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Reviews


Professor Fox's volume is a very welcome addition to an altogether distinguished series; furthermore, it heights anticipation of his promised edition of Henryson's works.

Textually, the edition leaves very little to be desired. The apparatus is generally scrupulous with minimal emendation and full notation. Some of choices of variants, however, are questionable: (1) in line 6, *gari* (ms = R) reading, is preferred to *can*, the reading common to the texts of Thynne (= T), Charteris (= C), and Anderson (= A): why can not *can* = *gan(e)* or why can not can stand as the verb in a parenthetical statement; (2) in line 94, or *refute* (T) is preferred to *on fute* (CA): why must the "harder" reading be accepted even though the common reading makes sense; (3) in line 205, *vnright* (T) is preferred to *vpricht* (CA): Phaeton, as did Phoebus, guided the *chair* into the heavens; (4) in line 283, the preference of *and* (TA) for *that* (C) obscures the sense of the line; (5) in line 328, the preference of *through* (T) for *thow* (CA) is misleading: Saturn is emphatically the object of the apostrophe, hence the reiteration of the pronoun; (6) in line 411, or *sound* (A) instead of *of* (C) enfeebles the alliteration and, again, disregards the emphasis of the apostrophe; (7) in line 544, the addition of *euer* and omission of *wolde* disregard T, C, and A. Some of the notes are incomplete or confusing: (1) for line 6, "the scribal tendency to make each line a separate unit of sense" does not account for the confusion; (2) for line 94, no consideration is given to the possibility that *but* is conjunctural and not prepositional and, therefore, the sense is best completed by *on fute* (CA) and not a "harder" reading; (3) for line 328, the comment that T "is probably correct," does not rationalize the choice; (4) for line 401, there is, again, no justification for preferring "the harder reading"; (5) for line 411, see (6) above; (6) for lines 512-14, the reference to Chaucer's *Troilus* is irrelevant; (7) for line 549, the justification of the choice of variant through metre and alliteration is not adduced; (8) for line 589, *beis is*
necessary, moreover, to rhyme, metre, and alliteration; (9) for line 611, the comment about Chaucerian irony is fatuous. It would have been helpful to have had a table of sigla facing the beginning of the text and a separate glossary of proper names.

The critical introduction is a bit more problematic. In spite of Professor Fox's assertion that Cresseid's leprosy is "the central fact of the poem," I prefer to continue to believe that the poem is the central fact of the poem. Perhaps if the editor had shared this view he would have relegated a great deal of the materia medica (pp. 24-37, 39-41) to the notes and addressed himself more completely to some of the critical questions generated by the poem. I will be the first to grant that Henryson carefully indicates the correlation between physical disease and moral corruption, but I doubt seriously that he presupposes or expects clinical competency.

The editor is very careful to discuss rhetoric in the poem but fails to say anything about Henryson's use of alliteration. This is, perhaps, a supercilious stricture, but in view of Henryson's craftsmanship it seems an oversight, especially since the alliteration becomes particularly heavy when the poet rhetorically launches into the descriptions of the participants in the heavenly tribunal. Furthermore, some attention to alliteration would indicate whether or not some of Henryson's verbal felicities are ingenious or practical.

Professor Fox's interpretation of the narrator (mainly pp. 49-57) raises some questions: Is the narrator really an old lecher? Does the narrator editorialize when he paraphrases the "vther quair"? Who is responsible for the envoi? What are we to do about Henryson? In short, with how many personae must we contend? These questions are not attempted—as they should be—by the editor.

I do not expect the editor to do the work of the critic; but the insufficiencies mentioned do, in my opinion, detract from an otherwise impeccable edition.

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