DIOSCORIDES' EPIGRAMS

G. G. VIOQUE: *Dioscórides:* Epigramas. Pp. 438. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2001. Paper. ISBN: 84-95089-59-9.

'One is struck above all by the variety of his work and the novelty of much of it.' So P. M. Fraser (*Ptolemaic Alexandria* [Oxford, 1972], i.606) concludes a survey (pp. 595–607) that highlights D.'s range—cool, often obscene, homo- and hetero-sexual love poems, touching funerary pieces, highly original literary and theatrical themes. D. favours different categories from Callimachus and Asclepiades and appears to represent 'the extreme Classic school in Alexandria' (*ibid.*, p. 601), opposed to new trends (Euripides is missing among his Attic dramatists), while his funerary poems indicate awareness of the hard life in the country outside Alexandria. The sensuous and abusive love-poems break new ground and proved influential.

V. now for the first time gives D. the attention he clearly deserves, with almost 300 pages of philological commentary on forty-one epigrams. A brief introduction (life, work, themes, style and language, metre and prosody, transmission) is followed by a new edition, with Spanish translation. The commentary tabulates earlier discussions and details literary pedigree and imitations. Four valuable indices are provided, although under Passages Cited, the *Anthology* section might helpfully have been arranged by author.

V. is conservative on authenticity, admitting even the undistinguished distich on Myron's cow (9.734), attributed in the manuscripts to Διόκριδο (Διοκρίδος, V.) and omitted by Gow-Page (*Hellenistic Epigrams* [Cambridge, 1965], ii.236). Fraser doubted whether 7.178, ascribed to Dioscorides of Nicopolis could be by our poet, since 'no known Nicopolis is pre-Roman' (op. cit., ii.844–5), and queried the authenticity of 5.54–6 because their lush compound adjectives anticipate Meleager and Nonnian poetry (i.598)—but that is surely compatible with D.'s general innovation (so V., pp. 21–2).

The literary/funerary poems include imaginary epitaphs on poets, archaic, Attic and contemporary (7.708 on Machon, independently transmitted by Athenaeus and there said to have been inscribed on Machon's tomb, gives a *terminus post* for D.), several on Spartan warriors, and the group on settlers in the Egyptian countryside: in 7.162 a Persian slave begs his master to respect his Zoroastrian religion (cf. V., p. 18 on D.'s interest in religious rites). V. (p. 26) departs significantly from Fraser and Gow-Page in interpreting all these, including the Machon poem, as literary fictions, arguing that *Anthology* epigrams from this period are seldom genuine inscriptions (p. 294).

This major work on Dioscorides is not convenient to use, since V. introduces a new arrangement different from both the *Anthology* order and Gow-Page. The commentary is sumptuous indeed, but no fresh evaluation of the corpus is attempted, although the detailed study of metre and prosody (pp. 30–4) will facilitate comparison of D.'s practice with that of his earlier contemporaries: V. notes flexibility in application of rules for the hexameter. The new manuscript collation makes for an enhanced apparatus but no fresh readings or emendations. There are a few textual changes from Gow-Page, often replacing a crux with an existing emendation, e.g. 5.138.3; 5.53.4; 5.193.4; 6.220.10 (a puzzling choice, cf. Gow-Page ad loc.); 6.290.4; 7.178.3 (return to the MSS); 7.229.1; 7.484.3; 7.485.5; 9.340.5f.; 12.171.3. I noted several misprints.

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