



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh Research Explorer

### Book review: Symmaque, Tome V

**Citation for published version:**

Kelly, G 2011, 'Book review: Symmaque, Tome V' *The Classical Review*, vol 61, no. 2, pp. 634-634. DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X11002009

**Digital Object Identifier (DOI):**

[10.1017/S0009840X11002009](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X11002009)

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Peer reviewed version

**Published In:**

*The Classical Review*

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

© Kelly, G. (2011). Book review: Symmaque, Tome V. *The Classical Review*, 61(2), 634-634doi: 10.1017/S0009840X11002009

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



## The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



---

**(J.-P.) Callu (ed., trans.) *Symmaque, Tome V. Discours – Rapports*. Pp. xxxviii + 196, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2009. Paper. €55. ISBN: 978-2-251-01454-8.**

Gavin Kelly

The Classical Review / Volume 61 / Issue 02 / October 2011, pp 634 - 634  
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X11002009, Published online: 08 September 2011

**Link to this article:** [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0009840X11002009](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X11002009)

**How to cite this article:**

Gavin Kelly (2011). The Classical Review, 61, pp 634-634 doi:10.1017/S0009840X11002009

**Request Permissions :** [Click here](#)

CALLU (J.-P.) (ed., trans.) *Symmaque, Tome V. Discours – Rapports*. Pp. xxxviii + 196. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2009. Paper, €55. ISBN: 978-2-251-01454-8.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X11002009

With the publication of this fifth volume of his Budé edition, nearly 40 years after the first, C. has achieved the first complete translation of Symmachus in any modern language. This is a very welcome milestone. It is also only the second critical edition, after Otto Seeck's brilliant contribution to *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in 1883, of Symmachus' complete surviving work (ten books of letters, the *Relationes* and the *Orationes*). To edit Symmachus requires not only philological skills but also intimate knowledge of fourth-century administrative history and prosopography. C., who has published widely on both philological and historical aspects of his author, certainly has these qualifications.

This volume contains the speeches (parts of three imperial panegyrics and five speeches given in the senate, which were uncovered in a fragmentary palimpsest by Angelo Mai in 1815) and the *Relationes* (letters written to the emperors as prefect of Rome in 384–5, mostly to Valentinian II in Milan, but some to Theodosius and Arcadius in Constantinople). His text does not diverge hugely from Seeck's, but he avoids the obelus and prints sometimes quite bold conjectures: his own are all worthy of consideration, and some are extremely shrewd. Such parts of the translation as I have read are accurate and, as far as I could judge, stylish (but at *Or.* 4.10 *impotentiam* refers to Maximinus' abuse of power not Gratian's lack of it). His introductions to the two separate parts of the work display his erudition and convey all the relevant information, though they are some way from tractable; the arbitrary mixture of footnotes and endnotes is an unhelpful feature of the Budé series, but the content here is helpful and detailed. If C. has the habit of occasionally treating his own hypotheses as fact (for example the idea that the elder Nicomachus Flavianus served in the east under Theodosius in the early 380s), he shares it with most other scholarship on his author: it is an indirect product of Symmachus' maddening vagueness. With the *Relationes*, he is on well-covered ground, not least by the detailed commentary by Domenico Vera (1981); the *Orationes* have been less well trodden (though cf. Pabst's 1989 text and translation). Here C. rejects Seeck's deletion of certain phrases as authorial variants, rightly seeing them as a feature of Symmachus' luxuriant style. He redates the panegyric on Gratian to that emperor's tenth birthday, 18 April 369, which is plausible; the first panegyric for Valentinian's Quinquennalia he puts in February 368, rather than 369, which has a minor impact on reconstructions of Symmachus' career. He may well be right (but note confusion on p. x n. 1; note also erroneous dates on p. xxii, where '28 mai 364' should be '28 mars', and p. xli, where '13 janvier 383' should be '19 janvier').

I have one significant reservation. The apparatus criticus for the *Orationes* is flawed in several ways. The situation is complicated by the fact that the MS readings have been destroyed by the acids used to reveal them and are no longer available to be consulted. Mai's early transcriptions were thoroughly overhauled by Seeck in his great edition of 1883. Thus the names of Mai and Seeck can represent either conjectural emendation or, sometimes, alternative transcriptions of the MS: in the former cases the apparatus should offer a MS reading, in the latter it should not (whether including Mai's much inferior transcriptions contributes anything may be questioned, but it was reasonable to note them). Unfortunately, in a few places C. confuses the two categories, and what is in fact the undisputed MS reading is attributed to Mai: I noticed *Or.* 1.2 *frigentia*, 1.18 *optauit*, 2.5 *perueniret*, 2.17 *fraudamur*, 3.7 *uinces*, 4.14 *subripisset*, 4.15 *defiuit* (emendations by Seeck or others are thus implied to be alternative transcriptions). At 2.17 *inermis* is not Seeck's conjecture but the MS reading. A further problem: at places where C. has adopted Seeck's or his own transpositions, it is not made clear where the transposed text originally stood in the MS (*Or.* 1.16, 2.11, 3.3, 3.5). Those interested in serious study of the text of the *Orationes* will need to use this edition in conjunction with Seeck's. That said, this volume will be valued for a fine text, translation and notes.

University of Edinburgh

GAVIN KELLY  
gavin.kelly@ed.ac.uk