

The articles are generally well written, but the editors have made one editorial choice that I found unfortunate. Some of the articles (Rollinger, Ellis, Lougovaya-Ast, Schuol, Schwab) use Anglo-American research literature quoted verbatim in English instead of referring to the literature indirectly or translating it into German. I would prefer these excerpts to be translated as they rarely convey such information that would be rendered unintelligible in translation. Even if they were translated, their place could well be in the footnotes. On the other hand, the collection does an admirable job in introducing German research and its conceptions of Herodotean themes. Dennis Möhlmann and Norbert Kramer in particular discuss an interesting selection of research literature in German about both Herodotus' subject matter and the general views of Herodotus in research. In order to make the German research tradition more familiar to English-speaking audiences, it would be useful to publish collections such as this one in both German and English.

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The Genres of Late Antique Poetry: Between Modulations and Transpositions. Edited by FOTINI HADJITOFFI – ANNA LEFTERATOU. De Gruyter, Berlin – Boston, 2020. ISBN 978-3-11-068997-6; ISBN (e-book) 978-3-11-069621-9. X, 335 pp. EUR 109.95.

This edited volume is a bold enterprise as it addresses two of the main issues that had implications in the literary, political and cultural sphere of Late Antiquity and in Byzantine times: to what degree Christian poetry relied on or departed from models, meter and language from the Classical past, and to what extent this (dis)continuity contributed to shaping a new society. In the introduction to the volume, after a brief summary of late antique Christian poetry (pp. 9–12), the editors comment on how this genre has been approached and studied since the 19th century and discuss the nuanced terminology used in the book to focus on the interactions of Classical and Christian models (pp. 15–20). Then, they describe the organization of the volume, which is divided into two parts: the first deals with minor genres (epigrams, hymns, etc.) whilst the second addresses major genres like epic and didactic poems.

In the first contribution, G. Agosti explores the interactions between Christian and pagan cultural codes as dissonances that contributed to creating the style of Christian poetic forms. Agosti argues that this discontinuity with the pagan past was achieved through a process of adaptation and resemantization of literary motifs from the Classical past, but also by the accompanying of spolia from pagan monuments that were reused in Christian monumental contexts. However, for

Agosti, the distinctive mark of a Christian verse entails the transformation of (p. 49) “traditional language into something new (...) by inserting expressions and phraseology from the Scriptures”. In “Writing Classicizing Epigrams in Sixth-Century Constantinople: the Funerary Poems of Julian the Egyptian”, A. Gullo deals with the (p. 59) “involuntary interferences of Julian’s Christianity” as a way to determine if Julian’s epigrams were Christian or not, given his tendency to use epigrammatic topics that were religiously unrelated. This is a difficult task according to Gullo as (p. 71) “there is nothing specifically Christian” in Julian’s epigrams, just a few nods to Christian phraseology. M. Onorato analyses the cultural and religious implications that can be derived from an intertextual study in “The Poet and the Light: Modulation and Transposition of a Prudential *Ekphrasis* in Two Poems by Sidonius Apollinaris”. Onorato compares how Sidonius borrowed a number of rhetorical strategies from Prudentius’ *Psychomachia* and, especially, an imaginary that he used for different purposes. Thus, while the aesthetics of Prudentius’ work clearly served a metaphysical purpose, Sidonius’ rewriting of some of the *Psychomachia* images in a carmen and in an epigram was more concerned with showing off his rhetorical and literary prowess.

T. Kuhn-Treicher looks into the influences on Gregory of Nazianzus’ poems in “Poetological Name-Dropping: Explicit References to Poets and Genres in Gregory Nazianzen’s Poems”. The versatile production of the poet and theologian includes implicit and explicit references to poets from the Classical tradition that Gregory combined in his oeuvre not only to (p. 98) “downplay the influence of those authors who are in some respect obviously his models”, but also to use the explicit references as moralizing sayings. J. McDonald also focuses on Gregory in his contribution, “The Significance of Meter in the Biblical Poems of Gregory Nazianzen (*carmina* I.1.12–27)”. McDonald contends that the bad reputation of Gregory’s Biblical poems is undeserved and could be explained by an incorrect understanding of the use of Gregory’s polymetry and the intended audience of the poems. M. Jennifer Falcone discusses genre issues in “Some observations on the Genre of Dracontius’ *Satisfactio*”, a contribution that focuses mainly on the rhetorical strategies deployed by Dracontius and on how analyzing them can help us determine the literary genre of this poem. A similar approach is adopted by E. Wolff in “Do Dracontius’ Epyllia have a Christian Apologetic Agenda?”, in which Wolff investigates the role of literary topics from Graeco-Roman mythology and how they had a moralizing function rather than a religious one in Dracontius’ epyllia. Similar conclusions are reached by S. Fischer in “Dracontius’ Medea and the Classical Tradition: Divine Influence and Human Action”. As anticipated in the previous contributions, Fischer highlights Dracontius’ ability to combine motifs and genres from the Classical past in order to rewrite stories like Medea without recasting it under a Christian light. A.M. Wasyl, in “The Late Roman Alcestis and the Applicability of Generic Labels to Two Short Narrative poems”, explores the reception of the myth of Alcestis in the *Alcestis Barcinonensis* and in the cento *Alcesta*. After contextualizing the composition of these

works and their rhetorical constituents, Wasyl makes the case for the relationship between the *Alcestis Barcinonensis* and ancient pantomime. M. Paschalis deals with the influence of Virgil on Juvenecus in “The ‘Profanity’ of Jesus’ Storm-calming Miracle (Juvenecus 2.25–42) and the Flaws of *Konstrastimitation*”. Paschalis proposes that the well-known episode in which Jesus calmed the Sea of Galilee has a much deeper significance in terms of religious disputations in the fourth century as it extolls (p. 196) “the power of the Christian god vis-à-vis the pagan divinity”. In “Writing a Homeric-Christian Poem: The Case of Eudocia Augusta’s *Saint Cyprian*”, M.S. Rigo studies how the empress Eudocia resorted to reusing Homeric verses in order to convey a Christian message suitable for the paraphrasis of a prose tale – the transformation of the magician Cyprian into the bishop of Antioch after his magic had no effect on a virgin protected by the power of the cross.

In “Did Nonnus Really Want to Write a ‘Gospel Epic’? The Ambiguous Genre of the *Paraphrase of the Gospel According to John*”, D. Accorinti examines to what extent Nonnus used different literary genres in his epic rewriting of the fourth Gospel and considers that this work conjugates a number of characteristics from different genres that make its adscription to a single form difficult. F. Hadjittofi analyzes the same work in “Nonnus’ *Paraphrase of the Gospel According to John* as Didactic Epic”, but in this case, Hadjittofi focuses on how Nonnus’ *Gospel* is integrated into the long didactic Classical tradition by focusing on the influences of Hesiod, Theognis and conventions of didactic poetry in the portrayal of Jesus. In “Davidic Didactic Hexameters: The Generic Stance of the *Metaphrasis Psalmorum*”, A. Faulkner describes the author of the *Metaphrasis Psalmorum* as (p. 272) “a new Davidic Hesiod” given the didactic dimension of the prologue of this paraphrase of the Septuagint Psalms, a poem full of Classical references that should be read figuratively – according to Faulkner – in order to understand their Christian value. A. Lefteratou, in “The Lament of the Virgin in the *I Homeric Centos: An Early Threnos*”, looks into the development of Mary until her transformation into the paradigm of the mater dolorosa by subverting rhetorical topics in the *I Homeric Centos*. The volume concludes with H. Leppin’s “George Pisides’ *Expeditio Persica* and Discourses on Warfare in Late Antiquity”. In this contribution, Leppin adopts a historical approach in order to analyze the literary strategies of Pisides’ epic poem composed to celebrate, in a Christian fashion, the military campaigns of the emperor Heraclius against the Persians in the seventh century.

At this point, it would have been much appreciated if the editors had decided to add a final chapter summarizing the main topics dealt with throughout the book. A more systematic arrangement of the variety of themes featured in this book and their implications on their historical contexts would have helped readers to have a more precise idea of the impact of Christian poetry over such a wide time span. Also, some editorial issues could be improved: homogenization in the writing of some forms (“reuse” and “re-use” coexist); improving footnote 8 in page 40 as it presents the full https address of an internet link; some minor typos like αἰλός instead of αἴλος on page 295.

These points, however, do not diminish the value of this collection of contributions on a topic that has reclaimed more attention from late antique scholars. As has been already stated, the chapters are varied in the topics they address as well as the methodology used to survey the texts under discussion, but the reader will not be left with the feeling of having read a miscellaneous volume. Instead, readers will have a sense of the ποικιλία of topics and forms in late antique Christian poetry.

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THOMAS M. BANCHICH: *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician: An Account of Rome's Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*. Routledge, London – New York, 2015. ISBN (hardback) 978-0-415-51663-1; ISBN (paperback) 978-0-367-86696-9; ISBN (e-book) 978-1-315-71458-5. XII, 185 pp. GBP 75.

The sixth-century historian Petrus Patricius (also known by his anglicized name *Peter the Patrician*) has to date been largely overlooked by a wider readership, partly due to the lack of a proper edition and a translation of what survives of his text. Banchich's book aims to correct part of this deficiency by providing the first full English translation of the fragments (some having been translated earlier by E. Cary in his LOEB Classical Library edition of Cassius Dio), including those whose origin has been disputed over the years (i.e. the fragments sometimes referred to as *anonymous post Dionem*). The book is part of the Routledge Classical Translations series, which attempts to provide easy access in English to the otherwise less well-known works that have either not been translated before or are no longer easily available.

The book contains a short introduction to the subject matter and the state of research (pp. 1–16), an English translation of both the *Testimonia* about Petrus' life and career, and the full collection of *Excerpta* assumed to have originated from Petrus' work (pp. 17–150), and a selected bibliography and indexes (pp. 151–185). As the Routledge series is mainly meant to provide English translations of these less well-known authors and thus provide easy acquaintance with their works, the other elements around them, such as deeper discussions concerning the structure of the works, their impact and the controversies currently debated in scholarly works, are naturally given less space.

The short introduction to the topic covers Petrus' life as a diplomat and official in the Byzantine court, as far as we know it (pp. 1–3), the structure and nature of the main source (the *Excerpta Constantiniana*) of the excerpts (pp. 3–9), a discussion about the nature of the lost work (pp.