of reception (cf. M. Trapp's novel article 'Sense of Place in the Orations of Dio Chrysostom', in D. Innes et al. [edd.], *Ethics and Rhetoric. Classical Essays for Donald Russell* [Oxford, 1995], pp. 163–75).

Merton College, Oxford HARRY SIDEBOTTOM

PANEGYRIC AND BIOGRAPHY

T. HÄGG, P. ROUSSEAU (edd.): *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*. Pp. xii + 288. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2000. Cased, £30. ISBN: 0-520-22388-8.

This collection provides a notable service by discussing in conjunction two types of text that are conventionally kept apart. In an engagingly ruminative, accessible introduction the editors make a powerful case for narrowing the gap between panegyrists and biographers, arguing that while the effusions of the former were constrained (*pace* Augustine, *Conf*. 6.6.9) by the presence of an audience that knew the truth, the latter enjoyed more room for creative manoeuvre than is generally recognized as they created the iconic figures that their readers demanded. The contributors, too, share a shrewd alertness to the relationships between authors and their audiences; the focus is much more upon the late antique debates to which these texts might have contributed than upon more recent quarrels about the historical value of the information they supply.

The individual papers maintain a high standard, and their many convergences (and occasional divergences) provide much useful stimulation. Gillian Clark and Mark Edwards each propose a literary context for pagan philosophical biography: where Clark measures Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* against Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Life*, and finds an argument designed to 'help and inspire students of philosophy' in the proper Porphyrean direction, Edwards places the same text in different company to discover a Neoplatonic gospel celebrating a pagan Christ. Similarly, Averil Cameron's reading of Eusebius' biography of Constantine through the prism of the *Life of Antony*, as an exercise in programmatic hagiography, is illuminating in itself but gains a further dimension beside the pair of neatly complementary studies of the *Life of Antony*, Philip Rousseau's analysis of the portrayal of the hero as the teacher and Samuel Rubenson's of the claims made about his education. The representative panegyric is Gregory Nazianzen's commemoration of his friend Basil of Caesarea. Frederick Norris discusses the delicate balance that Gregory preserves between loyal commemoration and self-promotion, and David Konstan his subtle adaptation of the classical rhetoric of friendship, while Jostein Bortnes brings home the shift, as Gregory's moves through different stages of Basil's career, from intense Platonic eroticism to more conventional Biblical rhetoric. Robert Penella's brief discussion of panegyrical elements in the private speeches of Themistius provides a coda to these treatments of Gregory, showing another panegyrist, in his commemoration of his father, recasting his subject in his own image. Patricia Cox Miller's pairing of Eunapius' *Lives of the Sophists* with a contemporary Christian collective biography, the *Lives of the Fathers*, brings together several central themes of the previous papers. Eunapius repackages the lives of Plotinus, Porphyry, and other philosophers to provide himself with a pedigree, and also illustrates the Athens which had inspired the most

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vividly personal passages of Gregory's panegyric on Basil; the *Lives of the Fathers* meanwhile takes us two generations beyond the *Life of Antony*, providing a guide to a citified desert whose dangers can be consigned to an improving epilogue, and where the fathers are neatly lined up for snapshots and soundbites. As if to caution against too enthusiastic an immersion in intertextuality, a final paper from Glen Bowersock excavates a series of hard facts from the Syriac Life of Rabbuta, persuasively reclaiming its hero for history.

There is a clear preponderance here of biography over panegyric; the editors tilt the balance further by claiming that Gregory's Basil oration, like the biographies, was 'a book to be read rather than a speech to be performed' (p. 10), an issue where Norris (pp. 140, 145) and Konstan (p. 162 n. 3) are more cautious. The question deserves fuller exploration, especially given the editorial discussion of the linkage between the circumstances and contents of panegyric. And if we accept the speech as, substantially, a performance given in Caesarea, we might see Gregory challenging local preconceptions about himself, for Basil's parishioners would have seen him twice at most in their bishop's company, and had little reason otherwise to suppose him an important friend. A tone that might seem self-indulgent or embarrassing (p. 16) can be interpreted as an audacious exercise in appropriation.

It is precisely this question, the point at which the personal becomes public and therefore political, that the volume raises most tantalizingly—and leaves most tantalizingly unanswered, the concentration on specific texts blurring the broader contexts. We therefore miss discussion of the drumming into well-born young men of the rhythms of panegyric; yet our own understanding (for example) of the Caesarean audience's response to Gregory's speech will depend greatly upon how capable we allow them to have been of similar creativity themselves. This was a generation, too, where public Christian discourse was taking a decided 'panegyrical turn', as more feasts crowded the calendar to demand exuberantly dignified celebration. Gregory Nazianzen was an especially determined (and, in the long term, perhaps the most influential) exponent of the trend; we might see his as at once sustaining and subverting a nascent cult of Saint Basil. Much formal Christian biography, by contrast, might usefully be examined with reference to the centrality of panegyric. Antony was thus unusual in remaining physically out of reach of the encomiasts: lack of a tomb perhaps helped put him on the biographical market. Similarly, the distance separating him from Constantine's mausoleum may well have helped shape Eusebius' biographical hybrid.

The papers on philosophical biography—especially those by Clark, Rubenson, and Cox Miller—suggest a further possible dimension. The closer the association between formal panegyric and the schools, the more inhibitions avowed philosophers must have felt in employing its tropes. In such details as Themistius' promise to supplement his father's eulogy with a biography (Penella, p. 197), we perhaps glimpse the concrete terms under which fourth-century philosophers conducted their ancient quarrel with rhetoric. In devising a means of bracketing his rhetorical teachers with his philosophical mentors, indeed, Eunapius was perhaps being even more boldly creative than Cox Miller allows. The intimacy of biography promises to make philosophers not only of its readers, but of its subjects too.

The volume is handsomely produced and reasonably priced. Although the editors modestly anticipate an exclusively scholarly readership, the availability of modern translations of nearly all the texts discussed means that a paperback version would do admirable service as a course-book. The headings that punctuate the introductory essay seem almost designed to launch a seminar apiece; and a volume organized with

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such intelligence and coherence deserves better than the piecemeal raiding that is the usual fate of such collections.

Keio University NEIL McLYNN

PLATO'S THINKING

M. DIXSAUT: *Platon et la Question de la Pensée*. (Études Platoniciennes 1.) Pp. 330. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2000. Paper, frs. 170. ISBN: 2-7116-1466-2.

There is no scholar of Plato who would not profit enormously from working through the highly original and thoughtful essays collected in this volume. Topics include irony, phronesis, the Sun analogy in the *Republic*, ancient etymology, and the terms *ousia*, *eidos*, and *idea* in the *Phaedo*; in addition, the extraordinarily nuanced and perceptive studies of the *Sophist*, which comprise almost half the volume, will prove indispensable to the student of that dialogue. The essays have all been previously and separately published, though Dixsaut has revised and rewritten them for the present occasion. Despite this diversity of topic and provenance, the essays cohere remarkably well since each sheds light on the central question announced by the volume's title: what is 'thinking' for Plato? D. maintains (p. 12) that this question is distinct from, and more important than, the subordinate question: what is knowledge?

Since it is not possible to discuss each chapter in detail here, I will confine myself to outlining how they respond to the question that unifies the volume, though admittedly at the cost of grossly oversimplifying D.'s careful analyses. Thinking, according to D., requires a recognition of the distance that separates it from what is thought (pp. 38–9), i.e. thinking is characterized by *irony*, where irony is the 'manner of freeing oneself from all content, all positivity, whether empirical or ideal' (p. 19). Thinking is essentially *dialectical*, i.e. a questioning of, and responding to, oneself (pp. 53–4). While ordinary thinking seeks to suppress itself in an opinion (p. 57), philosophical thinking seeks to 'ébranler la conviction' and cannot be reduced to its propositions (p. 70). Thinking is the questioning and desiring reminiscence of what something is in itself (*ousia*; pp. 79–80), rather than the knowledge of metaphysical Forms (*eidos*). It is *phronesis* in a not completely un-Aristotelian sense, i.e. it has to do with the contingent and the particular as well as with the eternal (pp. 109–10). Thinking is not related to the Good as to a metaphysical object or principle outside and beyond itself; instead, the Good is understood only within the exercise of dialectic, being both its cause and a power (pp. 128, 146–7). Unlike etymology, which seeks simply to explicate a meaning already given in the name, thinking instead seeks the thing itself through the *logos* (pp. 173–4). Affirming the errancy and multiplicity of *logos* as the only way of getting at the truth, though a perilous, multidirectional, and interminable way (pp. 184–8, 210), thinking is opposed to the naive Parmenidean *logos* (*muthos*) that wishes to exclude errancy as if it were nothing but error (pp. 183, 185). Seeing negative expressions (not-beautiful, not-just, etc.) as meaningful appeals to inquire and examine (pp. 247–8), thinking is opposed to the 'positivism' that reduces all meaningful negative expressions to positive ones and thus refuses to recognize any negation within being itself (pp. 238, 269–70). While thinking is discursive, it is not

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