

Fabrizio Bordone: Paolino Nolano. Per la morte di un fanciullo [*carm.* 31]. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e commento. Pisa: Edizioni ETS 2017 (Poeti Cristiani 8). 478 p. € 40.00. ISBN: 978-88-467-4724-2.

The last decades witnessed an increased scholarly interest in the literary works of the wealthy Gallo-Roman aristocrat turned Christian ascetic Mero-pius Pontius Paulinus, usually known as Paulinus of Nola (ca. 352–431 AD).¹ Paulinus' extant literary corpus consisting of fifty-one letters and thirty poems² continues to fascinate modern readers as it opens a window on an age of profound social and cultural changes, when a growing number of upper-class learned Romans such as himself converted to Christianity and began to redefine the Greco-Roman heritage from their newly adopted Christian position, thus transforming it into something new. While in his prose letters Paulinus made a sustained effort to distance himself from classical literary models adopting a language strongly influenced by the Bible and focusing on religious topics, in his poems he remains a disciple of the great Latin classical authors, Virgil, Horace and Ovid³. Consequently, in recent years numerous classical philologists turned their attention to Paulinus' poetic corpus producing most needed introductions to and commentaries on a number of his individual poems.⁴

- 1 D. Trout: Paulinus of Nola. Life, Letters and Poems. Berkeley 1999 (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 27); C. Conybeare: Paulinus Noster. Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola. Oxford 2000 (Oxford Early Christian Studies). S. Mratschek: Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola. Kommunikation und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen. Göttingen 2002 (Hypomnemata 134).
- 2 F. Dolveck: Paulini Nolani carmina. Turnhout 2015 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 21) 25.
- 3 P. G. Walsh: The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola. New York 1975 (Ancient Christian Writers 40), 4.
- 4 R. Kirstein: Paulinus Nolanus, Carmen 17. Basel 2000 (Chrêsis 8); M. Kamptner: Paulinus von Nola, Carmen 18. Text, Einleitung und Kommentar. Wien 2005 (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission zur Herausgabe des Corpus der Lateinischen Kirchenväter 22); B. Surmann: Licht-Blick. Paulinus Nolanus, *carm.* 23. Edition, Übersetzung, Kommentar. Trier 2005 (Bochumer altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium 64); L. Sciajno: Paolino di Nola, Il carme 15 (Natalicium IV). Introduzione, traduzione e commento. Pisa/Roma 2008 (Studi sulla tardoantichità 1); S. Filosini:

Published in the Italian series *Poeti Cristiani* dedicated to Greek and Latin Christian poetry, the present volume illustrates eloquently the interest that classical scholars manifested lately in Paulinus' poetic work. Fabrizio Bordone's study stems from his doctoral thesis *La fede che consola. Paul. Nol. carm. 31,1–380* under the supervision of Giuseppe Flammini and Roberto Palla, which offers an introduction, a critical text with Italian translation and a line by line commentary of Paulinus' *Carmen 31*. *Carmen 31* is a poem of lamentation addressed by Paulinus to a married couple Pneumatius and Fidelis to console them on the occasion of the death of their young son, the eight-year-old Celsus. The long consolation poem in elegiac couplets has already been under intense scholarly scrutiny given the fact that it offers a Christian treatment of the classical genre of *consolatio* with the aim of contrasting the differing attitudes toward death of the Christian and pagan culture.

Bordone's extensive introduction (21–121) discusses methodically matters regarding the unity of Paulinus' poem, its addressees, its date of composition, the transformation of the traditional rhetorical category of *consolatio* under Paulinus' pen and the Christian appropriation of traditional *topoi* belonging to Greco-Roman funerary literature, the structure of the text, Paulinus' reasons for adopting the elegiac meter, the language and style of the poem. He also dwells at length on the poem's manuscript tradition, followed by a detailed presentation of the various editions and translations of *Carmen 31*. The introduction concludes with some brief remarks on prosody and metrics.

As in *Carmen 31* Paulinus abides by the rules of consolatory genre particularly in the introductory part of the poem and in its concluding verses devoting the largest part to a dogmatic exposition on the Christian belief in eternal life and the resurrection of the dead, the structural unity of the poem has long been contested. Bordone's introduction surveys the various scholarly views on the subject and aligns himself with the interpreters who defend the unitary character of the composition. The unity is achieved at a formal level through repeated admonitions addressed to Pneumatius and Fidelis throughout the poem, thus reminding of its consolatory aim, coupled with Paulinus' choice of catechetical and dogmatic themes which “risultano coerentemente funzionali allo svolgimento consolatorio del carme” (28).

Paolino di Nola, Carmi 10 e 11. Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento con un saggio di F. E. Consolino. Roma 2008 (Studi e testi tardoantichi 6).

The largest part of the introduction is dedicated to an illuminating discussion of the genre of *Carmen* 31 and its themes (32–71). Bordone offers a detailed account of the Greco-Roman literature of lamentation and observes that in choosing to write a *consolatio* in verses Paulinus radically transforms a textual typology situated on the margins of the consolatory tradition more strongly represented by epistolary compositions (36). Bordone goes on to show that Paulinus draws consciously on the rich tradition of classical funerary literature in its entirety not only of *consolationes* in verse, as the poem includes elements of the sepulchral epigram (46) and elaborates themes and features present in the philosophical *consolationes* in prose, such as the exhortation to abandon excessive mourning (54) or the repeated use of *solacia* and *praecepta* (55). Bordone pays much attention to the way in which the traditional *topoi* of *opportunitas mortis*, defeated hopes by *mors immatura*, the uselessness of excessive mourning, the welcome of the deceased in the afterlife receive a Christian treatment in Paulinus' poem, arguing that the rejuvenation of the literary genre is achieved “attraverso l'appropriazione delle forme del passato e nella dimensione di una continua tensione dialettica con esse” (46). In addition, the substitution of the traditional philosophical themes of the universality of death and of the soul's liberation from corporeal chains with the Christian promise in eternal life and the belief in the resurrection of the body developed at length from a Christological and eschatological perspective distinguish Paulinus' consolation poem from the vast majority of other Christian *consolationes* (56–57). Unlike other commentators who saw a discrepancy between these lengthy dogmatic expositions and the consolatory aim of the poem, Bordone underlines their protreptic function, arguing that they are meant to bring solace to Pneumatius and Fidelis who, by means of a life conducted in accordance with Christian precepts, may hope to be saved and reunited with their son in the afterlife.

Bordone explains convincingly Paulinus' choice of elegiac meter not only as a continuation of the classical tradition of the *consolationes* in verse written overwhelmingly in the elegiac distich, but also through the prism of the protreptic character of the poem, showing that within the elegiac genre one may distinguish a subgenre of the didactic elegy of which Paulinus was highly aware (78). Moreover, the protreptic associations of the elegiac distich are present somewhere else in Paulinus' work as he wrote in the same meter a poem of exhortation to Licentius urging him to commit himself to Christ (*ep.* 8,3).

Bordone's analysis of the poem's language and style reveals Paulinus' indebtedness to the major poets of the Latin literary tradition, in particular to Virgil, Lucretius, Horace, Ovid and Martial (81–82). It also discusses Paulinus' effort to incorporate biblical material, pointing out to his reliance on the language of the gospels, psalms and in particular Paul who is both quoted in the poem and paraphrased (87).

While Bordone does not dwell on idle conjectures about the poem's date of composition or the identity of the addressees, of whom too little is known, he could have nevertheless devoted more space to discussing matters of audience. Given the amplitude of the didactic part it seems clear that the poem was not written solely for the edification of Pneumatius and Fidelis, but that it envisaged a much larger public. It would have worth slightly more investigating what kind of public did Paulinus intend to address.

The text of *Carmen* 31 has been transmitted as a whole by four manuscripts, which Bordone describes in detail. Two manuscripts have been dated to the ninth century (J Londiniensis Bibliothecae Britannicae Harleianus 4831, and O Parisinus Latinus 2122), one comes from the twelfth century (B Bruxellensis 10615-10729) and the fourth belongs to the fifteenth century (T Vaticanus Urbinas Latinus 533). Bordone sees J, O and B as descending all from a lost manuscript as they present almost identical omissions and common errors while T is ascribed to a different branch of the manuscript tradition (101).

In establishing the critical text of *Carmen* 31, he relies on all four manuscripts as well as on a fragment of *Carmen* 31, verses 311–322, found in a fifteenth century manuscript discovered and described by Franz Dolveck (100). He also takes into consideration the *editio princeps* of the Flemish scholar Iodocus Badius Ascensius and the most important printed editions of Paulinus' poetical corpus leaving aside those which merely reproduced the text without other interventions (119). Bordone's established text presents only small differences – most of which concern punctuation – with that of Hartel's standard edition and with the newer version proposed by Dolveck. His text differs from the versions of Wilhelm von Hartel and Dolveck at verse 57, where he opts for *cuncta gerens hominem* instead of *cuncta gerens hominum* and at verse 66 where he prefers *se spoliavit* rather than *despoliavit*. His first choice for a construction with the accusative is based on the identification of other *loci similes* in Paulinus' corpus and in other fourth century Latin authors (217), whereas *despoliavit* is rejected as a conjecture going back to the edition of Andreas

Schottus (1618) and later accepted by Jean-Baptiste Le Brun des Marettes and others, but not sustained by the manuscript tradition, which unanimously uses *se spoliavit*. (222). Another textual difference with Hartel's text is at verse 599, where in agreement with Dolveck, Bordone proposes *talium enim caeli regnum deus esse profatur* instead of Hartel's version *talium enim infantum caeli regnum esse probatur*, which follows T. Bordone accepts an emendation suggested by Badius that has clear biblical connotations referring to Mt 19,14: *talium est enim regnum caelorum* (464).

The bulk of the volume is taken up by the commentary (173–478), which gathers an impressive number of *loci paralleli*, both formal and thematic. In addition, it contains in-depth and erudite discussions of matters already touched upon in the introduction, such as language, style and meter while revealing fascinating aspects regarding the transmission of the text across centuries. The commentary does not neglect to draw attention to the structure of the composition devoting informative overviews to the main sections of the poem first presented in a schematic form in the introduction (71–74).

The main downside of this volume concerns the way in which the bibliography to this work is presented and the lack of indices. This impressive philological and textual work is preceded only by a partial bibliography of the works most frequently quoted, which are also abbreviated, but both the introduction and the commentary contain further bibliographical references, which are nowhere listed together, so that one can get an overview of the literature used in the making of this volume. It is surprising that a study targeted clearly at a scholarly audience does not contain a full bibliography in order to facilitate the reading of this volume. The same goes for indices, which lack completely, making the work with this volume cumbersome and time consuming, as it requires unending skimming through the text in order to find biblical references, names, places etc.

Notwithstanding these minor criticisms, overall Bordone's book is a most welcome addition to the already growing number of commentaries on Paulinus' individual poems. It makes a significant, positive contribution to the scholarship devoted to Paulinus' poetic corpus. While this study of a Christian *consolatio* proves exceedingly useful for the ongoing discussion of the transformation of classical genres and the renewal of late Latin poetry being especially relevant for literary critics and also classicists with research inter-

ests in reception studies, Bordone's informed discussions of cultural and ideological matters, make it also attractive for historians of Latin late antiquity and, to a certain extent, for theologians.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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