



## FROM MY DIARY

Today I had to drive for three hours each way for a job “interview” of around twenty minutes. I already had a job offer, but I thought it wise to have a face-to-face meeting, and it proved very wise indeed. The job looks like a stress-fest. Not for me.

But I redeemed the travel time somewhat. The road passed close by Cambridge University Library, so I stopped off on the way. The volume that I wanted was waiting, for I had ordered it last night using the internet. This was the Bassetti volume, *San Valentino e il culto*, on St Valentine of Terni, to which I referred in [this post](#). My intention was to photocopy the key articles within it, which I did, and then went on my way.

The most important article was Edoardo D’Angelo, “La passio sancti Valentini martyris...”, which contains a critical text of the *Life* of St Valentine that I have been translating, together with a list of manuscripts and an attempt at a *stemma*. I have extracted the Latin text of the *Life*, this evening, using my trusty Finereader 14. It will be most interesting to see how and where it diverges from the text as given in the *Acta Sanctorum*, which I have been translating. I’ve not seen any obvious changes so far.

One deviation is regrettable. D’Angelo has decided to number the individual sentences of the *Life*, which is fine. But he also decided to ignore the section/chapter numbers from the *Acta Sanctorum*. This is not fine. It means that anyone with his text before them cannot locate material mentioned in any prior scholarship; they will have to find the *Acta Sanctorum* text. Likewise any subsequent scholarship using his edition and numbering system will force the reader to obtain access to an obscure Italian volume of collected papers, held in relatively few research libraries.

D’Angelo is not the only editor to commit this sin. A little while ago I found that Zacharopoulos, a modern Greek editor of Theophanes of Nicaea (see [here](#)), did exactly the same. This was even more of a problem because the Sotiropoulos *editio princeps* is almost completely inaccessible without an international flight.

Every new edition should always indicate the divisions or page numbers of the very first edition, the *editio princeps*. It’s only considerate towards those who will use your work.

For Valentine, I might see if I can rectify this problem myself somehow, by giving a concordance or something on this blog.

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It’s slightly odd to think that I have made brief raids up to Cambridge like this for more than twenty years now. It means that I have witnessed a lot of change there.

In fact every time I visit Cambridge University Library something is different. It is not always better. For instance some strange person has moved the photocopiers out of a dedicated room and scattered them around the building. Staff are becoming used to bewildered visitors hunting for a machine.

Likewise I am not an alumnus of Cambridge. It is merely the nearest research library that I can use. Because of this, I have to pay a fee to use the library, and outsiders like myself are

second-class readers in many little ways.

This time the change was about photocopying. In reception I asked to put some money on my library card in order to pay for photocopies at the machine. To my surprise they deducted some odd amount, on the pretext of the VAT tax. A notice in the photocopier room in the West Room informed me that university members got their photocopies ex-VAT.

I confess that I wasn't aware that national taxes on the supply of goods and services do not apply if you are a member of certain universities. This sounds unlikely, in fact. I suspect that the taxman will take a dim view of this approach, once he becomes aware. But of course he shall not learn it from me.

The other thing that made me smile was that they made me fill out a paper form, in order to add money to my card. I suppose we must expect pettifoggery from library staff. The more conscientious they are, the better for the books, but the worse for low-status readers like myself.

I confess that, in my exasperation at all this tomfoolery, I expressed myself less politely than I might have done. Luckily there was no harm done this time. But it is always a mistake, as well as uncharitable.

I shall see what Bassetti's volume looks like tomorrow!

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