

This thesis derives from an awareness of what has been considerable the interest that the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus had for the philosophical and theological thought in the seventh century. A lot of distinguished experts had considered his works and his theories as the basis for the future medieval theological speculation. The *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* are among the most puzzling surviving medieval texts, as they are presented in the form of the transmission of grammatical precepts, but they follow only in appearance the standards of the time, because there is a large use of altered rules, the presence of parts where it has been analysed the poetic philosophical encryption of the *scinderatio fonorum*, where are used non-existent words and are exhibited numerous etymologies, following the encyclopaedic model of Isidore of Seville. The works, therefore, are interwoven with theories, often at the borderline of the orthodoxy, with some contradiction between the philosophical and religious tradition; so there was themes as the world creation, the soul, the need of the use of the *sermo obscurus*, the existence of the artificial language of the twelve Latin types, these endorsed by bogus authorities and quotes unattested. From the first reading, it is possible identify the aim of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, which he gave great importance to the transmission of the philosophical message, even leaving aside the theological or touching it only marginally. All the doctrines are always clearly expressed respecting the correct biblical exegesis, but without any deepening, never apart from the observance of the rules of the natural sciences, as these influence the results of its investigations to a final confrontation with the *fides*, the last *regula* of their trueness. Virgilius Maro Grammaticus should therefore be considered a reference to assess and understand the new perspectives on the intellectual life of the early Middle Ages and to decode the medieval literature in general. His works exerted their influence generation after the other, giving to him the role of a clear witness of the continuity of the studies and indicating his love for the search of the wisdom in the period between the Late Antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages . It was therefore felt necessary the needing to analyse deeply and in its entirety the only two works preserved in the codes and that Virgilius Maro

Grammaticus produced for his brothers and students. These codes were produced to give them the tools for a proper biblical exegesis, thus implementing an operation that anticipated more than a century that was completely realized by Alcuin. The analysis carried out in this thesis has required a deep linguistic analysis of each individual epitome and epistle, working after a number of comparisons with previous, contemporary and following grammars, in order to identify and evaluate the similarities and the differences to understand by those who, really, has drawn his knowledge and how fortunate they then had his works. It has been found various direct uses operated by grammarians such as Donatus Ortigraphus and Smaragdus that used entire parts of the works of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus. Authors such as Abbone of Fleury referred in the XI century to a some Virgil of Toulouse, author of a grammar. There are only hypothesis regarding his life, the origins, the studies and the environment in which he would have been operated. There is very few information about his life and it is provided only by Virgilius Maro Grammaticus that has left some hints about it in his works. He seems having lived around the mid-seventh century, probably in Ireland or in Spain. His identity remains unclear and the his name itself has a unknown root, it is accepted by all scholars that it was a pseudonym, in fact Virgilius Maro Grammaticus says that his name was Virgilius as his teachers, beginning with Virgil of Troy, and then claiming to be a pupil of Donato and Virgilio in Asia, the inventor of the twelve different Latin languages. The name Maro would have been assigned by his teacher, Aeneas, who would derived it from the writings of a grammarian Volcano, which would have been a very well educated person, existing at the time of Noah's flood. Scholars have attributed him Spanish origin, Gallic, Irish and even Jewish, but nothing has been assessed. His work is placed around the mid-seventh century as after the work of Isidore of Seville, of which he demonstrates the knowledge of some parts of the *Etymologiae*, dated around 636, and before the 709 as Aldhelm of Malmesbury mentions it. A substantial part of the work was dedicated to highlight and comment on the peculiar characteristic of the message that he want to convey to his confreres, namely the

existence of a plurality of ways to get to the truth and to emphasize the power of the symbols to reach the *sapientia* with all possible means, from the biblical exegesis towards the philosophical doctrines, with the help of the liberal arts, that at that time meant away to challenge the dominant power, the Church. Not surprisingly, according to a suggestive image used by Virgilius Maro Grammaticus: to have a full documentation for the study of the truth, the Christian intellectuals must separate the knowledge into two separate libraries, one containing the texts of the ancient masters of Science and philosophy and the other the texts of the Fathers of the Church. What above widely justifies the willingness, indeed the necessity, of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, to conceal its identity. Only at a first reading, his works are of a pair of modelled grammars, as well as many others, the famous pair of Donato, *Ars maior* and *Ars minor*. What has come to us are 12 *epitomae* of the 15 composed and 8 *epistolae*, plus the preface, where the structural characteristics of Late Antiquity Latin grammar are presents to the last detail: definitions, lists of properties, derived properties and exceptions, discussions on forms abnormal examples from classical authorities and others. Parallel to these well-known structures, there are a lot of violations of the conventions of the ancient grammar. Virgilius Maro Grammaticus tackles the classic problems, the declination of the pronoun, the formation of the adverb, the defective verbs, the participles, and so on, but then he teaches the grammatical forms and constructions not known by any other ancient or medieval writer and his doctrine often is very different from the usual forms. Virgilius Maro Grammaticus gives voice to characters engaged in verbal battles, prophesy, write songs, tell riddles and engage in a series of disputes, riddles and allegories that unlikely have found a place in the ancient or in the modern grammars. Not by chance, in his work, he refers to any kind of authorities such as Cato, Cicero, Lucan, Homer, Horace, Propertius, Quintilian, Varro. However, these references have some problem of assessment as the styles used by them are not so plausible. Only in a few cases Virgilius Maro Grammaticus can show to refer directly to the work of a certified writer, or he quotes characters of whom trace was found as the three Virgilius and the

three Volcano, Aeneas, Origen, Sufonia, Sagillio, Blasto, the Carthaginian Sibyl, Balapsido, Galbungo and other who attributes studies and the dissertations on subjects of great importance as the Creation; there are also unfulfilled historicals whose statements echoing the roundabout expressions of Sallust and Livy. Or he refers to a certain Donato of Troy, reputed to have lived about thousand years, at the head of a catalogue of twelve, otherwise unknown, grammarians, while others, like Virgil of Asia, are presented as a professional of the *scinderatio fonorum*. Equally imaginary are the places, from India to the extreme West, and the times in a fantastic system that it has been tried to be decoded unsuccessfully. The overall analysis shows that the Virgilius Maro Grammaticus's works are more atypical rather than the other medieval grammars. Most of the doctrines taught in particular in the Epitomae I, IV and XV, and in the *Epistolae Praefatione*, III and VIII, as well as in other passages scattered elsewhere, it appears to be totally unrelated to the grammar, such as history, wisdom, cosmology, greediness, human nature, the theory of the soul; so as to suggest that the precepts of grammar are nothing more than a device to transmit the philosophical and theological doctrines to his brethren. The last part of this thesis was devoted to briefly mention some of the most different interpretations made by scholars who, from the nineteenth century onwards, for various reasons, have studied his works. Some have deemed him a poor fool, others a refined connoisseur of irony, others considered him a shameful example of the cultural degeneration of his age, but for some it was an excellent literate, a genius, a man of great culture, which his works are targeted to a small circle of educated readers like him, willing to mock and to demystify all the certainties of the medieval mentality. All of above identifies his texts as a integrate work a very special grammatical doctrine exposed as a treatment almost as ascetic, at least in the obligations that it is deemed necessary to impose to the grammarians. In a context of an extreme seriousness it is even more evident the atypical nature of this author where everything arouses doubt, names of authors, titles of works, their size, they contain statements, biographies of the grammarians, and all raises doubt on its veracity and consequently also on the meaning of the letters and

epitomes. What is certain is that in Virgilius Maro Grammaticus the Toulousain nothing is obvious. Overall, the element that appears on all the others is that Virgilius Maro Grammaticus was a man of his time, who perfectly embodied the difficulties and contradictions of those centuries, considered dark, but in fact passing through a historic transition, which saw necessary the reinventing everything from politics to religion and the language it was the basic element, the main vehicle of communication that allowed the past time wisdom to reach to the new men orphans of everything.