

Finally, Hunter turns to the second phase of the Jovinianist controversy: the reception of Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum* and the sustained debates over how to characterize the superiority of asceticism to marriage without depreciating marriage. Hunter concludes that, in addition to debates over Pelagianism, Jovinian's and Jerome's views became the extremes against which definitions of sexual "orthodoxy" in the West were shaped. The resultant position maintained the superiority of celibacy over marriage that would result in greater heavenly rewards (with Jerome) while ultimately acknowledging the goodness of marriage, as well as locating salvation solely in faith and baptism (with Jovinian).

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The World of Early Egyptian Christianity: Language, Literature, and Social Context; Essays in Honor of David W. Johnson. Edited by **James E. Goehring** and **Janet A. Timbie**. CUA Studies in Early Christianity. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007. xxii + 229 pp. \$39.95 cloth.

In *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity*, editors James Goehring and Janet Timbie collect eleven essays in honor of David Johnson, S.J., who served as professor of Coptic at the Catholic University of America. As a festschrift, *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity* holds together admirably, showcasing some of the exciting developments in the study of late ancient Egypt, including the importance of some recently recognized figures—Shenoute of Atripe and Evagrius of Pontus in particular—in rewriting the history of late ancient Christianity (in essays by Goehring, Timbie, and Robin Darling Young), interactions (both competitive and productive) between Christianity and both Egyptian Judaism and traditional Egyptian religious institutions (Daniel Boyarin, David Frankfurter, Birger A. Pearson), Coptic papyrology and the history of Egyptian Christianity (Monica J. Blanchard), and Coptic literature (Tito Orlandi, Philip Rousseau, Mark Sheridan).

The volume's highlights fall toward the end, especially the essays by Frankfurter, Goehring, and Boyarin. Frankfurter's contribution is a nuanced bit of historical detection, convincingly untangling the authentic recollections of long-lost traditional Egyptian ("pagan") religious practices from the hagiographical commonplaces in the seventh-century *Panegyric on Macarius*

of *Tkow* as relating to the cult of Kothos. The panegyrist's depiction of the Kothos (or Gothos) cult, Frankfurter shows, conflates a variety of Greco-Egyptian religious practices related to Shai, Agathos Daimon, and other Egyptian household and public religious practices, framed of course in commonplace topoi of anti-pagan rhetoric. Goehring focuses on a ritual purification episode included in the sixth-century *Life of Abraham of Farshut*, an anti-Chalcedonian abbot of the Pachomian order. After a meeting with an imperial (that is, Chalcedonian) representative, Abraham orders that the monks "wash the entire meeting place" with water "as though it were polluted by . . . the emperor" (159). Goehring suggests that the episode of ritual purification in this Pachomian text may have been shaped less by the historical context of sixth-century Pachomian coenobitism than by the literary and theological culture fostered in the scriptorium in which the *Life* was transmitted, that of the monastery of Shenoute of Atripe, in which his own voluminous literary corpus—also reflecting an interest in purity language—was transmitted. Boyarin offers a précis of his ongoing research on allegory and biblical exegesis among Jews and Christians in Alexandria, especially Origen and Philo. Composed in running dialogue with other scholarly accounts of Alexandrian exegesis, Boyarin's analysis provocatively points to important differences between not only the allegorical approaches of Philo and Origen, but also between allegorical exegesis and rabbinic midrash. As someone who has had fewer opportunities to study midrash than I would like, I found the latter discussion especially thought-provoking.

Philip Rousseau revisits the long-running controversy surrounding the possible relationship between the codices discovered at Nag Hammadi and the nearby monasteries of Pachomius's federation, drawing on Michael William's analysis of the bibliographical organization of the individual Nag Hammadi codices. In William's reading, the Nag Hammadi codices are organized coherently in a number of patterns, most significant for Rousseau being, first, the "transition from ancient to revealed authority," and second, "sequences based more on instructional or liturgical preoccupations" (142). Rousseau compares the subtle organizational coherence of the Nag Hammadi codices to what he sees as a similar thematic coherence in individual treatises by two Pachomian leaders, Theodore and Horsiese. Rousseau draws on such thematic commonalities as biblical history, creation, and asceticism to argue very cautiously that "the Nag Hammadi documents could have taken their surviving form within Christian ascetic society," and possibly that the Nag Hammadi codices were products of other non-Pachomian ascetic communities. While the essay's carefully qualified conclusion strikes me as fair enough, the near universality of many of the ostensible parallels between the two corpora—for example, "exhortations to practical virtue" (146), prophecy and its fulfillment (156), and the olfactory imagery in Theodore's

Catechesis 3.5 and the Valentinian *Gospel of Truth*, NHC I 3, 34.3–5, both echoing 2 Cor 2:14, unacknowledged by Rousseau (146)—struck me as less than persuasive.

Young's essay underscores the potential of the *Letters* of Evagrius of Pontus (preserved completely only in Syriac, and as yet translated in toto only in German) for exploring the social and literary history of early Egyptian Christianity. Given the eye-catching title, "Cannibalism and Other Family Woes in Letter 55 of Evagrius of Pontus," the essay was a bit different than I expected, focusing, after a not entirely felicitous translation of Letter 55, dually on Evagrius's "self-presentation" as a humble teacher of wisdom and on his exegetical catena of scripture. The cannibalism suggested in the title—a mere allusion to 2 Kings 6:28–29 in Evagrius's letter—receives virtually no discussion, and in my reading refers not to "family woes" as such, but to the depths of perversity to which even "natural intentions" (like gluttony or anger) can drive humans. Other "family woes," such as the monk's lingering concerns over his kin left behind in the "world," also receive curiously short shrift in the essay.

The sole offering that seems out of place is of Leo Depuydt, an impression acknowledged by the author in his "apologia pro" inclusion in the present volume. His apologia convincingly states why *he* should offer an essay in honor of David Johnson, but fails to account for why *this* essay in particular should be included, given as it is an essay on Egyptian linguistics, having little to do with early Egyptian Christianity. More significantly, I wonder how readily the linguists for whom the essay seems intended will find this festschrift in early Christianity.

But this is a minor point. *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity* is a fine tribute to a scholar who has guided many in the field of Coptic studies. Goehring and Timbie have produced a well-edited volume. The essays are thoughtfully organized, and all the essays are integrated with a comprehensive bibliography. (The only essay that seemed not fully integrated in citation style and bibliography was Orlandi's.) CUA Press is also to be credited with producing a very attractive and readable volume, with excellent proofreading and a nice jacket. The price, especially for a festschrift, is unusually reasonable, making this not only a requisite purchase for libraries, but also well worth the cost for anyone working in the religions of late antique Egypt. Reading the essays collected here was quite a pleasure: a glimpse of some of the exciting developments in the study of early Egyptian Christianity and a pleasant reminder of why I was attracted to the history and literature of late ancient Egypt in the first place.

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