

Franca Ela Consolino: *Musico stilo. Aspects of the Poetry of Ennodius*. Turnhout: Brepols 2024 (Studi e testi tardoantichi 24). 309 p., 4 tables. € 80.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-61112-9.

Readers of Ennodius will sympathize with Franca Ela Consolino's description of her first encounter with the author: "challenging, if not traumatic" (p. 7). We can all be thankful that Consolino's bracing first encounter with Ennodius' notoriously ambiguous, layered, and oft obscure style enticed her to further exploration of this difficult yet rewarding author, the results of which are collected in this volume. The nine articles, eight of which were previously published, span 2006–2022, are presented in new English translations by Jennifer Mills or with her editorial assistance. Engagement with Ennodius' poetry demands a steady, knowledgeable guide, which Consolino provides through these efforts to explicate aspects of Ennodius' career, poetic style, and cultural context. Broadly speaking, the essays center on a self-evident yet essential attribute of Ennodius' creative process: his engagement with the twin traditions of secular and Christian Latin literature. As Consolino traces the impact of thematic and allusive mechanisms, she shows how Ennodius' innovative use of prose and poetry serves to redefine the potential and expectations of traditional genres. That is, Consolino's scholarship argues for the importance of Ennodius, both as an ecclesiastical figure and especially as an artist. Those already acquainted with the poet will find their appreciation heightened – and some familiar assumptions challenged; those who may be coming to Ennodius for the first time will benefit immensely from these new and revisited pieces.

The volume is divided into three sections and a coda. After a lucid introduction that briefly summarizes the contributions, as well as the history of their (mostly light) revision (pp. 11–27), the volume launches with two chapters that investigate the interaction of "Prose and Poetry in Ennodius" (pp. 31–102). The central panel of the book contains four chapters that consider "Literary Genres: Tradition and Innovation," with chapters treating examples of Ennodius' engagement with epithalamium, panegyric, travel poetry, and funerary poetry (pp. 105–203). Then follow two chapters on "The Classics and The Bible" (pp. 207–247), before the final chapter which analyzes in close detail Ennodius' epitaph (pp. 251–281). With the exception of the recent essay on carm. 1.2 and to a lesser degree that on carm. 1.1, the contributions are close translations of Consolino's original articles. With the

stated aim of documenting the evolution of Ennodian scholarship over the span covered by the articles, they are little changed apart from gentle editing and cross-referencing (often through a short introductory paragraph added to the piece). An extensive and valuable bibliography, as well as lists of abbreviations and cited ancient authors, complete the collection.

Consolino's first section examines two of Ennodius' prosimetric works, analyzing how their prose prefaces serve as more than mere introductions to the poetic set pieces. The first article, "The *dictio* for Epiphanius (*carm. I. 9*)" (pp. 31–62; originally published in 2006), explores Ennodius' first work, a bravura 170-line hexametric poem in praise of the thirtieth anniversary of Epiphanius' bishopric. By explicating how the prose and verse sections of the work operate in tandem, Consolino counters Zoja Pavlovskis's diminution of the importance of the prose preface, showing how, through complementary reference and themes, the preface establishes Ennodius' right – indeed obligation – to speak, while leaving to verse the praise of Epiphanius. Consolino productively speculates that Ennodius adopts to his prose prefaces the liberation from poetic subject that characterizes the verse prefaces of Claudian and Sidonius, allowing his prose to engage in rhetorical work beyond mere introduction and summary. This accords well with the tenor of tradition-embedded artistic experimentation that informs so much of Ennodius' literary production, and which Consolino so ably elucidates in these essays. Here comparison of Ennodius' praise of Epiphanius with his prose encomium of the Milanese bishop Lawrence is especially telling, with Ennodius preferring verse to praise Epiphanius' transcendent character, and prose to navigate the more exacting circumstances that surround Lawrence, a model he also followed for his praise of Theodoric. Apology is also a defining feature of the preface of *carm. 1.6*, which Consolino explores in the previously unpublished work, "The *Dictio Ennodi diaconi quando de Roma rediit* (*carm. I. 6*)" (pp. 63–102). Composed on Ennodius' return from the Synod of Rome in the autumn of 502 CE, this work features a proportionally longer prose preface to twenty elegiac couplets, a structure which Consolino argues embodies the attempted reconciliation of ecclesiastic and senatorial factions at play in the Laurentian Schism (p. 100). At all turns, the articles feature clear-eyed close analysis of the text, erudite contextualization with relevant classical and Christian comparanda, and helpful exegesis of manifold Ennodian oddities.

The second section treats Ennodius' forays into four different genres. "Ennodius and the Epithalamium. *Carm. I. 4 for Maximus*" (pp. 105–129; originally from 2009) investigates Ennodius' play with genre in one of his most ambitious poems through a systematic comparison of this polymetric composition with previous secular wedding poems (helpfully summarized in tables). On the surface we observe how Ennodius "reinterprets established genre with a striking degree of freedom" (p. 10); yet Consolino shows how despite their surprising metrical variation the themes of each section of the poem are firmly grounded in the tradition of the epithalamium. As is so often the case with Latin authors, a surface radicalness belies a deeper conservatism. So, like Ausonius before him, Ennodius "is a little more conformist than he would like to appear" (p. 119). "Ennodius and Panegyric Poetry. A Eulogy and a Request: *carm. I. 2 for Eugenes*" (pp. 131–152) represents a slight reformulation of an original of 2021 in light of recent elucidations of the poem by Bret Mulligan, Daniele Di Rienzo, and Filomena Giannotti (p. 131, n. 1). Unlike the public-facing hexametric *dictiones* that celebrate Epiphanius and Ennodius' own return from Rome, Ennodius cast this private, verse *dictio* for the Milanese orator Eugenes, in elegiacs, an innovation that drew on Ovidian epistolographic precedent for its deployment of eulogy in an unnamed petitioner's request for use of a *hortulus* (p. 133). Consolino adeptly illuminates many aspects of Ennodius' craft in this poem, and in particular the effects of Ennodius' combination of unique and familiar diction (e.g., *superbit | ingenii maciem*, vv. 1–2) and the multifaceted reference to the Orpheus myth, which underscores Eugenes' more authoritative voice as a proxy for his legislative support of public morality. In "Ennodius and Travel Poetry. The *Itinerarium Brigantionis castelli (carm. I. 1)*" (pp. 153–187; originally published 2022), Consolino treats Ennodius' account of his fraught crossing of Mount Montgenèvre. Properly contextualizing this poem with Ennodius' other major travel poem (1.5, on crossing the Po in flood), as well as classical and contemporary comparanda, Consolino demonstrates how Ennodius adapts traditional secular travel poetry into a metaphor for Christian perseverance and faith in the face of physical trial and how secular reference is cleverly deployed to support new spiritual goals. The central importance of variation on a theme for Latin literature in general – and especially epigrammatic and epitaphic works – is a thread woven throughout Consolino's perceptive exegesis of Ennodius' allusive tactics. In "Ennodius and Funerary Poetry. The Two Epitaphs for Cynegia. A Variation on the Theme?" (pp. 189–203; originally published 2014), she addresses an example

of variation on a larger scale through a thorough analysis of two short epitaphs to Cynegia, which Consolino argues are both addressed to the wife of Flavius Anicius Probus Faustus Junior Niger (p. 189). Embedded in two Ennodian epistles (5.7, 7.29), these paratexts provide rich contextualizing material that supports our understanding of Ennodius' social connections and audience. By adapting classical motifs to the praise of feminine virtue and Christian resurrection, Ennodius succeeds in offering “two complementary portraits, two halves of a single diptych together able to recreate the image, in its integrity, of the deceased” (p. 203).

The third section, “The Classics and the Bible,” draws together two of Consolino’s early contributions to Ennodian studies: “Pagan and Christian Echoes in the Epitaph of Victor, Bishop of Novara. An Exegesis of *carm. II. 95*” (pp. 207–229; originally from 2012) and “A reference to Job in *carm. I. 9. 21–24*” (pp. 231–247; originally from 2016). Ennodius’ style is infamous for its routine tipping into obscurity. Through a close analysis of several moments of obscurity in *carm. 2.95*, Consolino underscores how Ennodius’ broader poetic project of fusing traditional and Christian themes and allusions generates ambiguity and creates difficulty for readers. The final essay on Ennodius’ poetry returns to *carm. 1.9* to address how an obvious allusion to a famed and oft-quoted moment in Vergil (*Aen. 4.366–367, cantibus horrens | Caucasus*) interacts with oblique biblical exempla to conjure a reference to Job’s enduring piety.

The collection concludes, appropriately, with “Ennodius in His Epitaph” (pp. 251–281; originally published 2014), a close reading of Ennodius’ epitaph that was preserved in the Church of San Michele in Pavia. Through a close exegesis of nearly every line of the epitaph, Consolino constructs a case that the epitaph was authored not by Ennodius, whom she argues would not have been pleased by the inscription, which fails to account for his combination of literary achievement and Christian pastoral duty. While his epitaph might have disappointed the subject, Ennodius is immeasurably fortunate to have found, a millennium and a half after his death, such a perceptive and capable reader in Consolino, who moves with such erudition among secular and Christian literatures, and whose insights immeasurably aid the reader of Ennodius. In her introduction Consolino had expressed the “hope that the result as a whole is worth more than the sum of the individual texts” (p. 7). Each piece in this collection offers valuable insights and in new translations now accessible to new audiences. When taken together they offer a docu-

mentary archive of recent developments in Ennodian studies, as well as a perceptive guide into the challenging yet rewarding verse of this important figure.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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