Nor do the sections on individual authors sufficiently relate the observations made on the works to their social context, i.e. the recitations in Milan and Rome as well as Carthage and Constantinople. Considerations of this kind could not least shed additional light on the abandonment of a divine apparatus foregrounding the goddess Roma and would help the reader to embed S.'s results into a bigger picture. This would be a more nuanced picture than the one sketched in the last section of Chapter 2 ('Historisch-kulturelle Voraussetzungen', pp. 44–58), where S. seeks to stress the common ground between the works under discussion by pointing to their role as documents of the continuity of Roman culture in times of political instability. Yet the very concentration on the texts themselves has something to commend it: S.'s study provides in this way a basis for different approaches to late antique verse panegyric. While S. seems to set out to complement through literary analysis the theoretical frame outlined by Hofmann, her findings suggest that the emphasis on panegyric and epic keeps shifting and will no doubt lead scholars to reconsider the generic character of 'panegyric epic'.

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LATE LATIN POETRY

HARICH-SCHWARZBAUER (H.), SCHIERL (P.) (edd.) *Lateinische Poesie der Spätantike. Internationale Tagung in Castelen bei Augst, 11.–13. Oktober 2007*. (Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 36.) Pp. xviii + 316. Basel: Schwabe, 2009. Cased, €68.50. ISBN: 978-3-7965-2411-0.

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As the Introduction states, this Swiss conference was intended to strengthen cooperation between specialists in the literature of late antiquity who come from different scholarly traditions. The methodological spectrum explicitly included the current debate on literary theory. For its diversity alone this collection of fourteen papers is a success. However, readers are left to weigh the pros and cons on their own; given the aim of the conference it would have been helpful to have the discussions between participants. Contributions range from hard-core intertextuality and narratology to good old *Quellenforschung* and biographical reading. Perhaps contrary to expectation, the continental contributors rather than the Anglo-American ones appear most eager to apply current literary methods. The German- and French-speaking classical communities have now definitely caught up (the Italians had no need to). Contributions cover pagan as well as Christian poets from the fourth to the sixth century in chronological order.

Two papers about Claudian stand out for their conceptual daring, both aiming to probe the surface of his poetry by means of a metapoetical reading. Harich-Schwarzbauer, 'Serielle Lektüre der *Carmina minora* Claudians', contends that what is usually considered to be a posthumous appendix may well have been conceived as a coherent *libellus* by the poet himself. She construes *carmina* 2–7 as being introductory to the supposed *libellus* through a metapoetical interpretation of their subject matter: a harbour, for example, is a metaphor for the quiet of writing small-scale poetry, and marble represents the versatility of the artist. Poems 29

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and 33–9, on the magnet and the crystal, receive an Orphic interpretation, and are seen as symbols of the unity in disparity in a *libellus* of epigrams.

In a more abstract vein, Guipponi-Gineste analyses what she calls the 'Poétique de la réflexivité chez Claudien'. In his later political poems Claudian began to consider his art as an essential prerequisite for Stilicho's re-establishment of political order. The *concordia discors* of the *mirabilia* in the *Carmina minora* testifies to the same conception of poetry. In his imagery and in his *ekphraseis* the poet thematises his conscious *ars* as, for instance, in the description of Proserpina weaving, with its intertextual perspective on Roman literature. Conscious of his art and of chaotic reality alike, Claudian embraced poetry to make sense of the world.

Exemplary though these papers are, their method of comprehensive metapoetical reading remains a fragile construct. The problem is that it is scarcely falsifiable: whereas it is easy to adduce proofs for an allegorical world, it is difficult to prove their validity. Hence these papers, rather than proving something about Claudian's poetry, are, in a way, a poetical response to it.

It is interesting to compare them with two other excellent papers which use quite a different, indeed much more traditional method. Shanzer, in 'Two Variations on the Theme of Paradise', first explores the roots of the motif of the trees that are making music in Marius Victorius' *Aleth*. 1.245–51 (what on first reading might appear to be Alexandrian allusion turns out to have an eschatological pedigree), and goes on to track the traces of the Good Thief 'stealing Heaven' in Sedulius' *Carm. Pasch.* 5.227–31 and Avitus' *Carm*. 3.409–19. If done well – and Shanzer's expertise and contagious enthusiasm warrant that – this time-honoured quest for sources is obviously still able to create a fascinating portrait of an author's intellectual world.

Roberts' contribution, 'Venantius Fortunatus and the Uses of Travel in Late Latin Poetry', sheds new light on some travel poetry of Fortunatus (*Carm*. 10.9 and 11.25, and the epilogue of the *Life of Saint Martin*) in which travelling 'indexes an emotional state'. The last portion of the *Life* even 'takes on an increasingly personal tone' and takes 'a turn to autobiography'. What is so convincing about this paper is that it ignores the taboo regarding both the author's emotion and autobiography, while at the same time arguing on intertextual lines of genre. The 'memory of poets' legitimises a revival of autobiographical reading.

I have selected these four articles, and discussed them at some length, not only because of their intrinsic value, but also to show the fruitful tension between *anciens* and *modernes* which is created – albeit implicitly – in this volume. The remaining contributions are often no less interesting. I shall order them along the axis of author/*persona*, text and reader.

The 'I' of the authorial *persona* is the subject of Burnier's paper on Ausonius' *Mosella* and *Carmen* 27 by Paulinus of Nola, and of Hecquet-Noti's 'Entre exégèse et épopée: présence auctoriale dans Juvencus, Sédulius et Avit de Vienne'. Burnier's paper investigates the applicability of the idea of 'paratopie' (the author is a member of, and, at the same time, distant from society). Regrettably, his intertextual argumentation does not seem to warrant his conclusion that, while using the first person, the poet, through his work, wants to be acknowledged as spokesman of his time.

In a well-wrought article, Hecquet-Noti develops the interesting thesis that in biblical epic the authorial 'I' not only lends structure to the narrative as in didactic epic poetry, but above all enhances the Christian *utilitas* of the poem by turning epic in the direction of authoritative homily and exegesis. The rather cumbersome

theoretical argumentation in both contributions seems to indicate that the concept of the authorial 'I' to this day does not sit easily with criticism.

Now for a series of articles that are primarily centred around the text. Rücker contributes a beautiful paper which perfectly exploits intertextuality à la Conte to show that Ausonius' poetical letters 21 and 22 to Paulinus reveal their full literary potential only when read against the foil of Virgil and Ovid, with themes such as exile, solitude and return.

Carefully distinguishing between full intertextuality and mere poetical language, Consolino expertly analyses Juvencus' description of the death of John the Baptist (3.33–72) and ends up embedding it in no fewer than three pre-texts, viz. the murders of Priam and of Orpheus in Virgil, and that of Pompey in Lucan. In accordance with current views, Juvencus appears to be a careful artist who is conscious of the means at his disposal.

Galli Milić contributes a paper which leaves a mixed impression. She undertakes to uncover the argumentative strategies in Dracontius' *Satisfactio*. She makes a strong case for classifying the poem as a plea of *deprecatio*, 'the act of suing for pardon by expressing contrition' (*OLD* s.v. 3c). Her attempt to link it also to Ovid's *Tristia*, obvious though this may be *in abstracto*, turns out to be less successful in practice.

Uden deserves praise for an article which is as straightforward in its message as it is in its wording: 'The Failure of Fable: Art and Law in Avianus'. He demonstrates how Avianus breaks the mould of the fable. Despite their aestheticisation and disavowal of political relevance, his fables are no longer innocuous animal tales: they are full of public punishment and physical pain, representative of the retributive culture to which they belong.

Likewise concerned with the connection between text and culture, Pollmann traces notions of decadence and progress is Pseudo-Hilarius' twin poems *Metrum in Genesin – Carmen de euangelio*, while Chappuis Sandoz raises the question of the social and religious 'construction' of woman in the epitaphs of Venantius Fortunatus. Pseudo-Hilarius is described by Pollmann as a Christian poet open to pagan, anthropocentric cultural optimism. She endorses earlier research which has pointed out parallels with Lucretius' theory of the origin of culture, and has claimed that Lucretius' moral instance, Epicurus, was turned into the figure of Jesus Christ by Christian writers.

Women feature conspicuously in the life and poetry of Venantius Fortunatus. Chappuis Sandoz introduces one of them, a certain Vilithute, who died in childbirth and is remembered in *Carm*. 4.26. According to Chappuis Sandoz, Vilithute is not seen as an individual, but as a Marian symbol of chastity. The individual is subordinated to the structures of church and society (the same being true, she adds briefly, of men). This begs the question whether the use of the modern term individuality offers a fruitful perspective at all in late antiquity, as the absence of individuality inevitably has a negative connotation for modern thinking, which it could not have for contemporaries.

In a historically oriented contribution Schierl investigates the relationship between the praise of God and of the emperor Constantine in the anonymous hymn *Laudes domini*. Under Constantine, Christian poetry had to find ways to combine imperial panegyric with Christian religion. Schierl demonstrates how these two elements, together with a third one, namely the poem's patriotic stance for Autun, fit together.

Finally, one contribution addresses readership. In a brief but penetrating analysis, Charlet in 'Claudien et son public' defines three groups to which Claudian's political poems are addressed: first, the immediate and explicit addressees; second, the members of the public present at the recitations; third, the reading public throughout the empire. Charlet shows that usually both a western and an eastern readership are addressed. The last two poems, however, are different: *De bello Getico* mirrors a changed policy exclusively concerned with the west, whereas the *Panegyric on Honorius' sixth consulate*, against official policy, seems to contain the poet's own message of a *Roma aeterna* which must include both west and east.

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BOETHIUS

MARENBON (J.) (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*. Pp. xvi + 356. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Paper, £18.99, US$32.99 (Cased, £50, US$90). ISBN: 978-0-521-69425-4 (978-0-521-87266-9 hbk).
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We live in a handbook age, and it is easy to make fun of the phenomenon. But Boethius is an excellent topic for such treatment, given that his works range over so many disciplines that it is difficult for any one person to comprehend and comment on them all. In this light, this volume is a curiosity; there are still aspects of his work and achievement that find no treatment here. His *Arithmetic* and his *Music* are ignored, and in a footnote to his introduction, subtitled 'reading Boethius whole', the Editor notes this deficiency and hopes to disarm potential critics by claiming that it would be 'overambitious' to imagine a readership capable of dealing with both Boethius the philosopher and Boethius the mathematician. Yet the general reader hoping to discover Boethius would encounter many difficulties in dealing with the logical treatises; why not spread the net wider? The point is that this Companion fits comfortably in the broad series of Cambridge Companions devoted to philosophers, and the omitted works, despite their wide medieval readership, have little philosophical impact. In other words, the goal is not really to see Boethius whole. This book instead presupposes a philosophically adept audience, and is particularly concerned with the presentation and analysis of those theological and philosophical formulations that Boethius bequeathed to the Middle Ages, both their limits, viewed narrowly, and their influence, viewed broadly. It is concerned more with his philosophical posterity than his antecedents, and issues that have little bearing on this philosophical influence are disregarded. For a view of the whole of Boethius, Henry Chadwick's *Boethius: the Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford, 1981) has therefore not been superseded and remains a valuable resource. Chadwick does a fuller job of portraying Boethius the late antique scholar; and he finds more room for placing Boethius within the context of church history and its crises.

A second curiosity is this: to the extent that Boethius can be reduced to a force felt in medieval philosophy, he can be comprehended by an individual scholar – the assembling of essays by specialists is not the only possible approach to the dissection and evaluation of his corpus. M. has in fact done so himself, and only

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