

Introduction

1 Fortunatianus of Aquileia

The principal ancient source for Fortunatianus of Aquileia is the paragraph referring to him in Jerome's *On Famous Men*, written in 393:

“Fortunatianus, an African by birth, bishop of Aquileia when Constantius was emperor, wrote a commentary on the Gospels with ordered headings in a terse and rustic style. He is considered detestable because when Liberius, bishop of Rome, went into exile for the faith, he was the first to harass him, to break him and to force him to sign up to heresy.”¹

The name Fortunatianus is well attested in African Christian circles from the third to the fifth century, which fits Jerome's assertion of his African origin.² The year of his birth is unknown, although it was around 300, and we have no information concerning his early life. Constantius II ruled from 337 to 361, initially in conjunction with his brothers but as sole emperor from 353. His support of Arianism met with resistance from Liberius, pope from 352 to 366, whom he sent into exile for two years or so following the Council of Milan in 355. Although modern scholars are uncertain of the extent to which Liberius eventually acquiesced with the emperor's Arianism, Jerome was convinced of this and also referred to it in his *Chronicle*.³ Doubt is also cast on Jerome's historical accuracy by the positive terms in which Liberius himself mentions Fortunatianus in a letter to Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli from 340 to 371:

“I have also sent letters to Fortunatianus, our brother and fellow bishop, whom I know does not fear human persons and has greater consideration for the future rewards, so that he too may see fit to be vigilant with you even now, for his personal integrity and for the faith which he knows he has kept even with the risks of the present life.”⁴

Fortunatianus is listed as bishop of Aquileia among the signatories to the canons of the Council of Sardica in 342/3 and the letter sent by those bishops to Pope Julian I, but the exact dates of his episcopacy are unclear. Nothing certain is known regard-

¹ Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 97. On the translation of *commentarios* as “a commentary”, see below.

² Cyprian refers to a lapsed bishop Fortunatianus in Letter 65, while no fewer than four bishops called Fortunatianus participated in the Conference of Carthage in 411: most interventions are made by the Catholic bishop Fortunatianus of Sicca (who is also mentioned in Augustine's *Retractationes*), but there is also a Fortunatianus of Neapolis (1.126), a Fortunatianus of Meta (1.187) and a Fortunatianus of Senemsala (1.201).

³ Jerome, *Chronicon*, ad an. 349 p. Chr.

⁴ Liberius, *Epistula 3 ad Eusebium Vercellensem* (see CCSL 9, 123).

ing his predecessor, not even the name. The last mention of Fortunatianus in the extant sources dates from 358, but his death is likely to have been somewhat later. His successor Valerian is first attested as attending a Synod in Rome, probably in 371. Valerian was succeeded by Chromatius of Aquileia, a noted writer and preacher, who occupied the see from around 388 until his death in 406/7.⁵

2 The Early History of the Commentary on the Gospels

Although Jerome uses the plural *commentarios* in his description quoted above of Fortunatianus' exposition of the Gospels, this is one of his standard ways of referring to a single commentary and need not indicate multiple works.⁶ He uses the same word in a letter asking Paul of Concordia to provide him with a copy of this and two other works:

“In case you think that my request is modest, you are being asked for a pearl from the Gospel, *the words of the Lord which are sacred words, silver from the earth which has been tested by fire and refined seven times*, namely the commentary of Fortunatianus, and, for knowledge of the persecutors, the history by Aurelius Victor as well as the letters of Novatian.”⁷

The fact that Jerome does not specify the subject of the commentary implies that it is a single work. Jerome's third and final mention of Fortunatianus is in the preface to his Commentary on Matthew, where he lists it as one of the works he read in preparation for his own exposition:

“I admit that I read ... also the works by the Latin writers Hilary, Victorinus and Fortunatianus, from which, even if only a little were taken, something worthy of memory would be written down.”⁸

Apart from Jerome, Fortunatianus' work seems to have been read mostly in the region where it originated: Rufinus of Aquileia apparently knew it, and Chromatius of Aquileia is heavily dependent on the work of his predecessor, both in his Commentary on Matthew and some of his sermons, although he does not refer to Fortunatianus by name. After this, Fortunatianus' commentary seems to have fallen largely into oblivion. Although the work was used by a couple of writers of the late antique

⁵ For a full discussion of what is known about Fortunatianus' life see DORFBAUER, Zur Biographie.

⁶ For example, three paragraphs later, Jerome uses the same plural noun to refer to the Commentary on Matthew by Hilary of Poitiers (Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 100).

⁷ Jerome, *Epistulae*, 10.3. The quotation is from Psalm 12:6.

⁸ Jerome, *Commentarii in evangelium Matthaei*, praef.

and early medieval periods, it is only in certain Carolingian commentators that Fortunatianus is again mentioned by name. Both Claudius of Turin († ca. 828), in the dedicatory epistle to his *Commentary on Matthew*, and Hrabanus Maurus († 856) are dependent on Jerome's commentary. The latter makes two references in the preface of his *Commentary on Matthew*: the first reproduces the list of Latin and Greek sources given in Jerome's commentary, while the second places Fortunatianus alongside a different range of Latin authors:

“Therefore, having gathered from various sources the most notable and worthy writers on Holy Writ, I undertook to examine carefully what they said and what they observed in the words of St Matthew in their works: I mean Cyprian and Eusebius, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Fulgentius, Victorinus, Fortunatianus, Orosius, Leo, Gregory Nazianzen, Pope Gregory of Rome, John Chrysostom and the other Fathers, whose names are written in the book of life.”⁹

Although the subsequent account of his working methods suggests that Hrabanus Maurus read most of these works for himself, this seems extremely unlikely in the case of Fortunatianus, and there are no clear borrowings to be found in the text. Hrabanus' slightly younger contemporary, Paschasius Radbertus († ca. 865), lamented in his own *Commentary on Matthew* that Fortunatianus' commentary was not available to him:

“As for the rest, I should like our contemporaries to consider the number and quality of the expositors of this work belonging to the eloquence of the Greeks; then they may realise which documents Latin poverty is lacking, because hardly any comments from earlier writers have come into our hands. Even though Fortunatianus and Victorinus are said to have published works on Matthew, we have not yet been able to find them.”¹⁰

For almost one thousand years, then, nothing of Fortunatianus' commentary was known to survive.¹¹

9 Hrabanus Maurus, *Expositio in Matthaem*, praef.

10 Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matthaem*, 1.140.

11 For more detailed information on the early history of Fortunatianus' work see the introduction to Dorfbauer's edition.

3 The Rediscovery of the Commentary on the Gospels

In 1920, André Wilmart published two brief fragments from a twelfth-century manuscript of Latin homilies in the municipal library of Troyes.¹² These expositions of short passages from Matthew 21 and 23 are both attributed to a “Bishop Fortunatus”, and Wilmart observed that this might be a corruption of “Fortunatianus”. Three decades later, Bernhard Bischoff noticed a brief section of an anonymous Latin florilegium in a ninth-century manuscript in Angers with the following introduction:

“Now, indeed, we have extracted some comments from the book of the blessed Fortunatianus, bishop of Aquileia, which it is appropriate to make known here.”¹³

These three extracts were reprinted under the name of Fortunatianus of Aquileia in a collection of short or fragmentary fourth-century Italian Christian writings in the *Corpus Christianorum* series in 1957; a full edition of the anonymous glosses in the Angers manuscript was produced by Robert E. McNally in 1973.¹⁴

In October 2012, Lukas Dorfbauer encountered the anonymous gospel commentary which constitutes the majority of Codex 17 in Cologne Cathedral Library. Copied in the Rhineland in the first third of the ninth century, this parchment codex of 103 pages boasts a fine illuminated title page, followed by two pages written in uncial script before the Caroline minuscule script which is used by the five principal copyists in the rest of the volume. The manuscript had been fully digitised and put online in the *Codices Electronici Ecclesiae Coloniensis* collection in 2002, and was also included in the catalogue of Cologne Cathedral manuscripts made in 1995.¹⁵ The principal interest of the manuscript had previously been as the sole witness to an apocryphal Letter of Annas to Seneca on Pride and Idols (fol. 99–102), first edited in 1984 by Bischoff who believed that the work could date from the fourth century.¹⁶ Dorfbauer, however, noticed a number of features in the Gospel commentary which indicated an early date for that, too. In addition to the opening pages, possibly reproducing a late antique exemplar, the Latin name of the evangelist Luke was not the standard *Lucas* but *Lucanus*, a form found in much earlier gospel books. The textual affiliation of the biblical quotations was not with the Latin version of Jerome

¹² Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale 653: see WILMART, *Deux expositions*.

¹³ Angers, Bibliothèque municipale 55, fol. 9v: see BISCHOFF, *Wendepunkte*, 238–240.

¹⁴ CCL 9, 366–370; MCNALLY, *Scriptores*, 127–149.

¹⁵ See <http://www.ceec.uni-koeln.de> for the digitised Cologne manuscripts; ANDERSON – BLACK, *Medieval Manuscripts* (updated electronic edition at <http://www.ceec.uni-koeln.de/projekte/CEEC/texts/Anderson/Anderson.html>).

¹⁶ BISCHOFF, *Der Brief*; see now JAKOBI, *Epistula Anne*.

from the latter part of the fourth century, commonly known as the Vulgate, but with Old Latin biblical manuscripts. When Dorfbauer recognised in the preface of the commentary the extracts attributed to Fortunatianus in the Angers florilegium, followed by an extensive index of chapter titles corresponding to Jerome's description of the work in *On Famous Men*, the identification of the text could no longer be in doubt: this was a manuscript of Fortunatianus' commentary. Sure enough, the Troyes fragments too matched the relevant sections of the commentary on Matthew.

The discovery was announced in an article published in *Wiener Studien* in 2013, and Dorfbauer began work on an edition of the commentary.¹⁷ He established that the work as transmitted in the Cologne manuscript appeared to be largely complete, but there were a few sections missing due to physical damage in an earlier copy and frequent textual corruptions. The full text of Fortunatianus permitted the identification of other witnesses to the commentary. The most extensive was a manuscript in Zürich, copied in the late eighth or early ninth century, which supplies a few passages missing from the Cologne codex.¹⁸ In addition, Fortunatianus' commentary turned out to have been a major source for a text traditionally called *Interpretatio evangeliorum* (Interpretation of the Gospels) and attributed to one "Epiphanius Latinus". This is, in fact, a composite work created from a single long excerpt from Fortunatianus and a collection of sermons by an anonymous Italian bishop from late antiquity. Similar patchworks involving extracts from Fortunatianus are found in the *Commentary on the Gospels* by "Pseudo-Theophilus", which seems to have been written in France or Northern Italy in the seventh century, the anonymous *Expositio Iohannis iuxta Hieronimum* (Exposition of John according to Jerome), a compilation of the later seventh or eighth century possibly having an Irish background, and the *Commentary on Matthew* by a writer of the same time usually called "Frigulus" by modern scholars. An extract previously identified as part of Chromatius of Aquileia's *Commentary on Matthew* was actually written by his predecessor, while some homilies ascribed to Hilary of Poitiers and several sermons in the Pseudo-Augustine corpus also derive from Fortunatianus' commentary. The textual state of most of these additional witnesses, many of which feature abbreviations and adjustment of the commentary or its biblical quotations, proves the superiority of the Cologne manuscript. Nevertheless, they are useful in emending many of the scribal mistakes found in the Cologne manuscript, and they also demonstrate the continued use of this commentary, albeit anonymously, from the centuries after Jerome and Chromatius until the early Carolingian period.

The study of Fortunatianus' *Commentary on the Gospels* remains in its infancy. During the preparation of the edition, Dorfbauer published a number of articles on

¹⁷ See DORFBAUER, *Der Evangelienkommentar*.

¹⁸ Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, C 64. See DORFBAUER, *Codex Zürich*.

features of interest and there has also been a study of its text of John.¹⁹ In September 2015, a colloquium was held at the University of Salzburg (Fortunatianus Redivivus) which considered various aspects of the commentary based on a preliminary version of the edition. These papers have now been published in a companion volume to the edition and the present translation in the CSEL series. The critical edition features an extensive German introduction to the commentary as well as lists of Latin words, proper nouns, biblical parallels and sources.

4 The Structure and Content of the Commentary on the Gospels

The commentary as transmitted in the Cologne manuscript consists of four principal sections: an initial section on the characteristics of the four Gospels (**praef.**, lines 1–133 of the edition);²⁰ an extensive exposition of Matthew 1:1–2:18, apparently in three chapters (**M. long. I–III**, lines 134–574); a numbered list of the titles for each of the 160 sections of the full commentary (**cap. M. I–CXXVIII / cap. L. I–XIII / cap. J. I–XVIII**, lines 575–755); the commentary itself, treating almost all of the Gospel according to Matthew in 129 chapters (**M. I–CXXVIII**) followed by a portion of Luke in 13 chapters (**L. I–XIII**) and the opening of John in 18 chapters (**J. I–XVIII**) (lines 756–3306). There is no initial dedicatory letter or statement of authorial intent. The indication of the end of a given section, *explicit*, is found at the end of the first two parts and also at the end of the whole commentary in the Cologne manuscript (lines 133, 574 and 3306). Nevertheless, the unity of the work is demonstrated by internal connections. In particular, the first seven chapters of the full commentary refer back to the earlier, more detailed treatment of the beginning of Matthew, which itself contains an indication of the commentary to follow and a reference to the preceding introduction.²¹ The critical edition by Dorfbauer includes, as an Appendix, two passages from the “Pseudo-Theophilus” commentary which may represent borrowings from Fortunatianus in sections missing from all extant witnesses to the commentary (“Excerpta dubia”).

The opening section (*praef.*) is not explicitly marked as a preface in the Cologne manuscript. Its heading “Rule of the Four Gospels” (*Regula evangeliorum quattuor*), also present in the Zürich manuscript, appears to pertain to this section rather than

¹⁹ See the bibliography below.

²⁰ Note that all references to line numbers in the present introduction and in the footnotes to the translation refer to the lines of the Latin critical text.

²¹ The later commentary is mentioned at lines 385: “You will find here a more careful treatment of what I have noted briefly to be read in its own place”; the reference to the “rules” of the Gospels (line 136) and the association of Luke with the Law (line 141) connect it with the preceding section.

the whole commentary. Each Gospel is described by Fortunatianus as having its own defining characteristic or “rule”: righteousness in Matthew, the Law in Luke, prophecy in Mark, and Christology (“the beginning of the Son of God”) in John. The evangelists are also identified with the four creatures of Ezekiel and Revelation: Matthew is the man and Luke the calf, but in keeping with Irenaeus and early traditions, Mark is the eagle and John the lion. Next, the four Gospels are each assigned one of the four rivers listed in Genesis 2: John is the Pishon, Luke is the Gihon, Matthew is the Tigris and Mark is the Euphrates. The final part of this section finds the fourfold number of the Gospels and the twelve apostles anticipated in various images from the Old Testament, including Aaron’s breastplate (Exodus 35:27), the second circumcision of the Israelites (Joshua 5:2–3), the walnut from the staff of Aaron (Numbers 17:8) and Solomon’s bronze calves in front of the Temple (1 Kings 7:23–25).²² One perplexing feature is that this final part appears as a doublet, with a slightly different wording, in the Cologne manuscript (lines 92–112 and 113–33). Repetition is a characteristic of Fortunatianus’ writing, but not usually on such an extensive scale.

The detailed exposition of the opening of Matthew (M. long) has a similar structure to the later commentary. The biblical text is quoted at the head of each portion of commentary and, apart from the first paragraph, is treated in its gospel sequence: the opening of the Gospel appears at line 153. Fortunatianus’ initial concern with the genealogy is to account for the differences between Matthew (1:1–18) and Luke (3:23–38) and explain the apparent error of arithmetic in Matthew: for the latter, he finds in Matthew 1:18 (“But the generation of Christ was as follows”) a reference to the Church which he regards as spiritually begotten by Christ: by counting this as one generation he arrives at the required number.²³ After the initial focus on the genealogy, the portions of commentary become shorter, with more regular reference to the biblical text. Many of the images and illustrative verses quoted in this section are also found in the later commentary. There are no chapter numbers which divide this section in the Cologne manuscript. However, as the treatment of Matthew 2:1 at line 385 is described as the third chapter and the conclusion of this section is described as the “end of chapter three” (line 574), indications of chapters 2 and 3 have been added by Dorfbauer at lines 291 (Matthew 1:18) and 384 (Matthew 2:1) where there are natural breaks in the commentary.

The list of chapter titles (*capitula*) is explained in an introductory heading in the Cologne manuscript as enabling users to find the reading they need more quickly (lines 575–576). It consists of 129 sections covering the whole of Matthew, followed by 13 titles for Luke extending over the modern chapters 2–5 and 18 for John 1:1–2:11. Each title reproduces the first few words of the corresponding chapter, normal-

²² See BASTIT, Le prologue, for a full discussion of this section.

²³ See GUIGNARD, Les généalogies, for a full discussion of this section.

ly from the biblical quotation: a handful of inconsistencies and non-biblical text lead to the conclusion that Fortunatianus himself produced these titles after completing the commentary.²⁴ The length of the biblical portions ranges from a few words to several verses. Although Fortunatianus proceeds according to the sequence of the Gospel, there are some surprising omissions from Matthew, with no exegesis of the modern chapters 17, 22 or 28. In addition to the textual affiliation of the biblical quotations, the interpolations in Matthew 20:24 and 24:41 confirm that Fortunatianus was using an Old Latin version of the Gospel. This is also seen in the use of *Lucanus* for Luke and the archaic *cata* (“according to”, borrowed from Greek κατὰ) rather than *secundum*. The numbering of the chapters starts afresh for Luke and John: no further reason is given for the selection of material from these Gospels and the lack of treatment of Mark other than that they are considered largely to reproduce material from Matthew.²⁵

The full commentary constitutes the bulk of the work (110 of 144 pages in the CSEL edition). Each section starts with the numeral corresponding to that in the list of chapters and a quotation of the beginning of the biblical passage under consideration. Other phrases from the passage may be quoted verbatim during the course of the exegesis, as well as an array of other biblical verses from both Testaments for illustration or comparison. The length of the sections ranges from two or three lines to several pages of text.²⁶ Although the list of chapters is complete in the Cologne manuscript, the body of the commentary is lacunose for parts of chapters M. LVI–LXVI and M. CVII–CVIII as well as J. XVII–XVIII due to damage in an earlier copy, as noted above: some of the missing text can be supplied from the Zürich manuscript and other secondary witnesses. In addition, inconsistencies in grammar and sense indicate that there are numerous smaller lacunae of indeterminate length caused by a copyist accidentally skipping one or more lines, as well as a number of nonsense readings which defy emendation. There is a short preface at the beginning of the section on Luke (lines 2707–2719), reproducing material from the first section; the preface to John is much longer (lines 2852–2934) and introduces new observations and images. Other than these, the other two Gospels are treated in the same way as Matthew. As mentioned above, there is a note after chapter 7 of the exposition of Matthew referring back to the more detailed treatment of this portion in the section preceding the list of chapter titles (lines 808–809). The commentary ends with the final section of John, which appears to be the original conclusion.

²⁴ See HOUGHTON, Divisions. Prior to the rediscovery of the commentary, scholars had thought that Jerome’s reference to *tituli ordinati* indicated the structuring of the commentary according to an early set of chapter titles from a gospel manuscript: this can no longer be maintained.

²⁵ See lines 753–754, as well as 2704–2706.

²⁶ The shortest sections are M. XXV, LXLVIII, CXVIII and CXXIII; the longest ones are M. LXXXI, LXLIII, CXVI, CXVII and J. XVII.

Unlike many fourth-century commentaries, Fortunatianus' exposition is not in the form of sermons originally delivered in a liturgical context and later polished for publication.²⁷ Contemporary practice indicates that it is likely that the work was dictated, presumably over a number of sittings. The gaps between the passages selected for comment in the latter half of Matthew, and the reduced treatment of Luke and John, may be an indication of authorial fatigue. Indeed, one may wonder whether the initial, more detailed, commentary on Matthew was an original scheme abandoned in favour of a shorter treatment. At any rate, the current arrangement, with the preservation of the initial exposition of the opening of Matthew and its cross-references to the later commentary, as well as the insertion of chapter titles based on the opening lines of the later sections of the commentary, appears to be authorial.²⁸

5 Fortunatianus' Sources

Fortunatianus, in contrast with Jerome, gives no list of the sources upon which he relied for his commentary. It is clear that he used a Latin text of the Gospels, supported by his one reference to "a Latin translator" (line 3119). No reference is made to the underlying Greek text, and it appears that Fortunatianus' knowledge of Greek was at best small.²⁹ He offers a handful of etymological references for Hebrew and Greek words which were taken either from glossaries or, simply, from his immediate sources.³⁰ These are also the likely origin of his references to Greek letters or numerals.³¹ While some of the selection of illustrative verses and images may be original to Fortunatianus, he was also working within a tradition of interpretation which is likely to have provided a number of these examples. In particular, his references to the habits of the fox (lines 1149–1160), deer (lines 1323–1330), serpent (lines 1441–1451) and viper (lines 2749–2756) show parallels with the *Physiologus*, an early Christian bestiary written in Greek.³² Dorfbauer has shown that the differences bet-

²⁷ Note, too, the addresses to a single reader (e.g. lines 808–809, 1033) as well as the use of the first-person plural (e.g. lines 400, 466, 1026–1027, 1690).

²⁸ One aspect of the commentary worthy of further examination is an apparently elevated literary style shared by the earlier sections and the commentary on John. For example, the verb *deputare* is only found in the detailed exposition of the beginning of Matthew and the commentary on John; this distribution is matched by a number of other phrases, such as the use of *quod autem ait* to introduce biblical text, the phrase *utitur principio*, and, with one exception, the verb *insinuare*. Even the distribution of words such as *typus* and *exponere* may be pertinent in this regard.

²⁹ For a full discussion, see the relevant chapter of the introduction to the critical edition.

³⁰ See lines 64, 76, 387, 401, 767–768, 1860, 2219.

³¹ Lines 1549–1552, 1860 and 3158–3159.

³² See the analysis in DORFBAUER, *Physiologus*.

ween Fortunatianus and the Physiologus make it unlikely that he was reliant on a copy of it in Greek or Latin; similarly, direct dependence on Origen, one of the sources for the Physiologus, may also be ruled out. Instead, Fortunatianus seems to have taken these details from a Latin intermediary deriving from Origen, for which the best candidate is the lost Gospel Commentary by Victorinus of Poetovio. Victorinus is known as the first writer of commentaries in Latin on various books of the Bible (Genesis, Isaiah, Song of Songs etc.), and closely followed interpretations in earlier Greek exegetes such as Origen or Hippolytus. The literary style of the only commentary of Victorinus which has come down to us, on the Book of Revelation, appears similar to that of Fortunatianus: there are many shared ideas and sometimes even verbal similarities between these two writers. We can therefore be sure that Victorinus' works were an important influence on Fortunatianus, and it is likely that Victorinus was the most significant mediator for the bishop of Aquileia of interpretations originally found in second- and third-century Greek writers.

Another example of such mediation of Origen lies behind Fortunatianus' comment on the reading "Bethany" in John 1:28.³³ Fortunatianus mentions that "Bethara" (or "Bethabara") is a more plausible location, yet despite the ultimate source of this proposal being Origen's Commentary on John Fortunatianus shows no awareness of the original context or the manner in which the variant was introduced, assuming that it is a translator's error (line 3119). Again, Victorinus of Poetovio is the most probable source. Dorfbauer has identified a number of other probable parallels in Fortunatianus ultimately going back to Origen's Commentary on John and Commentary on Matthew. These include the identification of Bethphage in Matthew 21:1 with the Church, as the "House of Eating" (lines 2218–2220). Dorfbauer plausibly suggests that this bizarre image derives from a misreading of Origen's commentary: although the same etymology is found for Bethphage, Origen offers the more straightforward association of the Church with the Mount of Olives, part of the verse which is overlooked by Fortunatianus (or, rather, his immediate source).³⁴

Parallels may also be found between Fortunatianus and the relatively small amount of surviving Christian literature in Latin which predates him. The identification of the figures of the evangelists and the possibility of their connection with the four rivers in Genesis (lines 2–91) are present in Victorinus of Poetovio's Commentary on the Apocalypse 4.4, albeit in a less developed way.³⁵ Several of the examples of the number twelve in the Old Testament (lines 92–123) match Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 4.13.3–4, and there are further similarities with this author.³⁶ Other corre-

³³ See DORFBAUER, *Bethania*.

³⁴ DORFBAUER, *Bethania*, 190–197, especially 196.

³⁵ Further overlaps with this work are found at lines 477, 1152, 1215–1216, 1452–1457, 1697–1706, 1884–1889, 1939–1946, 1994, 2369, 2858–2863.

³⁶ These are indicated in Dorfbauer's index of sources at lines 323–327 and 2161–2162 (*Contra Marcionem*), lines 47–49 and 1567–1579 (*De carne Christi*), and lines 379–382 (*Apologeticum*).

spondences with later authors may hint at a shared source, or simply commonplaces of Christian exegesis. The investigation of Fortunatianus' sources, just like the examination of his influence on later writers, remains work in progress.

6 Exegesis and Theology in the Commentary on the Gospels

The principal characteristic of Fortunatianus' exegesis is a figurative approach, relying on a set of concepts associated with key terms in order to create an allegorical decoding of the text.³⁷ Fortunatianus normally calls these concepts "figures" (*figurae*), with occasional use of the verbs "to figure" or "to prefigure" (*figurare, praefigurare*) and the adverb "figuratively" (*figuraliter*). Although *figura* is the technical term for allegory, in order to preserve the connection between these words, "figure" has been used throughout the present translation. On five occasions, Fortunatianus uses the word "type" (*typus*) in the same sense.³⁸ The most common terminology, however, is simply "to show" or "to indicate" (*ostendere* and *demonstrare*), alongside "is understood as" or "is taken as" (*intellegitur* and *accipitur*). There are also references to a "spiritual understanding" (*spiritalis intellectus* or *spiritaliter*) which justifies the use of figures. Some of the associations are obvious, while others are more creative: bodies, mountains, towns, boats, sheep and hens are figures of the Church, as are a number of female characters including Eve, the Queen of Sheba, the girl raised by Jesus in Matthew 9, the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 and Abraham's wife Sarah (as well as her son Isaac); towers, pleasant fragrances and the sixtyfold crop of corn in Matthew 13 are identified as virgins; eyes are associated with bishops, while hands represent presbyters and feet deacons; the sea is the world; references to darkness, the desert, sterility, disease or misunderstanding are taken to indicate Judaism, and so on. The manifold figures of Christ include the spring of water in Eden, a rock, the sun, a lion, both lambs and chickens offered as sacrifices, the flower on Aaron's staff, the character of Samson and the cockerel that crows after Peter's denial. While some of Fortunatianus' figurative equations may be his own inventions, most of them are firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Christian exegesis and go back at least to the time of Origen if not before.

Fortunatianus also sees significance in numbers. Any reference to three, four, five or twelve is connected, as might be expected, with the Trinity, Evangelists, Pentateuch and Apostles respectively. The numbers ten and twenty, written in Greek by

³⁷ For discussions of Fortunatianus' exegesis see also KREINECKER, *Kingdom Parables*, and PERESOTTI, *Simboli ecclesiali*.

³⁸ Lines 389, 568, 1160, 2743, 3014.

the letters *I* and *K* respectively, are identified as the first letters of Jesus and the Lord (*Iesous* and *kyrios* in Greek).³⁹ Fortunatianus always connects ninety-nine (symbolising what is imperfect, and therefore ‘evil’) with the left hand and the Jews and one hundred (symbolising what is perfect, and thus ‘good’) with the right hand and the Church, whether the context is the Parable of the Lost Sheep or the age of Abraham. The background to this is the old Roman system of finger-reckoning: numbers up to 99 were denoted by the position of the fingers of the left hand, 100 (and its multiples) by those of the right hand. Support for figures is also provided by scriptural references or quotations, usually from the Old Testament, in which the same concept is alleged to be present. A typical combination of these elements of figurative exegesis may be seen in Fortunatianus’ exposition of Matthew 6:3 in chapter M. XXIII:

“*What the right hand does, the left hand should not know: the right side is always taken as the Church, because of the number of one hundred at which age a son was born to Abraham. This is Isaac, who is the figure of the people of the Church; a ram is slaughtered in his place, which is Christ on behalf of the people. But the left side is the synagogue, for the reason that Abraham is circumcised at the age of ninety-nine; this total is held by the left hand, which is useless and does not work like the right hand.*” (lines 1000–1006)

While the connections between such figures rely on deductive leaps which are not at all obvious to modern readers, these appear to be entirely natural to Fortunatianus and the conceptual exegetical world which he inhabits.

The frequent biblical quotations occurring throughout the commentary illustrate the importance to Fortunatianus of using Scripture to interpret Scripture. The justification for certain figures is provided by readings from the Old Testament, with several verses cited to illuminate a particular term on more than one occasion. Early in his initial commentary, Fortunatianus enunciates the following principle:

“Whatever the Old Testament contains figuratively (*figuraliter*) the New has fulfilled through the very reason of truth.” (lines 181–182)⁴⁰

To be sure, many of the verbal connections between the Old and New Testament which Fortunatianus establishes in order to bolster his interpretations appear rather far-fetched to the modern reader. For example, when he speaks about the “plank” that one must take out of one’s own eye before criticising the “splinter” in a brother’s eye (cf. Matthew 7:3–5), Fortunatianus says this must be understood in reference to Jeremiah’s words about idolatry, “Like a plank rests on the house” (Bar. 6:18); accordingly, Fortunatianus interprets Jesus’ words as a warning against idola-

³⁹ Lines 1551–1552 and 3158–3159.

⁴⁰ See also lines 1358–1359 and 1713–1714.

try (lines 1024–1033). Here, as often, it is simply the recurrence of a certain term (in this case “plank”) in different places in the biblical text which prompts Fortunatianus to establish an interpretative connection between passages which are likely to have little in common to the modern reader’s eye. Nevertheless, there are also occasions on which, following longstanding Christian tradition, the Old Testament is read as a literal prophetic anticipation of the events related in the New. There are a few instances where Fortunatianus relates a literal interpretation as well as a spiritual one. For example, he notes that Rachel’s weeping for her children “is the correct literal interpretation” (*iuxta historiam sic recte accipitur*, line 567), but that spiritually (*spiritaliter*) Rachel is a type of the Church. Elsewhere, a non-figurative reading may be identified by the adverb “literally” (*simpliciter*).⁴¹ Some of the parallels between biblical verses rely on the particular wording of the Old Latin version of the Bible known to Fortunatianus, with the Old Testament based on the Greek Septuagint rather than Jerome’s later translation according to the Hebrew.⁴²

The Church and its life are frequently in evidence in Fortunatianus’ exegesis. There are references to ecclesiastical offices (referred to as *ordines*, *gradus* and *disciplina*) and the threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons.⁴³ The only clear indications of liturgy are to baptism and communion, although there may be a reference to daily reading of the Old and New Testaments.⁴⁴ Baptism is associated with water, although the mention of “sprinkling” (*conspergitur aqua*, line 2000) may indicate liturgical practice.⁴⁵ There are several references to the baptismal font (*lavacrum*). In the exegesis of the faithful and wise servant of Matthew 24:45 (M. CXV, lines 2479–2497), the food given by the bishop or presbyter is not just teaching, but “the sharing of the sacrament” (*sacramenti communicatio*); later in the same paragraph Fortunatianus suggests that “eating or drinking with drunkards” refers to “communion” (*communicatio*) with the unworthy. His account of the Last Supper (*cena*) refers to the blessing of the bread and the cup (*panis atque calicis benedictione*, lines 2181–2182), while earlier he claims that heretics “have set fire to the harvests, which provide the true bread, and are marked as having burnt the vineyards from which the grape juice is pressed which represents blood” (lines 1157–1159). The most explicit theological statement about communion comes in the exegesis of

⁴¹ E.g. lines 554 (of Rachel, again); 1541 and 1869, both followed by a “spiritual interpretation” (*spiritalis intellectus* or *ratio*); 2093; 3218.

⁴² Fortunatianus refers to the traditional account of the creation of the Septuagint at lines 321–324.

⁴³ See especially M. LXXXV (lines 2006–2012); “presbyter” is retained for the Latin *presbyter*, while “priest” translates *sacerdos* in mentions of Jewish cultic practice.

⁴⁴ Lines 1782–1783, where the teaching of the apostles is said to follow the daily food of the Law. The daily celebration of sacraments is mentioned at lines 2589–2590. See also BUCHINGER – LEONHARD, *Evangelienkommentar*, for Fortunatianus’ references to the liturgy.

⁴⁵ For other references to Christian baptism, see lines 1616, 2451, 2821–2822 and 3018; at line 66 it is associated with the colour green (*lapis prasinus*) rather than the standard white (*candida*, line 1616).

Bethphage (M. LXLVIII, lines 2218–2220), with the observation that “the body of Christ is consumed by the faithful” in the Church.

Fortunatianus’ theology is relatively unexceptional. In addition to a reference to the intercession of the saints, he even affirms the existence of guardian angels.⁴⁶ He insists on the perpetual virginity of Mary, taking the reference to Jesus’ brothers as a way of affirming his humanity.⁴⁷ The word “Catholic” appears just three times, normally with regard to the Church.⁴⁸ Fortunatianus’ own proto-orthodoxy is evident in his description of Jesus as “God, the Son of God” or “our God and Lord”, phrases which seem to be characteristic of this commentary. Although Fortunatianus seems not to expect the imminent end of the world, he is clear that Christians are living in the end-times, which were inaugurated by the coming of Jesus.⁴⁹

The focus on Scripture and the figurative world results in a lack of reference to Fortunatianus’ contemporary context. One of the few external references in the commentary is to coinage. The reference to the “penny” in Matthew 5:26 is expanded with the observation that the *quadrans* has a value of three *unciae*: these were marked on the coin as three dots, as surviving examples from a long period of history bear witness.⁵⁰ The description of the nature and cross-section of the walnut as a figure of the Gospels, two Testaments and Passion (lines 100–107, 123–130) may be a traditional illustration or developed by Fortunatianus from an earlier source, like much of the material in the preface and the references to the animals corresponding to the Physiologus as mentioned above. The two references to menstruation (lines 2987 and 3015) may be surprising to modern readers but are not exceptional in context.

Perhaps the most striking example of Fortunatianus’ symbolic world is his treatment of Jews and Judaism, who are perennially invoked as the antithesis of Christians. Internal rivalry was a far more characteristic feature of Christianity in fourth-century Italy than conflict with Jews. While there were Jewish communities in north Italy at the time, it is unlikely that Fortunatianus had much experience of contemporary Judaism, or would even have recognised a Jew in the street. For example, the reference to sacrifices as current in Judaism is anachronistic by almost three centuries.⁵¹ Instead, the association of Jews with desertion and wickedness appears to serve the function of a straw man, an “other” against which Christians can define themselves regardless of the extent to which the characterisation has any basis in reality. It is also possible that Fortunatianus inherited some of this material from

⁴⁶ M. LXXVIII, lines 1836–1837 and M. LXXXVI, lines 2018–2019.

⁴⁷ See lines 360–362 and 1565–1571.

⁴⁸ Lines 1603, 1622 and 1935. It is worth noting that this adjective is also added in a secondary witness at line 1653.

⁴⁹ E.g. lines 1140, 1860–1861, 1886, 1949–1950, 3157–3158.

⁵⁰ See lines 983–984.

⁵¹ Lines 2586–2587.

earlier sources written in a context of greater antagonism, although this is already incipient in some of his biblical sources.⁵²

Given the religious and political context of the time, it is also surprising that Fortunatianus makes little reference to heresy. Two verses are noted as posing particular problems to heretics (*heretici*);⁵³ they are also described as “schismatics” (*scismatici*, line 1412) and “false prophets” (*pseudoprophetae*, line 2373). For Fortunatianus, the majority of heresies appear to be in the past, given that he claims that they were the target of the author of the Gospel according to John (lines 2907–2910). The exception is his one reference to the Arian heresy (*heresis Arriana*) at line 2926: this follows a passage drawn from the Nicene Creed of a few decades earlier, and observes that Arians insist “the Lord was made, not born”.⁵⁴ This gives little indication of the upheaval experienced by the Church in north Italy during the rule of Constantius II.

7 The Translation

The goal of the translation has been to make Fortunatianus’ commentary available to readers with little or no Latin. I have aimed to preserve the structure and forms of the original in order both to enable users to identify recurrent vocabulary and concepts and to facilitate comparison with the text of the Latin edition. Some attempts have been made to render a Latin term by the same English word throughout, even though this sometimes results in an unusual collocation (e.g. “character” for *persona*, or “land” for *terra*).⁵⁵ The sequence of verb tenses is often unexpected, but has generally been maintained in the translation. Adjustments have occasionally been made for the sake of readability, such as splitting up lengthy periodic Latin sentences,⁵⁶ omitting connectives or replacing pronouns by proper nouns. At the same time, I have tried to retain a flavour of Fortunatianus’ style, despite Jerome’s observation about its lack of refinement. His regular use of *ergo* is usually rendered by “so” or “then”; *scilicet* corresponds to “plainly”; *id est* or *hoc est* are often translated as “meaning”, although sometimes explanations of this type are simply placed in

⁵² See, for example, the references to the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10:25) at lines 2633 and 3289. Another example of possible anachronism may be the reference to martyrdoms as current events (e.g. line 2309).

⁵³ Matthew 12:46 (line 1565); Matthew 26:38 (line 2645).

⁵⁴ A further reminiscence of the Nicene Creed is found at lines 1855–1861.

⁵⁵ Among the exceptions, *caelum* may be translated by “heaven” or “sky” (although the number of the Latin is preserved), while *gentes*, which Fortunatianus normally uses meaning “Gentiles”, sometimes has the wider sense of “races” (e.g. lines 3009–3010).

⁵⁶ Some sentences extend to between eight and ten lines of the CSEL edition (e.g. lines 1350–1357, 1524–1533, 2856–2865).

parentheses in order to preserve the flow of the sentence. The text as a whole is marked by frequent repetition of vocabulary and ideas, and sometimes even complete phrases. Technical Christian terms are used in their established form and are translated by the traditional equivalent.⁵⁷

The greatest challenge for the interpreter is posed by the corrupted form of text in the Cologne manuscript. Many of the anomalies and apparent nonsense readings have been resolved by Lukas Dorfbauer and Clemens Weidmann, as noted in the critical apparatus of the CSEL edition. In other places, however, the original text appears to be irretrievable, and Dorfbauer has posited a lacuna, marked as ⟨...⟩, or printed the reading of the manuscript between *obeloi*.⁵⁸ It is possible that future discoveries or critical ingenuity may resolve these, in which case the translation should be emended accordingly. I have not translated material printed in square brackets in the critical text, which the editor believes to be extraneous material incorporated in the Cologne manuscript.

Biblical quotations have been translated as they stand, given Fortunatianus' use of an early, non-standard Latin text, although reference has been made to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). It should be noted that Fortunatianus is not always consistent in the form of biblical text in his quotations, and this has been reproduced in the translation. Italics correspond to those in the critical text. Proper nouns have been normalised to the form in the NRSV, although where this differs significantly from the Latin form, this has been indicated in a footnote. Traditional capitalisation has been used. I have attempted to use gender-neutral forms except when specified by the context.

The structure of the translation corresponds to the Latin critical text. The section divisions and paragraphing are identical. Line numbers relating to the critical edition have been inserted in multiples of 5. In the main section of the commentary, an indication of the biblical passage treated in the comment has been provided in brackets after the chapter number. Other biblical quotations, as well as a few explanations and cross-references, are given in footnotes.⁵⁹ Further comments on sources, as well as a fuller biblical apparatus, are to be found in Dorfbauer's critical edition.

⁵⁷ Less common words (e.g. *logion* in line 145) derive from the biblical text used by Fortunatianus. Nevertheless, a distinction may be observed between his vocabulary and that of the Latin Bible: for example, *pusillus* ("tiny") is only found in biblical quotations.

⁵⁸ In the translation, lacuna marks are reproduced in the text and uncertain readings are indicated in footnotes.

⁵⁹ In the critical edition, quotations are identified according to the Latin Vulgate, but in the translation the names of books and verse numbering have been changed to the system used in the NRSV.