then made with so great care is on the whole faithful, but some common words—*quando, quia, &c.*—were mistaken throughout, and there are a few more important errors, slips, and omissions, so that the recovery of the original is a matter of great congratulation. The old judgement of the value of the text has been singularly reversed by Professor BENEDETTO and other modern critics, for it is now recognized as a document of quite first rate importance, and it is exactly “the singularities which he alone records” for which we are specially grateful.

In making the transcript which is now printed I have tried to copy the original letter for letter, only writing out the abbreviations (except &) in full, and have even preserved the erratic and often apparently meaningless punctuation ; feeling that students who use such a text will like to have as nearly as possible an exact representation of the manuscript, unchanged by any editing at all. It has proved to be impossible to be perfectly consistent in the use of capital letters, especially of the large capitals which begin the paragraphs. The double spaces indicate the ends of the sentences, and are indeed a piece of editing as the sentences are not divided in the manuscript. Missing letters and, sometimes, words are often supplied in square brackets ; additional or wrong letters have not been left out or corrected.