



speakers use to avoid face-threatening acts or linguistic taboos and to make their addressees better disposed towards them.

The editors' ambition is that that this collection will offer 'new interpretations of known phenomena, by applying different analytic tools or by identifying new areas and objects of study' (p. 40). Their second aim is that the volume will offer readers 'a wide view of the richness and variety of Im/Politeness research in Classical languages' (p. 41). On both counts they have succeeded. This is an instructive, absorbing and pleasing collection, which, taken together, opens our eyes to linguistic subtleties in texts we thought we knew well.

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POETRY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

VERHELST (B.), SCHEIJNEN (T.) (edd.) *Greek and Latin Poetry of Late Antiquity. Form, Tradition, and Context*. Pp. xii + 302, ill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Cased, £75, US\$99.99. ISBN: 978-1-316-51605-8.

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In the last few decades late antique poetry, both Greek and Latin, has been experiencing an ever-increasing popularity. Typically, individual researchers – with few exceptions – have concentrated on either the Latin or the Greek tradition. This monolingual focus, hindering a true and fruitful dialogue, has its obvious drawbacks and, in some cases, may even lead to misinterpretations. For example, Hellenists, not considering the Latin epic tradition, tend to overrate the innovative character of Greek late antique epic poetry. Thus, this volume is especially welcome. Its aim is: 'to shed new light on literary developments that can or have been regarded as "typical" for Late Antiquity [by 'Late Antiquity' the editors intend the period from *c.* 200 to *c.* 600 CE] and on the poetic and aesthetic ideals that affect individual poems from this period. It is an exploration of the possibilities created by a bilingual focus seeking a deeper understanding of late antique poetry as a whole, and it aims to stimulate further such explorations in future research' (p. 3).

Inevitably, the volume's bilingual approach involves the *vexata quaestio* of direct interaction between the two literary traditions. To date, there is still much scholarly debate whether or not Greek authors interacted with the Latin tradition. Both editors and contributors are well aware of the problem and, generally, avoid arguing for one side. Instead, most of the case studies provide 'alternative lines' by exploring how late antique texts 'can meaningfully be read alongside one other' (p. 8), without addressing the Latin question.

The twelve chapters are organised in three parts: 'A "Late" Perspective on the Literary Tradition', 'Late Antique "Genres" and "Genre" in Late Antiquity' and 'The Context of Late Antiquity'. To address overall aspects, my review shall slightly depart from the order presented in the volume.

S. Bär's chapter, 'Greek and Roman Epigrammatists in the Later Imperial Period', lends itself as an ideal opening piece for the following contributions focusing on the late antique

conversation with the classical tradition. Based on the traditional function of epigrams as vehicles for meta-literary discussion, Bär analyses epigrams by Ausonius and Palladas dealing with classical authors and investigates how the relation to the literary past is reflected in the poems. As he demonstrates, in both cases the canonical authors are presented as authorities, while the relation to them is characterised by, what I would call, a certain 'lightness'. This relation to the canonical authors, belonging to a much distant past by the fourth century CE, seems quite different, for example, from the sentiment expressed in the Hellenistic *epitymbia* mourning the death of classical authors. Hence, I wonder whether the relation to the literary past, as analysed by Bär, can be considered typical for the late antique reception of the classical past more generally. In any case, his analysis ties in well with observations made elsewhere in the volume, which emphasise the ease by which late antique poets interact with the literary past (cf., in particular, C. Maciver, pp. 53–4; H. Kaufmann, pp. 104–13).

One way of interacting with the literary past is by means of intertextual references. This aspect is addressed in two chapters, yet with different approaches. Following a more traditional line, K. Carvounis and S. Papaioannou, in 'Rivalling Song Contests and Alternative Typhonomachies in Ovid and Nonnus', analyse parallels between Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The article is a good example of methodological problems posed by the 'Latin question'. For instance, the authors are able to point out striking correspondences between the description of Mercury (*Ov. Met.* 1) and Cadmus (Nonn. *Dion.* 1–2). However, in the light of the general uncertainty related to the question of Ovidian influence on Nonnus, the evidence does not provide any firm conclusion. In contrast, Maciver, in 'Allusion and Referentiality in Late Antique Epic', makes use of a theoretical concept, which has been developed for the intertextual analysis of late antique Latin verse, and applies it to the interpretation of Greek poems, that is 'nonreferential allusion' (defined as a mere allusion, which expresses adherence to a classical poetic tradition but is irrelevant for the content of the new poem). The usefulness of the concept is best exemplified by his stimulating new reading of the Callimachean echoes in the in-proem of Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica*.

Part 2, comprising three chapters, is dedicated to aspects related to genre. As stated by the editors (pp. 6–7), Kaufmann's survey 'The Implosion of Poetic Genre in Late Antiquity' is intended as an introduction to the section. Kaufmann diagnoses a 'decreased importance of genre' (p. 105) in late antique poetry (both Greek and Latin), a phenomenon she tries to capture by the image of implosion. As arguments for the alleged 'loss of pressure' (that is loss of generic rigidity), she refers to 'generically unique works', 'genre mixing' and 'new genres'. The implosion metaphor is certainly stimulating, but there are weak points in her argumentation, of which Kaufmann is well aware. Most importantly, it is methodologically difficult to decide whether to consider generic deviation a confirmation of or a challenge to the generic system. For example, on pp. 108–9, Kaufmann discusses the incorporation of a bucolic song (βουκολισμός) into Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* (15.399–416) as an example of generic implosion. But what about the fact that the lament is thought to be uttered by a cow (βοῦς)? Could this not be evidence of genre awareness?

The other two chapters discuss particular poetic genres, which are representative of Greek and Latin late antique poetry: cento and epyllion. B. Sowers, in 'Common Texts, (Un)Common Aesthetics', examines the prefaces of Proba's, Ausonius' and Eudocia's centos and convincingly argues for the 'pan-Mediterranean quality of cento poetics' (p. 117). Verhelst, in 'A "Revival" of the "Epyllion" as a "Genre"?', explores a 'genre' notoriously difficult to grasp: the so-called epyllion. She analyses potentially meta-generic passages (like prefaces, prologues etc.) in Greek and Latin short epic texts and identifies

several self-referential implications. Although there is no evidence of a well-defined genre of late antique epyllion, she argues that the poems exhibit 'a high degree of genre awareness' (p. 150).

In Part 3, the diachronic perspective, which prevails in the first two sections, is replaced by a synchronic focus, emphasising the late antique context of the poems discussed. Possibly, this section would have been a better fit for A. Peltari's chapter on paratexts in Greek and Latin poetry, 'Speaking from the Margins', which indicates 'a considerable degree of overlap between the Greek and Roman literary cultures of Late Antiquity' (p. 88).

The three chapters by L. Miguélez-Cavero ('Internal Audiences in the New Testament Epics of Juvenecus and Nonnus'), M. Gilka ('Colluthus and Dracontius') and A.S. Schoess ('Objects of the Lusting Gaze') exhibit a similar approach. In examining Greek and Latin hexameter poetry, all three authors point out distinctive features and try to relate their observations to socio-historical developments characteristic of late antiquity. Miguélez-Cavero examines the presentation of internal audiences in Juvenecus' and Nonnus' verse paraphrases and identifies subtle differences, which she tentatively relates to the specific historical background. Gilka analyses the treatment of Helena's abduction in Colluthus and Dracontius (*Romul.* 8). She points out notable differences compared to the mythological *vulgata* and links them to the contemporary Christian context. Schoess discusses three passages describing beautiful youths, both female and male (Claud. *Rapt. Pros.* 2.36–9; Nonn. *Dion.* 47.271–94; Coluth. 251–67). According to her, the descriptions implicitly emphasise the absence of attributes. She relates this observation to the Christian treatment of statues in late antiquity, which were deprived of their attributes and transformed into mere symbols of ancient beauty.

A different route is chosen by P. Hardie, in 'Metamorphosis and Mutability in Late Antique Epic', and E. Greensmith, in 'Saying the Other: the Poetics of Personification in Late Antique Epic', who focus on a specific motive in a Greek epic text (metamorphosis in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* and personification in Quintus Smyrnaeus, respectively) and trace it along the Latin (late antique) tradition. In doing so, both authors provide new perspectives on the original Greek texts.

The volume's bilingual focus is exploited in different directions, which cannot be reduced to a common denominator. In the choice of texts, however, one cannot help noticing the predominance of epic poetry. Naturally, readers' views on the attractiveness of the individual approaches will diverge. To me, the way in which theoretical concepts developed in Latin scholarship – such as nonreferential allusion (cf. Maciver) or proto-metamorphosis (cf. Hardie) – are applied to the interpretation of Greek texts is especially instructive. Despite the different paths pursued by the contributors, there is a significant overlap between the chapters. Hence, it is a pity that individual authors have not fully exploited these common lines. For instance, I wonder why Kaufmann's relevant implosion theory has not been thoroughly addressed in Sowers's and Verhelst's chapters.

Considering the wide scope of the volume, readers may inevitably miss the discussion of certain aspects and texts they consider crucial. In my case, this mainly applies to the common rhetorical background shared by Greek and Latin poets. In view of the massive impact that rhetorical training had on late antique poetry, this aspect – despite some relevant references by Greensmith and Schoess – seems heavily underrepresented. The inclusion of, for example, verse panegyrics could have helped provide a more balanced picture. In regard to the accuracy of the volume, I only registered minor typos.

The editors can be commended in succeeding to provide a kaleidoscopic view on how to explore Greek and Latin late antique literature side by side. The main strength of the book consists in showing different paths of meaningful engagement between Greek and

Latin texts, apart from the cumbersome question of direct influence. Hence, the volume provides a valuable starting point, which will certainly stimulate further research. Or to put it with Ausonius' translation of the Greek proverb ἄρχῆ ἤμισυ παντός: *dimidium facti est coepisse* (*Epigr.* 92.1).

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TEXT AND IMAGE IN GREEK LITERATURE

CAPRA (A.), FLORIDI (L.) (edd.) *Intervisuality. New Approaches to Greek Literature*. (MythosEikonPoiesis 16.) Pp. vi + 347, b/w & colour ills. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2023. Cased, £110, €124.95, US \$135. ISBN: 978-3-11-079524-0.

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Is *Intervisuality* a thing? Clearly the editors think so, apparently by analogy with 'intertextuality' (e.g. p. 1). But (admittedly after a rich few decades of scholarship) what intertextuality and what an intertext are, are clear. Whatever intervisuality may be, the idea of an intervis (or is that an intervisual?) is not at all clear. First, and above all, intertextuality is mono-medial: one text relates to and plays on another (or many). Is intervisuality about images playing on images or about texts playing on images or about images playing on texts? And if it is about all these things, does the difference make a difference? In other words, the intermedial problem matters and needs thinking through. If you call a book *Intervisuality*, it might be natural for readers to expect an extended discussion and definition, the argued development of a position that will make intervisuality a thing. But Capra and Floridi's eleven-page introduction offers only a few 'tentative takes'. The one chapter, 'Intervisuality from the Middle Ages to Classical Antiquity' by A. Pizzone, that might threaten a definition, starts off with a couple of medieval art historians and then skips lightly across some eclectically chosen examples from antiquity. None of this establishes anything. I remain as unclear about the controlling concept as I was before I had heard of it, and nothing in the book has sharpened the focus. But if the concept is to have any value and traction *theoretically*, it needs clear expression, definition and an argued justification.

So much for a grumpy introduction. It is fair because the editors have failed the concept that their grandiose title over-signals. It is unfair because this is a rather good collection of essays on the complicated and good old theme of image and text in ancient culture (not a young topic when T.B.L. Webster published *Greek Art and Literature* in 1939), an area of intense, rich and high-octane scholarly discussion in the last four decades (just like 'intertextuality', but without a catchy title). We are offered thirteen papers in addition to the introduction, with no obvious direct connection, but all loosely assembled around the 'intervisuality' banner. After Pizzone's opener attempting to justify the main theme, we are offered a disappointingly chronological framework: six papers on the 'Archaic and Classical Age', five on the 'Hellenistic and Imperial Age' (when on earth and in what mindset were these one?), which only offer one piece on pre-Imperial and one that is deeply Byzantine, and finally a parting shot 'Pointing to Rome'. This arrangement is