composed in Constantinople at the same time by Priscian. The work on Procopius' letters is taken care of by F. Ciccolella who skilfully extracts the details from the epistles which are so helpful in adding colour and depth to our understanding of life in Gaza and the network of relationships enjoyed by Procopius and his fellow intellectuals.

The second half of the volume consists of an edition, with translation and commentary, of Procopius' *dialexeis* and *ethopeia*, *ekphraseis*, panegyrics and 173 letters. In addition, the first of the appendices contains the text, translation and commentary by A. Corcella of Choricius' funeral oration for Procopius. Although there are other editions of some of these works, the convenience lies in having Procopius' rhetorical works gathered together here with a careful and detailed commentary which includes textual criticism as well as linguistic, literary and historical notes.

There are two further appendices: one by B. Bäbler and A. Schomberg, in which they attempt to reconstruct the mechanism of the clock described by Procopius, and the second by Bäbler on Procopius' *ekphrasis* on a cycle of wall-paintings. These essays are amply illustrated and the latter certainly offers further thoughts on the issue of the use of pagan motifs in a Christian world. As such, they might have been better placed within the first half of the volume where closer integration with the other chapters (especially 3 and 4) would have helped in reaching an understanding of Procopius' handling of pagan motifs and also lent greater coherence to the volume. However, as even the lengthy and thorough bibliography at the end of the book shows, the meticulous and thoughtful approach taken by Amato and his colleagues is testament to their dedicated work on Procopius. This volume adds significantly to our appreciation of Procopius as a writer and to our perception of the world in which he moved.

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DE STEFANI (C.) **Paulus Silentiarius, Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae, Descriptio Ambonis** (Bibliotheca Teubneriana). Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010. Pp. xlviii + 163. €69.95. 9783110221268.
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Paul Friedländer's magisterial *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius: Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1912) has been authoritative for a century: as De Stefani notes (xxi), Friedländer was the first since Holstein (1629) to base his edition on the unique source, the famous Codex Palatinus graecus 23, now in Heidelberg (mid-tenth century; hereafter 'P'), rather than one of its apographs, of which the earliest was made by Salmasius in 1607 (xiv). Friedländer's ground-breaking work, prefaced by a long study of antique descriptions of works of art, included a commentary dealing with interpretative and linguistic issues; and for John, but not for Paul, an *apparatus* of parallel passages.

De Stefani's new Teubner is a work of comparable erudition that draws on the immense scholarship on late antique poetry in the intervening period, from Keydell and Wifstrand to more recent rigorous and detailed studies particularly by the French and Italians. In the last 15 years, Paul's *Description of St Sophia*, precisely dated to Epiphany 563, has been translated into French (Fayant and Chuvin, 1997), Italian (Fobelli, 2005), Spanish (Egea, 2007) and English (Bell, 2009 – prologue and epilogue only); these complement the older translations of Pülhorn (1977; in Veh's *Prokopios*) and Mango (1985). High time, then, for re-establishment of the Greek text.

De Stefani's preface deals first with the manuscript tradition (vii–xiii): accepting Alan Cameron's identification of the scribe J with Constantine the Rhodian (A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes*, Oxford, 1993, 300–07), he argues that incorrect marginal emendations in J's hand are his own conjectures and that he had only one exemplar. But the correct optative in the Suidas' citation of *Descr.* 825, where P has an indicative, shows that Suidas had an independent exemplar of Cephalas' anthology, which in turn derived Paul's poem from the *Cycle* of Paul's contemporary Agathias. The Suidas' reading also shows that P is not infallible. De Stefani's painstaking analysis of apographs and editions (xiv–xxi) greatly improves understanding of corrections and conjectures – the optative at 825 was already proposed by Scaliger, while Salmasius had earlier corrected 7 and 139: Friedländer attributes all to Du Cange (1670). Graefe, although working from an apograph, made great improvements in his 1822 edition (for example *Descr.* 657; *Amb.* 53), whereas some of Friedländer's conjectures are poor (258 ἔχοντα, 333 Πλάτων – neither, however, admitted into the text). The textual notes published by Arthur Ludwich in 1913 also contain much of value (for example 570, 932).

On date (xxi–xxvi), De Stefani convincingly upholds the arguments of R.C. McCail ('The *Cycle* of Agathias: new identifications scrutinised', *JHS* 89, 1969, 87–96, at 94) that Paul was dead by the time Agathias praised him in his *History* (5.9.7–8); corroborating points are that Justinian is unlikely to have selected a novice to celebrate his restored St Sophia and that Paul's vocabulary draws on epigrams from Meleager to contemporaries, including himself, which suggests a previous career in this genre. De Stefani's linguistic researches greatly refine understanding of Paul's literary pedigree (xxvi–xxix) where, after Nonnus himself, imperial didactic poets (Dionysius Periegetes, Oppian, Ps.-Oppian) are prominent, as one might expect, whereas – Apollonius Rhodius excepted – there are striking gaps among the Alexandrians: Paul was, it seems, less learned than Nonnus. In metre (xxix–xxxviii), the iambic prologues aspire, not always satisfactorily (for example 97; *cf.* Friedländer 119), to imitate Attic comedy while also betraying features of the Byzantine dodecasyllable. In the hexameters (analysed following Keydell's scheme for the *Dionysiaca* with much valuable detail in the footnotes), Paul adheres to broad Nonnian trends, but is in some respects less rigorous. Friedländer (117) found greater laxity in the *Ambo* (delivered later), an issue on which De Stefani is silent.

There are many improvements to Friedländer's text (for example 36, 55, 125, 147–48) and several bold conjectures (149, 605, etc.), but some judgements are questionable: Niebuhr's correction at 68; at 143 the line-end is undoubtedly Hellenistic, but Nonnus has many similar cadences (for example *D.* 31.280; *Par.* 5.175); at 150 the linking of ἀπείρονα with πῆχυν across the caesura is not supported by sense or the parallel passages. More problematic is the emendation χέων at 333 underpinned by the view that 'the immortal herald of God' is the psalmist David (*cf.* 429–34) rather than St Plato, in whose church vigil was kept the night before the rededication, and a questionable sense for ὑπεδέξατο ('fece séguito': 'Per un'edizione critica dei poemi ecfrastici di Paolo Silenziario', *RFIC* 136, 2008, 396–411, at 401, 404), while at 334 P's word-division θεσπεσίοις τεμένεσσι νέοις (as opposed to Friedländer's τεμένεσσιν ἑοῖς) does not convince. I prefer Ludwich's λάων 'wakeful' (from epic λάω; defended by R.C. McCail ('ΛΑΩ: two testimonia in later Greek poetry', *CQ* 20, 1970, 306–08), paralleled in the same context of a sleepless night at *AP* 5.237.5 (Agathias) and both examples of *interpretatio homerica*.

However, these reservations do not undermine the importance of this stimulating edition, with its rich *apparatus* of parallel passages, indexed by author at the end – long entries for Gregory of Nazianzus and George of Pisidia and interesting Latin parallels – along with an exhaustive *index verborum*.

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SINIOSSOGLOU (N.) **Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xvi + 454. £70. 9781107013032.

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This book is a comprehensive monograph on Georgios Gemistos (Plethon), perhaps the most distinguished philosopher of late Byzantium. Siniossoglou summarizes, comments and reinterprets certain aspects of Plethon's work and of his contemporary intellectual history. He is well aware of the significance of the book's subject matter for the history of medieval and Renaissance philosophy and he furthermore argues for its importance to modernity.

The book, according to its author, does three things. The first is to define the elements of Plethon's version of Platonism and explain its relation to Plato's reception in Byzantium. Part 1 reconnects the 'lost rings of the Platonist golden chain'; though these rings are known, the reconstruction of a continuous line of Byzantine Platonists is well documented and confirms the suggestion that Plethon's idiosyncratic Platonism refers to late antiquity via Byzantine 'dissenters' (being also a reaction to Hesychasm and the Latin-Orthodox conflict). Plethon's philosophical project is contextualized, however a closer reading of the sources is needed to prove that Plethon is the 'direct intellectual heir' of Byzantine humanists or that his predecessors constitute a latent *pagan* intellectual tradition and were 'members of [a] movement' (30).

In parts 2–3 Siniossoglou highlights four elements of Plethon's Platonism: epistemic optimism, the idea of a cognizable One qua being, determinism and political utopianism. These parts are philosophically the most interesting as they