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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Appendix Probi IV by Fabio Stok

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*Appendix Probi IV*, a cura di FABIO STOK. Napoli, Arte Tipografica, 1997. 215 pp. Pr. L 30.000.

The so called *Appendix Probi* is probably best known to latinists for its catalogue of 'rights' and 'wrongs' in Latin orthography and diction. But most of the work is relatively unknown and has remained without a new edition since Keil (1864). The fourth book of the Appendix, dealing with *differentiae verborum*, has now been given a separate, critical edition by Fabio Stok (S). The Latin text contains 75 brief descriptions of the different meanings of two words that might in some way be confused. Most of these *differentiae* concern words that are homophonous or alike in sound; the first three cases, for example, involve *austrum/ostrum*, *hos/os* and *labat/lavat*. A small group of cases concerns words belonging to the same semantic fields, e.g. *lascivus/petulantus/temulentus* (AP IV,8). All descriptions have the same standard form and average length, e.g. *Inter laetum et letum hoc interest, quod laetum gaudentem significat, letum vero mortuum esse demonstrat* (AP IV,5).

S. presents a Latin text (9 p.), preceded by a long introduction (81 p.) and followed by ample commentary (91 p.) and indexes (16 p.). The introduction deals with various problems: the Appendix Probi as such (S. opts for a date in the middle of the fifth century; p. 24); the tradition of *differentiae*; the sources of AP IV; the characteristics of the text; its links with other collections of *differentiae*; and the manuscript tradition and text.

The commentary is learned and does not make easy reading. It contains many numbers, abbreviations, textual parallels and other references for every problem discussed by the Latin grammarian, but offers little immediate help for the average reader. Regrettably, one is often left with important questions that are not even touched upon. For instance, AP IV,8 describes a *lascivus* as a *satullus*, a very rare word that is left unexplained by S. (although he adds 8 full lines of references for it; p. 106); one wonders why the Latin grammarian chose an obscure word to explain a normal one. AP IV,10 discusses the difference between *ostentum*, *monstrum*, *prodigium*, and *portentum*, but S. does not even raise the question why such terms required an explanation in the first place. In AP IV,14, S. duly notices that some grammarians reject the use of *orbis* in the sense 'blind' (rather than 'bereft of children'), but he does not ask the obvious question why they did so.

These few examples may suffice to indicate that S. addresses an audience of specialists only. He does so in a thorough and accurate way, and his new edition of AP IV will no doubt be useful to those working in the field of Late Latin semantics.

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