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THEODULPH ON IGNORANCE

An excellent connoisseur of classical Latin poetry, and a witty poet himself, Theodulph of Orléans doubtless was the greatest poetic talent at the court of Charlemagne. His fascinating invective on Ignorance (consisting of twenty elegiac couplets), however, conceals two small textual problems (*Carmen* 10, ed. E. Dümler, in *Mon. Germ. Hist.*, P. L. A. C., I, 1881, p. 464 f.). The elegy opens as follows:

Illum non *sal*, non istum sapientia condit;
 hunc doctrina nequit vincere, *sal* nec eum.
 Doctrinam cuius vanum est adhibere medullis,
 quoque magis doceas, stultior inde fiet.

The repetition of *sal* is insipid and unworthy of the *sales Theodulphi*. I think the second *sal* is a psychological scribal error for *sol*. While *sapientia* is compared to *sal*, *doctrina* is compared to *sol*. This emendation seems to be confirmed by the seventh couplet of the poem (13f.):

*Sole oriente viget quantum tua visio, caeae,
 tantum eius [sc. stulti] sensus post bona verba solet.*

In both passages *instruction* is compared to the light of the *sun* — *enlightenment, illumination*. 2 *doctrina* = *sol* says much the same as 13f. *bona verba* = *sol*. As for the idea itself, compare Heraclitus Fr. [122] Marcovich (B 134 Diels-Kranz): Ἡράκλειτος τὴν παιδείαν ἔτερον ἥλιον εἶναι τοῖς πεπαιδευμένοις ἔλεγεν.

The other textual problem is in line 10:

Quid bona verba iuvant, ubi nil habet alma voluntas,
 aut quid in urticis semina iacta iuvent?
 Flava quid horrendis prosunt data mella lacunis,
 10 quid *litor* aut olei stercore mixtus aget?

The word *litor* does not make any sense. Read *liquor* instead. *Liquor* was written as *licor*, which then was misread as *litor*. Naturally, *liquor olei*, „olive-oil“, is applied to a *clean* body; if put on a dirty body (*stercore mixtus*), olive-oil will be wasted (*quid aget?*). The same expression occurs in Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita S. Martini* 1.426:

paulatimque artus liquor ut penetravit olivi.

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