

The authorial tone can also be idiosyncratic, offering many opinions which are not necessarily helpful to the task such as to capitalize 'Catechetical School' after discussing its informal nature (p. 18) or a running battle with certain modern theologians (p. 47).

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NONNUS' *GOSPEL OF JOHN*, BOOK 5

G. AGOSTI: *Nonno di Panopoli: Paraphrasi del Vangelo di San Giovanni. Canto Quinto*. Introduzione, edizione critica, traduzione e commento. Pp. 559. Florence: Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità 'Giorgio Pasquali', 2003. Paper, €40. ISBN: 88-89051-08-6.

A.'s new introduction, text, translation, and commentary on the fifth chapter of Nonnus' *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* (written after A.D. 431) represents the fifth such volume in a series orchestrated by Enrico Livrea. Livrea (L.) himself already has two commentaries on Chapters 18 (1989)—see J. N. Birdsall in *CR* 40 (1990), 472–3—and 2 (2000). The other two commentaries are by Domenico Accorinti (Chapter 20; 1996) and Claudio De Stefani (Chapter 1; 2002)—see Mary Whitby in *CR* 48 (1998), 17–18 and *CR* 54 (2004), 358–60. The previous volumes in this series have all received high praise, and A.'s contribution hardly falls short of the standard: in over 500 pages he offers one of the most detailed and erudite studies to date on a late antique text. (Each of the volumes in this series is published by a different press, and this reviewer hopes that eventually a zealous editor might collect these new critical texts and apparatus into a single convenient volume.)

A.'s major contributions to the ongoing critical reappraisal of late antique poetry are well known. Most of his authoritative articles can be found in this volume's comprehensive bibliography (including some less well known: e.g. 'L'epica biblica nella tarda antichità graeca', *Stella* [2001], 67–104). Not surprisingly, A. follows L. in attributing the *Paraphrase* (*P.*) firmly to Nonnus and highlights several affinities throughout the introduction between *P.* and the *Dionysiaca* (e.g. pp. 45, 58–64, 175–8). However, these affinities are only noted as he reaches them in his discussion of other topics such as imagery, exegesis, and language, and it might have been better, given the diffuseness of the overarching Italian project on *P.*, to readdress the perennial question of authorship in a more transparent fashion.

The fifth chapter of John's Gospel includes the healing miracle at the pool of Bethesda, an argument with Jews over the ability of the Son to judge, and a discourse by Jesus on the testimony of God and Moses. Nonnus follows this three-part structure closely by devoting fifty-six verses to John 5:1–15, sixty-three verses to 5:16–30, and sixty-one verses to 5:31–47. Given Nonnus' very measured approach to expanding his *Vorlage*, it is surprising that A. gives over so much of his introduction (pp. 37–131) to a discussion of miraculous healing in late antiquity (nevertheless making the sensible argument that Nonnus was influenced in his μεταβολή of John 5:1–15 by

contemporary modes of Christian healing). By contrast, the latter two-thirds of the *Vorlage* get short shrift, even though they are richer in their theological significance.

In this vein, Nonnus' exegesis of John 5 demonstrates further his reliance on Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on John* (A.D. 425–8; as argued first by J. Golega in 1930 and reaffirmed by L. in 1987; A., pp. 146–7 and bibliography). A. uses this Alexandrian connection to assert a competition between Egyptian and Constantinopolitan paraphrase schools (p. 99 and *passim*). Competition or not, A. sets Nonnus' paraphrase in its proper context by noting that the genres of *cento* and paraphrase were all the rage in the fifth century (e.g. Eudocia's *Homerocentones* and hexameter paraphrases of Zachariah and Daniel, of the Octateuch, and of the martyrdom of St Cyprian of Antioch; see Photius *Bibl.* 183–4, ed. Henry). A. neglects, however, to align these verse paraphrases with contemporary prose *μεταφράσεις* like the anonymous *Life and Miracles of Thecla* (c. 470), which is only cited for its depiction of the late antique healing shrine at Isaurian Seleucia. Furthermore, the evidence of Eudocia and the *Life and Miracles* shows that martyr acts and early apocrypha were as attractive as the Bible for literary paraphrase in the fifth century.

A.'s sections on paraphrastic technique (pp. 149–74), metre (pp. 175–210), and the manuscript tradition (pp. 211–27) provide the real substance of his prefatory analysis. While A. directs his readers to L. and to Accorinti for more comprehensive treatments of the MSS, he does pause to note that the eleventh-century Laurentian MS (the earliest and best witness) is extant up to *P.* 8.113 and thus includes Chapter 5 of the work. A. then closes his introductory material with a short section (pp. 229–39) on Nonnus' own text of the Gospel, a text which has long been of interest to New Testament scholars. (*P.* was printed early and often in the sixteenth century, e.g. by Aldus Manutius in 1501–4 and by Philipp Melanchthon and Johann Setzer in 1527.) Over and against the Ur-text hunters, A. rightly insists that the precise reconstruction of Nonnus' *Vorlage* is an impossible task due to the nature of paraphrase and, within that genre, to Nonnus' elegant interweaving of variations and expansions (p. 231).

The bulk of A.'s volume consists of a detailed philological commentary (pp. 265–549), which dwarfs the critical text and translation (pp. 244–61). This review obviously does not offer the space to examine the commentary in detail, but a few salient points from A.'s close analysis ought to be mentioned. First, John 5:3b–4, not present in the best NT MSS, is also absent from Nonnus' paraphrase: instead of an angel descending to stir the pool, Nonnus describes its healing waters as *ἄλμασιν αὐτομάτοισιν*, 'con balzi spontanei' (*P.* 5.7; A., pp. 244–5, 295–6; cf. *Dionysiaca* 1.308, *ἄλμασιν αὐτοπόροισιν*). Second, Nonnus stays close to his *Vorlage* when the topic of the superiority of the Father arises: the verse οὐ δύναμαι ἐγὼ ποιεῖν ἅπ' ἐμαυτοῦ οὐδέν (John 5:30) thus becomes οὐρανίου μὲν τοῦ δύναμαι γενετήρος ἀπόπροθεν οὐδέν ἀνύσσαι λαυτόματος (*P.* 5.116–17; A., pp. 254–5, 486–7), a change which emphasizes the unity of Father and Son even more than the Gospel. Finally, the image of Moses as lawgiver and judge arises in John 5:45–7. A. notes that these verses have a vibrant reception in late antique and Byzantine literature (A. p. 538–41), and *P.* is no exception: through the neologism *πρωτόθροος* ('fore-cry'; *P.* 5.175), Nonnus deftly associates Moses as *θεσμοθέτης* with John the Baptist (*P.* 3.130), Isaiah (12.152), and the divine voice (ὁμφή) of Jesus (13.88).

The subtlety and playfulness with which Nonnus handles the biblical text has been well documented by L. and others. What A. brings in addition is the sheer scale of his commentary, surely the largest ever produced for one chapter of a late antique poem.

He also brings a keen awareness of the intersection of literature and visual art through biblical imagery (e.g. on Coptic textiles; p. 422). With all of these tools deployed in its service, A.'s book represents a masterful application of classical learning to the elucidation of a true masterwork of later Greek literature.

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NONNUS AND THE GIANTS

F. VIAN (ed.): *Nonnos de Panopolis: Les Dionysiaques. Tome XVIII, Chant XLVIII*. (Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé.) Pp. xiv + 235. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003. Paper, €36. ISBN: 2-251-00508-0.

Nonnus tantalizes to the end. His last and longest book opens, as did the first, with Gigantomachy, programmatically announced in Book 25. Dionysus faces the Giants alone—but humour and parody prevail (pp. 7–9): Chiron is terrorized when Pelorus decapitates Pelion to expose his cave and all ends inconclusively at l. 89 as Dionysus withdraws for Zeus' future battle. There follow erotic confrontations more congenial to Dionysus: a titillating wrestling-match with Pallene (ll. 90–237) draws on the legends of Hippodamia and Atalanta and motifs from funerary contest, while Dionysus' liaison with Aura, the god's last earthly adventure back in his native Phrygia, is expansively treated (ll. 238–968), though Dionysus himself is absent for long passages, as in the novel handling of the bath of Artemis, where the goddess modestly enters the water fully clad—V. plausibly compares the ritual washing of a cult statue—while Aura plays female voyeur, chiding Artemis for her voluptuous breasts. Artemis' consequent visit to Nemesis in her Taurus cult-centre secures Aura's downfall through Dionysus' agency. Like Dionysus' first conquest Nicaea, Aura is inebriated by a river of wine before being raped, but additionally bound hand and foot, in the Anatolian tradition of a theomachic monster (J. L. Lightfoot, *GRBS* 39 [1998], 293–306). Her rage on discovering her fate prevents her from nursing her twin sons: one she eats before herself committing suicide, the other is entrusted first to Nicaea (!), then Athene (!), and finally inaugurated as Iacchus at Eleusis. Nonnus' capacity for innovative surprise based on immense erudition is unmatched.

Equally resilient and erudite is the scholar who initiated this massive edition almost thirty years ago: Francis Vian edited the first two books of the Budé *Dionysiaca* in 1976. This is the seventh volume for which he has been solely responsible, seven more have been produced under his guidance and the four in preparation will complete the task. In this final volume he corrects some early aberrations (e.g. pp. 23–4 n. 2, p. 81, p. 83 n. 1) and brings mature reflection to bear in interpreting not only this book (notably its frequently humorous tone, p. 9 n. 4, pp. 17–18, p. 70 n. 1, etc.), but the architecture and meaning of the poem as a whole, often improving on Keydell's views (e.g. p. 87 n. 4, p. 88 n. 5, p. 94 n. 1). Gigantomachy was, appropriately, the subject of V.'s earliest publications and his own titanic contribution in his chosen field has now been recognized by a volume of essays in his honour (D. Accorinti, P. Chuvin [edd.], *Des géants à Dionysos* [Alessandria, 2003]).

Dionysus' final affair with Aura invites examination of the entire *Dionysiaca*, which is shaped as much by the god's loves as by his battles. Aura is Dionysus' fifth mistress, parallel in many respects to Nicaea (Books 15–16), but Nonnus carefully articulates