

Catherine Ware (ed. and tr.): *A Literary Commentary on Panegyrici Latini VI(7). An Oration Delivered before the Emperor Constantine in Trier, ca. AD 310*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2021. X, 396 p. £ 100.00/\$ 130.00. ISBN: 978-1-107-12369-4.

Catherine Ware's book is the first edition, translation, and commentary of what ultimately promises to be a full series of twelve independently published volumes dealing with each of the twelve speeches that make up the collection of the *Panegyrici Latini*. Spearheaded by Roger Rees (St Andrews, UK) and Bruce Gibson (Liverpool, UK), the network of scholars responsible for undertaking this project have already produced a 2013 volume on Pliny the Younger in Late Antiquity¹, and a forthcoming edited volume, *Praising Constantine*, due to be published by Brill in the coming years, both of which feature chapters contributed by Catherine Ware. Those eagerly awaiting the appearance of these volumes and looking to Ware to give an indication of what they can expect from them will doubtless be delighted with what they will find between its covers: precision, depth, and an often humbling knowledge of the Classical Latin canon.

Paneg. VI(7) is an important speech, both as a historical source and as a rhetorical product, and makes an interesting first offering for this series, forming, as it does, a midpoint in the collection, being the sixth in the traditional manuscript ordering, the seventh when ordered chronologically; hence VI(7). Delivered in 310 at the city of Trier, the speech is the first sole panegyric to the emperor Constantine – the earlier 307 Paneg. VII(6) had been a joint offering to Maximian and Constantine – and is an important witness for the aims and intentions that guided the early stages of Constantine's career. In it we see not only the increasingly clear rift that was opening between Constantine and the other tetrarchic emperors, but also gain the earliest hints of Constantine's divine mission (framed, in keeping with the highly traditional language and milieu of panegyric, as an encounter of Constantine's with Apollo). The speech is also, with Lactantius, one of only two sources that can shed any real light on the usurpation and downfall of Maximian in 310.

Catherine Ware makes no secret of the fact that commentary on the *Panegyrici Latini* is an increasingly crowded field. Translations of and commentaries on

1 B. Gibson/R. Rees (eds.): Pliny the Younger in Late Antiquity. In: *Arethusa* 46, 2013, 141–374.

the collection exist in all important scholarly languages, and Ware particularly draws the reader's attention to the 1990 German translation of Paneg. VI(7) by Brigitte Müller-Rettig², and the exceptionally important 1994 volume of C. E. V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers³, which brought the entire *Panegyrici Latini* into English for the first time and which was accompanied by a very detailed historical and (to a lesser extent) linguistic commentary, albeit one consigned to the footnotes. Ware's answer to the implicit question of what she has to add is direct: "[...] the literary aspects of the speeches and of the collection as a whole still merits attention." (1).

The book's opening paragraph (and, indeed, its title) are therefore its mission statement, the way it seeks to distinguish itself from the work that has gone before: the *Panegyrici Latini* for Classicists and Philologists, not merely for Ancient Historians. Certainly, the impetus to give to Late Roman prose literature the same depth and seriousness of treatment usually reserved for the late Republic and early Principate is a laudable ambition, and one that it may be hoped, will help to give late Roman Latin greater traction in university Classics departments as a legitimate object of study.

Literature as literature and the ever-present ancient concern of intertextuality are the *modus operandi* of Ware's book and the region in which it most truly shines. Where most scholars who work with the panegyrics (myself included) have tended to treat them as mines for historical data or evidence of *mentalité*, Ware's aim is different, to explore the intellectual and literary world of their production (the schools of the late Empire and, specifically, of Gaul) and to see them not only and not primarily as oratorical moments or as historical documents, but as pieces of literature that were produced – consciously and explicitly – for later consumption as such. Whilst one can wonder whether the panegyrics merit being treated as great literature – they were, at least to my mind, political servility uncomfortably kitted out in literature's clothing – Ware's approach is persuasive and intriguing and offers insight into the working of the minds that produced them.

2 B. Müller-Rettig: Der Panegyricus des Jahres 310 auf Konstantin den Großen. Übersetzung und historisch-philologischer Kommentar. Stuttgart 1990 (Palingenesia 31).

3 C. E. V. Nixon/B. Saylor Rodgers: In Praise of Later Roman Emperors. The Panegyrici Latini. Introduction, Translation, and Historical Commentary with the Latin Text of R. A. B. Mynors. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1994 (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 21).

As a translation and commentary, the work presents a fairly straightforward structure, opening with an introduction (1–63) that sets out some of the most important textual and historical context as well as exploring the foci of Ware’s own study (intertextuality at their forefront), moving thence to a Loeb-style edition and facing-page translation (64–97), and closing with the commentary itself (99–351). Barring the inclusion of a translation, the book is reminiscent – in layout, format, and in general style and approach – of a Cambridge Green and Yellow (a point I will return to), and every bit as scholarly impressive as any member of that series.

The introduction is divided roughly in two between a section on the *Panegyrici Latini* as a collection and a section on Paneg. VI(7) specifically. Both sections are at their most interesting when they step out of the fairly well trodden grooves of what is known and argued about the *Panegyrici Latini* – of which Ware includes, not unreasonably, a fair amount – and into her more personal insights on how intertextuality not only shaped the speeches as compositions, but can also be used to understand their production. Insights within the first section (1–35) on the place of Paneg. VI(7) within the *Panegyrici diuersorum VII*, are fascinating, and Ware amply demonstrates through intertextuality not only that the collection must have been known as a unity long before the *Panegyrici Latini* were assembled in their current form (which Ware follows the near universal consensus of ascribing to Pacatus), but also that the author of Paneg. VI(7) was working in explicit dialogue with earlier speeches, from which he borrowed liberally but judiciously. Likewise fascinating is the short but highly erudite section on intertextuality (32–35). As mentioned, this is ever Ware’s focus, but her explicit consideration of it here gives weight and depth to more general assertions found elsewhere of just how fundamentally grounded in the Latin classics were the authors of these panegyrics, who borrowed liberally from (in particular) Cicero and Fronto, Ennius and Vergil, but also from Livy, Sallust, Velleius, and Florus, and even from authors less commonly seen as mines for intertext like Caesar, Seneca, and Tacitus.

The second part of the introduction (35–63) again works through some fairly well established (though excellently researched and clearly written) historical context for the speeches, on Constantine’s rise to power and his break with the tetrarchy, and again ornaments itself with a more idiomatic look at how the author employs intertextual strategies and at the way that he consciously and explicitly worked in dialogue with earlier tetrarchic speeches (which he

must have read) in order to construct models for Constantine at once grounded in and subversive of the tetrarchic models that preceded him.

The translation is the part of the work with which I have most issue, but those issues centre mostly around the wisdom of including it at all, and so I will confine those remarks to the latter part of the review. In short, and taken purely on its own terms, the translation is excellent and there is little beyond pedantic quibbling that one could say against it. It is accompanied on its facing page by the 1964 edition of Mynors, generally agreed to be much the best we possess.⁴

It is the commentary, however, that truly marks the work out, and forms the real heart of the volume. Anyone interested in buying a copy of Ware's book will do so for this commentary, and for those seeking to dive deep into the panegyrics as works of literature and, above all, seeking to understand them as tapestries of intertextual engagement with the Latin greats, Ware's work is an embarrassment of riches. Reviewing a commentary is an exceptionally difficult thing to do, so I will confine myself to some general remarks about its character and its quality, and then to look at a few specific examples that will help give a flavour of the depth and detail of the text.

At very nearly two thirds of the main-text length of the book (and even greater in terms of word count, since it is printed in the diminutive font always deemed appropriate for commentaries), Ware's effort here is immense and – one might dare to say – approaches exhaustive. At a little under 250 pages for a speech totalling less than 500 lines (as printed in this volume), the commentary thus averages a page of text for every two lines of the speech. It is exceptionally thoroughly researched, and ranges from historical insights, narrative framing, guidance as to how and why a particular translation has been undertaken, rhetorical exposition, and of course the intertexts that are so important to the whole project. Individual examples of all of these different facets are legion, but one that particularly caught my eye as worthy of note concerned the orator's phrase *coniecturam oculorum [...] fefellisset* (19.5; p. 303), which appears in his description of the siege of Marseille. Starting with some basic definitions of the vocabulary, the note transitions to an explanation of the phrase as a whole, moves to a delightful exploration of Ro-

4 R. A. B. Mynors: XII panegyrici Latini. Oxford 1964 (Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis).

man surveying practices during siege operations worthy of any military historian, and closes with some really interesting mathematics concerning the use of trigonometry to estimate the lengths of the sides of triangles, theories the ancients believed were first set out by Thales. A note like this could be expanded to a short article in an Ancient History journal and no one would bat an eye. And there are many such.

To give a flavour of the depth and breadth of Ware's commentary, I offer a summary of a page of it chosen largely at random (133), but which I feel amply reflects that character of Ware's scholarship. Here, the commentary relates to section 3.3 of the speech, and is part of an extended section on that part of the speech. On this page, we get the following:

1. The tail-end of a discussion of the historical evidence for Constantine's pre-imperial military career under Diocletian and Galerius, replete with reference to the *Oratio ad Sanctos*, Lactantius, Barnes, Edwards, and Lenski;
2. A further historical consideration of Constantine's acclamation as Augustus but acceptance of the title of Caesar, again carefully referenced;
3. A cultural-linguistic note on the use of *Fortuna*, here, as a hostile force;
4. The explorations of a metaphor hinging on the verb *crescere*, with an intertextual reference to that metaphor's reprise later in the speech;
5. An exploration of the historicity of the assertion that Constantine engaged in personal acts of martial valour, buttressed by Paneg. XII(9), Lactantius, the *Origo Constantini imperatoris*, and Eusebius;
6. A consideration of the phrase *singulari certamine*, its characteristic late Latinity, and its frequent employment in the late Roman commentators (Servius on the *Aeneid*, Placidus on Statius's *Thebaid*);
7. Consideration of the antithesis of *notiorem* [...] *nobilior* with intertextual references to Cicero's *Pro Caelio* and *Pro Flacco* and to Curtius;
8. And the opening of an exploration of the import of the term *gentes* as specifically employed by this orator in this speech.

The commentary, in short, is excellent, and it achieves very admirably what Ware set out to do, that is to subject the panegyric to a true literary analysis. With all this being said, I am not without my criticisms of this volume, which I would roughly group under two headings: firstly, my issues with the translation, and secondly what I see as missed opportunities to explore more deeply the import of the intertextualities that are Ware's bread and butter.

On the translation – and given the labour that must have gone into producing it – I confess myself unconvinced that it adds anything not already available in Nixon and Rodgers. Though obviously an independent product of Ware’s labour, her translation and Nixon and Rodgers’ differ little in points of substance, nor is there a particularly obvious alternate guiding principle in Ware’s. She is sometimes more literal to the Latin text (e.g. at 11.4); but sometimes she is less so (e.g. 10.4). She is sometimes more observant of Mynors’s punctuation (e.g. 10.1), but sometime less so (e.g. 7.4). Occasionally a small error of Nixon and Rodgers’ is picked up and corrected, as when they slightly fumble the numbering at 6.3, and likewise one sometimes finds more sympathy for Ware’s choice of English word in rendering a Latin original (Ware’s ‘love for him’ is probably better than Nixon and Rodgers’ ‘your piety’ for *pietas tua*, 7.4). Only very occasionally are variances anything more than incidental, and even when they are not, they are hardly ground-breaking: Ware’s rendering of *ilico* at the moment of Constantine’s accession (8.2) gives greater immediacy to the narrative, and her understanding of *te imperante* (15.2) makes Constantine’s involvement more direct, but neither asks for a fundamental shift in our understanding.

Were the translation integral to the work as a whole, these comments might be dismissed as made in bad faith; they are, after all, the griping of a moderate linguist frustrated to routinely see excellent linguists re-translating works in a field bedevilled by untranslated text. But my major issue with the translation is that I feel the volume would have been richer without it. The most obvious strength and value of the commentary (at least to my thinking) is that it permits late Roman scholars to begin teaching the panegyrics to our Latin students in the way that we would normally teach ‘the Greats’. The inclusion of a translation, however, undercuts the value of this book as the foundation of a reading class; one never sets a Loeb in a reading class for the precise reason that the temptation for students to look across the page is always too great to resist.

I made comparison, in my opening, to the Cambridge Green and Yellows and it strikes me as noteworthy that Ware’s book – shorn of its translation but otherwise untouched – would make a superb addition to that series (and would thereby appear at a price point more accessible to students).⁵ One

5 My comment on pricing is of course blunted by the fact that the text exists as an e-book, a large upfront cost for libraries but granting ready access to students.

suspects, of course, that there are institutional pressures that would prevent this from happening; barring Peter White's edition and commentary of Augustine, *Confessiones* V–IX, the more than one hundred and twenty volumes of the Green and Yellow series have so far eschewed any foray into the world beyond the second century AD (a double shame in this case since, as Ware herself points out, the panegyrics offer a distinctly classicising Latin largely devoid of post Augustan vocabulary and syntax: p. 27). Nonetheless, one wonders if the format might valuably have been duplicated here, to place emphasis on the Latin that so fundamentally shapes Ware's approach to the speech. Of course, in closing this point, it would also be unfair not to point out that there is much room for disagreement on this score, and colleagues with whom I discussed this question – including one who had been teaching Paneg. VI(7) using Ware's edition – were clear that the inclusion of such a translation was both helpful and welcome for an edition such as this. My reservations over the translation, therefore, may be mostly my own idiosyncrasies.

My other major complaint is that I feel that some of Ware's insights on intertextuality, particularly in the introduction, could have been taken further. Again, this is perhaps a broader frustration of mine, that too often the identification of intertexts is seen as its own reward, but at times I feel that Ware could have explored more fully the implications of the very interconnected web of textual references not only to Latin classics, but to other speeches within the *Panegyrici Latini*. Ware's efforts could be expanded upon to more fully explore the social and intellectual milieu in which these speeches were produced and consumed, to ask how and in what ways oratory was preserved, circulated, and appreciated in antiquity, and in so doing to think about the role of oratory as text within the wider society and historiography of the period. Ware's most direct statement on the *purpose* of intertext presents what was, to my mind, the most fascinating idea in the whole book, an idea then immediately abandoned as she moved on to the more prosaic work of defining Paneg. VI(7)'s structure:

Although most [in the audience of the speech at its delivery] would have been well educated, the various literary allusions to Tacitus, Vergil, Seneca and Cicero and the complex intertextual ties to the earlier panegyrics were not necessarily for their entertainment; the orator's secondary audience, those who would later read and study the panegyric at their leisure, was more likely to appreciate its literary qualities. (59).

Again, perhaps it is just the Ancient Historian in me, but I found myself aching to know more about the secondary audience, a topic on which I suspect Ware would have much – and much valuable – to say.

These criticisms should not blunt the fact that, as I said in my introduction, this commentary is a masterful work of scholarship, an awesome display of Ware’s classical knowledge, and an indication that we can likely expect a great many more equally erudite publications from the research group of which Catherine Ware is a part (Roger Rees’s *Pacatus* looks likely to be the next off the press). For those interested in introducing students to the considerable joys of Late Roman Latin, or in understanding for themselves the considerable richness and texture of the “vapid and turgid” panegyrics of the fourth century, this work can only be recommended.⁶

6 For this phrase, emblematic of older views, A. H. M. Jones: *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A social, economic, and administrative survey*. 3 vols. Oxford 1964, II 1008.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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