

FORUM

Blame it on Titivullus

I read with interest Larry S. Crist's review of *Renaut de Montauban: Édition critique du manuscrit Douce par Jacques Thomas* (*Olifant* 15.2 [Summer, 1990]: 188-96). The reviewer's "plaint" concerning the desirability of editors' quantifying rhymes makes a good deal of sense; unfortunately his own quantifications include some basic arithmetic errors that should have been caught before the review appeared in print.

On page 190, Professor Crist tells us that the total of verses rhyming (or assonating) in AL is 67. Then, comparing this figure to the overall number of lines in the poem (14,310), he tells us that "67/14310 gives 0.00047%, an insignificant sum in itself, but one which will allow. . . a frequency listing of rhymes." He further comments that "One does not need a computer for this, only a pocket calculator."

A moment's reflection shows up the error: 1% of 14310 is 143 (rounded down). Now, 67 is almost half as much as this latter figure, that is, roughly 47/100 of 1%, i. e., 0.47%, or, expressed as the decimal fraction, 0.0047: the figure is not nearly so "insignificant" as Professor Crist affirms.

The same type of error persists in the other figures given on that page of the review (decimals rounded off):

$1/447 = 0.0022 = 0.22\%$ of *laissez* [1% = 4.47]
 $4/14310 = 0.00028 = 0.028\%$ of verses [1% = 143.1]
 $8/447 = 0.0179 = 1.79\%$ [1% = 4.47]
 $40/14310 = 0.0028 = 0.28\%$ [1% = 143.1]

This said, I heartily agree with the conclusions toward which Professor Crist was aiming with his sample calculations, that editors should indeed go that far in providing data relative to their texts.

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