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ALBERTO VÀRVARO

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REPLICHE

A REPLY TO PROF. ALBERTO VÀRVARO'S NOTA PUBLISHED IN «MEDIOEVO ROMANZO», XXVII, FASC. II

Fascicolo II of «Medioevo Romanzo» xxvii (henceforth MR) contains the proceedings of the International Colloquium organised by Profs. Maiden and Zaccarello with the stated purpose of discussing the *Early Textualisation of the Romance Languages*. This colloquium took place in March 2002 in Oxford.

Professor Alberto Vàrvaro was asked to contribute a text to the proceedings with general comments on the topics discussed in Oxford. This text titled *Osservazioni conclusive* appears at the end of Fascicolo II (pp. 328-38). Prof. Vàrvaro (henceforth V.) appended a *Nota di appendice sui documenti portoghesi* to his article (pp. 335-38). Contrary to what one might be lead to assume V.'s *nota* is not a discussion of either aspects of Portuguese Medieval Philology or of Medieval Portuguese primary sources (texts): it is simply a series of harsh criticisms issued against my paper *The Textualization of Portuguese in the late 12th and early 13th centuries*, published in the same issue of «Medioevo Romanzo», pp. 275-310.

If V.'s remarks in his *nota* were simply a matter of academic disagreement, stated in a fair, broadminded and courteous manner I would let it go and would not bother to reply. But as the matter stands, and for reasons unknown to me, V.'s remarks seem to be a deliberate attempt to undermine the credibility of my research.

V.'s *nota* has in my view three main problems:

- 1) it misrepresents several aspects of my article – it offers erroneous and decontextualized interpretations of my statements and on occasion misquotes my text;
- 2) it attempts to diminish my credibility as a scholar – it suggests that my text was produced in haste and in a distracted manner and with disregard for elementary philological guidelines and precautions;
- 3) it contains misunderstandings and factual errors regarding some important aspects of contemporary philology.

SCRIPSIT VÀRVARO, p. 335

L'entusiasmo di Antonio Emiliano è ammirevole e da lui si possono aspettare altri lavori in questo campo. Tanto più mi pare dunque opportuno prospettargli alcune esigenze, che mi pare siano qui in parte disattese.

I have indeed already produced «altri lavori in questo campo». V., who seems so keen on showing his knowledge of Portuguese scholarship in his *nota*, should know that (we have even coincided in one or two academic events).

V.'s *esigenze* are totally out of place and out of order in the context of these proceedings; they are disrespectful of the organisers who framed their own set of *esigenze* when they chose the speakers and invited them to the Colloquium and proposed the papers for publication.

For the sake of accuracy, I would like to note that I was invited to the Oxford Colloquium by Profs. Maiden and Zaccarello. I was not invited by Prof. Vârvaro. I was invited there because of my work in my field, and because of the *esigenze* that I put into every piece of research that I do.

At no point, in Oxford, or during the process of editing and proofreading the texts for publication did V. contact me to let me know of his concerns regarding the flaws that he supposedly found in my paper. He should have, as a simple *esigenza* of fairplay.

SCRIPSIT VÂRVARO, pp. 335-36

Emiliano è così attento agli elementi esteriori da essersi procurato un set di fonts, che non è stato possibile usare qui, che gli permettono di riprodurre le abbreviazioni medievali e perfino il fatto (oserei dire banale) che le i nei documenti non recano il puntino [...].

Nothing is *banale* when it comes to analysing medieval *scriptae* and medieval character sets (in fact, nothing is *banale* in science in general, as chaoticians among others have shown). Why is a dotless *i* not *banale*? Because the dotted *i* is a modern character, not a medieval one, and because several combining signs and combining superscript letters could be written above the medieval dotless *i*.

In Medieval Portuguese texts this is particularly important as we all know, because from the late 13th-century on the acute sign, which was originally used to separate two adjoining *I*s, became a graphemic indicator (in some contexts) of vocalic nasality. The dot above the x-height was mainly confined to the *y* and the *h(oc)* abbreviation (and one or two other things). So, if one takes the time and the trouble to study things properly and to ask the proper questions, one will find that there is always a reason for everything, and what may seem *banale* to the amateur or the layman may be of crucial importance to the professional.

The quote from Roger Wright's paper¹ that Profs. Maiden and Zaccarello transcribe in their introduction² is quite to the point (no pun intended):

[texts] have to be published without any emendations, so that we can see exactly what there is on the parchment. We never know what might be important to researchers in the future. Doctoral students in the next century might wish to know the precise details of every comma and dot, capital letter, word-separation, and even the most blatant error.

Lo scrupolo è ammirevole, anche se non sempre ne è chiaro lo scopo o almeno non se ne vede alcuna utilizzazione. Non sarebbe stato più semplice, a questo punto, aggiungere le fotografie degli originali, in modo che fosse possibile controllare le trascrizioni?

I will try to explain briefly, although I must admit that this is a bizarre situation, to comment and to discuss something that did not appear on print and that the readers of MR cannot see and judge for themselves.

If one wants faithfully to represent a medieval character set one has only two

1. R. WRIGHT, *Sociophilology and Twelfth-Century Spain*, in MR, xxvii 2003, pp. 253-74, p. 166.

2. M. ZACCARELLO-M. MAIDEN, *Premessa*, *ibid.*, pp. 163-72.

options: 1) one encodes one's base-text by means of either XML-type tags or XML character entities or a combination of the two, or 2) one uses a special font in the base-text, preferably a UCS-compliant font.

What is truly *ammirevole* is the fact that a scholar such as V. can ask questions like these in public. Does he not know that a facsimile is just a dumb thing, a product of technology, not a product of the human mind, whereas a transcription and an edition (which are altogether two different things) are the products of the human mind and of human ingenuity? A transcription is a parsable, browsable, analysable object. It has structure, texture and depth. It can be processed with an array of tools, such as taggers, concordance generators, wordlist extractors, etc.

So, the primary *utilizzazione* for a medieval font is to represent typographically a medieval character set, as many medieval scholars around the world know. And they also know that it is pointless to try to represent by means of a typeface every minutia of a manuscript text; hence the focus on *characters* and on *typical lettershapes* (glyphs). An edition that uses a medieval font will never be or purport to be a "typographical facsimile", and anyone who makes that suggestion does not have a clue about what a palaeographic edition in the Information Age is or can be.

Le edizioni di testi toscani fatte per mezzo secolo da Arrigo Castellani dovrebbero servire da modello. Segnalerei anche le norme recentemente pubblicate dell'École des chartes.

To state in a academic journal that Castellani and his 50-year old editions should be the model for contemporary editions of medieval charters is a bizarre notion, and reveals a bizarre conception of philology.

I could recommend in a similar vein to V. that the editions of Alexandre Herculano, published almost 150 years ago in the great *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica* series, should serve as a model for Italian philologists. In spite of some occasional errors they are quite good and contain thousands of charters and other types of medieval texts up to the 12th century. Since Herculano there have been several wonderful philologists in Portugal. But Herculano was a giant: a genial scholar, an influential politician and a successful and well-loved novelist. He left a huge body of work. He reformed the National Archive – nay, he created it as we know it today! His editions, though old and in some cases dated, are nevertheless better than those of many 20th-century philologists and historians who adhere to norms of the *École des Chartes*.

So I could indeed proclaim that Herculano should be the model to be followed by Italian philologists, and face the inevitable derision of my peers. No one would take me seriously, and some might even accuse me (and with good reason) of "philological patronising and supremacism".

As to the norms of the *École des Chartes*: even under the patronage of the great Monfrin those norms were designed for historians (i.e. for editions of charters *qua* historical primary sources not as linguistic sources). The norms of the *École des Chartes* are a set of procedures devised to normalise medieval texts beyond recognition (in terms of the original graphemic and graphetic conventions). Because most editions of Portuguese charters and codices are done by historians (seldom by philologists) who

adhere to those norms, they are virtually useless to linguists and philologists who are interested in the study of graphemics, phonology, morphology, punctuation, textual structure, etc. I have no use for those norms, as far as transcription of primary sources is concerned. I doubt that any "scrupulous" philologist has.

Let me just point out that the fragments of medieval texts contained in my article are presented in a fully normalised way simply because MR could not handle the special fonts that I sent them. After sending several versions, for both Mac OS and Windows OS, I was forced to give up and publish those samples in a fashion that I do not consider appropriate for linguistic analysis.

SCRIPSIT VÂRVARO, p. 336

Lo scrupolo non può non accompagnarsi alla prudenza. Trovo di un coraggio che inclina a temerarietà che nel documento di S. Michele a Lardosa Emiliano legga «In n(omi)ne Patri et Fili et Sp(irit)u S(anc)ti» e trascriva addirittura in IPA: «ẽ 'nomẽ 'padre e 'fîle e es'prito 'sãte».

In my article the trinitarian *inuocatio* of the charter from S. Miguel de Lardosa is given as «In nomine Patri et Fili et Spiritu Sancti» without any brackets. V.'s quote is a misquote. I do not know where V. got his brackets from (which represent the expansion of abbreviations), and I do not know what the form «S(anc)ti» signifies. Perhaps V. meant «S(an)c(t)i», i.e. the expansion of the very common abbreviation *sci*. The abbreviation *sti* existed but only appears in the documents several centuries after.

The phonetic transcription that was published by MR is wrong, although I corrected it at the proofreading stage, but MR could not get it right because they are apparently not used to IPA symbols. The Old Portuguese alveolar fricatives were apical, whereas the alveolar affricates were laminar, hence the crucial need for the IPA apicality diacritic. The symbol for the palatal lateral sonorant is a minuscule Y rotated 180°, not to be confused (as many 1st year students of Phonetics do) with the Greek letter *lambda*! Also, the IPA sign representing the primary wordstress is a supralinear non-combining vertical stroke, not a single quotation mark!

As to my *temerarietà*, and leaving aside the discourteous nature of the remark, I wish more medieval philologists had it: a good way to test one's knowledge about the early stages of a language is to attempt to produce broad phonetic (or at least phonemic) transcriptions in IPA fashion of written utterances produced in those early stages. Allophonic phonetic transcription of an old text is one of the ultimate tests to one's scholarship regarding an old language, a test that not many scholars in Romance Linguistics have dared to attempt in public. In my case I prefer to be wrong (which I honestly think that I am not) and attempt to interpret my data in a way that makes sense to me, rather than do nothing and concede defeat.

Early medieval texts were read aloud, hence they were pronounceable and were pronounced, hence they can and should be transcribed (provided that one knows enough about the phonology and morphology of the period, and we do know something about Old Portuguese).

(As an aside, I cannot but wonder whether V. read Banniard's contribution to the

colloquium,³ or any of Banniard's previous work; I wonder whether V. read Carmen Pensado's 1991 seminal article⁴ where these matters are dealt with decisively and which was published in a volume organised by R. Wright, a volume which by the way contains also a text by Vârvaro himself – I presume therefore that he knows and even owns a copy of the book; had V. read and understood those texts he would not have wasted a iota with ill-informed comments about the phonetic reality of Latin-like written utterances in the Early Middle Ages, especially when Pensado's text – published a few pages away from V.'s text – is a groundbreaking piece of research which clearly shows that Notarial Latin was read as Romance, although it could still have been regarded or conceptualised as Latin).

Anche a non ricordare che fino alla recente riforma liturgica una formula del genere era recitata in latino, sia pur storpiato, da qualsiasi analfabeta e anche a concedere l'esattezza di tutte le corrispondenze fonetiche, che razza di portoghese (o romanzo) è questo che non ha né preposizioni né articoli?

How does V. suppose that Latin was pronounced in the centuries before the Gregorian Reform (which is the only liturgical reform that concerns me), namely in 882 in Northwestern Iberia? With Classical Latin phonetics à la Sidney Allen? or à la Alcuin of York?

And I never labelled my transcription as Portuguese or Romance. Again V. misquotes me. I simply wrote that the Latin formula was pronounced with Old Portuguese phonetics (p. 294). I stand by my statements and by my transcriptions, which reflect the state of the art in reconstructed Old Portuguese Phonology, and also my direct knowledge of many hundreds of charters.

SCRIPSIT VÂRVARO, p. 336

Che i documenti siano originali è detto globalmente una sola volta; sarebbe stato indispensabile parlare dei dubbi e delle discussioni, che ci sono stati, per esempio, proprio per il documento più antico. Più in generale, non viene data alcuna indicazione sulle eventuali edizioni precedenti o comunque sulla bibliografia, quasi che i documenti di cui si parla siano inediti. La cosa più singolare è che Emiliano non faccia eccezione neanche per la propria e recente edizione del documento 1 (se ne riparla più sotto). È appena il caso di dire che l'indicazione delle edizioni precedenti [...] è un dovere, rende possibili i controlli a chi voglia farli e permette di completare testi qui incompleti.

In a lengthy section titled *The Early Textualisation of Portuguese - Textual Milestones* (pp. 293-302) I did give excerpts of medieval texts. I specifically stated: «I give below some excerpts [...] which help having an idea of the general outlook of the Latin-Portuguese documental tradition» (p. 293).

The aim of my paper was *not* to publish medieval texts, i.e. to present full editions of texts, it was to outline and discuss in very broad strokes the process of the Early

3. M. BANNIARD, *Changements dans le degré de cohérence graphie/langage: de la notation du phrasé à la notation de la phonie (VIII^e-XI^e siècle)*, *ibid.*, pp. 178-99.

4. C. PENSADO, *How was Leonese Vulgar Latin read?*, in *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. R. WRIGHT, London-New York, Routledge, 1991, pp. 190-204.

Textualisation of Portuguese. The excerpts are there for illustration purposes only, and that section is not even the most important or significant part of my article. Now if V. felt that it was important to publish the whole texts and not just excerpts, why then did he not deign to inform me of his opinion during the proofreading stage? Why did he not voice the same concerns in respect to other papers contained in MR xxvii, which also present samples of texts for illustration purposes?

The fact that I provided the archival reference for each text, and that I declared that the transcriptions were original (and based on the direct perusal of the manuscripts) is more than enough. Some of those transcriptions have already been published, some are in the process of being published, but that is beside the point. The convenors of the colloquium saw no problem there. None of the eminent philologists who listened to my presentation and read my hand-out (which contained all the text samples presented in the paper) voiced any objection in that regard, either publicly or in private.

SCRIPSIT VÄRVARO, p. 337

A proposito del testo dell'882, del quale – come in genere per gli altri – si dà solo un estratto, si osserva che «it shows evidence for the existence of nasal vowels and the deletion of intervocalic /n/ and /l/» (p. 293); non si dice dove siano queste prove e, a differenza dei testi successivi, nessuna parola del testo è evidenziata in corsivo [...].

The charter from 882 was published and extensively analysed by me in an article in the journal «Verba», which I refer to in my text. There is absolutely no reason why I should repeat my extensive and detailed arguments in a paper whose purpose was *not* the linguistic analysis of medieval texts or spelling.

But V., refusing to accept that I gave the excerpt of the 882 charter for illustration purposes only, decided to bring in Wolf-Dieter Lange's book (*Philologische Studien zur Latinität west-hispanischer Privaturkunden des 9.-12. Jahrhunderts*, Leiden, Brill, 1966), where an edition, a German translation, and a word by word explication (pp. 6-49) of the 882 charter is presented. There is no linguistic or graphemic analysis in Lange. This is most unfortunate, because Lange's editions have some problems (as also his translations) – although, for justice's sake it must be stated that Lange's book is an extremely useful and interesting reference tool. Lange seems to have had some difficulties in reading the cursive Visigothic script, and made some errors. Just a simple example: Lange systematically read *p(ro)* for *p(er)*, unaware that in the Visigothic script the horizontal stroke that crosses the descender of the letter *p* begins in many hands with an upwards curving loop. I admit that a 1st year student of Palaeography could mistake it for the Carolingian abbreviation of *pro*, but Lange should know better, and so should V. Since V. perused Lange's editions he should have noticed the high number of *pro* when *per* is expected.

[...] Quanto alla asserita scomparsa di /n/ e /l/, apprendo da Lange che l'unica base (ovviamente solo per il dileguo di /n/) è la forma *elemosias* 'elemosine', che si trova nella parte del testo omessa da Emiliano.

This discussion is totally beside the point, but I must note that Lange is *wrong*. In line 8 of the 882-charter the form *moastica* (for *monastica*) occurs, and I discuss it thoroughly in the *Verba* article, along with other significant spellings. I was the first editor to transcribe that form correctly; Lange and others read *monastica*, and a single editor transcribed *mo[n]astica*. This error is understandable because the open round minuscule *a* is connected to the following tall minuscule *s* in a very common (but strange looking to the nonspecialist) nexus of *a* plus *s* of the Visigothic script: the *a* is written above the x-height, as if it were a superscript *u*, the *s* is severely distorted, and the resulting pattern is indeed odd for someone not familiar with this script.

V. then proceeds to refer that there are all sorts of things in the 882-charter that he found out about *apud* Lange, things that I, to his surprise, omitted in the Oxford text but did mention in the said «Verba» article. What would he have me do? Repeat the «Verba» article in Oxford?

La sorpresa però aumenta quando si passa da Lange, che qui non è citato neppure nell'ampia bibliografia, al recente articolo del medesimo Emiliano sul documento dell'882. In esso, infatti, non solo si cita il libro di Lange, ma si documentano lenizioni (pp. 26-27), si discute la presunta nasalità vocalica (pp. 33-34) e si registra che -n- manca in elemosias mentre -l- è sempre presente (pp. 33-35). Devo dunque concludere che nella stesura della relazione per il convegno di Oxford lo studioso portoghese si sia distratto.

V.'s surprise is no match to mine when I read his *nota*. Does V. expect every scholar who mentions data or results from previously published research to repeat everything in detail again and again? What is the purpose of publishing texts if not to ensure that the results of one's research are forever made available to all? Or is «Verba» not a *bona fide* scholarly journal?

I sincerely wonder whether V. really read my «Verba» article thoroughly, since he states that «apprendo da Lange che l'unica base (ovviamente solo per il dileguo di /n/) è la forma *elemosias*». How could he fail to mention the *moastica* form if he did read my article? Why does he say that I wrote that intervocalic *L* is always present but fails to mention that I also said and showed in that article that there was nonetheless strong evidence to argue for the suppression of the intervocalic lateral? Who is distracted here?

SCRIPSIT VÂRVARO, pp. 337-38

Il documento 2, secondo Emiliano, sarebbe invece importante, oltre che per alcune forme verbali senza -t, che non sono una novità, per «the earliest occurrence of the digraph <ei> for the Galician-Portuguese diphthong /ei/» (p. 294). La forma sarebbe il toponimo 2 Freiseno, nella quale purtroppo non c'è e non ci può essere alcun dittongo /ei/ in quanto si tratta di una evoluzione di FRAXINU (gr. DCECH, vol. II pp. 956-57). [...] la <i> non va con <e> ma con la successiva <s>, ad indicare la pronuncia [j] [...].

V. is *wrong*. The placename *Freiseno* which occurs in an original charter from 907 corresponds to the modern form spelt *Freixo*. There is also the common noun *freixo* (ash tree and ash wood) in Contemporary Portuguese.

A few comments are in order:

In primis, it is unacceptable that the *DCECH* (i.e. the *Diccionario Crítico Etimológico Castellano e Hispánico*, by J. Corominas and J.A. Pascual, 6 vols., Madrid, Gredos, 1980-1991) be mentioned by V. as an authoritative reference in this regard, since the entry *fresno* in vol. II (pp. 956-57) that V. refers to – as if it were a decisive piece of evidence – not only does *not* say anything about the phonetic evolution of the Castilian form, but also has *no bearing* on the development of the Portuguese form *freixo*, which is pronounced in Standard European Portuguese as ['frɛiʃu].

Secundo, V. should know that although Portuguese and Castilian are different languages they share some early phonetic developments, such as the evolution of the Latin sequences *AKS* (> *aɪs* > *eɪs*) and *AKT* (> *aɪt* > *eɪt*). He should look up, among others, E.B. Williams' book, *From Latin to Portuguese. Historical Phonology and Morphology of the Portuguese Language* (Philadelphia, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1962, 2nd ed.), where these changes in Portuguese are explained and the forms *freixo* and *freixeo* (archaic) are dealt with (§ 33.3, § 53, § 53B, § 92.9, § 102.3C).

Tertio, Menéndez Pidal discussed the development *FRAXINU* > *fresno* in his monumental *Orígenes del Español* (Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1950³, § 16.4) and also in his shorter *Manual de Gramática Histórica Española* (ibid., 1944⁷, § 9.1, § 61.4), which are two basic reference works in Hispanic Linguistics. Pidal gives examples of early written forms of *fresno* (and of similar items) with the digraphs <ai> and <ei>. Pidal even notes that forms with the diphthong [eɪ], such as *seisma* (< *SEX(I)MA*) and *freisno* (< *FRAX(I)NU*) survived in the literary language until the 13th century (the latter is also mentioned by the *DCECH*, but V. seems to have missed it).

Quarto, the grapheme <x> represented in most instances a voiceless apico-alveolar fricative [s̺] as a result of the regular change /ks/ > /s/ (common to both Portuguese and Castilian); hence, we often find in the charters hypercorrect and reverse spellings such as «ussor» *pro* «uxor» or «ueriximi» *pro* «uerissimi», or «nodeximus» *pro* «notissimus», etc. (the list is quite long).

Quinto, the palatalisation of [s̺] to [ʃ] in *FRAXINU* (given that /ks/ > /s/) could either have resulted from the following palatal vowel (the short *i* became a nasal [ẽ] which was later denasalised, raised and suppressed), or from the palatal offglide of the preceding diphthong (this is of course the most probable and most widely accepted scenario).

Sexto, the offglide of the [eɪ]-diphthong was in many contexts the regular result of the vocalisation of [k] in syllabic coda position, a well attested trait of Galician-Portuguese (and also Castilian-Leonese, not to mention Catalan) diachronic phonology, as we know.

Septimo, it was the *i*-offglide that caused the raising and fronting of /a/ in the original diphthong [ai]: *ak* > *ai* > *eɪ* (both in Galician-Portuguese and Castilian-Leonese), which attests to the antiquity of the diphthong. Thus, a spelling such as *frexineiro* (which V. mentions because he found it *apud* Lange, not because he knows the texts) shows the presence of the diphthong in the first syllable (the form corresponds to the modern placename *Freixeiro*). The scribe did not have to write the <i> in the first syllable due to the presence of the <x>. This situation cannot be confused with the Castilian situation where monophthongisation of both /eɪ/ and /ou/ into /e/ and /o/, respectively, occurred early. Thus the occurrence of the single grapheme <e> where one would expect <ei>, <ec>, etc., in a Castilian text of the 10th and 11th centuries must have a completely different phonemic interpretation from the occurrence of single <e> in the context <ex>, <ec> or <ep> in a Portuguese text of the same period, as we all know.

Octavo, the digraph <ei> is very rare in Latin-Portuguese documents until the 12th century (although the diphthong had existed for centuries in the spoken language); hence its earliest occurrence in an early 10th-century document is noteworthy. The *i*-offglide, as we all know,

was represented "indirectly" in the early Latin-Portuguese documents by *c* or *p* in syllabic coda position, or by *x*. In the 882-charter it is even spelt *d*, as in *kadedras* ('chairs') [ka'deĩras]. A spelling such as *frexineiro* clearly shows the presence of the diphthong, i.e. [frei'eĩro], as I pointed earlier. Even in the early 13th century the oldest known private document written in Portuguese (known as *Notícia de Torto*, from 1211-1214) still shows Latinate spellings such as «existis» *pro* «eixistes», «figecredo» *pro* «figeiredo» (placename; modern *Figueiredo*), «lecxasen» *pro* «leixasen», «lexaren» *pro* «leixaren», «medio» *pro* «meio», «pigecros» *pro* «pigeiros» (placename; modern *Pigeiros*), «plecto» *pro* «preito», «rec» *pro* «rei» (actually, in the 13th and 14th centuries the digraph <ey> was more commonly used than <ei>, but that is beside the point). Those and other forms are discussed in A. Emiliano-S. Pedro, 'De notícia de torto': aspectos paleográficos e scriptográficos e edição do mais antigo documento particular português conhecido, in «Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie», cxx 2004, 1 pp. 1-85.

Nono, all modern Portuguese and Galician forms present a diphthong; cf. *freixo* and Portuguese place-names such as *Freixal*, *Freixão*, *Freixas*, *Freixeda*, *Freixedelo*, *Freixeeiro*, *Freixeira*, *Freixeirinha*, *Freixeiro*, *Freixial*, *Freixialinho*, *Freixianda*, *Freixido*, *Freixeira*, *Freixieirinha*, *Freixieirinho*, *Freixieiro*, *Freixiel*, *Freixinho*, *Freixiosa*, *Freixo*, *Freixoeirinho*, *Freixoeiro*, *Freixos*, *Freixosa*. Western Leonese and Catalan placenames of this type also have the diphthong. But if V. says that «non c'è e non ci può essere alcun dittongo /ei/» one cannot but wonder where all these diphthongs came from.

Decimo, instances of the spelling <is> to represent [j] where the fricative is not preceded by a diphthong in the previous syllable are not found in the earliest documents, and are extremely rare even in the 11th and 12th centuries. So V.'s claim that «la <i> non va con <e> ma con la successiva <s>, ad indicare la pronuncia [j]» is simply *wrong* and apparently stems from ignorance (or distraction) of basic facts of Hispanic Historical Grammar. It also shows on V.'s part an outdated conception of the relation between graphemes and "phonemes".

V. wrote in his final paragraph «non è possibile rinunciare alla completezza e accuratezza dell'informazione e dell'analisi, basata sugli strumenti tradizionali della linguistica storica» (p. 338). I agree, and I think I have shown abundantly how deep are the *completezza e accuratezza dell'informazione e dell'analisi* of V.'s *nota*. I regret that Professor Vårvaro chose to close the proceedings of such an important and interesting event as was the Oxford Colloquium with such an ill-informed set of remarks. Had he sent his *nota* in private we could have had an interesting exchange of ideas, and I would not have been put in the unpleasant position of criticising a major figure in contemporary Romance Linguistics and Philology.

My thanks and compliments to the «Medioevo Romanzo» editorial board for accepting to publish this reply, and in particular to Professor Alberto Vårvaro for a remarkable demonstration of fairplay in making the publication of this reply possible.

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REPLICA A UNA REPLICA

Lo scritto del prof. Emiliano non meriterebbe risposta se non fosse per la sua insistenza nel ripetere che, a differenza sua, io non avevo a che fare con il colloquio di Oxford e l'ho poi colpito alle spalle per qualche ignobile quanto misteriosa ragione. Ciò è falso e offensivo. Come ho spiegato a suo tempo, sono stato invitato dagli organizzatori del convegno per trarli fuori dalla difficoltà creata da una rinuncia tardiva; mi è stato chiesto di dare una valutazione conclusiva dei lavori; ho ascoltato quello che potevo ascoltare (non la comunicazione di Emiliano) ed ho espresso le mie opinioni, non sempre entusiaste, in ovvia libertà. Se avessi ascoltato Emiliano, dei cui precedenti lavori non avevo alcuna stima ed il cui *handout* mi aveva fatto temere il peggio, avrei detto apertamente cosa ne pensavo.

Per aiutare gli organizzatori, che non avevano altre possibilità, mi sono offerto di pubblicare gli Atti su «Medioevo Romano», cosa che poi, a dire il vero, non è stata accolta con entusiasmo dai condirettori. Quando ho ricevuto i testi mi sono trovato in una sgradevole situazione. Se l'articolo di Emiliano fosse stato sottoposto alla rivista, l'avrei rifiutato. Ma gli atti erano curati da M. Maiden e M. Zaccarello. Se non ci fosse stato alcun intervento mio, avrei potuto tacere e lasciare a loro ogni responsabilità; ma l'intervento mio c'era ed era proprio una valutazione dei lavori. Aggiungervi alcune frasi su Emiliano sarebbe stato improprio, perché esse non erano state pronunciate a Oxford, ma tacere sarebbe parsa una approvazione. Ho scelto la via di una nota aggiuntiva, che ho subito trasmesso al prof. Maiden, curatore del fascicolo. Non spettava a me farla conoscere ad Emiliano, con cui non avevo rapporti. Se egli ne abbia avuto notizia o no, non è affar mio.

Nel merito giudichino i lettori.

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