

CRESPO (E.), DE LA VILLA (J.) and REVUELTA (A.R.) *Eds. Word Classes and Related Topics in Ancient Greek*. Proceedings of the Conference on ‘Greek Syntax and Word Classes’ held in Madrid on 18-21, June 2003. (Bibliothèque des Cahiers de l’Institut de Linguistique de Louvain 117). Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 2006. Pp. 584. EUR 49. 9042917377.

Going by the references one finds in a typical commentary, it is easy to get the impression that, apart from the occasional blip on the screen, serious study and description of Greek grammar ended somewhere at the beginning of the last century. Few have worked more assiduously to confound that notion than a small band of mostly Dutch, French and Spanish scholars, who employ a characteristic blend of modern — primarily ‘functional’ — linguistic approaches and more traditional descriptive method. The group meets for a conference every few years: ‘Word Classes’ was the fifth, the sixth was held this summer in Groningen; all have yielded proceedings. The present volume collects papers by most of the usual suspects, plus a large contingent from various universities in Spain.

With thirty-one articles, many of which fall at best under the ‘Related Topics’ header, the book was bound to be a rather uneven affair, and to contain a few endeavours of interest only to the type of Hellenist that attends these conferences (and still this reviewer, though ‘initiated’, occasionally found himself outside his comfort zone). Nevertheless, there is much here that is worth reading. I briefly highlight two groups, with no claim to exclusivity. First, those authors that do engage seriously with the overall theme prove that our traditional classification of parts of speech is long overdue for review: many distinctions long gone unchallenged do not hold up to close syntactic scrutiny. Revuelta, in the course of a thorough study of the word *πάλι*, rightly argues against maintaining particles as a separate class (Denniston’s edifying influence has blurred the picture here); so too Duhoux in his paper. Similar problems of classification occur with participles — a non-prototypical mixed class, according to Pompei in a valuable discussion of different levels of subordination — and, perhaps more surprisingly, with adverbs — defined by De la Villa as a group of non-prototypical nouns. Second, there is a group of well-executed papers dealing with finer points of grammar. García Ramón observes distributional differences between the uses of *γηθέω* and *γέγηθα*, concluding that the so-called ‘intensive’ perfect is not simply a stronger variant of the present but an actual perfect (not all difficulties are solved, but further research along these lines would be welcome). Méndez Dosuna offers pertinent objections against existing explanations for the vexing use of the ‘active’ imperatives *παῦε* and *ἔγειρε* with intransitive sense (‘stop!’, ‘wake up!’); whether his own hypothesis — an erroneous standardization (‘un accident phonétique’, 309) of elided *παύε* (= *παύεο*, middle) — is any more feasible I dare not say. Wakker clears up the status and meaning of *μέλλω* + inf., arguing that it is a true periphrastic construction, where *μέλλω* is no more than an auxiliary, in very few cases only. Rijksbaron dispels the idea that *νῦν* and *τὰ νῦν*, *πρότερον* and *τὸ*

πρότερον and similar pairs mean the same thing. These papers deserve to be consulted and cited by commentators who come across such phenomena.

Yet if the book's content is at times rewarding, its editing all but spoils it. The editors have printed 'the majority of the papers read at the ... conference' (5), apparently unrefereed — an all-too-inclusive selection procedure which makes for an unwieldy (the book weighs in at nearly 600 pages) and qualitatively patchy whole. What is worse, the practical aspects of the editorial business seem to have been wholly neglected. The text is defaced by literally hundreds of typos, spelling errors and offenses to grammar and style, from the first page ('Raphäel Kühner', 'resulted') to the last (chapters by De la Villa and Rijksbaron reversed in the table of contents) and from the trivial to the shocking. Bibliographies (each paper has its own) appear in differing formats; three papers lack one entirely. The house style of translating Greek extracts is not followed throughout; some of the translations are decidedly poor. The brief index of terms seems culled from the book in strangely haphazard fashion, and is not very helpful. And so on. One would hope that the wreckage does not conceal the hidden gems from linguists' and commentators' eyes altogether.

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