

New Evidence for a Late Dating of the *De Trinitate* Attributed to Didymus

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Of unknown authorship and disputed attribution, the Greek treatise *De Trinitate* ascribed to Didymus the Blind (CPG 2570)¹ by Ferdinando Mingarelli and his brother and first editor of this work Giovanni Luigi,² has commonly been regarded as a work from the late fourth or early fifth century CE. In the past decade, however, scholars started to challenge this dating on the basis of

¹ J. A. MINGARELLI (ed.), *Didymi Alexandrini de Trinitate libri tres*, Bononiae, 1769, reprint-ed with modifications in PG 39, col. 269–992; ed. and German trans. of Books I and II, 1–7 by J. HÖNSCHEID and I. SEILER respectively, *Didymus der Blinde, De trinitate*, Meisenheim am Glan, 1975 (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, 44 and 52); cited hereafter as “Trin.”, followed by book, chapter, and paragraph reference. For convenience’s sake, reference is made only to PG, even if passages from Books I and II, 1–7 are quoted from Hönscheid’s and Seiler’s edition. A new edition, with English translation, of the whole text is under preparation by M. R. CRAWFORD, J. HICKS, and R. B. JAMIESON; see in this volume M. R. CRAWFORD, “Prolegomena to a new edition of Didymus (?), *De Trinitate* with a special focus on the first three folios of Biblioteca Angelica gr. 116”, pp. 237–264. For a *status quaestionis* on the authenticity issue, see J. D. HICKS, *Trinity, Economy, and Scripture: Recovering Didymus the Blind*, Winona Lake, 2015 (Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements, 12), pp. 20–69; M. ZAMBON, “Didyme d’Alexandrie”, in *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, vol. 7, ed. R. GOULET, Paris, 2018, pp. 485–513, at pp. 496–497; A. PERŠIČ, “1941–2021: un ottantennio di alterni giudizi sulla paternità didimea del *De Trinitate* dopo la scoperta dei papiri di Tura”, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte*, 115 (2021), pp. 157–185, at pp. 157–173; P.-M. HOMBERT, “Le *De Trinitate* attribué à Didyme d’Alexandrie: un nouveau *status quaestionis*”, *Revue d’études augustinienes et patristiques*, 69 (2023), pp. 3–84.

² F. MINGARELLI, *Veterum testimonia de Didymo Alexandrino Coeco ex quibus tres Libri de Trinitate nuper detecti eidem asseruntur*, Romae, 1764; J. A. MINGARELLI, *De Didymo commentarius*, in IDEM (ed.), *Didymi Alexandrini* (n. 1), pp. ix–lxii (reprint. PG 39, col. 139–216). On the origin of the Didymean attribution see L. DOUTRELEAU, “Le *De Trinitate* est-il l’œuvre de Didyme l’Aveugle?”, *Recherches de science religieuse*, 45 (1957), pp. 514–557, at pp. 514–515 and n. 4. On the life and works of G. L. Mingarelli (1722–1793) see the bibliography cited by P. BUZI, “The Dawn of Coptic Studies in the Shadow of the ‘City of the Two Towers’: Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli and Two Forgotten Noteworthy Coptological Achievements”, in *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte: Auf dem Pilgerweg durch 5000 Jahre ägyptische Geschichte über drei Kontinente. Heike Behlmer zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. D. ATANASSOVA et al., Wiesbaden, 2023 (Texte und Studien zur Koptischen Bibel, 4), pp. 131–146, at p. 132, n. 2.

Summary

Of unknown authorship and unlikely attribution, the *De Trinitate* ascribed to Didymus the Blind (*CPG* 2570) has generally been regarded as a work from the late fourth century CE. In the past decade, however, some scholars challenged this dating on the basis of internal evidence and source analysis. In the same vein, I recently argued that *De Trinitate* draws upon Cyril of Alexandria's anti-Arian theology, and that its testimony to a developed cult of the archangels seems to point to the early sixth century. In this article, I adduce further evidence for a late dating. First, the author's inclination to transfer expressions and concepts of anti-Arian Christology to Pneumatology, as well as the range of his sources of inspiration, suggest that he is posterior to Cyril of Alexandria, both chronologically and theologically. Second, his use of non-Christian sources as a proof of the doctrine of the Spirit reveals a certain dependence on Cyril of Alexandria's *Contra Julianum*, while the quotation of a Christian "oracle" on the Spirit, probably dating from the mid-fifth century, provides a new, previously unnoticed *terminus post quem*. Third, at several points, his references to and knowledge of heretics such as Arians, Macedonians and Eunomians depend on mid-fifth century sources. Fourth, at a passage in Book 2 in which the author of *De Trinitate* speaks of himself, he appears to have adopted an intentionally polemical style, in order to express the doctrine of the Trinity in a more forceful way and "to induce more fervour of orthodoxy" to his readers.

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