

Claudio Giammona: *Ars Ambianensis*. Le tre redazioni delle *declinationes nominum*. *Editio princeps* con commento e indici. Hildesheim: Georg Olms 2016 (Collectanea Grammatica Latina 14). LXVII, 363 S. € 68.00. ISBN: 978-3-615-00424-3.

Since the early 2000s the series *Collectanea Grammatica Latina* of the *Bibliotheca Weidmanniana* has been publishing new critical editions of grammatical texts from Late Antiquity. In 2012, with Giammona's edition of the *De accentibus* of the Pseudo-Priscian, the series has taken a step forward into the Middle Ages; the *Bibliotheca Weidmanniana* also published, in 2014, Krotz's and Gorman's edition of the grammatical works attributed to Peter of Pisa. The present volume is a welcome addition to the medieval texts of this prestigious series. The *Ars Ambianensis* is an elementary grammar focusing on the morphology of noun, pronoun and verb: there exist three different versions of it, all deriving from a common source. This text was brought to the attention of scholars in 1965 by Bengt Löfstedt, and a critical edition has been a *desideratum* ever since. In this volume Giammona publishes for the first time the three versions of the *declinationes nominum*, and destines to the future the edition of the sections on pronoun and verb, which are thought to have different characteristics. It was 1982 when Vivien Law wrote that the three versions 'are independent on one another and should be given equal weight in the preparation of the *editio princeps*'.¹ Giammona follows in her steps in that he produces three different editions, one for each version. The choice of keeping the traditional name of this *Ars*, which was given after the first manuscript known (Amiens, Bibliothèque Centrale Louis Aragon, 426), is sensible, for the manuscripts provide no suitable title.

In the introduction, Giammona dedicates the first chapter ('Le grammatiche elementari') to a handy outline of the main changes that the grammatical tradition of Late Antiquity underwent in the early Middle Ages, due to the new linguistic situation and consequent didactic requirements. In contexts where Latin had to be learnt as a foreign language, such as the British Isles, grammars had to focus in particular on aspects of the language that were taken for granted by earlier works designed for native speakers: hence there

1 V. Law: *The Insular Latin Grammarians*. Woodbridge 1982 (Studies in Celtic History 3), 68.

arose the elementary grammars, of which the *Ars Ambianensis* is a conspicuous example. The work of Vivien Law in the 80s and 90s has been fundamental for our understanding of these issues, and Giammona utilizes it profitably.

In the second chapter, the author describes the five manuscripts which transmit the three versions of the *Ars* (*A*, *G* and *MOW*). The versions *A* and *G* are transmitted by one manuscript each (from Amiens and St Gallen, respectively), while the version *MOW* is preserved in three manuscripts (Munich, Oxford, and again St Gallen). The descriptions are quite detailed and contain thorough lists of the other works preserved in each manuscript, with observations on their transmission. Sometimes, in critical editions, the descriptions of the manuscripts of the work published attract the attention of those who are interested in the other works contained in the same manuscripts: in that respect, this chapter will do the job.²

The description of *A* (Amiens, Bibliothèque Centrale Louis Aragon, 426) focuses on the interesting layout of the text of the *Ars*, which varies throughout the manuscript. This leads the author to claim, if I understand it correctly, that this manuscript does not contain the original version *A* but a copy of it. He supports his statement by providing additional evidence: the mistaken interpretation of the abbreviation for *apud*; some unusual exchanges between the letters *a* and *u*; a *saut du même au même* (p. xxxviii). However, while this manuscript might well transmit a copy instead of the original version *A*, these three arguments do not quite seem so decisive to me. The problem with this reasoning is that such mistakes can indicate that the text in which they arise is a copy of the original work only if they are found in a section that was written for the first time in the original work: if they are found in sections that the original work derives from another source, such mistakes might have arisen when the source was copied into the original, so the text in question can actually be the original. This is the case of the following (cited in footnotes 41, 42 and 43): the mistaken abbreviation *apost* for *apud*, at 683 *A*, is in a passage that is shared with *MOW* 551, which correctly

2 It might be helpful to add that the digitizations of four of these manuscripts are currently available online: *A*: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8452180f>; *G*: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/it/list/one/csg/0877>; *M*: <https://bildsuche.digitale-sammlungen.de/index.html?c=viewer&lv=1&bandnummer=bsb00012921&pimage=00001&suchbegriff=&l=it>; *W*: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/-csg/0878#details>.

reads *apud*, so the error might have occurred during the transcription of the original version *A* itself. The same applies to the exchange *u/a* in *Iugartha* at 71 and 98 *A*: the example is also in 79 and 116 *G* as well as 28 and 56 *MOW*, so it must go back to their common source; the passage containing *regala* for *regula* (which is at 659 app., not 265 app. as stated in footnote 42) is also found in the apparatus at 524 *MOW*, so it must come from a common source (the next two exchanges are out of place in the discussion of *A*, for *uolantas* for *uoluntas* is not at 751 *A* but 751 *G*, and *productu* for *producta* not at 274 *A* but 274 *O*, cf. apparatus). Likewise, the *saut du même au même* (footnote 43) that took place in the section on the verb which is not published here, is in a passage that is shared with the version *G*. Therefore, evidence that the text in the manuscript of Amiens is a copy of the original version of *A* must be searched for in sections that are likely to not have been derived from other works.

After all the manuscripts preserving the versions of the *Ars Ambianensis* have been described, the author adds a brief outline of a famous manuscript of Naples (Biblioteca Nazionale, Lat. IV.A.34) containing a tract on the noun that was published by Bengt Löfstedt,³ which is in many ways close to the *Ars Ambianensis* (cf. p. xxxiv n. 23 and p. lv): Giammona does not re-publish this but regularly refers to it in the commentary. The chapter is concluded by some observations on the typology of the manuscripts seen so far based on their content and function, which is elementary teaching with a focus on morphology. The interesting idea is formulated that both the manuscripts and the grammars they transmit are ‘modular’.

Chapter 3 focuses on the versions of the *Ars Ambianensis* and their features. Readers who were not to be familiar with this material might find it helpful to consult the more extensive treatment by Vivien Law.⁴ The relationship between the different versions is complicated: they share most of the material (see list on p. lvii), but *G* has more information, *MOW* less, and *A* is in between. Law’s explanation was that the common source was simpler and more similar to *MOW*, while *A* and *G* added some material independently. Rather to the contrary, Giammona’s suggestion is that the common source was very complex and offered alternative options, which the authors of the

3 B. Löfstedt: *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus*. Uppsala 1965 (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Latina Upsaliensia 3).

4 V. Law: *The Insular Latin Grammarians* (cf. above note 1) 67–74.

different versions selected in different ways. This is a very interesting idea, and it is hoped that future research on the parts of this treatise on the pronoun and the verb will help shed more light on such a scenario.

The very short chapter 4 is a clear discussion of the didactic orientation of the *Ars Ambianensis* as compared to similar but more theoretical works such as the *Ars* of Clemens Scottus and the anonymous *Ars Bernensis*.

Chapter 5 deals with the difficult issue of locating in space and time the common source of the three versions of the *Ars* (that is, the original *Ars*). Texts of this type were traditionally the product of Insular scholars, and Vivien Law famously set out the criteria that point to an Insular origin for an anonymous grammar.⁵ Only elements internal to the text such as syntax or lexicon can be taken into account, not elements that might have come about in a later stage whatsoever of the work's transmission, such as spelling – this can only account for the history of the manuscript tradition. Giammona has not found evidence of the first kind. On the other hand, since the manuscripts show that the text was at Insular foundations on the Continent such as Corbie, Luxeuil and Fulda, and since it is close to the *Ars* of Clemens Scottus and the *Ars Bernensis*, the author finds it more cautious to think that the original *Ars Ambianensis* was produced on the Continent in the eighth century. This origin, he writes at p. lxi, might also be corroborated by lexical parallels with Virgilius Maro Grammaticus alone: regrettably, such parallels are not provided here, but in the Index at p. 356 readers can find a list of all passages of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus cited in the book and work their way through the commentary to figure out which ones might serve the purpose.

While spelling does not point to the origin of a work, it certainly says something about the background of the scribes who copied its manuscripts. On pages lxii–lxiv, Giammona provides a comprehensive list of typically Irish spellings. This is quite instructive and very appropriate here, especially as Giammona's edition is programmatically conservative as far as orthography is concerned, allowing for a great deal of non-standard spellings: it will be easier for readers to make sense of them by referring to this list. A couple of phenomena listed here, however, could be interpreted differently: at p. lxii, *ballenium* for *balineum* and *indegina* for *indigena* might be better described as

5 V. Law: *Grammar and Grammarians in the Early Middle Ages*. London/New York 1997, 28–49.

cases of metathesis than of double exchange *i/e*; similarly, at lxiv nn. 169–170, *Galicula/Gallicula* for *Caligula* can be better described as metatheses than as cases of simultaneous voicing (of *ç*) and devoicing (of *g*). Surely, metathesis is no more typical of Irish spelling than it is of any other non-standard variety of Latin.

Vivien Law wrote plausibly that “the *Ars Ambianensis* cannot be assigned a certain date and provenance until a detailed analysis of its sources and its relationships to other seventh- and eighth-century Insular grammars have been carried out”.⁶ While a great deal of commendable work on the sources has been carried out in the commentary of this volume, a separate chapter in which such data were put together into a systematic analysis would have been very helpful, not least with a view to figuring out once and for all (if possible) the question of the origin. It is hoped that this will find a place in the future research on the other parts of the *Ars Ambianensis*.

The sixth chapter outlines the editorial criteria of this edition. Very wisely, Giammona has produced a conservative text with regard to spelling and grammar. For works of this type and period, it is very difficult to assess the linguistic and orthographic competence of the authors, who might have been simple copyists themselves; it is risky to assign a priori mistakes and fluctuations to later stages of transmission and not to the original. Moreover, mistakes were already in the manuscripts of the other works cited, and such mistakes might have been transferred by the authors in their texts. That is why Giammona is right to write that corrections are in order only when the forms in question can be easily explained as slips (p. lxvi). The application of these sound principles, however, is not always straightforward, and sometimes considerations of a different order (legibility, to start with) override conservatism of spelling and more. For example, the discussion of the gender of nouns in both 32 *A* and 30 *G* is based on the *Ars minor* of the grammarian Donatus. As the term for a noun both masculine and feminine like *passer*, Donatus wrote *epicoenon* (from the Greek ἐπίχοινων): this appears at 32 *A* as *HPICHnon* (Greek and Latin mixed) and at 30 *G* as *erisenon* (transliteration of the form in *A*), but Giammona corrects both to the more standard *epicenon*. In the commentary (p. 122) he writes that there is a fluctuation in the spelling of this term in the manuscripts of Donatus themselves. It appears highly likely, then, that the common source to *A* and *G* had a form

6 V. Law: The Insular Latin Grammarians (cf. above note 1) 68.

such as that of *A*: such form was copied more faithfully by *A* and was transliterated by *G*, and therefore it should theoretically be printed as it stands in the manuscripts, not corrected. In this case, the editor has chosen legibility over faithfulness to the (incorrect) original. The opposite case is found for example at 47 *G*: in a citation from Prisc. *nom.* 5.3–5 P., shared by all versions, *G* has the incorrect *acciperunt*, as opposed to *acceperunt* in 48 *A* and 3 *MOW*. Giammona notes this in the commentary (p. 124) but, given that *acciperunt* is found in three manuscripts of Priscian, prints *acciperunt* in *G* too (while keeping *acceperunt* in *A* and *MOW*). The problem is that here the agreement of *A* and *MOW* conspires to the common source to all three versions having had *acceperunt*. Since it is unlikely that *G* collated this passage with another manuscript of Priscian just to introduce a spelling mistake, I would be inclined to interpret this *acciperunt* as a slip of *G* alone when transcribing the correct text of the common source, and would therefore correct it to *acceperunt*. Neither the meaning nor the legibility, however, are affected. Finally, one problem that comes with being programmatically conservative in the spelling is that sometimes it is not easy to tell a medieval author's mistake from a medieval copyist's mistake or a typo in the modern edition: this is especially relevant when it occurs in inflectional lists. So at 351 *A* the inflection of the numeral *duo* in the feminine runs like *duae, duarum, duobus, duas, duae, duabus*. But the third form, the dative, should be *duabus*, like the ablative. So is *duobus* for *duabus* what the author of the version *A* actually believed the dative feminine to be, or a slip of his pen, or a transcription mistake of the copyist, or a typo in the modern edition? If one assumed that the author of a tract on declensions held that *duobus* and not *duabus* was the dative feminine (despite correctly writing *duabus* as the ablative), this should probably deserve a comment. If this was a *lapsus* of the copyist, it would need correction. But I think it more likely that this is simply a typo in the edition.

A problem that the editor of a text like this inevitably faces is when a word is repeated within a few lines in the manuscript with fluctuating spelling: Giammona allows for variation, both in words that are arguably trickier (e.g. 68 *A hebreicis*, 79 *A ebraica*, 92 *A hebraicum*) and in words that are more common (e.g. *A* 61 *appud*, *A* 65 *apud*). Other editors might prefer consistency in such cases, but one cannot exclude that the author himself was inconsistent – this also says something about what kind of author one assumes for this text.

Syntax too is not corrected in the case of syntactic ‘disagreement’, when a neuter substantive agrees with a masculine adjective, such as *nomina latina* [...] *breues sunt* (cf. p. lix). But I wonder if one should intervene where the ‘disagreement’ is due only to a missing nasal in the verbal ending (a very common mistake in a manuscript), like 423–424 *A*: *Feminina, ut haec mater, huius matris, per omnes <casus> declinatur*. Here it might be reasonable to write *declinantur* (Giammona himself sensibly corrects *declinatur* to *declinantur* at 85, 230, 519 *A*). However, Giammona’s more conservative approach might be justified in view of passages such as 421–422 *A*: *Ita declinantur masculina in ‘er’, ut hic pater, huius patris, et <per> omnes casus declinatur* (cf. at 603–604 *A* and 608–609 *A*). Here the second predicate *declinatur* agrees with the singular *hic pater*, not with the plural *masculina*: the same might be true of the passage at 423–424 *A*, although *feminina* would remain without a predicate there.

Unfortunately, because of editorial guidelines, it was not possible for Giammona to place the three versions side by side on every single page, which would have made the job of comparing the three texts very much easier. But paragraphs in the text are numbered, which eases the comparability of the versions and makes it possible to have a synoptic commentary, paragraph for paragraph.

Let us now look at the critical edition proper. This has many merits. To start with, at the top of each page is the page number in the manuscript(s): this goes to Giammona’s credibility, for it potentially enables every reader to check his collations. Both the text and critical apparatus are clear and user-friendly. The apparatus has a first section where the grammatical sources and comparable grammatical works are indicated. There follows the section with the textual variants. Literary sources are indicated here. One can only appreciate the cross-references to parallel passages across the versions: these prove very useful as the reader does not have all three versions on the same page. It would have been helpful to extend them to all cases where the same major editorial intervention is carried out in all three versions, as for example at 236 *A* – 438 *G* – 207 *MOW*: here Giammona posits the same lacuna (something like *Ita appellatina* was lost), and with cross-references in the apparatus the reader would have been able to realize immediately that the lacuna was in the common source (the author discusses this case in the commentary, pp. 174–175).

The reader will also appreciate that, while a conservative text means that many spellings will be odd and at times difficult to identify, Giammona

sometimes provides clarifications in the apparatus (e.g. *Phiton* at 414 *A* is clearly *Phaeton*; *pilax* at 524 *A* might be either $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\alpha\zeta$ or *pinax*; *penten* at 588 *G* is *pecten*, etc.).

Let us now consider the *constitutio textus*. The versions *A* and *G* are based on one manuscript each, so no selection of variants is needed, except when the correcting hand provides a different *lectio*. Editorial interventions mostly consist of small corrections, small additions and a few deletions, which are all carried out in a balanced and sensible fashion. The only major intervention in the text of *A* is the deletion of a whole passage on pronouns in the chapter on the fifth declension (659 *A*). The passage clearly does not fit in thematically, and Giammona relegates it to the apparatus as an interpolation. However, the same passage appears in *MOW*: the first sentence of the passage is after 524 (and it too is relegated to the apparatus), but the rest of it is printed at the end of the chapter (556–567 *MOW*). On account of this, Giammona reasonably writes in the commentary that the position of this passage in *A* is likely to reflect its position in the common source (p. 267 n. 450). But if this passage was already in the common source, then it is not an interpolation in *A*, but has been (inadvertently) written by the author of *A* himself as a legitimate part of this version: given that this is the edition of the version *A*, not of the original *Ars Ambianensis*, it should have been printed in its text just as the rest of the passage gets printed in 556–567 *MOW* (maybe a different font or some other visual device could have signaled its oddity). This case reveals the hybrid nature, as it were, of this edition: inasmuch as it is the edition of three independent versions and not of their common source, it by and large reflects their differences and innovations compared to the common source and to each other; but at times, for the sake of legibility and sense, the author intervenes in the single versions as if he was producing the critical edition of the original *Ars Ambianensis*. The case of the lacuna at 236 *A* – 438 *G* – 207 *MOW* is just as emblematic. Some expression like *Ita appellatiua* was lost in the text of the common source, and the author of each version simply transcribed the text of the common source without realizing that something was missing: so, from the point of view of each version as it was originally written, there is theoretically no lacuna and no expression that has to be supplied, because there just never was any such expression in any of the three versions to start with. Surely, however, an editor has to make it clear to the reader that the text of the independent

versions, whether original or not, does not work as such, and in this respect it is fair to point out that something was lost in the common source.

While the versions *A* and *G* are preserved in a *codex unicus*, the version *MOW* is transmitted by three manuscripts, but there is no discussion of stemmatic relations. If one goes through the critical apparatus, it will appear that the editor consistently selects the variant that is attested in two out of three manuscripts: this might indicate that the author thinks of a tripartite tradition. This is not the place for a stemmatic analysis, so I will only point to a few cases when two manuscripts share a potentially conjunctive error: at 320–321 *MW* omit the expression *uel feminina uel neutra uel communis generis*, which is in *O*; at 354, *MO* omit *et hoc utile*, but this is likely to have come about independently as a *saut du même au même* after *et haec utilis*; at 537, again *MO* omit *in es*, but I wonder if that might have been caused by the following *in hac*.

If we now move to the commentary, this is very rich and provides detailed explanations of the ways in which the differences in the versions might have come about, sometimes with a focus on the manuscript tradition of other authors as well and their relations with the *Ars Ambianensis* (see for example pp. 119–120). The most space is dedicated to the systematic comparison of the *Ars* with the treatment of similar material in the grammatical tradition, and long footnotes (which are not very usual in commentaries) accommodate the *loci similes* quoted in full. But the reader has to be alert for remarks of a different kind in the footnotes: for example, the footnote 288 at p. 212 explains why the term *cancer* at 422 *A* was deleted. Generally, however, issues of textual criticism are addressed in the main body of the commentary. There are also contextual remarks on the didactic features of this work (e.g. p. 125) and on the process of Christianization of grammar in the Middle Ages (e.g. p. 122).

No paragraph of the text goes uncommented upon. When, in the exposition of the third declension, each tract offers an independent treatment of the original material and the endings are discussed in a different order across the three versions, the commentary conveniently switches to the alphabetical ordering of the lemmas (pp. 191ff.), abandoning the order in which each paragraph appears in the text (i.e. the first ending discussed in the commentary is *-a*, then *-abs*, then *-ac* etc. which are not in consecutive paragraphs). In this way the commentary manages to be still synoptic. This novel arrangement is preceded by an instructive explanation of the different ways in which

the grammatical tradition treats the part on endings and inflection of third declension nouns, touching upon Priscian, Charisius and later authors, and an introduction to the different approach and arrangement of material in the three versions of the *Ars Ambianensis* (pp. 184–190).

The volume concludes with useful aids for readers: a thorough index of the lemmas used as examples of inflection in the three versions, an index of the passages from other works cited in the commentary, a table of correspondences of the critical editions of grammatical works, and an index of the manuscripts cited throughout the book.

It is now time for conclusions. While in the extreme specialization of contemporary academia the subject matter of this book is unlikely to make it appealing to a large readership, the present volume should be welcomed by all those who are interested in the late antique and medieval grammatical thought and education. It fills a gap in scholarship, for a critical edition of this text had been a *desideratum* for decades, and it fills it well, for the text it provides is reliable and it is highly unlikely that it will be superseded in near future. The introduction is informative and those interested in manuscript traditions might take advantage of the good descriptions of the codices. The commentary is thorough and provides a wealth of material for the investigation of the grammatical tradition. The indexes make it easier to navigate through the volume. As we congratulate Giammona on this contribution, we look forward to the publication of the rest of the *Ars Ambianensis*.

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