

BOOK REVIEW

Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature. Fourth edition. By L. D. REYNOLDS and N. G. WILSON. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 325 + 16 plates. Hardcover, \$150.00; paper, \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-19-968632-2 (hardcover); ISBN 978-0-19-968633-9 (paper).

The earlier editions of *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* published in 1968, 1974, and 1991 have received strong endorsements as the following attests: a) First edition: Colin Austin, *CR*20(March 1970): 84-6, and P. E. Easterling, *JHS* 90(1970): 237. b) Second edition: James Diggle, *CR* 27(1977): 146, Marie-Thérèse Isaac, *AC*, 45(1976): 413-14, and Christian Kopff *CJ*72 (1976-1977): 180-2. c) Third edition: James Diggle, *CR* 42 (October, 1992): 484, Christian Kopff, *CB* 68(1992): 99, Gerald O'Sullivan, *Classical World* 86(1992): 144, and Mark Possanza, *BMCR* <http://bmc.brynmaur.edu/1991/02.07.06.html>

Of these editions the most changed (amended, emended and expanded) was the third which was hailed by Isaac as “un guide indispensable à ceux qui se destinent aux études classiques en rattachant celles-ci à l'histoire culturelle du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance.” Possanza also found much merit in this edition, calling it a “classic of its kind,” and pointed to revisions that enhanced its value. But he also made suggestions for improving the book's conceptual framework and listed a number of books and articles that he thought should have been included in the third edition.

A few of his suggestions may have been incorporated into this new fourth edition, but not many, for this book is closer to a reprint of the third edition than it is an actual new edition. It offers us a text that as N.G. Wilson says in the preface dated July, 2012 on page vi is “largely unaltered,” along with “a fair number of adjustments” made to the notes. The question is whether these additional notes, along with a shift from capitalizing the first letter of the first word of each entry in the index to using lower case letters to distinguish common nouns from proper

nouns, the elimination of the comma after each main entry in the index, cross referencing instructions such as *see* or *see under* placed in italics, and a slightly more thorough index in general warrant the purchase of this book; for these changes are in many cases not improvements.

The text of the fourth edition is nearly a verbatim version of the third. The table of contents is entirely the same. The 16 plates and the maps/diagrams are identical. A single sentence or less, and myriad small changes appear on pages 10, 11, 242, 246, 248–260, 263, 269, 271, 272, 274–275, 278–282, 284, 286, 290–291, 297–298, 300, 302, and 304–306. Two to five new sentences are found on pages vi, 196, 200, 267, and 276. But the adjective “recent” or adverb “recently” is applied to scholarship published in the 1970 and 1980s (pages 276, 278, and 280) and errors have been introduced into this new version where there were none before. For example, Wurzburg which was capitalized in both the text and the index of the third edition appears with a lower case “w” on page 312 in the index to the fourth edition. Cluny suffers a similar fate, correctly capitalized throughout the third edition and on pages 137, 141, 172, and 277 of the fourth, but not in the fourth’s index on page 311. A fair number of accents have also been lost or unevenly used. On page 319 Étienne (as in Étienne Tabouret) has lost its accent aigu. Orléans (as in Theodulphus of Orléans) which is spelled correctly on page 96, has no accent on page 320. “Saint Omer”, correctly spelled on page 176, is misspelled “Saint Orner” on page 318.

It is perhaps due to the scribal error known as dittography that the pages cited for index entry “Procopius (of Gaza) 50, 53” on page 318 are those given for the next entry “Prohaeresius, 50, 53,” when Prohaeresius is in fact only mentioned on page 50. Furthermore the volume breaks its own formatting conventions by putting a comma after Prohaeresius’s name. On page 315 following the entry “Macrobius”, the titles of his works should be indented by three spaces. One wonders why “friars” is capitalized in the index on page 313, but nowhere else, cf. pages 118–119 and 272, and is simply puzzled by an index that lists “Po, Li” (the seventh century Chinese poet, Li Po) on page 317, but lists “Mao Tsetung” and not “Tsetung, Mao” on page 315.

In sum *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* dressed in Reynolds and Wilson’s erudition and expressed by their well-turned sentences is indeed a “classic.” If you are without a copy of the worthy third edition, you should acquire the fourth if you have the wherewithal. That said it is disturbing to see avoidable errors and inconsistencies introduced into the text of a

book examining the work of scholars and scribes, living and dead, whose intellectual energy was (and is) spent trying to explain, correct, repudiate or eradicate such things.

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