The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

Viereck's Official Greek *Sermo Graecus quo Senatus populusque Romanus magistratusque populi Romani usque ad Tiberii Caesaris aetatem in scriptis publicis usi sunt examinatur*: scripsit Paulus Viereck, Dr. Ph. Gottingae, MDCCCLXXXVIII. (5 Mark).

E. L. Hicks

The Classical Review / Volume 4 / Issue 1-2 / February 1890, pp 37 - 39
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00189486, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00189486

How to cite this article:

E. L. Hicks (1890). The Classical Review, 4, pp 37-39 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00189486

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

One advantage of treating Greek and Latin metres side by side is that the continuity of development pervading them can be better seen. The way the pentameter forms a connecting link between the *κατὰ στίχον* and the lyric metres (p. 100), the gradual restrictions on its last syllables (p. 116), and the slow but subtle influence of accent (pp. 295-6), are clearly brought out. The subject of accent, indeed, as affecting and affected by metre, is an interesting one, and one which has not received in English text-books the attention it deserves. Discarding the use of the terms *arsis* and *thesis*, as being now generally understood in a sense exactly contrary to their original one, the author adopts a notation (p. 3) slightly differing from that of Havet and others to designate the *temps fort*, or stress, as distinguished alike from quantity and the tonic, or true, accent. The first of these three he makes equivalent to the modern accent (p. 34), while the last was simply a momentary raising of the pitch, a 'note musicale plus élevée.' Such lines as :

Itáliam fáto prófugus Lavínáque vénit

show how unaffected the metrical stress was by the accent proper. The fact no doubt remains that in the last two feet of the hexameter we often find the stress or *temps*

fort and the accent coincide, as in 'rura manebunt,' 'lumine caelum,' and such like common types. But Havet (*Métrique*, p. 60) will not allow this to have been intentional, and he decides that 'le rôle de l'accent est absolument nul dans la versification latine.' Weil and Benloew, in their *Théorie générale de l'Accentuation latine* (a treatise unfortunately now out of print), come to much the same conclusion (p. 241), on the ground of the tendency of the Latin accent to coincide with the stress (the Romans having for example no words accented like *Αἰσχύλος*), and of stress again to coincide with quantity. In the long run accent carried the day, and made possible the metres of the Christian poets.

Not the least valuable part of the book is that in which the writer treats of archaic prosody (*Excurs.* iii.), especially as affecting the scansion of Plautus. The book is carefully printed, and we have noticed very little to add to the list of errata. On p. 222, in the first line of note 2, 'sur la finale' should be 'sur l'initiale,' and the last number on p. 279 should be 42 instead of 41. We think the work will be found very serviceable in the higher forms of classical schools.

J. H. LUPTON.

VIERECK'S OFFICIAL GREEK.

Sermo Graecus quo Senatus populusque Romanus magistratusque populi Romani usque ad Tiberii Caesaris aetatem in scriptis publicis usi sunt examinatur : scripsit PAULUS VIERECK, Dr. Ph. Gottingae, MDCCCLXXXVIII. (5 Mark).

THE subject of this careful and scholarly prize-essay ('praemio regio ornata') may at first sight appear to be of narrow range, but the reader will find it opening out in various interesting directions. When Rome became mistress of the Eastern world, she had to treat with her subjects in their own tongue, and that tongue was Greek: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*. In the West, indeed, the Roman official might usually employ his native Latin, although probably Greek was the channel of communication between Rome and Carthage in the times of Hannibal; while in Magna Graecia we find *Senatusconsulta* inscribed in Greek, and not in Latin,

late in the first century A.D. (*C.I.G.* 5836, 5838, 5843). But in Greece proper, and over those large tracts of the world which had been Hellenised under the Diadochi, Greek was the official language: even in Palestine the Roman decree or treaty was inscribed in Greek as well as Latin (p. xii).

The writer first addresses himself to the task of collecting and arranging the texts of all the inscribed documents which come within his scope. These are set out in full, the readings being subjected to careful criticism. First come ten Letters from Roman magistrates, the earliest being Flamininus's letter to Cyretiae (*circ.* 196 B.C.) and the latest (p. 47) a letter of Cn. Lentulus Augur to Nysa (B.C. 1). Next follow eleven *Senatusconsulta*, most of them in excellent preservation and of considerable length, their number being swelled by several more in the Addenda. A third class is formed by the Treaties. None of these documents are

new, and many of them have long been familiar. But they gain greatly in interest by being thus grouped together, and the student of Roman history may perhaps find in this collection some documents that have escaped his notice amid the scattered literature of epigraphy. Some of the *Senatus-consulta* were first published by me in Part iii. of the *Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum*, and if this Essay had then lain before me it would have saved me much trouble in restoring the texts. The collection might have been greatly enlarged, had the author wished to proceed further than the reign of Tiberius. Imperial letters addressed to the Greek cities are being brought to light in almost every excavation. Some are the merest 'notelets': but Greek servility inscribed them all. At this day however they have a certain value, if only in the chronological data furnished by their headings. Few however are so curious as the document discovered at Acraephiae last year (*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* xii, 1888, p. 510), which gives us a verbatim report of the high-flown address of the Emperor Nero to the Greeks at Corinth, in proclaiming the liberty of Hellas, Nov. 28, A.D. 66.

Our author, after placing the documents before us, proceeds next (pp. 55 foll.) to criticise their language, under the various heads of orthography, inflexions, syntax, vocabulary and style. There is no doubt whatever that these Romano-Greek documents received their Greek dress at Rome, and were transmitted in Greek to the Provinces. In grammar and diction they differ but little from each other, or from the Greek commonly spoken by educated persons in that day. Latinisms, indeed, of idiom abound, but the number of Latin words bodily transferred into the Greek tongue is remarkably small: nearly every Roman official term received at once its official Greek translation. We must remember that it was as essential for a Roman statesman, even under the Republic, to speak Greek as for an English public man to-day to speak French (cp. Livy, xlv, 29); it was usual for Greek envoys to address the Senate in their own tongue. The extant letters of the Roman politicians afford an amusing evidence of the extent of their acquaintance with Greek. Flamininus's Greek style is crude, involved and obscure; his diction is commonplace, like that of Polybius (p. 75), and not free from Latinism and bad grammar. Mark Antony, whom Cicero so unmercifully banters about his rhetorical

studies, affects a verbose and grandiloquent manner, not always strictly grammatical (p. 77). The literary revival of the Augustan age is reflected in the elegant Greek of Augustus's own letters (p. 78): and very curious ones they are, as illustrating Provincial life and government.

In the course of this discussion of points of style, some interesting illustrations occur of the change of meaning which some Greek words underwent in later days: e.g. *ἄνωτέρω* 'before' of time, or 'above' in a book; *καταχωρίζω* 'to put on record in a book'; *φιλάνθρωπος* of kindness generally; *καταλογία*, 'distinction,' 'notice,' 'honour'; etc. These pages (72 foll.) are of value to the student of Hellenistic Greek. I doubt the statement made on p. 56 about the revived observance of the *iota adscriptum* in the Augustan age giving rise to its insertion where it was not wanted. Long before the Augustan age, in purely Greek documents of the time of the Diadochi, such otiose insertion of the *iota* was not unknown: Mr. Roberts agrees with me in reading *ὀρκῶσ[αι]* in line 20 of the Lygdamis inscription. Viereck does well, however, in declining to call forms like *ἀπῆλθοσαν, εἶπασαν* 'Alexandrian,' since they are found equally in other parts of Greece (p. 59).

A separate discussion is reserved (p. 85) for the Greek version of the *Marmor Ancyranum*, which departs so far from ordinary standards of grammar and style, that Nissen believed it to have been made from the Latin by a Gaul of Ancyra. Viereck suggests that the inferior style of this document may readily be accounted for by its length and the great complexity of its contents. These afforded more opportunity for the exhibition of ignorance than the much more simple and formal documents we have hitherto been discussing. He concludes that the Greek of the *Marmor Ancyranum* was drafted by a Roman official in Rome itself, and was transmitted to Galatia, by order of Tiberius upon the request of the people of the province, to be inscribed on the walls of temples dedicated to Caesar-worship.

The examination of so many authentic inscribed documents qualifies the author to proceed yet further, and to discuss the specimens of *Senatusconsulta* and official letters which occur in Polybius, in Josephus and in the Book of Maccabees. Internal evidence satisfies him that Polybius had before him Greek originals of public documents (p. 90). Josephus is convicted of gross carelessness, and something worse, in

his handling of *Senatusconsulta* and official letters borrowed by him from the collections of others. But there is no ground for doubting the substantial accuracy of the documents themselves, which were mostly borrowed from Nicolaus Damascenus, though little trust is to be placed in their headings and the titles assigned to the Roman officials in

them; these are due to the unscrupulous pen of Josephus.

The essay is made the more useful by some good indices. I have noted only one glaring misprint; p. 7, line 11: *templum Veneris Ephesiae*, for *Dianae*.

E. L. HICKS.

PLOIX'S LA NATURE DES DIEUX.

La Nature des Dieux. Par CHARLES PLOIX.
1888. 10 fr.

ONE opens this book, which consists of only 470 pages, with a pleasurable expectation, first because it is written by a Frenchman, and therefore it is not likely to be dull or obscure, and secondly because of the title. The student of the classical religions might hope that he will here find—not one more theory added to the endless number concerning the origins of those religions—but a work which we in England especially need on the actual religious ideas of Greece and Rome in the historic periods. But the whole book is a theory of origins, and its title is an illusion; it is also an astonishing, perhaps an expiring, effort of the familiar school, in which we have all been trained, of philologico-physical mythology. In his preface M. Ploix disclaims style and aspires merely to science. But the book has of course the usual French excellences of style, piquancy of expression and lucidity, while as regards science it reminds us of Mr. Lang's treatise on 'the Gladstone Myth': only M. Ploix means his book to be taken very seriously. It is in fact nothing less than a key to all the polytheistic religions; for what he discovers of the Greeks and the Romans he maintains must be true of the whole human race. Thus at the outset we are startled with the enormous assumption—with the proof of which he does not trouble himself—that 'la marche de l'intelligence humaine a du être partout la même.'

Plurality of causes is excluded at a single stroke. Ancestor-worship, the sense of the Infinite, personification of moral ideas, and other possible explanations, cannot be applied to any religion of any branch of the human race if they are found not to apply to the religion of Greece and Rome. If one could believe this, one would at least save oneself trouble. With this advantage to start with

M. Ploix works out the great single idea with which his book is inspired, namely, that all the Greek and Latin divinities except Zeus are personifications of the twilight. He has at least maintained his originality, for the twilight is the one department of nature that has not been over-run by his fellow-mythologists. We have become very familiar with the apparitions of the sun, the moon, the wind and the lightning, etc., in the forms of Apollo, Dionysos, Hera, Athene, and many others, but Apollo, Demeter, Proserpine, Eros and Ares as dawn-divinities of twilight are novel characters. M. Ploix is very contemptuous of solar theories, and holds some very peculiar views about the sun. He thinks that primitive man paid very little attention to it, and did not regard it as the cause of light, and supposed it was a very slow thing, and that therefore he could not have personified it as a fast-running hero such as Apollo or Hermes. 'Le soleil ne paraît avoir été anthropomorphisé chez les Grecs et les Latins.' This is a strange statement in the face of the worship of Helios at Rhodes and elsewhere, and his very human activity in many Greek legends.

However, though he disregards all solar, lunar or astral explanations, he maintains as an indisputable view that the divinities were personifications of celestial phenomena: in the first place, because Devas and Divi and Zeus contain a root meaning bright: therefore they must be sky-divinities or deities of light. We are familiar with this argument through Professor Max Müller's writings; but modern philologists by no means accept this conclusion. For the same root may be used for the expression of two independent though cognate ideas: of two derivatives from the same root the one may denote a 'bright being,' the other the 'bright sky,' and yet the bright being need not be a personification of the sky. And after all the Greeks did not speak of Divi but *θεοί*, and