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Griffith, Susan B

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Susan B. GRIFFITH, University of Birmingham, UK[1]

ABSTRACT

Early Christian commentaries occasionally draw attention to what the biblical text does *not* say, and do so using a consistent rhetorical formula in Greek: Οὐκ εἶπε A, ἀλλὰ B – 'It does not say A, but B'. The purpose of this construction in context may be merely to clarify a point of vocabulary or grammar, but often it is more broadly theological, paraenetic, or even polemical. The pattern most likely entered usage from the first century BC onward in Greek commentaries on literature, philosophy, and medicine. Philo also deploys this antithesis in his Old Testament exegesis at nearly the same time, suggesting perhaps that this construction arose in a shared rhetorical tradition, possibly Alexandrian. Greek patristic commentaries develop the antithesis further into a relatively set formula, appearing with particular frequency in Origen and Chrysostom. Examples from a range of pagan, Jewish, and Christian commentaries are discussed, followed by a closer look at this pattern as found in patristic commentaries on *Galatians*. Usage of any similar formula in Latin patristic texts, however, appears to be comparatively rare.

Early Christian commentaries focus, unsurprisingly, on what the biblical text says but in doing so the commentators also, from time to time, draw attention to what the text does *not* say. This observation arose whilst researching comments that the church fathers make about variations in transmissions of the text of scripture. In looking for text-critical passages where early commentators tell us what the biblical manuscript before them really 'ought to say', I discovered that far more frequently, at least for the Greek fathers, they note what the text does not say, as a means of highlighting the specificity of the text itself rather than to point out a variant reading.

1. Structure

The structure for this rhetorical technique in the Greek commentary tradition is surprisingly formulaic, and generally takes the form of a kind of antithesis

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with a dependable pattern. Most frequently this pattern is along the lines of Οὐκ εἶπε A, ἀλλὰ B. Occasionally, a γὰρ is inserted, and/or a euphonic *nu* at the end of εἶπε: οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν A, ἀλλὰ B. And at times instead of εἶπε the verb used is λέγει. But for the most part, this pattern is so set within these small variations that, if one reads through a lot of early commentaries in Greek, it appears as a standard feature. The pattern is nearly always in this order: first what the text or author does *not* say, and then what the text or author *does* say. This structure appears frequently in a range of commentary traditions, whether about Greek literary works, medical textbooks, or Scripture, as a rhetorical device to heighten the listener or reader's attention to some element of the actual text.

Instances of this pattern also occur in the New Testament itself, particularly in verses that comment on Old Testament texts. A prime example is *Gal.* 3:16: τῷ δὲ Ἀβραὰμ ἐρρέθησαν αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ. **οὐ λέγει·** καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν **ἀλλ᾽** ὡς ἐφ᾽ ἑνός· καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου, ὅς ἐστιν Χριστός.[2] Paul here cites the Septuagint for *Gen.* 12:7 and then offers exegesis. It is not surprising, given Paul's Hellenistic education,[3] to see a rhetorical pattern from Greek literary commentaries appearing in his own interpretative writing. The New Testament verses with this rhetorical pattern, however, are relatively few in number and probably not enough to account for the frequency with which this device appears in Greek patristic commentaries.

In a few instances, the standard pattern (οὐκ εἶπε A, ἀλλὰ B) becomes partially inverted into a chiasm. In other words: A οὐκ εἶπε, ἀλλὰ B. On the whole, however, when a distinction is being made between what a text says and what it does not say, the previously described non-chiastic pattern holds. The very infrequent chiastic structure is generally used to flag up a difference in *how* or *why* something was said. A biblical example of this chiastic pattern occurs in *John* 11:51: τοῦτο δὲ ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ **οὐκ εἶπεν, ἀλλ᾽** ἀρχιερεὺς ὢν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου ἐπροφήτευσεν. The text contrasts not *what* Caiaphas said, but rather *under which conditions/authority* he spoke: not speaking on his own initiative, but prophesying as high priest. Thus the chiastic form serves a somewhat different rhetorical purpose, and as such appears rarely. An exegetical example can be found in Origen's *Com. Io.* 13.1.4, where the contrast is the Samaritan woman ignoring the first part of Jesus' reply and instead asking a question about the second part: 'Καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν τῷ προτέρῳ **οὐκ εἶπεν, ἀλλὰ** ἐπαπορεῖ περὶ τῆς συγκρίσεως τῶν ὑδάτων ἡ Σαμαρεῖτις.' Origen's use of the chiastic (A οὐκ εἶπεν, ἀλλὰ B) pattern signals that he is not discussing two possible variants, or two things that might have been said: he is highlighting the woman's avoidance.

A similar rhetorical contrast can be found in the Matthean antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount: 'You have heard it said, … but I say to you…'. Some scholars hold those statements of Jesus to be drawn from a rabbinic pattern of exposition as found in the Talmud. Pious Jews sought to 'draw a fence around the Torah' by expanding the requirements of the halakhic law with rabbinical interpretations known as *khumrot* based on *Deut.* 22:8. In studying οὐκ εἶπεν ἀλλὰ antitheses in early *Galatians* commentaries, I concluded that they do not share the Matthean/*khumrot* usage, although there is some similarity in their structure. Both the *khumrot* and Matthean antitheses declare what the Law forbids and then extend the boundary. The antitheses found in early Christian commentaries, however, frame a variation to explore some point depending on grammar or vocabulary.

Moreover, the New Testament contains a few verses with the sort of antithesis found in the Greek commentary tradition. In addition to the illustrations of οὐκ εἶπεν ἀλλὰ from *Gal.* and *John* mentioned above, a further example can be found in *John* 21:23, where the contrast is between what the other disciples thought Jesus was saying about John's life, and what he actually said. Likewise in *Matt.* 16:12, the disciples needed clarity, in order to understand what Jesus was saying with his parable: the yeast is not what they should be focusing on.

2. The Origins of the Construction

By searching through the Greek corpus of *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, it became evident that the origin of this construction predates the composition of the New Testament. This rhetorical strategy of negative argumentation can be found in literally thousands of places in ancient Greek texts, particularly with the rise of commentaries on pagan literature, such as those on Homer, on Plato and other philosophers, and on Hippocrates and other medical handbooks. It does not occur very often in antiquity outside of the commentary tradition. Thus it appears to be a rhetorical strategy limited to Greek exegetical literature, be it pagan, philosophical, or biblical. A few scattered examples, one possibly in Aeschylus and one in Demosthenes, occur a few centuries BC. The sustained deployment of this pattern however, really only starts in the first century BC, and possibly in Alexandria, as its emergence can be identified in Philo's Old Testament commentaries, as well as the almost contemporary works of the grammarian Aristonicus, among others. Indeed, the first century before Christ marks the beginning of 'systematic commenting,' at least in the realm of philosophy.[4] It is possible that the pattern entered the Christian tradition via the Alexandrian

[4] Han Baltussen, 'Philosophers, Exegetes, Scholars: The Ancient Philosophical Commentary from Plato to Simplicius', in Christina S. Kraus and Christopher Stray (eds), *Classical Commentaries: Explorations in a Scholarly Genre* (Oxford, 2015), 173.

school, given its frequency in Philo; but it is also possible (and perhaps more likely) that it came via the fathers' school days spent studying pagan commentaries on both literature and philosophy.

One early pagan commentator whose works survive was Aristonicus, a grammarian from Alexandria who straddled the turn of the millennium during the time of Augustus and Tiberius. He is renowned for explaining the marginal signs made by Alexandrian scribes in Homeric manuscripts. His commentaries illustrate a very early use of the οὐκ εἶπε … ἀλλὰ paradigm. In commenting on a line in the *Odyssey*, he notes Homer's odd choice of masculine gender to refer to the feminine word 'dew': '[The *diple* {is here in the margin} because] **it does not say** "θήλεια" [in the feminine] **but** "θῆλυς" in the masculine, as it is more productive.'[5] Similarly, Aristonicus comments on a passage in the *Iliad*, noting Odysseus' shift in address in his lengthy speech, as the wily hero turns to tell his audience to go home, 'For you will never reach the goal of lofty Troy.'[6] The only indication that this shift has occurred, Aristonicus points out, is in the ending of the verb: '**οὐ γὰρ εἶπε** δήουσιν **ἀλλὰ** δήετε'.[7] One final example, from among dozens in Aristonicus: 'ὅτι **οὐ λέγει** τρεσσάντων δεισάντων, **ἀλλὰ** φυγόντων'.[8] Here he uses λέγει to clarify a definition: τρεσσάντων 'does not mean "scared" but "shirking"', a runaway coward. It is important to keep in mind that these written illustrations from a Hellenistic commentator on Homer may well point to an earlier rhetorical tradition, perhaps originating in the classroom. Clearly though, an established pattern in the commentary tradition existed probably just prior to, or possibly contemporary with, the composition of the Pauline epistles, and certainly well before their commentaries.

Philosophical commentaries likewise use this pattern. Moving into the second century CE, the anonymous commentator (previously thought to be Eudorus of Alexandria) on the Platonic dialogue the *Theaetetus* writes: '**It does not say** "You learn geometry as received from Theodore" **but** "some elements of geometry".'[9] Apparently, Theodore had failed to deliver the entire syllabus to his students.

Second-century medical commentaries also contain this rhetorical device. For example, Galen comments on a text from Hippocrates by saying: 'Why does he not simply say [**οὐχ ἁπλῶς εἶπεν**] "the bilious ones", but [**ἀλλὰ**] adds

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    [5] Scholion on *Odyssey* 5.467, in *Aristonici Περὶ σημείων Ὀδυσσείας reliquiae emendatiores*, ed. Otto Carnuth (Leipzig, 1869), 62. A *diple* is a marginal mark identifying parts of a text for various reasons, ranging from citations to possible errors.

    [6] Homer, *Iliad* 9.685.

    [7] Aristonicus, *De signis Iliadis (Aristonici Περὶ σημείων Ἰλιάδος reliquiae emendatiores)*, ed. Ludwig Friedländer (Göttingen, 1853), 169, Scholion on *Iliad 9* (I).685.

    [8] Aristonicus, *De signis Iliadis*, 238 (scholion on *Iliad* 14.522).

    [9] *Anonymi Commentarius in Platonis Theaetetum* (P. Berol. inv. 9782), in H. Diels and W. Schubart, *Anonymer Kommentar zu Platons Theaetet (Papyrus 9782)* (Berlin, 1905), 14.45.

"the things above"?'[10] This variation on the formula by the insertion of ἁπλῶς emphasises the completeness of the original text. Galen frequently draws attention to Hippocrates' precise words in this way. In Galen's commentary on Hippocrates' *Epidemics*, however, he uses this rhetoric to critique the *sigla,* abbreviations added by anonymous scribes just after a patient's case history to summarise key details of their illness and death (or recovery), as an *aide-mémoire*. He vents his frustration at their mistakes in assigning inappropriate *sigla* and cause of death for some cases:

οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν "ἀπέθανε καυσουμένη", καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῆς κυναγχικῆς "ἀπέθανε κυναγχική", **ἀλλὰ** τό γε καῦσος ὄνομα κατὰ τὴν εὐθεῖαν πτῶσιν εὑρίσκεται γεγραμμένον, ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ δὲ τούτου τε καὶ τοῦ ἀπέθανε τό γε κοιλίη διὰ παντὸς ὑγρή καὶ τὰ τούτῳ συνεχῆ.[11]

In this case, Galen objected to the cause of death being annotated as καῦσος[12] a fever that 'originates in the bilious humours.' This woman in Case 10 of Book 3 of the *Epidemics* however, had died of a fever arising from a miscarriage. Here the initial ἀλλὰ after the οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν serves to introduce a lengthy string of ideas (not all of which is cited here) that eventually settles on the ultimate rebuttal to the erroneous scribes.

Jumping ahead momentarily to the third century, a later example of this pattern is Porphyry's commentary on the *Odyssey*. In reference to one passage, he says, **οὐκ εἶπεν** ἐσκεδάννυεν, **ἀλλ'** ἐσκέδασεν: 'He does not say "he was scattering" but "he scattered"' – in other words, the verb is not imperfect but aorist.[13] Thus this negating pattern of textual criticism – what a text does not say – persists and develops in commentaries on ancient Greek literature, philosophy, and medical handbooks during the first few centuries of this era.

3. Biblical Commentators

Returning to the turn of the millennium, another Alexandrian was writing commentaries on a different genre of text: that of the Old Testament. The Jewish Hellenistic philosopher Philo composed exegetical works, primarily on the Pentateuch, during a similar timespan as Aristonicus's Homeric commentaries.

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[10] Galen, *In Hippocratis de victu acutorum commentaria iv*, in *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, vol. 15, ed. Carl Gottlob Kühn (Leipzig, 1828), 565, line 4.

[11] Galen, *In Hippocratis librum iii epidemiarum commentarii iii*, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum 10, 2.1, ed. Ernst Wenkebach (Leipzig, 1936), 100, lines 7-11 (Kühn volume 17a, page 633, line 14 – 634, line 1).

[12] W.H.S. Jones, in referring to Galen's list of the *sigla* (Kühn volume XVII, A 611-613), provides the likely *sigla* for Case 10 (*Hippocrates*, vol. 1, LCL 147 [London, 1923], 234, footnote 2).

[13] Porphyry, *Quaestionum Homericarum ad Odysseam pertinentium reliquiae*, ed. Hermann Schrader (Leipzig, 1890), on *Odyssey* 13.352.4.

In fact, it is difficult to say who may have come first, as we do not have very precise dates for Aristonicus. The intellectual environment of Alexandria no doubt influenced them both. Could Philo have been the originator of this type of exegetical strategy: 'It doesn't say this, but that'? Or perhaps they were both drawing on a tradition of commentary that arose just before them and was developing around them.

Philo deploys this familiar formula to a distinct task: to bring clarity to the meaning of the Old Testament. His method requires strict attention to details in the biblical text. In discussing *Gen*. 2:11, he points out that **it does not say** Havilah has only gold, **but** that there is gold there.[14] In another brief illustration from the same book, Philo points out that God **did not say** 'I will put enmity for you and the woman', **but** 'between you and the woman'.[15] Similarly, he comments on *Ex*. 21:12-14: '**He did not say** only "to be put to death", **but** "to be put to death by death".'[16] He is supporting the Septuagint's use of a cognate dative to translate woodenly Hebrew's emphatic syntax.

A century or two after Philo, Christian commentators begin to make their mark on the genre. One related antithesis that develops, appearing exclusively in these biblical commentaries, is οὐ γέγραπται … ἀλλὰ… . This form empha-sises the writtenness rather than the orality of the scripture cited, and reflects the rise of the culture of the book, as well as, of course, drawing from a biblical phrase.[17] Despite its biblical provenance, γέγραπται occurs surprisingly less often in this construction in the works of these Christian exegetes than the formula with λέγει/εἶπε, and examples with other tenses of γράφω are almost nonexistent. Οὐκ ἐγράφη does appear, but exclusively in citations of *Rom*. 4:23, with perhaps one exception in Epiphanius.[18]

Origen wrote far more commentaries than are now extant; in what remains of his exegetical works, there are too many illustrations of this pattern to list, so two will have to suffice. In commenting on *Gen*. 9:5, he elucidates, '**He does not say** "your blood," **but** "the blood of your souls".'[19] Another very pithy example from Origen can be found in his exegesis of *Matt*. 18:20: 'Notice that it [or: he] **does not say** "I will be" **but** "I am".'[20] This attention to a textual nuance was a significant development to the exegetical process in the early church, albeit leaning on Greek misapprehension of the underlying Hebrew idiom. This emphasis counters a common view of Origen as relatively uninterested in the literal meaning of the text.

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[14] Philo, *Legum allegoriarum libri i-iii*, in *Opera*, vol. 1, ed. Leopold Cohn (Berlin, 1896), 1.77.1-2.
[15] Philo, *Legum allegoriarum*, 3.184.1-2.
[16] Philo, *De fuga et inventione*, in P. Wendland, *Opera*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1962), 110-155.54.3.
[17] There is one possible earlier example in Plato, *Cratylus*, Stephanus page 432.a.2.
[18] Epiphanius, *Panarion*, ed. K. Holl, GCS 37 (Leipzig, 1933), 3.466.8.
[19] Origen, *Dialogus cum Heraclide*, ed. J. Scherer, SC 67 (Paris, 1960), 22, 19.
[20] Origen, *Scholia in Matthaeum*, 17.300.9.

Clement of Alexandria comments before the year 215 on a contemporary text known as the *Kerygma Petri*. The anonymous author declares, 'Worship this God not according to the Greeks.'[21] Clement analyses the text by noting, '**He does not say**, "Do not worship the God whom the Greeks do", **but** "not according to the Greeks"' – in other words, not in the Greek way.[22]

Moving on into the later third and the fourth century, the construction becomes very popular in a wide range of Christian writers, and expands beyond the commentary tradition. It can be found among the fragments of Eusebius's commentary on *Galatians*, in Gregory of Nyssa (at least in some of his spurious writings), and in Epiphanius the heresiologist. Epiphanius in particular likes to deploy it in polemical contexts in which he corrects the false doctrine of the heretics, highlighting key biblical content they were missing or confusing. Athanasius, Didymus the Blind, and Chrysostom also use it. Due to the high volume of Chrysostom texts extant, hundreds of examples of this pattern can be found in him alone.

4. *Galatians* Commentaries

Focusing now on early Greek exegesis of *Galatians*, as those commentaries are the locus of my current research, it becomes apparent that this pattern of antithesis continues, and not just in reference to *Gal.* 3:16. In a *catena* fragment from Eusebius of Emesa's lost commentary, he comments on *Gal.* 1:4, regarding Christ: 'For **it does not say** "the one who seized" [power], **but** "the one who gave himself for our sins".'[23] Chrysostom's *Galatians* commentary, the most significant extant Greek patristic commentary on this epistle, has at least forty examples of this construction: slightly more than one per double-column page in the Migne edition. A few excerpts will suffice to illustrate the point.

In his exegesis of *Gal.* 1:16, Chrysostom comments, '**It does not say simply** "I did not consult," **but** "immediately".'[24] This form of the construction points out a significant word by stating the verse first without it (οὐκ εἶπεν ἁπλῶς), and then with it. This relatively common subset of the antithesis, with ἁπλῶς added, is popular with Chrysostom and found frequently in Galen's commentaries, as noted above. Similarly, on *Gal* 5:13 he states, 'Because of this **he does**

[21] M. Cambe, *Kerygma Petri: Textus et Commentarius*, CChr.SA 15 (Turnhout, 2003), 151-61, Fragment 3a.1-2; as found in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6.5.39.4.1-2 in L. Früchtel, O. Stählin and U. Treu (eds), *Clemens Alexandrinus*, vols. 2, 3rd ed. and 3, 2nd ed. GCS 52(15), 17 (Berlin, 2:1960; 3:1970).

[22] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6.5.39.5.1-2.

[23] Eusebius of Emesa, *Fragmenta in epistulam ad Galatas (in catenis)*, ed. K. Staab, in *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt* (Münster, 1933), 47.10-12.

[24] Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Galatas commentarius*, PG 61, 630.31.

not say simply [ἁπλῶς] "Love one another", **but** "Serve" – demonstrating an intense affection.'[25] About *Gal*. 2:20, John points out (without ἁπλῶς), '**It does not say**, "I live" **but** "Christ lives in me".' A few lines later, he repeats this idea with amplification: '**It does not say**, "I live for Christ", **but** what is much greater, "Christ lives in me".'[26] These illustrate a fuller comparison of ideas, rather than merely pointing out an important word: here, the inversion of subject and object.

Theodoret, who wrote a compressed commentary on the Pauline epistles based heavily on Chrysostom among others, has just one example of this pattern in the *Galatians* section, although more can be located in his discussion of the other letters. In this case, Theodoret has borrowed directly from Chrysostom's commentary. On *Gal*. 5:10, Theodoret says, '**Οὐκ εἶπεν**, Οὐ φρονεῖτε, **ἀλλὰ** Φρονήσετε.'[27] In other words, it is fine if the Galatians think differently at first – Paul's prayer is that eventually in future they will see things his way and 'take no other view.' Chrysostom's commentary expounds further on this verse and offers another antithesis by way of explanation. 'How do you know this is so?' he asks. '**Οὐκ εἶπεν**, Οἶδα, **ἀλλὰ**, Πιστεύω.' 'He does not say "I know" but "I believe".'[28] Paul has faith that their thinking will be transformed.

This formula thus continues from the pagan commentary tradition, expanding and persisting in the Greek commentary tradition of the early church. It varies little and functions at least in part as a form of punctuation for citations and anti-citations, *i.e*. the things that were not said. Apart from the occasional addition of qualifiers such as μόνον or ἁπλῶς, it is remarkably consistent and stable as a construction. It may well be yet another example of the two-pronged logic so prevalent in Greek thought and rhetoric. Emphasising a negative example, though, to prove a positive does seem like circumnavigating the point.

5. The Construction in Latin

What about in Latin? Does this pattern transmit to the Western tradition? Naturally, it is found in the Vulgate for the New Testament examples of this antithesis cited above *John* 21:23 states: '*Et **non dixit** ei Jesus:* Non moritur, **sed***:* Sic eum volo manere donec veniam, quid ad te?' Similarly, *Matt*. 16:12 reads: '*Tunc intellexerunt quia **non dixerit** cavendum a fermento panum, **sed** a doctrina pharisæorum et sadducæorum*.' *John* 11:51 even keeps the chiastic

[25] *Id*., *Gal. com.,* PG 61, 670.22.
[26] *Ibid*. 646.11-6.
[27] Theodoret, *Interpretatio in xiv epistulas sancti Pauli*, PG 82, 493.49. See Chrysostom, *Gal. com*., PG 61, 667.4.
[28] Chrysostom, *Gal. com.,* PG 61, 667.5-6.

order of this expression: '*hoc autem a semet ipso* **non dixit sed** *cum esset pontifex anni illius prophetavit quia Iesus moriturus erat pro gente*'. The central example from *Gal.* 3:16 reads: '*Abrahae dictae sunt promissiones et semini eius* **non dicit** *et seminibus quasi in multis* **sed** *quasi in uno et semini tuo qui est Christus*'.[29]

Thus the Latin translations of New Testament texts clearly carry over this rhetorical pattern, as would be expected in that it relies on a Greek base text that includes it. But what of the Latin commentary tradition? Theodore of Mopsuestia's commentaries on the Pauline epistles are no longer extant in Greek, but they survive in a Latin translation that is recognised as authentic by its correspondence with the Greek fragments attributed to Theodore transmitted in *catenae*.[30] In commenting on Paul's self-introduction in *Gal.* 1:1, Theodore writes: '**non dixit** *secundum suam consuetudinem:* Paulus apostolus Christi*, aut* Dei*;* **sed** *interiecit:* non ab hominibus, neque per hominem*, hoc est, "sicut aduersarii dicunt*".'[31] Here he illustrates the fact that this formula often has a polemical purpose: the addition to Paul's normal greeting, Theodore maintains, is aimed at the apostle's adversaries. Theodore continues: '**non enim dixit** et a Deo Patre*;* **sed simpliciter***:* et Deum Patrum, per Iesum Christum *pariter illud complectens.*'[32] For this second section, Swete identifies the Greek original as '**οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν**· καὶ ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρός· **ἀλλ' ἁπλῶς**· καὶ θεοῦ πατρός, τῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦτο συμπεριλαβών.'[33] Both the Latin translation and the presumed Greek follow the established pattern of antithesis. Again, as this text represents a translation of a Greek text, the appearance of this formula in the Latin is hardly surprising but serves as further confirmation of the prevalence of this construction in the Greek tradition. It does provide an example, though, of a commentary including this pattern that was accessible to Latin-speaking communities.

But what about other fathers, those who thought, preached, and wrote in Latin? Database searches of similar verbal strings in Latin texts of the first six centuries found next to none. One example of something close, however, can be found in a sermon of Augustine labelled as 'Against the Pagans'; it is perhaps

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[29] The Latin citations here are from the Vulgate; the Vetus Latina manuscripts for the gospel texts, while differing in some phrasing, still include the '*non dicit/dixit/dixerit … sed*' pattern.

[30] See Rowan A. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Commentary on the Minor Pauline Epistles* (Atlanta, 2010), x.

[31] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Ad Galatas* I.i (p. 6 lines 14-16 in Greer's edition; in *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas B. Pauli commentarii: The Latin version with the Greek fragments*, ed. Henry Barclay Swete [Cambridge, 1880-2], p. 4 lines 1-3).

[32] Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Ad Galatas* I.i (Greer 6.22-23, Swete 4.9-11).

[33] Swete, 4, footnote for line 9. He does not clarify provenance, *i.e.* which *catena* MS or other source; Greer does not have a Greek parallel in his edition, and I have not been able to locate one. It is thus possible that Swete is merely recognizing a familiar rhetorical formula and positing that this would be an example of it.

not surprising to discover this rhetorical device in a polemical context.[34] Towards the end of the homily, as the focus of the attack shifts from pagans to Donatists, Augustine cites 1*John* 2:1-2 and argues against their exaltation of their bishop as a mediator between God and humanity:

So did this John, then, ever say, 'And if anyone does sin, you have me [John] with the Father; I am praying for you'? … **Not only**, I mean, **did he not say that, but** even if he had said, And if anyone does sin, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just One, … he would have seemed somewhat proud and arrogant. He didn't say that.[35]

The rhetoric of this sermon portion perhaps reflects the chiastic pattern noted in the discussion of Greek texts (in Latin: A *non dixit, sed* B), but in this case Augustine never completes B, *i.e.* what was actually said; rather he rephrases it slightly, changing the more inclusive 'we' to 'you' (A′ rather than B). Thus even this citation falls short of the full paradigm, resorting to: 'A *non dixit, sed etiam si diceret* A′.' This deviation from the formula could be a marker of the discursive orality of Augustine's transcribed *Sermones ad populum*. More likely, though, it serves to reinforce the idea that this pattern was not well-known in the Western exegetical tradition.

Apart from these very limited and admittedly less than satisfying examples, the pattern under discussion does not seem to appear in Latin, at least not up to the sixth century, the outer limit for my research. It does not surface when searching on '*non dicit/dixit/dixerit … sed*', the verb forms in the New Testament examples cited above and thus the most likely to be duplicated in commentaries. Neither can it be found with '*scribit/scripsit*', '*ait*', '*loquitur*', nor other verbs of speaking and writing, although it is possible that some examples were overlooked. Thus in terms of sheer frequency, it appears to be largely a rhetorical hallmark of Greek commentaries.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the rigid rhetoric of this form of antithesis connects the early Christian commentaries composed by the Greek fathers to broader commentary tradition – on pagan literature, philosophy, and medicine, as well as Alexandrian Jewish exegesis – that barely predates and then parallels the development of Christian commentaries. The fathers did not create a genre *de novo*, but built

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[34] Augustine, *Sermo* Dolbeau 26 (Mainz 62), in F. Dolbeau, *Augustin d'Hippone, Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, Études Augustiniennes: Antiquité 147 (Paris, 1996). Also identified as Sermon 198 in the standardised classification of the *Sermones ad populum* as it includes the previously known fragment labeled as 198, as well as 197 and 198A. See E. Hill, *Sermons III/11: Sermons discovered since 1990* (Hyde Park NY, 1997), footnote 1, 229.

[35] Augustine, *Sermo* 198.55 Dolbeau 26 (55), *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, 410; trans. E. Hill, *Sermons III/11*, 222.

on what many of them were familiar with from their own rhetorical education, which included earlier 'pagan' exemplars of textual commentary. The transformation of commentary writing – from notations in the margins of manuscripts to separate books interpreting the texts that were considered essential to be understood – began in the decades before Christ and exploded in the subsequent centuries. A concern over the precise wording of the text and explanations of confusing or culturally distant words were even more significant tasks to the early Christian community. Why this rhetorical methodology seems virtually invisible in the Western Latin tradition is more surprising and deserves further investigation.