

VAN DEN BERG (B.), MANOLOVA (D.), MARCINIAK (P.) (edd.)
Byzantine Commentaries on Ancient Greek Texts, 12th–15th Centuries. Pp.
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The book under discussion contains thirteen essays on the practices, methods, performance and means of dissemination of the Byzantine commentaries on ancient texts. While also commenting on the works of less known authors, it focuses on some of the best known Byzantine scholars, such as John Tzetzes, Eustathios of Thessalonike, Maximos Planoudes, Manuel Holobolos and John Peditasimos. The chronological perspective adopted (explained by van den Berg and Manolova in the introduction) makes the book a true history of exegetical literature in the socio-cultural context of the Komnenian and Palaiologan periods (from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries). The volume covers different types of commentaries on ancient literature within the different (yet complementary) contexts of the study and teaching of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy and science. Finally, the contexts of knowledge transfer, patronage and authorial identity are stressed, important as they are for the understanding of the Byzantine intellectual milieu. Although none of these subjects is new, it is, as far as I know, the first time that they are united in such a monographic way; this makes the volume a very appreciated work.

P. Agapitos's chapter provides an enlightening synthesis (with the necessary bibliographical references) of the crossroads of Byzantine commentaries on ancient texts. It stresses the connections between scholars, patrons, textual genres and subjects, but also the contexts of production and dissemination of these works, providing a less well-known material example of such an intricate process – the codex Alexandria, Patriarchal Library 62, a late thirteenth-century example of the material used in a teaching context that contains a true synthesis of twelfth-century exegetical production, both pagan and Christian. M. Trizio's long contribution focuses on the commentaries on Aristotle in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, looking mostly for an understanding of the functioning of authorial practices in a widely competitive environment, an environment common to all the Byzantine scholars mentioned in the book. Trizio also offers a welcome list of manuscript sources for what he calls 'hidden treasures: unknown or little-known philosophical texts from the Komnenian period' (pp. 80–1). The pleasure of knowing the previously unknown is exactly the feeling provided by F. Nousia's chapter, especially when editing the scholia to Ὑπερ Πητορικῆς A' & B' from the Vatican gr. 1899, fol. 184r–234r, an autograph by Theodora Raoulaina, from the early-Palaiologan period.

M. Tomadaki's contribution discusses the literary sources of Tzetzes' *Theogony*. On the one hand, it comes as no surprise when we are told about Tzetzes' recourse to the texts of authors such as Homer, the extant and even some lost works of Hesiod, Pindar, Theocritus, Aeschylus, Aristophanes and others. Of most of them, he composed large commentaries, or even poetic re-elaborations, and there is no doubt about the level of his bibliographic resources. On the other hand, one misses a deeper discussion of the eleven manuscripts said to transmit the *Theogony* (their formats, the other texts they copy, their scribes and the public), a not so difficult task that would probably make certain the possibility that 'Hesiod was occasionally part of the Byzantine school curriculum and that professional teachers, like Tzetzes, could have used Hesiod's *Theogony* as a textbook' (p. 142). This has been shown by, among others, M. Cardin and F. Pontani ('Hesiod's fragments in Byzantium', in: C. Tsagalis [ed.], *Poetry in Fragments: Studies on the Hesiodic Corpus and its Afterlife* [2017], pp. 245–87) – cited in the bibliography.

With no room for an appreciation of every chapter of the book, particularly good pieces of research on their own Byzantine subjects and authors, the index should be highlighted: from ancient, Byzantine and modern authors to their works and the manuscripts that transmit them, it is a useful resource for the academic use of this book.

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OSGOOD (J.) (trans.) *Sallust: How to Stop a Conspiracy. An Ancient Guide to Saving a Republic*. Pp. xxxviii + 195. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2022. Cased, £12.99, US\$16.95. ISBN: 978-0-691-21236-4.

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Sallust has been well served with English translations over the last two decades: by A.J. Woodman in the *Penguin Classics* series (2007), by W. Batstone for *Oxford World's Classics* (2010) and most recently by J. Ramsey's extensive revision of J.C. Rolfe's Loeb (2013). Among such august company, what is the rationale for a new translation of the *Bellum Catilinae*?

The distinctive focus of O.'s translation befits its place in the Princeton *Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers* series and is expressed in its title: O. draws out the wider resonances of Sallust's narrative, framing the monograph as an influential and transferable meditation on conspiracy. Indeed, the introduction begins not with Rome (although the context is subsequently well covered, with useful background information for those new to the period as well as discussion of Sallust and his project), but with the persistent fear of conspiracy among the eighteenth-century founders of the United States. Taking Sallust's monograph as a practical handbook flattens out some of its most intriguing features (Does Sallust really offer a guide to saving a Republic? The monograph's famously ambiguous ending, together with the political upheaval within which Sallust was writing – only 20 years after the events described –, would seem to complicate this.), but at the same time succeeds in making the text accessible and appealing to a broad readership.

In keeping with the aims of the series, the translation aims primarily at a readable and flowing narrative, rather than at capturing the distinctiveness of Sallust's style: there are occasional gestures towards Sallust's characteristic *brevitas* and the sometimes elliptical qualities of his Latin, but the English is above all clear and compelling, with some memorable formulations (e.g. 'unspeakable sex crimes' for *nefanda stupra* at *Cat.* 15.1). O. also includes helpful notes, explicating elements of the historical context (e.g. *senatus consultum ultimum*), but also more literary qualities, such as Sallust's practice of including direct speeches. All of this is well judged to the volume's target audience. Also admirable is O.'s reference to recent scholarship on the text, highlighting some of the interpretative questions behind the narrative (e.g. on the so-called 'first conspiracy'): the focus here is primarily historical rather than literary.

The translation is accompanied by a facing Latin text. This differs from the Loeb and L.D. Reynolds's OCT mostly in punctuation and orthography: O. regularises