

Review

Author(s): Jessie Crosland

Review by: Jessie Crosland

Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Apr., 1922), pp. 196-197

Published by: [Modern Humanities Research Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3714451>

Accessed: 22-01-2016 02:24 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Modern Humanities Research Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Modern Language Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Mystères et Moralités du Manuscrit 617 de Chantilly. Publiés pour la première fois et précédés d'une étude linguistique et littéraire. Par GUSTAVE COHEN. Paris: H. Champion. 1920. cxlix + 134 pp. 30 fr.

None of the five poems published by Dr Cohen in this volume has hitherto seen the light in its present form, though the last of them (*Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*) is known to students of Old French literature in a French version by Guillaume de Digulleville, edited for the Roxburghe Club by M. Stürzinger in 1893. They are listed in the library catalogue simply as 'Cinq Jeux.' The first two are 'Jeux de la Nativité' (the second unfortunately fragmentary), the remaining three deal with more abstract subjects and are thus described: 'Li Jeux des VII pechié mortel et des VII vertus'; 'Unc Jeux a VI personage (L'Alliance de Foy et Loyalté)'; 'Le Jeux de Pèlerinage humaine.' All five are written in Walloon, or, more precisely, in Liègeois, of the fourteenth century, and it is chiefly to a study of their forms and vocabulary that Dr Cohen has devoted the 149 pages of his Introduction, thus making a further contribution to the growing body of literature dealing with the Walloon language.

The literary value of these Mysteries and Moralities cannot be said to be very great, though they possess a certain distinction in having apparently been copied by a woman and written for 'un couvent de femmes.' But their linguistic interest is considerable, especially in the case of the last one, where the existence of the French source enables a detailed comparison of French and Walloon forms to be made. This comparison Dr Cohen has carried out at great length in his Introduction, but his work is rendered very diffuse and a little confusing at times by the fact that, in spite of the archaic form of the poems, he takes modern French and modern Liègeois as his *point de départ*. Hence many forms and developments are tabulated (sometimes several times over, as each poem receives individual attention), which are absolutely normal in Old French and do not seem to call for remark in a work of this kind. Such constructions as *por eaux convertire*, subjunctive without *que*, imperfect subjunctive with the value of a conditional, hardly call for notice except in a treatise on Old French syntax. In fact as regards syntax and morphology the poems present very little that is exceptional from the point of view of the French of that epoch. But the phonetic side is necessarily the most important portion of any work dealing with such pronounced dialectal forms. Dr Cohen makes a detailed study of the poems from this point of view and is able to amplify and, in a certain measure, rectify recent researches on this subject—as for instance in the case of the treatment of the suffix *-ellum*, both in ancient and modern Liègeois. The section dealing with the atonic vowels contains many points of interest, but seems to need a little correction on one or two points. For example, in speaking of 'a' *protonique à l'initiale*, Dr Cohen tells us: 'Là où le français altère ou modifie l' "a" protonique à l'initiale, notre manuscrit le garde,' and he cites, amongst examples

such as *aweur* (> agurium, O.Fr. *etir*) and *pawour* (> pavorem, O.Fr. *peëur*), which support his thesis, the words *samayne*, *astoit* (= *estoit*), *ramembreir* and *machine* (= *meschine*), where surely the modification or 'altération' is in the Walloon and not in the French form. Again, Section v is anything but clear. What have the words *ângele*, *órdene*, *apôtele* to do with the 'loi de Darmesteter' and the *protonique non-initiale non en position*?

Chapters IV and V of the Introduction deal with the nature and literary value of the five pieces. Dr Cohen is inclined to regard the first Nativité as the earliest in date; its identity with the liturgical drama is more pronounced, a more archaic form of versification is employed and the comic element is entirely absent. There is a rustic simplicity in the scene where shepherds bring their gifts, one a basket of apples and nuts, one a flute 'por consoleir le pitit enfan,' which has a distinct charm. The second Nativité also shares this character of *naïveté*. St Anne and her two daughters come to adore the infant Jesus, and the mother of the Virgin introduces herself and her two daughters with simple directness:

Et moy, poure creature,...
Suy vostre indigne grandame
Et vechi mes II fille qui sont vos ante.

Several leaves of this part of the manuscript are unfortunately missing, and the fragment consists of only 306 lines. The three Moralities are long and tedious and full of the personifications and allegory which bore the modern reader to extinction in the works of the fourteenth century. As Dr Cohen remarks: 'le lecteur d'aujourd'hui, et plus encore le spectateur, en supporterait difficilement l'ennui,' but he consoles himself with the thought that we may be grateful to these and other such Moralities 'd'avoir gardé le théâtre pour des fins très hautes et qui intéressent la destinée même de l'homme,' and he considers that it is the Morality, even more than the Mystery, which paved the way for the classic drama.

JESSIE CROSLAND.

LONDON.

Die Umschreibungen des Begriffes 'Hunger' im Italienischen. Stilistisch-onomasiologische Studie. Von LEO SPITZER. (*Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, Beiheft LXVIII.) Halle: M. Niemeyer. 1921. 345 pp. 42 M.

An effort is required from the readers who wish to appreciate Dr Spitzer's massive book. They must still in their hearts the voice of suffering humanity. It is repulsive at first to watch this 'Leiter einer der fünf Zensurgruppen' (p. 5) inspecting the letters and cards written by Italian prisoners in Austria to their homes not merely with the detachment of a censor who is called upon to perform a painful duty, but with the glee of the philologist who gloats upon the data of a