

prospective administrative imperial staff-members. In addition, officially paid sophists not only provided an education in rhetoric but also gave public speeches on various occasions and took part in embassies to emperors and imperial officials. Libanius' letters and speeches give a vivid impression of the highly formalised behaviour and ritualised debates and quarrels in local and imperial politics, as well as of the self-esteem and self-presentation of those who tried to maintain and develop Classical and Hellenistic values and literary traditions.

Wintjes aims to present a biography of Libanius. His guiding star is the autobiography (*or.*1), and he follows and in most cases trusts this account. Only when its unreliability is obvious does he concede that Libanius' presentation is 'rhetorised' or 'stylised' (e.g. pp. 78, 118, 204). After introductory chapters on Libanius' work and on the history of Antioch in the third and fourth centuries, W. presents Libanius' family (pp. 43–62); two stemmata help to set out the complicated relations (pp. 277–8; however, Sabinus [p. 199] is omitted). The main part of the book (pp. 119–234) treats Libanius' personal contacts: his links with and influence on intellectuals and imperial officials, and his relation to the emperors. In W.'s account nearly all epistolary contacts are proofs of L.'s far-reaching influence, and nearly all are supposed to attest personal obligations of the partners involved.

The book is heavily annotated, but notes (especially prosopographical ones) are sometimes repeated twice (n. 12 in pp. 204 and 220) or even three times (p. 59 n. 154, p. 111 n. 105, p. 224 n. 52). It is not the author's fault that most German printers no longer copy-edit monographs, so that misprints, misleading references and missing half sentences are not corrected.

Libanius' demanding prose style, the complicated nature of civic policy, the highly differentiated imperial administrative system, diverse Christian and pagan attitudes towards the ideals of ancient *paideia* – these and other factors create a complex framework for a biography of a rhetor like Libanius. This book contains many good observations in detail; but the author's unshakeable confidence in Libanius' testimony makes it recommendable only to those who already know how to separate the wheat from the chaff.

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THEKLA

JOHNSON (S.F.) *The Life and Miracles of Thekla. A Literary Study*. Pp. xxiv + 288, map. Washington DC: Centre for Hellenic Studies, Trustees for Harvard University, 2006. Paper, £12.95, €17, US\$19.95. ISBN: 978-0-674-01961-4.

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Texts relating to the protomartyr Thekla and her representation in Greek and Latin hagiography have drawn considerable attention in the past few years, including works such as K. Cooper's *The Virgin and the Bride* (1996), a social study of the saint. S.F. Johnson aims with his literary study of the Greek *Life and Miracles of Thekla* to expand this field of research. Drawing on and completing the work of Dagrón, who in 1978 edited the text with a commentary, J.'s thorough analysis re-positions it within the classical literary tradition.

In Chapter 1, 'Paraphrase in Practice: *The Life of Thekla* and Literary Inheritance in Late Antiquity', he proposes a literary and rhetorical analysis of the fifth-century text, comparing it in detail with the earlier Greek apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thekla*. This sheds light on the author's effort to dramatise the conversion and martyrdom of the virgin. J. underlines the thematic and stylistic resemblance of the *Life* to Greek romance. Additionally, he demonstrates that the text clearly refers to contemporary Trinitarian theology, thus establishing that the author had absorbed contemporary theological preoccupations. Moreover, although presenting a saint whose cult had long been established in the region, the anonymous author insists on the constant presence and local identity of the saint. J. emphasises this idea in demonstrating that Thekla is presented in apostolic terms, a powerful figure capable of rivalling the likes of Paul, whose cult was thriving in nearby Myra.

Having established the contemporary character of the *Life*, J. proposes in Chapter 2, 'Biblical Rewriting and Metaphrastic Habit: *The Life of Thekla* within the History of Ancient Paraphrase', to situate the text within a literary tradition from Hebrew biblical paraphrase to fifth-century A.D. Greek paraphrase, also including a brief reference to Byzantine paraphrase. Following a short and selective history of the genre, J. explores this method of textual elaboration. He shows that paraphrase can enlighten us about both the sources used and the cultural context of production. This technique was traditionally used by Christian writers to clarify texts and purge them of heretical or controversial material.

Chapter 3, 'History, Narrative and Miracle in Late Antique Seleukia: Thekla's "thaemata" and their Collector', proposes that the *Miracles*, a series of stories which can be read independently, are in fact closely woven threads with numerous correspondences forming an intricate thematic pattern. Thekla appears as the patroness of a precisely defined geographical area, claiming the region for herself by defending, avenging and healing those who believe in her. She also sets her authority against that of pagan *daimones* such as Sarpedon, surpassing him with her healing powers. However, this precise textual commentary could have been enriched by a comparison with the miracles in which Thekla confronts, ridicules and steals patients from local doctors and the version of the end of the saint's life, relegated to Appendix 1, where her presence in Seleukia is justified by the fact that she disappeared into the ground, fleeing the men who had been paid by jealous local doctors to rape her. J. continues his commentary by demonstrating how the author of the *Miracles* underlines the reality of the saint by recounting his direct encounters with her. He is the ultimate witness, and the *Miracles* prove to have been commissioned by the saint herself.

Chapter 4, 'Greek Wonders: Classical Models for Christian Miracle Collections', links the tales describing the extraordinary activities of Thekla to paradoxographical compilations of works of wonder. J. shows the cultural and literary continuity of this tradition in historical, biblical, theological and paranormal miscellany. This genre was indeed used in late antiquity by pagan and Christian writers alike. For J., the *Miracles* seem to belong to paradoxography much more than to aretalogy, which was otherwise used to relate healing miracles. However, the length of the narrations which characterises the collection in question indicates the author's desire to set his text in the continuity of classical forms of literature already used by Christian writers.

Finally, the conclusion raises the interesting point of the demise of the cult of Thekla within the rise of Marial, announcing the overall decline of the cult of the protomartyr in the early Middle Ages.

The remaining pages contain three useful appendices: the first, as noted, could have been included in the main text; the second offers a brief analysis of two late antique sermons on Thekla (Pseudo-Chrysostom and Severus of Antioch); the third presents a selection of early Byzantine miracle collections.

J. has succeeded in writing a precise literary study of the *Life and Miracles of Saint Thekla*, when previous works on the saint had mainly concentrated on social and historical aspects of her cult and hagiographical documents linked to her. This work is therefore a useful tool for those interested in both Greek hagiography and literary transmission in late antiquity. It is a worthy contribution to our understanding of the cult of the most celebrated saint of early Christianity.

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ANCIENT EDITIONS OF PLAUTUS¹

DEUFERT (M.) *Textgeschichte und Rezeption der plautinischen Komödien im Altertum*. (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 62.) Pp. xiii + 422. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002. Cased, €98. ISBN: 978-3-11-017336-9.

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This splendidly researched and argued study, successfully submitted for habilitation at the University of Göttingen by a pupil of Otto Zwierlein, details the history of the text of Plautus' comedies from their initial composition down to the fourth century A.D., when allegedly the common source of the surviving manuscripts was written. The many problems therein have exercised the brains of the leading Plautinists for over a century and a half, but Deufert effectively challenges claims made by scholars as eminent as Ritschl, Studemund, Leo and Lindsay, making his study essential reading for all students of the manuscript tradition of Roman drama.

D. covers the first 600 years of Plautine transmission in detail up to the fourth century A.D., the date he assumes for the common ancestor of the Ambrosian palimpsest in Milan (A) and the three Palatine manuscripts (B, C, D). Here he follows the structure of the first 62 pages of Leo's *Plautinische Forschungen* (Berlin, 1912) and Lindsay's *The Ancient Editions of Plautus* (Oxford, 1904), but his arguments are far more detailed and his conclusions often different.

He begins with unverifiable but astute guesses of Plautus' *modus operandi*, suggesting that the plays were originally composed with no divisions into acts and scenes and no colometric presentation of *cantica*. Few and largely minimal changes were likely to have been made for repeat performances in Plautus' lifetime and after his death, leaving only limited evidence (e.g. the duplications in the ending of *Poenulus*). In the lifetimes of Plautus and Terence apparently only producers possessed play texts (cf. *Eunuchus* 25–34), and D. argues that it was not until 130–20 B.C. (20 years earlier than Leo suggested!) that manuscripts of the 130 or so plays attributed to Plautus by Aulus Gellius (3.3.11) were more widely available, although even then just to a small group of scholars (e.g. Accius, Varro, Aelius Stilo, Sergius Clodius). A detailed analysis of all

¹My apologies to the author of this study and to the readers and editors of *CR* for the late completion of this review.