PANEGYRIC

M. WHITBY (ed.): *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity.* (*Mnemosyne* Supplement 183.) Pp. x + 378. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1998. Cased, $117.50. ISBN: 90-04-10571-9.

This volume brings together papers of both young and established scholars, some presented at the Classical Association meeting in St Andrews in 1995. It deals with the public presentation of leaders, in theory and practice, in prose and poetry, ranging widely, from the first to seventh centuries C.E., from the Greek East to Latin Gaul. In a skilful 'Introduction' the editor identifies common issues raised by the various contributors, furnishing deft summaries and comment of her own. 'Panegyric' is interpreted broadly enough to include works, such as the ecclesiastical histories of Socrates and Sozomen, with panegyrical elements embedded within them, as well as invective. Most of the contributors are more concerned with the theory, themes, and technique of the craft than with 'issues of "truth" and the "facts" of history' (p. 1), although all recognize the importance of locating panegyrics within their immediate context. This is an impressive collection, although more might be said about audiences.

In 'Panegyrists and Their Teachers', Donald Russell examines the teaching of epideictic rhetoric and its relation to surviving examples (of pagan prose). Surprisingly little evidence survives for the teaching of encomium, given its importance in the Roman Empire, whether 'the educational tradition . . . never caught up with the real situation in the empire', as R. suggests (p. 25), or whether our evidence is simply defective. R. plays down the impact of handbooks such as Menander's, observing, however, that noted authors, those least in need of help, are disproportionately represented today. He suggests that 'Menander II' omits some of the commonest court occasions in extant panegyric, such as consulships, anniversaries of accession, and imperial birthdays, because these ceremonies only developed after his time, 'under Diocletian and his successors' (pp. 28, 49). But numismatic evidence implies that imperial anniversaries, at least, were accorded great prominence from much earlier times, along with occasions Menander does mention, such as *adventus* (cf. legends like VOTA SUSCEPTA DECENNAL III COS IIII; PRIMI DECENNALES, etc.; from Antoninus Pius on). It is reasonable to assume that such public celebrations were accompanied by panegyrical address as well as sacrifices. And Zenobios, a sophist who taught at Rome under Hadrian, composed a *Γενεθλιακὸν εἰς Ἀδριανὸν Καισάρα* (Suda). Presumably Menander's Greek audience was simply more remote from the court than (say) the rhetoricians of Autun, and private and provincial occasions loomed larger.

In 'Praise and Protreptic in Early Imperial Panegyric: Cicero, Seneca, Pliny', Susanna Braund illustrates how the specific context of a panegyric shapes its content and character. Consideration of Pliny's Panegyric on Trajan leads her to an exploration of earlier protreptic or 'programmatic' works: the Caesarian speeches of Cicero ('proto-panegyrics'), the *De Imperio Cn. Pompei*, and Seneca's *De Clementia.*

Roger Rees examines 'The Private Lives of Public Figures in Latin Prose Panegyric' from Trajan to Theodosius, nicely demonstrating 'how private conduct is used to claim moral superiority for the subject', but finding no 'linear progression in the ethics of the self' (p. 99): speakers respond to immediate political opportunities rather than to broader societal change; for example, emphasis on private life is particularly useful

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in contrasting Trajan and Constantine with Domitian and Maxentius. Perhaps R. is too ready to entertain an adverse Christian judgement upon the private conduct of the Tetrarchs in explaining the figurative approach to it by their panegyrists. I suspect it has more to do with their seclusion, and the remoteness of the speakers from the court.

In a stimulating contribution Shaun Tougher re-examines Julian's speech of thanks to Eusebia, finding it not as artless and sincere as it is often taken to be. A corollary is that the image of the kindly and influential Eusebia must be seen as the encomiastic creation of Julian himself. While the speech is panegyrical in structure, technique, and content, T. notes some oddities, particularly the barbed observation that the highest virtue is not to have caused the death of any citizen! Enticingly, T. promises a re-evaluation of Julian's First Panegyric upon Constantius.

In a lively paper, 'Themistius: a Political Philosopher?', Peter Heather seeks to explain how this pagan thrived so long under Christian emperors: not in terms of his rhetorical novelty or his claims to credibility as a philosopher; rather he was a talisman for emperors confronted by a powerful pagan landed élite. His employment showed 'a commitment to continuity . . . in the midst of cultural transformation' (p. 138). Rhetorical 'novelty'—or pre-eminence? Perhaps H. underrates Themistius' rhetorical skill? But he acknowledges Themistius' skill as a propagandist who, rather than 'championing senatorial opinion to the emperor', as he often claims to do, advocates the wisdom of imperial policy to the senate, and attempts to deflect criticism of it.

Paula James argues that the pagan imagery of Claudian's invective *In Rufinum* I has Christian resonances, that it 'plays upon anxieties shared by both belief systems' (p. 151); for example, good and evil operate through human agents; 'persuasive serpents would strike a chord in a Christian court' (p. 167); Stilicho is a Peter-like rock upon which Rufinus founders. Claudian's message is that a 'demonic danger' to the empire has been eliminated. His poem is serious and powerful, not ornamental or amusing.

In 'Representing the Past, Redefining the Future: Sidonius Apollinaris' Panegyrics of Avitus and Anthemius', Lynette Watson stresses the daunting tasks that faced the panegyrist in a fast-changing world. In order to reconcile the Roman Senate to emperors imposed upon it he stressed the Romanitas of Avitus' barbarian backer Theoderic II and the Greek Anthemius; he used the past to disguise fundamental changes and provide 'cultural continuity for concepts of power which are, in fact, not traditional' (p. 196).

Mark Humphries's 'Savage Humour: Christian Anti-Panegyric in Hilary of Poitiers' *Against Constantius*' argues that this theological disquisition 'shows the impact of imperial rhetoric and propaganda on Christian modes of expression' (p. 201), vividly demonstrating the pervasiveness in late antiquity of the 'propaganda of power'. H. labels the work (which he dates to Constantius' life-time) 'anti-panegyric' rather than invective to emphasize Hilary's inversion of panegyrical technique.

Judith George, 'Venantius Fortunatus: Panegyric in Merovingian Gaul', traces the development of Venantius' career and the character of his panegyric. After deft service to a variety of patrons, secular and ecclesiastical, he became more assertive as his moral authority increased. But consistent moral (and political?) principles may be observed throughout: the need for unity between Gallo-Roman and Merovingian Frank, and harmony between King and Church.

Mary Whitby analyses George of Pisidia's 'image of Heraclius and his deputies, the virtues he highlights, and the consistency of his portraits' (p. 250). In the absence of

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the emperor George elevates his deputies, such as the patriarch Sergius, to his level. The portrayal of Heraclius as an emperor aided by God vindicates his bloodiest deeds. W. suggests there are responses to criticism of Heraclius in the poems, reflecting the emperor's unpopularity in Constantinople and resentment at his absences.

Claudia Rapp studies the relationship between panegyric and hagiography in terms of subject matter rather than genre. She finds fluidity of definition of secular power and sacral authority in the fourth and fifth centuries. Moses is shown to be prototype of the ideal bishop and paradigm for the Christian emperor.

Theresa Urbainczyk examines Socrates and Sozomen's treatment of Theodosius II, Constantine, John Chrysostom, and Julian. Unsurprisingly, she finds the two have different perspectives: Sozomen puts Church and bishop in a more positive light; Socrates is ambivalent about John and easier on Julian.

Michael Whitby explores anew the way in which Evagrius constructs his formal judgements of patriarchs and emperors, arguing that his portraits are not cardboard clichés, as they have been characterized. W. both identifies the qualities Evagrius valued and tests the latter's verdicts against external evidence.

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FINDING THINGS OUT

W.-R. MANN: *The Discovery of Things: Aristotle's* Categories *and their Context*. Pp. xii + 231. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. Cased, £24.95. ISBN: 0-691-01020-X.

This intelligent and engaging book advances an apparently outrageous thesis: 'before the *Categories* and *Topics*, there were no things' (p. 4). For Aristotle's *Categories* 'presents a revolutionary metaphysical picture' (p. 3). The picture charmed observers; and if it did not 'come to be common sense immediately', it is now 'firmly in place' (p. 201 with n. 18). The artist, on the other hand, was dissatisfied, and in the *Metaphysics* he painted a new ontological landscape (p. 206). Thus Everyman's understanding of the world depends on a brief Aristotelian whim.

The outrageous thesis is not what it seems: M. demurely explains that 'the discovery of things amounts to the discovery of objects, to the discovery that all the entities need to be divided into particular objects on the one hand, and whatever belongs to those objects on the other. . . . To this Aristotle adds the further claim that the objects, the bona fide things, are the most fundamental entities' (pp. 10–11). It is not that Aristotle discovered cabbages and kings; rather, he was the first philosopher to recognize that this king and that cabbage are particular items (rather than universals) and are objects (rather than properties). And he was also the first philosopher to insist that any other items there may be—the divine right of kings or the divine colour of savoys—are dependent entities, their existence being parasitical upon the existence of particular objects.

These novel ideas were not drawn from the void; for 'the characteristic concerns and claims of <*Cat*.> can be seen to be the outgrowth of Aristotle's critical engagement with earlier Greek philosophy' (p. 5)—and in particular, with Plato. We fail to see this inasmuch as 'crucial parts of Plato's metaphysical picture have been misunderstood'; for we have been blind to 'the at first startling idea that there are no things in his ontology, that Plato does not recognize things as things' (p. 6).

Thus half the book is about Plato, half about *Cat.*

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