

przyszłości społeczeństwo osiągnie tak wysoki poziom kulturalny, iż większość ludzi będzie umiała pisać zupełnie poprawne wiersze.

Książka Steina z uwagi na swoje akcenty społeczne zasługuje na zainteresowanie kół nie tylko ściśle naukowych i literackich. Jest to interesująca pozycja pomyślana w pewnym sensie jako zagajenie dyskusji, która w rezultacie prędzej czy później doprowadzić powinna do stworzenia nowej poetyki, obejmującej całokształt współczesnych zjawisk artystycznych.

Franciszek Jarzyna, Świdnica

Hanna Szelest, *MARCJALIS I JEGO TWÓRCZOŚĆ*, Wrocław—Warszawa—Kraków 1963, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, pp. 252, Komitet Nauk o Kulturze Antycznej PAN, Archiwum Filologiczne VI.

Marcjalis i jego dzieło (Martial and His Work) by Hanna Szelest of the University of Warsaw is the first Polish monograph on Martial. The classic of the ancient epigram, who became a master of the whole pleiad of modern epigrammatists, has not yet been treated in an exhaustive and adequate monograph in other countries either¹.

Let us first have a look at the content of H. Szelest's book. In Chapter 1 ("The Poet's Biography", pp. 7—18) the author describes Martial's life by making use of his epigrams, which are almost the only source available for this purpose. The poet was born and educated in a little provincial Spanish town, Bilbilis, wrote his works as an adult in Rome, and returned to his native country by the end of his life. As Lucas² has pointed out on the

basis of Martial's epigrams it used to be customary in Rome to keep birthday feasts on the first day of the month (*Kalendae*); hence the accepted date of Martial's birth should perhaps not be agreed upon without reservation. In Chapter 2 ("Martial's Protectors and Patrons", pp. 19—22) Martial's relations with influential people of contemporary Rome are briefly discussed. Chapter 3 ("Martial and the Emperor's Court", pp. 22—35) describes the character of the poet's relations with Domitian, which are placed first, and with Titus, Nerva, and Trajan. The author is right when defending the poet against the accusation of overservility. Martial might have considered rightful some of the emperor's actions, e. g. those of rebuilding and extending Rome, nevertheless the poet's relations with Domitian were insincere; the emperor's, especially Domitian's, attitude towards him was cool and official. Quite different were the poet's relations with his protectors, with whom he was almost friends, and his colleagues, who are presented according to epigrams in Chapter 4 ("Martial and His Literary Milieu", pp. 36—56). He was closely connected with the poets who practised short poems. He fought persistently with his acute wit and sense of humour against scribblers, plagiarists, and the like.

Chapter 5 ("Martial's Pronouncements on Contemporary and Older Roman Poetry", pp. 57—68) shows Martial's views of literature. First of all he is an opponent of mythologic and learned poetry, mainly mythologic epic, and a warm adherent of historic epic. He takes sides against archaisms in contemporary literature, with which his negative estimation of Old Roman literature is connected. What Martial admires is the so-called lighter muse, i. e. short poems. That is why he highly ranks and frequently praises Catullus, whose lead he follows. He was attracted by the literary genre represented by Catullus, viz. the lyric and the satiric epigram, as well as by the latter's themes and style. His favorite poets were epigrammatists of the Augustan Age, e. g. Marsus and Pedo. He esteemed Virgil, and considered Horace to be an outstanding repre-

¹ When excluding a synthetic article by R. Helm (*Paulys Realencycl. d. class. Altertumswiss.* VIII A, 1, 1955), no monograph has been written by the Germans although they are famous for detailed studies. The Italians are an exception; within fifty years' time they produced as many as five works that can be considered to be monographs on Martial.

² H. Lucas, *Martial. Kalendae nataliciae*, "Class. Quart." XXXII: 1938, p. 5—6.

sentative of lyric; less frequently he mentioned the great elegists. He draws the reader's attention to the fact that even the greatest poets produced short poems which excelled other, more conspicuous, literary genres by being able to reach to wider circles of readers.

In Chapter 6 ("Aims of Epigram", pp. 69—80) we see Martial as the "theoretician of literature" who tries to define the function that is to be performed by the epigram, mainly by its satiric type. Pronouncements of this sort are not found too often in ancient literature. According to Martial, a very important characteristic of epigram is its closest possible connection with life, its ability to create a true picture, and to present problems, of current life (X 4, 8: *quod possit dicere vita: meum est*, and X 4, 10: *hominem pagina nostra sapit*). The chief aim of epigram is to awake the reader's reflection upon himself and the world (VIII 3, 19 sq.: *At tu Romano lepidos sale tinge libellos: Adgnoscat mores vita legatque suos*). This aim will be achieved only if the epigram appeals to wide circles of readers (III 9, 2: *Non scribit cuius carmina nemo legit*). Proper language and style help to perform latter task. Epigrams, therefore, have to tell the truth in a jocose and frolic manner (I Praef.: *lasciva verborum veritas*). For that reason, Martial calls his poems "nugae" and "ineptiae", i. e. trifles, and even "lascivi libelli". Besides, an inseparable feature of epigram are the "grain of salt" and the "drop of bitterness" (VII 25, 3 sq.). The absence of malignity and of attacks against particular persons is the leading principle of the strife against human vices (X 33, 10: *Parcere personis, dicere de vitiis*). Each man should be respected, even if he comes from a lower social class (I Praef.). These principles are the source of Martial's frequent indignation against authors of malignant epigrams. They make him also never use the proper names of persons criticised; pseudonyms are used instead. Real names are introduced if their bearers are not spoken of badly or if they are praised by the poet. According to Martial, therefore, the epigram is a didactic poem by means of which the poet influences his environment.

From this standpoint, Martial estimated the value of the earlier and the contemporary poetry. This accounts for his dislike of mythologic poetry, which neither educates nor is accessible to the common reader. In view of that, would it not be more appropriate to have the present Chapter preceding Chapter 5? The author of the monograph treats the form of epigrams in a very concise way: on p. 76 she quotes only the poems in which the poet defends himself by appealing to his predecessors against adversaries' opinions that his epigrams are too long.

In the short Chapter 7 (p. 81—85) H. Szest discusses the problem of the chronological order of publications of particular books of epigrams, and distinguishes the following types of poems:

1. satiric epigrams.
2. occasional epigrams:
 - a. sepulchral and consolatory;
 - b. laudatory;
 - c. dedicative;
 - d. convivial;
 - e. reflective;
 - f. on various events.
3. epigrams on works of art.
4. erotic epigrams.
5. the so-called literary epigrams.

In Chapter 8 (pp. 86—103) the author analyzes epigrams belonging to the collection called *Liber spectaculorum* (describing the spectacles on the occasion of the opening of the Amphitheatrum Flavium); and two collections of epigrams called *Xenia* and *Apo-phoreta* written in elegiac couplet on gifts sent out to friends or distributed by lots among guests at the festival of Saturnalia, and performing the original function of epigram, viz. the inscription. All kinds of inscription (the object speaks to the person it is bestowed upon; the donor addresses the person benefited; the poet's question and the object's answer) had already been known to Greek epigrammatists; Martial's literary contribution consisted in creating large collections of such compositions. His epigrams are an inexhaustible source of data concerning the everyday life, and constitute an interesting reflection of literary polemics.

In Chapter 9 ("Satiric Epigrams", pp. 104—119) and 10 ("Occasional epigrams", epigrams on works of art and erotic epigrams, pp. 120—142) particular kinds of epigrams are

discussed. The satiric epigrams³ are the main part of Martial's literary production, and have exerted the strongest influence on posterity. The object of the poet's attacks are characters typically Roman, e. g. upstarts, clients, fortune-hunters, uninvited intruders at feasts, as well as such common characters as tattlers, bad clerks, physicians, barbers, rhetors, scribblers, philosophers, drunkers, insolvent debtors, hypocrites, swindlers, intruders; physical vices are also satirized. Any ridiculous thing becomes an object of the epigram full of wit and humour.

Among the occasional compositions, most conspicuous are sepulchral epigrams. There are epigrams full of sentiment written on the death of the poet's friends and little slaves; epigrams in the form of dry inscription, elogium, consolation, epicedium; satirical epigrams in the form of sepulchral inscription. Another kind of occasional epigrams are votive, dedicative, convivial, and reflexive epigrams, the latter frequently containing deep lyricism; epigrams on birthdays, weddings, and various annuals. Little room is taken by the erotic epigram; mostly, they are compositions addressed to beautiful boys, or criticizing illicit love.

Chapters 11 and 12 are devoted to the problem of Martial's attitude towards the Greek epigram (pp. 143—177) and the earlier Roman poetry (pp. 178—215). Conclusions arrived at are as follows: Martial took over almost all forms, subjects, and motifs of the Greek epigram, yet a considerable part of his epigrams have no counterparts in Greek poems. What he had taken over was filled by him with new content: the theme was changed or added. Martial's epigrams are usually longer, always wittier. The satiric epigram, only initiated by the Greeks, was

by Martial brought to perfection. As far as the influence of the Roman poetry on Martial is concerned, that of Catullus must be regarded as the strongest, because both poets practised the same literary genre (epigrammata, nugae, ineptiae), and presented in them a vivid picture of their epoch. Catullus' satire is more personal, it attacks individual persons whereas Martial's is directed against human types and vices. Martial is cheerful and shows a sense of humour, Catullus is bitter and malignant. Virgil's influence is seen only in Martial's language and style as it is also the case with the elegists, particularly Ovidius; but some features of Tibullus' pastoral atmosphere are also traceable in Martial's epigrams. It was only Horace that exerted a stronger influence on Martial; both in language and subject-matter (Horace's odes influenced Martial's reflective and convivial epigrams; the former's satires influenced the latter's satirical epigrams). The author of the monograph should have pointed, in Chapter 12, to a considerable influence of Seneca's motifs and style, which is discussed in detail only in the succeeding chapter. H. Szelest does not take up the problem of Martial's relation to compositions of the so-called *Corpus Priapeorum*⁴. This makes her account of Martial incomplete.

Chapter 13 (pp. 216—224) presents the analysis of the principle of composition of both the whole books of epigrams and individual epigrams. A book of epigrams consists of introductory compositions, cycles of compositions⁵, and final compositions. The majority of epigrams, particularly satiric ones, consist of two parts, viz. an objective, descriptive

³ It would be advisable to make in this Chapter a brief sketch of the development of particular motifs and types of satiric epigram, or at least make a reference to a good work by F. Specht, *Motiv- und Typengeschichte des griechischen Spotte*, Leipzig 1930, "Philologus", Supplementband XXII, H. 2, where considerations on Martial's epigrams are included.

⁴ Later on this problem was examined by V. Buchheit, *Studien zum Corpus Priapeorum*, München 1962, pp. 159, "Zetemata", H. 28, and by L. Herrmann, *Martial et les Priapees*, Latomus 22, 1963, p. 31—55.

⁵ Some works are missing in H. Szelest's monograph concerning this point, viz. K. Barwick, *Zyklen bei Martial und den kleinen Gedichten des Catull*, "Philologus" 102, 1958, p. 284—318, and V. Buchheit, *Martials Beitrag zum Geburtstag Lucans als Zyklus*, "Philologus" 105, 1961, p. 90—96.

part, and a personal part ending up frequently with a point. Lessing's theory of epigram appeals to the same principle; the two succeeding parts are called here "Erwartung" and "Aufschluss". As has been recently pointed out by K. Barwick, these divisions go back to Greek epigrams, and above all to the pointed prose of the Early Empire. There are various ways of presenting the person criticized, viz. the character is spoken of in the third person, the character is spoken to in the second person, the character is spoken of in the third person, but there is another addressee of the epigram, both the character criticized and the addressee are spoken of in the third person.

Chapter 14 ("Martial and Rhetoric", pp. 225—233) shows a rich range of rhetorical elements used by Martial, viz. comparison, pun, parody, anaphora, metaphor; the influence of Seneca, particularly of his epigrams, is seen in maxims and concise sentences. The rhetoric, therefore, exerted a considerable influence on the composition and style of Martial's epigrams.

In Chapter 15 ("Realism and Lyricism", pp. 234—241) the author draws our attention to the realism⁶ of Martial's epigrams, which consists in taking subjects from, and vividly presenting pictures of, reality; she points also the lyrical note of a considerable group of epigrams (yearning for the fatherland and for idyllic country life; reflective epigrams, sepulchral epigrams, epigrams on the death of friends).

Final Chapter ("Martial's Originality", pp. 242—246) is a synthesis of the monograph: in fact, each chapter is intended to show Martial's originality. He was original because he took his subject-matter from the Roman life, and if he used the subjects and motifs of his Greek predecessors, he introduced Roman elements into them. He was original in the content of his compositions, in impressing on them an individual character, in consciously creating not only cycles of epigrams bound by the subject-matter, but also full books;

original in strictly defining the aim of the epigram, particularly its satiric type. Martial not only continued the earlier epigram but brought it up to perfection.

In spite of that rich content of H. Szelest's book there are a few things that may be desired.

There are some scattered remarks concerning the poet's language and style. This problem, however, is important enough to have been given much more attention; all the more so because the literary genre under consideration is based on the principle of condensing the subject-matter and content, and abounds in lyricism and wit giving an acute and subtle point. Martial's metres have not been touched upon at all. It would be interesting to see the poet's both direct and indirect influence on posterity through his literary genre. We would welcome even a limited account of this problem, considering the enormous scope of the literary material. It would also be worth while to present in fuller details the origin and development of epigram, particularly its satiric division. Besides, many corrections could be brought into bibliography; corrections of this type, however, are as a rule suggested by reviewer of a monograph. The practical usefulness of the work is to a large extent hindered by the absence of an index of names and an index of subject-matter; an index of epigrams quoted would be very helpful.

To conclude, it should be stated that H. Szelest's work on Martial—result of a long study of ancient epigram—performs its main task: it gives a new, well-evidenced, and convincing account of Martial's literary production. Traditionally, Martial was regarded mainly as an imitator and continuator of the earlier Greek and Roman poetry. It is H. Szelest's great merit to have shown us Martial as an creative imitator and continuator, who took over subjects and motifs from his predecessors, but only to transform them through his poetic invention into new original compositions, which in turn became an inspiration to many a later generation of poets.

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⁶ No account is taken here of J. W. Duff's *Martial's Realism and Sentiments in the Epigram*, Cambridge 1929.