POETS' LATIN

J. N. Adams, R. G. Mayer (edd.): *Aspects of the Language of Latin Poetry*. Pp. viii + 447. Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 1999. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-19-726178-7.

This volume represents the proceedings of a symposium sponsored by The British Academy in April 1995. The thirteen papers published here—one of the original participants elected to withhold his contribution—are preceded by a brief introduction by the editors, exemplary in its concision and acuity in dealing with a notoriously intractable topic—how the language poets use differs from other forms of communication. The editors have grouped the essays under four broad themes: 'Word Order', 'Greek Influence and Technical Vocabularies', 'Syntax', and 'Stylistic and Generic Variation', with one essay by R. G. G. Coleman providing a general survey of the subject. In their introduction, J. N. Adams and R. G. Mayer describe a framework for discussing some of the distinctive aspects of Latin poetic language, with specific reference to the essays that follow. Discussions of poetic language often tend to focus on diction and morphology, usually to the exclusion of syntax—a serious mistake, since 'there are no bad words or good words, there are only words in bad or good places' (Nowottny). That mistake is avoided in this volume. A. & M. isolate eight themes that recur in the following essays (pp. 3–18)—'neutral' terms, 'prosaic' terms, 'formal' speech, colloquialism, archaism, Grecism, metaphor, and word order—only the first three of which are primarily concerned with lexis.

R. G. G. Coleman's opening essay on 'Poetic Diction, Poetic Discourse and the Poetic Register' is the widest-ranging piece in the volume, resuming in greater detail many of the themes adumbrated by A. & M. in their general introduction. C.'s essay is a splendid survey, certainly one to be recommended to advanced students. The next two papers deal with poetic word ordering in very different ways. J. N. Adams on 'Nominative Personal Pronouns' is a meticulous analysis of the use of *ego* and *tu* to highlight emphatic terms in speech. The conclusions drawn by A. are used, in turn, to illustrate how poets can create different emphases by drawing on patterns that were commonplace in speech. The discussion of Cat. 16.1 (p. 110) is a particularly good example of how such analysis can elucidate a poet's tone. R. G. M. Nisbet on 'The Word Order of Horace's *Odes*' is in a different vein, depending less on cumulative analyses of observed phenomena than on cumulative experience of reading. N.'s observations are, as always, illuminating.

R. G. Mayer's entry on 'Grecism' is the first of three papers on technical vocabularies. His examination of how readers of Latin poetry in antiquity understood the phenomenon is exemplary, as is his application to practical categories. D. R. Langslow studies 'The Language of Poetry and the Language of Science' from the particular vantage point of 'medical Latin'. Conspicuous by its absence, therefore, in this otherwise excellent study is the word *medicina*, on Propertius' use of which Hermann Tränkle and David Ross have made important observations. But the discussion of Lucan (pp. 193–4) is an excellent illustration of the fruits to be harvested from this approach. L. also has very sensible observations on the value of literary texts in reconstructing technical language. David Sedley's contribution on 'Lucretius' Use and Avoidance of Greek' has more modest aims in distinguishing between Lucretius' seemingly antithetical practices of substituting metaphor and imagery for Greek technical terminology, while nevertheless importing Greek loan-words. His discussion (pp. 239ff.) of how Lucretius thereby creates Greek 'color' is particularly instructive.

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Two articles focus specifically on poetic syntax. In the first, J. H. W. Penney investigates an array of syntactical phenomena classified as 'archaic' that have been integrated into the poetic language. P. demonstrates that such identifications are precarious, that in fact what may appear to be a construction deployed for its archaizing effect has lost those associations and is felt only as a poeticism. One telling example is drawn from word order in prepositional phrases. Woldemar Görler's contribution is more limited in scope, dealing with one type of syntactical oddity, shifting objects.

Five papers on individual authors and genres round out the collection. Hubert Petersmann makes good use of limited evidence to tease out interesting conclusions about the linguistic registers of Ennian and Lucilian satire. His paper is particularly convincing on Ennius' parody of the high style (pp. 303–4) and the colloquial aspects of Lucilius, though perhaps not all will be won over to his conclusion that Lucilius is 'one of the greatest artists of the Latin language' (p. 309). In 'Stylistic Registers in Juvenal', J. G. F. Powell launches a largely successful attack on the consensus among scholars, 'advocates of altitude' as he calls them (p. 319), that Juvenal affected a 'high' style. P. advocates a more skeptical reading of programmatic passages, such as 6.641ff. In many respects, P.'s paper is a model of the productive use to which Axelson's much abused *Unpoetische Wörter* (Lund, 1945) may still be put, and one might hope that his trenchant comments about contemporary critical approaches will be read to salubrious effect. 'The Arrangement and Language of Catullus' so-called *polymetra*' exhibits all the hallmarks of a paper by H. D. Jocelyn—meticulous attention to philological detail, pointed polemic, and original argument. J. aims to show that the first sixty-one items in the Catullan corpus show signs of having been compiled in their present order, whether by the poet or, as seems more likely to J., by a scholarly editor. J. argues that these poems do not constitute a stylistic unity, as has often been asserted, that in fact the lyric items distinguish themselves markedly from the Phalaecian epigrams and the iambics. J. further argues that these distinctions are highlighted in the arrangement of the collection, a hypothesis which he tests in an analysis of the sequence 10–11–12.

Robert Maltby's contribution on 'Tibullus and the Language of Latin Elegy' is somewhat out of character with the other papers in this section, since it attempts a broader assessment of the linguistic characteristics of the genre. M.'s brief and for the most part tralaticious surveys of topics such as postponed particles, compound adjectives, and diminutives demonstrate some of the hazards of generalizing about poetic language. The final paper, by E. J. Kenney, is another case study. 'Vt erat novator: Anomaly, Innovation and Genre in Ovid, *Heroides* 16–21' examines alleged stylistic anomalies in the double *Heroides* that have been adduced as evidence to dispute the attribution of these poems to Ovid. This is an important contribution to the continuing debate over the authorship of these poems by the most persuasive advocate of Ovidian authorship. K.'s contribution caps an outstanding collection of essays, a welcome resource for students and a store of information for critics and commentators.

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