

Letters from Sir James Spens and Jan Rutgers. Edited by ARNE JÖNSSON. The Works and Correspondence of Axel Oxenstierna II:13. The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities in co-operation with The Swedish National Archives. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Riksarkivet, Stockholm 2007. ISBN 978-91-7402-367-1. 643 p. SEK 285.

Axel Oxenstierna, Chancellor of Sweden under King Gustav II Adolf (1611–32), the regency of 1632–44, and Queen Christina (1644–54) is internationally best known as the leader of Swedish foreign policy during the Thirty Years' War. The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities has, since 1888, published Oxenstierna's collected works in two series: series I comprises Oxenstierna's historical and political works and his letters, series II contains letters written to Oxenstierna. The process of editing came to a stop in 1977, but in 1999 it was continued by the Academy in cooperation with the Swedish National Archives. The present volume contains diplomatic correspondence from the Scottish adventurer and officer Sir James (Jacob) Spens (d. 1632) and the Dutch humanist and jurist Jan Rutgers (1589–1625). Both were diplomats in Swedish service; the former was also entrusted with a number of important charges by British rulers. Rutgers received an excellent education; he was taught by some of the greatest scholars of the time, such as Gerhard Johann Vossius, Dominicus Baudius, Joseph Justus Scaliger and Daniel Heinsius.

The 86 letters written by Sir James Spens and the 185 letters by Jan Rutgers are chronologically arranged. Each letter is provided with an English summary of the contents. This enables those who are unable to read Latin to follow the correspondence. The letters are carefully edited according to editorial principles which mainly serve the purpose very well. The biographical notes, the reduced but well-focused selection of literature and the index assist the reader in surveying the letters that open a fascinating view of the European politics of the time. The volume is a valuable contribution to the studies of Neo-Latin epistolography, showing, once again, the importance of letters in the research on early modern times.

Raija Sarasti-Wilenius

ROGER WRIGHT: *A Sociophilological Study of Late Latin*. Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 10. Brepols, Turnhout 2002. ISBN 2-503-51338-7. VIII, 389 pp. EUR 65.

This book is a collection of twenty-five (mostly recent) articles by the author. They have originally been published in various places, and most of them have been revised or abbreviated to suit the needs of the collection at hand. The term sociophilology that appears in the title is defined by the author as "an approach to the linguistic study of texts from the past which attempts to combine traditional philological analysis with the insights of modern sociolinguistics". This definition immediately invokes interest in the reader, as does Wright's definition of Late Latin, "the language which, when written, is traditionally regarded as a kind of Latin, but when spoken, is often regarded as being 'Early Romance'". The articles have been arranged in chronological order of subject matter and grouped in six sections (Section A: Late Latin, Medieval Latin and Romance, Section B: Texts and Language in Late Antiquity, Section C: The Ninth Century, Section D: Italy and Spain in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries, Section E:

Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Spain, Section F: Sociophilology and Historical Linguistics), followed by a general conclusion, bibliography and index.

Wright's central point concerning Late Latin and Early Romance is that, in Late Antiquity, people did not have a separate pronunciation for reading texts aloud, but they, including the highly literate ones, used the same phonological system both in their vernacular and for reading Latin aloud. Because morphosyntactic and syntactic change is always slow compared with phonological, and old forms can easily remain passively intelligible for centuries, the result is that even illiterates were able to understand contemporary written texts when they were recited. He connects the appearance of Donatus' grammar in the 4th century with the ever-growing need to check the correct written forms of one's vernacular, forms that had largely already disappeared from speech due to phonological and morphosyntactic changes (something that is well in accordance with the reconstructions of proto-Romance). Wright stresses that the linguistic variation between 400 and 800 was of an essentially normal kind, complex but still monolingual – a view others have found too optimistic, as the author himself notes. The author shows overall a valuable insight into the nature of linguistic variation and change, based on the awareness of the difference between different language levels in these linguistic processes. He, probably correctly, sees changes in the lexicon and semantics as most profound for the loss of intelligibility.

Wright claims, in contrast to many previous studies, that, in the Late Roman period, the direction of change was in fact towards greater convergence. He makes a particularly interesting case in using the concept of *interdialect*, developed by the sociolinguist Peter Trudgill, that refers to the convergence in immigrant societies of the various contributing dialects to the effect that the new, common dialect reflects the highest common denominator of the divergent input. He traces the conceptual split between Latin and Romance back to the Carolingian reforms initiated by Alcuin and welcomed by Anglo-Saxon speakers. Latin was then turned into a foreign language for everyone.

The author argues forcibly for the view that, in the 9th century, despite a great amount of variation, there was no correlation between the various features according to geographical areas, and that for a considerably long time, up to the 13th century, we cannot really speak of separate Romance languages in the minds of the people speaking them (with the probable exception of Rumanian). He sees the subsequent conceptual split into different languages as resulting from nationalistic ideologies and conscious language planning in the later Middle Ages.

Wright further points out that the historical-comparative method cannot be applied to the reconstruction of Proto-Romance in the same way it is used in the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European because of the limited time span in question and the fact that Romance speakers had frequent contacts with each other during the formative period. Moreover, what the reconstructions represent is, in fact, spoken Latin, not Romance, as the author acutely observes. That is why historical sociolinguistics is needed in this field. His analysis (on pp. 246–248) of different types of texts written in 12th century Spain serves as a illuminating illustration of the variation on the written level. He identifies three types of written language: 1) Late Latin, i.e., Ibero-Romance written with Latin orthography, 2) Medieval Latin texts written by mainly French writers who were in command of the archaic way of writing, and 3) at the end of the period, there appear texts written with a reformed (i.e., Romance) orthography in an attempt to write the vernacular in a new and more appropriate manner. As Wright stresses, the scribes

writing Early Romance naturally had first learnt to write Latin and their educational and social context should be considered when making a philological analysis of the texts they wrote.

I found the parallels drawn between the Early or Medieval Romance world and modern western societies less convincing. This is due to the fact that while drawing parallels with present day English or French (for example, in his discussion on p. 90 on the passive knowledge of verbal forms that had long since disappeared from speech), Wright does not make allowance for the decisively different role of literacy in the respective time periods and societies – and this despite the fact that he elsewhere explicitly points out the necessity of appreciating the role played by writing and literacy in a given society when carrying out linguistic research solely on the basis of texts (on p. 310). There is also a slightly confusing discussion (on pp. 142–145) about the meaning of *transferre studeat in rusticam Romanam linguam aut thiotiscam* (as formulated in the Canons of the Council of Tours in 813) where the parallelism between *rusticam Romanam linguam* and *thiotiscam* (Germanic) as the objects of the same verb does not seem to leave room for Wright's interpretation that *transferre in rusticam Romanam linguam* here would only refer to the vernacular pronunciation and not to any actual act of translating (his argument at this point is in keeping with his general view that, in the 9th century, people did not think about the linguistic situation in terms of two different languages, between which 'translation' would have been possible).

That said, there can be no doubt that this is a book of great importance, for latinists, romanists, and historical linguists alike.

Hilla Halla-aho

P. M. NIGDELIS: Ἐπιγραφικὰ Θεσσαλονίκεια. Συμβολή στην πολιτική και κοινωνική ιστορία της αρχαίας Θεσσαλονίκης. University Studio Press, Thessaloniki 2006. ISBN 960-12-1550-6. 646 pp. EUR 40.

The author, of the University of Thessaloniki, is a well-known authority on Greek epigraphy, especially on that of the Roman period in Macedonia and N. Greece in general (but note also, e.g., his monograph on Πολίτευμα καὶ κοινωνία τῶν πόλεων Κυκλάδων of 1990). It was a very good idea of his to publish this collection of papers, some of them dedicated to the publication of new inscriptions (most of them, as one would expect in Thessalonica, from the second and the third centuries AD) and others to the examination of texts already published (normally not too long ago). The inscriptions of Thessalonica, almost all of the Roman period and very numerous, have already established the status of Thessalonica as one of the most important Greek-speaking cities of the Roman period; this collection of papers, admirably indexed and with very good photos, certainly does much to confirm this status. One must also note that the commentaries are of a very solid quality.

From the Preface (p. 16), one learns that the inscriptions (among which there are some Latin ones) dealt with here come, for the most part, from emergency excavations dating from after 1960, and that the same year was the 'terminus ante quem' for the texts published by C. Edson in the *IG* volume of 1972. The inscriptions are presented in six chapters, I, 'Ἀπὸ τῆ δημοσία ζωὴ τῆς πόλης', II, 'Ἰδιωτικοὶ σύλλογοι τῆς πόλης' (Thessalonica being a city with many various associations), III, 'Ἀπὸ τὸν κόσμον τῶν ἐπαγγελημάτων', IV, 'Ἡ πόλις καὶ πληθυσμὸς τῆς', V, 'Ταφικὸ λεξιλόγιον καὶ ταφικὲς πρακτικὲς' (with many interesting formulations), VI, 'Testimonia epigraphica' (mentions of Thessalonica, etc. in inscriptions