

educated in the empire. It was this bond of civilisation that he felt was being undone by the Christian Roman masters.

P. concludes by noting 'to the extent that the Roman order was felt to be a Christian order bearing down heavily on Greek paganism, men like Eunapius will have tended to view it as conflicting with rather than complementing the Greek tradition as they understood it'. This modest statement reiterates, in effect, one of the fundamental problems in Greek studies, which still remains alive and unresolved. What is the essential Greekness? Is it the self-confessed *Rômiosuné*, the Romanness of the Christian Byzantine tradition, or the *Hellênismos* of the Classical pagan past? The intrinsic conflict of the two never manifested as acutely and openly as in the fourth century. This book is an invaluable contribution to the much-needed detailed examination of that crucial epoch.

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## CATULLUS CARNIVALISED

JOHN KEVIN NEWMAN: *Roman Catullus and the Modification of the Alexandrian Sensibility*. Pp. x + 483. Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1990. DM 98.

J. K. N(ewman), after books on Pindar (1984) and the epic tradition (1987), has now turned his attention to Catullus. This is a bold step after recent magisterial contributions by Wiseman (1985) and Syndikus (1984, 1987 and 1990, the last too late to be used by N.), but N.'s work is everywhere marked by wide and deep learning and a welcome readiness to look at Catullus from a fresh perspective. In twelve chapters, five appendices and a glossary of critical terms N. discusses Catullus' literary and cultural inheritance, compares the poet with Martial, Cicero and Virgil, provides a reading of most of the poems and much besides. This is an intensely learned, challenging volume.

The central thesis of the book is that Catullus must be seen in a thoroughly Roman context, politically, socially and in terms of the literary tradition in which he writes, and only thus can he be rescued from those who present him as 'a young lyricist, swept into an impossible love affair by feelings beyond his control' (p. 3) who directly and honestly describes his personality and feelings in his poetry, or those, going to the opposite extreme, who see him as a bookish Alexandrian, precious and artificial: 'Lost somewhere between the poles of boyish simplicity and Alexandrian sophistication however defined, Catullus himself vanishes' (p. 6). There is truth in what N. says here but his case is not helped by the exaggerated portrayal of the two extreme positions. Few scholars still wholeheartedly read the poems as a transparently autobiographical record, and while recent sophisticated readings have highlighted Catullus' Callimachean allegiance no-one has tried to set the most lively Latin poet wholly in the context of the Museum of Alexandria. N. sees Catullus as primarily an iambic poet belonging to the Roman satirical tradition, heir to Archilochus and Lucilius, forerunner of Martial. Evidence for this view is found particularly in the opening poem of the collection and in the use made of Catullus by Horace, Martial, Ausonius and Erasmus: for N., the best readers of poetry are poets, whose opinion is ultimately the only view that matters (p. 467). As for *Cui dono*, N. devotes much learned discussion to the meanings of the words *lepidum* and *nugas*. The latter is 'not

*prima facie* an Alexandrian term' (p. 7) and the former has nothing to do with the Greek *λεπτός*. N. rather evokes the Roman connotations of these words, citing especially Plautus as the source against which they may best be understood; these terms suggest the world of the mime, pantomime and carnival, evoking with a satiric outlook 'the deceptive reality of the slave, the lover, the parasite, the comic playwright, irritatingly provocative because its inventors are fully conscious of its illusory or "masked", even Bacchic nature' (p. 18). Similarly, the poet is *doctus* not because his poetry displays the fruits of detailed study of Classical and Hellenistic Greek literary models in his own dense, allusive compositions but because 'he knows how to play on our feelings, because he has the dexterity in words that recalls a pantomime artist's nimbleness in the dance allied to the worldly wisdom of a courtier (better, a court jester) and the insight of a philosopher' (p. 24). All Rome's a stage on which the jester-actor-poet plays out his role.

The influence on N. of Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalisation of literature is pervasive and clearly acknowledged, few classicists (and certainly not the reviewer) enjoying such facility with Russian Formalist theory in the original language. Nevertheless, N.'s approach is likely to be attacked. To deny that Catullus is a love poet and to present him as a satirist smacks of taking him out of one strait-jacket and locking him up in another. Due attention must be given to both traditions in attempting to understand his work and the Hellenistic fondness for *ποικιλία* and *Die Kreuzung der Gattungen* surely provides a more suitably inclusive framework for appreciating the variety of poems found in the collection. Furthermore, while comparison between the mime and the world evoked and created by the poems of Catullus provides interesting comments on particular passages and the two certainly have features in common (and not forgetting Wiseman's Catullus *mimographus*), it is unwise to be as exclusive as N. consistently is; it is difficult to see, for example, how poem 11 echoes the Roman mime (pp. 162–7) and while poem 63 certainly has a vivid dramatic quality it is doubtful whether much is to be gained by treating it as a pantomime (chapter 10; McKeown, *PCPS* 205 [1979], 71–84 and Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* [1985], pp. 198–210 and now also Fantham, *CW* 82 [1989], 153–63 are better guides in this area). A further objection: N. attaches great importance to what Martial's imitations can teach us about Catullus, but it can be argued that a successor's reworking of a model implies a process of distortion; we are likely to learn more about Martial than about Catullus from this approach.

Despite such reservations, this is a book which all readers of Catullus should study, although those who do not already know the poet well are likely to find the going very heavy. N. poses important questions concerning the Roman and the Alexandrian in Roman poetry and his answers will provoke argument, demand response and suggest that further study of the Roman reception of Hellenistic literary culture is required.

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## THE GEORGICS

R. A. B. MYNORS (ed.): *Virgil: Georgics, Edited with a Commentary by R. A. B. Mynors and with a Preface by R. G. M. Nisbet*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. £45.00.

Almost twenty years have passed since the reviewer of this book was privileged to examine parts of the earliest draft of M.'s Commentary. The annotations (on Book