

Stramaglia, studies the value placed on Apuleius as an exemplary author before the Renaissance; Priscian, one of the writers that preserve evidence for Apuleius' lost works, is examined by Stramaglia in 'Prisciano e l'*Epitoma historiarum* di Apuleio' (*RFIC* 124 [1996], 192–8); and finally, Annamaria di Piro, in 'Le Metamorfosi di Apuleio nella tradizione indiretta. I testi' (*InvLuc* 17 [1995], 55–76), lists texts quoting narrative fragments of Apuleius.

The book concludes with a valuable bibliography, helpful indexes, and some fine photographs of the most crucial passages in manuscripts. In sum, as these papers have largely not been superseded and are now presented adequately and, above all, supplemented by Graverini's addendum, this book may be practically useful for scholars generally interested in Apuleius.

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THE VIGIL OF VENUS

A. CUCCHIARELLI: *La veglia di Venere. Pervigilium Veneris*. Introduzione, traduzione e note. Pp. 167, ills. Milan: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 2003. Paper, €10. ISBN: 88-17-10635-6.

This little late-antique poem has received considerable attention recently, with several editions appearing over the course of the twentieth century, the latest by Formicola in 1998. Cucchiarelli's new edition thus has a lot of competition, and a lot of work to do to advance the scholarship on the *Pervigilium Veneris*. In this C. succeeds admirably by producing a very thorough and scholarly pocket edition, which at just 167 pages achieves considerably more than could reasonably be expected, including in particular a highly detailed commentary.

The dramatic setting of the *Pervigilium Veneris* is on the day before the festival of Venus, and the poem is a combination of a hymn to Venus, to spring, to creation and the recreation of life in spring, and an epithalamium. The anonymous poet, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the goddess, predicts the glories of her coming, moving easily from cosmological themes—the birth of the world in spring, the *hieros gamos* of earth and sky, the birth of the goddess from the foam—through the glories of the natural world—birdsong, the flowery meadows of spring, the green woods—to human life and love, with the repeated refrain 'Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet'. However, in contrast to the entirely positive development of the poem, the ending is sudden and dark, with the poet's plaintive question 'Quando ver venit meum?', and the comparison of the destruction of the poet's Muse through his own silence with the destruction of the silent city of *Amyclae*.

C. begins with an introduction 'la dea, il poeta, la città muta', which looks at the central themes of the *Pervigilium*, the style of the poem, and its public, then moves on to discuss the difficult problem of the poem's date. Arguments have tended to cluster around the second century A.D. (sometimes with attribution to Florus) and the fourth century A.D. (sometimes with attribution to Tiberianus). C., probably rightly, favours the fourth-century dating, but wisely refrains from naming the author. There follow brief but useful studies of the metre and language, poetic models, structure, the putative festival of Venus for which the poem may (just possibly) have been written, its philosophical thought, the manuscript tradition, and the reception of the poem. C.

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also includes a very interesting brief anthology of critical responses to the *Pervigilium*, ranging from Voltaire and Walter Pater, through to Schilling and Cameron in the twentieth century. C.'s text is essentially based on that of Shackleton Bailey (1982) with a comparative table of C.'s differences, and has a facing Italian prose translation. C.'s translation avoids prosiness while managing to keep reasonably close to the form and syntax of the original e.g. *P. V.* 1–2:

Ver novum, ver iam canorum; vere natus orbis est
vere concordant amores, vere nubunt alites

Nuova primavera, è primavera ormai di canti:
in primavera il mondo nacque
in primavera concordano gli amori, in primavera
si sponsano gli ucelli

But perhaps the most valuable part of C.'s book is the commentary. This is a really excellent commentary given the small size of the edition, and indeed excellent in comparison to almost any commentary on Latin poetry. For example, the note on the topos of the *hieros gamos* in ll. 58–67 is probably the best I have come across; the range of reference begins with Aristotle, *Gen. An.* 1.2.716a15–17, moves to Virgil, *Georgics* 2.325–33, where C. speaks of Virgil's remythologizing of the topos already debunked implicitly by Lucretius, *DRN* 1.250–61, to *Iliad* 14.346–51, Columella 10.194–214, the cosmology of Anchises' speech in *Aeneid* 6.724–32, and from there into philosophical uses of the topos with reference to Euripides, *Melanippe* fr. 484 N², Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 13.600a–b, Aristagoras, and Empedocles among others. Despite this level of detail, C. presents a highly readable commentary that combines deep philological and philosophical analysis with subtle and sensitive literary criticism. Finally, as an added bonus, C. closes the book with a brief anthology of Latin poems on the rose (one from Florus, the rest anonymous poems from the *Anthologia Latina*) which makes for useful comparative reading.

Overall, I can thoroughly recommend C.'s book as a very valuable addition to the scholarship on the *Pervigilium Veneris*, one which will be of great interest both to students of late Latin poetry and also more generally to anyone interested in Aphroditian poetics.

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TEXTS ON AND BY CONSTANTINE

M. EDWARDS: *Constantine and Christendom. The Oration to the Saints. The Greek and Latin Accounts of the Discovery of the Cross. The Edict of Constantine to Pope Sylvester*. Translated with Notes and Introduction. (Translated Texts for Historians 39.) Pp. xlviii + 143, maps. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003. Paper, £12.95. ISBN: 0-85323-648-8.

To Constantine scholars, the most important of the four works in this contribution to the highly useful Translated Texts for Historians series is the 'Oration to the

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