CODEX VAT. BARB. LAT. 721 AS A SOURCE FOR THE RIDDLES OF SYMPHOSIUS

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Caelius Firmianus Symphosius (4th–5th c. A.D.) is generally regarded as the author of a collection of one hundred Latin riddles of three hexameter lines each. This collection is sometimes published separately, but often is treated as a part of the *Latin Anthology*. Almost nothing is known about the life and career of Symphosius, but his riddles must have been very popular, as is indicated by the substantial number of manuscripts of them produced in the mediaeval period and by the influence exercised by them over later writers. The anonymous collection of six-line enigmas known as the *Bern Riddles* was clearly influenced by the work of Symphosius, as was the collection of riddles by Aldhelm, who mentions Symphosius by name. It is significant that ten of the riddles of Symphosius were quoted in *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, a Latin version of one of the Greek romances. In the field of Old English literature the collection of riddles known as the *Exeter Book* reflects the influence of Symphosius in considerable degree. The subject matter of these hundred enigmas by Symphosius is quite varied. The objects described in the first five, for instance, are stylus, reed, ring with gem, key, and chain.

Codex Vat. Barb. Lat. 721 (folios 49^v–52^r), saec. XI (henceforth designated V), contains an almost complete text of the Riddles of Symphosius, with only Riddle 81 omitted.[1] Although this manuscript is unknown to modern editors,[2] it almost certainly served as the

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[1] The study of Vat. Barb. Lat. 721 presented in this paper is based on a microfilm copy of the manuscript placed at the disposal of the writer by The Knights of Columbus Vatican Film Library at Saint Louis University.

[2] No mention of this codex is made in the edition of Symphosius contained in Aemilius Baehrens, *Poetae Latini minores* 4 (Leipzig 1882) 364–85, or in the edition of Alexander

chief source for the edition of the Riddles published by Joseph Castalio in 1598.[3] In fact, on the flyleaf of the codex, in addition to the title, *Fortunati Opus et Symposii Aenigmata*, there appears in a late hand the following entry: "Hic codex fuit Josephi Castalionis, ut patet ex eius epistula ad Thomam Avalum Piscariae Marchionis filium Symposii editioni praefixa." The statement in the letter to which reference is here made reads:

> Iam vero mihi quaecumque animo tuo essent iucunda pervestiganti, Aenigmatis visus es in primis gaudere, quod acerrimi est signum ingenii, et praesagium futurae prudentiae, qui decimum vix agens annum obscurissima quaeque iam vides. Quo in genere condimentum studiorum tuorum suavissimum reperisse me vehementer sum laetus. Siquidem erat apud me in postremo Venantii Fortunati codice manuscripto Symposii veteris poetae carmen eius generis antiquum, lepidum, eruditum, venustum. Itaque illud statim venit in mentem mihi, praeclare me operam positurum, si te ad festivum sane Symposii convivium invitarem, quo subamara litterarum rudimenta ea dulcedine quasi condires, ac sumeres. Hoc meum consilium vehementer adprobarunt docti homines, et vero etiam persuaserunt, ut primo quoque tempore haec Symposii aenigmata tibi dedicata publicarem, ut aliquando Latinum poetam castum, et facetum haberemus, qui tibi, ac per te ceteris proponeretur.[4]

While it is true that in V the Riddles of Symphosius are preceded by the work of Fortunatus, this taken by itself is hardly sufficient to prove that the Vatican manuscript is the one owned by Castalio and utilized by him in the preparation of his edition, since there could conceivably have been a number of different codices made up of the

Riese, *Anthologia Latina*, part 1, fasc. 1 (Leipzig 1894) 221–46, or in Raymond Theodore Ohl, *The Enigmas of Symphosius* (Philadelphia 1928).

[3] The copy of Castalio's edition used by me is a part of a much longer work entitled *Phaedri Aug. liberti Fabularum Aesopiarum libri V. Nuper a P. Pithoeo V. C. primum editi. Et iam emendati atque illustrati notis a Cunrado Rittershusio I. C. professore Norico. Accessere, in easdem Fabulas Spicilegium Gasp. Schoppi Franci: et alia quam plurima quae sequens pagella indicabit* (Lugduni Batavorum 1598). The first item mentioned on the "following page" is Castalio's edition of Symphosius. This book is divided by page numbers into three sections: the first section is numbered 1–191 and contains (181–91) the commentary of Castalio on the Riddles (but not the Riddles themselves); the second section, containing miscellaneous materials, is numbered 1–55; the third section, which contains the text of the Riddles of Symphosius, is without page numbers. I wish to express my gratitude to the photographic service of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris for providing me with a microfilm copy of this book.

[4] Castalio (above, note 3) 182, first section.

texts of Fortunatus and Symphosius. Many peculiar features of Castalio's text, however, make clear that, as a matter of fact, he based his edition almost entirely on Codex V, although he had a few other manuscripts and the edition of Pithoeus (Paris 1590) at his disposal. There are several instances in which Castalio adopts readings to be found in no manuscript except V. Examples are: 127 (37.2)[5] *confusi*] *alterni* V Cast.; 168 (51.1) *iacemus*] *iacentes* V Cast.; 179 (54.3) *morti*] *mortis* V Cast.; 313 (99.2) *veri*] *veros* V Cast.

Most important of all, however, is the fact that both V and Castalio employ a system of ciphers for recording many of the titles of riddles. The system used is a modification of that supposedly developed by Augustus. According to Suetonius, when this Emperor wished to conceal the meaning of his messages from persons who were not supposed to read them, for each letter in the text he substituted the next letter in the alphabet.[6] Thus *B* designated *A*, *C* designated *B*, *D* stood for *C*, and so on. The copyist of V, followed in most cases by Castalio, limited his substitutions to letters following the vowels. In this modified plan *B* is substituted for *A*, *F* for *E*, *K* for *I*, *P* for *O*, and *X* for vocalic *V*. In both V and Castalio *GRAPHIUM* (the title of Riddle 1) becomes *GRBPHKXM*; *CATENA* (5) becomes *CBTFNB*; *RANA* (19), *RBNB*; *CUCURBITA* (43), *CXCXRBKTB*; *ROSA* (45), *RPSB*. It will be noted that in the next to the last example cited *B* has both the value of *B* and of *A* in different positions.

In some instances in which V has titles in ciphers Castalio has converted to the standard forms: *FORMICA* (22), *VESPERTILIO* (28), *ERICIUS* (29). On the other hand there is one case in which Castalio has written a title in ciphers where V retains the standard spelling: *SCALAE* (78). Occasionally both V and Castalio retain the regular forms. Examples are: *NEBULA* (8), *NAVIS* (13), *PULLUS IN OVO* (14), *VIPERA* (15), *COCLEA* (18), and others. But most of the titles in both documents are in ciphers. Since V is apparently the only manuscript of Symphosius containing such ciphers, their presence in

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[5] All citations from Symphosius, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the text of Riese (above, note 2). The first number listed is the line number in Riese's text. In each instance the riddle number and the number of the line within the riddle have been added in parentheses for the convenience of those who may be using other texts.

[6] Suetonius, *Augustus* 88. For a detailed discussion of cryptography in antiquity see Edgar C. Reinke, "Classical Cryptography," *CJ* 58 (1962) 113-21.

Castalio's edition taken alone would be almost sufficient to prove that his text is based primarily on this manuscript.

Some of the readings listed in modern editions as conjectures of Castalio actually come from V. Such is true of 103 (29.2) *completus* for *conpletus*; 226 (70.2) *vis* for *ius* (cited by Ohl); 268 (84.2) *pulcri* for *Phrygii* (the spelling of *pulcri* is *pulchri* in V).

The manuscripts of Symphosius used in modern critical editions fall into two families or classes designated B and D.[7] The best representatives of B are Sangallensis 196, saec. x ($=\beta$) and West-monasteriensis E 919, saec. x ($=$ w); the best manuscripts belonging to D are Vossianus quart. 106, saec. IX–X ($=$ d), Sangallensis 273, saec. IX ($=a$), and Mus. Britann. Regius 12 C 23, saec. x ($=$h).[8] In addition there is one manuscript, Parisinus 10318, saec. VII–VIII ($=$ A), which at times follow B, at other times D. In some riddles A has alternate texts for a given line taken from each of the two families of manuscripts. It shows no distinct preference, however, for either group.[9]

Codex V is clearly a member of family D and within this family is closely related to da, as is indicated by the fact that in V as in da Riddle 12 precedes 11. This is not true of Parisinus 8055, saec. x ($=$ G) or Parisinus 8319, saec. XI ($=$I), other important members of D. Further proof of the close affinity between V and da is provided by the transfer of Riddle 61 to the end of the collection in all three manuscripts. This happens in these three documents only.

There are a few instances in which in individual readings V agrees with d or a or both in error against all other manuscripts: 86 (23.3) *submoveor*] *submovear* Vda; 107 (30.3) *capias*] *capies* Vd; 126 (37.1) *patri matri*] *patri matris* Vd; 198 (61.1) *uno*] *unco* Vda; 293 (92.3) *dis-cessere*] *discere* Vd (but corrected in V possibly by the first hand). There is one instance in which V agrees with da against other manu-scripts in a reading accepted by Riese as the correct one: 150 (45.1) *rubore*.

In spite of the close relationship existing between V on the one hand and da on the other, however, V cannot possibly be regarded as a

7 Riese (above, note 2) 222.
8 Ohl (above, note 2) 25.
9 Ohl (above, note 2) 26–27.

copy of either. This is indicated clearly by the fact that Riddle 51, which is omitted by da (as well as by FH) is present in its full form in V. Furthermore there is a vast number of instances in which ‚V has retained the correct reading where d or a or both are in error. One of the most significant examples is found in 205–6 (63.2–3) where a omits *patulis diffusa cavernis. intus lympha latet*—a passage retained in full by V. Other examples taken at random are the following:

36 (7.1) *mihi sunt* V, *mihi* a	206 (63.3) *sed non se* V, *sed se non* a
54 (13.1) *formosae* V, *formunsae* da	*profundit* V, *profundet* d
58 (14.2) *iam matris* V, *genetricis* d, *matris* (*iam* om.) a	209 (64.3) *ventus* V, *vetus* a
	curant V, *adurant* d
68 (17.3) *est* V, om. a	213 (66.1) *cunctas* V, *cuncta* a
79 (21.2) *nox est* V, *non est* da	215 (66.3) *nocere* V, *noceri* da
92 (25.3) *Romae* V, *Troiae* da	216 (67.1) *apta* V, *apti* a
104 (29.3) *sedes* V, *caedes* a	241 (75.2) *meo* V, *mea* a
113 (32.3) *caelis et* V, *caelo sed* da	*fato* V, *fatu* d
122 (35.3) *lingua* V, *voce* d	242 (75.3) *de limphis* V, *de nimphis* a, *demsis* d
131 (38.3) *maritum* V, *maritos* da	
135 (40.1) *est* V, om. a	*ab undis* V, *ab ignis* a, *ad ignes* d
145 (43.2) *ventis* V, *mentis* a	253 (79.2) *conpressa* V, *complexa pressa* d
et V, *qui* d	274 (86.2) *pugna* V, *pugnum* d
149 (44.3) *quia* V, *qui* da	285 (90.1) *voto* V, *fato* d
habet V, *habeo* a	287 (90.3) *secundis* V, *secundus* a
154 (46.2) *sim* V, *e* da	292 (92.2) *animas* V, *animus* a
167 (50.3) *propria* V, *proprio* d	*intus* V, *inter* a
tecto V, *tecta* a	300 (95.1) *luciferum* V, *lucificum* da
177 (54.1) *mucronis* V, *ferronis* d	*iacentes* V, *iacentem* a
192 (59.1) *comis* V, *capillis* da	308 (97.3) *qui* V, om. a
195 (60.1) *sum* V, *in* da	315 (100.1) *fata* V, *facta* a
201 (62.1) *nemus* V, *nemo* a	*relinquor* V, *remansit* a, *remanens* d
gurgite V, *iurgite* d	317 (100.3) *superest* V, *semperest* a
silva V, *silvas* a	

There are, of course, cases in which V agrees in error with manuscripts other than da. This is especially true of GI. Typical examples are: 101 (28.3) *redeo*] *sedeo* VGI; 112 (32.2) *sed mons sum*] *sed non sum* VGI; 122 (35.3) *pecoris*] *pecorum* VGI; 141 (42.1) *latine*] *latina* VGI; 143 (42.3) *olivo*] *oliva* VGI; 170 (51.3) *desinit*] *desinet* VGI.

It is clear from these examples and others which might be cited that V is closely related to GI as well as to da. It is difficult to determine the exact extent of the relationship between V and GI since the critical editions do not contain a complete listing of the variants in these two manuscripts. It is certain, however, that V cannot be

derived from either in view of the following instances in which V has the correct reading where G or I or both are in error: Riddle 17, which is in the correct order in V, precedes 16 in GI; 207 (64.1) *unus quos* V, *quos unus* GI; 275 (86.3) *illo* V, *illo est* I; 317 (100.3) *morti* V, *mortis* I.

From the evidence cited above it becomes clear that V stands in the D family somewhere between dα and GI. But, at the same time, it has been influenced considerably by some member of the B family or by some mixed manuscript such as A. In fact, in one respect it resembles A very closely. Like A, on several occasions it has alternate lines representing different traditions for a given line of text. Riddle 6, for instance, has four lines instead of the conventional three. Lines 1, 2, and 4 are identical with the texts of Riese and Ohl (except that V has *humor* for *umor* in the last line). Line 3 of V reads *est domus in alto sedis est semper in alto*, which is the reading of dαβ and several other manuscripts, with the exceptions that *sedis* appears as *sedes* in these documents and *alto* takes the form of *imo* in all but F.

Riddle 42 likewise has four lines in the version contained in V. Lines 1, 3, and 4, with slight variations, correspond to the three lines of Riese's text. Line 2 reads *pauperibus semper praeponor namque tabernis*, which (with *proponor* in place of *praeponor*) is the reading of ABGI and has been adopted by Ohl as line 2 of his text.

Another riddle which has alternate lines in V is 47. Lines 1 and 2 are identical with the first two lines of Riese's text except that V has *flama* for *flamma* (line 1) and *sed* for *et* (line 2). Lines 3 and 4 read *cum mihi peccandi meritum natura negavit / nec mihi poena datur sed habetur gratia dandi*. This is exactly the reading of A except that this manuscript has *habetuir* for *habetur*. The first of these two lines (*cum . . . negavit*) is the B text; the second (*nec . . . dandi*) is the D reading. The former is adopted by Ohl; the latter, by Riese.

A fourth riddle with a four-line text in V is 84. The first three lines, with minor exceptions, correspond to the three lines of Riese's edition. *Nomen ovis graece* (line 1) becomes in V, as in I, *nomen habens graecum*, and, as noted above, *Phrygii* (line 2) becomes *pulchri*. The third line of V and of Riese's text is the D reading. The fourth line of V, which is accepted as line 3 by Ohl, is *excidium Troiae dum bella cruenta peregi*. This is taken from the B version.

In spite of occasional inclusion in V, however, of readings from B, there can be no doubt that it belongs to the D family and is especially close in its relationships to dα.   But the large number of cases cited above in which it is correct where d or α or both are in error indicates that it is independent of these two manuscripts and in some respects better than they are.   Since d and α are considered as being two of the three best manuscripts of the D family, it follows that V occupies a very important position in that family and thus deserves the attention of future editors of the text of Symphosius.