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Review
Reviewed Work(s): Martial, Book XIV the Apophoreta by T. J. Leary
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Martial, Book XIV The Apophoreta, text with introduction and commentary by T.J. LEARY. London, Duckworth, 1996. XIII, 306 pp. Pr. £ 45,– (hb).

Among the fifteen extant books of verse by Martial, some have been rather neglected by classical scholars. In particular, the numerous two-line epigrams of Martial's early works *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, later numbered as "books XIII and XIV", have only rarely been seriously examined in studies on the Roman epigrammatist. They are, however, worthy of attention, if only because of their importance for Martial's later oeuvre and the general development in the genre of the epigram. Moreover, as the new commentary on the *Apophoreta* by T.J. Leary shows, they also make very interesting reading and allow for some literary analysis.

The 223 epigrams of "book XIV" are meant as accompaniments to various Saturnalia gifts. Since each poem deals with a specific, material object, the collection as a whole enables us to see glimpses of Roman daily life. Between the lines, we are also given socially relevant information on the sort of presents Romans were expected to give each other. The epigrams have clearly been deliberately arranged in a certain way. The book opens with a cluster of epigrams on writing materials, games, and objects for personal care (1-29), and it further presents groups of poems on e.g. lighting equipment (39-44), pet birds (73-76), fabric and clothing (124-158), works of art (170-182), literary works (183-196) and, perhaps most shockingly, what we may call "human objects", that is: slaves (201-223). In addition to this thematic composition, Martial has arranged the epigrams in such a way as to get a regular alternation of "Rich Man's" and "Poor Man's" gifts. The last section on slaves perhaps best illustrates this: between epigrams on various slaves we find epigrams on cheap objects connected to slaves, such as cymbals, a small shield, a fibula, or a roasting stand. This double structure gives Martial's book enough variation and surprising effects to charm an ancient or modern reader.

The latter may now use Leary's excellent commentary to learn virtually all he has to know to understand and appreciate the poems. After the introduction (28 pages) and the Latin text, each epigram is given full treatment (mostly one page or more), starting with a prose translation. Textual, linguistic, or literary matters, jokes and riddles, *realia*, ambiguities and obscenities: everything is carefully discussed and clearly presented.

Leary's interpretations and conclusions are, on the whole, con-

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vincing and helpful to the reader. I only felt some doubts about the alternation of rich (R) and poor (P) gifts. Clearly, such an order is operative on a structural level; Martial even announces it himself in 14,1,5-6 *diuitis alternas et pauperis accipe sortes / praemia conuiuae det sua quisque suo.* It also provides us with many clues on the value of gifts which we could not have estimated otherwise. But Leary has applied the principle of a fixed order RPRP in perhaps too rigid a manner, which has led him to assume lacunas and to rearrange the order of poems at several points in the collection. This, in the end, may be carrying things too far. Anyhow, all differences from the OCT are conveniently listed (p.27-28) and these are not likely to pose serious problems to the user.

To sum up: this is a very useful and welcome book, opening up a part of Martial's oeuvre which usually remains closed to classicists. In his preface, Dr. Leary announces he has started working on a new project, a commentary on Martial XIII. Given the present results, this is something to look forward to.

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