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MAVORTIVS AND PRVDENTIVS.

THE vexed question of the exact significance of the name of Mavortius in the old Putean MS. of Prudentius (Par. Put. 8084) has again been called into court in the recent discussions of the Mavortian recension of Horace, and is fully treated in Dr. Bick's *Horazkritik seit 1880*, pp. 31-35.¹ As Dr. Bick has done me the honour of subjecting my former articles² on the question to his criticism, I feel called upon to say something in defence of the view I maintained. I willingly grant him that perhaps I laid too strong a stress on the connection of the question with Horatian criticism; but I do so, I fear, not as a convert to his arguments in favour of the view that Put. is merely a copy of a MS. that had Mavortius' autograph written in it, and that therefore that name is part of a lost subscriptio, but precisely for the contrary reason, that I consider I was too much influenced by former advocates of that view. That there is no ground for assuming the name to be part of a lost subscriptio I am more than ever convinced, and my object here is to endeavour to show that the whole argument is based on a false premise.

Briefly put, the argument is this. The name there written is 'Vettius Agorius Basilius'—one or two of the letters are not now visible, but that is neither here nor there—the last name Mavortius being omitted: such an omission would be impossible on the part of Mavortius himself;³ and therefore, as one word is certainly omitted, we may as well assume forty more to be omitted too, and so make up a subscriptio. But why is it impossible? When Aulus Gellius, for example, refers to Marcus Tullius Cicero simply as Marcus Tullius, or to Q. Claudius Quadrigarius simply as Q. Claudius,⁴ no one exclaims that the word Cicero or the word Quadrigarius is indispensable, and therefore we must assume a lacuna, for the simple reason that they recognise that the ordinary habit of the Roman burdened with three or four names was to omit some of them when he had no reason for formality. What grounds have we for assuming that Mavortius was eccentric in this particular, and always wrote his name in full? Of course he wrote it in full and added v.c. et inl., and anything else he could think of, when writing a formal subscriptio to his edition of Horace; and the very fact that he did not do the same

¹ Cf. also F. Vollmer, 'Die Überlieferungs Geschichte von Horaz,' *Philologus*, Suppl. Band. x. 317.

² *C.R.* xvii. (1903), 203-207; xviii. (1904), 112-115.

³ On the same false reasoning is based the view

that the name is M.'s autograph, but that he was interrupted before he finished it—a view rightly condemned by Dr. Bick as 'unglaublich.'

⁴ e.g. *Noctes Att.* vi. 11, 3 and 7.

here is clear proof that he was not making any formal subscriptio, merely writing his name in his own book like anybody else. Everything about the signature points to informality. It is written in the same small hand as the notes. Now, no formal subscriptio would be written in a small, semi-cursive hand, as though it were of no more importance than the marginal notes: it would rather be printed in letters as large again as the text. Again, it is written a long distance away from the text, of which only a few lines occur on the top of the page, while the name is three-quarters of the way down. Dr. Bick attempts to account for this space by assuming that it was originally filled with some lost remarks on the preceding hymns, for which the copyist, being unable to read them, left a blank space. But it is difficult to imagine what else could be there except the ordinary ending 'Explicit liber Cathemerinon Aurelii Prudentii,' with perhaps an 'illustrissimi poetae' tacked on; and for that or any other reasonable ending surely half a large folio page is an absurdly disproportionate space to leave.

One may call attention, too, to the small cross preceding the name, which is very frequently found before signatures in documents. In fact, I am perfectly sure that, had Mavortius not already been known as an editor, no one would ever have inferred from the name, written where it is and as it is, that anything so formal as a subscriptio was intended by it.

It is difficult to see how the exponents of the view that Put. is a copy of a MS. containing Mavortius' subscriptio account for the name being in a different hand from the text. Surely it would have been the duty of the copyist to write all that he found in the book he was copying, subscriptio included; and yet the name is written by the marginal annotator, who presumably used either another MS. or his own wits for the notes he added. If he was Mavortius, it is intelligible enough that he should write his own name; but if he was someone else, his reasons for scribbling other people's names are to me a mystery. Even supposing that it was he and not the copyist of the text who used a MS. with a subscriptio, one has to postulate an inconceivable degree of conscientiousness on the part of a man who was not copying a MS., merely taking notes from it, to suppose that he copied among them three meaningless words from an illegible subscriptio.¹

Dr. Bick's other arguments are no more convincing; than those already discussed: the last of them, indeed, begs the question by assuming that it is a subscriptio; and, as the subscriptio was always added at the end of the edition, and in this case the marginal notes continue to the end of the book, there would have to be another subscriptio there too. That argument, however, breaks down if, as I have attempted to prove, the name is not intended for a subscriptio at all.

The only other support Dr. Bick finds is Zangemeister and Wattenbach's opinion that the MS. should be assigned to the end rather than the early part of the sixth century; but this he admits is doubtful, as other authorities take the

¹ In the case of the Montpellier MS. of Persius the subscriptio and notes are apparently taken together from some different MS. from that used for

the text (cf. Lindsay, *C.R.* 1905, p. 465). But there the subscriptio was legible.

contrary view. He might have added that the dating of early Latin MSS. is so uncertain that eminent authorities have lately differed by as much as two centuries in the date they assign to the Codex Romanus of Vergil, and consequently cannot be called in with any certainty to settle the present question. No one has dated the MS. later than the end of the sixth century, and as Mavortius was consul in 527 A.D., he may well have annotated a MS. written in the middle of the century or even later: so that there are comparatively few years between the two views.

There is, after all, no reason for supposing that Mavortius edited all the Latin poets he had on his shelves and marked with his name, and, as there is nothing but his name in the MS. of Prudentius, it is just as rash to infer that the few notes found there were intended as an edition as it would be in the case of an edition possessed and pencil-marked by any modern scholar. Of course, he may have treated his Prudentius, who was a recent author and probably not considered worth editing formally, much as he did Horace; and so the Paris copy may, as I suggested before, be a specimen of ancient editing. But there is absolutely no evidence that such was the case, and consequently I must admit that many of the inferences I drew in my former articles are hardly justifiable,¹ and at the best can only be regarded as vague hypotheses. In one conviction, however, I remain unshaken: a name is but a name to me.

E. O. WINSTEDT.

¹ *e.g.* I was too much influenced by the prevalent belief in a subscriptio in suggesting that the continuance of the notes past the page containing the name afforded support to the view that Mavortius' labour in

Horace extended past the subscriptio at the end of the *Epodes*. As the name is not a subscriptio, the case is quite different and has no bearing whatever on that Horatian question.