

REVIEWS

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Searby, Denis M. (ed.) (2007) *The Corpus Parisinum: a critical edition of the Greek text with commentary and English translation. (A Medieval anthology of Greek texts from the Pre-Socratics to the church fathers, 600 B.C.-700 A.D.)* Translated, with commentary and introduction by Denis M. Searby; with a commendatory foreword by Dimitri Gutas. Books 1-2. Lewiston etc.: Mellen. XIII, 1000 p. ISBN-13 978-0-7734-5300-5), ISBN-10 0-7734-5300-8.

Searby's book is a critical edition of a Greek gnomological text called *Corpus Parisinum*, which was probably compiled in the 9th century. The selections in it cover a period extending from archaic Greece to the 7th century AD. Searby notes that, in the history of Greek gnomologies, the *Corpus Parisinum* represents "a kind of cross-roads in which various earlier and more or less contemporary collections are joined in a less than successful conglomeration" (p. II). There are texts from Judeo-Christian and from pagan authors.

Searby's book is divided into three main parts. The first and the second part (Book 1) consist of introductory sections and the Greek text, and the third part (Book 2) comprises notes and translations of the Greek text. The author notes that his edition is intended as a tool that other scholars can use and analyse. Only some measure of analytical discussion is included in the introductory sections.

Searby starts with a handy reference list of terms that he uses in his edition (e.g., anecdote, apophthegm, aphorism, *apomnemoneuma*, *chreia*, *dictum*, excerpt, fragment, gnome, *homoeoma*, maxim, proverb, quotation, saying, *sententia*, similitude). In the very useful definitions of these terms he also denotes which words will be used interchangeably. Then he gives a synopsis of the contents of *Corpus Parisinum*, which he divides into eight sections (according to the two chief manuscripts), and the descriptions of the different manuscripts he had studied for the edition. The list of the manuscripts is quite long. Later on, Searby also gives information about the other people who have dealt with manuscripts important for editing the *Corpus Parisinum*, and mentions which editions he has used for his translation.

The author also speaks about the history of gnomologies. Collections of maxims, proverbs, fables and the like existed already in classical times, but the real foundations for the gnomological tradition were laid in the Hellenistic period. These kinds of collections offer repositories of moral values, and later Christians also started to compile such texts. Florilegia, anthologies and gnomologies were used from classical to medieval times. They had an entertainment or an educational or edifying value. They served as useful sourcebooks for writers, speakers and preachers, who needed quotations, anecdotes or striking sayings for their compositions.

At the end of the introductory section Searby talks about the difficulties in editing anthologies and gnomologies and gives his principles of the edition. The editorial model for Searby is the edition of Stobaeus by Wachsmuth and Hense, because it offers a continuous

text with a continuous critical apparatus. Searby has maintained the division of the two main manuscripts. On rare occasions (for example in case of obvious errors) different division is employed. The numbering of excerpts is from Searby. The critical apparatus is divided into four parts and marked with the capital letters A, B, C and D. The apparatuses are devoted to different sources. Searby explains which are the two chief manuscripts used for his edition and which ones he prefers when these two do not agree with each other. If he emends the text of the main manuscripts, it is noted in the apparatus. Orthographical divergences are noted in the ordinary critical apparatus, or if they are minor ones, then in the appendix at the end of the book.

The third part of the book (Book 2) contains the translations of the sayings and apophthegms. 2009 sayings and apophthegms are divided into eight groups (parts). Each group has also an introductory part before the translation, explaining which manuscripts and editions have been used, and sometimes presenting some information on the authors.

The first section (CP1) is a Christian Florilegium. The sayings are divided by authors (for example St. Basil, Clement and St. Ignatius). Most of the sayings affirm that we have to be decent people and live an honest life and do good to other people. The second group (CP 2) consists of a few oracles ascribed to pagan sages proclaiming Christian dogmas, such as the consubstantiality of Father and Son and the virgin birth. The third part, the profane Florilegium (CP 3), is divided by authors (Isaeus, Plutarch, Aristotle, Isocrates, Democritus, Clitarchus, Socrates, Plato, etc.). After the sayings we may find some apophthegms of the same man (although actually there are also apophthegms about other men). There are also a couple of sayings from two Greek novels, *Leucippe* and *Charikleia*. The fourth part is presented in two series (CP 4 and CP 4B), and contains excerpts from Stobaeus. They are divided by themes (for example *about prudence*, *about foolishness*) and there is a name of the author before the saying. CP 5 contains sayings from Democritus, Isocrates and Epictetus divided under different themes (for example: *on God*, *on the soul* and so on). CP 6 is an alphabetic gnomology, presenting a selection of apophthegms of Democritus, Epictetus, Isocrates and other philosophers. The last part (CP 7) consists of the monostichs of Menander.

Although the sayings and apophthegms are divided into eight parts, the main themes are the same. Many of the sayings have the same idea in different formulation. The main themes are virtuous life ('owning a little virtuously is much more honourable than owning a lot immorally' and so on); friendship (you have to choose friends slowly and the real friend is with you also in hard times); flattery (the flatterers are the worst people and you can't trust them at all; there are comparisons with crows: crows pick out the eyes of the dead, flatterers corrupt the soul); women (they can be the worst thing in man's life, but sometimes also a joy); prudence/wisdom/reason and education (they are the most important things in man's life; wisdom is the strength of the soul and man can have money and fame, but he is nothing without prudence); silence (it is better to be silent than to say something stupid or improper; we have two ears, but only one tongue, so we could listen more than speak).

There are lots of sayings from Aristotle, Socrates, Diogenes, Demetrius, Demosthenes, Plato and from other well-known philosophers and famous men. Most of the apophthegms are of

Alexander the Great (there are several good ones suitable also for our time, for example *He saw some thieves being led away by the magistrates and said, "The big thieves are leading the little ones away!"*), but also of several philosophers. The index of personal names gives a list of men from whom the sayings have been taken.

At the very end of the book there are different tables, appendices, bibliography, indices, and synopsis of the *Corpus Parisinum*.

This book is suitable both for scholars and for the common reader. For scholars it is an appealing example of how to make an edition based of such a collection of fragments, and also, as Searby wanted, a source they can explore and analyze. For the common reader, the most interesting part is the translation. There are lots of sage, witty and sharp sayings and apophthegms in this book that are timeless and worth reading for everybody.