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](#)

Note on Homer Hymn Dem. 268

Arthur Platt

The Classical Review / Volume 10 / Issue 09 / December 1896, pp 431 - 432

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00205076, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00205076

How to cite this article:

Arthur Platt (1896). Note on Homer Hymn Dem. 268. The Classical Review, 10, pp 431-432
doi:10.1017/S0009840X00205076

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

NOTES ON VIRGIL, *GEORG.* II. 501-2.

THE explanation of *populi tabularia* quoted by Mr. Ray from Forbiger in the October number of the *Classical Review* rests on a more respectable authority than Forbiger's, being taken verbally by Forbiger from Heyne's commentary. But Mr. Ray does not seem to have noticed that it bears a different sense from that which he attaches to it, and that the sense which he attaches to it does not suit the drift of the passage. 'Happy is the peasant,' Mr. Ray explains the phrase, 'who has not seen the grinding injustice of the tax-farmers.' It is obvious to remark that this was precisely what the peasant did see, and the inhabitant of Rome did not. But Heyne's explanation is something quite different: 'Happy is the peasant who has not dealt in public contracts.' His simple and natural life is contrasted with that of the financier, as, in the words which immediately precede, it was contrasted with that of the lawyer and politician.

This explanation gives Virgil's phrase a rational and appropriate meaning. But whether the words will bear it is a different question. These contracts of the *publicani* were only one sub-division of the mass of public records preserved in the Roman Record Office attached to the Temple of Saturn, and not even the most important sub-division. One of the two notes on the phrase in the Servian commentary is in the following apt and accurate words: '*negotia publica et rationes populi, quae in tabulis scribuntur, unde tabularia dicta.*' So far as the phrase expresses an abstract idea it can hardly be restricted to any more special meaning.

But what is important to grasp—as the *Georgics* are a poem and not a treatise on political economy—is not so much the abstract idea in Virgil's mind as its imaginative embodiment. The mere use of the word *vidit* rather than *novit* indicates that urban life rises inevitably before the poet's mind

in a concrete shape. This imaginative instinct, which must needs think in visible forms, acts in the moulding of Virgil's sentence with accumulating force. The first touch of concrete form is given by the epithet, *ferrea*, attached to the abstract word *iura*. In the next member of the sentence the process goes a step further, and political life is now presented under the visible and tangible symbol of the Roman Forum, the central spot of its action. But at this point the imagination has gathered so much momentum that it will not stop. 'The mad forum,' the flat paved space filled with its seething crowd, is actually present to Virgil's inner eyes; and as part of the same picture, the vast mass of the great Record Office across its upper end, a silent background to the shouting orators and surging mob below.

I follow Mr. Ray in using the word Record Office. But that particular *tabularium* was more than this. For a proper English parallel we must conceive of the Treasury and the Record Office in one building occupying the site of the National Gallery; with Westminster Abbey close behind and above them, the Houses of Parliament and the Law Courts sitting in the Royal College of Physicians or St. Martin's Church, and the general elections for the whole country, speeches and all, going on in Trafalgar Square.

There could hardly be a more complete instance of the organic imagination caught, if one may say so, at work. Curiously enough Ovid, so often an unconscious commentator on Virgil's methods, unites the first and last steps of the Virgilian climax, in a line describing the House of the Fates (*Metam.* xv. 810), *solido rerum tabularia ferro*. The contrast could not be more neatly put between the creative and the mechanical imagination.

J. W. MACKAIL.

NOTE ON HOMER HYMN DEM. 268.

WHEN I see the most brilliant of our younger Homeric scholars proposing *ἀθανάτους θνητοῖσι τ' ὄνειρα καὶ πολὺ χάσμα*, another of the established reputation of Prof. Tyrrell suggesting *ὄνειρα κάσμα τέτυκται*, and

finally Mr. Allen raising no objection to the latter on metrical grounds,¹ I cannot refrain from pointing out that a syllable naturally short cannot be lengthened at the

¹ *Classical Review* for last month, pp. 388, 393.

end of the fourth foot by position,¹ unless it forms a monosyllabic word. There are no doubt a few exceptions in Homer but so few and so doubtful that they afford no support for importing another. Thus in the phrase βῶπις or βῶπι πότνια Ἥρη the ι is certainly long and we should perhaps accent βῶπις ποτνία. At Φ 126 we should read, I now think, μελαίνῃ φρίχ(ι) ὑπαίξει.

¹ Unless of course the consonant or consonants lengthening it are part of the same word.

The rule was observed throughout the whole course of Greek epic verse. Indeed in the late highly polished school of hexameter writers it is still more stringent, for they decline to lengthen even a monosyllable *in thesi* at this part of the verse, at any rate generally speaking.

I believe that the only two exceptions to the Homeric rule in the Hymns are xxxii. 6 and xxxiv. 18, a precious pair of lines.

ARTHUR PLATT.

THE NEW EDITION OF BUSOLT'S *GRIECHISCHE GESCHICHTE*.

G. BUSOLT: *Griechische Geschichte*, Band ii. *Die ältere attische Geschichte und die Perserkriege*. Zweite vermehrte u. völlig umgearbeitete Auflage. 1895. Large 8vo. pp. xviii. 814. 13 Mk.

The second edition of Professor Busolt's chief work is all, and more than all, it professes to be, an enlarged and thoroughly revised version of the first (1885-1888). It is virtually a new and in every way a bigger book. It is also a better book, an observation not necessarily consequent on the preceding. The improvement arises not so much from any change in the author's method, as from the notable additions to our resources which have been made during the last ten years, since the first and second 'Parts,' which have now grown into the first and second 'Volumes' of this *History*, saw the light. From two different quarters Greek history has received large endowments, by the Mykenaeen renaissance—it must still for convenience be called Mykenaeen—and by the discovery of the Aristotelian *Polity of Athens*. These original additions have naturally been attended by a huge and rapid output of treatises and articles, a formidable increment in the bibliography of our subject. It is enough to make less capable or more distracted students well nigh despair to see with what apparent ease Professor Busolt not merely utilises the additions to our original sources, but also digests the masses of accumulating exegesis, down to the last German monograph, before going to press. His exemplary diligence in this respect would make his work indispensable to all students of Greek history, quite apart from the value of his own contribution to the discussion raised by the new material, and by the literature

arising out of it. This growth of materials has led the author not merely to enlarge his volumes, but to re-distribute his chapters and paragraphs, and, indeed, to renumber and to rename them. The effect here is all for the better, and fully bears out the author's prefatory claim to exhibit a more thorough-going analysis of the original sources, and a more convenient synthesis of results than in the first edition. Yet, here I venture to suggest *argumenti causa* that the new first chapter (*Die mykenische epoche* i.² 3-126), useful and interesting as it is in itself, somewhat disturbs the symmetry and even the method observable in the *Handbuch* as a whole. This chapter is in the first place an inventory and description of the material remains of the so-called Mykenaeen period. It is in the second place a survey of the geographical distribution of those remains, and a discussion of the antecedents and origin of the Mykenaeen culture, with results probably not all acceptable, even now, to our leading archaeologists. It is not, and indeed it could not be, a history of the Mykenaeen period; the time is not yet come for that. This first chapter is preceded by three pages on the sources and recent bibliography (*Quellen und Literatur*): but the description of the archaeological evidences is here the description of the real *Quellen*, the most authentic, the most primitive. The second chapter deals with the origin of the historical complex of Greek states (*Die Entstehung der geschichtlichen Staatenwelt*): but the 'Mykenaeen' states are becoming more real than some of their successors: they had their constitutions, their cults, their economy, their politics, as well as their arts, and arms, all which can hardly be relegated permanently to the 'præhistoric' limbo. In truth, Busolt's