

In conclusione, il libro di K. offre insieme di più e di meno di quello che promette: di meno perché, ad es., l’enigma del saturnio rimane, secondo me, sostanzialmente irrisolto; di più perché K. fa giustizia, c’è da sperare in modo definitivo, di molti titoli interpretati come saturni in tempi più o meno recenti; perché esamina con accuratezza non solo gli aspetti epigrafici e ‘monumentali’, ma anche quelli linguistici e stilistici di numerosi testi arcaici, non solo in versi saturni; e ancora perché propone, nel commento e negli excursus, molte osservazioni utili per chiunque studi i caratteri dell’ideologia aristocratica nella media repubblica romana.

Roma

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This admirable monograph seeks to demonstrate that a fifty-line hexameter poem surviving solely in a collection of disparate works in the ninth century (C9) manuscript MS Paris BNF lat. 7538 and introduced by the words incipit versus Drepani de Cereo Paschali, long attributed to the deacon Florus of Lyon (obit ca 862), was written in fact by Latinus Pacatus Drepanius, the panegyrist of Théodosius, between 389 (or 393) and 396 C.E.

It proceeds first by careful examination of the external evidence – viz. the manuscript history and what is known of the transmission of other works in the collection. It then turns to a close analysis of the poem itself, the literary parallels, the ritual it describes, and the theological beliefs it reveals.

Turcan-Verkerk (T-V) is then in a position to write the biography of a ‘new’ Pacatus Drepanius: ‘Christian and poet’. She argues that he was not a colleague of Ausonius, but like Paulinus of Nola a disciple. She identifies him with the only two ‘other’ Pacati mentioned in antiquity, both Christians, the one the author of a treatise against Porphyry dating from 410–420, the other the recipient of a letter about the death of Paulinus in 431. She further argues that Drepanius Pacatus was

1 Questo è certamente un pregio del libro; ma sarebbe stato utile avvertirne il fruitore almeno nel sottotitolo, per non generare equivoci.
closely associated with Priscillianists, and may have joined Paulinus first in Spain, and then in Nola. Finally she points to other poems which Pacatus may have written.

No bald summary can do justice to this impressively argued, spirited book. It is a real tour de force: erudite and judicious, it is also bold, and brimful of fertile ideas. It was a pleasure to read, and this reader, at least, is convinced of its central thesis.

The panegyrist Pacatus Drepanius might seem always to have been a promising candidate for authorship of a poem associated with the works of Ausonius and Paulinus that carried MS attribution to one Drepanius. No doubt the purely Christian character of the *De Cereo* discouraged such a thought; cf. E. Galletier, *Panégyriques Latins* 3 p. 51: in his ‘Panegyric’ Pacatus displays «une attitude d’esprit qui semble difficilement conciliable avec le christianisme le plus tiède» (But see below on T-V p. 131ff). Furthermore, two years after the *editio princeps* of lat. 7558 of 1560, Fabricius had combined the name Drepanius with the internal signature of one of the anonymous poems in the collection to create a phantom late Roman poet, one Drepanius Florus. Although the latter was exorcised by the C.17, and the C9 deacon Florus of Lyon credited with authorship, it took the perspicacity of T-V to expose the error of combining the two names (Helmántica 50, 1999, 711).

Now Pacatus Drepanius’ credentials could be reasserted. Ausonius reckoned him a sure judge of poetic worth: a poet second only to Vergil (*Praef.* 4; Green p. 5), he could be relied upon to judge Ausonius’ *carmina, sive legenda, sive tegenda* (*Ludus Septem Sapientum, Praef.*; Green p. 184). Furthermore, the language of his ‘Panegyric’, T-V claims rightly, manifests the author’s taste for poetry, its vocabulary and cadences. The immediate context of the *De Cereo* points in the same direction. In Paris MS lat. 7558 it follows a series of poems and letters (of Ausonius, Paulinus of Nola and Claudius Marius Victorius, as well as some anonymous items) originating in C4/C5 Gaul; it precedes two poems attributed to Florus of Lyon, grammatical treatises, and further poems attributed to Florus. As T-V declares (14), there is as much reason to associate the *De Cereo* with what precedes as with what follows.

Thereupon T-V embarks on Part 1 of her work, ‘L’origine et la composition du seul témoin connu du *De Cereo Paschali* (Paris BNF lat.7558)’. This has two sections. The first, ‘Textes trahissant l’origine du latin 7558*’ (16–37) is densely, nay relentlessly, argued and is a real challenge, particularly to those who, like the reviewer, are unfamiliar with the MSS and the manuscript transmissions she is discussing. Here an *Index Codicum* provides much-needed, if not quite sufficient, assistance in following the arguments. T-V traces the origin of the collection that makes up MS lat. 7558 from its supposed C16 presence in Tours back to Lyon in C9. In turn, she finds the transmission of its disparate parts – Marius Victorius (20–23), the *Cunabula grammaticae artis Donati* (23–31) and Ausonius and Paulinus (31–37) – all leading back to Lyon. Palaeographically, too, lat. 7558 belongs to C9 Lyon. «Les lettres de l’ancienne capitale des Gaules, du grand carrefour d’échanges au confluent du Rhône et de la Saône,» have transmitted, it seems, a whole bloc of late antique literature unknown elsewhere (36).
The second section, ‘Drepanius et la place du latin 7358 dans l’histoire de la transmission d’Ausone et Paulin de Nole’ (37–69) is equally intricately argued. It explores the relationship between lat. 7358 (now called II) and ‘l’ensemble P + V’ [Paris BNF lat. 8093 and Leiden UB Voss. Lat. F 111, V being the strand of the transmission of Ausonius which includes works post-383]. T-V argues that II, if not a copy of V, belongs to a group of MSS copied at Lyon in the C9 with the aid of a MS older than V, or representing a tradition older than V, very probably, because of the nature of the errors it contains, written in Visigothic cursive (45). The addition of poems of Florus not reproduced elsewhere raises the question of Florus’ rôle in the compilation of II, and, specifically, whether Florus himself added the poem of Drepanius to the collection, or whether it reached Lyon with the rest of the C 4/5 material in II. T-V concludes that it was already in a compilation of works which reached Lyon from Spain, the ‘Anthologie hispanique’. These included works of Ausonius and Paulinus which Eugenius and Julian had read in C7 Toledo.

T-V next (49ff) re-examines the relationship between Drepanius and Ausonius. She contends that Drepanius, addressed by Ausonius as filius in the Preface of his Eclogues, was not his colleague, but a disciple. She contends that like Paulinus he was a generation younger than Ausonius, born c.350–55, and held his proconsulship of Africa in his mid-350s. Her analogies reinforce the argument. ‘Drepanius et la collection ‘V’ d’Ausone’ (58–69) disposes of the suggestion that Paulinus of Pella edited Ausonius’ works. T-V cleverly accounts for the nature of this selection (omission of erotica and ‘paganising’ pieces) by suggesting the editing was made not by, but for, the young Paulinus of Pella. By whom, then? Other aspects of ‘V’, editorial criticism of Maximus and the prominence of Spain, are features of Pacatus’ Panegyric. Parallels between Ausonius, the ‘Panegyric to Theodosius’ and the De Cereo demonstrate that Pacatus was familiar with the works of Ausonius known to us only from ‘V’. There is an excellent case for attributing the collection of the Panegyrici Latini to him. All this gives ‘une valeur nouvelle’ to Ausonius’ dedications to Pacatus as a poet and correcteur-éditeur (65–66). And ‘V’ alone contains all the ‘billets d’envoi’ to Drepanius. Irresistibly, it might seem, T-V concludes that he was responsible for its compilation. And in Spain, not Aquitaine (68–69).

The second part of the book, ‘Pacatus Drepanius, Chrétien et Poète’ (71–148), turns to the internal evidence for the thesis. T-V first furnishes the text of the De Cereo Paschalis, followed by a translation, with a profusion of parallels and reminiscences in footnotes. Passages from the ‘Panegyric to Theodosius’, Ausonius and Paulinus are followed by examples gleaned from the CD-ROM ‘Poesis’ (1995), which reaches the C7. (Unfortunately its successor of 2001, which extends to the C13, was unavailable to the author.) As T-V wished to be comprehensive, some parallels, naturally, are more compelling than others. They fall into three groups – from classical poets, writers of 389–415, and later authors. As a whole, these are held to demonstrate the importance of classical culture to Drepanius (83), all the more so as biblical parallels are absent – a striking and important point, given the subject matter of the De Cereo. While it may be that T-V overplays the parallels with Pacatus, there is no doubting the poem’s affinity with his language and mannerisms. Whether the parallels independently confirm
the Theodosian date of the poem is arguable, given the propensity of later poets such as Florus himself to imitate earlier ones. Be that as it may, T-V then refines its date to 389–396/7, fixing the limits by Ausonius’ knowledge of Drepanius’ poetry before his proconsulship, and two parallels with the young Claudian, who is held to be the imitator.

‘Une vigile pascale entre 389 et 396’ (86–112) analyses in minute detail the ceremony the poem describes. It takes up a 1740 observation that the title of the poem is «mal à propos» because what is described is not the ritual of the blessing of the Easter candle, but an ordinary nocturnal ceremony – and there is no mention of the Resurrection! (The distinction being between the ‘vigile pascale’ and a mere ‘lucernaire’) T-V concludes that the poem, which seems to celebrate Christ’s birth, was not a hymn for the Easter vigil, let alone a laus cerei, but rather a description of the opening phase of the ceremony of the Easter Vigil. She then tries to identify the particular form of the ritual. She finds that the Visigothic Spanish ritual is the closest, admitting, however, that it is the only one of which a precise description survives. Suitably cautious, she concedes the possibility that an ancient Jerusalem ritual is the common ancestor of Drepanius’ and the Spanish. She then rebuts, on the evidence of the poem, the theory that Drepanius was a deacon or cleric; rather, he was merely one of the congregation.

An equally fascinating section on Drepanius and Priscillianism follows (112–131). The poem, even allowing for its brevity and genre, seems to betray some heterodox views, Trinitarian and Christological: the Holy Spirit is neglected, and the figure of Christ dominates the second half of the poem. Is this due to imprecision in thought and dogma in fourth century Christianity, or is it redolent of Priscillianism? One recalls the criticism of the persecution of the Priscillianists in Pacatus ‘Panegyric’. The catch is that because of the partisan nature of the surviving texts Priscillianism itself is elusive, having been seen, notably by Henry Chadwick (Priscillian of Avila, 1976), as less a doctrine than an ascetic or charismatic movement. T-V assembles, under the heading ‘Les flottements théologiques de Drepanius’ (116), a series of Priscillianist and anti-Priscillianist texts to compare with the De Cereo. Sensibly, she comes to a nuanced conclusion, that if not Priscillianist, Drepanius was not in pure conformity with the Councils of Nicaea or Constantinople, not surprisingly, perhaps, if he were a recent convert to the faith (129).

This section, like its predecessors, abounds in bright ideas. For example, T-V suggests that five verses in the De Cereo contrasting pagan mystery cults with Christian might be a response to accusations that the Priscillianists, like pagans, devoted themselves to nocturnal orgies (130). But perhaps she goes too far in implying that the eulogy of Spain in the ‘Panegyric’ owes something to Pacatus’ own connections with Spain and Priscillianism (131): to my mind there is nothing particularly personal in the passage, nothing that an accomplished rhetor could not easily devise. It conforms to Menander Rhetor’s advice when an honorand’s native city is unremarkable (Second Treatise’ 368–69), and the coincidence that Spain was Theodosius’ origo is adequate explanation for it.

The section ‘Trois Pacati ou un Latinius Pacatus Drepanius?’ (131–148), as stated above, argues for one Pacatus. The religious question, viz. the fact that the ‘other’ Pacati are Christian, is easily disposed of. T-V rightly follows Harnack in explaining the religious ambiguity of the ‘Panegyric’ in terms of the composition
of its audience; the numerous references to the imperial cult are in keeping with the traditions of the genre. But setting aside the presumed chronological difficulties does involve accepting that it would not be inappropriate for a priest to address an elderly layman as *filii carissime*.

‘L’évolution d’un converti: une hypothèse’ (140–148), is a brilliant construct. First T-V draws attention to the mystery of Pacatus’ political disappearance: is it to be explained by his conversion to an ascetic form of Christianity, or by the loss of his patron (Theodosius), or both? If indeed he wrote the *De Cereo* in the 390s, «période plutot favorable aux priscillianistes» (141), might not his disappearance from the sources be connected with the condemnation of the Priscillianists by the Council of Toledo in 400 CE? T-V emphasises his links with Paulinus, and further speculates that Pacatus, like Paulinus, may have gone to Spain, and then, like Paulinus, have fled to Nola: the only trace of the Pacatus ‘Treatise against Porphyry’ (see above) is a citation of Victor of Capua, living a mere thirty kilometres away (146)! There, Pacatus was in a perfect position to write the ‘Life of Paulinus’, needing only to enquire about the saint’s last moments. T-V, having assembled the fragmentary materials with erudition and imagination, fits them together beautifully: her life of Latinius Pacatus Drepanius deserves to be true.

But T-V is ever questing. Armed with this new construct, she urges us to look for further poems of Drepanius. The MS tradition of Ausonius and Paulinus needs restudying. Other poems in lat. 7558, in particular, *unica* attributed to Florus and Paulinus, must be examined in detail. There will be, of course, some difficulties (e.g. the tendency of Florus to imitate the poets of Late Antiquity, remarked upon above). But the Epilogue sees her well advanced on this mission. *Carmen* 6 of Paulinus is a prime candidate for reattribution; cautiously, she leaves the matter of its authorship open, but she has already outlined a persuasive case for Drepanius. We can look forward with relish to further fruits of Turcan-Verkerk’s researches.

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