

CORRESPONDENCE

Peter Godman writes:

P. G. Walsh, in his notice of *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (CR 36 [1986], 182–3), refers to the ‘totally illiterate’ Latinity of the *Versus de Verona* (no. 22) as it is reproduced from G. B. Pighi’s standard edition and the ‘wholly different impression’ created by the nineteenth-century text of Dümmler. Had Walsh troubled to read pp. 30–1 of the Introduction he praises so warmly, or to consult the modern vulgate of Pighi, he would have learnt that the poet was consciously composing, in rhythmical verse, a clerical colloquialism that Dümmler mistakenly attempted to ‘correct’ into a ‘classical’ idiom – which perhaps explains why his outmoded edition appeals to Walsh. The reasons why it seemed kinder not to refer to the edition of *Waltharius* by A. K. Bate are set out with severity by D. Schaller in *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 16 (1981), 54–7. Similar examples, at a linguistic as at a bibliographical level, could be multiplied; but it is not necessary to labour the point that these are not *recherché* references but the basic tools of the subject, which it is an advantage for a reviewer to possess.

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Professor Walsh writes:

Before commenting on Dr Godman’s letter, I should like to emphasise again my judgment that his book represents a considerable achievement. His main complaint certainly has point; I should have consulted Pighi’s edition of *Versus de Verona* before writing my notice. Having now studied it, I must confess that I remain critical of his text. Pighi explains that we are dependent on nine versions of the poem in manuscript or printed sources, all dating from the 15th century or later, and no doubt these have undergone ‘correction’ to establish more acceptable norms of Latinity; but Pighi’s text, at virtually all the points which I criticised (plural nouns with singular verbs, masculine relative with feminine antecedent, and the like), rejects the balance of such evidence as we have in favour of what Dr Godman calls clerical colloquialism. We are back with the familiar editorial problem of author *versus* scribe; would a competent Latinist of c.800 have written *ab Syriam* for *ab Syria* (53), or in one stanza *ad pelago* (‘from the water’) and in the next correctly *ab hoste* (‘from the enemy’)? If such solecisms were to be attributed to the author, I should challenge his right to be included in the anthology; ‘illiterate doggerel’ would be a more appropriate designation than ‘clerical colloquialism’. I see that even Dr Godman blanches at *expugna* (57) and emends to *expugnat*. If, as I hope, a second edition of this useful book is called for, Dr Godman should note misprints at lines 60 (*Mamman*) and 79 (*aurem* should read *aureum*), and in the bibliography the date of Pighi’s edition should be 1960, not 1969 (but correctly stated on p. 180).

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