Panegyric and the Discourse of Praise in Late Antiquity*

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Eulogy: *Praise of a person who has either the advantages of wealth and power, or the consideration to be dead.*

Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

A. FILIPPO and M. UGENTI (EDS), *GIULIANO IMPERATORE: ELOGIO DELL'IMPERATRICE EUSEBIA* (Testi e commenti 29). Pisa: Fabrizio Serra, 2016. Pp. 232. ISBN 9788862279154. €92.00.

C. LAUDANI (ED.), *NAZARIO: PANEGIRICO IN ONORE DI COSTANTINO*. Bari: Cacucci, 2014. Pp. 463. ISBN 9788866114055. €45.00.

A. MARANESI, *VINCERE LA MEMORIA, COSTRUIRE IL POTERE. COSTANTINO, I RETORI, LA LODE DELL'AUTORITÀ E L'AUTORITÀ DELLA LODE* (Diadema 3). Milan: Mimesis, 2016. Pp. 216. ISBN 9788857533186. €20.00.

L. PERNOT, *EPIDEICTIC RHETORIC: QUESTIONING THE STAKES OF ANCIENT PRAISE*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015. Pp. xiv + 166. ISBN 9780292768208. US$50.00/£41.00.

M. P. GARCÍA RUIZ and A. J. QUIROGA PUERTAS (EDS), *PRAISING THE OTHERNESS: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ALTERITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PANEGYRICS* (Talanta: Proceedings of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society 45). Amsterdam: Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society, 2014. Pp. 175. ISBN 9789072067173. €10.00.

I

Although a panegyric can be defined very simply as a speech of praise, it is no longer assumed that praise is also its sole function. What that function might be, however, continues to preoccupy scholarship. Generalisations can be made, but even a nuanced judgement such as 'every encomium is at once a literary work, a moral problem, and a social rite' (Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric*, ix) can be challenged by the particular: 'there is no system and there never was. There is circumstance, preference and ambiguity'.[1] The

* As the different authors under discussion use different systems in referring to the *Pan. Lat.*, I have standardised all references here according to the system of Mynors' *OCT*.

[1] Saylor Rodgers 1986: 98–9 and the conclusion of Maranesi, *Vincere la memoria*, 168.

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question is further complicated by the evolution of a rhetoric of praise, related to but independent of the formal panegyric, which came to characterise the literature of Late Antiquity and beyond.[2] The questions, therefore, of what a panegyric is and what it is for are highly relevant to modern scholarship, not only to commentaries but, as is apparent from the books under review, to studies of rhetoric, late antique historiography and the creation of the imperial image.

To the creators of panegyric, the orators of classical Athens, the panegyric was for display and entertainment. Epideixis was a branch of oratory intended for show, and the panegyric, designed for festival competitions rather than practical purposes, exhibited the orator's art.[3] However, although the first panegyrics praised mythological figures, animals or objects, the ability to praise a living ruler or city was quickly appreciated.[4] Panegyric was useful in diplomacy, and epideictic oratory flourished in the Hellenistic period.[5]

The Romans, however, had reservations about praise. It was appropriate for funeral orations, as Cicero allowed, but Roman speeches of praise were more properly simple and unadorned. In his view, the *laudatio* or panegyric was essentially un-Roman, suited to amusement and not public utility (*De or.* 2.341). Nevertheless, his immediate acknowledgement that the Greek style of praise might occasionally be needed by Roman orators indicates that, at the very least, the sharp distinction between the plain funeral oration and the ornate *laudatio* was being blurred. As the public celebration of a political life, the *laudatio funebris* was frequently used to promote the public image of the deceased's family and so had a political aspect which went beyond its use in diplomacy.[6] So far from being unsuited to public life, the *laudatio* supplied Cicero with the techniques of praise in his Caesarian orations, speeches which would influence later writers of panegyric.[7] The rhetoric of praise had already found a home in Roman politics.

In dismissing the *laudatio* as an oratorical set-piece, Cicero had not anticipated the formality of an imperial court and the prominence which panegyric would achieve in court ritual. While the first surviving Latin panegyric is Pliny's *gratiarum actio* of A.D. 100, the letters of Pliny and Fronto and the instructions for composition which appear in the proliferating rhetorical handbooks suggest that by the second century A.D. the delivery of panegyrics had become an essential skill. Unfortunately, no Latin panegyrics survive between the *Panegyricus* of Pliny and the late third century, but the Gallic orations of the *Panegyrici Latini* (A.D. 289–389) give a clear idea of the importance of the genre. This collection of eleven speeches by different authors, fronted by Pliny's panegyric, addresses emperors from Diocletian and Maximian to Theodosius. Constantine is the dominant figure, honoured jointly with Maximian in A.D. 307, and singly in 310, 311, 313 and 321. Internal evidence from this collection indicates that by the time of the Tetrarchy and the expansion of court ceremonial under Diocletian, multiple panegyrics accompanied every stage of the imperial progression. These speeches show only some of the opportunities for encomia: to express gratitude for a consulship, to honour the emperor's arrival, birthday or *quinquennalia*, or to celebrate a civic anniversary.[8] The honorific ceremonial aspect of a panegyric is its most striking feature: as part of a ritual, the speeches are self-consciously and grandiloquently rhetorical, and

[2] While Curtius 1953: 154–66 examines the influence of epideixis on medieval poetry, his summary is also very relevant for Late Antiquity.

[3] Isocrates coined the term πανηγυρικός for an oration at the Olympic festival of 380 B.C.; on the origins of panegyric, Pernot 1993: 19–22.

[4] Isocrates wrote on Helen and Busiris, Polycrates on pebbles and mice; the first panegyric in honour of a living person was Isocrates' *Evagoras*.

[5] On the opportunities for epideictic in the Hellenistic period, Kennedy 1994: 81–2.

[6] Not all funeral orations were those of public figures, but a significant number were. See Ramage 2006; Covino 2011.

[7] Braund 1998: 68–71 describes these speeches (*Marcell.*, *Lig.*, *Deiot.*) as 'proto-panegyrics'.

[8] The best general work on this text is the commentary of Nixon and Saylor Rodgers (1994).

the orators parade their learning with references to other panegyrics, repeating the same exempla and tropes.[9] As Edmond Vereecke observed in a study of the rhetorical models of the *Pan. Lat.*, 'rien ne ressemble plus à un panégyrique qu'un autre'.[10]

Vereecke is correct, but his point applies only to rhetorical style: despite their apparent uniformity, the panegyric had acquired an important political and cultural role in the later Roman Empire.[11] Most of the Constantinian speeches in the *Pan. Lat.*, for example, concern key moments in his rise to power: his elevation to Augustus and marriage to Maximian's daughter in the speech of 307, his defeat of Maximian in 310, the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 313 and 321, critical occasions when the orator as the voice of the community addressed the emperor. It was perhaps their formulaic aspect, as noted by Vereecke, that made panegyrics a protected means of communication between the emperor and his people. Panegyrics do not seem a likely vehicle for disseminating news, but such announcements as Constantine's claimed descent from Claudius II (*Pan. Lat.* VI(7)2.1–2) suggest imperial involvement. Libanius certainly solicited information from the emperor for his speeches.[12] The inclusion of the emperor's own words in a panegyric (*Pan. Lat.* IX(4)14) could give it the status of a quasi-official document, but to what extent the panegyric was seen as a formal means of disseminating information is a matter which merits further study. Panegyrics, however, could confirm how the emperor wanted his people to view him and the image he desired. The *laudatio* directs the gaze of all to the emperor and to the impact of his presence.[13] The orator tells the audience what they are seeing, pointing out the light of divinity emanating from their ruler and the virtues which are stamped on the imperial countenance. The imperial persona, visible in monumental art and on coins, was mirrored in the oration, a tacit expression of his subjects' loyalty and their trust in him.[14]

Through panegyric, the people could guide, or rather encourage, their emperor towards the right course of action. The primary function of the *laudatio*, as expressed by Cicero, was to praise a good man (*De or.* 2.341, 349), but Pliny saw this as having a hortatory element, and stated in his *Panegyricus* that it was for the public benefit that good emperors should recognise what they have done and that bad rulers learn what they should do (4.1). In a letter to Vibius Severus, he admitted that giving advice to an emperor was a noble endeavour but risked the charge of *superbia*: in a panegyric, however, it could be done without seeming arrogant (*Ep.* 3.18.2). The canonical virtues appeared in the handbooks of rhetoric where the abstract ideal was created, but the individual orator was free to choose what the occasion required. In the formulaic locutions of praise, the nuance of a slight variation carried weight. An orator could encourage the emperor to display or to continue displaying a quality by praising him for its possession; more subtly, he could promote good behaviour by praising a quality which the emperor had utterly failed to display, or he could offer a *speculum tyranni*, demonstrating through invective what qualities were unacceptable.[15]

[9] Ware 2017: 11–16.
[10] Vereecke 1975: 155.
[11] MacCormack 1976: 30–1 examines the divergence between the Greek and Roman traditions.
[12] *Ep.* 760 and 1106; Ando 2000: 127–8; Heather and Moncur 2001: 28 suggest various passages where Themistius was briefed; on Claudian as Stilicho's propagandist, Cameron 1970.
[13] MacCormack 1981 remains outstanding in articulating the link between the verbal and visual in late antique ceremony.
[14] MacCormack 1976: 53–4.
[15] Invective appears in passages within panegyrics (Domitian in Plin., *Pan.* 48–9, Maxentius in *Pan. Lat.* XII (9)14–18 and IV(10)8–10, Maximus in *Pan. Lat.* II(12)24–32) or in full length works: Claudian's *In Rufinum* and *In Eutropium* are particularly entertaining examples, *In Rufinum* in particular showing how invective inverts the formulae for writing panegyric. For the deployment of invective by Christian writers in attacking heresy and those who espoused it, see Flower 2013; 2016.

Above all, through the medium of praise, the subjects told the emperor of their concerns. The *Pan. Lat.* show how the panegyric could facilitate and strengthen the bond between the cities of Gaul and the emperor. Requests presented became part of the praise, an expression of the citizens' confidence that their emperor would act on their behalf, an illustration of the virtues for which he was being praised and a vision of a future which would balance the great deeds he had done in the past. *Pan. Lat.* VI(7) of 310, praising Constantine as *salutifer*, invites him to visit Autun where he will restore its ancient glories because of his veneration of the city (21.6, 22.3). *Pan. Lat.* V(8) of 311 honours him as the saviour of Autun, thanking him for his generosity (while hinting that more remains to be done) and underlining the citizens' loyalty by referring to the town's name, at the start and close of the speech, as Flavia Aeduorum (1.1, 14.5). That the orator spoke for his community is emphasised in the image repeated in panegyric after panegyric: when the emperor arrives, the whole community, young and old, men and women, pour out to greet him (e.g. XI(4)11.3, V(8)8.1, III(11)6.4).

II

While the books under review represent a variety of genres (literary commentaries on a single panegyric (Filippo and Ugenti, Laudani), monographs on epideictic oratory (Pernot) and the Constantinian persona (Maranesi) and a collection of essays on cultural alterity (García Ruiz and Quiroga Pertas)) and have their specific concerns, all to some extent consider panegyrics as a channel of communication between an emperor and his people. The following questions recur: is the communication top-down, bottom-up or both simultaneously?[16] Can a panegyric be described as propaganda? How exactly does the panegyrist convey his message? Is the orator representing himself alone or his community?

For Alessandro Maranesi, consensus is the function of the panegyric, but he gives the emperor a prominent role in influencing the content of the oration. His monograph on the creation of Constantine's image in the *Pan. Lat.* surveys and assesses the role of different media in creating and disseminating the imperial persona.

In the opening 'Introduzione: I *Panegyrici* tra memoria e politici', M. argues that the panegyrics were central to creating a nexus of Constantinian policy which included defining and adjusting the emperor's image, legitimising his power with historical or cultural foundations and creating consensus. This approach raises the question of terminology: is it appropriate to use the word 'propaganda' in reference to the ancient world? The term now seems to be accepted as practical, but M. uses the connected terms *diffusione* in reference to the communication of the imperial image and *promozione* in describing the creation of networks which, even if controlled by different centres of power, could disseminate an essentially coherent message (24). In this interpretation of panegyrics, there is never a definitive answer as to the source of *promozione* since the negotiation between top-down and bottom-up communication is constantly changing. The image of Constantine honoured in the *Pan. Lat.* can only be ascribed partly to the emperor. In the panegyrics written between 307 and 311, when Constantine was separating himself from his Tetrarchic origins, local and imperial interests combine. M. suggests that Constantine's new association with Sol and Apollo came from the emperor, while local interest emphasised the Gallic location; simultaneously, then, Constantine's right to government was redefined and legitimacy was given to the ambitions of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy.

[16] The discussion of Sabbah 1984 on *communication ascendante* and *descendante* is central to this topic.

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The second section, 'Lode dell'autorità o autorità della lode', considers the panegyrists' models and their use of the past in presenting the emperor. M. addresses the question of who is controlling the image in each case and how the standard techniques of the panegyrist — mythical and historical *exempla*, literary allusion, encomiastic tropes — are variously combined for each different occasion to remould the imperial persona in keeping with the values of the local aristocracy. Analysing individual word-groups in each speech, M. shows how the focus is adjusted to emphasise specific aspects of Constantine's career and he suggests who is responsible for each adjustment. The speech of 310, for example, is the most top-down and contains the greatest number of divine references, creating an alternative sacral dimension for the ex-Herculean emperor. By contrast, the speech of 313 is bottom-up and relies more on historical *exempla*, the traditional imagery, perhaps, providing reassurance after the Milvian Bridge and Constantine's conversion.

In 'I *Panegyrici* e gli altri *media*', M. compares the presentation of Constantine in the *Pan. Lat.* with his depiction in other media. The essence of the emperor is created by the attribution of recurring virtues, and the adherence to these traditional values exemplifies a combination of top-down and bottom-up communication. *Pietas* and *clementia* are outstanding. Of more interest is the list of virtues which do not recur, most notably *aeternitas*, which featured in the speech of 307 but is replaced in later orations by *maiestas* and *felicitas*, the victorious connotations of *felicitas* augmented by the emphasis on *uictoria* in 321.

In the period 307–321, Constantine's conversion was bound to dominate. For M., his relationship with the divine and the resulting network of images in pagan and Christian texts represent a clash of civilisations (214). M. examines key themes — Constantine's affinity with the divine, his visions, the victory at the Milvian Bridge — in the pagan *Pan. Lat.*, the Christian Eusebius and Lactantius, inscriptions and coins. There are no surprises: the Christians interpret Constantine's victorious career as the result of his relationship with the Christian god, the panegyrists rely on neutral language and attribute aid to *quisnam deus* (*Pan. Lat.* XII(9)2.4) or *diuina mens* (2.5). Through close analysis, M. demonstrates how careful was the transition to Christian ideology, even in court-controlled media.

M.'s collection and display of data, utilising studies of modern communication techniques, is central to his methodology and is an arresting feature of his monograph. Information is presented in lists, word-clouds, graphs, tables and flow charts; there are also extensive footnotes covering primary sources with a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography. This methodology has much in common with L'Huillier's invaluable *L'empire des mots* (1992), which adopted a lexical approach to the *Pan. Lat.*, categorising and tabling words by category (e.g. virtues, modes of address, visualisation). Advances in computer technology in the last two decades enable a much more accessible presentation of data than the simple table. In the word-cloud representing the panegyric of 321, the visual impact of the super-sized *uictoria*, supported by *maximus* and *uirtus*, almost equally large, suggests how these qualities were impressed through repetition on the ears of the audience.

The presentation of evidence in multiple formats, however, does not do away with the need for caution, as the results of word-clouds and graphs depend on the words selected for analysis. In some cases the compilation is subjective. *Prouidentia*, for example, is given one citation among the imperial virtues, although it appears in all the speeches between 307 and 313 (111–14). Some of the allusions (61–4) are tenuous: would an audience have been reminded of the solar theme from Vergil's *Georgics* 1.463–8 in an allusion to *Georgics* 1.489–97 (68)? Nevertheless, the presentation of evidence in multiple ways is a very valuable resource, and an excellent way of carrying out a comparative study.

A great strength of this book is its presentation of the occasionality of each oration. Speech-by-speech analysis of data not only shows rapidity of change in the period but

indicates the involvement of the panegyrists in effecting change. Since only a handful of panegyrics have survived and each is written for a different occasion, it is impossible to speak conclusively about the extent of top-down/bottom-up communication. However, by presenting data from different media and in different ways, M. gives the reader a range of comparisons so that the subtleties of change can be appreciated. This approach also allows the *Pan. Lat.* to be read as a macrotext in which the character of Constantine is created, developed and revised as political circumstances require.

M.'s thematic focus is necessarily restricted, but his methodology shows the potential for similar studies. In the appendices, M. suggests topics that await such treatment: exemplars of moral and military virtues, beauty and physical qualities. I would like to suggest that a similar study of the panegyrics of Diocletian, Maximian and Constantius in the *Pan. Lat.* would be of tremendous benefit to scholars of Tetrarchic ideology and, in terms of the *Pan. Lat.* as an edited corpus, would focus attention on the earliest panegyrics of the collection, still relatively under-examined.

III

Maranesi's study views Nazarius' panegyric of 321 as a vehicle for ideological content: Carmela Laudani's lengthy commentary reinstates it as a literary work. This speech has a number of distinctive features within the *Pan. Lat.* corpus. It addresses an emperor who is not present and its theme is a battle of nearly a decade earlier, Constantine's victory over Maxentius, a topic covered by the panegyric of 313. L. follows Barnes' suggestion that Nazarius was an early editor of the corpus,[17] and that he took the opportunity of presenting the work of Gallic rhetoricians to a Roman audience. As editor, he placed his own speech at the start of this collection. L. suggests that Nazarius had as a further motive the chance to reposition Rome at the centre of imperial history after a period of turbulence, and agrees with L'Huillier's proposition that this panegyric is part of Constantine's preparation for war.[18] This would account for his revisiting a battle fought long ago — a battle which Constantine was willing to present as a turning point in the history of Rome and the ending of Tetrarchic ideology (118).

L. does not commit herself on the question of propaganda and panegyrics generally, confining herself to the *Pan. Lat.* Nonetheless, she acknowledges that it would be difficult to deny that they have a role in confirming and diffusing imperial policy, as they were spoken at key points in the imperial calendar and could be performed in other locations and in the schools. She singles out as propaganda the promotion through repetition of the title 'Maximus', which Constantine was voted in 312: its fourteen occurrences in this speech far outstrip its use in the other panegyrics. A more significant piece of propaganda is the attempt to depict Constantine's war on Maxentius as the response to provocation. Nazarius portrays him as unwilling, *inuitus* (*Pan. Lat.* IV (10)8.2) and *coactus* (13.4), the protector of the state, fighting a righteous war (9.1, 31) and justified by divine determination (12–16) in the face of Maxentius' madness and tyranny. Nazarius protects Constantine from the negative associations of civil war by describing the conflict as a battle between virtues and vices (7.5, 32.2).

For L., Nazarius' prime motivation is the recreation of Constantine's image. Uniquely among the orators of the *Pan. Lat.*, he has to praise an absent emperor but does so by creating a metaphysical *praesentia* for him which recurs throughout the speech. The physicality of Constantine is evoked in his statues (12.2–5), the empire is watched over by his foresight and the speech is enclosed by the two accounts of his approach (5.2–4,

[17] Barnes 2011: 183; see also Galletier 1949: xi.
[18] L'Huillier 1986: 559, 569.

34.4). L. argues that Nazarius introduces a new element to the imperial persona: the portrayal of Constantine as a father to his sons and to his subjects. Ignoring the claim of Licinius and his son, Nazarius presents Constantine as a single emperor and the founder of a dynasty (199). The *aeternitas* of Constantine and the Caesars is linked to the eternity of Rome; a key motif of imperial ideology is updated to replace the Tetrarchic ideal with a dynastic scheme (30).

The emperor's relationship with the divine is central. Despite Constantine's conversion in 312, the language is ambiguous, using such terms as *rerum arbiter deus*, *diuinitas*, *diuinum numen* (7.3). The divine element permeates the whole but in different guises, as a companion or adviser or a power which Constantine cannot disobey. The appearance of divine soldiers (14.6) is new to Nazarius; L. summarises the scholarship on this episode and its relationship to other Constantinian dreams and visions, observing that this is generally accepted as a move towards a new conception of divinity (23). Constantine himself is not presented as a god but has the sacral aura of one who carries out the will of the god.

While L. includes some textual analysis and situates the speech within its historical context, this is essentially a literary commentary which gives the oration full credit as a work of literature. Agreeing with those who criticise the obscurity of Nazarius' prose, L. attributes this partly to the influence of Cicero, Nazarius' lexical model. Like the other panegyrists, his vocabulary is taken largely from the classical canon, but L. summarises some of his stylistic and lexical idiosyncrasies which include a fondness for antithesis and accumulation and for *callidae iuncturae* (49–50). She disagrees with the criticism of a lack of clear structure, pointing out that the speech is designed to put the Caesars at beginning and end, with Constantine's military campaigns at the centre.

L. excels in showing how the text positions itself within the classical literary tradition. The introduction has a concise and insightful summary of Nazarius' models and his style of allusion: Cicero is paramount, most notably the Caesarian speeches, and Vergil also, used particularly to evoke pathos (39). Epic episodes look back to Ennius: Constantine's *aristeia* (29.5) came from Ennius via Vergil and Valerius Flaccus (40). L. is correct in giving such weight to the classical tradition, but it would have been of interest to look at Nazarius in terms of late antique trends also. Personifications play an unusually active role in this oration, but while L. traces their history back to *Aeneid* 6, she does not look forward to the warring virtues and vices in Prudentius' *Psychomachia* or consider Nazarius as an intermediate step between Vergilian personification and the vices of Rufinus in Claudian's *In Rufinum*.

Generally speaking, L. could put her own views forward more. She is scrupulous in setting out the various voices in a scholarly debate, but tends to be reticent in giving her own opinion (the discussion of propaganda is one such example). As a result, her presentation seems tentative, despite her familiarity with the material. Likewise, while she presents an abundance of citations to support points of style, it is not always clear if an example is to be read as an allusion or as an illustrative parallel. Overall, however, this is a comprehensive and extremely useful work, and is an excellent addition to scholarship on panegyric and Constantinian studies.

IV

The commentary of Adele Filippo (text, translation and comments) and Marco Ugenti (introduction and indices) on Julian's panegyric to Eusebia is a scholarly introduction to the text rather than an in-depth study of the content, but it provides an intriguing contrast to the imperial *laudationes*, as it is simultaneously a panegyric in honour of a woman and one in which the main character is the orator himself. This is only partly

due to the historical importance of the author, as Julian himself is responsible for his own prominence. He devotes considerable attention to the benefits he has obtained from Eusebia and skips over the standard tropes of praise: the many *praeteritiones* include the splendour of her arrival from Macedonia (110D), her reception on the journey (112A) and her visit to Rome (120C). Very reasonably, U.'s introduction begins with the personality of Julian, quoting Julian's thanks to Eusebia for her gift of books on philosophy, history, oratory and poetry, and for making Galatia and the country of the Celts resemble a temple of the Muses. The creation of the authorial persona as scholar and philosopher takes centre stage, as Julian digresses self-consciously from praise of his benefactress to praise of Greece as the home of *paideia* and philosophy (118C–119D) or to the importance of books (124A–125A).

There is some justification for Julian's approach. It may seem self-evident that the subject of a panegyric is the subject of the praise, but this is not necessarily the case when the honorand is the emperor's wife. In his *basilikos logos*, Menander Rhetor gives instructions: 'If the empress is of great worth and honour, you can conveniently mention her also here: "The lady he admired and loved, he has also made the only sharer of his throne. For the rest of womankind, he does not so much as know they exist"' (II 376.9–12, trans. Russell and Wilson). U. cites Angiolani's suggestion that the speech developed from Menander's advice,[19] and so Eusebia's virtue is proved by the fact that she has been chosen by Constantius to be his wife (109C–D). She, in fact, becomes part of the emperor's own virtues. However, as U. observes, there are other discourses in praise of empresses or women of the imperial family. The speech can be defined as a *basilikos logos* or simply as an encomium, since Julian comments that excellent women as well as men should be praised and draws attention to his model, Athene's praise of Arete in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 7.53–5; cf. 105B–106B).

Authorial motivation and authorial presence feature in this oration to such an extent that U. asks if the force of the writer's personality succeeds in unbalancing the encomiastic structure, and suggests that the speech could be classified as a *gratiarum actio*. In terms of encomiastic content this is a small distinction, but it allows Julian's gratitude to take priority, as gratitude is the theme which leads Julian away from Eusebia to his own career, his relationship with the emperor, and to the lengthy digressions mentioned above. Given the historical context, Julian's digressions may well be a political decision. Even if Julian is not following the guidelines of the rhetorical handbooks, praise of Eusebia must relate to her husband Constantius. Here both U. and F. need to take the topic farther and consolidate their findings. U., observing that Julian's relationship with Constantius was at best distrustful, states that Constantius' virtues are attenuated in the panegyric, but he does not expand. F. notes that Julian credits Constantius with the possession of the canonical virtues (109B) and acknowledges that praise for a list of qualities which Constantius notoriously did not possess could have been 'un'antifrasi sarcastica'.[20] Nevertheless, she thinks it unlikely under the circumstances that Julian would deviate from standard rhetorical models. She does not draw attention to passages which could be said to call into question Constantius' virtues, that, for example, Eusebia commonly encouraged her husband to show mercy (114C) or that Constantius readily listened to *delatores* and turned against Julian (118B–C).

As a panegyric of historical and oratorical interest, this speech has recently been the focus of critical attention[21] but the last textual commentary was that of Bidez in 1932. U. and F. have produced an elegant volume of text with critical apparatus, translation,

[19] Angiolani 2008: 7–8.
[20] Fontaine 1987: xxxvii.
[21] e.g. Angiolani 2008; Vatsend 2000.

introduction and commentary. It is a very accessible introduction to the speech (the inclusion of an index verborum and index locorum is particularly useful) but it is not entirely clear who the intended reader is. Both introduction and commentary are very short. U.'s introduction discusses the occasion and date and gives a good (if brief) summary of Julian's self-presentation, his relationship with Constantius and Eusebia, and the language and imagery of the speech. F.'s commentary explains mythological references and literary sources. It is helpful on rhetorical techniques and models and links the panegyric with Julian's writing generally, but there is otherwise little discussion. Much more could be done, both on Eusebia herself and on the exemplary models. There are many parallels, for example with Claudian's *Laus Serenae*, another panegyric by a Greek author with a debt of gratitude to a woman who cultivates the Muses (*Laus Ser.* 146–51) and who is compared to Penelope, Laodamia and Evadne. James' article of 2012 would be an excellent addition to the bibliography in this regard.[22]

V

By Late Antiquity, epideictic oratory dominated the three classifications of rhetoric in study and practice, and schools across the Empire trained students in the art of writing encomia. It is hardly surprising that the rhetoric of praise should infiltrate other literary genres, particularly those which, like panegyric, had a hortatory or didactic element or which involved the emperor as direct or indirect dedicatee. Its impact on historiography is particularly evident in the epitomes and short histories which characterise Late Antiquity. Like panegyrics they are directed towards the emperor, and may also be said to have as their aim consensus and the demonstration of the continuity of Empire 'in its ethical values, political institutions and military prestige'.[23] In her introduction to *Praising the Otherness*, Isabella Gualandri quotes lines from Claudian, Rutilius and Orosius as examples of literary *topoi* which also mirror 'a common ideal image of unity' (9). It is against this background that 'cultural alterity' is examined.

The term 'cultural alterity', coined in 1970, derives from the field of cultural analysis. Alterity or Otherness is defined as presupposing 'a difference between the self and the other, in an individual sense as well as on the level of the group' (7). In the Empire of the fourth century, this concept is manifest in the differences between Greek and Latin, pagan and Christian, East and West. The volume derives from the themes originally discussed at a workshop in 2012: 'the panegyrical strategies and the relevance of Cultural Alterity in Latin and Greek encomiastic texts addressed to public figures … and composed by Late Antique authors' (8). Constantine is chief among the public figures, Claudian and Ammianus among the authors.

These categories and definitions certainly merit attention, but while some of the individual articles are excellent, the volume as a whole lacks a coherent theme and an identifying character. 'Cultural Alterity' is defined in the brief preface by María Pilar García Ruiz and Alberto Quiroga Puertas and clarified in Gualandri's introduction, but it remains a very broad topic and does not always combine comfortably with historiography and panegyric. The relationship between the two genres is very sketchily presented, and instead of explanation, the reader is directed to recent scholarship, not all of which relates to Late Antiquity.[24] It may be coincidence, but the papers which deal with a single genre are overall more successful than those which combine

[22] James 2012.
[23] Bonamente 2003: 85. Historians avoided writing about living rulers lest they be open to the charge of flattery, the *stilus maior* of Eutropius 10.18 and Ammianus 31.16.9 implying exaggeration.
[24] Rees 2010 is relevant on this topic; there is also an excellent survey of recent scholarship in Ross 2016.

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encomiastic texts with panegyric or history. A longer introduction which looked at the role of praise in genres other than epideictic (in this case, in Ammianus, Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* and the *Historia Augusta*) would have taken some of the burden of explanation off these papers.

The challenge involved in combining praise, historiography and panegyric in a single paper is particularly evident in the different approaches of Gavin Kelly and José Torres Guerra. Panegyric is of no concern to Kelly's study ('Ammianus' Greek accent') which argues that Ammianus' history 'exudes his bilingual and bicultural identity in countless ways' (67). Citing Ammianus' use of Greek quotations, his prose rhythm and style of accentuation, Kelly concludes that 'in short, Ammianus *wanted* to speak Latin with a Greek accent'. The paper is to the point, well-argued and concise. Torres Guerra, on 'The bilingual emperor: Eusebius of Caesarea's *Vita Constantini*', posits a 'game of contrasts' between Eusebius' praise of Constantine's Greek and Ammianus' assessment of Julian's bilingualism, which he sees as 'highly suggestive' (23). However, he is unable to conclude that this is a deliberate response of Ammianus to Eusebius, and admits that coincidence does not provide solid ground for a hypothesis. The argument is a weak one, and while there is value in the study of Constantine's knowledge of Greek, the evidence is based on an encomiastic text and begs the question: how reliable can praise of fluency be in this context?

Diederik Burgersdijk's study, 'Praise through letters: panegyric strategies in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* and the *Historia Augusta*', covers panegyric and encomiastic texts, including the *Pan. Lat.* corpus. His aim is to 'replace the *HA* as a narrative within its Constantinian context, linking its data with the other sources of the Constantinian period: Eusebius and the *Panegyrici Latini*' (26). This is a stimulating paper: of particular interest is the role of Constantine in the *HA*, and the discussion of panegyrical strategies including the link between monumentality on paper and stone. Three sizeable texts, however, are too many for a short paper, and in places the discussion seems rushed and the parallels sketchy (e.g. 27–8).

'The "Marcellus" case and the loyalty of Julian: "latent arguments" and otherness in Ammianus' *Res Gestae*', by María Pilar García Ruiz, questions Ammianus' claim to truthfulness. García Ruiz builds on Sabbah's definitions of 'overt' and 'latent' argumentation[25] to look at the Marcellus case (16.2–5, 7.1–3), and the different cultural assumptions behind *pistos* and *apparator fidus*. This is a very interesting discussion, which is also relevant to Alberto Quiroga Puertas' 'The others: cultural monotheism and the rhetorical construction of "cultural alterity" in Libanius' panegyrics'. In a well-presented article, Quiroga Puertas argues that Libanius presents the barbarian in stereotypical terms, based on Herodotean 'Otherness' (56), but that he also gives an alternative definition of the barbarian as one who does not espouse Hellenic *paideia*, a definition which includes Latin speakers and Christians.

Roger Rees' 'From alterity to unity in Pacatus Drepanius' *Panegyric to Theodosius*' is an excellent paper which looks at a different aspect of alterity and the problems an orator faced when switching sides. In 389, Pacatus Drepanius came from Gaul, which had been ruled by Maximus from 383 to 388, to deliver a panegyric to Theodosius. Opening with an apology for his rough transalpine speech, the orator initially emphasises his ethnic and cultural 'Otherness', in order to confuse and eliminate the boundary between cultural and political identity (43). Gradually he reveals himself as a cultured Roman, coming from a Gaul which was persecuted by the tyrannical Maximus.

Claudian is the subject of the papers by Álvaro Sánchez-Ostiz and Isabella Gualandri. Sánchez-Ostiz's study of the panegyric of Theodorus, a poem which has been comparatively understudied, is persuasive. In 'Lucretius, Cicero, Theodorus: Greek

[25] Sabbah 1978: 407–10.

philosophy and Latin eloquence in Claudian's encomiastic imagination', he argues that although Claudian uses Lucretian language to associate the panegyric with Latin philosophical poetry, Cicero is the real model for Theodorus, who 'epitomizes the translation of Greece into Rome' (111). In 'Claudian, from Easterner to Westerner', Gualandri looks at Greek allusion in the context of Claudian's declared cultural affiliation to Rome (*Carmina Minora* 41). Gualandri examines the prefaces and themes which she sees as having 'a distinctive Greek colour' (119), specifically the theme of Delphi and the eagles. Claudian's debt to Greek literature is a fascinating question, but a difficult one, and his reuse of literary models means that Greek reminiscences may be concealed by Latin versions. G. acknowledges the challenge, but her language is unnecessarily tentative and this makes the argument more tenuous.

Alberto Quiroga Puertas' 'Final remarks: rhetorizing cultural alterity in late antique historiography and panegyrics' suggests avenues of future research. Arguing for the centrality of 'Otherness' to Late Antiquity, he cites its particular prominence in panegyric, a genre which 'contributed to delineating the boundaries of orthodoxy in the religious and cultural arena as well as to delimiting what or who "the Other" was' (132). It is yet another aspect of the role of panegyric in creating and disseminating consensus.

VI

Laurent Pernot's short monograph focuses specifically on the questions which still fascinate him after a lifetime's study of epideictic oratory. How did panegyric develop from a speech designed to entertain to the pre-eminent medium of communication with the emperor? How did the least significant of the three oratorical genres become so important, and what exactly was its purpose? This book was inspired by a seminar, and P. states that his aim was to give a handy synthesis and present new ideas. A reader new to the field of epideixis might find it advisable to approach this work as an addition to Pernot's monumental *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain* (2003), as the pace of this shorter work is rapid and the content selective. P. concentrates on what interests him most: so while the Greek world in the imperial period is given eleven pages, the Hellenistic Greek world and the Roman Republic together get only one, and the speeches of Late Antiquity appear only as a source of examples. Nevertheless, P.'s familiarity with a vast amount of material allows him to summarise, succinctly and elegantly, the evolution of epideictic rhetoric in theory and practice from its Athenian origins to the fall of Empire.

In Ch. 1, 'The Unstoppable Rise of Rhetoric', P. traces epideictic's transformation from being a pure speech of praise and 'rhetoric's poor relation' (10) to becoming 'a social practice embodied in speeches undertaken for specific reasons' (19–20). The second chapter then shows how the expansion of epideictic was enabled by the proliferation of theoretical and practical treatises. This section is, in effect, a distillation of the handbooks, describing the *topoi*, categories and figures which combined to create a 'grammar' of praise. There are many insightful comments in P.'s consideration of theory and practice: how the switch from third to second person, for example, ruptures the distance between speaker and honorand, so that a second-person address is more frequent in a request or exhortation (58).

The third chapter, 'Why Epideictic Rhetoric?', poses another question: 'we must ask ourselves if epideictic rhetoric was reduced to political and self-interested flattery' (66). For P., the answer is no. After surveying ancient criticism of epideictic and its perception as being either flattery or futile, P. looks at its practical value and what that meant in terms of performance and content. An encomium is not a simple matter of insincere

praise, he argues, but of intelligent persuasion. The orator employs amplification based on the evidence of actions, and those actions show the possession of virtues. The paraenetic element of panegyric is not a new concept, but P. examines precisely what it means when paraenesis is conducted through praise. His conclusion clears panegyric from any charge of flattery and gives the epideictic orator a unique perspective, 'seeing things from the angle of what is laudable and from the viewpoint of the community' and reflects this 'shining and unanimous face' as an idealised version of societal understanding (99).

P.'s authority in the field of epideixis and his intimate knowledge of the texts make this short monograph a very useful addition to current scholarship, and his final chapter suggests topics for future research. Because P. supports every example with a wealth of evidence from Greek and Latin texts, the reader gets some idea of how extensive the range and diversity of encomium is. Further, by writing a synthesis, P. avoids the distractions of the particular. From the vantage point of the surveyor, P. argues for a 'utopian' element in epideictic, with orators creating a vision of the world (5). Expanding on the concept of *laudatio* as a *speculum principis*, P. asserts that its importance is in consensus: 'its purpose is … to reaffirm and re-create afresh the consensus around prevailing values … it instantiates a moment of communion, in which a community, or a microcommunity, presents itself with a show of its own unity' (98). This may be an idealistic and possibly limited conclusion, but it is a very serviceable yardstick for approaching individual panegyrics.

VII

In conclusion, therefore, the authors reviewed all see consensus as a function of panegyric, but what exactly this means remains debatable. For Pernot, surveying the whole genre of epideictic rhetoric, panegyric comes from the people and reaffirms community values. Viewing the world from the aspect of what is praiseworthy gives epideictic an otherworldly quality, and allows it to present the ideal (99). The other scholars interpret 'consensus' more pragmatically. Maranesi, examining the Constantinian speeches of the *Pan. Lat.* as part of a nexus of media, sees consensus as part of a two-way system of communication in which the local community is as invested as the emperor, both sides adjusting their position as political circumstances changed. Laudani's commentary on Nazarius' panegyric of 321 narrows the focus to a single moment in history when Constantine was on the point of becoming sole ruler of the Empire and the founder of a dynasty. Nazarius combines top-down and bottom-up communication in his retelling of Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge. The emperor remains a great and victorious warrior, but he is tacitly urged towards moderation. He is praised not for being the first to attack, as he had been in the speech of 313 (*Pan. Lat.* XII(9)2.3), but for fighting, reluctantly, in a just war. The collection edited by García Ruiz and Quiroga Puertas takes a broader view again, seeing consensus as an ideal which was particularly desirable in the increasingly diverse Empire of Late Antiquity, and looking at how Greek and Latin authors, historians and panegyrists, used the techniques of encomium to address questions of alterity.

In a survey of what panegyrics have in common, Julian's speech to Eusebia is an outlier, addressed to a woman and representing the individual rather than the community. In its own way, however, the oration shows how intrinsic politics were to panegyric. Passages extolling the empress, which are modelled on Homer's praise of Arete and Penelope, are repeatedly sidelined by the speaker's own career, his concerns and his relationship with the emperor. It was hardly Julian's intention, but the juxtaposition of fulsome praise expressed through archaic imagery and the orator's political agenda embodies the

discrepancy between the traditional condemnation of panegyric as fulsome flattery and its reality as a means of communication with the emperor.

The panegyrics of Late Antiquity are a unique resource, encapsulating a ceremonial moment of contact between the emperor and his people, when the people were told what they should be seeing and the emperor was told what he should portray. The speech was a medium of communication both top-down and bottom-up. The language may be classically formal, the imagery and tropes repetitive; but the panegyrics are utterly contemporary, simultaneously creating and reflecting the changes in the emperor's image and ideology, and enabling a relationship which was perpetually reviewed and renewed.

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