Reviews of Books


The period following the Carolingian Renaissance abounded in commentaries. To compare small things with great, it suggests the Alexandrine age, which succeeded the creative period in Greek literature. Not many of the commentaries of the ninth century have been published, and the reason is not far to seek. They contain little information of value concerning the classical authors whose work they were written to explain; an attempt like that of F. Schlee in his Schola Terentiana (1893) to sift out the ancient and profitable material, can furnish only ludicrous results. But viewing these commentaries as illustrations of the culture of their times, they acquire interest at once; in fact the history of the period cannot be written until many more of them are published. They can show how information about antiquity gradually increased in the ninth century, how it was accompanied, nevertheless, by gross ignorance and the readiness to invent when facts were lacking, and how the humanistic and bellettristic tendencies of the times of Charlemagne yielded finally to the passion for philosophy of which we find the first great partisan in John the Scot.

Professor Burnam has already published from two manuscripts (Vat. Pal. 237 s. xi and Paris 13953 s. x) 'Glossesata de Prudentio' (University of Cincinnati Studies, 1905), which he attributed to a Celtic monk of the monastery of Corbie writing between 650 and 720. But the palaeographical evidence on which this conclusion rests is most uncertain, and Professor Burnam, in a note at the end of the book, abandoned his attempt to prove Corbie the home of the writer. More probably, it seems to me, the commentary is a work of the ninth century. In the present volume Professor Burnam has edited in a clear and convenient fashion another and longer commentary on Prudentius from a Valenciennes manuscript, 413 s. ix. Reserving a complete discussion until later, he declares that the archetype of the present manuscript was probably written in a semiuncial insular hand by a Low-German or Netherlandish scribe, and that its author was Remigius of Auxerre. Without going into details, I may state my belief that the writer was more probably the master of Remigius, Heiricus of Auxerre. It contains interesting manuscript at Trèves, 1003 s. xi, which contains an EXPOSITIO IN LIBRO BORTII DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIAE REMIGH AEUTERRESIS MAGISTRI, conflated with at least one other commentary on the same work, there is also an assemblage of notes on Prudentius. So far as I can judge from random excerpts, it is the Trèves manuscript which contains, perhaps with other material, the commentary of Remigius, while the Valenciennes manuscript preserves, though again, it may be, with some additions, the earlier work of Heiricus. Remigius, as usual, ascrips with so few alterations that his work has at least a value for the text of his pilfered source; for instance, the unintelligible conclusion of an important anecdote ('Commentaire,' top of p. 128) is perfectly clear in the Trèves manuscript. These two commentaries were preceded, it would seem, by the Glossae Magistri Isonis cited by Arevallo, and that work in turn depends on the Glossesata published by Professor Burnam in 1905. I see no reason why all these works should not be placed in the ninth century, and believe also that John the Scot, who is quoted in the 'Commentaire' and the Trèves manuscript, should be credited with an exposition of Prudentius; the activity of this great man as commentator is only just beginning to be understood. (See Traube's Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lat. Lit. des Mittelalters.
Interesting relations may be traced between the present series of commentaries on Prudentius, those on Boethius, to which John the Scot and Remigius contributed, and those on Terence, two of which I have tentatively assigned to Elicius and Remigius (Classical Philology iv (1909), 283 ff.), but the whole subject demands renewed investigation. When the whole material is before us, it should be possible by putting these commentaries in chronological order to follow in detail the development of culture in the ninth century, and, perhaps, to determine more exactly, events in the life of John the Scot.

The student of language will find much of interest in the lists at the end of the volume: “Addenda Lexicia Latina;” “Vocabula Rario;” “Index Graecus;” “Index Latinus.” These are inconvenient to use, since, doubtless owing to the exigencies of printing across the ocean, the references are not to the preceding pages but to lines of the poems and subdivisions of the different glosses. It is clear that making due allowance for scribal slips, for errors of the commentator, for his deliberate inventions in the interests of a rabid etymology, there remain enough new and unusual words to show that Latin was still growing by natural processes in the ninth century. I cite from Professor Burnam’s list of one hundred “Addenda Lexicia,” of which some sixty are of distinct significance; Balator (= balbus), condesteta, consenminocnatio, conturbatrix, cumex (= lip-pula), cytheralis (= lyraca), despectivus, fatigabundus, fulicolores, illigata (= non ligata), inconsumptus (= consumptus), involuca (= infolutiones vettamentorum for which involubilates is also used), locolis (= lyraca), laniola (‘a surgical hospital’—not a bad word), novernus (= novus, modernus), obcreperire (= obscureire), pluna (= planio), quietaure (= furari), raunciones (Italia vocet signos quod bene canam), rainingari, sonniculostotiem, turnmen (= trocheus).

The commentator shows inventiveness in almost creating an abstract noun pecatia to translate ἡγομνησία (liber est de peccatio, si posset dicl). He likes to distinguish in the fashion of the pseudo-etymologist, between forms and shades of meaning—circius and cirkius, transstra and traser, pernecia (from pernecare) and pernices (= pernicias).

One questioned word in this list is funditonnae, which needs, I think, only to be separated into two words, fundi tonnae. The context (p. 133) is:

Vexonium civitas tres portas habebat in quibus litteras maximas in similidudine fundi tonnae factis hoc scribatur habebatur: IVLIA IVLIAE IVLIAE HOC DIES MAXIMUS OCCULT, id est diis internalibus.

This is a gloss on Adv. Symm. I 403: ipsa patrum monumenta probant, dis manibus ilic | marmora secta lego. The letters of the inscription, which I have been unable to identify and which the commentator seems to know from some literary source, may have been large enough and round enough in the case of O and C to suggest the butt-end of a barrel—an exaggeration with which our use of ‘cart-wheel’ may be compared. Tonna (tonnae) is of course a common medieval word.

Another doubtful word is olario, p. 183 (on Adv. Symm. ii, 1077: splendid enim id est olario nubentium capita velabantur. Professor Burnam thinks this an

[I would suggest that the words in simulidudine fundi tonnae factis mean ‘disposed in the form of a barrel-head,’ i.e., like the legend on a coin.—H. A. T.]
error for velario or sudario. Might it not be for stolario, especially if the preceding est was written with the customary abbreviation (é stolario)? Stolarium would be a new word. Or possibly olarium is an error, or another form for orarium = stola; v. Du Cange s. v.

I expected to find that this list of new words would remove the stars from some of the substrates in Köring's Lateinisch-Romanisches Wörterbuch. But not one of them is affected. Is this fact significant? Is it possibly true that the Latin formations of the day have no influence on the vernacular, which drew from the Latin of either earlier or later periods, or have we merely to do with the bookish inventions of a scholar which would not have affected popular usage at any period? Questions like these increase our curiosity as to the general vocabulary of these commentators of the ninth century and confirm the desire for the publication of their works. We can only be grateful for Professor Burnam's editions of the commentaries on Prudentius, and hope that he and others may make further investigations of this subject.

E. K. Rand

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

La Seguidilla. Por Federico Hanssen. (Publicado en Los Anales de la Universidad de Chile.) Santiago de Chile, Imprenta Cervantes, 1909.

This publication embodies a most welcome contribution to the study of the poetic types of the Spanish Peninsula, which are still far from receiving the attention which they demand. This is especially true of the popular lyric of Spain which, as the artistic expression of an unlettered community, is of very great value for the historical and comparative treatment of poetry. Dr. Hanssen has divided his discussion of the Seguidilla into forty-five paragraphs dealing, in a sequence which is perhaps not as well adapted as one might wish to a clear exposition of the essential questions involved, with a brief bibliography of the subject, of the origin of the name seguidilla, the various metrical forms affected by this type at the present as well as in former times, its geographical distribution, the popular and literary sources in which it is found (here we miss, among other references, one to the two specimens offered in the Picara Justina, i p. l. 2, c. 4; iii p. l. 2, c. 5, to which attention is called in Revue Hispanique, 1906, p. 93), the origin of the rhythms of popular poetry, the primitive rhythm of the folk-song of Castile, the classification of seguidillas according to the shifting of the final accent in the verses employed in them, and general observations regarding the rhythm and the origin of the Seguidilla.

In the list of authors who have discussed the metre of the Seguidilla, as well as in the body of the treatise itself, one misses, e. g., the following important works: (1) Apollon ou l'oracle de la poésie italienne et espagnole, par Bense-Dupuis. Paris, 1644 (see p. 351, ch. iv, Des seguidilles); (2) Rhytmica . . . Ioannis Caramueliis. Campaniae . . . 1668 (special chapter: De strophis quas Hispanus Seguidillas, Latinus Secundinarum aut etiam Consectarias appellat); (3) El Lasgas de “El celoso extremeño. . . .” Por Francisco Rodriguez Marin. Sevilla, 1901 (p. 275 ff.); (4) Rinconete y Cortidillo . . . edición crítica por F. Rodriguez Marin. Sevilla 1905 (p. 460 ff.) and (5) Chiilindrinas. Cuentos, artículos y otras bagatelas. Sevilla, 1906 (p. 112 ff.). In discussing the origin of the name, Dr. Hanssen quotes Cejador, La Lengua de Cervantes, ii, 1002, and the well-known expression copilillas de la seguida in the Celoso Extremeño in favor of its scarcely contestable interpretation as a diminutive of the latter.