

GRAMMATICA

AGGRESSUS

The anonymous grammar known as *Aggressus*¹ is a brief commentary on selected lemmata, pertaining to nouns, in the *Ars maior* of Donatus. In its introductory sections, *Aggressus* gestures toward several scholarly methods of textual analysis. The commentator prescribes a threefold reading of the *Ars maior* – historical, moral, and anagogical – as was more typically prescribed for the study of the Bible², and he draws on the tradition of the *accessus ad auctores* and introduces Donatus according to *locus*, *tempus*, and *persona*³. He also contrasts similar words by using the *differentiae* method associated with Isidore of Seville⁴.

Aggressus cannot be dated or localized with precision, but an origin in the late seventh or early eighth century is plausible, and its author may have been an Irish *peregrinus* in Francia or northern Italy⁵.

Four manuscript copies of *Aggressus* are known, and as Luigi Munzi points out, each of the four is transmitted in specialized compilations alongside other grammatical works⁶.

A Amiens, Bibliothèque Centrale Louis Aragon 426, ff. 18v-20r (s. VIII-IX; Corbie)⁷

B Bern, Burgerbibliothek 522, ff. 89r-91v (s. IX^{1/3}; provenance Rheims)⁸

1. Most studies refer to the work as *Aggressus quidam*, according to the *incipit* that appears in manuscripts ABN (cfr. below). However, as L. Munzi explains, *quidam* doesn't make sense in the context of the opening sentence, and manuscript C reads «*Aggressus quidem*». In his edited text, Munzi emends to “*Aggressus <sum> quidem*”, and in his more recent studies he refers to the work simply as *Aggressus*: cfr. L. Munzi, *Multiplex latinitas. Testi grammaticali latini dell'Alto Medioevo*, Napoli 2004, p. 82.

2. L. Munzi, *Custos latini sermonis. Testi grammaticali latini dell'alto medioevo*, Pisa-Roma 2011, pp. 15-6.

3. *Ibidem*, pp. 25 and 92.

4. *Ibidem*, pp. 26 and 68.

5. V. Law, *Insular Latin Grammarians*, Woodbridge 1982, pp. 92-3; Munzi, *Multiplex latinitas* cit., p. 72; M. Lapidge - R. Sharpe, with foreword by P. Mac Cana, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature 400-1200*, Dublin 1985, no. 751, p. 202. Lapidge and Sharpe place this work in the category of “*Peregrini*”, indicating Irish authorship outside of Ireland, and they suggest a date of «s. vii or viii?».

6. Munzi, *Multiplex latinitas* cit., p. 68. The present list of manuscripts synthesizes data provided by Law, *Insular Latin Grammarians* cit., p. 92, and Munzi, *Multiplex latinitas* cit., pp. 68-70.

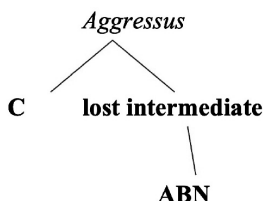
7. Law assigns this copy to the first half of the ninth century (*Insular Latin Grammarians* cit., p. 92). For a more complete description of A, cfr. L. Holtz, *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical: Étude sur l'«Ars Donati» et sa diffusion (IV^e-IX^e siècle) et édition critique*, Paris 1981, pp. 436-7.

8. For a complete account of the contents of B, cfr. Holtz, *Donat et la tradition* cit., pp. 377-8.

C Angers, Médiathèque Toussaint 493 (477), ff. 120r-122r (s. IX¹; Tours)⁹

N Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale «Vittorio Emanuele III» IV.A.34, ff. 144v-145v (s. IX *in.*; Luxeuil)¹⁰

Based on his editorial work on *Aggressus*, Munzi envisions a bipartite transmission history, with C occupying one branch of a putative *stemma codicum* and ABN the other. The readings of C are generally preferable to those shared by ABN, and Munzi further hypothesizes that errors shared among ABN suggest that they descend from a shared exemplar that is at least one copy removed from the common ancestor of all four surviving copies¹¹.



The relationship among ABN has not yet been determined more precisely than is indicated in the *stemma* above.

No indirect witnesses to the circulation of *Aggressus* have been identified, but the close relationships between *Aggressus* and other surviving grammars inform our understanding of its origins and transmission. Munzi points out that *Aggressus* resembles two other grammars, *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum* and *Quae sunt quae*, in terms of its purpose, method, and citations of earlier grammars. On these grounds, he argues that the three works likely emerged from the same Insular cultural milieu, likely on the continent and in the decades *ca.* 700¹². Vivien Law observes that a brief treatise on noun declensions and a treatise on pronouns circulated alongside *Aggressus* in ACN, and the treatise on noun declensions appears in B as well: «their self-contained nature and varying sequence ... suggest that

9. For a fuller description of C, cfr. M. de Nonno, *Un esempio di dispersione nella tradizione grammaticale latina: gli inediti «Excerpta Andecavensia»*, in *Problemi di edizione e di interpretazione nei testi grammaticali latini*, cur. L. Munzi, Roma 1994, pp. 211-62, at 215-9.

10. For a more comprehensive description of N, cfr. C. Giammona (ed.), «*Ars Ambianensis*»: *Le tre redazioni delle «Declinationes nominum»*, Hildesheim 2016, pp. LI-LIII; and cfr. also De Nonno, *Un esempio di dispersione* cit., p. 219, on the relationship between N and C.

11. Munzi, *Multiplex latinitas* cit., p. 70.

12. *Ibidem*, p. 72.

they are not by the author of *Aggressus quidam*, although they may have been chosen by him as an appropriate complement to his own work»¹³.

The *editio princeps* of *Aggressus* appeared in Hermann Hagen's *Anecdota helvetica* in 1870¹⁴. Hagen's text relies solely on **B**, and he mistakenly includes in his text of *Aggressus* the opening lines of the aforementioned work on noun declensions, which appears immediately following *Aggressus*, on f. 91v¹⁵. Munzi produced the first critical edition of *Aggressus*, based on all four manuscript witnesses, and supplemented with an introduction and commentary¹⁶.

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13. Law, *Insular Latin Grammarians* cit., p. 93. The treatise on pronouns has not been printed; on the work concerning noun declensions, cfr. below.

14. H. Hagen (ed.), *Anecdota helvetica quae ad grammaticam latinam spectant*, Leipzig 1870, repr. Hildesheim 1961, (Grammatici Latini, 8), pp. xxxix-xli.

15. Cfr. Munzi's discussion at *Multiplex latinitas* cit., pp. 67-8, esp. n. 3. The final words of *Aggressus* are «Symon Petrus», and the next nine lines that Hagen prints belong to the work on noun declensions. The remainder of the work on noun declensions has not been printed.

16. Munzi, *Multiplex latinitas* cit., pp. 74-9 (text), with introduction at 67-73 and commentary at 81-93.