

# Is the Author Really Better than his Scribes?

## Problems of Editing Pre-Carolingian Latin Texts

MICHAEL HERREN

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN by thanking Alexander Andrée for inviting me to give this year's Ars Edendi lecture. When he first mentioned the subject to me, I thought that he was inviting me to address a gathering of gourmets. I soon realized that he was talking about editing, not eating. Even so, one might imagine an Isidorian etymology running as follows: 'Editor dictus est ab edendo, quia verba scriptorum edit, id est manducat.' In Latin, of course, the functions covered by English 'editor' were entrusted to a *grammaticus*. An *editor*, in the Latin sense of the word, might publish his writings, but he does not edit them. An *editor* brings forth, or "births" his writings. The Latin word *editor* thus comes from *ēdo* ('give out') with a long *e*. Not all the meanings attached to Latin *editor* are nice. Meaning no. 1, as given by the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, is 'one who emits exhalations'. This serves to explain why I prefer the folk etymology based on short-*e* *edo*. We editors dine on words, we ruminate on their meanings, and sometimes we have to eat our own words, as I shall admit over the course of this lecture. All this may lead to exhalations, but it is our ruminations, not our exhalations, that render us editors. Sometimes we feel that because of them we know our author better than the author's scribes.

This brings me straight to the question in the title of this lecture: 'Are authors better than their scribes?' The simple answer, of course, is yes. No one in this audience needs to be reminded about the many kinds of mistakes a scribe can make, or told about their causes.<sup>1</sup> We know as well that scribes not only made mistakes in transcribing, the smarter ones tried to correct readings they perceived as mistakes, and in doing so, often introduced inauthentic readings, or corrected, say, a factual error that the author actually made.<sup>2</sup> In using such

1 The subject has been widely treated; the following is only a brief sample: A. C. Clark, *The Descent of Manuscripts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918; reprinted 1948), 1–31 (omissions in manuscripts); Ludwig Bieler, *The Grammarian's Craft: An Introduction to Textual Criticism*, reprinted (with revisions by Martin R. P. McGuire) from *Classical Folia* 10, no. 2 (1958), pp. 3–47, especially 28–43. Perhaps the most extensive treatment is that of James Willis, *Latin Textual Criticism* (Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 47–188.

2 R. B. C. Huygens, *Ars Edendi: A practical introduction to editing medieval Latin texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), p. 41: 'There are quite a number of factual, and even grammatical

terms as ‘authentic’ and ‘author’, I have already made the assumption that these entities are knowable. But I would be the first to acknowledge that editing belongs to *technē*, not *epistēmē*, and thus we rightly speak of the *ars edendi*. We are dealing here with the plausible, not the provable. In the remainder of this talk I shall deal only with writings that show the mark of having an author rather than a compiler (i.e. I exclude *florilegia* and *catenae*), and which have a unitary textual tradition.

Latin texts composed after ca. 600 and before the Carolingian writing reforms that began in the late eighth century present problems that editors rarely have to face when working on classical texts (including most writings of late antiquity), or texts written after ca. 800. It is one thing to correct words and phrases for their sense, but what is an editor supposed to do with so-called errors in spelling, morphology, and syntax? Those editing a classical Latin work, should they encounter any such mistake in a medieval manuscript containing that work, would not hesitate to exclude the error from their text and replace it with the correct classical spelling or form. The grammarians set the rules for correct Latinity in stone, and one assumes that all ‘good authors’ followed them. A slight relaxation of the rules is sometimes allowed for more informal genres such in private letters, but in general, editors of classical texts allow their authors scant leeway to break any of the rules. A case in point is the debate over the language of the freedmen that occurs in the section of Petronius’s *Satyricon* known as the *Cena Trimalchionis*. The section is preserved in a *codex unicus*, the so-called *Codex Traguriensis* (Paris, BnF, lat. 7989), a copy made by Poggio in 1423 of an earlier manuscript. The Italian scholar Antonio dell’Era argued that not only the popular idiom represented therein, but also the ungrammaticality of numerous locutions attested in the manuscript represented Petronius’s attempt to reproduce realistically the spoken language of the *liberti*.<sup>3</sup> Readers of English literature, unfamiliar with the more refined conceits of classical scholarship, would accept his argument *prima facie*. After all, Shakespeare did it, Dickens did it, and more recently so did Lerner and Loewe. Classical philologists, however, are unimpressed by such parallels. Petronius, so runs the line, would have sought to amuse his readers, not shock them. The *arbiter elegantiarum* did not think of the solecism as a source of wit.

Within well-defined limits, editors of Medieval Latin texts written after ca. 800 have accepted a number of departures from the norms of Classical Latin. In the area of orthography, some spellings are admitted on to the page that one would not find in an edition of a classical work: *e* and *e-caudata* for *ae* (and occasionally vice-versa), *ci* for *ti* and vice-versa, and individual spellings such as *hiemps* and *michi*. Allowance is made for replacing a present participle with

errors the editor should not correct, since is it by no means certain that the author himself cannot have made them ...’

3 Antonio Dell’Era, *Problemi di lingua e stilo in Petronio* (Rome: Editizioni di storia e letteratura, 1970).

a gerund in the ablative case, substituting the present passive of a verb with the supine and a form of *esse* and the perfect with a supine plus *fuisse*, and expanding the function of the infinitive to express purpose. Similar leeway is granted in the use of cases: *cum* with the ablative may be used to express instrument, and the accusative of duration of time may be replaced by the ablative – a development that was already underway in the later classical period. Many of the allowable exceptions to classical usage are found in the Vulgate, and thus, so to speak, enjoy divine dispensation.

The obvious advantage of employing classical spelling, morphological and syntactic norms is that these norms are easy to apply consistently, at least in the case of an author who does not stray too far from the path.<sup>4</sup> A work that straddles late antiquity and the pre-Carolingian period is the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, finished around 620. For the most part, Isidore writes correct Latin. His scribes, however, frequently show him to be a poor speller, to have fallen victim to the same bad orthographical habits exhibited by so-called ‘Merovingian’ writers. Wallace Lindsay, a scholar equally expert in philology and paleography, probably knew the Latin language better than anyone since the seventeenth century. But despite his detailed knowledge of the variations in Latin, he decided to take the easy way out, and edited Isidore as if he were Varro. Classical Latin spelling norms are observed consistently, and the many Greek words occurring in the text are printed in Greek characters and spelled according to the rules of classical Greek. The result is a very readable work, edited consistently. It is hardly surprising that it has represented the gold standard for Isidore for over a century.<sup>5</sup> Lindsay did not leave his readers in doubt about what Isidore *thought* about a subject, but one might very well wonder how that author spelled those thoughts.

A project to re-edit Isidore’s work in the light of a fresh examination of the manuscripts was begun in the 1970s under the direction of Jacques Fontaine and Yves Lefevre – to be carried about book-by-book by a team of editors. Each volume is to contain a facing page translation in the language of the editor. To date, only 5 of the 20 books have appeared: II (Marshall), IX (Reydellet), XII (André, XIII) (Gasparotto), XVII (André). The volumes I have seen show that the editors made an effort to accommodate some of the orthographical vicissitudes exhibited in the mss. Greek words no longer appear in Greek characters, and their spelling reflects much more closely the more usual spellings of scribes. Much the same applies to the spelling of Latin words, but with more caution.

4 See the judicious advice by Huygens, *Ars Edendi*, p. 52: “Often the only solution may be to mildly normalize the spelling of your text, or to simply follow one manuscript. But don’t think of publishing a medieval Latin text as if it were a thousand years older.

5 For a recent highly positive assessment of Lindsay’s work see *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville, Translated with Introduction and Notes* by Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: University Press, 2006), p. 27.

Glancing through P. K. Marshall's edition of Book II (*De rhetorica*) I note that the editor is reasonably consistent in his treatment of the Greek. Indeed, there is little reason to correct manuscript spellings of Greek words in the Latin text, since on the facing page he can write the word in Latin according to classical norms, then insert in parentheses the Greek term, written in Greek characters and spelled according to classical norms. Thus we find *acirologia*, with *i* for *y* in the second syllable (20.1, 20.4), *ellemsis* (20.4) for *elleipsis*, and *procatalempsis* for *procatalepsis* (21.27). These readings are noted in the apparatus with the designation "*codd.*", so it is reasonable to assume they all stood in the archetype. But why, then, does Marshall print *amphidoxae* against "*codd.*" *anfidoxae* (21.26), especially as the word is easily recognizable? I suppose that ease of recognizability is the operative criterion for many editors. This probably explains why Marshall eschewed the spelling *quinonosis* (again, *codd.*) for *coenonosis* (21.28), even though *coenonosis* is accessible to the reader at a parallel place on the opposite page?

I can feel Marshall's pain when he was confronted with the prospect of printing *clemax* for the term *climax* (20.4) – it must have felt much easier (and surely safer) to align oneself with all previous editors and write *climax*. But the beauty of a bilingual edition, at least in the matter of printing Greek, is that one can safely print all sorts of *monstra horrenda* without fear of creating a stumbling block for one's readers. To be fair to Marshall, whose work I admire, the reader is warned in the Introduction that no attempt will be made to reconstruct Isidore's orthography.<sup>6</sup> Yet what *does* the edition seek to do? We are left with an uneasy compromise.

I have always accepted the received wisdom that a thorough training in classical philology is indispensable for editing Latin texts of any period. But there is a downside. Being raised as a classicist is like being raised Catholic – you grow up with an overdeveloped sense of guilt. You feel that you have been placed on earth by God to serve as a guardian of two of the three languages that God speaks, and it bothers you intensely when anyone breaks the rules.<sup>7</sup> We worry that the angels will weep if we print *luxoria* for *luxuria* (Marshall prints *luxuria* at 21.5, even though the preponderance of the manuscripts read *luxoria*, and the spelling *Luxorius* was common for the African poet's name). After all, error multiplied by any number is still error, as Catholics will say. Now Alcuin was

6 Marshall, ed., p. 11: 'No attempt has been made to recreate any such thing as "Isidore's orthography". It may well be true that he used such forms as *quum*, *conlocutio*, *luxoria*, *retorica*, but the interests of the modern reader seem to demand the "normalization" practised in most classical texts.'

7 When I wrote these words for this lecture I had forgotten that my teacher Ludwig Bieler had written much the same more than fifty years ago: "From time immemorial we grammarians have been the trustees of the literary languages of the human race; to us has fallen the task of watching over the purity of both language and text – and of each other for the other's sake as well as for its own." (*The Grammarian's Craft*, p. 45) Bieler was trained as a classicist, but spent the bulk of his life editing early medieval Hiberno-Latin texts.

a classical scholar, who just happened to be a staunch Catholic. He was raised in England, the only country where one could be certain to get a proper education in classical Latin in the mid-eighth century. When he came to Europe, as the English are wont to call it, he convinced Charlemagne to make everybody write Latin in the same way that he had been taught to write it at home.<sup>8</sup> By all accounts he was successful. Minions were dispatched throughout the kingdom to collect good copies of works to serve as exemplars for copyists. Schools were set up everywhere to teach kids proper grammar and spelling – what a great idea! The experiment worked so well that it not only produced “good copies” of classical and patristic texts, but also “better copies” of works written in the bad old days before the reform.<sup>9</sup>

Classical scholars have always felt beholden to Alcuin. He restored the language of Rome and paved the way for the recovery of the Latin classics that began in his lifetime. But, believe it or not, Alcuin is not popular with everyone today. Roger Wright would have us think of Alcuin as a vandal who breaks into a scientist’s lab and destroys all his specimens. The period between ca. 600 and 782, the fateful year when Alcuin took up residence at the palace school, is the Romance philologist’s laboratory, his archaeological site, his Ark of the Covenant. It provides a vast amount of the written data that is indispensable for the reconstruction of early Romance (or as some scholars continue to think, of the proto-Romance as distinct from Latin).<sup>10</sup> The scribes who wrote the manuscripts that contain these data did not commit crimes against the Latin language; instead, they were recording the forms and units of speech that were part and parcel of the language they heard and spoke. While the classicist can still be heard referring to this age as barbarian, the Romance philologist believes that its enforced end constituted an act of barbarism of a different sort. The data for the development of the Romance languages become much rarer after ca. 800. The effects of these radically divergent attitudes for editing should be clear. The classicist will tend to choose a ‘good’ spelling even if occurs in only one late manuscript or a correction in an earlier one; the Romanist will likely choose the ‘vulgar’ form, whether or not it has support in the overall text tradition.

I do not think it has been sufficiently recognized that the writing practice of the period ca. 600 to 782 was characterized more by instability than anything else. The era might be likened to the convergence of two competing weather systems that produce periods of rain and cool wind alternating with sun and

8 See especially Roger Wright, ‘Alcuin’s *De Orthographia* and the Council of Tours (AD 813)’, in Roger Wright, *A Sociophilological Study of Late Latin* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 127–146.

9 Roger Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1982), pp. 104–122.

10 Wright, ‘Review Article: Michel Banniard, *Viva voce: communication écrite et communication orale du ive au ix<sup>e</sup> siècle en occident latin*’, *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 3 (1993), 77–92; reprint: *A Sociophilological Study of Late Latin*, pp. 49–68, especially 65.



mild temperatures – in other words, ‘unsettled weather’. In most areas of Europe at this time authors as well as scribes lived in the midst of two competing language systems. One was the old system promulgated by surviving schools; the other, the new paradigm of the spoken language. When it came to spelling of a given word, there were often several possibilities, just as there were in English before the advent of dictionaries in the eighteenth century. As for grammar, there were two ways of differentiating the passive voice from the active, two ways of expressing participial concepts, and, yes, two nominal case-systems, to mention only a few examples.

The evidence of the Romance language together with non-literary texts of the eighth century tells us that the Latin case system had been much simplified. *Romanisten* hypothesize that by that time Romance or Vulgar Latin had only two cases, the nominative and the accusative (or according to others, the oblique), with many of the functions of the old cases replaced by the accusative (oblique) case coupled with a preposition.<sup>11</sup> This stripped-down model is probably right with regard to the development of the Romance languages, but overly reductive when applied to literary texts of the period.

It is clear from a glance at works such as the *Liber historiae Francorum*, finished in 727, that the classical Latin case system had been destabilized.<sup>12</sup> Yet certain functions associated with the old paradigm remained consistently in place, e.g. *gladios* might do service for *gladiis*, but very rarely for nominative singular *gladius*.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, there are many instances of case usages that are correct by classical standards. Words meant to be construed together, e.g. *omnibus paribus*, might be written thus in so-called “correct” fashion, but just as likely written *omnes paribus*, or even *omnis paribus*. The same inconsistency is at work in the frequent confusion of the active and passive voices and the interchange of deponents with non-deponents. The ease of forming the new present passives with a supine and the present tense of *sum* and the past with the supine and the perfect tense of *sum* (vel sim. for the future passive with *ero*, *eris*, etc.) rendered the passive forms of the old paradigm cumbersome and confusing. One also notes a tendency to simplify the old paradigm by reducing the number of separate forms. Does one really need both the second and fourth declension? Witness the assimilation of fourth-declension nouns to the second, especially in the genitive and ablative singular and accusative plur-

11 W. D. Elcock, *The Romance Languages*, revised by John N. Green (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 72–74.

12 Indispensable for the study of this work is Pauline Taylor, *The Latinity of the Liber Historiae Francorum: A Phonological, Morphological and Syntactical Study* (New York: Carranza and Co., 1924). For the case system and use of prepositions see her section entitled ‘Syntax’, pp. 61–116.

13 On the stability of the *-us* ending of the second declension nominative singular up to the late eighth century (ca. AD 770) in North Italian and Frankish documents see Robert L. Politzer, *A Study of the Language of Eighth Century Lombardic Documents* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1949), p. 138.

al.<sup>14</sup> Does one really need two different ways of forming the future tense? Note the intrusion of *bi-* elements into the third and fourth conjugations. And why does one need different vowels in the present-tense endings of the second and third conjugations? If *-et* is good enough for the present tense of *monet*, why not write *dicet* as well, especially since one can use *dicebit* for the future? Yet writers of literary texts continued to struggle with the old paradigm, with varying success. Active forms are sometimes correctly distinguished from passive, and some writers some of the time write *dicit* for the present tense, and *dicet* for the future. And some of the time accusative singulars are written with their final *m* intact, and ablative singulars are correctly written without a final *m*.

We find the same kind of maddening inconsistency with orthography. The ending *-us* does double service for the nominative singular of second-declension nouns and the accusative plural. *Habet amicus multos* probably does not mean ‘a friend has many men’, but rather ‘he has many friends’. But note: three lines down the same scribe (or author?) might write *habet amicos multos*. Similarly, the ending *-es* does double duty for nominative and accusative plurals of the third declension and for the nominative and genitive singular of nouns of the same declension.

The obvious question every editor of works from this period should raise is this: Are all or even most of the aberrations mentioned above authorial, or do they represent the scribbles of illiterate scribes – ‘blockheads’, as James Willis was wont to call them in his lectures. Did eighth-century scribes ‘translate’ a correctly written text into their own unorthodox system of spelling and grammar, or did they simply copy what was in front of them? One might also ask: If the same work was also copied by ninth-century or later scribes, did these scribes correct and remove infelicities of spelling and grammar according to Alcuinian principles? I suspect that both types of intervention occurred, but I would wager that the impetus to remove error was considerably more powerful and more frequent.

No work illustrates this dilemma better than the *Historiae Francorum* of Gregory of Tours. Some scholars are inclined to place Gregory at the end of the so-called *Übergangszeit* rather than at the head of the Merovingian literary tradition of ill repute. After all, Venantius Fortunatus, Gregory’s close contemporary and fellow bishop in Gaul, not only wrote prose to a high classical standard, but also composed poetry that was correct according to the ancient metrical system. More recent scholarship has tended to scepticism regarding the ‘vulgarisms’ imputed to Gregory’s *chef d’oeuvre*. Was Gregory better than his scribes? Or did his editor, the indefatigable Bruno Krusch, make Gregory out to be a ‘worse writer’ than he actually was, forcing him into a Procrustean bed built to the measurements of Fredegar, who wrote half a century later? Let

14 Manu Leumann [Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr], *Lateinische Grammatik: auf die Grundlage des Werkes von Friedrich Stolz und Joseph Herman Schmalz*. 2 vols. (Munich: Beck, 1972–1979), vol. 1, p. 450.

us focus on just one example to illustrate the debate, namely, the issue of confusing active and passive forms. Peter Stotz sets the following in stone: ‘Stark verbreitet ist die Verwendung des Infinitivus activus anstelle des Infinitivus passivus. Der letzere war in der volksnahen Latinität der Übergangszeit nur noch wenig geläufig; er lebt im Romanischen nicht weiter.’<sup>15</sup> How *stark verbreitet* and when this *Verbreitung* started remains somewhat problematic. One of the authorities for Stotz’s pronouncement is an ambiguous example from Gregory’s *Vita patrum* 2.2: ‘... non potest hic habere locum inter sanctos’. But the example is problematized here as elsewhere: note the variant: *locum haberi*. The alleged use of the active in place of the passive infinitive in the *Historiae Francorum* was discussed recently by the late and much lamented Giovanni Orlandi.<sup>16</sup> That scholar cited a passage from 5.28 (Krusch, p. 234), which exhibits what seem like both a correct and an incorrect use of the infinitive in close conjunction:

Sed et alii functionis infligebantur multi tam de reliquis terris  
quam de mancipiis; quod implere non poterat. Lemovicinus populus, cum  
cernerit se tali fasci gravari, etc.<sup>17</sup>

As the second infinitive (*gravari*) is used correctly, and since Gregory consistently distinguishes between the active and passive forms of finite verbs,<sup>18</sup> Orlandi reasoned that *implere* (*impleri* in some mss) should be attributed to scribal activity. Perhaps; but here one cannot appeal to phonetic influence, since the final *i* of the correct *impleri* is long, and is very rarely rendered as *e*. Can we allow for this type of inconsistency in the same passage? Orlandi was generally resistant to ascribing morphological and grammatical errors to Gregory, more sympathetic to admitting orthographical divergences: ‘Ma neppure a Tours nel 573 pare possibile supporre che si desse la cattedra episcopale a chi non distinguisse piu le desinenze dei casi latini; non si era ancora a questo punto. Le innovazioni presenti nella sua lingua sono altre e di diversa portata, come i gia citati mutamenti di genere, di costruzioni verbali e preposizionali, e soprattutto un uso indubitabile del accusativo assoluto.’<sup>19</sup> In other words, we can allow a few minor spelling peculiarities as authorial faults, but the more serious mistakes in morphology and syntax are the faults of the scribes. It is interesting to see how a critic’s paradigm of a particular era continues to influ-

15 Peter Stotz, *Handbuch zur lateinischen Sprache des Mittelalters*. Bd. 4. *Formenlehren, Syntax, und Stilistik* (Munich: Beck, 1998), p. 344, §74.5

16 Giovanni Orlandi, ‘Un dilemma editoriale: Ortografia e morfologia nelle *Historiae* di Gregorio di Tours’, *Filologia mediolatina* 3 (1996), 35–71, at pp. 57–59.

17 Translation with help from Orlandi: ‘But many other tributes (*functionis* = -es) were inflicted with regard to both the remaining lands as well as the serfs (?); but it could not be implemented. When the Limousine population realized that it was weighed down by such a burden’, etc.

18 The conclusion of M. Bonnet, *Le latin de Gregoire de Tours* (Paris, 1890), pp. 400–401, 628–633.

19 Orlandi, ‘Ortografia e morfologia in Gregorio di Tours.’, p. 69.



ence his choices as an editor. Hesiod's metallurgical allegory of the ages still holds for Latin: first came Golden Latin, then Silver Latin, then Late Antique Latin, and finally the Age called 'The Worst is Still to Come.'

'Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate!' With the warning cry of Dante still ringing in my ears, I emerged from the *selva oscura* rubbing my eyes, and gazed upon the Eldorado of the Latin editorial world, the shining city of Aethicus Ister, otherwise known as the *Cosmography*. The great city had been besieged three times, but this mighty fortress had withstood every attack, her mystery still intact. Believing myself to have solved the riddle of the sphinx in the guise of the *Hisperica Famina*,<sup>20</sup> I was convinced that I would breach this mystery as well. Then I gazed upon the sign above her gate, 'Per me si va nella città dolente.' Fool that I was, I rushed in. As the gate locked behind me, I knew at once that I was utterly unprepared for what I found inside. I reached into my editor's bag and realized that I had brought the wrong paradigm. The *Cosmography* was supposed to be an Hiberno-Latin text – had not Heinz Löwe proved that it was written by a certain Virgil, an Irish bishop of Salzburg of the late eighth century?<sup>21</sup> I was prepared to be confronted by many hard words and neologisms based on Greek. What I was not equipped for was the mountain of morphological and syntactical error. The Hiberno- and Anglo-Latin texts I had worked on were not free of mistakes by classical standards, but where morphology and syntax are concerned, they approached the norms of 'good texts' written in late antiquity.

I was consoled by the fact that I was not the first to be fooled. Because the *Cosmography* passes itself off as the work of *Hieronymus presbyter*, its second editor Heinrich Wuttke, convinced that the work came from the hand of the church father, believed that the scribes were responsible for its many aberrations. When it was later proved that the work was heavily reliant on the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, and therefore had to have been written after ca. 620, it became necessary to construct a new paradigm for it. Misled by superficial verbal and stylistic parallels with the *Hisperica Famina* and the writings of Virgil the Grammarian, Löwe pronounced the *Cosmography* Irish. But before Löwe, Krusch himself had entered the fray, even editing a small section of the *Cosmography*, and announced it as a Merovingian work – indeed, an example of *Hofsgeschichtsschreibung*. While this last designation is unfounded, Krusch, who had singlehandedly edited practically everything written in Gaul between Gregory of Tours and the first Carolingian kings, knew a Merovingian work when he saw one. His paradigm provided the basis for Otto Prinz's edition of

20 Michael W. Herren, *The Hisperica Famina*. 2 vols. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974, 1987).

21 'Ein literarischer Widersacher des Bonifatius. Virgil von Salzburg und die Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister', *Abhandlungen der Akademie von Mainz. Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Klasse* 1951, Nr. 11, 903–83.

1993, though Prinz dates the work a little earlier than Krusch and localizes it differently.<sup>22</sup>

I said at the outset that editors sometimes have to eat their own words, and I shall proceed to eat some of mine before you right now. In volume 3 of *The Journal of Medieval Latin* I wrote a rather harsh review of Prinz's edition of the *Cosmography*.<sup>23</sup>

In my summary I wrote: "At the basis of this failure [sc. to make the text accessible to the reader] is a fundamental misconception: the belief that well-educated and well-read medieval authors were unable to construe or spell any better than the most ignorant scribe. This misconception becomes even more serious when it is recognized that we do not know the identity or origin, or even the date, of the author of the *Cosmography*. It is by no means inconceivable that he belonged to the second half of the seventh century and wrote in a region that was largely unaffected by the vagaries of Merovingian scribes."<sup>24</sup> Clearly, when I wrote these words seventeen years ago, I believed that authors *were* better than their scribes, and in my Oedipal *hubris*, I set out to prove that they were. Just as Prinz appeared to favour the worst readings, I went on a hunt for the best. While Prinz privileged the eighth-century Leipzig manuscript (L), I chose the ninth-century Vossianus (V) as my holy hand grenade. Alas, my bomb was a dud. Mingled with some clever readings in the first hand and others by correctors were some of the bad old spellings and terrible grammatical mistakes that I had set out to purge. When I turned to later manuscripts, it became evident that they were copies of the early ones, but containing easy syntactical corrections. As Aethicus Ister himself said, 'Non repperi quem quaesivi'.<sup>25</sup> I eventually abandoned the search for a 'best manuscript' and fell back on Prinz's own recension of the manuscripts and his stemma.<sup>26</sup>

Prinz posited a unified tradition in two branches. Unfortunately for my agenda, far too many spelling and morphological errors could be attested in both branches, and quite often, in all the mss. Even more deleterious to my agenda was the demonstrated fact that the archetype was chronologically close to the *terminus-post-quem-non* of the work. However, I had written in my review: 'Prinz confuses not only author and archetype', etc.<sup>27</sup> By this logic, it hardly matters if the archetype was copied out ten weeks, ten decades, or ten centuries after the author wrote; a copy is only a copy, and every copy makes errors. But it *does* matter when the author himself wrote his book, and alas, we

22 For a discussion of previous scholarship on the *Cosmography* see now Herren, *The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister: Edition, Translation and Commentary*. Publications of *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. xi–xvi; for the early editions, pp. cxii–cxiii.

23 *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 3 (1993), 236–245.

24 *Ibid.*, 245. .

25 Ed. Prinz, 234 (Herren, §105, p. 206).

26 Ed. Prinz, 61 (Herren, cviii). For an original critique of the 'optimist method' see Huygens, *Ars Edendi*, pp. 37–38.

27 Herren, Review of Prinz, p. 245.

must endure the tyranny of this paradigm. Had a poem by Catullus survived in an early eighth-century copy full of non-classical spellings, an editor would be justified in discarding the copy entirely. On the other hand, if an eighth-century author is represented by an archetype also written in the eighth century, however many errors the archetype contains, we must be prepared to accept that at least to some degree it represents authorial practice. It becomes a question of “to what extent”? But how does one determine this?

The answer, I believe, lies in the appeal to sheer numbers. If a certain type of error occurs persistently throughout a work, at least as it is transmitted by the *consensus codicum*, can one really blame the scribes for every single one? Let us look at just a few examples drawn from the *Cosmography*. Earlier we mentioned the lack of congruence between noun and adjective, or noun and noun, even when they are written immediately next to each other. Can one really countenance the collocation *omnes paribus*? Allow me to entertain you with a small sample of somewhat noisome exhalations in the *Cosmography*, cited here now according to the section numbers in my edition:

usque trecesimo terminum diei luminis 15  
 de ianuis caeli et cardinibus mundi tergaque solis 22  
 de ubera aquilonis et earum munitione 23  
 manus et pedes sicut reliqui hominum genus 28  
 insolis uel litoribus inclusos Birricheos montes 32  
 usque Euxinum maris sinus 32  
 trieribus aut scaphas seu carinas dolose foramine pertunsum 36a  
 illisque in ira saeuientes 37c  
 habet et flumina modica, Mineruio et Conubio 37d  
 inmanissimos malleorum ictibus 38b  
 alii clipeo tecti et arma 38b  
 praecurrente potentiam Dei 41a  
 ut neque acumen aut ferro incidatur 41b  
 de ignotis gentibus uel insolas septentrionales 42  
 ratiaras ... ex tignis asserebusque connexum 45  
 ferroque plurimum adfixa 47  
 a Griphone quodam gentilem artificem 49  
 Nam ipsas rostratas in altum erectae 49  
 Scithae et Griphes et Taracontas 53  
 Nauticos gignaris prouehitur 54

There are many more, but perhaps already you have had enough.<sup>28</sup> What about concordance in gender? Here is another sample. I begin with groupings of masculine nouns in *-or* with feminine adjectives, as such collocations might be useful for localizing:

<sup>28</sup> A fuller list can be consulted in my edition, lxxxix–xc. For analogous data in the *Liber historiae Francorum* see Taylor, *Latinity*, pp. 67–68.

Eam fragorem 10b  
propter nimiam ardorem uel calorem 14  
et prae torreda calore 21b  
labore eorum sunt satis exiguae 35  
nouam errorem 58a

But there are other types as well:

ordinem decimam 2  
hanc cardinem 20  
quadratus agmen 38a  
contra mare feruentem 59d  
tantum ... similitudinem 28  
celebre eius historiam 30  
peltas ualde robustos bituminatos 67d  
unam atque idem statuam 3  
atroque ... plaga 59d

Again, there are many more. Unlike the good bishop of Tours, who, according to Orlandi, could still distinguish his cases, the manuscripts show that the author of the *Cosmography* could not. An accusative after a preposition requiring the ablative occurs regularly: *in unam ergatam* 3, *in aliquas epistolas* 17, *de ubera aquilonis* 23, *et in eam* 25, *in has insolas* 34, *in arenam* 34, *cum iuga* 37a, *et in eas* 38a, *in mare Magnum* (location) 47, *in ipsum mare* 50, *in aliorum codices philosophorum* 56, *in Arminiam* 69, *in ipsos enim montes* 59b, *de astra* 66b, and on it goes. As you can see from the examples, phonetic conditioning is only a possible factor in the case of the first-declension singular nouns. The errors occur in all the declensions, and in both singular and plural. There is plenty more, including a host of examples of first-declension feminine plural nouns and adjectives in the accusative used as subjects:

Tantum ... uim et uigorem angelorum manus ignitas habent 13  
Gentes stultissimas sunt inter alias gentes 31  
Ubi barbaras gentes habitant 35  
In hac insula siluarum magnitudo et ... bestiolas uenenatas 37c  
Praecogniti plus quam alias gentes terrarum 38b

And a rare example of a demonstrative pronoun used by itself:

Eas attamen in Mediterraneo mare nusquam reperiuntur 57

Perhaps by now you are all suffering from *fastidium* or shock. But other anomalous features should at least be mentioned. The pronoun *quae*, which gave rise to Spanish *que*, Italian *che*, and French *que*, is used in the *Cosmography* as a kind of all-purpose relative pronoun, still spelled *quae*, but already functioning as if it were a Romance derivative. Here is a sample:

Eam conditionem quae nunc diximus 12

Ab alios latere quae porrigit faciem 21*b*  
 Cuniculi muli et lepus quae uulpes metuunt 34  
 Et libellum quae arte sua inuenerat 34  
 Arenam auro fecundam quae in illis regionibus celebre 63 (antecedent  
*auro*)  
 Cum humano sanguine mixto quae 67*d*

As you can tell from the examples, neither the gender nor the number of the antecedent matters. There are many more examples.

The active and passive voices of finite verbs are regularly confused, as are deponents and non-deponents. Those pesky active infinitives used for the passive also appear, and, to satisfy Giovanni wrinkling his brow from above, there are converse examples. The *questo punto* that Gregory, the metropolitan bishop, had not yet reached is reached and breached by the author of the *Cosmography*. If Gregory belongs to the paradigm called ‘Worse is Still to Come’, the cosmographer is situated in the ‘Last Days’, the *tempora nouissima* marked by the reign of the Anti-Christ of grammar. Of course, as Pseudo-Methodius and others might have prophesied, that too shall pass away some fifty years later, when Lady Grammatica will reign at the palace school in Aachen. When she presides over the Last Judgement, the cosmographer will be consigned to the lowest circle of hell, and his cell-mate will be his contemporary, the anonymous author of the *Liber historiae Francorum*, with whom he shared so many crimes.

In an essay in a Festschrift for Tom Hill,<sup>29</sup> I outlined my principles for editing the *Cosmography* – these reflect at least a partial repentance for my harsh judgement of Prinz’s editorial methods.<sup>30</sup> In a nutshell it is this: keep all the specimens of bad spelling, bad morphology, and bad syntax that are sanctioned by the *consensus codicum*. Roger Wright needs them for his collection. Conversely, intervene aggressively in matters of sense. Accept a minority reading or a later correction, or the conjecture of an earlier editor, when it makes better sense than the archetype; emend without hesitation when necessary; supplant a lacuna if it can be done convincingly; excise double readings and interpolations. And don’t forget to clarify punctuation so that the reader will know where a sentence is supposed to begin and end. Keep in mind that the author, however crazy he may seem at times, was trying to say something. The following is a small selection of divergences from Prinz’s readings that I introduce in my edition:<sup>31</sup>

29 ‘Crux-busting on the Danube: uel Conectanea in Cosmographiam Aethici, ut dicitur, Istri’, in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill* (Toronto: University Press, 2007), pp. 353–369.

30 See also the *Prolegomena* to my edition, p. vii.

31 Herren, ed., pp. cx–cxii. In the following samples the symbol α stands for the consensus of the uncorrected readings of the earliest manuscripts; *Pr* stands for Prinz’s readings. For other sigla see my edition, p. cxix.



§1, Pr 87. Quae (Quur αPr) Aethicus iste chosmografus tam difficilia appetisse didicerit, quaeque et Moyses et uetus historia in enarrando distulerint (distulit et αPr) hic secerpens protuli (with V1: protulit αPr). ‘I have reproduced here in selection the very difficult matters which the cosmographer Aethicus learned to pursue, and also the matters which Moses and the Old Testament omitted in their narrative.’

§4, Pr 90. Primam eleuationem (eleuatam αPr) ordinem decimam ignis spirans flatum, [in] ordinem refulgentem conditam facturae (with V: factore αPr) signaculum quae ruinam fecit. ‘{He says that} the first elevation is the tenth order breathing a fiery wind, an order created flashing the sign of the creature that caused ruin.’ (Note that I did not correct *decimam* to *decimum*.)

§5, Pr 92. Haec omnia subterius in ipsa massa deorsum [a Deo iudicando] iudicio Dei habuisse sub formam Aethicus sofista scripsit. ‘Aethicus the sophist wrote at a later point that all these things in that mass below are held beneath the formation by the judgement of God.’ (Do we have an instance of an author editing his own work, or do we have an interpolated gloss? In either case, ‘a Deo iudicando iudicio Dei’ calls out for intervention.)

§10b, Pr 96. ... ab imo cum protoplausto (with L1: conplausto α) sursum, hominibus sanctis, per dominum esse repletum. ‘{this} was replenished above by the Lord with protoplasm from below, the saintly men.’

§11, Pr 98. Idemque primus in nouissimo, iudice terribile uenturo, poenas daturus (damnaturus αPr). ‘... and the same one will be first to pay the penalty when the terrible judge will come on the last day.’

§13, Pr 101. ... Si hominum ira peccantium (peccaminum αPr) uel hostium rebellium furor ingruerit ... ‘If the wrath of sinful men or the rage of rebel hosts should attack ...’

§30, Pr 117. ... quia omnes scripturas et legum et liberalium (litterarum) (supp. M. Winterbottom, *Peritia* 9) fontem uiuum et matrem historiarum appellat. ‘because he calls all the Scriptures the living fountain of the laws and liberal (letters) and the mother of histories.’

§36b, Pr 127 Meopari quoque citimam confectionem inquinant (inquinant αPr) a parte solis speculo ... ‘The Meopari also smear their famous concoction on to a part of sun-mirror ...’ (Note that the *a* before *partem* stands for *ad*; there are more examples of this.)

§36b, Pr 128. ... statim quandoque uoluerint stationem faciunt et aliarum nauium ruinam (non) incurrunt. ‘and immediately come to a stop when-

ever they want to, and thus do <not> incur the damage {suffered by} other ships.’

Perhaps this is enough to show the kinds of corrections I think are appropriate.

Let me now quickly pull together some of the strands of this lecture. The notion of the paradigm into which an editor fits his author is supremely important. However, before one applies the cookie-cutter – to revert to our culinary metaphors – one should be confident about the date and provenance of the work under edition. It is not acceptable to say that because a given work is full of spelling and grammar mistakes it must therefore come from eighth-century Francia. Rather, date and provenance should first be determined independently of any such judgements. We can date and localize the *Etymologies* and the *Historiae Francorum* fairly closely, because we know a good deal about the lives of their authors. The *Cosmography*, however, is an anonymous work, so we must look elsewhere for clues to its origin. Its date can be determined by its earliest manuscript (Leipzig, ca. 780) and the latest sources used: the Latin translation of Ps. Methodius and the *Liber historiae Francorum* finished in 727. Multiple stages of transmission between author and earliest manuscript incline us to date the work nearer the earlier limit. Provenance can be determined, to some degree, by the centres that produced the earliest copies: St. Gall, Regensburg, Salzburg, Murbach. There was a copy at Reichenau at least by the ninth century, and another at Bobbio at least by the ninth century.<sup>32</sup> Possibly the earliest ‘Aethicus batches’ in a glossary are found in a Tegernsee manuscript of the eleventh century.<sup>33</sup> Thus, we might place the provenance of the work in Alemannia, Bavaria, Burgundy, or even Northern Italy (Lombardy), as I am now inclined to think.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the *Cosmography* was probably written at a central location on the continent, not in Spain, England, or Ireland.<sup>35</sup> The spelling and grammar of its manuscripts is consistent with that of contemporary works

32 Gustav Becker, *Catalogi Bibliothecarum Antiqui* (Bonn: Max Cohen & Son, 1885), no. 32, item 471, *librum I. cosmographiae*. For the identification of this item as the *Cosmography of Aethicus Ister* see Herren, ed., lxiii–lxiv. For the ninth-century dating of this catalogue (i.e. the so-called ‘Munari Catalogue’) see Mario Esposito, ‘The Ancient Catalogue of Bobbio,’ *Journal of Theological Studies* 32 (1931), 337–344.

33 Munich, Staatsbibliothek, cdm 19439, fols. Scattered between fols. 3r and 44r.

34 See my remarks on milieu in Herren, ed., pp. lxi–lxxiii, especially the conclusion, lxxiii: ‘On the available evidence, the *Cosmography of Aethicus Ister* was completed at a continental centre that had good connections to monastic libraries in the region of Lake Constance and historical Bavaria. Bobbio presents itself as an attractive candidate for the milieu where Ps. Jerome finished his book; but for the present this must remain an hypothesis.’

35 I think it likely that Ps. Jerome travelled and visited Ireland and England, as I conjectured in my ‘The *Cosmography of Aethicus Ister*: Speculations about its Date, Provenance, and Audience,’ in *Nova de veteribus: Festschrift für Professor Dr. Paul Gerhard Schmidt*, edited by A. Bihrer and E. Stein (Freiburg im Breisgau: K. Saur Verlag, 2004), pp. 9–102. However, I feel confident that he completed his work in a continental centre, from which it was disseminated.

from these locations. Thus, it is likely, in my view, that the author was not too much better than his scribes.

I hope that over the course of this scholastic dinner I have given you something on which to ruminate and that you will be able to digest it without too much trouble.

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