

ILARIA RAMELLI, *Scoto Eriugena, Remigio di Auxerre, Bernardo Silvestre e Anonimi: Tutti I Commenti A Martiano Capella*. Presentazione di Giovanni Reale. Introduzione, traduzione, note e apparati di Ilaria Ramelli, Bompiani: Milan, 2006, pp. 2524, ISBN 88-452-5739-8.

This is another impressive volume by Ilaria Ramelli, the Italian translator of Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, involving this time a translation of many of the published medieval commentaries on that work, although not *tutti*. The edition of the *Commentum super Martianum* by Alexander Neckam that appeared in the same year (Sismel: Florence 2006) is, for obvious reasons, not included. An edition (and translation) of the last commentary in the medieval tradition by Johannes Dubravius (Jan Doubravky, 1486-1553) remains a *desideratum* (see Cora E. Lutz in *CTC* 2 [1971] and 3 [*Addenda et Corrigenda*] for this and other unedited glosses and commentaries). Early Modern readings of Martianus, e.g. by Grotius, would repay detailed study as well, as sixteenth and seventeenth century readers of *De Nuptiis* were probably the last to have fully understood and appreciated the Menippean form and spirit of the work.

The importance of Martianus Capella for medieval teaching of the liberal arts is matched by the interest in his use of allegory in the first two Books of *De Nuptiis*, in particular the marriage of Philology and Mercury, leading to the apotheosis of human learning. In these first two books, it was assumed, much of the subject matter of the encyclopedia had been presented allegorically, waiting to be decoded by the medieval exegete whose task it was to lift the mystical veil and uncover the sacred secrets of the universe. The translation of this material is not only a Herculean task because of its sheer bulk, but it also requires a deft touch because of its arcane subject matter and reference material. The history of allegory is very much in the purview of the translator, who has published two extensive volumes on

the subject and has also provided a re-edition with translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

In addition to the translations, the Latin texts for two of the commentaries have been provided as well, namely for the influential commentary by Remigius of Auxerre, and for the commentary attributed to Bernardus Silvestris. A spot check of the accuracy of the Remigius text reproduced here yields the following divergences with the critical edition, ranging from obvious typographical errors to misreadings to emendations of the edition by Lutz: p. 876 (5.16) *i Parcae* and p. 898 (10.8) *pythu*; p. 896 (10.5) *MONENDOQUE* for *MONENDORUM*, against the translation that maintains and explains *monendorum*; p. 896 (10.6) *dictus* ('si chiama') for *ductus est*, probably an improvement; p. 898 (10.6) *Nero* for *quod Nero* (but 'che Nerone' in the translation, hence probably an error of omission). When doing close textual work, the reader should therefore refer back to the critical edition. It is, however, immensely useful to have a Latin reference text on the facing page.

A systematic check of the entire Latin text of the commentary attributed to Bernardus Silvestris against the critical edition reveals a great many typographical errors, some of them related to a touchy Italian keyboard, e.g. intrusive 'è' and 'e', others apparently the product of scanning, for example the misreading of original 'u' through 'n' with the result that *deus* is spelled *dens* (1766, 1884, 1894, 1898, 1900, 1902), *rubeus* as *rubens* (p. 1760), *coeunt* as *coennt* (p. 1792). There is a problem with the reproduction of the letter 'f' as well, resulting in the nonsensical *Jidem cumiedere* (p. 1802, last para) for *fidem cum federe*. The same problem with *fides* comes back and again (1838, 1840, 1846, 1848, 1850, 1872). The following errors could cause confusion. On p. 1762, *TRirrion* for *Kirrion*; in the last paragraph of the same page after *ordine scilicet*, the following words have been omitted: *operis, doctrine genere, auctoris imitatione*, but they are present in the translation. Similarly, on p. 2000 four lines are missing between *Scande celi*, etc. and [216] *tercium aphimacrum* but they are present in the translation. On p. 1770, second line from the bottom, we find *Connabium dirum* instead of *Connubium divum*, otherwise correctly translated. Other problems, including the placement of angle brackets, are too numerous to

mention. We have noted a total of 237 errors. In sum, the Latin text should not be used for citation.

However, the present volume should not be judged on its accuracy in reproducing the Latin texts but by its translation of them. In the following, we will limit ourselves to the two commentaries with which we are somewhat familiar. In the programmatic Praefatio to the commentary attributed to Bernardus Silvestris we found no obvious problems. By way of a spot check of the Berlin-Zwettl Anonymous commentary on *De Nuptiis* 50.15 (p. 2366) one could object that “sibi” is omitted from the translation of *sibi decantat Calliope*; *poetice* in *gratia poetice* is translated adverbially but it could also be taken as a genitive of the noun *poetica*; in the following sentence, *ex officio* has remained untranslated. However, it remains for someone whose cradle stood on Italian soil to judge the overall quality of the translation.

In addition to the rendering of the Latin text, Ramelli has also translated, in a selective fashion, substantial parts of the Introduction and notes to the critical edition of the commentary attributed to Bernardus Silvestris. This is very useful for the reader but one might quibble that acknowledgement of the original authorship of such material gets somewhat lost in translation. However, given the enormous contribution to Martianus scholarship and the medieval commentary tradition represented by this volume, and given the obvious fact that these commentaries were not brought into the textual universe for our vanity, we gladly overlook such slippage. As E.A. Lowe used to say, ‘Wir sind nur Diener der Wissenschaft’.

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