

Susanna de Beer, Karl A. E. Enenkel, and David Rijser, eds. *The Neo-Latin Epigram: A Learned and Witty Genre*.

Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia 25. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009. vi + 350 pp. index. append. illus. bibl. €59.50. ISBN: 978-90-5867-745-7.

The Neo-Latin epigram was a favorite genre with humanist poets, in which they were expected to demonstrate their talents. It was a very protean form, used *inter alia* for satire, eulogy, epitaphs, love poetry, and *ekphraseis*. Wit and understatement, according to Enenkel, were essential ingredients. In love poetry the chief models were the Greek Anthology and Catullus, in satire Martial. Enenkel is justly critical of a general definition of the epigram given by Peter Hess in his book *Epigramm* (1989) as a poem in which current and dominating values or ideas are criticized or violated. This is surely to narrowly circumscribe this wide-ranging genre. He favors the more open-minded views expressed by Julius Caesar Scaliger in the chapter on epigrams in his *Poetices libri septem*.

Stephan Busch examines two collections of epigrams, the so-called *Epigrammata Bobiensia* of the fourth century CE and the *Epigrammata Salmasiana* from around the sixth century CE. The first he considers to be a good example of the role epigram played in Roman literary society; the other is a compilation of epigrams from the classical period and lesser-known later authors. The next essay, by Marc Lauxtermann, is a more substantial piece about Janus Lascaris, a Greek exile whose fame rests chiefly on his editio princeps of Planudes' Greek Anthology, published in Florence in 1494. The author provides a very good summary of the manuscript tradition and structure of the work. Jan Bloemendal delivers Vossius's *Poeticae institutiones* (1647) from the aspersions cast upon it by Coleridge. Donatella Coppini, editor of Panormita's *Hermaphroditus*, writes an elegant and discerning essay on the place of that work in the epigram tradition and offers a bonus in the form of a little known group of salacious ditties of Panormita called the *Edicta hostiaria*. David Rijser, one of the editors of the volume, spins a fascinating tale around the famous epigram on Raphael's grave in the Pantheon, involving some of the chief literary figures of the day — Bembo, Castiglione, Tebaldeo, Ariosto. He also unearths various other arcane connections that help to explain this High Renaissance epigram, which Rijser sees as the hinge that connects antiquity with modernity in Rome.

Susanne de Beer illustrates Giannantonio Campana's theories of epigrams with samples of his own compositions directed to various popes and cardinals, in which the poet was careful to accommodate the force and wit of the *pointe* to the individual personages addressed. Christopher Pieper briefly expounds the theories of Hans

Robert Jauss as they pertain to the epigram, and takes as his subject the differences between the first and second versions of Landino's *Xandra*. There are two essays on the epigrams of Marullus, the first on his imitations of Catullus and the second on his imitations of poems from the Greek Anthology. With his 199 published epigrams he is surely to be accounted as an important representative of the genre.

Another essay considers the epigrams of Aurelio Orsi contained in a collection called *La Caprarola*, dedicated to the Farnese family. The greater part of the poems are *ekphraseis* describing the art treasures of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome. Of added interest in this essay are the Italian imitations of Orsini's epigrams included by the baroque poet Giambattista Marino in his *La Galeria*. I can only list the topics of the remaining essays without wishing in any way to detract from their merits: didactic epigrams for the instruction of children by Joannes Murmellius; the baroque epigrams of the Welshman, John Owen, and the little known Belgian poet Julie Waudré; the translation of the entire Planudes Anthology into Latin by Hugo Grotius.

The volume concludes with a genial essay by Ingrid Rowland on Angelo Colocci's collection of epigrams, emphasizing his contribution to our knowledge of metrics in medieval and humanist poetry. It is admittedly a difficult task to pin down the essence of the epigram, but these essays provide good insights into its elusive character.

CHARLES FANTAZZI
East Carolina University