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](#)

Rostagni's *Ibis Ibis*. A. Rostagni (Contributi alla Scienza dell' Antichità, Vol. III.). One vol. 4to. Pp. 123. Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1920. Lire 12.

A. E. Housman

The Classical Review / Volume 35 / Issue 3-4 / May 1921, pp 67 - 68

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00014700, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00014700

How to cite this article:

A. E. Housman (1921). The Classical Review, 35, pp 67-68 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00014700

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

(=homo) are collected. The sense is 'like mere human beings.'

J. P. POSTGATE.

December, 1920.

VARRO'S *QUAESTIONUM PLAUTINARUM*, LIBRI V.

IN the last book on Roman literature, the excellent new edition of Teuffel's *Römische Literatur*, it is assumed (p. 335) that Varro's *Quaestiones* dealt with vocabulary ('wohl zur Erklärung einzelner dunkler Ausdrücke'). But we have express testimony that they dealt with the incidents of Plautus' life.

The *Liber Glossarum*, which has preserved for us the true reading of Catullus 39, 11 (C.R. XXXIII. 105), has a gloss (printed on p. 234 of *Corp. Gloss. Lat.*, Vol. V.):

Plautinarum: Plauti auctoris re<s> gestas.

Mr. Thomson is showing us (in *Class. Quart.* XIV. 87 and elsewhere) that one source of the *Liber Glossarum* was the full, unreduced *Abstrusa Glossary*, and that the chief source of the *Abstrusa Glossary* was a 'variorum' commentary on Virgil which retained much of Donatus' scholia. That this gloss preserves for us the lore of Donatus is quite probable. Servius, who followed in Donatus' footsteps, discusses in the preface to the commentary on the *Aeneid* (p. 4, line 15 of Thilo's edition) the number of Plautus' plays: 'nam Plautum alii dicunt unam et viginti fabulas scripsisse, alii quadraginta, alii centum.'

W. M. LINDSAY.

St. Andrews.

REVIEWS

ROSTAGNI'S *IBIS*.

Ibis. A. ROSTAGNI (Contributi alla Scienza dell' Antichità, Vol. III.). One vol. 4to. Pp. 123. Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1920. Lire 12.

IT is said by Ovid in *Ib.* 55 and by Suidas s.u. *Καλλίμαχος* that Callimachus wrote a poem against an enemy of his, one *Ἴβις*. Mr Rostagni contends that they were wrong. There existed a poem of that name and nature, but its author was not Callimachus. This he proves as follows.

He begins by assuming that Ovid's *Ibis* is substantially a translation of the Greek *Ἴβις*. Now not only is there no support for this assumption in Ovid or anywhere else, but there is one couplet of the *Ibis*, 449 sq., which conflicts with it. That couplet therefore Mr Rostagni declares to be interpolated, alleging further that it contradicts Suidas. It does not necessarily contradict him at all, but what if it did? must nobody contradict Suidas except Mr Rostagni? And why not rather declare the sentence in Suidas to be interpolated, on the ground that it contradicts Ovid?

He then remarks that the *Ibis* contains in 299 sq. a reference to an event of the year 213 B.C., too late for Callimachus, and that it contains no reference to any event of later date: the author of the *Ἴβις* therefore belonged to the first part of the second century. But the *Ibis* contains in 631 sq. a reference to the ninth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which is too late not only for Callimachus but for Mr Rostagni's pseudo-Callimachus. Ovid himself must have inserted it; and even if the *Ibis* is a copy of the *Ἴβις*, why cannot Ovid have inserted also the reference to Achaëus in 299 sq.? Because it is Greek, says Mr Rostagni, who tacitly assumes that the *Ἴβις* was the only Greek book which Ovid had ever read. For instance, many of the stories to which Ovid in his *Ibis* makes allusion are known to have been told by Callimachus in his *αἴτια*, a work which might be perused, one would think, by the author of the *fasti*; but Mr Rostagni will not allow the *αἴτια* to be Ovid's source for these stories: they must have been in the *Ἴβις* too, and

that is how Ovid came to know of them.

It is thus demonstrated, by assumption piled on assumption, that Callimachus wrote no *Iβis*. But Mr Rostagni will also investigate the personality of Ovid's enemy. He says that Ovid did not know who he was. But Ovid knew his birthplace. Oh, he took that from the *Iβis*. But Ovid also knew his birthday, which he could not take from the *Iβis*, for it is a date in the Roman calendar. Oh, he made that up out of his own head. Cannot Mr Rostagni see that if Ovid specified the birthday and birthplace of an enemy whose very identity was unknown to him he was ensuring that his invective and execrations should miss their mark? Unless this real and unknown person was actually born in Libya on the dies Alliensis, which would be a miracle, the *Ibis* does not apply to him; and Ovid may curse till he is black in the face without doing him the slightest injury in this world or the next. And where did Mr Rostagni pick up his extraordinary notion? He says that *Ibis* is the person spoken of in *trist.* I 6 7-16 as defeated by Ovid's wife and friends in an attempt to lay hands on some of his property. Then Ovid must have known who he was: if his wife was such a Mrs Nickleby that she omitted the enemy's name in relating his actions, Ovid would have written to ask for it; he would not have sat down in easily remediable ignorance to pen 600 lines of verse and discharge them at the circle of the horizon. But in *trist.* I 6 13 he contemptuously calls this person *nescioquis*, an insignificant creature; and that has done the mischief: Mr Rostagni takes this word to mean that Ovid really did not know whom he was talking about. His Latin scholarship indeed is not of the best: in the verse 'siue idem simili pinus quem morte peremit' he construes *idem* with *pinus* and translates 'il medesimo albero'.

Mr Rostagni has also much to say upon the scholia of Ovid's *Ibis*. These often offer us explanations which we know to be figments, because we understand Ovid's allusions, which the

scholiasts did not. But wherever we do not understand his allusions Mr Rostagni is prepared to believe that the scholiasts did, and listens with eager credulity to convicted liars. More yet. These scholiasts, except the most respectable of them, the scholiast of the cod. Phillippicus, enrich their notes with Latin elegiacs and hexameters, redolent of the middle ages, which they ascribe to persons whose names they found in Ovid and Fulgentius; not merely to Roman poets like Tibullus and Propertius and Gallus but to Greek poets like Arion and Callimachus and to mere vocables like Lupercus and Menephron. Mr Rostagni will have it that these concoctions, many of them made out of Ovid's own words, are translations of Greek verses preserved in Greek scholia on the *Iβis*. Greek verses of Tibullus and Propertius and Gallus? Well, not exactly; but *Gallus* is a corruption of *Callimachus* (as also are *Darius* and *Clarus* and *Calixto* and *Calmethes* and even *Promptius*), and *Tibullus* and *Propertius* are corruptions of the names of other Greek poets whom Mr Rostagni has not yet decided to identify. There is a certain *Battus* (*Batus*, *Bacus*, *Bachus*, *Bacchus*) to whom Latin verses are imputed at 259 and 299; and for Mr Rostagni he is Callimachus again, *Battiades*. In truth he is nothing of the sort: he recurs in a similar imposture, *L. Caecilii Minutiani Apuleii de orthographia* § 43, as '*Battus* iambicus poeta Ouidii contubernalis', and his birthplace is Ouid. *trist.* IV 10 47, where the MSS present 'Ponticus heroo, *Battus* (*Batus*, *Bacus*, *Bachus*, *Bacchus*) quoque clarus iambis', and editors read *Bassus* with Scaliger.

Worse argument and vainer conclusions than make up the staple of this treatise are not often met with; but the pains which Mr Rostagni has wasted on it are considerable, and so is his knowledge of recent literature relevant to the subject. One would think however that at pp. 56-8 he must have quoted *Oxyrh. pap.* 1011, published in 1910, if he had ever read it.

A. E. HOUSMAN.