

Being, Life and Intellect that is the culmination of the treatise (6.6.18) – but perhaps Plotinus didn't either.

Plotinus' main argumentative contribution lies in his rebuttal of Aristotle's criticisms of the Platonic Ideal Numbers: numbers can't simply be the result of our counting or weighing operations, as though the number seven (for example) did not exist until we had counted that far. For there to be right reasoning (including calculation) there must be a right answer already fixed before we reasoned our way to it: without that limit any answer would be as good. But the substantial (Ideal, True) number is not identical with any of its appearances (copies, partial images); neither is it simply composed of many smaller numbers. As Syrianus later explained, 'units combined with units make a *substratum* for the number seven, but seven comes to be from so and so many units and the *heptad*' (*Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* 133). The dyad, pentad, heptad and the rest are Ideal Forms, and – or so Plotinus argues – logically precede the real beings incorporated into the Intellect, that is, all the things that go to make the complete living being which is the intelligible universe. 'But if numbers were before beings, they were not beings' (*Ennead* 6.6.9, 24), and it is the power of number that divided Being into multiplicity.

One further confusion that S.-G. disentangles is between the One itself, the incomprehensible source of everything, and the one of the numerical order. Ideal numbers exist (like everything else), each of them a unity, by virtue of there being *unity*, and this is an easy route into the notion that everything exists in and by the presence of the One, but that One is not a number, any more than it is a creator, a fountain, or the sun itself. In the end, mathematics is only another way of remaking our sensibilities, seeing in ourselves the grand images of Two, Three, Seven and the rest, and then looking beyond them to the source of intellect, life and being.

Much in Plotinus' thought remains obscure, and many metaphysical questions about the numbers we are more interested in remain unanswered. But this is a sound, scholarly and sympathetic treatment of an unjustly neglected portion of his thought, not a line-by-line commentary, but an intelligent exploration of an important text.

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## LATE GREEK LITERATURE

JOHNSON (S.F.) (ed.) *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity. Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism*. Pp. xii + 215. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006. Cased, £50, US\$99.95. ISBN: 978-0-7546-5683-8.  
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This volume is a welcome contribution to the study of Greek writing in Late Antiquity in its own right and in its entire breadth. A. Cameron provides a substantive introduction to the subject matter. The study of Greek literature in Late Antiquity, she notes, has traditionally been hampered by four sets of boundaries: the chronological boundary between Antiquity and Late Antiquity, the linguistic boundary between Greek and other languages (not just Latin, but also Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, etc.), the religious boundary between paganism and Christianity, and the social boundary between elite 'literature' and non-elite texts such as hagiography or didactic writing. All these shortcomings the present volume seeks to address.

A. Becker's contribution exemplifies the benefit of crossing linguistic boundaries. He shows how the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, originally composed in Greek, were hugely influential in West Syrian Christianity where they were absorbed to such a degree that it is justified to speak of 'Theodorism'. While Theodoret's original works came under suspicion of heresy in the course of the Chalcedonian controversy and were subsequently suppressed in Greek, it was this 'Theodorism' that then influenced such Latin authors as Junillus Africanus, *quaestor* at Justinian's court, and Cosmas Indicopleustes, who was writing in Greek in Alexandria. This contribution could have been even stronger if the author had relegated his sparring with other scholars (Kihn, Maas) to footnotes.

C. Jones demonstrates the benefits of a reception history of a text whose influence extends well into Late Antiquity and beyond and, again, bridges more than one linguistic tradition. In a series of vignettes, he shows how Apollonius of Tyana as described in the *Life* by Philostratus was appreciated by non-Christian Greek authors as an embodiment of ancestral culture. Christian Greek authors, by contrast, regarded him with cautious suspicion as a magician and a fabricator of talismans, while Christian Latin authors of the same period singled him out for his admirable comportment in the face of tyranny.

The following three articles illustrate the 'didacticism' of Late Antique literature in a variety of genres: apologetic, *erôtapokriseis* and oratory. A. Johnson's tightly argued piece argues that Eusebius of Caesarea's *Praeparatio Evangelica*, ostensibly an apology for Christianity, can also be read as an *elenchus* (in the sense of petition), and, even more, as an *eisagôgê*. This function of an introduction to insiders in the Christian faith is evident not only in the arrangement of the material (especially Eusebius' extensive use of quotations from non-Christian authors), and in the use of chapter headings and indexes for ease of reference, but especially in the author's own declarations of the pedagogical aim of his work, which thus becomes another building block in his grand project of establishing a distinct, supra-ethnic Christian identity.

In a richly documented essay that points the way for future studies, Y. Papadoyannakis discusses the genre of *erôtapokriseis*. The elusive nature of these Question-and-Answer texts, and the difficulty of pinning them down in time and place that is further exacerbated by their complicated textual history, only confirms their popularity, which continued unabated in Late Antiquity and Byzantium. Replicating the classroom experience of teacher and disciple or the interaction between preacher and audience, these texts implicitly provide models of discipleship for the reader. Along with the related genre of dialogue literature, they form a discursive matrix in which rhetoric plays a central role.

R. Webb's brilliant piece of literary hermeneutics teases several layers of meaning from Choricius of Gaza's declamations (*meletai*) – fabricated speeches on themes taken from Greek history, mythology or the lives of stock characters – in juxtaposition with his speech on the mimes. Choricius articulates the rhetor's conundrum of posing as a character in a timeless fictional world while at the same time ensuring that he presents his audience – in a very real time and place – with a speech that resonates with their own experience. Choricius' themes of artistic representation and theatrical impersonation in these speeches 'form a commentary on the art of declamation' (p. 116). In this manner, they stake out 'the idea of the "literary" as an autonomous zone where worlds can be created' (p. 123).

The next three articles form a small cluster, as they all draw attention to the flourishing of literature in the classical vein in Constantinople in the early decades of

the sixth century. E. Jeffreys shows how, during the reign of Anastasius I (491–518), hexameters by Christodorus of Coptos or Colluthus of Lycopolis on themes from ancient history and pagan mythology co-existed with the recently invented form of Christian poetry, the *kontakion*, and how historiographers like Zosimus presented a thoroughly pagan world-view at the same time as Malalas produced a Christian world chronicle.

A. Hollis follows suit with an encyclopaedic contribution on the history of the epyllion that reinforces the notion that the flourishing of Christianity in the fourth century did not immediately dampen the appreciation of classical genres or mythological themes. This form of miniature epic usually focussing on an episode from mythology gained popularity in the third century B.C.E., while the latest such works were composed by Colluthus and Musaeus under the Emperor Anastasius I.

M. Whitby offers a thorough metrical and stylistic analysis of the St Polyeuktos epigram (AP 1.10), along with a very welcome translation (thanks to J. Bardill) of the entire text. Nonnus' strict practice of hexameter writing had set the gold standard that was observed by pagan and Christian poets alike, and even though neither the author of this epigram nor most authors of other inscribed epigrams from this period, ever quite attained full mastery of his metrics, it is clear that Anicia Juliana spent her wealth well in selecting not only master artisans but also a master wordsmith for her magnificent church.

S. Johnson's contribution picks up on the theme of authorial strategies embedded in narrative. In a condensation of his work on the *Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla*, he shows that this late fifth-century text still shows traces of the ancient novel, mediated through the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* of c. 190, the salient common features being the motif of the two lovers' forced flight and education, invented speeches and the manipulation of levels of time within the narrative through foreshadowing and recapitulation.

The volume has several commendable features: there are footnotes at the bottom of the page, bibliographies at the end of each contribution, and an index. There are also quite a few typographical errors, especially in the foreign-language titles in footnotes and bibliographies.

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## NONNUS

AUDANO (S.) (ed.) *Nonno e i suoi lettori*. (Hellenica 27.) Pp. vi + 113. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2008. Paper, €16. ISBN: 978-88-6274-059-3.

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In recent years, interest in Nonnus of Panopolis as a literary model has developed among scholars working not only on Late Greek Epic and Early Byzantine Literature, but also on the Classical Tradition among those who appreciated the later and rare authors of Antiquity (it must be remembered that Nonnus was also read and imitated, by those who appreciated later authors, in Byzantium and in sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Western Europe). The current blossoming of Nonnian studies in Italy, where two important editorial projects on the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase* have been carried out under the guidance of D. Gigli and E. Livrea, has produced this