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Jan M. Ziolkowski and Bridget K Balint (with Justin Lake, Laura Light, and Prydwyn Piper), eds. and trans., *A Garland of Satire, Wisdom, and History: Latin Verse from Twelfth-Century France (Carmina Houghtoniensia)*. Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2007. x + 233 p. Illustrations, facsimiles, indices. \$35.00. ISBN-10: 0976547279; ISBN-13: 9780976547273.

Review by M.-A. Bossy, Brown University.

MS Lat 300 of Harvard University's Houghton library is an anthology of Latin poems copied in northern France during the late twelfth century. The contents are ninety-five poems, some very short, capped by a prose epilogue. Minute penmanship (in several hands) enabled the scribes to fit the whole assemblage within eleven folios, none taller than 208 mm or wider than 147 mm, all of which in this edition are photographically reproduced in an appendix. The team of editors have ably transcribed, annotated, and translated twenty-five of the ninety-six pieces preserved in the manuscript.

For whom, though, was that twelfth-century anthology originally composed? And who before the modern period owned the booklet containing it? Neither question can be answered with certainty. Yet historical and topographical allusions within the poems point toward Tours as the likely place of origin (pp. 5-6, 38, 65). During the Revolution, books from the Church's three major libraries in Tours—at Saint-Gatien Cathedral, the Collegiate Church of Saint-Martin, and Marmoutier Abbey—were transferred into a new municipal library, whose holdings were repeatedly (not to say habitually) pilfered during the first half of the nineteenth century.[1] MS Lat 300 was probably one of the books expropriated in 1791 from one of the religious establishments of Tours. Then, like so many other items in the new library, it was stolen at some point during the next four decades. For all we know, it may even have been filched before the new library was set up. Given its small size, MS Lat 300 would have been easy to tuck into a coat pocket.

Our earliest record of the booklet dates from 1836. Its owner then was the historian and manuscript collector, Amans-Alexis Monteil, who in that year published a description of its contents.[2] Following Monteil's death in 1850, the manuscript remained largely unnoticed until Harvard purchased it from a Swiss book dealer at Sotheby's in 1965. Since then, the Houghton Library has digitized the manuscript and posted information about it on the internet. In fact, a link on the Houghton's web page for Latin manuscripts enables anyone with internet access to view MS Lat 300 folio by folio.[3] Other links on that page lead to a descriptive summary of the manuscript's contents and to a brief bibliography, from which one can also access the 1990 article by Jan Ziolkowski that paved the way for the edition reviewed here.[4]

The anthology features six parts or "groups," as the editors prefer to call them. Group One consists of a single item: a verse diatribe against the corruptive power of money, in which bribery becomes personified as a little coin (*parvus nummus*) that holds sway over all courts and stands as "the highest prince in the Roman curia." Group Two comprises sixteen poems, mostly satirical in tone. First come three pieces dealing with "topics of illness, medicine and death." The poet grouses about fevers that bring on nightmares and about the painful consequences of overeating, for which quacks contrive disgusting purges, as a prelude to the great leveler (Nos. 2-4). Following that anti-medical riff, an

Ovidian lover rails against the torments inflicted on him by his merciless Corinna and a satirical squib skewers a certain Landri for his gluttony and randy behavior. A pause ensues in which the poet boasts of his inspired talent and offers a capsule summary of doctrines propounded by four ancient philosophers (Nos. 7-8). Then it's back to satire, as mythology-laden invectives are hurled at four individuals and severe admonitions at a fifth (Nos. 9-11, 13, 15). Lighter touches, nevertheless, appear in an encomium to a prelate and a two-line call for blessing (Nos. 12, 14). Group Two's penultimate piece is the lament of a cleric who returns from Rome quaking with dismay (No. 16). His allusion to the curia's despotic greed recalls the opening diatribe against bribery in Rome, and that thematic echo suggests that Groups One and Two form a single cycle.

The editors identify several political allusions that bind together a central cluster of poems within Group Two (Nos. 11, 12, 13, and 15). The references offer glimpses into a series ecclesiastical disputes that broke out in Poitiers, some ninety kilometers south of Tours, during 1073-1074, and then reached Rome, where they were adjudicated by Pope Gregory VII and the Lenten Synods of 1074 and 1075. For a clearer picture of how those disputes relate to the Gregorian reform, readers should turn to H. E. J. Cowdrey's *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*.<sup>[5]</sup> (Surprisingly, this important study is cited neither in the notes nor in the bibliography.) As Cowdrey explains, the conflict in Poitiers pitted the canons of the abbey of Saint-Hilaire both against the cathedral's canons over a question of celebratory privilege and against the city's bishop over control of a smaller monastery. The abbey-cathedral row landed in Rome before the Lenten Synod of 1074, whose ruling came down in favor of the cathedral's canons. Later that year, Pope Gregory VII took up the abbey-bishop dispute. As months went by, Gregory became increasingly displeased with the actions of the bishop, Isembert II, who in turn made matters worse by sending armed men to stifle a council organized in Poitiers at the pope's behest. Those in charge of the council were the Papal Legate Amatus of Oloron and the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Gozelin (a.k.a. Joscelyn), two stalwart backers of Gregorian reform in southern France. In November, Gregory excommunicated Isembert and summoned him to Rome. The Lenten Synod of 1075 placed Isembert's see under Gozelin's surveillance and entrusted its judicial matters, such as the claims of the canons of Saint-Hilaire, to the hands of the count of Poitiers. That count was Duke William VIII of Aquitaine, the very man who stood to benefit from the council that Isembert tried to sabotage.<sup>[6]</sup>

Isembert, Amatus, and Gozelin are all three present in Group Two poems. Isembert is roundly denounced in Poem 11, which assimilates him to Polyphemus, for he is blind both physically and spiritually. Poem 12, aside from further cursing Polyphemus, addresses and highly praises the father who "exhilarates the followers of Saint Hilary" and "whose rod rules the people of Bordeaux," that is to say, Archbishop Gozelin. (The opening apostrophe revels in rambunctious puns on Saint-Hilaire: "Exilaras mestos, hilaris pater, Hilarienses.") The papal legate favorably mentioned in Poems 11 and 13 clearly coincides with Amatus, future successor of Gozelin as Metropolitan of Bordeaux. In poem 15, the speaker tells his addressee that he will be severely punished for his crimes of simony. While neither Pope Gregory nor Duke William is explicitly mentioned, both might be envisioned as tutelary spirits hovering above the spectacle of Isembert-Polyphemus's humiliating downfall, the price to be paid for defying simultaneously the head of the Church and the secular lord of one's city.

The pleasure of revenge expressed in Poem 15 is offset by the speaker's dread in Poem 16, as he recalls crossing perilous mountain ranges and undergoing other "disastrous experiences" on the way to Rome. Yet the ordeal of journeying to Rome to petition the curia and the pope has resulted in a happy outcome for the canons of Saint-Hilaire. Fittingly, Group Two's epilogue banishes all dread with a call to pilgrimage: "climb the peaks of the mountain" and taste bountiful honey sprung from rocks (No. 17).

That exhortation serves as a transition from the commemoration of a battle won by the Gregorian reform to a series of sixty-nine biblical epigrams composed by Hildebert of Lavardin, which constitutes Group Three in the anthology. Readers are thus invited to draw honeyed understanding from Hildebert's capsule summaries of scriptural *exempla*. The pedagogical aura that suffuses the epigram

collection continues in Group Four, which contains two schoolroom declamations in verse sometimes ascribed to Bernard Silvestris, *De gemellis* and *Pauper ingrates*. The editors list the contents of Group Three and Four but they omit the texts themselves. Instead, they refer us to journal articles in which the seventy-one poems can be found.<sup>[7]</sup> The omission of so many pieces is a pity, since it renders the overall design of the anthology less visible and comprehensible.

Full transcription of the manuscript resumes in Group Five, which contains six political poems, three relatively lengthy pieces followed by three much shorter ones. Whereas Group Two focused on places ruled by William VIII of Aquitaine (from Poitiers down to Bordeaux), Group Five gravitates northward to the county of Anjou and the domains of King Louis VI of France. Addressed to an unidentifiable Philip, Poem 90 is a panegyric in praise of Geoffrey Martel le Jeune, son of Fulk Réchin, Count of Anjou (d. 1109). Though disinherited by his father, Geoffrey fought for his rights and managed to reign as count from 1103 until his death in 1106. In Poem 91, equally fulsome praise is directed toward Louis VI. A tacit link between the two panegyrics, according to Justin Lake, is that Geoffrey and Louis were both sons poorly treated by their fathers and threatened by the same notorious lady, Bertrade de Montfort, Fulk Réchin's fourth wife. As Geoffrey's step-mother, she had tried to despoil him of his inheritance in favor of his younger half-brother, who was her own son, Fulk V (later King of Jerusalem). In 1102, Bertrade left Fulk Réchin to become King Philip I's concubine, causing considerable trouble for crown prince Louis. Nevertheless, the texts themselves make no mention of those scandals. Poem 92 eulogizes a certain Milo, who may have been Milo II of Bray, seneschal of Monthléry and partisan of Louis.

The encomiastic procession of group Five closes with three snippets of paeans, as if the rhetorical parade were finally running out of breath (Nos. 93-95). However, the anthology has one more item to deliver: its prose epilogue. That concluding piece is the prophecy of the Tiburtine Sibyl, which foretells the battle waged in the ninth and final age of the world by an emperor to vanquish the Antichrist, thus heralding the Apocalypse and Last Judgment. This widely circulated text, "developed in stages over a long period of time", exists in several variants (p. 130). The version supplied by MS Lat 300 is an abridgement, which becomes at times almost cryptic. Despite its flaws, it provides strong culminating closure, as Bridget Balint argues: "From the solipsistic concerns about sickness and love, the poets' vision has become ever broader, encompassing the scriptural knowledge and book learning that are embodied in the biblical epigrams; contemporary politics and history; death, which is of course universal; and, finally, in the Tiburtina, the end of the world...[a] blissful image of the inevitable end of history" (p. 131).

The editors of MS Lat 300 have elucidated many of the inner contours and outer contexts of its anthology.<sup>[8]</sup> Their work skillfully combines codicology, paleography, and philology. Their notes furnish precise information about classical echoes within the Latin texts, their English translations are accurate as well as elegant, and their literary commentaries guide the reader well.

## NOTES

[1] See Léopold Delisle, "Notice sur les manuscrits disparus de la bibliothèque de Tours pendant la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, Vol. 31 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1884), pp.157-356 and Auguste Collon, "Tours," *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France – Départements*, Vol. 37 (Paris: Plon, 1900), pp. iii-xvi.

[2] *Traité de matériaux manuscrits de divers genres d'histoire*, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Duverger, 1836), II :177-179.

[3] [http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early\\_manuscripts/bibliographies/Lat.cfm](http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early_manuscripts/bibliographies/Lat.cfm).

[4] Jan Ziolkowski, "A Bouquet of Wisdom and Invective: Houghton MS. Lat 300," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, new series I, 3(Fall 1990): 20-48.

[5] H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). See especially pp. 351-352.

[6] The council's chief aim was to assist William in obtaining the dissolution of his second marriage. With respect to literary history, it is worth noting that he was the father of the earliest known troubadour, William IX, and grandfather of Eleanor of Aquitaine. It is interesting to speculate whether the Latin poetry of Poitiers in the mid-1070s had some bearing on the emergence of troubadour verse and culture in the following decades. Note, however, the caveats sounded about such surmises by Ruth Harvey in "Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Troubadours," in Marcus Bull and Catherine Léglu eds., *The World of Eleanor of Aquitaine: Literature and Society in Southern France between the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 101-114.

[7] A. B. Scott, Deirdre F. Baker, and A. G. Rigg, eds., "The Biblical Epigrams of Hildebert of Le Mans: A Critical Edition," *Mediaeval Studies* 47(1985): 272-316. For the two declamations, see Robert R. Edwards, "Poetic Invention and the Medieval *Causae*," *Mediaeval Studies* 55(1993): 183-217, 197-202 and 211-213.

[8] They have also attentively compared the contents of this collection to other twelfth-century anthologies, including Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson G 109 (Rg); Reims, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1275 (R); London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus A.xx (T); Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 115; and Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, MS C 58/275.

M.-A. Bossy  
Brown University  
[michel-andre\\_bossy@brown.edu](mailto:michel-andre_bossy@brown.edu)

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