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](#)

The New Edition of Reisig's *Vorlesungen* Reisig's *Vorlesungen über Lat. Sprachwissenschaft*, mit den Anmerkungen von F. Haase. Erster Theil: Syntax. Neubearbeitet von J. H. Schmalz und Dr G. Landgraf. Pp. 888. Berlin, 1888.

J. E. Nixon

The Classical Review / Volume 4 / Issue 04 / April 1890, pp 163 - 165
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00190031, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00190031

How to cite this article:

J. E. Nixon (1890). The Classical Review, 4, pp 163-165 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00190031

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

against the pretensions of various towns to the honour of having produced Propertius, or even two pages in proving that *axis* cannot mean 'a hill' (29-30). In Italy this question of the birth-place seems to be one of municipal importance; and a candidate in Spello, Bevagna, Assisi, etc. (see the list in pp. 51 foll.) would have little chance unless he were 'sound' on the birth-place of Propertius. The disproportionate interest which the subject excites is shown by the writer's peroration to the *Studi* (p. 100), which may serve also as a specimen of his style: 'È per vero, senza essere nè uno Champollion, che con la sola iscrizione trilingue (*Pietra di Rosetta*) del *British Museum* arrivò a decifrare i geroglifici egiziani, nè un Cuvier che da un sola ossicino si vantava di ricostruire la forma di tutto un megaterio scomparso, e tanto meno un di quegli savi dell' Egitto che da un sandalo rapito da un' aquila (attenti gli archeologi!) argomentarono, si dice, tutta la bellezza del corpo di Rodope, io credo di aver proprio colto il pensiero del Poeta che, meno forse pel capriccio di lui, che per le bizzarre ipotesi di molti esegeti e commentatori pareva impenetrabilmente ascoso—direbbi l' Alighieri—

Sotto 'l velame degli versi strani.'

Urbini defends the claims of Spello (*Hispellum*) against those of Assisi. His chief arguments may be briefly stated thus. The claims of Assisi must be rejected because it was a place of no note, which does not agree with the *noti Penates* (Prop. iv. 1, 121), a phrase which must refer to a town. Its

position on the side of the hill does not suit *scandentes arces* (*ib.* 65; cf. 125) nor with i. 22, 9 which implies contiguity with Etruria, whereas the inhabitants of Asisium never had a foot of land in the plains of Angeli and Bastia, nor with the reference to Mevania (iv. 1, 125), as the whole territory of Spello lay between Bevagna and Assisi. The *Lacus Vmber* or *Vber* (*ib.* 124) is not the river Clitumnus; but is to be sought round Bastia which was once an island and is called *insula* in eleventh and twelfth century documents (p. 43). To a criticism of Prof. C. Braggio—that there are plenty of islands in Italy where there is no vestige of a lake, it is replied that lakes have disappeared from all parts of Italy without leaving a trace, as Lake Trasimene and three in Umbria itself. The required conditions are satisfied by the Roman colony Hispellum. The MS. reading in iv. 1, 125 '*scandentisque Asis consurgit vertice murus*' is accordingly to be retained, Asis being the present Monte Subasio (originally Asis) on which both Assisi and Spello stand. Urbini adds a bibliographical appendix, which is useful, though by no means complete. According to him the best Italian translation of Propertius is Casella's (opere edite e postume, Firenze, Barbèra, 1864, vol. 2). The French translations he condemns, and, if he is right in thinking the best to be that of De la Roche-Aymon (Quantin, 1885), with justice. Scholars who make a special study of Propertius will find Urbini's book worth purchasing.

J. P. P.

THE NEW EDITION OF REISIG'S *VORLESUNGEN*.

Reisig's Vorlesungen über Lat. Sprachwissenschaft, mit den Anmerkungen von F. HAASE. Erster Theil: Syntax. Neubearbeitet von J. H. SCHMALZ und Dr. G. LANDGRAF. Pp. 888. Berlin, 1888.

To those who are interested in tracing out the Darwinian development of grammatical theories this book ought to be most useful and interesting: but to others with only a limited amount of patience who wish to use it as a practical grammar it may prove misleading and disappointing. The avowed design is to adhere religiously and affectionately to Reisig's original text and Haase's additions, without altering the original character of the book (Haase's

edition came out in 1839). Consequently we have in the main text and in larger print numbers of exploded errors, with condensed *resumés* in smaller type of later views, out of which the student has to pick the most plausible. The carrying out of this plan necessarily involves also frequent repetitions of subject-matter and quotations (cp. pp. 40, 46, 781), adding considerably to the bulk of the volume, which contains 888 pages. The net result is a collection of suggestive materials for forming views on grammar but no sound system worked out in any part; a number of useful rules and observations, but frequently based on childish or fanciful theories. We find e.g. on p. 9, without comment, the venerable rule that the masc. is more

worthy than the fem., and the fem. than the neuter, to account for *Ptolemaeum et Cleopatram venturos*. But in these and other cases, such as are quoted on p. 10, the construction really follows according to the idea most prominent in the speaker's mind; e.g. *uxorem et pecora salvam nuntiavit; loca et nationes minus frequentata; amici et multa praesidia paranda*; differences of gender being merged in the masculine or neuter when the mere plurality of persons or things is thought of.

Similarly we are told on p. 41 that the 1st person is preferred to the 2nd and the 2nd to the 3rd; but in *ego meique vescimur* or *vescor: tu, tui, tua omnia curae sunt*, etc., one and the same rule prevails, that the idea most prominent to the mind at the moment when the verb comes dictates the construction.

Old-fashioned attempts to confine the flexibility of thought by rigid rules such as these, with a view to teaching in a mechanical way, only result in a mechanical unintelligent rote-learning and in a code of arbitrary perplexing *formulae* discredited by the number of exceptions that they necessarily entail.

'Gender' and 'number' are followed by 'pronouns' (100 pp.) and 'adjectives and adverbs' (34 pp.); and these by 'conjunctions and particles' (130 pp.). A short summary of the chapter on negatives must suffice for this part: it will give a fair idea of the general treatment throughout. Reisig (in 2—3 full pages) says: 'negatives are (1) direct or (2) indirect. Direct (1) are A. categorical (*non* and *ne* used) or B. dubitative (*haud* only used). Two negatives in same clause in all languages destroy each other, but not if the clause is virtually distinct or repeated. (2) Indirect negatives are (a) conditional clauses, e.g. *si unquam* or (b) rhetorical questions.' On this subject we have notes almost double in length: esp. on *haud*, e.g. Hand makes *haud* 'modal,' 'nearly = μή,' 'stronger than *non*': Stürenburg makes it 'a weaker negative' and 'dubitative,' 'derived from a privative and Lat. *ut*!' Haase makes it neither, but varying with what it negatives, and 'subjunctive': others make it a courteous negative (= οὐκ ἄν). 'As subjunctive, it negatives words and not clauses: so is never used with infinitive, conditionals, &c.' The notes also contain references to some thirty treatises, besides Latin quotations. The subject will not seem to readers of Draeger or Kühner either practically or exhaustively treated.

Some amusing derivations come in this part, pp. 187, 281, 300, e.g. Corssen's deriva-

tion of *haud* [h(='this')-au(='not')-d or t='that']; *donec, donicum*=*dum ne cum*, Reisig [Corssen *dio* (time), *ni, cum*: Ribbeck *do-neque-cum*]; '*num* from μὴν reversed' R. and Voss—and this in spite of the form *etiamnum*, and the analogy of the Greek *vuv* temporal and *vuv* enclitic! However the strangest notions were and are still entertained about interrogatives, based on the almost inconceivable theory that some one at some time invented words to express mere interrogation, instead of the fact that they used weakened temporal or negative or inferential particles, to introduce interrogative as well as other clauses, when they thought fit, the idea of interrogation being given originally not by the particle but by the tone of voice.

The moods and tenses take about 70 pp. of general and 120 pp. of special explanations. Here too there is much waste of time to both writer and reader in expounding and establishing at great length theories that are exploded with a few short remarks at the end of a long note. The moods are treated on the logical basis of Kant, followed by Hermann, that modality has three forms—*actuality, possibility, necessity*. The tense-origin and temporal meaning of the moods is practically ignored. A few specimens of details in this part must suffice: e.g. (i) (pp. 390 sqq.) '*antequam* and *prius quam* are followed by subj. if main clause is negative, otherwise by indicative'; 'in *antequam dicam*...*exponam, dicam* is future indic.'! (ii) consecutive clauses are (i) ideal (i.e. final) or (ii) 'real'; the subjunctive with the real result is explained as due to the fact that only when viewed from the stand-point of the present (not from that of cause) can an occurrence appear real. *Ut* with verbs=how is used to describe something; hence *id erat tempus ut frumentum haberent*; so *addit, accedit, verisimile est ut*...In '*tantum abest ut*...*ut*...the first *ut* "describes" viz. the point of distance, the second the degree of distance.' By starting with a confusion of final and consecutive (which are distinct, though often combined, ideas), R. fails to see that the first *ut* is strictly final (though it serves as a subject to *abest*): the second is consecutive, defining *tantum*.

But the most unsatisfactory results of the plan adopted may be seen in the treatment of the cases of the noun, pp. 507–688, where we find it stated in the main text that (i) the nominative [not the accusative] is the case which expresses simply the bare idea of the noun, pp. 512, 514; (ii) the case forms generally (p. 508) express ideal relations

(esp. e.g. predicate and object); (iii) the accusative expresses general relation; (iv) the genitive is that 'woran ein Objekt sich als Prädikat befindet'; (v) the ablative that 'woher eine Wirkung kommt.' In accordance with these principles, and by way of illustration, we have ἀκίῃ ἔσαν explained as = 'they stood in a certain relation to silence.' [The use of the accusative only in Greek with verbs of seeing, not the genitive also as with other *verba sentiendi*, is amusingly explained as due to the freedom of sight, because one can shut one's eyes, but one cannot shut one's ears, nose, etc., p. 515.] The handling of the accusative however is happily free from the taint of the local theory; and difficult questions, like the use of prepositions after verbs of motion with names of countries and not with names of towns, are treated fairly and suggestively (though fancifully, e.g. the omission of prepositions with towns is said to be due to the curtness and precision of Romans in fixing the daily limits of military marches, as they would do in the case of towns not countries). But the treatment of the other cases is much more startling.

Of the dative we read, p. 539, that before the ablative was invented the dative, as in Greek, was used in an ablative sense, e.g. *sum ruri*: so *Tiburi*, *Anxuri*, *Karthagini*. Cf. also p. 265. On this principle the dative in *occumbere morti* is explained as instrumental; in *dependent lateri*, as local.

The primary meaning of the genitive being with convenient vagueness defined as that about which anything is predicated, we find that *dives opum*, *dubius animi*, *dignus est huius rei*, etc., are all readily and indiscriminately to be referred to this central idea. *Refert* and *interest* (p. 559) with genitives of persons offered more difficulty (it is hard to see why on this theory); but these too are eventually so classed.

On pp. 570—1 we are told to consider the genitive as partitive not only after *memini*, *potior*, *adipiscor*, but after *aestimare*, *facere*, *pendere*, etc., and in *aequi*, *boni consulere*, *magni interest*, etc.; so *parvi ducere* = 'to hold for a part of what is small': *unius assis aestimare*, to reckon as worth only a part of one *as*! On page 576 we find a genitive of 'cause' and 'means' set up: to this head are referred *damnare*, *accusare furti*, etc.: 'the crime is the cause of condemnation etc.; hence the genitive.' But 'the genitive after *emere*, *vendere*, etc., is the "means." In *voti damnatus* however *voti* is the cause = 'because you have wished' p. 582. On p. 589 we find a genitive of time

set up on the support of *crastini die*, *postridie*, etc., a *castris aberam bidui*!

The secondary meanings of the ablative are boldly derived from a supposed primary one of source of action; e.g. the ablative of place (*Athenis habitat*) is a 'cause,' for 'were there no Athens a man could not live there'; so with time, if a thing happens in a certain year it is *through* this year, by its completion, that the result is reached! p. 520. So too in *Balbus doctior Caio* we are to see an ablative of cause, i.e. Balbus is more learned through Caius (being unlearned) and *vixit annis xxx* means he completed his life by the completion of thirty years; and in *quatriduo quo haec gesta sunt* we are to see also an ablative of 'means' to mark the time or the distance of time.

It is hard to see what is gained either in the way of doing honour to a distinguished scholar or in the way of practical utility by reprinting such views, unless indeed it be to show as a warning how easily the most distinguished scholars can be led on into absurdities in support of some pet and plausible conjectures or theories, through which they see grammatical facts coloured so that the theoretically possible becomes a practical certainty. Of course these errors are generally corrected in the notes, or rather supplemented by later errors of others, and these in turn by the latest views; but in the absence of paragraphs it is not easy to eliminate from a long continuous note the right view or to distinguish readily which are the views of Haase and others and which those of the editors; and the process of passing through the various stages of belief, only to find one plausible creed after another upset, may be good mental exercise, but may also lead to a graceless state of absolute scepticism about all grammar.

However it must be admitted that the principle adopted, though carried to excess, is infinitely preferable to the arbitrary dogmatism of older grammarians. We can learn even from errors; and it is easier to distinguish between right and wrong views by contrasting them. The notes and their copious references to grammatical treatises are very valuable. Reisig himself, though repeatedly if not generally wrong, is original and suggestive, and, considering the time when he wrote, far more sound and sensible than might have been expected.

There are many interesting points that deserve fuller and more special notice, but these must be reserved for another article.

J. E. NIXON.