

Giovanni Orlandi & Rossana E. Guglielmetti (eds & trans), *Navigatio sancti Brendani. Alla scoperta dei segreti meravigliosi del mondo*. Per Verba. Testi mediolatini con traduzione 30. SISMEL: Edizioni del Galluzzo. Florence 2014. ccc + 215 pp. €42.00. ISBN 9788884505569.

Rossana E. Guglielmetti (ed), with critical text by Giovanni Orlandi & Rossana E. Guglielmetti, *Navigatio sancti Brendani. Editio maior*. Millennium Medievale 114 (Testi 29). SISMEL: Edizioni del Galluzzo. Florence 2017. x + 746 pp. €130.00. ISBN 9788884508010.

Giovanni Orlandi & Rossana E. Guglielmetti (eds), *La navigazione di san Brendano / Navigatio sancti Brendani*. medi@evi. Digital Medieval Folders 7. SISMEL: Edizioni del Galluzzo. Florence 2018. xviii + 85 pp. €7.99. E-book.

By now, one hopes, readers of this journal are aware of the important new edition of the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*: it is the fruition of decades of labor by Giovanni Orlandi, and has been brought to glorious completion by Rossana Guglielmetti. This edition has been published three times now. First to appear, in 2014, was the *editio minor* (NSB<sup>1</sup>): a standard edition, with a wide-ranging introduction, copious textual notes, and a facing-page translation (all in Italian); next, in 2017, the *editio maior* (NSB<sup>2</sup>): a volume which lays out the manuscript transmission in detail, and takes cognisance of ‘all the variants of the tradition ... with the exception of negligible orthographical variants’ ([T]utte le varianti di tradizione ... con l’eccezione di minime varianti grafiche non significative’: NSB<sup>2</sup>, 417). The most recent, from 2018, is a streamlined digital copy, with no apparatus or notes. The first of these volumes will be the standard reference text for decades to come; the second is a delightful supplement, of use to anyone studying the text or transmission of the *Navigatio* in detail; and the third makes one of the most important medieval Latin texts accessible to a wider (Italian-reading) public.

The effort required to craft this edition is apparent throughout. It is, quite simply, staggering. The *Navigatio* has 142 witnesses to its text surviving in whole, in part, or incorporated into other works (NSB<sup>2</sup>, x). Orlandi and Guglielmetti, with the assistance of Eleonora Nessi and Ludovica Anna Bianchini, collated 139 of these in full; the remaining three, each an interpolated copy of the *Vita Brendani* (with no bearing on reconstructing the stemma or the text), were simply sampled (NSB<sup>2</sup>, 417). The *Navigatio* is not a particularly long text; still, it is not a short one, and the amount of work this represents is astonishing. I cannot think of any similar effort for any comparable text: the edition, like the text it presents, is *sui generis*.

The 2014 *editio minor* is of complicated authorship, due to Orlandi's untimely death in 2007. The introduction is the work of Guglielmetti, as is the textual apparatus; the text itself, the translation, and the notes are Orlandi's doing, with occasional corrections and additions by Guglielmetti. The introduction, for its part, performs an admirable job of summarising over a century of scholarship. It covers the little we know of the historical Brendan and his historical context, the literary context of the *Navigatio* (its genre, its sources, its relationship to the *Vita Brendani*), the matter of the date and place of composition, and previous scholarly interpretations of the work (literal, allegorical, or otherwise), before engaging in a lengthy synopsis of the manuscript transmission and the work's fate in the later middle ages (expounded at yet greater length in NSB<sup>2</sup>). It is easily the best single overview of scholarship on the Brendan legend I have read, and there are a few sections that caused me to look on the text with fresh eyes. Particularly thought-provoking is the section (cxvi–cxxi) on internal discrepancies within the text. These, as Guglielmetti points out, are largely the result of measurements of time that do not coincide from section to section. This raises the question of whether this indicates, perhaps, multiple stages of composition (NSB<sup>1</sup>, cxvi). Guglielmetti — correctly, in my view — ultimately determines they should not. If these blunders are indeed authorial (as Orlandi believed: NSB<sup>1</sup>, cxix), this raises questions about the working method of the author, elsewhere so careful, 'un po' maniacale', even, with numbers and what they represent (NSB<sup>1</sup>, 120 n. 36). Are they testimonies to a changing conception of the work? Have elements from various sources been poorly integrated? There is room here, I believe, for careful conjecture.

The most controversial section (cii–cxvi) will be, of course, on the eternal questions in Brendan scholarship: when, and where, was this text written? Recent scholarship on the origins of the *Navigatio* have tended towards one of two poles: either of the eighth century and Irish, or ninth century and continental. Guglielmetti, following Orlandi and David Dumville, prefers the former; she further bolsters this claim by reference to the allegedly 'Merovingian' character of the Latin. The case is well-made, but the interpretation of the evidence is not as clear-cut as Guglielmetti's discussion may indicate. Michael Herren, in his review, remained unconvinced (see Herren, review of NSB<sup>1</sup>, in *Journal of Medieval Latin* 26 [2016] 383–87) and, in a recent article, I have recently defended the latter interpretation, and provided evidence that suggests the *Navigatio* was composed in or near Milan towards the middle of the ninth century (Nicholas Thyr, 'The *Navigatio sancti Brendani*: a text from ninth-century Milan', *CMCS* 79/1 [2020] 1–18).

The text itself approaches the Platonic ideal. The *apparatus criticus* is kept to a manageable level — usually taking up roughly thirty percent or so of the page. This is achieved by signalling variants mostly by reference to stemmatic branches, with individual readings provided from only a handful of the most important witness-

es. Thankfully, the editors, despite their misgivings ('[L]a soluzione più corretta sarebbe forse presentare un testo continuo') have kept the chapter divisions of Selmer, the previous editor (NSB, ccxxxvii). They provide the reader a further service by subdividing these sections into numbered units, making for easy reference.

The notes are, in general, exceptionally useful, and are worth reading through for their own sake. They provide a wonderfully detailed overview of textual parallels and possible sources. A small concern is that there is a tendency to ignore the textual variants present in liturgical texts. For instance, at XII 51, the monks chant *Iniuste egimus, iniquitatem fecimus. Tu qui pius es pater, parce nobis, Domine*. This is considerably different from the cited Vulgate source text (Judith 7.19–20), which reads *iniuste egimus, iniquitatem fecimus: tu, quia pius es, miserere nostri*. The discrepancy is not signalled, however, in the notes, though it may be significant: in a ninth-century manuscript from St Emmeran in Regensburg (now Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14248) we find, as part of a longer prayer for the adoration of the Cross, *Veniam peto. Veniam credo. Veniam spero. Tu qui pius es parce nobis domine* (André Wilmart, 'Prières médiévales pour l'adoration de la Croix', *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 46, n.s. 6 [1938] 22–65: 40 n. 2). Maurice Frost suggests the manuscript is 'a collection of private or semi-private prayers shewing Irish influence both in their character and in their phraseology' (Frost, 'A prayer book from St Emmeran, Ratisbon', *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 [1928] 32–45: 33; see also p. 44 n. (n)), a judgment with which I would agree. Did the author confuse two different texts? Was the form in the *Navigatio* a legitimate variant that did not survive the liturgical upheavals of the eighth and ninth centuries? I have not encountered this precise wording elsewhere, but there are many, many unedited liturgical manuscripts; I would not be surprised if a survey of *orationes ad crucem adorandam* turned up further examples. The *Navigatio* is a rich, if somewhat inscrutable witness to the early medieval liturgy (as many of Orlandi and Guglielmetti's notes underline), and all variation from the normal texts should be noted. This is a quibble, however: not everything can be researched to exhaustion, and I was astonished, again and again, at the level of erudition and painstaking detail that went into these notes.

The *editio maior*, for its part, forms a useful supplement to the previous work. It provides a full description of all direct and indirect witnesses, alongside a discussion of evidence for manuscripts, now lost, known to have contained the work. There follows a detailed defence of the edited text, beginning with evidence for characteristics of the archetype (some distance removed from the putative original copy, as a number of cruces demonstrate), with subsequent discussion of the rationale for each branch and sub-branch of the tradition. This is impressively detailed; the chapter on the characteristics of the archetype is especially thorough. The cautious discussion here — very honest regarding doubts and uncertainty

— lends immense authority to the reconstructed text, and the depiction of the manuscript relationships underpinning it.

Given its wealth of detail, the *editio maior* is certainly not a text for reading or quick consultation. The presentation of the text on the page is precisely what one would expect for such an endeavour: some fifty-odd words of the reconstructed *Navigatio* resting atop a massive block of small print. Practically every word, at some point in the tradition, has seen some variation creep in. These variants, though numerous, are rarely important as regards the sense. For instance, under the words *divina refectioe satiatae* [scil. *animae*] *sunt* (XI.28), we find

sunt refectioe saciate T<sup>2</sup> O<sup>2</sup>: fuerant refectioe saciate ε<sup>22</sup> ~ sacietate (*corr.*)  
 sunt divina refectioe R<sup>1</sup> ~ sunt saciate S<sup>1</sup>: sanate sunt M<sup>4</sup> Bn K: saciata sunt  
 Be<sup>2</sup>: satiavit γ<sup>11</sup> (sanavit γ<sup>18</sup>): refocillate sunt δ: sunt hodie saciate L<sup>5</sup>: saciati  
 sunt M<sup>6</sup>: et *add.* Wa.

At points, such detailed information is desirable, as when the *Navigatio* veers off the standard form of biblical or liturgical quotations; it is impressive how little scribal interference many of these have suffered, given that many of the scribes copying them down would know the regular texts by heart (for instance, Psalm 83.8, at XVII 8; see NSB<sup>1</sup>, 159 n. 8). Typically, however, the apparatus of the *editio maior* mostly serves to confirm the good judgment of Orlandi and Guglielmetti in constructing their edition.

In essence, therefore, they have shown their work: it is possible to judge the claims made on the evidence provided. In so doing, they avoid the pitfalls of R. A. B. Mynors's approach to the textual transmission of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* (in Bertram Colgrave & R. A. B. Mynors [eds & trans], *Bede's ecclesiastical history of the English people* [Oxford 1969] xxxix–lxxvi). It is evident Mynors had made careful consideration of many of the 150-odd complete manuscript copies of that text; however, in rendering his judgments in summary format, he forced further scholarship on the topic to grind through the same dreary spade-work of transcription and comparison. In her full description of the manuscripts, and their relation to one another, Guglielmetti avoids this flaw, and provides us with a synoptic view of the entire textual history of this text. Previously, scholars were limited to vague comments, noting groups present in the Rhineland, say, or in Bavaria, and attempting to extrapolate a narrative from shaky ground. The *editio maior* provides, for the first time, comprehensive evidence detailing the spread of this story across the continent, throughout the centuries of its popularity. In short, following Guglielmetti, the *Navigatio* was composed, in Ireland, in the second half of the eighth century. There are five main branches, of which three are attested in the tenth century. As a result of this effort, Guglielmetti is able to provide substantial support (and add further nuance) to the hypothesis that the

transmission of the *Navigatio* was related to reformed Benedictine houses (NSB<sup>2</sup>, 388–89). Notable, too, in this discussion is the demonstrable lack of early copies at the great monasteries of the Carolingian period (NSB<sup>2</sup>, 390). In Guglielmetti's view, this suggests the *Navigatio* was not brought to the continent until the second half of the ninth century (of course, a date of composition near that time would also fit the evidence) (NSB<sup>2</sup>, 390). This is fundamental work, and I doubt it could have been achieved without the full, laborious collation.

In brief, for most intents and purposes, the *minor* will suffice. Happily, it is for sale at a reasonable price. For anyone wishing to perform detailed work on the text of the *Navigatio*, or its manuscript transmission, however, access to the *editio maior* will be imperative. Finally, I should mention the e-book for sale on the SISMELE website (containing a far shorter introduction, bare text without variant readings, and facing-page Italian translation) at the astonishing price of €7.99. Having purchased a copy myself, I can report that the font is large and the margins are ample: the perfect layout, that is, for scribbled observations and notes. It would make for a wonderful teaching text. Taken together, these three publications have set a standard as marvellous as the *terra repromissionis* itself.

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