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C.H. Cosgrove *An Ancient Christian Hymn with Musical Notation. Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786: Text and Commentary.* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 65.) Pp. xii + 232. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. Paper, €69. ISBN: 978-3-16-150923-0.

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The Classical Review / Volume 63 / Issue 01 / April 2013, pp 95 - 97
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X12002521, Published online: 01 March 2013

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X12002521

How to cite this article:

Don Barker (2013). The Classical Review, 63, pp 95-97 doi:10.1017/S0009840X12002521

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illustrating skilful fusion of classical and Christian conventions. In this case, however, the aim of Augustine's ambivalence is pragmatic rather than ideological and serves to provide him with a rhetorical exit strategy in an unpredictable conflict.

The next essay, '*totum subvertere uoluerunt*: "social martyrdom" in the *historia persecutionis* of Victor of Vita', is also located thematically in North Africa. A.H. Merrill portrays the occupation of Carthage by the Vandals as the destruction of a fine classical society overrun by barbarians, with special attention to anxieties over loss of public status resulting from Vandal dominance of the city.

The volume closes with T. Kitchen's 'Italia and Graecia: West Versus East in the Rhetoric of Ostrogothic Italy', which shows how the regime of Theodoric is presented in terms of full exploitation of the ambiguity of *Italia* to mean either a specific province or the western empire as a whole, in which case the ruler of Italia was the heir of Roman emperors (p. 11).

The strengths of this volume are to be found in the individual contributions. However, as a collection of essays on a clearly articulated concept, the volume reveals its weaknesses. It is the task of the introduction to make plausible the unity of the collection and to work through the concepts relevant to the topic, as well as to explain the role of each contribution in the execution of its analysis. The introduction, which itself would have profited from more stringent editing for clarity, does not serve to clarify what the volume is about or how the parts make up a coherent whole.

It would have been helpful if the editors had suggested what, if anything, late-antique thinkers might have done instead of relate themselves to a classical tradition, or if they had sought analogies in post-colonial literatures where the cultural work of a society is referred to a past which is not proper to it. Is it something similar that we see when the North African Augustine uses classical epistolary forms? Or is there something different about this type of engagement with more recent cases of reception, adaptation and self-identification in terms of an imagined past? In addition, there is no significant use made of previous scholarly discussions on topics of reception and historicisation, or other cultural processes of relating to the past. Here the work of P. Ricoeur, B. Anderson or J. Assmann could have provided conceptual clarity.

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P. OXY. 1786

COSGROVE (C.H.) *An Ancient Christian Hymn with Musical Notation. Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786: Text and Commentary.* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 65.) Pp. xii + 232. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. Paper, €69. ISBN: 978-3-16-150923-0.
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C. undertakes a thorough examination of *P. Oxy. 1786*, an ancient Greek Christian Trinitarian hymn dated to the late third century and the only example of a pre-Gregorian Christian music offering the most ancient surviving example of a notated Christian melody. The hymn was written on the back of an account of grain deliveries and orientated at right angles to it. C. situates **1786** in the context of the Greek literary and hymnic tradition, ancient Greek music, early Christian liturgy and devotion, and the social setting of Oxyrhynchus c. 300 C.E.

The introduction covers the history of the hymn's interpretation especially from a musical perspective, beginning with the papyrologist A.S. Hunt (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 15, pp. 21–5) through to M.L. West (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 65, pp. 81–102). C. clearly sets out a brief history of the debate as to whether early Christian music was influenced by Jewish, oriental or Greek musical traditions and its social context.

Chapter 2 deals with the transcription of the text and its musical notation. Importantly, C. informs the reader that he, along with Hunt and West, have autopsied the manuscript whereas M.M. Wagner, although critiquing Hunt's transcription, only worked from a photograph. Before C. deals with a careful transcription of the text he notes that Hunt was uncertain if a single hand produced both the text and the musical notation, whilst G.B. Pighi (*Aegyptus* 21 [1941], 189–220) saw the same hand in both. Unfortunately C. does not give his opinion, as a reconstruction of the history of the text (Chapter 6) will depend on careful analyses of both hands. From my own observation it is clear that the text is written in a different hand from the musical notations (compare the formation of the phi in both). C. works through the text referring to the conclusions of others as well as giving his own opinion. He supplies detailed notes in regard to remaining letter shapes, although it is a pity that at those points of discussion photographs were not incorporated into the text as on p. 29. Following the discussion and establishment of the text C. gives a helpful explanation of the Greek musical notation system and the rhythmical signs used in **1786**. He then deals line-by-line with the musical notations that are above the text.

Chapter 3 considers the interpretation of the hymn beginning with a transcription and translation of the text that was argued for in Chapter 2. C. maintains that the hymn reflects traditional Christian formulations and Jewish themes, as well as using language from the pagan Hellenistic tradition. He discusses the call for cosmic stillness found in lines 2–3, arguing that it reflects a well-established pattern in Classical Greek liturgy, drama and hymnody that has roots as far back as the *Iliad* and also in the church's midnight prayer, in the *Apostolic Tradition*. He also considers an interpretation of the doxological response of the powers (lines 4–5). C. argues that angelic beings are meant by the use of the term 'powers', which he states was chosen because of metrical considerations, concluding that the hymn describes a shared liturgy of the church and angels.

In Chapter 4 C. offers a formal and rhetorical analysis of **1786**. As the call for stillness in comparative ancient Greek hymns appears at the opening of those hymns, he bases a reconstruction of the opening line on the assumption that the hymn consisted of the five lines that are extant and proposes that a closer look at the poetic tradition of ancient Greek hymns sheds light on the form and rhetoric of the composition. After discussion of deictic self-referentiality in Greek hymns C. concludes, from early and later Christian evidence, that it is likely that Christians interpreted the language of hymn, which pictures the natural elements falling silent and the angels singing a doxology, as referring to exophoric reality in a literal or quasi literal way.

Chapter 5 is a musical analysis of **1786**. This analysis depends on two sources: treatises on Greek music theory and extant Greek musical scores. C. gives an introductory explanation of ancient Greek musical theory before proceeding to a technical analysis of the hymn's music, which in part involves transposing the ancient notes into modern musical notations as well as interpreting its other musical features such as its melody; the degree of melisma (the singing of a single syllable of text while moving between several different notes in succession), repetition and variation; tessitura (the pitch range that most frequently occurs within a given piece of music); tempo and phrasing and whether it was meant to be sung by one or more people.

Chapter 6 deals with the social setting of **1786**. First C. examines the dating of the text and relies heavily on the date assigned by Hunt to both the grain account and the hymn as well as Turner's calculations of time lapse before reuse. He concludes with a date range of 250–300 and from the nature of its content inclines to a date close to the end of the third century. It is a pity that C. did not conduct his own observations in regard to the palaeographical dating of both texts, as its historical and social context depends much on its date range. Much more is now known about scripts and subsequent date ranges; see for example D.C. Barker, 'The Dating of New Testament Papyri', *NTS* 57 (2011), 571–82 and B. Nongbri, 'The Use and Abuse of P52: Papyrological Pitfalls in the *Dating* of the Fourth Gospel', *HTR* 98:1 (2005), 23–48. Next C. deals with the provenance of the manuscript, Oxyrhynchus. To establish the percentage of the population that was Christian in the period in which the manuscript was written he uses the estimations of R. Stark and R. Bagnall, concluding that efforts at estimating the Christian population at Oxyrhynchus suggest growth from about 400–1,400 in the year 250 and about 2,000–2,900 in the year 300. C. also considers the place of the hymn in the context of persecution and the social status and property of Christians, concluding that amongst the Christians at Oxyrhynchus there would have been wealthy members. C. argues from the surviving Christian literature and the high literary activity attested in Oxyrhynchus that a Christian scriptorium probably existed in the city. He appears to be unaware of K. Haines-Eitzen's valuable contribution to this discussion in *Guardians of Letters* (2000), in which she argues that in this period copying of Christian literature was carried out by private networks rather than in scriptoria. C. examines Greek musical culture at Oxyrhynchus. From the surviving Oxyrhynchus musical manuscripts, he suggests that there were highly trained professional musicians in Oxyrhynchus and that the composer or owner of **1786** belonged to this circle. To arrive at an understanding of the significance of the manuscript in the history of early Christian music C. raises the question why and how the musical score was produced. Because of the errors in musical notation C. suggests that the manuscript has the hallmarks of being a copy and from the five scenarios he offers, speculates that a Christian musician from Alexandria or elsewhere visited Oxyrhynchus and lent a copy of the hymn, under hurried circumstances, for use in Oxyrhynchite church/es. With regard to the liturgical context in which it was performed C. has no suggestions except to criticise Wolberg's claim that it was used exclusively in an Eucharistic setting. Chapter 6 concludes with a section on the Greek musical tradition among ancient Christians. C. suggests that **1786** is evidence that a tradition of Greek Christian hymnody existed in Egypt and elsewhere. After scanning the evidence for Christian music from the second to the fifth centuries, C. suggests that Hellenistic Christians composed hymns in Greek metre, some of which were sung in devotional settings of various kinds. It is surprising that Pliny's observation (*Ep.* 10.96) of Christians singing (*carmen dicere*) to Christ as God was not taken into account at this point. The book concludes with an appendix dealing with a technical discussion of pitch centres and tonal structure in ancient Greek melodies.

C. is to be commended for what will be a lasting and valuable contribution to the ongoing discussion of *P. Oxy.* 1786; the book has much to offer classical philologists, ancient Greek musicologists, church historians and students of church music history. However, the book would have been greatly enhanced, and perhaps different conclusions drawn as to its history and social context, if a more comprehensive palaeographical examination of **1786** had been included.

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