

Filip Doroszewski: *Orgies of Words. Mystery Terminology in the “Paraphrase of St. John’s Gospel” by Nonnus of Panopolis*. Translated from Polish by Damian Jasiński. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2022 (*Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* 154). XIX, 199 p. € 99.95/£ 90.50/\$ 114.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-079085-6.

This is an English version of a text first published in Polish in 2016,¹ a time when close study of the poetry of Nonnus (fl. c. 450–475 CE) was seriously beginning to take off, fuelled by new editions of individual books of the *Dionysiaca* under the leadership of Francis Vian in the “Les Belles Lettres” series (1976–2003) and of the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* by gifted Italian scholars, guided by Enrico Livrea, beginning with his edition of book 18 (1989) and still ongoing.² Filip Doroszewski’s paper at the landmark First International Conference on Nonnus in Context, a memorable event organized by Konstantinos Spanoudakis in Rethymnon, Crete, in May 2011, is entitled “Judaic Orgies and Christ’s Bacchic Deeds: Dionysiac Terminology in Nonnus’ *Paraphrase of St. John’s Gospel*”³ – an indicator that his research was already moving in the direction of which this monograph is the outcome.

The Fifth International Nonnus in Context conference recently (May 2023) organized in Madrid by David Hernández de la Fuente and Laura Miguélez Cavero was enthusiastically attended, both in person and online, by an ever-growing throng of Nonnus devotees. Much water has flowed under Nonnus’ over-arching bridge in the twelve years since the first conference and one question to ask will be whether the six-year gap between the appearance of the Polish and the English versions of Doroszewski’s study means that it has already been overtaken by this surge in Nonnian scholarship. Doroszewski is right to say (p. XVII) that the *Dionysiaca* has overall held pride of place in

- 1 F. Doroszewski: *Orgie słów. Terminologia misteriów w Parafrazie Ewangelii wg św. Jana Nonnosa z Panopolis*. Warsaw/Toruń 2016.
- 2 Nonno di Panopoli: *Parafraasi del Vangelo di S. Giovanni. Canto XVIII. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione, commentario a cura di E. Livrea*. Napoli 1989 (*Speculum* 9).
- 3 F. Doroszewski: *Judaic Orgies and Christ’s Bacchic Deeds: Dionysiac Terminology in Nonnus’ Paraphrase of St. John’s Gospel*. In: K. Spanoudakis (ed.): *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context. Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity with a Section on Nonnus and the Modern World*. Berlin/Boston 2014 (*Trends in Classics. Supplementary Volumes* 24), pp. 287–301.

Nonnian scholarship. But that picture is now changing, with excellent work on the *Paraphrase* from a new generation of scholars that includes Claudia Greco, Laura Franco, Fotini Hadjitoffi, Anna Lefteratou and Maria Ypsilanti, to name but a few. I note, however, that Doroszewski's bibliography to this English version of his book includes works published in 2016 and later, notably "Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis" and Andrew Faulkner's new edition of Apollinaris of Laodicea.⁴ Most important for this study, Doroszewski also cites the recent analysis (2021) of Nonnus' paraphrastic technique in a volume edited by Ypsilanti and Franco, which is the outcome of a major research project in which Doroszewski himself collaborated, contributing sections on interpretation and theology.⁵

Doroszewski has made the study of mystery terminology in Nonnus' *Paraphrase* a corner-stone of his research, contributing a chapter on this topic to the Nonnus Companion,⁶ as well as to the papers of the Second International Conference on Nonnus held in Vienna in 2013;⁷ he also spoke on this theme at the Fourth International Conference held in Ghent in 2018.⁸ And

- 4 D. Accorinti (ed.): Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis. Leiden/Boston 2016 (Brill's Companions in Classical Studies); Apollinaris of Laodicea: Metaphrasis Psalmorum. Edited and translated by A. Faulkner. Oxford 2020 (Oxford Early Christian Texts).
- 5 M. Ypsilanti/L. Franco (eds.): Nonnus' *Paraphrase* between Poetry, Rhetoric and Theology. Rewriting the Fourth Gospel in the Fifth Century. With the Collaboration of F. Doroszewski and C. Greco. Leiden/Boston 2021 (Mnemosyne Supplement 436), esp. pp. 249–277 for Doroszewski's contributions.
- 6 F. Doroszewski: The Mystery Terminology in Nonnus' *Paraphrase*. In: Accorinti (ed.): Companion (note 4), pp. 327–350.
- 7 F. Doroszewski: The Wise Mysteries of the Sacrificial Hour. Nonnus' Exegesis of *John* 4.23. In: H. Bannert/N. Kröll (eds.): Nonnus of Panopolis in Context II. Poetry, Religion and Society. Proceedings of the International Conference on Nonnus of Panopolis, 26th–29th September 2013, University of Vienna, Austria. Leiden/Boston 2018 (Mnemosyne Supplement 408), pp. 184–194.
- 8 Paper entitled: Jesus the Rival: *Paraphrasis* 11.185–213 read against Euripides' *Bacchae*. An abstract of this lecture by Doroszewski is available at 'Academia.edu', URL: https://www.academia.edu/36405824/Jesus_the_Rival_Paraphrasis_11_185_213_read_against_Euripides_Bacchae_Nonnus_in_Context_IV_conference_Ghent_19_21_April_2018_. See also F. Doroszewski: Dieu rejeté, Dieu triomphant. Réception des *Bacchantes* d'Euripide dans la *Paraphrase de l'Évangile de Saint Jean* de Nonnos de Panopolis. In: M. Cutino (ed.): Poetry, Bible and Theology from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Berlin/Boston 2020 (Millennium Studies 86), pp. 151–159.

indeed Doroszewski has also made himself a corner-stone of the resurgence of interest in Nonnus by hosting the Third International Conference in Warsaw in 2015 and editing its papers alongside Katarzyna Jażdżewska.⁹ His monograph, then, can be regarded as the culmination and distillation of this work.

The volume is divided into four parts, of which the first is introductory, dealing with the broad background of the ancient mysteries, the author Nonnus, the scope of the current enquiry and specific mystery terminology in Nonnus' *Paraphrase* of the Gospel of John (pp. 1–56). The fourth part is a relatively brief Conclusion (pp. 155–164). The two central sections each consist of three detailed case studies under the broad headings of “Jesus and Dionysus” (pp. 57–99) and “Mysterium and Mysteries” (pp. 101–154). Each case study is subdivided into three or more sections, of which some are broken down even further, reflecting the author's highly meticulous and methodical approach. The entire work is articulated with great clarity.

The first part of the Introduction (1.1, “Ancient Mysteries”, pp. 3–10) gathers available evidence for the rituals of the ancient Eleusinian and (more shadowy) Dionysiac Mysteries, drawing on the works of Walter Burkert and Jan Bremmer in particular.¹⁰ While elements of the rituals can be pieced together, Doroszewski stresses the centrality of the emotional experience for initiands. A substantial study of “Mystery Terminology” (1.2, pp. 11–29) explores the use of the language of mysteries in philosophers, the New Testament, Fathers of the Church and Neoplatonists from Plato through Philo, Justin Martyr, Clement and Origen to Proclus and Synesius. While the account of Plato draws substantially on the work of Christoph Riedweg,¹¹ discussion of authors of the imperial period is increasingly enhanced by specific

9 F. Doroszewski/K. Jażdżewska (eds.): *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context III. Old Questions and New Perspectives*. Leiden/Boston 2021 (Mnemosyne Supplement 438).

10 W. Burkert: *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Translated by P. Bing. Berkeley, CA/London 1983; W. Burkert: *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Cambridge, MA/London 1987 (Carl Newell Jackson Lectures); J. N. Bremmer: *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World*. Berlin/Boston 2014 (Münchener Vorlesungen zu Antiken Welten 1).

11 C. Riedweg: *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*. Berlin/New York 1987 (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 26).

examples that demonstrate first-hand research. The overall message of this important section is that the language of the mysteries is extremely widely used by philosophical and theological writers, but that each adapts it to suit their own needs or objectives (p. 29).

A brief section (1.3, “Nonnus of Panopolis”, pp. 31–37) gathers key information about the poet, of whose personal biography virtually nothing is known. Doroszewski, rightly in my view, rejects attempts to identify the poet Nonnus with Nonnus, bishop of Edessa or with pseudo-Nonnus, author of mythological commentaries on four orations of Gregory of Nazianzus, and accepts that Nonnus was a Christian when he wrote both the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase of John’s Gospel* (pp. 31–32). On the date of the *Paraphrase*, Doroszewski adheres to a standard view that it post-dates Cyril of Alexandria’s *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (c. 425–428) and favours the argument that it pre-dates the *Metaphrasis of the Psalms*, although the presumed fifth-century date of the latter has now been fundamentally challenged by Andrew Faulkner who, in his 2020 edition, redates the *Metaphrasis* to the mid fourth century and attributes it to the Christian bishop Apollinaris of Laodicea.¹² It may, in any case, be misguided to seek such narrow dating parameters for the *Paraphrase*, as Christos Simelidis has suggested.¹³ However, this issue is only peripheral to Doroszewski’s study. More important are Doroszewski’s concluding comments (pp. 35–36) on the extraordinary familiarity with Christian, Neoplatonic and more broadly, late-antique thought manifest in the *Paraphrase*: here Doroszewski draws on the work of Henryk Wójtowicz, to whom the volume is dedicated.¹⁴

In section 1.4 (“The Scope of Inquiry”, pp. 39–43), Doroszewski sets out the objectives of his study, namely a systematic examination of use in the *Paraphrase* of the language of the mysteries, in order to evaluate scattered earlier scholarly comment on this topic and to formulate new conclusions, based on the hypothesis that mystery terminology is not used merely for decorative purposes. Part 2, “Jesus and Dionysus” focuses on the use of mystery language in connection with Jesus’ activity, while Part 3, “Mysterium and the Mysteries” is concerned with mystery terminology linked to Jewish

12 See Faulkner (note 4).

13 C. Simelidis: Nonnus and Christian Literature. In: D. Accorinti (ed.): *Companion* (note 4), pp. 289–307, at pp. 304–307.

14 H. Wójtowicz: *Studia nad Nonnosem*. Lublin 1980.

rituals and also the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. Section 1.5 ("Mystery Terminology in the *Paraphrase*", pp. 45–56) analyses nine key terms from mystery language, starting with the original meaning and then discussing the use of each in Neoplatonic and Christian literature, as well as in the *Paraphrase* and *Dionysiaca*. The initial, unsurprising (as Doroszewski concedes, p. 56) conclusion is that in the *Dionysiaca* the terms tend to be used literally of pagan cults, especially that of Dionysus, whereas in the *Paraphrase* the same terms are used figuratively, either in connection with Christ or with Jewish rituals.

The three case studies of Part 2 "Jesus and Dionysus" are in fact a fuller treatment of the material discussed in the first section of Doroszewski's 2014 article.¹⁵ Key to discussion of the first example (pp. 59–80), the moment when the wine runs out in Nonnus' account of Christ's first miracle, the transformation of water into wine at the wedding at Cana (Par. 2.12–20 = John 2.3), is Nonnus' phrase ἀβακχεύτιο τραπέζης (Par. 2.15). Doroszewski deftly traces the use of this rare adjective, found first in the debate between Dionysus and Pentheus at Euripides, *Bacchae* 472, in Clement of Alexandria, Theodoret and Julian, all of whom allude explicitly to the Euripides passage to signify lack of contact with what is truly divine. Nonnus too clearly intends a reference to the new order of Christ's divine teaching, an allusion strengthened by its association with the noun τράπεζα, which regularly refers to the Eucharistic table in Christian writers: hence the table at Cana is not yet ready to celebrate the Eucharistic feast of redemption (pp. 62–67). Doroszewski goes on to demonstrate convincingly that other phrases in this passage (Par. 2.12–20), notably φιλάκρητος παστός and ἡμιτελής μέθη, when interpreted in the light of writers such as Philo and Cyril of Alexandria, can be related to the limited salvation and approach to God that is possible through the religion of the Jews, without Christ (pp. 67–72). Finally, Doroszewski shows how Nonnus' description of the actual miracle at Par. 2.35–38, which has no precedent in John's narrative, indicates the reversal of the unsatisfactory situation, in particular through the adjectives of 2.38 ἀκρητος and φιλεύσιος (pp. 73–75). In his concluding remarks on the Cana miracle (pp. 75–80), Doroszewski draws attention to the linguistically close parallels at *Dionysiaca* 7.17–18 and 14.411–417, where Dionysus rather than Christ is the protagonist. Doroszewski goes on to argue that the resemanticization of Dionysiac

15 See note 3.

language for Christian purposes can be traced back through almost three centuries of Christian writers, exemplified in particular by Clement of Alexandria. He stresses that the contrast between paganism and Christianity is stronger in our contemporary consciousness than it was in late-antique Egypt where Hellenistic *paideia*, which was founded on mythology, flourished alongside Christianity.¹⁶ Doroszewski's case is both meticulously argued and convincing.

The last two studies of Part 2 are more briefly presented. First ("The Failed Arrest Attempt", pp. 81–89), Doroszewski considers Nonnus' account of the unsuccessful attempt to arrest Jesus at Par. 7.172–182 (= John 7.45–49). By close comparison with the Gospel account, Doroszewski demonstrates how Nonnus recalibrates the language of John, describing Jesus as "wise" rather than simply "good" as in the Gospel (e.g. John 7.12, cf. Par. 7.42, 44) and inserting adjectives that colour our judgement of the witnesses and the Pharisees (e.g. Par. 7.172, 177). The climax of Nonnus' description is his introduction of the term βακχέεται (Par. 7.182) to describe the crowd's response to Jesus: although the Pharisees here use the term derisively, Doroszewski argues that the Bacchic frenzy inspired in the crowd by Christ denotes their receptivity to the divine doctrine of Christ's preaching, just as ἀβάκχευτος in the Cana episode denoted lack of receptivity to Christ's message. Moreover, Nonnus' substitution of "wise" for the gospel's "good" aligns his account closely with the conflict in Euripides' *Bacchae*, which presents the true wisdom of Teiresias and Cadmus as against the arrogant stubbornness of Pentheus, who fights against the gods (Eur. Bacch. 45 θεομαχεῖν). In concluding this section Doroszewski argues that Nonnus deliberately introduces the Bacchic metaphor in the *Paraphrase* as a symbol of divinity that is wrongly dismissed, and that he relies on audience knowledge of Euripides' play in so doing. Through the writings of Clement of Alexandria such Dionysiac imagery was an accepted part of the contemporary Christian cultural framework.

Finally in Part 2 ("Jesus' High Priestly Prayer", pp. 91–99), Doroszewski analyses Nonnus' introduction of the phrase ὄργια μύθων into Jesus' prayer to God at Par. 17.88–92, based on John 17.25–26a. He demonstrates that Jesus is here presented as a mystagogue who has initiated the "chorus" or "choir"

16 Doroszewski aptly cites in this connection Wolf Liebeschuetz's article, Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire. In: *IJCT* 2, 1995, pp. 193–208.

(Par. 17.89) of his disciples and shows that once again this concept draws upon the Christian writings of Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Cyril of Alexandria.

Part 3 “Mysterium and the Mysteries” is, like Part 2, divided into three studies, of which the first, on the three Passover feasts, is the most substantial (pp. 103–129). Again, this is a fuller presentation of the material discussed in the second part of Doroszewski’s 2014 article.¹⁷ Doroszewski’s technique of close reading is by now familiar. In analysing Nonnus’ presentation of the Passover (pp. 104–129) he focusses on the poet’s choice of significant language, initially (pp. 104–108) *θηηπολίη* (Par. 2.70), showing how this term will be used consistently in connection with Jesus’ own sacrifice in the crucifixion. To this end, Nonnus omits John’s specific reference to “the Passover of the Jews” (2.13), since in the poet’s presentation the true Passover to come will be that of Christ. Once again, this presentation is prefigured in the commentaries on the gospel text by Origen and Cyril of Alexandria.

Doroszewski next (pp. 109–20) discusses the heavily Bacchic colouring of Par. 2.110–115, especially lines 112–114, arguing that Nonnus deliberately inserted this colouring in order to assimilate Jewish Passover traditions to the ecstatic Dionysiac cult. He stresses that here *ῥογία* is used in connection with liturgical rites, as opposed to the *ῥογία μύθων*, God-revealed truths, discussed in Part 2 of his study. In addition, the Jewish priests are in line 112 described as “lamb-eating” (*ἀρνοφάγων ἱερήων*), prefiguring the image of Christ as the Paschal Lamb and implying that the priests are predatory wolves. Doroszewski reinforces his argument about the association of Jewish rites with pagan mystery cult by wider exploration of this assimilation in other writers of the imperial period, notably Plutarch. In a later reference to this Passover feast at Par. 4.204–205, Nonnus introduces further Bacchic vocabulary (*κῶμον, θιασώδεες*), and also the personified Horae, traditionally companions of Dionysus (pp. 120–123). Doroszewski concludes this section by arguing (pp. 123–129) that, although negative association with Bacchic festivities is reiterated in the *Paraphrase’s* reference to the second and third Passovers (Par. 6.9–10, 11.222–227), a reference to the ‘mystical Horae’ (Par. 12.6), in the context of Jesus’ return to Bethany before his final Passover, anticipates Christ’s imminent death and resurrection: in interpreting the im-

17 See note 3.

pact of mystery language in this poem, precise context is crucial for determining import.

In the second section of Part 3 (“Jesus and the Samaritan Woman”, pp. 131–143), Doroszewski analyses Nonnus’ account of Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4.4–26),¹⁸ a passage expanded into 120 lines by Nonnus (Par. 4.11–133) and permeated with mystery language, to a greater degree than any other part of the poem. Focussing on the conversation at Par. 4.88–121, Doroszewski notes that Nonnus shifts the emphasis from worship (in the gospel) to sacrifice, stressing the pagan and bloody aspects of Jewish cult, in contrast to the new form of initiation and worship that will be inaugurated in the imminent ‘hour of sacrifice’ (Par. 4.110), that is Christ’s sacrifice of himself. Doroszewski concludes his discussion of this passage by arguing (pp. 137–143) that his delineation of the role of mystery terminology throughout the *Paraphrase*, which distinguishes its positive use of those who accept the message of Christ from its negative application to Jewish religious practices, rebuts the thesis proposed by Mariangela Caprara in her commentary on book four of the *Paraphrase*.¹⁹ According to Caprara, in this passage Nonnus deviates from the Gospel text, so that the Samaritan woman presents the perspective of Judaism, while Christ’s reply to her from the beginning (Par. 4.97) represents the view of Christians. Doroszewski, on the contrary, argues that Jesus begins by describing Jewish practice (Par. 4.97–109) before turning to Christian practice with the word ἀλλὰ (Par. 4.110). This is in line with the interpretation of the gospel passage in the Church Fathers, as well as with Doroszewski’s interpretation of Nonnus’ twofold use of mystery terminology elsewhere in the *Paraphrase*.

For his last analysis (pp. 145–154), Doroszewski returns to John chapter 7 on the Feast of the Tabernacles, one aspect of which has already been discussed in Part 2.2. Here Doroszewski focusses on the puzzling verse 8 of the gospel, where Jesus urges the disciples to go to the feast, saying he will not go himself, “for my time is not yet come”. And yet in verse 10, Jesus does subsequently go up to the feast, “not openly, but as it were in secret”. Ancient commentators suggested that Jesus’ phrase “my time has not yet come”

18 Doroszewski’s 2018 article (note 7) addresses aspects of this material.

19 Nonno di Panopoli: Parafrasi del Vangelo di San Giovanni. Canto IV. A cura di M. Caprara. Pisa 2005 (Testi e commenti 3), pp. 15–28; M. Caprara: Nonno e gli Ebrei. Note a Par. IV.88–121. In: SIFC 17, 1999, pp. 195–215.

refers metaphorically to the moment of Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent ascent into heaven. Doroszewski argues that this metaphorical sense is conveyed in Nonnus' rendering of the passage (Par. 7.31–34). Whereas the gospel twice uses the word *ἑορτή* in this verse to refer to the feast, Nonnus first uses *ἑορτή* in conjunction with Dionysiac vocabulary, *εὐκελάδοιο [...] κῶμον ἑορτῆς* (7.31), but then shifts to language associated with the mysteries: *οὔπω [...] εἰς τελετὴν ὁσίην ἐπιβήσομαι. ἡμετέρου γὰρ οὔπω μοι τετέλεστο χρόνου δρόμος*, “As yet, I am not going to take part in the sacred celebration [...]. My time has not yet come to its fulfilment” (7.32–34). This “sacred celebration” foreshadows the crucifixion at which Jesus' will cry *τετέλεστο*, “It is accomplished” (Par. 19.159) before surrendering to death.²⁰ This interpretation accords with Cyril of Alexandria's comment on John 7.8. Doroszewski's argumentation here at once vindicates the distinctive use of the language of the mysteries which his book has presented and affirms Nonnus' profound knowledge of exegesis on the gospel text.

Part 4, “Conclusions” (pp. 155–164) draws together the argument of the book with outstanding clarity: Doroszewski identifies three distinct ways in which Dionysiac language is used by Nonnus – to represent “the virtuous, ecstatic impulse of the soul experiencing contact with the divine” (p. 159); to represent “the mystery of God's plan of salvation” (p. 160); and, finally, in polemic against Jewish cultic practices. Doroszewski stresses that the *Paraphrase* is not a systematically theological text, but that in using this terminology, Nonnus draws upon traditions well-established within Christian writing and particularly closely connected to the Alexandrian church. Hence it is likely that the poem was composed in Alexandria, while it is certain that Nonnus had contact with Alexandrian intellectuals. Doroszewski pays tribute to the insight of Henryk Wójtowicz who emphasized the key role played by mystery terminology in the *Paraphrase*, as “correlated with the ‘very essence’ of the Gospel” (p. 163), in contrast to the view of Francis Vian that it is primarily ornamental.

The volume is well equipped with scholarly aids. After editions, translations and commentaries on the Bible and Nonnus, Primary Sources are clearly organized alphabetically by ancient author (pp. 165–172). An English reader may be surprised that sometimes French editions are preferred even where a reputable English one exists (e.g. Aristophanes, Herodotus, both recently

20 John 19.30 has *τετέλεσται*.

edited by Nigel G. Wilson in the Oxford Classical Texts series),²¹ but this doubtless reflects the materials available to the author, who worked on this study in the library of the Fondation Hardt (p. VII). As is not uncommon in continental works, the secondary bibliography (pp. 172–180) is organized thematically, with separate sections on Nonnian studies, the Mysteries and “Other topics”. This arrangement can make individual items hard to locate, for example p. 5, n. 13 cites Burkert 1983 and Simon 1983, but these two works appear in different sections of the bibliography, while Wick 2004 might better have been located in the Nonnian section of the bibliography. An *Index graecitatis* (pp. 181–183), *Index locorum* (pp. 185–195) and *Index nominum* (pp. 197–199) complete this very thorough study.

These are, however, extremely minor quibbles. This is an important book, clearly articulated and very carefully thought through, larger than the sum of its parts, in particular by its demonstration of the overall coherence of Nonnus’ use of mystery language in the *Paraphrase*, which enables Doroszewski to vindicate the traditional exegetical interpretation of Par. 4.107–109. Doroszewski’s careful analysis of this exegetical tradition is key to his approach and enables him to demonstrate Nonnus’ intimate familiarity with this material. Moreover, the publication of elements of the material in shorter studies elsewhere has assisted Doroszewski in refining his thinking to utmost clarity. His work offers a model for further broadly based studies of metaphorical language in the *Paraphrase*, now possible given the resources of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae alongside new editions and commentaries.²² The English translation is excellent and I noted only a couple of minor errors/inconsistencies:

p. 31, n. 198: “Cavero 2008”; bibliography, p. 174: “Miguélez Cavero”/“Miguélez-Cavero”.

p. 172: “Teodoret of Cyrrhus”: rare misprint.

21 Aristophanis Fabulae. 2 vols. *Recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instrvxit*. N. G. Wilson. Oxford 2007 (Oxford Classical Texts); Herodoti Historiae. 2 vols. *Recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instrvxit*. N. G. Wilson. Oxford 2015 (Oxford Classical Texts).

22 To the resources available to Doroszewski the following can now be added: Nonno di Panopoli: *Parafrasi del Vangelo di San Giovanni*. Introduzione, traduzione e commento a cura di M. Agnosini. Rome 2020 (Collana di testi patristici 263); Nonno di Panopoli: *Parafrasi del Vangelo di Giovanni*. Introduzione, edizione critica del testo greco e traduzione a cura di S. C. Calzascia. Lecce 2021.

This is a subtle and closely argued book, that demonstrates how close philological study combined with careful reading of biblical exegesis can provide a framework for an over-arching understanding of the late-antique cultural environment, an environment in which classical concepts could be reconstituted for Christian purposes without any sense of confrontation. I quote from p. 89: “The Dionysiac imagery, borrowed from Euripides and then critically adopted and reworked by Clement of Alexandria, had by the time of Nonnus clearly become part and parcel of the Christian framework of metaphorical references.”

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

Mary Whitby: Rezension zu: Filip Doroszewski: *Orgies of Words. Mystery Terminology in the “Paraphrase of St. John’s Gospel”* by Nonnus of Panopolis. Translated from Polish by Damian Jasiński. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2022 (*Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* 154). In: Plekos 25, 2023, S. 717–727 (URL: <https://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2023/r-doroszewski.pdf>).

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