

architecture. One of these, in particular, proves key to Korres' reconstruction of the Odeion roof, and that is Apollodorus' great bridge over the Danube. This section represents a phenomenal case study of large-scale construction in wood in the Roman world and is worthy of attention in its own right.

To describe Korres' study as unconventional is to understate the case. It is both innovative and idiosyncratic. This is especially clear in the first thirty-two pages, in which Korres present something of an oddity: an imagined dramatic narrative, involving nineteen characters, focused on the commissioning and construction of the so-called Odeion of Herodes Atticus. This narrative begins with Herodes laying out his plans for his music hall, 'bigger and finer than any other', and follows the architect through the design process as he grapples with the challenge of creating such a vast interior space and, in particular, roofing it: *Herodes* – 'my cunning friend, look me in the eye and tell me: not what you might think or guess, nor what you suppose would offer me greater satisfaction, but only what is scientifically certain! Is it possible to span a distance of 166 feet?', *Architect* – 'Yes, even if it surpasses what has been anticipated until now, in this type of building, ...yes!' (p. 19). This is all fairly hammed up and light-hearted, verging in places on the surreal. However, it has a certain impact and a clear purpose. It acts, in a way, as a sort of thought experiment, through which Korres, an architect and engineer, can put himself back in the shoes of the ancient (and anonymous) architect challenged with creating this enormous building. What this narrative does is provide a testing ground for considering the practicalities of the processes and solutions that underpinned this project. As well as explaining certain technical details of the structure, this narrative serves to explore the possible relationship, occasionally strained, between architect and commissioner, the presentation and continual adaptation of the various iterations of the design, the sourcing of materials ('...the initial 320 stones in three months...'; (p. 22) '...wonderful timber oak in the district of Emona' (p. 22)), management of the workforce, and arrangements of cranes and scaffolding. This narrative stops mid-project, at which the reader jumps from an imagined 2nd-century AD Athens, to Korres' detailed discussion of the technical aspects of the site and surviving remains of the Odeion, as described above.

Korres' aim here is to appeal to 'the non-specialist who wishes to learn about, even with some difficulty, the amazing world of great technical works.' (p. 6). There is much that is difficult here but there is also a vast amount of extremely stimulating discussion of ancient engineering and the potential

of large-scale construction in timber. The numerous illustrations are extraordinary. They are often confusing: many show reconstructions that the author then dismisses as improbable in the text; and there is no basic plan or elevation showing the key dimensions of the complex. However, the reconstruction drawings of the roof trusses, notably the colour plates by V. Chasapis, are immaculate. The text presents certain challenges too. Translated from Greek by five different people, they differ quite considerably in style and phrasing, which can be a little off-putting. These, however, are minor issues and should not detract from what is a stunningly presented discussion of a complicated and much-overlooked building. Anyone interested in ancient architecture or engineering will find this volume fascinating.

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**Alexandra Eppinger. *Hercules in der Spätantike. Die Rolle des Heros im Spannungsfeld von Heidentum und Christentum* (Philippika: Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen / Contributions to the Study of Ancient World Cultures 89). pp. XI+408, 14 b/w illustrations. 2015. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. ISBN 978-3-447-10418-0 hardback €98.00/£82.44.**

In this revised thesis by Alexandra Eppinger (hereafter 'E.'), defended at the University of Heidelberg in 2013, the ubiquity of Heracles/Hercules in the art, archaeology, and literature of 'the long late antiquity' (defined as c. 250-600 AD) is ascribed to a desire by individuals or communities – be they pagan or not – to come across as 'learned', to

show off their status, and/or to have something to talk about.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the book attempts to chart how Christians and non-Christians reacted to Hercules (as I shall call him in the remainder of this review). It must be said at the outset that the value of E.'s book lies in the synthesis of a great variety of source-material that allows us to see the late-antique reception of Hercules in action, as it were, even if the presentation of the material sometimes hampers her argument and leads to occasional repetitions that easily could have been avoided. Undoubtedly, this is partly due to the ambitious goal of cataloguing reactions to Hercules in such a diverse and dynamic period and the occasional wavering between the two objectives that the book has set itself. Despite this, *Hercules in der Spätantike* does many things well.

Beyond the introductory sections (pp. 1-22), the book is divided in three parts (numbered A-C) focussing on Hercules in everyday life (pp. 23-156), imperial representations (pp. 157-255), and tensions and overlap in the engagement with Hercules by Christians and non-Christians (pp. 256-322), a two-page Conclusion (pp. 323-324), and an appendix on the iconography of coinage under the tetrarchy (pp. 325-334). Every part consists of at least two chapters discussing source-material as diverse as cutlery, statuettes, hippodromes, textiles, glass, contourniates, and much more. The book is rounded off with an extensive and oecumenical bibliography (pp. 335-385), index locorum (of literary texts, inscriptions, and coins), index of names and places, and fourteen illustrations. Given the wide geographical and temporal scope of E.'s book and the wealth of material it incorporates, it is a pity that the publisher did not include a subject index and a catalogue of artefacts discussed so that a reader might quickly find relevant information or compare statements made in different sections of the book. Because the book is likely to become the port of call for those interested in Hercules in this period or the artefacts and texts mentioning and/or depicting him the lack of these basic tools greatly detracts from its utility. The book is edited meticulously and I have found only a handful of errors.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E.'s pp. 3-6 and 19-22 for the temporal boundaries and the role of *paideia* respectively. With regard to the latter, cf. Cameron 2004, x: 'Anyone with any pretensions to literary culture, that is to say any member of the elite, had to be able to identify mythological allusions in the literature he read and the oratory he listened to, as well as mythological scenes in wall paintings, mosaics, silver plate, and other media. Greek mythology was the cultural currency of the Greco-Roman world.'

<sup>2</sup> In the Table of Contents it should be noted that section B.II ('Hercules unter der Tetrarchie') starts on p. 179, not 180; p. 18: omitted full stop after 'Christentums' (final word on the page); p. 91: for 'beziehungsweise' read 'beziehungsweise'; p. 121 n. 91: for 'Cyrino, Heros in D(u)ress' read 'Heroes'; p. 199: for 'Kollgiums'

The book's self-proclaimed goal is to investigate the various roles of Hercules in late antiquity and the factors which contributed to his continued presence in all areas of life despite the rise of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> The answer is the expected one: Hercules continued to exercise an appeal as an *exemplum uirtutis* and knowledge of at least some of his deeds and adventures was guaranteed by his proliferation in imperial propaganda (in the sense of more or less controlled information serving a political purpose) and long-established customs. But if Hercules was omnipresent – as the evidence meticulously surveyed by E. attests amply – surely there was nothing particularly special about owning a figurine of this most popular of heroes nor especially learned about mentioning his most well-known feats, the Twelve Labours? This is a far-cry from the mythological riddles that were a stock element of the symposium. Foregoing the extreme and allusive learning of the participants in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* or Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, one might certainly expect a member of the elite – naturally, most of our evidence stems from this layer of society – to know the answers to questions such as: 'Who taught Hercules to play the lyre?' or 'How many of Thespius' daughters did Hercules sleep with?'<sup>4</sup> As E. herself shows, Hercules frequently crops up in public spaces, the army, coinage, and oratory and therefore one may reasonably surmise that non-elites (however defined) would be able to at least get the gist of the allusions even in a time that pagan religions were gradually supplanted by Christianity. Perhaps, then, it would be better to forego the term *paideia* (even when understood as 'basic education'), with its connotations of cleverness and learning generally associated with the Second Sophistic, in favour of a broader concept of cultural *koinè*.<sup>5</sup>

read 'Kollegiums'; p. 218 n.372: 'R. Lyne' should be 'M. Lyne' (ostensibly a mix-up between Malcolm and Raphael Lyne); 254: for πανάλκιμος' Ηρακλῆς read 'Ηρακλῆς (misplaced spiritus); p. 291 n. 49: the second b in 'Verfügbarkeit' should be deleted; p. 327: a missing space in 'fürAntoninus Pius'.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> The answer to the former question is 'Linus'; the latter – jokingly called 'Hercules' Thirteenth Labour' – is a bit of a trick question: D.S. 4.29.3, Apd. 2.7.8 say fifty (the latter even supplying the names: see Heyne's despairing note for textual variations); Paus 9.27.6-7 deems a variant with 49 daughters more credible. Incidentally, S. Antoni (BNP s.v. 'Thespiades') oversimplifies: Hyginus (*Fab.* 162) does not claim that Thespius had twelve daughters, but rather says that Hercules had twelve children by the king's daughters (*duodecim Thespiades, quos ex Thespii regis filiabus procreauit*). Hyginus thus leaves the number of women unspecified and it therefore is entirely possible that Hercules had more than one child per daughter, as indeed happens in Apollodorus and Pausanias.

<sup>5</sup> *Paideia* (pp. 19-22) is discussed as the major factor contributing to the survival of knowledge of Hercules and myth more generally.

In view of Hercules' continued survival, it is perhaps a bit surprising that the subtitle positions the book within the 'pagan' versus 'Christian' debate, giving the impression that these groups held different views about Hercules. With the exception of the Church Fathers and Christian apologists on the one hand and Julian the Apostate on the other, there is of course precious little evidence for the religious beliefs of individuals (as opposed to communities) and virtually nothing for non-elites. Naturally, most people will have fallen somewhere between these extremes, as E. herself sensibly points out, and so too rigorous definitions should be eschewed.<sup>6</sup> Doing so, however, makes it difficult to move beyond generalizations. *Faute de mieux* she defines 'pagans' as all people who cannot be classified as Christians or Jews and uses 'Christians' for 'die Anhänger sämtlicher antiker Glaubensrichtungen innerhalb des Christentums' (which here must be understood to include Jews).<sup>7</sup> This is where issues of methodology and presentation arise. For example, the first chapter of Part A at length deals with objects in the private (homes, furniture, clothing, etc.) and public (theatres, graves, schools, etc.) spheres but the evidence most often does not allow for firm conclusions regarding people's beliefs, which in turn makes it difficult to attribute any kind of motive for the presence of Hercules. As a result, E. needs to take recourse to *paideia* or 'learning' and regards many of these items as conversation pieces. Curiously, the second chapter deals with both Christian and non-Christian authors and philosophers. Setting aside for the moment the obvious difficulties in establishing the religious beliefs of poets such as Ausonius (at least nominally a Christian) or Ps-Claudian (about whom we know nothing), the works of these and other authors will hardly have had a greater circulation than the numismatic evidence gathered in Part B of the book and so will have been less of a presence in the *Lebensumfeld* that E. attempts to sketch.<sup>8</sup> One therefore wonders whether some of the material in Part B could not have been deployed more profitably in Part A, even if the desire to keep the political material together is understandable. Despite this, the chapter on Christian writers admirably shows how their rhetoric for or against Hercules feeds off pagan precedent.

Returning to matters of religion, E.'s reluctance to equate the contents of the poems with the personal beliefs of the poets is of course judicious. It should not automatically be deduced from mythological subject-matter that a poet was a pagan: classicism does not necessarily amount to paganism. But why does this logic not apply the other way around? Tertullian's *Amant ignorare cum alii gaudent cognouisse*. [...] *Malunt nescire, quia iam oderunt* (*Apolog.* 1.8-9: 'They [sc. non-Christians] prefer to persist in their ignorance while others leap at the chance to learn about Christianity. [...] They prefer not to know because they already hate') can hardly be the whole story. There may be those who dabbled in Christianity without committing to it. E.'s unwillingness to argue the other side sometimes results in a forced reading of her sources. On p. 130 we read that 'In religiöser Hinsicht neutral behandeln vier Gedichte christlicher Autoren [sc. Ausonius, Ps-Claudian, Dracontius, Boethius] aus dem 4. beziehungsweise 5. Jh.n.Chr. das Leben des Alkiden.' It is thus *a priori* assumed that these poets were (more or less) devout Christians. Yet not even St Augustine was consistent in his beliefs throughout his life: as Tertullian elsewhere remarked with characteristic terseness, *fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani* ('Christians are made, not born').<sup>9</sup> In the case of Ausonius, Dracontius, and Boethius we know that they wrote on Christian themes, but Ps-Claudian is a great unknown. Despite the religiously neutral treatment of Hercules by all four, there is little discussion of the possibility of a development in the thought of the first three poets, while of the last even E. must recognize (and thus contradict her previous statement) that 'Die Frage nach der Religionszugehörigkeit des Dichters muß unbeantwortet bleiben.'<sup>10</sup> Narratives of religious ambivalence, common curiosity, gradual processes of conversion, syncretism, or evolution in outlook have been postulated in the past and are still often found in modified form in scholarship. In order to regard any of these authors as Christians (at the time of writing) requires more proof and justification than E. generally provides.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Matters of definition and religious identity are broached on pp. 7-18.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 18. E. repeatedly notes she would prefer a different terminology, even if her book would not be the place to develop it; she, however, overlooks the taxonomy put forward by Cameron 2011: 176-177.

<sup>8</sup> E. notes (on p. 106) that she intended this chapter to discuss the major trends in the reception of Hercules, whereas Part B focusses on Hercules' role in a political context – but are these areas so readily separable?

<sup>9</sup> *Apol.* 18.4.

<sup>10</sup> See p. 132. Even if one accepts the often implicit assumption that the later the author, the likelier it is that he is a Christian, this is hardly a guarantee at the time of Ps-Claudian (E. follows existing scholarship in opting for the second half of the fifth century AD: pp. 130-131). His dates can be fixed only through his position relative to other writers, but literary reminiscences can often be explained in both directions while style is a notoriously difficult criterion.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, on 130 n. 148 E. without further comment refers the reader to Green 1991: xxvii-xxviii, for Ausonius' religious position; Green 1993 is a fuller discussion. Cf. Chadwick 1981: 249 on Boethius' complex position: the *Consolation of Philosophy* was 'written by a Platonist who is also a Christian, but is not a Christian work.' One would like more engagement with such pronouncements.

One of the most interesting results of E.'s investigations in Part A is that Hercules featured regularly in Dionysiac contexts, by which we are to understand mosaics and other objects in triclinia and tablina. Hercules is often part of the *thiasos* of Dionysus, alongside Silenus, nymphs, and satyrs. Clearly, Hercules' presence in these contexts is aided by his reputation as a prodigious drinker: the owners wished to be seen in this light, including the full gamut of connotations that accompany ancient drinking (love, erotics, manliness, madness). In this way, Hercules' function as *exemplum uirtutis* shines through, sometimes *ex negatiuo*. This section is particularly strong, but could have profited from a discussion of Hercules' role in Orphic cults.<sup>12</sup> The Orphics (and indeed other mystery cults) are conspicuously absent in this book, even though E. presents a good overview of other types of Hercules-cult on pp. 256-284. One wonders which criteria of in- or exclusion E. has used for the selection of her material. The inclusion of Dionysian-Orphic material, for instance, might have been facilitated by a more extensive use of Nonnus of Panopolis, who receives short shrift (as do many other authors, such as mythographers who present a more fanciful picture of the hero).<sup>13</sup> This (probably) fifth-century poet composed extensively on pagan and Christian topics, might have been a late convert, and could well be the same person as the bishop of Edessa who participated in the Council of Chalcedon in 451.<sup>14</sup> On a quick count, the *Dionysiaca* has no fewer than 16 passages featuring or alluding to Hercules.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the poem, Nonnus is at pains to parallel Dionysus' conquest of India with Hercules' deeds. This perfectly suits Hercules' role as *exemplum uirtutis*. In places Nonnus' rhetoric resembles quite closely the uses of Hercules in imperial panegyric (otherwise discussed admirably by E. in Part B), particularly in those cases where the *laudandus* is said to outstrip his counterpart. Moreover, since the poet of the *Dionysiaca* employs striking imagery, similes, and allegory throughout and since (quite possibly the same) Nonnus produced the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of St John*, scholars often read one text through the other and so Dionysus is sometimes seen as a kind of

avatar of Jesus through an *interpretatio Christiana*, just as Hercules and Jesus are both saviour-figures and so may evoke each other (as E. notes: pp. 285-286).<sup>16</sup> Even if one disagrees with such views, the *Dionysiaca* could have served as a springboard for a more engaged and interesting discussion of Hercules at the crossroads of philosophy, mythology, and allegory in late antiquity.

The final section (Part C) provides the book's subtitle. Here, E. follows *inter alios* Alan Cameron in deconstructing the myth of a struggle between paganism and Christianity.<sup>17</sup> As E. reminds the reader throughout the book, such a struggle is for the most part a construct that goes back to Christian authors in late antiquity and has been upheld subsequently. As she convincingly shows, there is very little evidence indeed for any kind of organized resistance to Christianity in any layer of the population. Numismatic evidence shows that Hercules remained a powerful means to convey imperial ideology and, more importantly, that even those without formal training were able to understand such references. The battle at the Frigidus of 394 between Theodosius and the usurper Eugenius (discussed at pp. 315-321), once upheld as paganism's tragic last stand, is carefully taken apart. The depiction of Hercules on the battle standards of Eugenius is demonstrated to be not an expression of profound pagan beliefs but rather a conventional use of the hero as bringer of peace (*pacifer*), which had been topical since the usurper Postumus used Hercules on his coinage, as well as straightforward military tradition (several of Eugenius' legions had Hercules as their protective deity). E.'s conclusions thus support the (now) *communis opinio*.

In conclusion, E. casts a wide net and successfully charts different strands in late-antique thinking about Hercules. Any book on (the reception of) Hercules in antiquity inevitably will be compared to the similar efforts by Karl Galinsky and Emma Stafford.<sup>18</sup> E.'s is different in scope and focus but of course builds on those earlier labours: *Hercules in der Spätantike* manages to hold its own and is a valuable addition to previous scholarship. E. marshals a wide array of primary and secondary sources that often remain the preserve of specialists. For this we should be grateful. If ultimately E.'s deconstruction of the 'pagan versus Christian'-opposition should leave the reader pondering her own choices regarding the

<sup>12</sup> For Hercules in Orphic texts, see e.g. Bernabé Orph. fr. 76, 79 (serpent known as Heracles and Ageless Time), 351 (as Idaean Dactyl); Epim. fr. 55 (as hero).

<sup>13</sup> Nonnus gets two brief mentions on pp. 28 n.19 and 145-146 n. 257.

<sup>14</sup> See the cogent discussion in Livrea 1987 and 2003, and most recently Accorinti 2016 and Dijkstra 2016. There will always be unbelievers, however: notably, Cameron 2000: 188 and 2016: 90 (one might counter the incredulous question in the latter – 'Who can believe that a serving bishop devoted his spare time to writing the *Dionysiaca*?' – by pointing to the prodigious output of Eustathius, the Byzantine Archbishop of Thessalonica, on all kinds of pagan poetry and much more besides).

<sup>15</sup> Nonn. *Dion.* 7.126; 10.373-377; 17.52-54, 239; 25.174-175, 196-212, 223-229; 29.242-252; 31.161-165; 34.192, 35.88-91, 333-335; 40.366-578; 41.224-234; 43.12-15, 246-249.

<sup>16</sup> Shorrock 2011 is crucial.

<sup>17</sup> See esp. Cameron 2016: 399-420 and 691-742 (resp. Ch. 11: 'The Pagan Revival' and Ch. 19: 'Classical Revivals and Pagan Art').

<sup>18</sup> Galinsky 1972; Stafford 2012. E. in fact presents her book as a kind of continuation of the latter (her first section 'Why Hercules in Late Antiquity?' consciously echoes Stafford's 'Foreword: Why Heracles?'), who is indeed rather brief on Hercules in late antiquity. On p. 2 E. states that: 'It is the goal of the present book to fill this gap [...]' (my translations).

selection and arrangement of source-material, that itself is testimony to the enduring legacy of Hercules in a complex age in which old and new traditions co-existed and eventually were reconciled, and so also to the magnitude of the task that E. set herself.

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## Medieval

**Michael Dekker. *The Byzantine Dark Ages*. pp. 246, 3 maps, 17 figures. 2016. London: Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN 978-1-47253-606-8. paperback £20.99; hardback £70.**

This is one of a series of small volumes in the *Debates in Archaeology* series from this publisher, a very useful production focussing on special foci of scholarship at the presentday. As this volume covers the Early Medieval period in the Byzantine Eastern Mediterranean, it is a useful complement to the magisterial overview of Italy over the same but also a longer period by Francovich and Hodges, *Villa to Village* (2003) in the same series. Michael Dekker has already published extensively on Late Antiquity and Byzantium but this slim but rich volume allows him to concentrate on issues and problems of the pathway from the unified Roman Empire to the smaller and weaker successor state of Byzantium which reached its heyday at the end of the 1st millennium AD.

The period of 'Dark Ages' is here defined as the mid-7th to 9th century AD, and Dekker accepts the periodisation now favoured by most archaeologists and historians by paralleling this to the Early Byzantine era, with the Late Roman – Late Antiquity era covering the period from around 400 AD to the early 7th century. Why he retains Dark Ages however is not clearly argued for, and he acknowledges that the current tendency is to avoid this tendentious term, not on the basis of historical sources, for these indeed are poor for these centuries, but rather because the archaeological evidence is becoming quite plentiful. Indeed despite the book's appearance in 2016, there are already many more sites and ceramic forms that can be assigned to this period since the author penned this synthesis.

After a brief Introduction, the book has a coherent and logical structure. First comes an historical overview of the period, which is a good place for the reader to understand the divergent schools of thought on the decline of Rome and the transition into the mature Byzantine world. Next comes a brief presentation on the types of ceramics and other forms of material culture available for archaeological study in this period. Then follow chapters on cities, the rural world and then the economy. A final chapter looks ahead to where this field is moving. The text is succinct, up to date and allows different opinions their due airing.

In general, the author finds himself agreeing with the pessimistic school, that the Early Byzantine