Simon Goldhill (ed.), *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 266 pp. ISBN: 978-0-521-88774-8.

This collection of articles is a real feast — or should I rather say "symposium"? — as it analyses the literary genre of dialogue with special attention to issues of power, authority and playfulness in changing cultural contexts. The "dialogue" is also investigated as a space for constructing identity in multi-cultural environments, thus following in a way the previous collection edited by Goldhill, *Being Greek under Rome* (Cambridge 2001). The editor opens with the provocative thesis that "dialogue" was invented in democratic Athens and disappeared with the victory of Christianity, which inculcated more authoritative and orthodox structures, while significant dialogic activity was preserved in pockets of rabbinic culture. Following the pattern of an ideal symposium, the thesis of the *symposiarch* is constantly undermined by the invited guests: the notion of a 'real' Platonic dialogue is shown to be very slippery, while rabbinic culture is exposed as rather more authoritative and the lack of 'dialogue' in Christian culture is explained by reference to social necessity (a wide and low-class instead of an aristocratic audience) rather than to authoritarian ideology.

All the contributors to this volume share a deep commitment to the notion that a true and open dialogue is a good thing, signifying political freedom and egalitarian creativity. The question that constantly comes up then is where, when and why such an ideal was compromised. The thrust in most contributions in this book may be summarized as suggesting that true dialogue may never have come into existence in Antiquity.

The book is divided into five sections, according to chronological and cultural criteria. The first section is devoted to Classical models, the second to the Roman Empire, the two sections which follow treat Christianity and the final section focuses on rabbinic literature. The distinction between the two Christian sections, one focusing on theology, the other on sociology, seems a little artificial, but appears to have resulted from the setting of the Cambridge colloquium on which this volume is based: each section reflects one original presentation and its respondent.

The three essays in the first section inquire how and to what extent Platonic 'dialogue' emerged as a unique phenomenon and was truly dialogic. Emily Greenwood in her article 'Fictions of Dialogue in Thucydides' (pp. 15-28), shows that the "Melian dialogue" in Thucydides cannot qualify as a significant precedent, because this staged dialogue is nothing but a camouflage for underlying coercion. Andrew Ford in his article 'The Beginnings of Dialogue' (pp. 29-44) argues that the Socratic dialogue was much more rooted in so-called sophistic forms of speech than is generally assumed. The most significant piece in this section is Alex Long's article 'Plato's Dialogues and a Common Rationale for Dialogue Form' (pp. 45-59). Long inquires here into the heart of the question, namely whether Plato's choice of the dialogue form expresses a particular rationale of philosophizing. In other words: did Plato write dialogues because he thought that they convey a sense of the process of inquiring implied in the very act of doing philosophy? Long argues that no such rationale can be identified, even within Plato's writings, and therefore the use or disuse of this literary genre does not say anything about the philosophical or ideological position of their authors.

Long stresses that the classical passage (*Phaedr.* 276c9), where Plato principally approves of dialectic, deals more with teaching than with inquiring. The philosopher already possesses the required knowledge and is now eager to render it, via the dialogue, a more effective tool of teaching and indeed of converting the student to the Socratic viewpoint. Moreover, Plato's diverse statements on the usefulness of engaging opponents, sympathetic Others or indeed discussing with oneself are shown to be insufficiently consistent with or committed to dialogue with a real Other. While the reader may well appreciate the demanding honesty of the modern scholar, he or she may also sympathize with the editor's admiration for the Classical dialogue. As far as the reader of Plato's dialogues is concerned, it surely remains remarkable that very different views and

approaches to the same philosophical problem are presented. In this sense, there is something unsettling and messy in the Platonic dialogues — despite the conspicuous pedagogical role which Plato assumes as an author.

Two excellent essays form the second section on 'Empire Models': Malcolm Schofield, 'Ciceronian dialogue' (pp. 63-84), and Jason König, 'Sympotic dialogue in the first to the fifth centuries CE' (pp. 85-113). Schofield argues very convincingly for the high value and true open-endedness of the Ciceronian dialogues. Rather than concluding with a definite answer à la Plato, Cicero ends his dialogues with a repeated emphasis on the continued disagreement of the parties. Revealing his own positions both in the prefaces and as an interlocutor in the dialogues, Cicero emerges as a writer who presents a 'uniquely challenging form of philosophical dialogue' (p. 84). König investigates Greek sympotic literature in the Roman Empire, stressing that pagan writers were obsessed with the genre, while Christians on the whole neglected or significantly remodeled it. The key to understanding these differences is the recognition that the symposium became a significant space for re-constructing Greek identity and engaging with the Greek past — a space which pagan writers were eager to inhabit, while Christians were rather less so. The result was that pagan writers engaged in high degrees of polyphony, especially by means of quotations, while Christian writers, like Clement, cut out the dialogical element and with it also the characteristic ambiguity of the symposium.

While both articles in the section on the Roman Empire are excellent, the section as a whole lacks one vital aspect. It does not raise the question of why the dialogue form virtually disappeared in the city of Rome. The transition from Cicero to Seneca is also a transition from dialogue in the Republic to the genre of moral treatises and letters under the Emperors. It is significant that not only Christians virtually lacked sympotic literature, but also first-century CE Romans. Given the interest of the book in the limitations of dialogue, with a special focus on political structures, a treatment of Roman literature during the Imperial Period seems mandatory. Valerius Maximus, Tiberius' court philosopher, may provide a meaningful starting point for inquiry. He writes the following on the ideal Roman *convivium*:

> At dinner the elders used to recite poems to the flute on the noble deeds of their forebears to make the young more eager to imitate them. What more splendid and more useful too than this contest? Youth gave appropriate honour to grey hairs, age that had traveled the course of manhood attended those entering on active life with fostering encouragement. What Athens, what school of philosophy, what alien born studies should I prefer to this domestic discipline? (*Memorable Sayings* 10, transl. D. R. Shackleton Bailey)

Following this line of thought, the essay by Seth Schwartz, 'No Dialogue at the Symposium? Conviviality in Ben Sira and in the Palestinian Talmud' (pp. 193-216) is remarkable for taking into account the Roman context of Jewish literature. Stressing the prevalence of reciprocity and patronage as forms of shaping social hierarchy in Rome, Schwartz convincingly argues that the Jewish symposia depicted in *Ben Sira* and in the rabbinic literature are spaces lacking true conversation. They have instead become a place of ostentation and of in-acting power relations.

The two sections on Christianity divide neatly into two essays pointing to the severe limitations of dialogue, while two essays survey similar material, arguing for an adaptation of the dialogue form to specific Christian needs, which may even be seen as an invigoration of the genre. Richard Miles, ' "Let's (Not) Talk about it": Augustine and the Control of Epistolary Dialogue' (pp. 135-48) and Richard Lim, 'Christians, Dialogues and Patterns of Sociability in Late Antiquity' (pp. 151-72) stress the limits of dialogue among Christians. Each proposes highly convincing reasons for this development: Miles studies Augustine's de-legitimization of the Donatists, showing that letters to key members of the community serve as 'surrogate dialogue form' (p. 139), creating the illusion of total agreement between friends. Little room is left for real dissent or debate. Similarly, Lim stresses the pastoral ideology of Christian writers, such as Methodius and Augustine, which favours hierarchy and letters rather than dialogue among equals.

Augustine is shown to have Christianised the Platonic form of dialogue, using it in more and more authoritarian ways to defend orthodoxy for the Christian masses. These two essays are balanced by Gillian Clark, 'Can we talk? Augustine and the Possibility of Dialogue' (pp. 117-34) and Kate Cooper and Matthew Dal Santo, 'Boethius, Gregory the Great and the Christian "Afterlife" of Classical Dialogue' (pp. 173-89). These three authors endeavour to show that dialogue was not completely shut down, but continued to exist within certain theological limits and subject to certain pedagogical strategies. Gillian Clark rightly stresses that doubts about the dialogue were not distinctly Christian (p. 127). As I mentioned before, it would have been very profitable to study Christian adaptations and limitations of dialogue in the context of Roman ambivalence towards the genre.

In conclusion, this book is highly recommended as a thought-provoking study of a crucial topic during a crucial span of time. It can only be hoped that the editor will choose additional topics to be studied by an equally excellent and interdisciplinary team of scholars, thus throwing further light on the complexity of early Western civilisation.

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Angelos Chaniotis, Annika Kuhn and Christina Kuhn, eds. *Applied Classics. Comparisons, Constructs, Controversies*. HABES. Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 46. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009. xx + 425 pp. ISBN: 978-0-520-25727-6.

For unusual reasons, reviewing this book is a challenge. The essays, all concerned with the continued importance of Greek and Roman studies, are inquisitive, original, and well executed; but their energy is centrifugal, radiating outward, raising new points, resistant to "branding". So the reviewer must seek moments of convergence.

First, three contributions concern "culture": For Angelos Chaniotis ('European Identity Learning from the Past?' pp. 27-56) and Geza Alföldy ('The Imperium Romanum. A Model for a United Europe?' pp. 57-82), classical studies deepen our understanding of modern Europe, while Stefan Rebenich's rich and original contribution ('Wilhelm von Humboldt oder Die Entstehung des Bürgertums aus dem Geiste der Antike,' pp. 97-118) explores the Greek roots of German bourgeois culture.

Chaniotis' Eco-style parody hilariously reveals how standard practices of archaeological inference may lead future excavators to declare that 'Europe's greatest enemy' was the 'United Kingdom', and to label the ubiquitous Turks the 'Ur-Europeans'; this is, he adds, what 'ancient historians unknowingly do … all the time'. Chaniotis' succinct but rewarding case studies reveal the complexity of ancient 'identities'. In Cretan Lyttos, 'civic' identifications ('citizenship') clashed with 'social' (age or wealth): 'as is common with Cretans' (Polybius, 4.53.5-6). Different towns can share identity, while Cretan identity includes the distinct birthplace of Zeus. Similarly, tales of shared military exploits bound the motley settlers of Aphrodisias in Caria.

These 'identities' were 'constructs'. So is modern Europe, where the lack of both 'cultural identity' and a sense of economic supremacy make 'political identity' all the more important (pp. 48-51).

Alföldy comments on the paradoxical formation of the Roman Empire and the European Union. Rome conquered others, sometimes brutally, and extracted wealth from subject states; yet, he says, the empire was not a 'prison of peoples … it is surprising how fast and closely most of the peoples, which once had fought so bitterly for their freedom, became part of the Roman *res publica*,' (p. 62) and by the third century CE every freeborn inhabitant was a citizen. (MacMullen's famous three-word summary, 'Fewer have more' [*Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284*, New Haven, 1974, p. 38], or Shaw's comments on wealth distribution and