THE AUTHOR OF THE OPUS IMPERFECTUM IN MATTHAEUM

BY

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The identity of the author of the Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum remains a vexing problem central to a problematic text. This work in the view of some textual critics unites comments on Matthew collected from manuscripts dating to three separate periods: the eighth and ninth, the twelfth, and the fourteenth centuries. Such an editorial process of uniting groups of texts with no known author does not guarantee the unity of authorship for all three groups. However, if arguments presented elsewhere validly conclude to the essential unity of the work, as presently edited, and to a Latin author, perhaps the question of authorship can be appropriately raised.

The internal evidence of the text yields several important clues about the Latin author: his ecclesiastical rank, his other literary works, his position in a time of theological controversy, his chronological setting, and his knowledge of Constantinople. An examination of each of these characteristics will provide a profile of the author and the basis for suggesting his identity.

Perhaps the clearest statement the author makes about his status in the Church is contained in 677A, where he identifies himself as one of those who are uniuscujusque regionis pastores. In the context the notion of an individual region contrasts with the whole of Galilee, an item in Mt. 4. 23 on which he is commenting. The term pastores has led M. Meslin to identify the author as a bishop, but P. Nautin has insisted on the implications of the term regio, which he points out does not mean a diocese but rather a district within a city. On the supposition that pastor regionis refers to a parish, he identifies the author as "le prêtre chargé d'une paroisse."

Both terms, pastor and regio, require separate examination. First of all, the transition in P. Nautin's argument from pastor to presbyter is invalid. The function of the word pastor in this passage yields ultimately to the role of doctor. Such a transition is implicit in the author else-
where, e.g. in 738D where *doctores haeretici* are termed *devoratores*, and anyone taught by them is *non pastus*. The juxtaposition of *pastores et doctores* in Eph. 4. 11 could easily suggest the transition which Pelagius had indicated in his commentary on the passage: *Pastores sunt sacerdotes, doctores uero omnes qui sunt idonei ad alios instruendos. omnis ergo pastor doctor, non omnis [qui] doctor et pastor.* The first task is to identify who in the terminology of the author is a *doctor*.

In a general sense of the term all Christians are *doctores Ecclesiarum* inasmuch as they are prophets who proclaim the reality of Christ intimated by the prophet of the Old Testament who spoke of *de Christo venturo*:

*Sed et omnes Christiani prophetae dicuntur, qui in regnum et in sacerdotium et in prophetiam ungentur. Nec enim potest quis propheticos interpretari sensus, nisi habeat spiritum prophetiae. Haec autem diximus, ut ostendamus, quia prophetae, de quibus loquitur Christus, doctores dicuntur (738A).*

But in the case of laymen this role of teaching is not literally fulfilled in the present life: *Laicus enim in die judicii stolam sacerdotalem accipiet, et a Deo chrismate ungetur in sacerdotium (852B).* Hence the *doctor* must be a *sacerdos*, but the office also includes anyone who is a *clericus*:

*sic sacerdos, et omnis clericus, etsi specialiter non promittat, tamen per hoc ipsum quod doctor constituitur aliorum, tacite promittere Deo videtur, in omnibus obauditurum se Deo (852B).*

In one passage he seems to include the office of *lector* under the *opus clericale* (624C). Beside the *sacerdos* or *clericus* and *laicus* is the *ecclesiasticus vir* (686C) who is in the general category of *spirituales personae* among whom are included *aut continens vidua, aut monachus, aut virgo, id est, qui se Deo tradidit* (858C). The author further specifies who have the *honor sacerdotalis* by distinguishing them from the *diaconi, ecclesiastici, and laici: et ejicit omnes vendentes gratiam Dei de Ecclesia, episcopos, presbyteros, diaconos, omnesque ecclesiasticos, necnon et laicos* (841C). Finally, the generic term *doctores* is further specified through the function of those who are *praedicatorres* (677D-678B) and by the reason of that function must be members of the *presbyterium* (934D). Hence when the author speaks of *sacerdotes caeterique doctores* (686A), he implicitly denies the lay status of our author, who is among the *doctores*. But his specific status must be