

CAPER: *DNP* 4.547; *OCD*² p 202; *RE* 3/2.1506–08; Schanz-Hosius 3.163–64 (§599).

Flavius Caper was a minor Roman grammarian who flourished in the second century, although nothing is known of his life. He wrote two grammatical treatises entitled *De latinitate* and *De dubiis generibus* which are both now lost, although they are cited approvingly by **PRISCIAN**, the most influential of late-antique grammarians. To the Middle Ages Caper is known only through two grammatical treatises entitled *De orthographia* and *De uerbis dubiis*, which are both universally attributed to Caper, even though they are probably not in fact by him, but rather anonymous compilations based on Caper's genuine (lost) grammatical treatises, with additions by other unknown authors. (Since modern scholarship consistently refers to these texts as works by Caper, even though he is only a probable source and not their actual author, that usage is perpetuated here.) Of these, only the *De orthographia* seems to have been known in Anglo-Saxon England.

De orthographia [CAP.Orthogr.].

ed.: Keil, *GL* 7.92–112.

MSS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 221, fols 25–64: HG 69.5.

Lists – A-S Vers none.

Quots/Cits 1. ALCVIN.Orthogr. (see below).

2. BEDA.Orthogr. (see below).

Refs none.

Two Anglo-Saxon authors knew Caper's *De orthographia*. The first is **BEDE**, who in his own **DE ORTHOGRAPHIA** culls material from the work of the same title attributed to Caper. In an alphabetically ordered presentation, Bede gives the correct spellings of various words and shows how they are spelled in oblique singular cases or in the nominative plural. He draws examples from many sources, usually without attribution. Under words beginning with *A*, for example, Bede has an entry that reads: “Audacter latinum est sed audaciter melius, quia nomina in x littera terminate in adverbii iter adsumunt, ut atrox atrociter, ferox ferociter” (*CCSL* 123A.11 lines 112–13), which is taken directly from Caper's *De orthographia* (*GL* 7.196 lines 19–20). Similar borrowings appear throughout Bede's work.

The only other Anglo-Saxon author who demonstrates knowledge of Caper's *De orthographia* is **ALCUIN**, who twice quotes from this work in his own **DE ORTHOGRAPHIA** (ed. Bruni 1997 p 22 line 253 and p 26 line 316; cf. Marsili 1952 p 14). The first instance is taken from Caper's statement: “Narro et narratio, per duo r querela loquela per unum l” (*GL* 7.96 line 7). The second is: “Protenus per e adverbium locale est, id est porro tenus, ut ‘cum protenus utraque tellus Vna foret.’ protinus per i adverbium temporale est, id est statim, ut protinus Aeneas celeri certare sagitta” (*GL* 7.100 line 5). Alcuin wrote his work on the continent at Tours probably between 796 and 800 (*CSLMA* 2.142; Bruni 1997 p ix), so it is likely that he knew Caper in a continental manuscript or manuscripts rather than Insular Anglo-Saxon ones.

One manuscript containing Caper's *De orthographia* survives from Anglo-Saxon England: CCCC 221 Part II (fols 25–64) was written in England or on the Continent in the late ninth or early tenth century and was in England by the late tenth century. The manuscript contains **CASSIODORUS**'s **DE ORTHOGRAPHIA** (fols 25r–48v), Caper's *De orthographia* (fols 49r–59v), and **AGROECIUS OF SENS**'s **ARS DE ORTHOGRAPHIA** (fols 59v–64v). Budny (1997 1.207) observes that the script of this manuscript “contains a few Insular features in letter-forms and abbreviations, but they might derive from the exemplar,” and she notes that the Caper text is glossed by an Anglo-Saxon scribe using an Anglo-Caroline script.

Keil's is the only edition. There is no critical discussion of Caper's influence on Bede or Alcuin.

Works Cited

Bruni, Sandra, ed. 1997. *Alcuino: De orthographia*. Millennio Medievale 2, Testi 2. Florence.

Budny, Mildred. 1997. *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue*. 2 vols. Kalamazoo.

Marsili, Aldo, ed. 1952. *Alcuini Orthographia*. Pisa.