The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

La langue française depuis les origines jusqu'à la fin du Xle siècle. Vol. i. E. Etienne (Paris, Bouillon). 10 frcs.

F. Spencer

The Classical Review / Volume 5 / Issue 07 / July 1891, pp 329 - 329

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00179223, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00179223

How to cite this article:

F. Spencer (1891). The Classical Review, 5, pp 329-329 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00179223

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

viously done, certain *véa τακτικά*, which are apparently the work of Leo the Wise, and he has completed his excellent book by full indices and four good maps.

F. HAVERFIELD.

Chronologie de l'Empire Romain, publiée sous la direction de R. CAGNAT, par GEORGES GOYAU, Élève de l'École Normale Supérieure. Paris. 1891. 6 frs.

THIS very useful little volume is the work of a pupil of Mons. Cagnat, who, wishing to occupy the leisure time of his second year with some employment which would be at once useful to others as well as profitable to his own studies, was advised to compose a *chronology of the Roman empire*. That the work will be useful to students of the period, there can be little doubt. In studying historians like Dio Cassius, or the *Scriptores historiae Augustae* or *Inscriptions*, it is often impossible to solve the chronological questions raised without a considerable amount of research, either in a regular chronology, e.g. Clinton's *Fasti*, or in the scattered monographs and review-articles which deal with particular points. But Clinton is to a certain extent antiquated, having been composed before the *Corpus of Latin Inscriptions* or the numismatic collection of Cohen were published, while scattered articles are often either unknown or inaccessible. The present chronology, which reflects the greatest credit upon the industry and research of Mons. Goyau, has been compiled with great care from the most recent authorities, and certainly, as far as I have examined it, is thoroughly reliable. It begins with the battle of Actium, and reaches down to the death of Theodosius. Each page has three columns, the first containing the names of the consuls, both ordinarii and, as far as they are known, suffecti; the second gives the principal events, literary, historical and ecclesiastical, together with the names of the praefects of the praetorium, the vigiles, the City and the Annona. The third column contains, whenever it can be ascertained, the precise date in the year, by day or month, or when this is impossible, by summer or winter, etc. At the foot of each page are very full and careful references both to classical authors and to the latest authorities, so that every facility is afforded for going into the question of all disputed dates. When it is added that at the end of each year is given a list of all the laws (*decreta, edicta, rescripta*, etc.) belonging to the year, preserved in the Digest or the Codes, it will be seen how considerable and useful a piece of work Mons Goyau has performed. It would be well if other young students both in France and elsewhere would imitate so meritorious an example.

E. G. HARDY.

La langue française depuis les origines jusqu'à la fin du XI^e siècle. Vol. i. E. ÉTIENNE (Paris, Bouillon). 10 frs.

THE last few years have seen the publication of several works of the highest value in the department of Romance Philology. Among these the present volume may justly claim a prominent place, and it will warmly welcomed by students of the early French language and literature. For the classical student proceeding to investigate the development of Latin on Gallic soil it will be doubly valuable, as forming in some sort a link between Schuchardt's *Vokalismus des Vulgarlateins* and the ever increasing literature in the wider field of Mediaeval and Modern French; and as affording a good working *résumé* of the results of recent phonetic and linguistic study of the earliest extant monuments of the French language. To the student who is concerned with these monuments only

in so far as they are important for the study of literature, it offers an exhaustive and valuable linguistic commentary which must greatly facilitate the understanding of such a text as the *Chanson de Roland*. The author needs no excuse for restricting his investigations to the limited and remote period indicated in the title of his work. A language which in the seventh century was already ripe for all the requirements of epic song, and which, in the eleventh, could produce a *Song of Roland*, may well dispense with apologists. Far from being in an elementary stage of development, it already affords a worthy field for the most ambitious investigator. At the same time the small number of extant texts has enabled M. Étienne to cover the whole field with a thoroughness which leaves little to be desired. A preliminary condition of the satisfactory performance of such a work is the establishment of a critical text where the extant manuscripts vary considerably among themselves, or where a unique manuscript obviously fails to reproduce the text of the original version. This preliminary work, in the case of the *St Ledger* and the *Alexis*, has already been performed by Gaston Paris, whose canons of criticism Clédat has also adopted in his classical edition of the *Roland*. The *Oaths*, *Eulalia*, and *Valenciennes Fragment* present no similar difficulty, but the extant versions of the *Voyage de Charlemagne* and the *Laws of William the Conqueror* are known to differ so widely from the original text that, notwithstanding Koschwitz's scholarly edition of the former, the greatest caution is necessary in invoking their authority, except in illustration of the syntax of the period. The utility of the Provençal vowel system as a basis for the hypothetical reconstruction of the vowel developments of pre-literary French may justify some regret that the early Provençal monuments are excluded from the present work. Thus, not only is no place assigned to *Boece*, but the *Passion* is also omitted, as belonging rather to the langue d'oc than to the domain of French strictly so called.

In Book I (*Phonétique*) there is little, if anything, that can lay claim to originality, and some of the matter has been better and more clearly stated elsewhere. The value of this section lies in the rich profusion of examples adduced from the available texts. This portion of the author's work has been performed carefully, intelligently, and so exhaustively that none of the texts are likely to present any phonetic problem which is not here fully treated in its rightful place. Considering the archaic nature of the *Oaths*, permeated, as indeed the author expressly acknowledges, by the influence of the Latin of written tradition, he sometimes invokes their authority with confidence where it cannot be accepted as conclusive. It seems probable that the young student who requires nothing further than a brief summary of the phonetic developments of the French language will rather provide himself with some such epitome as Bourciez's *Précis* than invest in the present volume for the sake of the appendix which the author has compiled for his benefit.

Books II and III treat of declension and conjugation respectively; and here again the laws enunciated are illustrated by a copious array of examples from the texts on which the investigations are based. M. Étienne's exposition of his subject is, in the main, clear and precise, though not free from an occasional obscurity of expression. In some passages there is a tendency to ignore the distinction between sounds and their corresponding orthographical signs. Excursions into the field of textual criticism are only incidental, and consist for the most part in the expressed preference for one of two or more alternative readings.

F. SPENCE.