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BOOK REVIEWS

Rainer Friedrich, *Postoral Homer: orality and literacy in the Homeric Epic.* Hermes Einzelschriften 112. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2019. 276 pp. ISBN 9783515120487.

Had this book been published some thirty years ago, it would have sparkled a lively discussion exerting a significant impact on the study of Homer's formulaic diction. As things stand now, however, Rainer Friedrich's is a rather lonely voice aspiring to reinvigorate a largely abandoned scholarly field. Today, more often than not the Parry-Lord theory of oral-formulaic composition is being paid lip service rather than used as a working tool, taken for granted rather than critically examined. Having neither thoroughly adopted nor thoroughly rejectrd it, Homeric scholarship has simply moved in other directions. The reasons for this unfortunate development are not in the least found within oral-formulaic theory itself, and Friedrich's devastating criticism helps us to understand why. But his aspirations go even further than that. According to Friedrich, the flaws in oral-formulaic theory that he exposes signal that Homer's text presents a mixture of oral and non-oral features. To account for this peculiar situation, he advances a theory of 'postoral' Homer, a hybrid text in which the oral and the literate elements are present in equal measure. Accordingly, the book falls into two parts, 'The Theory of the Oral Homer and Its Dilemmas' and 'The Theory of the Postoral Homer'.

By applying to oral-formulaic theory its own tests of orality – the formula test, the economy test, the enjambment test, and the thematic test – Friedrich argues in Part I that oral-formulaic theory has failed to demonstrate the thoroughly oral character of Homer's diction. While some of his criticism is pertinent, some is rather less so (more below): on the whole, however, Friedrich has succeeded in showing that oral-formulaic theory in its standard form fails to account in full for Homer's text at our disposal. The real question, however, is whether applying to Homer the dichotomy 'orality vs. literacy' is the only way to explain this phenomenon.

Consider, for example, the issue of the formula, one of the focal points of Friedrich's book (pp. 52-113). While rightly emphasizing that, contrary to the mainstream Parryism's claim, it is out of the question that nearly one-hundred-percent of Homer's text consists of traditional formulae, Friedrich concludes that Homer's non-formulaic expressions should be automatically classified as non-oral. This is obviously based on the assumption that formulaic diction is a generic characteristic of oral poetry as such. Comparative evidence, however, shows unequivocally that one-hundred-percent formularity is not attested in any oral tradition we are acquainted with and that the ratio of formulae and formulaic expressions in Homer's text (about 70%) is the highest we have.[1] And although it stands to reason that Parry was correct in claiming that the main function of formulaic diction was to alleviate the process of oral composition, there is no evidence that one-hundred-percent formularity postulated by Friedrich for pre-Homeric poetry had ever taken place -- nor moreover that deviation from this hypothetical model would amount to deviation from orality.

In fact, there is ample reason to believe that Greek traditional poetry combined formulaic and non-formulaic elements at every stage of its exiatence.[2] The reason is simple. As Jonathan Ready

1 See Minna Skafte Jensen. *Writing Homer. A study based on results from modern fieldwork*. Copenhagen (2011), 50-63. See also my review in *SCI* 32 (2013), 257-59.

2 See Margalit Finkelberg. 'Oral Formulaic Theory and the Individual Poet'. In F. Montanari, A. Rengakos and Ch. Tsagalis (eds.), *Homeric Contexts. Neoanalysis and the Interpretation*

has recently demonstrated, comparative evidence points out that the oral poet is equally committed to exhibiting before his audience both pan-traditional elements (thus demonstrating his professional competence) and idiolectal ones (thus demonstrating his individual prowess as a performer).[3] On the lexical level, the idiolectal elements would materialize as hapax legomena, nonformulaic expressions, or even as individual formulae characteristic of a given poet but not of the system as a whole. Thus, for example, placing equivalent formulae employed by a particular poet against the formulaic system shared by the entire tradition shows that, while Friedrich is correct in claiming that the existence of such formulae violates Parry's principle of economy (pp. 110-13),[4] the latter is vindicated on the pan-traditional level, in that only the expressions that conform to the principle of economy are shared by different poets across the tradition.[5] It follows from this that 'traditional vs. individual', not 'oral vs. literate', would be an appropriate characterization of the spectrum of phenomena analysed by Friedrich.

The case for postoral Homer is presented in detail in the second part of the book. 'Homer should have started out as an oral poet and attained alphabetic literacy in the course of his career as an unlettered singer. At first Homer's postoral mode of composition would not much differ from his oral mode. … Yet over the time the absorption of alphabetic literacy would show its effects, slowly but steadily changing his compositional mode' (p. 186). Friedrich defends this thesis against alternative theories of the genesis of the Homeric text, his main target being the widely accepted theory of oral-dictated texts (pp. 174-85). According to Friedrich, insofar as the initiative for dictation invariably comes from an external factor rather than from the poet itself, the theory of oral-dictated texts is not economical and therefore should be rejected. However, he fails to take into account that, as distinct from the model he advances, the model of dictation initiated by an external factor is strongly supported by comparative and historical evidence at our disposal.[6]

'An orally trained literate poet' is, however, not the only sense in which the concept of postoral Homer is used in this book. As was claimed already by Aristotle, Homer is special in that he transcends the other epic poetry (read: the poems of the Epic Cycle), and the view of Homer adopted in the so-called Neoanalytic school of Homeric scholarship amounts to much the same. As most Homeric scholars, Friedrich adopts this view, albeit in a somewhat modified form, and his discussion of Neoanalysis (pp. 209-25) is one of the best I have encountered. Not surprisingly, he ascribes the uniqueness of Homer to his being a postoral, that is, literate, poet. It is not clear, however, to what degree, if at all, the poet's individual genius plays a role in his interpretation. That is to say, does it follow from the book's thesis that Homer's greatness was exclusively due to the supposed literary character of his composition and that an oral poet would never be capable of producing anything as great? It would be illuminating in this respect to confront Friedrich's

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of Oral Poetry. Berlin/Boston (2012), 73-82 (= Margalit Finkelberg. *Homer and Early Greek Epic*. *Collected Essays*. Berlin/Boston [2020], 95-103).

3 Jonathan Ready. *The Homeric Simile in Comparative Perspectives: Oral Traditions form Saudi Arabia to Indonesia*. Oxford (2018). See my review in *CP* 114 (2019), 310-13.

4 This thesis is developed in full in his earlier book *Formular Economy in Homer. The Poetics of the Breaches*. Stuttgart (2007).

5 See Margalit Finkelberg, 'Equivalent Formulae for Zeus in their Traditional Context', in Finkelberg (2020) (n. 2 above), 104-10.

6 See esp. Jensen (n.1), 281-328; Jonathan L. Ready, 'Textualization of Homeric Epic by Means of Dictation', *TAPA* 145 (2015), 1-75. In the premodern world, ancient Greece included, the initiative for fixing an oral traditional text in writing invariably came from political or religious authorities.

argument with the one advanced by Zlatan Čolaković,[7] namely, that the poems by the Southslavic oral poet Avdo Međedović transcended the tradition to which he belonged in exactly the same manner as Homer's poems transcended his own tradition.

These reservations notwithstanding, there's no denying that the *Postoral Homer* is a meticulously researched, rich and stimulating book. Rainer Friedrich never shrinks from attacking prevailing orthodoxies, and he expresses his thoughts with eloquence and wit. Everyone interested in Homeric studies will benefit from reading his book.

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Gabriel Danzig, David Johnson and Donald Morrison (eds.), *Plato and Xenophon. Comparative Studies*. (Mnemosyne supplements vol. 417). Leiden, Brill, 2018, 670 pp. ISBN: 978-90-04-36901-6.

"This is the first collection of papers comparing the work of Plato and Xenophon ever to be published, so far as I know," writes Gabriel Danzig in his introductory chapter. To be reminded of this state of affairs is important, since Plato and Xenophon were contemporaries, and Socrates was ostensibly important for both. Moreover each of them probably had the opportunity to read more than one work of the other, and is suspected of having echoed or rivalled the other. For these reasons, it is no small surprise to learn that, despite the abundant literature on these luminaries of classicism, accumulated during the twentieth century, no sustained comparison of their works and ideas is known – or at least no study going beyond the network of similarities and differences that affect their portrayals of Socrates, or their overall attitudes towards him. Clearly, if the state of the art is as Danzig claims -- and I am not able to deny that things are so -- then this book deserves a very special attention for what it endeavours to do.

Indeed, what the book offers is an in-depth investigation by twenty authors (plus one of the editors, Don Morrison, who did not contribute a paper), introduced by a very detailed and very helpful survey by David Johnson (31-52), in which each paper is not only discussed in some detail but also competently contrasted with at least one other: a splendid beginning.

The other introductory paper, by Danzig, is quite different in character and has its merits. Among them is the sentence by which he suggests replacing a famous statement by F.D.E. Schleiermacher this way: "What can Socrates have been to have inspired such a wide variety of followers, including not only the philosophic types listed above, but also political figures like Critias and Alcibiades?" (18). The new sentence came to light exactly two centuries after the original printed version of Schleiermacher's *Sokrates als Philosophen*, and is not unworthy of comparison, since Gabriel goes beyond the literary portrayals and attempts to account for some historical facts too. However, his main effort is aimed at eliciting what may be taken for certain on the basis of the work of Plato and Xenophon, and this is not a very strong position, if only because one should take into account not only the prolific authors (P. and X.) whose writings reached us, but also the other luminaries of the contemporary Socratic literature, and certainly not just Antisthenes and Aristippus, as he does in a cursory reference on p. 17. Indeed, if both Plato and Xenophon were Socratics, each in his own way, it becomes difficult to accept that one should

7 As recently restated in the posthumous 'Avdo Međedović's Post-traditional Epics and their Relevance to Homeric Studies', *JHS* 139 (2019), 1-48.

ignore the considerable host of other Socratics. Therefore, to restrict the comparison to the most widely known among them is to adopt an extrinsic and hardly defensible principle.

Besides, literary works are not the main road towards the ascertainment of facts, all the more when a considerable number of more direct documents, some of which have nothing to do with personal memories imbued with a sense of veneration for Socrates, are available (I refer, in particular, to Polycrates and his *Katēgoria Sōkratous*, on which see below).

Another important passage in Danzig occurs when he states that "Plato's interpreters make extraordinary allowances for what seem to be deeply flawed arguments" (25-26). That most Platonists still need to be reminded of that is a bare fact; this in turn implies that a major challenge is still to be faced: finding a viable avenue towards unbiased ways of reading Plato. Danzig himself contributes to this effect when he dares to suggest (10-11) that "Most authors of *Sokratikoi logoi* had some connection with Socrates, and Plato probably had some connection as well. But his connection may not have been a very close one, which makes it perilous to assume that his writings accurately reflect the ideas of Socrates." He does not undertake to argue in detail for this point, probably presuming that the *onus probandi* lies with those who are willing to credit Plato with substantial reliability in several respects. But the challenge has been launched, and somebody will hopefully accept it. These preliminary remarks should give an idea of how rich is the present volume, *Plato and Xenophon*.

The set of selected papers begins with one by Louis-André Dorion on 'Comparative Exegesis and the Socratic Problem' (p. 55-70), a paper which is extensively criticized by David Johnson in his chapter on 'Xenophon's Intertextual Socrates' (p. 71-98). Johnson worries that Dorion too easily accepts incoherence as an explanation for difficulties in Xenophon; but this itself means evaluating Xenophon from a basically Platonic point of view, as when Johnson assumes that Xenophon seeks to preserve the philosophical coherence of his portrait of Socrates. Indeed, it is enough to consider that Xenophon in no way wanted to be, to become, or to be considered a philosopher, to raise a doubt about his supposed interest in philosophy when dealing with Socrates.

More generally, Johnson reminds us that Xenophon has in mind, not unlike Plato, a wealth of writings on Socrates, authored by different Socratics in the decades subsequent to the traumatic process of 399 BC, writings that for us are often out of reach. The consequence is that "when Xenophon says 'Socrates' he means not 'my Socrates' but 'our Socrates'" (85), i.e. a Socrates about whom many authors (not just Plato) had already written a lot. Intertextuality is evoked in order to suggest precisely this reference to the many Socrateses who appeared in numerous writings which are likely to have had a considerable circulation.

On this point it is perhaps permissible to insist that we still have access to some significant traces of Socrates as portrayed and discussed by Aeschines, plus some remains of the Socrates of Antisthenes and Phaedo, plus a wealth of apophthegms ascribed to Aristippus in Diog. Laert. II 66-82, plus a number of other scattered sources, including some precious elements of another booklet that got lost, the *Katēgoria Sōkratous* (a speech in support of the indictment against Socrates, the contrary of an apologia) by Polycrates of Samos, a pamphlet purporting to offer a contrast to the very first re-enactments of Socrates a few years after his trial and execution by hemlock. I must confess I find it always astonishing that most comments upon the *Apologies* ignore the *Katēgoria* despite the fact that we know something about it thanks, first of all, to Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (provided, of course, that the *katēgoros* mentioned six times in I 2 is the author of the *Katēgoria*). As a matter of fact, a comparative exegesis is not correctly comparative if it fails to consider some obvious terms of comparison. For example: why deal with the analogy

to craftsmen in *Mem.* IV 4.5 as if the papyrus fragment from Aeschines' *Miltiades* (T121 Pentassuglio), which almost coincides with it, still had to be discovered (as does Johnson, 83)? In the same vein let me point out that, when Xenophon says something about Xenophon, he is not necessarily alluding to himself; some occurrences suggest rather the evocation of a senior homonym (cf. Rossetti 1975 and 1997).

After Dorion and Johnson, there is a paper by William Altman, whose basic assumption is that Plato's dialogues are somehow governed by a "reading order that begins with the elementary *First Alcibiades* … and ends with *Phaedo*". I must confess my total inability to follow his conjectural arguments in which I am sorry to see no helpful suggestion at all. The subsequent paper, by James Redfield, is commendable because of its effort to account for a large selection of Socratic dialogues as well as ancient references to them, plus the spurious dialogues attached to the Platonic corpus. One could note that the equally spurious Socratic letters (Márisco 2012) were left out of the selection although they contain some interesting suggestions. Of great interest is page 118, with the translation of a passage by ps.-Demetrius (*On style* 296) which is so rarely quoted in its full length.

The papers continue with one by Christopher Moore on "Xenophon on 'Philosophy' and Socrates". This looks like a preliminary investigation for his *Calling Philosophers Names. On the Origin of a Discipline* (Princeton 2020). Christopher deals with the process that led to an increasing familiarity of the Greeks with the word *philosophia* and its cognates (notably the word *philosophos*), notes the explicit reference to *philosophoi* in *Mem*. I 2.31 (on the part of Charicles) and to *hoi philosophountes* in Pl. *Ap.* 23d4 (129), and then asks: why Xenophon is so reluctant to establish a direct connection between Socrates and the term 'philosopher'? His final conjecture is that Xenophon "may instead have wanted to show that Socrates could not be correctly understood in terms of being a philosopher*"* (131). Given that both passages offer a plural, not a singular, form of the word, it is perhaps permitted to ask whether, under the Thirty tyrants, it was already common practice to see Socrates as a philosopher: this is possible, but far from certain, I would say.

Geneviève Lachance resolved to investigate the instances of elenchus in Xenophon in its formal features, hardly a promising choice since Xenophon made no effort to refine the logic of his arguments and counter-arguments. Especially in the admirable exchange with Euthydemus (*Mem.* IV 2) we are faced with a Socrates who is ostensibly interested not in the quality of his arguments but in the (temporary) capitulation of his rather unprepared young interlocutor. Why 'ostensibly'? Because Socrates' objections are so weak that it would have been easy to resist each of them. This is a point seldom made, but it is a fact, and it clearly escaped Mme Lachance.

The papers commented upon so far pertain to the introductory section and Part I, *Methods*. Part II of the volume deals with *Ethics*, Part III with *Friendship and Politics*, Part IV with *History*. I cannot go on with the same level of attention, since this would require writing a review of great length, something comparable to the very detailed and competent report on the 2014 conference which stands behind the book under examination, as prepared by Fiorenza Bevilacqua and appearing in *Magazzino di Filosofia* 27, 2015, 137-199 (more than sixty pages!). By the way, I am surprised to see that the editors of *Plato and Xenophon* passed over in silence so detailed a survey.

I now mention Katarzyna Jazdzewska's 'Laughter in Plato's and Xenophon's *Symposia*' and Alessandro Stavru's 'Socrates' Physiognomy: Plato and Xenophon in Comparison.' The latter pays considerable attention to Aristophanes' *Clouds* and Phaedo's *Zopyrus*. The following paper, by Lowell Edmunds, deals with Socratic virtue and carefully extends his investigation to what is reported by third persons other than Xenophon and Plato, the comic poets and the historians par

excellence included – which in my opinion is a valuable feature. According to Roslyn Weiss, who deals with the 'Appropriate Response to Intentional Wrongdoing', 'Plato's Socrates alone sharply severs pity from pardon … while nevertheless blaming them for their deed. Xenophon is not inclined to pardon or pity' (277). In her pages on the 'Mechanisms of Pleasure' Olga Chernyakhovskaya has valuable remarks on happiness and labor. According to Xenophon, she concludes, 'happiness cannot succeed without hunger and thirst or *ponoi*, toil and effort' (337). When dealing with 'The Ends of Virtue', Gabriel Danzig stresses, inter alia, that Xenophon was in favour of 'a purely instrumental view of *arete*' (354). Francesca Pentassuglio deals with the 'Erotic *Paideia*'. She concentrates on role reversals in Socrates' erotic relations, a feature that 'turns out to be a defining feature of *his* erotic behaviour and paves the way for erotic mutuality' (365). The section on ethics finishes with a valuable paper by Tazuko A. van Berkel, on 'Socratic Economics and the Psychology of Money'. Her investigation suffers somewhat from having left out what our sources report about Aristippus (clearly, her footnote on p. 401 is not enough).

To my regret space prevents me to enter in further details. As a whole, this volume, *Plato and Xenophon*, has the great merit of opening a number of paths to the investigation of the subject and overcoming a number of inadvisable simplifications, all that while an impressive 'Xenophon Renaissance' is flourishing.

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Peter Riedlberger, *Prolegomena zu den spätantiken Konstitutionen. Nebst einer Analyse der erbrechtlichen und verwandten Sanktionen gegen Heterodoxe.* Stuttgart: frommann-holzboog, 2020. 880 pp. ISBN 978-3-7728-2886-7.

The author (R.), currently a senior research fellow at the University of Bamberg, wrote this book as a revision of his 2019 doctoral dissertation in law at the University of Tübingen. This wide-ranging book (*Introduction to Late Antique Constitutions: Accompanied by an Analysis of Inheritance and Related Sanctions against Heterodoxy*) examines the *Theodosian Code* and certain topics relating to legal policy directed toward heterodoxy (and so contributes to a growing body of scholarship on late Roman law in the last 25 years).

The first chapter (pp. 19-252) provides an overview of both the contents and the method of the *Theodosian Code*. Throughout this sweeping introduction, R. delves into scholarly debates on topics including the influence of the *Codex Gregorianus* and the *Codex Hermogenianus*, definition of terms (edict, law, constitutions, *datum*, *propositum*), the concept of "codification," the manuscript tradition of the *Code*, the method of the compilers, and the sources of the laws. Above all, R. stresses the importance of *generalitas* in the selection of laws for the *Code* (pp. 153-

168). Of course, once the *Theodosian Code* itself was released, all the laws became general laws, but R. argues that the selected laws were chosen because they were originally designed as universal laws (an argument which will lead to some scholarly debate).

Chapter Two (pp. 253-407) provides background for some legal topics. First, R. examines inheritance legislation in late antiquity, with analysis of the *Latini Juniani*, passive male homosexuals, and deaconesses (*CTh* 16.2.27). Next, he examines the potential differences between *relegatio*, *deportatio*, and *exilium.* R. then (pp. 353-393) wrestles with the question of when the heterodox acquired the legal status of *infamia* and along the way delves into the difference between *infamia* and the simple description of groups as "infamous." R. confronts earlier scholarship on the topic (sometimes brutally), but the problem is difficult. Finally, he evaluates testimony from the fifth-century Church historian Sozomen for the question of *infamia* for the heterodox.

Chapter Three (pp. 409-494) addresses Roman legislation aimed toward the Manicheans. After first examining the history of Manicheans in the West, R. turns to Diocletian's law of 302 quoted in the *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum* at 15.3 from the *Codex Gregorianus* (where it was added after that work's compilation c. 291). The combination of Manicheans with Astrologers and Sorcerers (*De Mathematicis, Maleficis et Manichaeis*) in Title 15 of the *Collatio* is strange, as R. notes (pp. 423-425). While the Collator cites the *Codex Gregorianus* section from which he draws already as *De Maleficis et Manicheaeis*, R. could be correct that that section title might have already been modified by the editor who added Diocletian's 302 law. The Collator may have been struck by the similarity between a section in Ulpian's *De officio pronsulis* (which he had just used at Coll. 15.2) and this section of the *Codex Gregorianus*. R. argues that *infamem* at Coll. 15.3.7 is an adjectival form for "infamous" rather than the Roman legal concept of *infamia*. Valentinian and Valens produced a law in 372 (*CTh* 16.5.3) that emphasizes punishment of the Manichaean elect and condemns those who gather for Manichaean services as "infamous," but specifies that they should be separated from everyone else in the community (which does sound like *infamia* in Roman law). R. may be correct that an important shift seems to come in 381 with legislation of Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius (*CTh* 16.5.7) which states that Manichaeans do not have the right to make testaments (but perhaps alludes to an earlier lost law).

The fourth chapter (pp. 495-607) examines legal policies toward the Donatists. Once Constantine legalized and started supporting Christianity in 313, he was confronted with this schism. Interestingly, the *Theodosian Code* preserves no laws specifically addressed to Donatism before 405, although Eusebius preserves some relevant rescripts of Constantine (*HE* 10.5.15-17; 10.6.1; 10.7.2) and *CTh* 16.5.37 of 405 alludes to a lost law of Julian, which presumably gave the Donatists more standing to create problems within the Church. Laws preserved in the *Theodosian Code* that address rebaptism from the late fourth century may be addressing Donatism. R. concentrates on the legislation preserved in the *Theodosian Code*, especially from 405 onward, such as *CTh* 16.6.4, 16.5.38 (the "Unity Edict"), and 16.5.54, as well as evidence from Augustine and Possidius.

Chapter Five (pp. 609-684) examines legislation directed at the Eunomians. R. reviews their history and the sources (especially Philostorgius) before launching into his analysis of the surviving laws in the *Theodosian Code* (which are complex). The law surviving as *CTh* 16.5.17 from 389 AD lays out penalties, including those pertaining to testaments and inheritance, for "Eunomian eunuchs" (*Eunomium spadones*). R. wrestles with the problem of whether this was some kind of *topos* or aimed at Eunomians who were actually eunuchs (possibly imperial chamberlains). R. then looks at subsequent surviving laws from the late fourth and early fifth

century which alternate back and forth between granting Eunomians testamentary powers or withdrawing it (*CTh* 16.5.23 [which might be referencing a lost law after 16.5.17], 16.5.25, 16.5.27, 16.5.36, 16.5.49 and 50, 16.5.8) and wrestles with different scholarly arguments (the influence of court factions does seem appealing as an explanation).

The sixth chapter (pp. 685-764) examines apostates. The label is slippery, as R. realizes. Those labeled as Donatists or Eunomians probably felt they were the real Christians. The situation is made all the more complicated by the practice of late baptism where catechumens would hold off on baptism until close to the end of their life. Of course, it is hard to guess just right sometimes (as Theodosius discovered). So, was a catechumen who attended a pagan ceremony an apostate? Another issue would be the lapsed who might attend a pagan service, but not officially turn away from Christianity. R., p. 700 n. 23, uses a "*heuristische Kategorie*" of "half-Christian" to define those Christians who also participate in pagan ceremonies (a category which some might find provocative). It appears that late fourth-century legislation especially aimed at baptized Christians who participated in pagan ceremonies. R. examines important legislation such as *CTh* 16.7.1 from 381 (which denies apostates the power to make a testament), *CTh* 16.7.2 from 383 (which specifies that baptized Christians who participate in pagan ceremonies would lose the power to make heirs outside of their family), *CTh* 16.7.3 also from 383 (which gives a statute of limitations on when an accusation could be lodged), *CTh* 16.7.4 and 5 from 391 (which repeats the penalty of 16.7.2 and even uses the word *infamia* but seems to clarify that those who have not yet been baptized can return to the fold), *CTh* 16.7.6 from 396 (which again states the same penalty, but again clarifies that traditional heirs can inherit), and *CTh* 16.8.28 and 16.7.7 from 426 (which protects Christian heirs of Jewish families and also reiterates how apostates lose the power to make testaments or gifts to heirs outside of their families). It is striking that family heirs will still inherit from apostates. R. may be correct that the motivation for the apostate inheritance laws in the 380s came when "careerists" who had become apostates under Julian were reaching their later years and wanted to make wills.

Chapter Seven (pp. 765-810) looks at inheritance penalties for the heterodox from 428 AD through Justinian. R. analyzes *CTh* 16. 5. 65 from 428 and the possible influence of Nestorius. R. (pp. 773-4) raises some interesting questions about the reading of *his* at *CTh* 16.5.65.3 (does it refer to all the earlier listed heresies or only to Manicheans?). He then examines *Nov. Val.* 18 from 445 which reacted to Pope Leo I's condemnation (Leo, *Sermon* 16.4-5) of a Manichean ceremony in Rome in late 443 (Caroline Humfress, "Cherchez la femme! Heresy and Law in Late Antiquity," *Studies in Church History* 56 (2020), pp. 36-59 probably appeared when R.'s book was in press). *Nov. Val.* 18 is also interesting for its implicit reference to Diocletian's law against the Manicheans (Coll. 15. 3), but R. is probably correct that the authors of *Nov. Val.* 18 knew Diocletian's law from the *Codex Gregorianus* and not from the *Collatio*. R. then examines anti-Eutychian laws of 452 and 455 and the edict of the Vandal King Hunerich in 484. The chapter then briefly touches on Justinian and the *Codex Iustinianus* (and his attempts at systemization) before turning to a look forward to the impact of the rediscovery of Roman law on Papal policies toward heterodoxy in the twelfth century.

A brief conclusion (pp. 811-815) summarizes the preceding chapters, sketches out some patterns, and posits what R. considers good practice in approaching evidence in the *Theodosian Code*. The book has extensive indices (including a subject index, a citation index, and an index of Bible citations) and a *Bibliographie* of the works cited in the book.

R.'s writing is clear and should be accessible to foreign scholars with a reading knowledge of German (but more explicit and complete chapter conclusions and a fuller main conclusion would

have been helpful). His knowledge of Latin is strong, and he has engaged deeply in late Roman law (and the scholarly literature). The "laws" in the *Theodosian Code* are, of course, tricky as evidence since they are fragments from longer texts selected by fifth-century compilers as still valid, and the fifth-century compilers had to work with what they could find (which may have been dealing with local problems). Many of the chapters could have been volumes in their own right (but this would defeat R.'s purpose of trying to show connections between laws directed toward these heterodox groups). There is much that is useful and provocative within this large volume, and I enjoyed reading it and feel it should be acquired by major university research libraries.

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Attilio Mastrocinque, Joseph E. Sanzo, and Marianna Scapini (eds.), *Ancient Magic: Then and Now* (Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 74), Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2020. 451 pages, 53 b/w illustrations. ISBN 978-3-515-12796-7 (Print), ISBN 978-3-515-12797-4 (eBook)
For the full table of contents see https://elibrary.steiner-verlag.de/book/99.105010/9783515127974

In the past decades the topic of ancient magic has begun to enjoy the conceptual attention it deserves, with attention being paid to the overarching phenomenon as well as its manifestations in texts and objects. This volume is a new addition to the field, stemming from a conference held at the Academy of German-Italian Studies in Meran in 2016. The contributions are in three languages: English (primarily), Italian and Spanish, and, with some small exceptions, they focus on the Graeco-Roman world. The editors made clear efforts to shape the volume methodically around an engagement with the conceptual aspects of "magic". This is apparent in authorial comments related to theoretical and terminological features of the topic. Occasionally, the editors even inserted into the articles full paragraphs to this effect, as mentioned on p. 114, n. 10 (the same editorial hand may be sensed elsewhere, e.g., at the beginning of p. 211 or 303 n. 2). Additionally, an attempt was made to connect the contributions through cross-referencing. As a result of these efforts the volume enjoys a relatively high degree of cohesiveness and uniformity, for which the editors are to be commended. Nevertheless, as with all conference-based volumes, the level of the contributions varies, with some being more innovative and significant than others. For space limitations this review will only touch upon some of them.

After a brief introduction that summarizes the twenty-three articles, the volume is arranged in three sections. The first, "Magic as a Category", is devoted to a conceptual engagement with the topic. Joseph E. Sanzo's article "Deconstructing the Deconstructionists" is an important contribution to the ongoing discussion on the categorization and terminology of "magic". After a useful historical review of the criticism undergone by this term, Sanzo highlights the problems inherent in the alternative solutions that have been put forward by the "deconstructionists". Discarding the category and term "magic" often does not do justice to the ancient source material, as Sanzo and others before him demonstrate. The author offers concrete suggestions on how we can preserve the category while being aware of its pitfalls and of the option to replace it with other, more appropriate, categories. This replacement should occur when necessitated by the sources and the analysis we wish to undertake. Following on similar lines, but less methodically structured, is the contribution of Antón Alvar Nuño and Jaime Alvar Ezquerra, "'Pure Magic' and

its Taxonomic Value'", who attempt to relate anthropological concepts known as 'witchcraft' or 'pure magic', primarily used in the context of pre-industrial cultures, with sources from Graeco-Roman antiquity.

The second and main section of the volume is devoted to "Interpreting Magical Texts and Objects". It consists of studies of specific topics or sources that are a-priori classified as magical, such as inscribed *lamellae*, curse tablets, or the *PGM*. Many of these provide new readings or interpretations of previously published sources. For instance, the contribution by Attilio Mastrocinque re-analyzes a gold *lamella* from a burial complex in Vincovci (Croatia), attempting to place it in a larger necromantic context. The article raises intriguing questions, and although some are left untreated (such as the relation of the person named Servius with the tomb inhabitant, or the original function of the bronze rooster found in the tomb) it provides a good example of the benefits of studying such texts using a multi-cultural framework. In a skillfully structured article Celia Sánchez Natalías presents a new and convincing reading of one of the texts from the Anna Perenna fountain in Rome. She transparently describes her thought process, which could make the article a good study piece for students, illustrating how historians of such magical texts actually work. The contribution by Juan Ramón Carbó Garcia presents some instances of "cultos orientales" and their influences in magical objects from Roman Dacia. This interesting topic raises numerous questions on intercultural connections and should be explored further in a methodical fashion. The article of Véronique Dasen re-examines a gem depicting two men playing a board game, accompanied by an elusive inscription in Greek letters. The author walks the readers through an interesting list of possible interpretations for this scene and its subsequent magical meaning (without, however, providing a definite answer), showing again how such tiny objects can raise broad cultural questions. In an elegantly written contribution Christopher A. Faraone discusses dream divination and the method of employing images of divinities as part of the ritual. This is an example of a cross-object study, in which different magical items (rings, gems, figurines, drawings) are analyzed by centering on the overarching magical technique rather than on the individual details. An interesting contribution is that of Isabel Canzobre Martínez, on the "Categorization of the Divine in the *PGM*". The author discusses the placement of some supernatural entities normally regarded as deities (e.g., Helios, Hermes, Osiris) in three classes of "intermediate beings": *daimones*, *angeloi* and *pneumata*. The resulting synthesis sheds light on the manner in which the *PGM* authors and users may have regarded these entities, and raises questions about their religious-magical worldview. Giulia Pedrucci's article, "On the Use of Breast Milk and Menstrual Blood in the Greek and Roman Worlds", touches upon several fascinating topics, from the relation of ancient medicine and magic to gender aspects pertaining to both. Despite some strange editorial choices, such as quoting excessively long passages from Pliny, her analysis is sound and thought-provoking. Most importantly, the article illustrates the need for a comprehensive scholarly system for studying ancient magical practices (or magico-medicinal, in this case).

The third section, titled "The Transmission of Ancient Magic", mainly contains discussions on the appearance of magical features in non-magical texts. It is the least coherent of the three, and also the one in which the engagement with the concept of "magic" seems to have been somewhat lost, when, for example, the subject receives surprisingly broad definitions, such as that in Laura Mecella's article (p. 350), that include "pratiche implicanti ricette per la preparazione di veleni per la contaminazione di aria, acqua, cibo e bevande (…)". A well-written contribution is that by Raquel Martín Hernández, on "The Transmission of the *Sortes Homericae*". Through an analysis of three papyri that preserve the *Sortes*, the author demonstrates the potential of codicology for

shedding light on broader issues, such as the possible users of a divinatory text or its modes of transmission. The contribution of Marina Foschi Albert, presented from a literary and linguistic angle, explores the main magic motifs in the medieval work *Tristan* by Gottfried von Strassburg. The author innovatively shows that the features traditionally perceived as "magical" in this legend could actually be regarded as natural, and she moves on to compare some of these with themes from the classical world, in the stories of Ulysses and Jason. An initial definition of the term "magic" (not only its linguistic aspects) could have been beneficial here, as it would have made the analysis and conclusions even more convincing. Another valuable contribution is that by Tiziano Dorandi, who revisits the creation and transmission of *PGM* XIII. While mostly summarizing the previous analyses by Morton Smith and others, Dorandi ends his article with an appeal to re-edit the papyrus with a new and detailed commentary (perhaps steps in this direction may be taken in the project "Transmission of Magical Knowledge - The Papyrus Magical Handbooks in Context" https://voices.uchicago.edu/magicalpapyri/). His proposal should be expanded to numerous other magical texts that have been published during the twentieth century and could now benefit from newly available knowledge, methods, and even technologies, primarily those from the field of digital humanities (see more below). The last article in the volume, by Carlo M. Lucarini, consists of a novel exploration of the topic of Circe in the *Odyssey*. The author elaborately and convincingly argues that the literary figure of this powerful woman does not derive from a pre-existing Argonautic epos, now lost, but its first mention is in the *Odyssey*.

The volume contains several black and white illustrations, mostly photos, though at times line drawings should have been preferred (e.g., pp. 97, 173), In other instances, like in "Magia y cultos 'orientales' en la Dacia Romana", the addition of illustrations would have benefitted the reading.

As mentioned above, this is a fairly cohesive volume, despite the challenges of turning a conference proceedings into one. Nevertheless, it is evident that such cohesiveness is often superficial, and for a good reason: it is not always easy for scholars to overstep their comfort zone and engage with texts, objects and rituals from other cultural, geographical or chronological spheres. Conferences such as these allow them to benefit from interdisciplinary exchanges of knowledge. Lately, however, steps have been made towards a larger-scale systematization that would bring together knowledge of ancient magic accumulated in the past centuries, making it easily searchable for scholars worldwide, and thus greatly benefitting future studies. Some examples are the Campbell Bonner Magical Gems Database (http://cbd.mfab.hu/), the Corpus des énoncés des noms barbares (http://www.cenob.org/), or the Kyprianos Database of Ancient Ritual Texts (https://www.coptic-magic.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/index.php/manuscripts-search/). It is high time that such databases and digital editions unite, crossing sub-disciplinary boundaries (e.g., *nomina barbara* appear on magical gems as well as on magical recipes and in literary depictions of rituals). An integrative treatment of ancient magic, as this volume shows, would greatly enhance the discipline.

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Oren Margolis, *The Politics of Culture in Quattrocento Europe. René of Anjou in Italy*. Oxford University Press, 2016. 222 pp. ISBN 9780198769323.

This book presents a reassessment of René of Anjou, a political history of mid-fifteenth-century Italy, and a new understanding of cultural politics and Quattrocento Renaissance. In the course of his study, Dr Margolis addresses a set of practices from the realm of cultural politics that the Angevin King promoted and developed as part of his attempt to recover the Kingdom of Naples. The volume is edited to the highest standards.

From the standpoint of a classicist readership, the book offers the results of an outstanding investigation into the pragmatics of the complex communicative acts within which Classical texts were received and Neo-Latin ones composed during the fifteenth century. New light is shed on essential facets of such texts.

The introduction (pp. 1–10) starts with a discussion of previous scholarship on René of Anjou, largely characterised by underestimation of his political significance and investment in Humanism. Two major underlying causes for such inaccuracies identified and discussed by Dr Margolis are nationalist biases that have at times shaped some scholarly traditions, and periodisation issues whereby 'medievalists have been as happy to preserve this culture-hero far from a Renaissance interpretive context' (p. 5). On the basis of an insightful review of the *status quaestionis*, the case is made for 'A new approach —a new way of looking at René's Italian career' (p. 7). The characteristics, structure, and methodological framework of the study are presented in pages 11–20. Drawing on concepts from visual–culture and communication theories, Margolis formulates a new method for historical research (*The Diplomatic Approach to Culture,* pp. 11–16), as well as a new interpretive framework (*hyper-literacy,* pp. 16–20).

Apart from setting firm foundations for the study, the book's introduction is in its own right a noteworthy essay on topics such as the crucial role played by social and diplomatic practices in the configuration of the Italian Renaissance; the hermeneutic tools available to scholars in order to gain a fresh understanding of the said practices; and general epistemological matters intrinsic to the field of Cultural History. The remainder of the volume presents the results of sound and rigorous research, conducted through a direct examination and an original discussion of a vast array of primary textual sources and material documents. These include diplomatic records, letters, Neo-Latin epideictic and epic compositions, architectural elements, and artworks of various types.

Chapter 1 ("The Angevine Network in Italy", pp. 21–67) starts by providing the reader with background information about René of Anjou's ancestry, the dynastic claims over the Neapolitan Kingdom, and the eventful years that preceded the Angevin King's withdrawal from Naples in 1442. Pages 35–67 address the genesis and configuration of the network and programme of cultural politics that René of Anjou promoted and developed as a way 'to reassert himself in the Italian scene' (p. 67). Margolis identifies and discusses two paramount elements in such configuration: chivalry (pp. 51–61) and cultural Guelphism (pp. 35–51). To the classicist reader, this chapter is most enlightening on the key role of cultural Guelphism as a springboard both for the reception of classical texts and for the reworking of ancient motifs and historical figures.

In chapter 2 ("Janus Pannonius and the Politics of Humanist Literature", pp. 68–108), Margolis challenges conventional interpretations of fifteenth-century humanist political literature. The author examines in detail two compositions by Janus Pannonius: the *Carmen pro pacanda Italia*, modelled on Claudian's *Panegyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti,* and a panegyric of King René. On the grounds of a rigorous study of textual contents and circumstances of commission, execution, and public presentation, Margolis places the relevance of the said works

on their *agency* rather than on their content. He maintains that they were composed not so much to convey political argument, but 'to function as a networking agent, doing the diplomatic work of drawing parties together into alignment' (p. 77), a claim that is amply substantiated throughout the central pages (pp. 77–101). The last section (102–108) presents a detailed account of Guarino of Verona's school and discusses the interrelation between humanist milieus and patrons. Such account is framed by the concept of *network*, which had been properly discussed in the introduction (esp. pp. 13–16). Of particular interest to the classicist reader are the following chapter contents: the study of the symbolism of Scipio and Hannibal in a vast array of textual sources —including diplomatic records— (pp. 77–95), and the discussion of the Senecan language and ideology that Pannonius weaved into his panegyric of René (pp. 95–101).

Chapter 3 ("Art, Politics, and Patronage", pp. 109–45) begins with the discussion of René of Anjou's commissioning activity, as evidenced by inventories and catalogues of the Castle of Angiers and the Library of St Maximine. The first part of the chapter includes a discussion of the diplomatic and political significance of a series of artworks commissioned in the orbit of King René. In the central sections (pp. 115–137) Margolis examines the textual contents, illuminations, and the accompanying paratexts of two illuminated manuscripts, namely the *Life of Saint Maurice* (Arsenal, MS 940) and Guarino's Latin translation of Strabo's *Geography* (Albi, Médiathèque Pierre–Amalric, MS 77). The author addresses them as samples of evidence of the *modus operandi* of the Angevine network, in turn highly revealing about the characteristics of Quattrocento Renaissance culture at large. Margolis provides substantiated and sound new interpretations of the textual, paratextual, and iconographic ensembles (esp. in pp. 126–29 and pp. 131–37), and discusses essential facets of the said manuscripts which had not been identified and discussed before. Conclusions are also drawn as to the effect of Angevin cultural politics in stylistic developments in the art of illuminated books and typography in fifteenth-century Italy (pp. 137–45).

Chapter 4 ("The Network in Action", pp. 146–185) discusses the effects of the Angevin network and agenda on the Italian events of the 1450–1464 period, the years that saw military and political events such as the Lombard Wars, the Peace of Lodi, several succession crises in Naples, and the ascendancy of the Medici regime in Florence. The chapter also focuses on the network's 'post-Angevin afterlife' (p. 146). On the grounds of the evidence provided by a large number of primary sources (*Carteggi*, *Diurnali*, *Commentarii,* among others), the author makes a strong case for the diplomatic and political effectiveness of the allegiances prompted and forged by René through his network and cultural practices. Margolis demonstrates the weight of René of Anjou's allies and collaborators in the realms of diplomacy, politics, and warfare, by chronicling and discussing several conspicuous instances thereof, such as the crucial role played by members of his network in the diplomatic envoys sent to Venice in 1460 and to the Court of Louis XI in the winter 1461–2 (pp. 159–160 and 162–168 respectively). Another major subject addressed in the chapter is the endurance of Angevin practices and language, which stretched as far as the times of René II and Charles VIII, as evidenced by a diplomatic gift such as D. Acciaiuoli's *Life of Charlemagne* in a special presentation copy produced by Vespasiano da Bisticci (pp. 163 ff.), as well as by the type of language deployed during the Pazzi conspiracy (pp. 174–75). Of particular significance to the classicist reader is the study of the exploitation of the Brutus-and-Cassius symbolism in a wide range of textual sources, and the discussion of Alamano de Rinuccini's reworking of a major concept in ancient political theory, *libertas*.

The Conclusion (pp. 186-93) provides a recapitulating outline of the major findings of the study as well as further discussion. Margolis advocates for establishing a clear distinction between

René's military failures and the impact of his trans-national network and programme of cultural politics in the Western Mediterranean. Margolis concludes that the alliances and personal affinities forged within the Angevin network did have specific effects on the development of political events in Italy, and that such effects outlived the dissolution of the network itself ('René's network and its associated languages and other cultural practices were wholly suitable for exploitation by other important people', p. 188).

The Politics of Culture in Quattrocento Europe. René of Anjou in Italy is the product of rigorous and extensive research, outstanding intellectual ability, and erudition. By examining a vast array of primary sources, and displaying an academic maturity uncommon among scholars of his youth, Margolis has conducted a sound study of a positivist type, and has selected and applied the concepts and interpretive frameworks that best enable a theoretical understanding of the examined evidence. With his new research method, he advocates for the investigation of the effects of diplomacy and its associated cultural practices on historical change. The book thus prefigures Dr Margolis as a first-class cultural historian and original, genuine thinker, whose other academic publications are decidedly to be taken into account. The most adequate way to conclude this review is to refer the reader to the book itself.

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