

well the pervasive use of biblical motifs, language and imagery in these liturgical pieces incorporated in the various writings as an intent of 'scripturalization'.

The articles of the second part dedicated to Greece and Rome emphasize the more formulaic nature of prayer as shown in its taut structure and fossilized diction illustrated in the examples of Cato's *De Agri Cultura* and Catullus' hymn to Diana (to mention two illustrations of strict attachment to a liturgical pattern, the first one from an authentic oral tradition and the last one a literary conscious reworking of such material). Just as in the first section on the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, here too the use of prayer as a literary device occupies several scholars, among whose discussions I found specially interesting the treatment of Aeneas' oath in the *Aeneid* and a prayer of Scipio Africanus transmitted by Livy, both of these by Frances Hickson-Hahn, with incisive remarks on aspects of language and style. High readable I found as well Christopher A. Faraone's comments on a hymn to Selene-Hecate-Artemis from a Greek magical handbook, comments which stress the main feature that distinguishes Greco-Roman prayer: its 'magical intention', in the belief that the word contains an efficacious power capable of granting the petitioner a favorable answer.

The third section is dedicated to New Testament and early Christian prayer. The New Testament prayers although very well-known represent an unavoidable step between Jewish and Christian tradition to which the anthology dedicates several interesting essays. In the last part, spanning the period from the late first century to the mid-third century CE particular praise is due to the introduction section by Barbara E. Bowe and John Clabeaux, who present a clear classification of the prayers selected according to their affiliation to either Jewish or Greco-Roman tradition, and characterize accurately the process undergone by these prayers as a 'continual departure from Jewish prayer forms and an increasing acceptance of features from Greco-Roman classics'. In the first group, full of resonances from the Hebrew Bible, an essay by James H. Charlesworth about the Ode of Solomon 5 as an example of close attachment to Jewish tradition should be mentioned. As representative of the second group I found very enriching the analysis by Anniewies van den Hoek of a Hymn of Clement of Alexandria bearing heavy influence of Greek and Roman tradition. In my opinion, this anthology succeeds admirably in displaying a range of representative samples from three different religions in the period of their narrowest convergence, while pointing out their common features as well as the distinctive traits belonging exclusively to each one.

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Veronika E. Grimm, *From Fasting to Feasting, The Evolution of a Sin. Attitudes to Food in Late Antiquity*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996, 304 pp.

'Hospitality, loving kindness, and cheerful conviviality on the one hand and on the other ... mortification of the flesh, weeping and groaning ... as ideal patterns of Christian behaviour' (1) — it is this apparent paradox and its evolution over the first three hundred years of Christendom that Veronika Grimm's passionate book attempts to trace, if not resolve. Deeply influenced by her experiences as a psychologist, Dr. Grimm is particularly drawn to the metaphorical and practical role played by food — and the rationale for

its consumption or rejection — in the development of the ‘veritable abyss’ that separates those who advocate hospitality and those who do not.

The book’s introductory chapters detail Jewish and Greco-Roman attitudes to food and fasting and serve to establish the basis for its thesis: fasting was not central to early Christianity; it only became so during the fourth century. The analysis of New Testament texts, more specifically the Pauline epistles, reveals ‘that food in itself should not be a religious issue,’ that ‘for the Christian there is no ritually clean or unclean food’; that hospitality remains a virtue; in short, that ‘Paul perceived no great danger in eating’. His concerns regard sexuality, but he does not emphasize a connection between the two (67, 71-3). Similar views are represented in the Acts of the Apostles, where ‘food as such ... is generally regarded as beneficial and strengthening’ (strangely, the Gospels are omitted as having ‘no special message concerning food’) (74), and fasting was ‘an efficacious penitential act for sinners’ (88, 89).

Clement of Alexandria did not materially challenge such opinions, largely because he remained indebted to moderate pagan attitudes (94-111). Yet two tenets of his teachings foreshadow future developments, first, that Christ himself is the inspiration of Clement’s teachings, which therefore carry added moral weight. Such heightened moral demands lead then, second, to a division of Christians into two classes, the ‘advanced’ and the ‘beginners’ (95, 112-3). Even though such divisions were already anticipated by the changing attitudes towards eschatological expectations documented in the context of Acts (74-6, 90), it was Clement’s emphasis on two kinds of Christians that was destined to look ‘forward to a long and unfortunate history’ (95).

True to the Gibbonian paradigm, it is with Tertullian that the earlier crevice begins to widen into the abyss. In a fascinating and original suggestion, Dr. Grimm links Tertullian’s endorsement of fasting as self-sacrifice to Jewish concepts of fasting as expiation of sin (122, 124-5) — a move she sees as a highly probable cause for the hostility and bewilderment Tertullian’s views caused among fellow Christians, since ‘rejecting the Jewish abstention from certain kinds of food was a crucial step in Christian self-definition and separation from Judaism’ (131).

The progressive division of Christians into perfect and less-than-perfect, combined with the notion that the perfect were to sacrifice themselves either through martyrdom or starvation, achieved a new relevance in the works of Eusebius. His portrait of Origen ‘as a literary hero, is the first in a long and woeful line of orthodox Christian ‘holy’ men and women, who will starve, abuse and mutilate their physical bodies in search of salvation’ (141, 150) — a trajectory leading straight to the central chapters on Jerome as the propagandist and Augustine as the (slightly more moderate) practitioner of asceticism. With these two authors the tendency already announced in Clement, namely ‘to open up the most intimate part of an individual’s life to ecclesiastical scrutiny’ (113), came to full fruition. One particularly insidious aspect of their ascetic teachings was the fact that now the nexus between food and sex became crucial and final (e.g., 179). Driven by ‘an intense personal revulsion towards sexuality’ (138, 178, 189), both authors utterly condemned both food and sex, thus promoting behaviors and attitudes ‘strikingly illustrated today in the illness of anorexia nervosa; in this life-threatening condition, an ideal ‘above’ commands the person to treat his or her body as a slave, as an object ‘below’ her’ (189).

Dr. Grimm's sympathies lie with those who feast. This sympathetic emphasis on feasting in all its religious and social complexities is the book's strength and its originality. However, as a direct consequence Dr. Grimm's book resonates with a continuous sense of wonder and amazement as to how and why originally quite sensible Christians should have descended into the kind of madness exemplified most forcefully by Jerome, the true villain of the piece. While most everyone would on a personal level agree that Jerome the man is unpleasant, and his views on food and sexuality somewhat difficult to swallow, especially in a 20th century context, such contentions do not necessarily make for good methodology or for good history (158, 177, 178). It is unfortunate, therefore, that Dr. Grimm echoes her authors' extensive concerns with fasting and sexuality.

Her introductory chapters are excellent negotiations of the intricate relationship between food, fasting and ritual, and the impact of these issues, so central to human life and survival, on the gradual separation of Judaism and nascent Christianity. I wish she had stuck with these topics, that is with feasting rather than fasting. Much has been written on the subject of fasting, i.e. on asceticism and the body, and that means as a consequence on the norms devised as rhetorical strategies for precisely a Christian elite (194). What Dr. Grimm's earlier chapters highlight are instead the practices of the many; it would have been exciting to learn what the many were supposed to have eaten and how they were supposed to have fasted in the later centuries. Dr. Grimm touches upon that, especially in her chapter on Augustine as well as in the conclusion, but — and this is yet another strength of this interesting and stimulating book, there remains much to be learned about Christianity and feasting.

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Classical Studies in Honor of David Sohlberg, edited by Ranon Katzoff, with Yaakov Petroff and David Schaps, Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1996, ix + 510 pp.

This massive and attractively produced volume¹ reflects the manifold interests of the honorand's friends, colleagues and scholarly connexions: obviously the reviewer's singling out some pieces closer to his own concerns and ignoring some others projects only his own limitations.

Molly Myerowitz Levine, who taught for many years at Bar-Ilan and is now at Howard University, is thus also personally well qualified to return to the subject of Bernal's *Black Athena* which has engaged her for some years now. 'Bernal and the Athenians in the Multicultural World of the Ancient Mediterranean' opens the volume with a long essay whose two parts are only loosely connected. In the first half L restates her position and estimate of *Black Athena*, now that the second volume seems to have been thoroughly digested by both the scholarly world and the popular press and political opportunists (and, one may add, when a certain weariness of the subject seems to be spreading and the third volume is less than eagerly expected). Not surprisingly, her support is less enthusiastic than on earlier occasions and in counting the blessings of *Black Athena* Bernal's role as the proverbial gadfly seems to occupy pride of place. The second half of the

¹ But the proofreading in some of the contributions is rather indifferent, and some of the papers could have benefited from more active editorial intervention.