logical analyses by Irene de Jong (*Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad*, Amsterdam 1987) and Elene Volonaki ('The art of persuasion in Jason's speeches: Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*', in C. Kremmydas and K. Tempest (eds), *Hellenistic Oratory: Continuity and Change*, Oxford 2013, 51–70), Verhelst applies narratological models to the analysis of direct speech in Nonnus' epic. The recent special issue of *Symbolae Osloenses* (volume 93 (2019) *Narrative, Narratology and Intertextuality: New Perspectives on Greek Epic from Homer to Nonnus*), which also includes a paper by Verhelst, provides a significant example of how much narratology combined with intertextuality can teach us about Greek epic.

After the introduction, the book is divided into two sections, part 1, 'Epic speech in transformation', and part 2, 'Rhetoric and narrative', each of which deals with three case studies. Every chapter offers a thorough discussion of its examples and Verhelst shows an in-depth knowledge of the vast literature on Nonnus, which only occasionally could be enlarged. For example, in chapter 1.3 on 'Nonnus and Quintus (or Libanius): Τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους;', where the author deals with the parallel between the necrophilia of an anonymous Indian soldier (*Dion.* 35.27–30) and the love of Achilles and Penthesilea, mention should be made of the 'almost-episode' (here καὶ νύ κε / εἰ μή) studied by Heinz-Günther Nesselrath (*Ungeschehenes Geschehen: 'Beinahe-Episoden' im griechischen und roïmischen Epos von Homer bis zur Spaïantike*, Stuttgart 1992, 67–73) (71). Then again, on the comparison of the dead Bacchante in the *Dionysiaca* with the dead Drusiana in the *Acts of John*, articles by Domenico Accorinti ('Nonnos und der Mythos: Heidnische Antike aus christlicher Perspektive', in H. Leppin (ed.), *Antike Mythologie in christlichen Kontexten der Spaïantike*, Berlin and Boston 2015, 43–69) and Simon Goldhill ('Preposterous poetics and the erotics of death', *Eugesta* 5 (2015) 154–77) might be added (164–73). As to the subject of the book, it would also have been useful to refer to the sound observations on the absence of long monologues in *Par.* 20.103–35 by Mary Whitby ('The Bible hellenized: Nonnus' *Paraphrase* of St. John's Gospel and "Eudocia's" Homeric centos', in J.H.D. Scourfield (ed.), *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, Change*, Swansea 2007, 195–231, at 206): 'The long monologues that interrupt the narrative flow of the *Dionysiaca* are rejected as a means of expansion here since they would merely distract from the Gospel text, whereas Nonnus' carefully selected epithets assist interpretation of its meaning.'

The conclusion concerns Aura's last words in *Dionysiaca* 48.892–908, and is followed by an appendix, a clear 'Summary of the *Dionysiaca*'. The book is very carefully produced, concluding with a rich bibliography, a concise general index and a select *index locorum*.

In sum, Verhelst's book makes a valuable contribution to Nonnian studies and readers can also look forward to reading the proceedings of the international conference on *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context IV: Poetry at the Crossroads* (Ghent, 19–21 April 2018), which will be edited by the same author.

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WORTLEY (J.) **The Anonymous Sayings of the Desert Fathers: A Select Edition and Complete English Translation**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. viii + 651, £39.99. 9781108439022.
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What are the Sayings of the Desert Fathers? Usually known as the *Apophthegmata*, they are nuggets of wisdom and instruction passed on orally, in Coptic, by the most eminent ascetics (mainly male but occasionally female) of the Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian deserts in the period between the fourth and early sixth centuries AD. They were turned into a written, Greek wisdom tradition and subsequently rendered into many other languages: Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Latin, Georgian, Old Slavonic, Ethiopic. Their core material is aphorisms, frequently gnomic or elliptical; interspersed with them 'like gravel in sand' (5) in John Wortley's words, are 'tales': either narratives of events in the lives of the Fathers or 'spiritually beneficial tales' encapsulating important but difficult teachings. They are grouped into three main 'collections': the Alphabetical, organized under the names of individual ascetics; the Systematic, grouped according to theme; and this collection, the Anonymous, in which many, though not all, of the sayings and tales gathered under thematic headings are ascribed simply to 'an elder' or 'an anchorite' rather than named figures such as Antony, Arsenius, Macarius, Poemen, etc.

The Anonymous Collection was given a partial edition and translation into French by F. Nau across several issues of *Revue de l'orient chrétien* in the early 20th century and a French translation by L. Regnault in 1985 (*Les Sentences des Pères du Désert, série des anonymes*, Solesmes and Bellefontaine). Nau worked from one Greek manuscript, MS Paris Coislin 126, while Regnault used five, though mainly Coislin, along with MS Sinai, St Catherine 448. Here, Wortley utilizes these along with MS Vat. Graec. 1599 to present a

Greek text comprising 765 apophthegms and tales. All three manuscripts date from the tenth to 11th century: he is careful to establish that this represents a select edition: '*an* edition, not the definitive critical edition scholars like to see of ancient texts' (4). He doubts that such an edition would be possible, presupposing as it does the existence at some time of a definitive text by one author. Not only were sayings and tales already several decades old and widely circulated in oral form, a sort of monastic folklore, before being set down in writing, but over the centuries scribes subsequently took the greatest liberties with this material, revising, rearranging, adapting, reattributing and even adding new sayings in an attempt, to quote Wortley, 'to train and foster those who aspired to monastic ideals' (6). Viewed from this angle, his select edition offers a combination of nuggets of early ascetic wisdom with an insight into the training priorities of (some) Greek monasteries in the tenth and 11th centuries. But for research purposes, written editions are now being overtaken by online resources. A new online database (*Monastica,* based at Lund University, Sweden, https://edu.monastica.ht.lu.se/) combines a dynamic library of the manuscripts and texts with a complex relational database, offering scholars the opportunity to come to terms with the immense jungle of apophthegmatic material in Greek and other languages and enabling comparison between individual collections and across languages.

As a translation, what does this offer? Some of its operational principles are less than helpful: key words, including *accidie* (roughly speaking, a spirit of boredom and defeatism), are left in the original Greek and not consistently explained. While Wortley provides an initial definition of the highly important term, *porneia* as 'any illicit sexual activity in mind, word, or deed' (vii), another crucial concept, the ambivalent *logismos/oi* (troubling thought/s that might cause an ascetic's mind to wander in the direction of *porneia*) is not explained. No introductory pointer is given to the basic signification or historic use of another central term, *hēsychia*, which occurs many times in the text. The reader is simply invited to construe according to context, implying a considerable amount of prior knowledge. Annoyingly, the English text alone is indexed and inadequately: it does not, for instance, include *logismos/oi* and there is a single page reference for *porneia*, when in fact it is mentioned dozens of times. By contrast, there are 21 page references for the phrase 'two brothers': and these do not correspond entirely to what is revealed by an electronic search of Cambridge University Press' online version of the book. This is all deeply frustrating because, while I balked slightly at the co-option of the Old English 'worldling' to translate *kosmikos*, this is a most intelligent and highly engaging translation. Wortley, who died in 2019, was a prodigious translator and interpreter of early monastic sayings and tales, and, like all his work, this volume reflects the depth of his immersion in and understanding of the subject and his ability to convey its essence in direct and memorable fashion.

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DERDA (T.), HILDER (J.) and KWAPISZ (J.) (eds) **Fragments, Holes, and Wholes: Reconstructing the Ancient World in Theory and Practice**. Warsaw: Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw, 2017. Pp. xv + 409. £50. 9788394684808.
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This thought-provoking volume stems from an international conference organized by two prominent Polish classicists, Jerzy Danielewiz and Krystyna Bartol, and held in Warsaw in June 2014. The editors of the volume, Thomas Derda, Jennifer Hilder and Jan Kwapisz, successfully bring together papers that examine the authority of fragments in Greek and Roman culture. The book combines a huge variety of case studies from different areas of ancient culture with new methodological approaches that may be 'applicable to different kinds of material' (viii).

The study is arranged in six parts, framed by an introduction and an epilogue. In the former, 'Fun from fragments' (3–20), Kwapisz establishes a critical perspective on the definition of 'fragment' as a 'piece of information' (13) and on its conceptualization in the 'puzzle of Antiquity' (15). Taking the form of a fruitful discussion between Han Baltussen and S. Douglas Olson, the latter provides a debrief on the main arguments of each contribution.

Part I ('Prolegomena to fragmentology') builds a general introduction to the subject. Joshua T. Katz confirms that pre-ancient fragments exist in Greek poetry. Hans-Joachim Gehrke highlights the importance of contextualization in the process of the construction of history. Using a small corpus of literary and sub-literary texts of Ptolemaic Alexandria related to Heracles as ancestor of the royal dynasty, Annette Harder stresses the importance of taking into consideration '*contents* and *format* of all relevant papyri' (57).

Part II ('From fragments to contexts') steers readers toward the use of fragments for reconstructing larger parts of lost literary texts. Baltussen investigates the reliability of some post-Aristotelian Peripatetic sources concerning the Presocratic fragments. Ilaria Andolfi establishes a new critical perspective on the fragments of