

ways an audience's *Sitz im Leben* would have resulted in differing uses of the text and have resulted in contrasting reading/listening experiences. A collective catechetical application arguably differed from more private use. Harkins argues that the work's popularity in Rome is indeterminate. Nevertheless, she argues that elite readers would have found the over-sexed, numbskull freedman Hermas true to type and hence risible, which leads one to conclude that she thinks the literary invention of the bumbling autobiographer is a deliberate narrative device. If so, this makes problematic the idea that the protagonist's visions and encounters are designed for the task of self-fashioning (p. 23). These criticisms notwithstanding, this study presents the guild with a new way of engaging the *Shepherd* that will repay scholarly attention.

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Romaniser la foi chrétienne? La poésie latine de l'antiquité tardive entre tradition classique et inspiration chrétienne. Edited by Giampiero Scafoglio and Fabrice Wendling. (Collection d'études médiévales de Nice, 20, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Cultures et Environnements. Préhistoire, Antiquité, Moyen Âge.) Pp. 255. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. €60 (paper). 978 2 503 60087 1; 2294 852X

Césaire D'Arles. Commentaire de l'apocalypse de Jean. By Roger Gryson. (Sources Chrétiennes, 636.) Pp. 311. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2023. €59 (paper). 978 2 204 15489 5; 0750 1978

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The first of these books, we are told, is the result of collaboration between a group of Latinists and a team of historians engaged in research on processes of spatialisation and territorialisation in late ancient and medieval Christianity. That original impulse appears clearly in an essay on Prudentius and the cult of the martyrs, and in another on epigraphic poetry across the time span between Damasus, bishop of Rome in the fourth century, and Ennodius, bishop of Pavia in the sixth. Beyond that, it diffuses through a fleeting focus on spaces in the city of Rome into a flickering discussion of the 'Roman inculturation' of Christianity. For the coherence of the volume, the reader must rely on the *quatrième de couverture* and a slender introduction. There are no response pieces, no general conclusion, no index. Each essay is prefaced by abstracts in French and English, and has a separate bibliography. Fewer than half of the ten contributions formally address the question posed by the title of the collection. The quality of scholarship is high. In addition to generous coverage of Prudentius and especially Ennodius, there are instructive pieces on Macrobius, Ausonius, Claudian and the Latin Anthology, and an elegant opening chapter on the representation of the Roman past in the writings of later Latin poets.

Can one now speak of a 'Romanisation' of the Christian faith, without being heard grinding a confessional axe? The suggestion will not startle Roman historians *d'outre-Manche*. (See, for example, Peter Heather, *Christendom: the triumph of a religion* [2022], part 1: 'The Romanization of Christianity', who does not mean to innovate with the phrase.) Yet there is still something to ponder in the coda to Joëlle Soler's essay on Prudentius, where she argues specifically for the model

of an *interpretatio romana* of Christianity (p. 130). This would be a replacement for the paradigm of Christian ‘conversion’ of classical and Roman traditions, trialled by Jacques Fontaine and Jean-Claude Fredouille in pioneering works of the 1970s and ’80s. With good reason, Soler judges the older paradigm to be over-reliant on the perspective of the Church Fathers. She may not be quite fair to the modern masters in question, for whom the ‘conversion’ trope can be said to have served more as catchphrase than heuristic. It was a methodological principle for Fontaine to reject the fictions of literary conversion peddled by contemporary sources, nor did he downplay the acculturating force of classical and Roman ideas, idioms and institutions. For Soler, however, the term *interpretatio romana* would now better capture the process of ‘cultural transfer’ undergone by elements of the Christian faith. The point is reproduced on the cover of the book, with a twist. What is at issue, we are invited to think, is an ‘*interpretatio romana* of the Christian faith, which was of Hebrew origin’. The appeal of a new-old and authentically Roman tagline is obvious. *Interpretatio romana* was Tacitus’ phrase and concept. The notion of an *interpretatio christiana*, once favoured by art historians, is a calque of it. The reference to Hebrew origins, although not integrated with arguments presented in the book under review, makes for a better fit with the Tacitean model. But how uniformly does a model of cultural appropriation as conquest fit the assimilations and reassimilations that we find taking place in Roman discourses of Christianity in late antiquity? Does it not risk making *alien* texts, practices, images, ideas and beliefs that, by the time the earliest of the poets canvassed in this collection began to sing, had in fact been internal to the Roman Empire for generations? Recent research has emphasised that ‘being Roman’ or ‘being Roman and Christian’ was a condition of continuous *aggiornamento* or change management that usually stopped well short of cultural *translatio* on the Tacitean model. ‘Romanism’ or ‘Roman-Christianism’ is a possible shorthand for that condition, less stringent than *Romanisation*. And is it a problem that the newly applied formula of *interpretatio romana* reinscribes (or reverses) another ancient, patristic script, according to which a Roman *interpres* conformed Latin Scripture to the Hebrew truth? Those are pathways for a discussion that this volume would have stimulated. Students of later ancient Christianity and later Latin writing will find much of value in it. Some may be surprised to find themselves in a dialogue about Christian and ‘pagan’ literary *mores* with colleagues who are so allergic to Alan Cameron’s *The last pagans of Rome* (2011) that they do not cite it even when it is most plainly relevant.

The second volume recovers a text from the other side of a cultural watershed in the West, as processes of de-Romanisation set in. Those processes were partly passive, an aspect of the breakdown of Roman imperial and municipal institutions. But they were also active, an aspect of the Christian-ascetic takeover of resources that Robert Markus documented in *The end of ancient Christianity* (1990) with reference to the partly contrasting cases of southern Gaul and northern Italy in the early sixth century. Whereas Ennodius of Pavia, originally from Arles, reappears in *Romaniser la foi chrétienne?* as the proponent of an aristocratic ideal of eloquence, adjusted to the role of bishop, his contemporary Caesarius, alumnus of the Provençal monastery of Lérins, has long enjoyed a reputation as master of the Augustinian *sermo humilis*, secured for him by Dom Germain Morin when he reconstructed his homiletic *oeuvre*. In volume iii (1942) of his *Sancti Caesarii opera*, Morin edited a series of

homilies entitled *Expositio in Apocalypsim*. The work is attributed to Augustine in one branch of the manuscript tradition, appears anonymously in the other, older branch, and was convincingly restored to the bishop of Arles by a priest of the diocese of Auxerre in the late eighteenth century. Already in the Froben edition of Augustine, Erasmus recognised that it could not be that author's and commented that the disjoint matter in hand looked like 'notes collected by some learned party, which someone [then] turned into homilies'. Morin called the text an *incondita farrago* and took a similar view, but allowed the possibility that the original compiler meant to preach from his notes. In his *editio maior* for CCSL cv and now in a volume for *Sources Chrétiennes*, Roger Gryson explains the complex textual situation by combining versions of earlier hypotheses. On his account, what we have is 'a commentary disguised as homilies', constituted jointly (a) from materials originally assembled in view of a series of oral presentations to a select audience in a non-liturgical setting; and (b) from notes taken by an auditor of those presentations. Whether the results should now be designated as a 'commentary' (*expositio*) or with some other title is a decision the editor is content to leave to literary critics. Little should depend on it. The interest of the work lies on the one hand in its corroboration of the pastoral concerns of Bishop Caesarius and on the other in the evidence it affords of the influence and transmission of the two previous commentaries on which he relied, those of Victorinus of Poetovio and the African Tyconius. With this edition of Caesarius, Gryson completes the stupendous task of reediting the pre-Carolingian Latin commentaries on the Apocalypse, enabling us to see more clearly than ever before how a biblical book that cast the Roman Empire in a Christian prophetic light was serially updated and adapted by Latin expositors for Roman and post-Roman constituencies.

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Gregory of Nyssa. On the human image of God. Edited and translated by John Behr. (Early Christian Texts.) Pp. xiv + 367. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2023. £160. 978 0 19 284397 5
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These are splendid times for those interested in examining more closely Gregory of Nyssa's theology of creation as well as his exegesis of the early chapters of Genesis. In the wake of Robin Orton's recent translation of Gregory's *Apologia in Hexaemeron* in the Catholic University of America Press's new series, *Fathers of the Church: Shorter Work* (not to mention a second translation forthcoming by Andrew Radde-Gallwitz), John Behr here offers readers a fine edition of facing-page Greek and English translation of Gregory's *De hominis opificio*. Behr has without a doubt performed another significant work of service on behalf of scholars interested in Nyssen's theological anthropology, his place within the hexaemeral tradition and his use of sources philosophical and theological.

Behr provides an extensive introduction (pp. 1–141) before presenting his edition of the Greek text and English translation (pp. 142–329) and outlining in an appendix the sixty-eight manuscripts of Gregory's *On the human image of God* consulted for this edition of the text. The introduction contains three