

research stemming from the Hercules Project, this book is a fundamental resource for everybody interested in the post-classical life of Herakles and, more widely, in the adoption of Greek and Roman myth in Christian art and literature.

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Scholies aux Psaumes (Psaumes 1–70). Évangre le Pontique. 2 vols. By Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, Paul Géhin and Matthieu Cassin. (Sources Chrésiennes, 614, 615.) Pp. 792 + 784. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2021. €128. 978 2 204 14186 4; 978 2 204 14205 2

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Evagrius' fame hardly rests on his Psalms commentary. In fact, it took the best part of the last century to establish that he had written one. We know that he did thanks to cross-references to his well-known *Praktikos* in the Psalms commentary. So it is later than *Praktikos* and also *Kephalaia gnostica*, but prior to the Proverb *scholia* which reuses it – perhaps he worked in canonical order. As one who has tried to access Evagrius' *scholia* directly and been frustrated by their sporadic and disconnected nature, the editors' attempt to provide a systematic account in their introduction to these two volumes is incredibly helpful, and is what this review mainly covers.

In the introduction first comes a section on the composition of the *scholia*. There is an awareness that these were not sermon texts nor full commentaries but pithy *scholia*, as evidenced in *scholia* v on Psalm lxxxviii.g: 'the genre or law of scholias does not permit prolixity'. Every Psalm except the very short Psalm cxvi finds at least one gloss and Psalms cxxxv–cl have longer explanations. The gnomic nature of *scholia* is akin to Evagrius' ascetic chapters with its 'just as ... so', and even a syllogistic flavour. The tone can be 'antirrhetic', speaking back to enemies, yet the target is wider than the demons. Although less marked than with Origen Evagrius was still able to offer two or more explanations of the same verse; for example, Psalm xxvi.g receives four interpretations on 'how Satan "rules"'. Quite often another passage of Scripture is used to 'explain' a Psalm verse. There is a small amount of comment on verbal tenses.

Next comes a chapter-treatise on the exegesis in this work: there is a particular interest in moving from textual details (names, places) to the signified abstract notion, and (we are told) like Didymus, Evagrius was clearly not interested in history as such. Inanimate beings denote animate ones: so, mountains and forests or 'tribulations' in Psalm cxvii.143 really mean the people who cause these obstacles. Scripture that speaks figuratively (*tropikōs*) does not need to be allegorised. Commandments are clear, but law (which is spiritual) needs unveiling and explaining. *Scholia* xv on Psalm lxvi.21 borrows a pair of schemas from Clement: the first being historical/legislative/sacrificial/theological becoming with Evagrius ethics, physics, theology. The soul moves from one to another in a spiritual journey, reaching towards the spiritual reality, in some ways akin to Gregory of Nyssa's single-minded concern for the *skopos* of the text.

The most interesting and largest chapter in the introduction is chapter iv on doctrine. The Bible is made to correspond to the great intellectual and ethical notions that structure Evagrius' system. There is great debt to Antoine Guillaumont here, especially his *Un Philosophe au désert*. The soul is linked to *praxis*, the intellect to *theoria*. The word *logismos* loses the meaning of 'reason' in Evagrius and comes to designate evil thoughts (whereas *noemata* mean 'images'), while for 'intellect' *hegemonikon* gets used. *Praktike* is the struggle against vices, on the way to *apatheia*; through sublimation the irascible part of us can be employed to fight enemy vices, resulting in the 'broken spirit' of Psalm 1.19, and the concupiscible can fuel the desire for God. Sin in thought is like a wound; sin in act is like death. Christ has made the struggle of the psalmist even more an interior one. In his *scholia* on Psalm xliii.24 he mentions five of the deadly sins: pride and *acedia* are emphasised throughout. Correspondingly one can speak of the interdependence of virtues. The Psalms mirror well the life of virtue ebbing and flowing and inculcate a spirit of moral obedience and responsibility under trial. Romans v.3–5's chain of virtues from affliction to hope is cited seven times. When it comes to 'theologia', Psalm cxviii.1 speaks of the contemplation of God by the blessed 'pure in heart' (as in KG 1,70 on Psalm lxxii.23: to be with God incessantly is to know the Trinity).

This philosophy provides the grid through which Evagrius reads the Scriptures: 'physics' means that natural elements are symbols of their reasons for being. The soul is summoned to climb up from the fallen material realm; there needs to be purification to know the *logoi* of judgement which can be equated with *pronoia* (providence): however, this equation is not all that convincing and there would perhaps be one small quibble with the interpretation on offer here.

According to *scholia* ii on Psalm cxliv.3 it is not that God is without measure but that knowledge of the Trinity is; this is not apophaticism, we are merely limited in what we can know (*scholia* xxii on Psalm liv.7) (p. 82); the twin wings of the dove are the contemplation of corporeal things and incorporeal things, which together help the soul to rise up to know God. Likewise, Jacob exults when soul reaches impassibility; Israel rejoices when contemplating God (*scholia* vii on Psalm xiii.7); hence *euphrosune* is greater than *agalliasis*. *Scholia* ii on Psalm cxxxv.1 establishes that confession designates glorifying God and confessing sins. The 'new song' means new state, and there is not actually much on song or prayer, except for *scholia* i on Psalm cxl.2, which is similar to his *Chapters on prayer*.

Other important content includes teaching on the devil and demons. The angels who are 'evil' (*poneroi*) are not demons, but are avenging angels, such as those who deliver judgement as on Sodom (on Psalm lxxvii.49) (p. 97). Divine providence includes their acting and withdrawing (*scholia* viii on Psalm xxxvii.12). Matthew xviii.10's 'angels contemplating God incessantly' is referenced eight times in the *scholia*, and in two cases linked to 2 Samuel xiv.20: David is an angel knowing the fate of earth, since the 'face of God' they contemplate is really God's action reflected in creation. Before Christ the nations had the angels whereas Israel had God himself (p. 99). Again the ready identification of judgement and providence possibly needs a bit more thought. According to the human capacity to choose 'we' approach demons or angels, as in Psalm lxxvii.25, where eating the bread of angels/manna is considered. Although (and this is my second quibble)

there is some amount of eschatology the Evagrian emphasis seems still on the here and now (Psalm lxxxviii.30 talks about becoming 'Christs'). Perhaps there is no mention of *apokatastasis* because he is not talking about eschatology here.

Evagrius approaches Christ both theologically and economically. Virtue is hypostasised in Christ and become one of his *epinoiai*. Before the movement God was father of rational beings, after it he became creator of bodies, judge, overseer, doctor, pastor ... but even before generation of incorporeal things he was Father of Christ and principle of the Holy Spirit (cf. KGVI, 20). Evagrius' choice word for the incarnation was *epidemia*. His Christology emphasised the fullness of an ensouled humanity, in anti-Apollinarian manner. Yet there was singularity of Christ in soul and body. Since (on Psalm xlix.2) God became visible in Christ, and Christ is the one who has the word of God in him (*scholia* ix on Psalm lxxvi.14), it is the soul of Christ who is Christ (*scholia* on Psalm cxiii.3, where 'the lord' gets replaced in his gloss with 'rational holy soul', one who dwelling in the life of men with the word in him; cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* i.32, 36). In the *scholia* on Psalm cxviii.8 he gives a rare account of the cause of Christ's specialness in Origenist fashion, which is that 'he loved righteousness'. Delegation of judgement was given to the Son/Christ. What makes 'Christ divine and then allows other people to participate' is the anointing of knowledge of divinity that happened to his soul prior to his incarnation (*scholia* xi on Psalm lxxxviii.21)

The figure of David is never called king or prophet. His dominant virtue is mercy, refusing vengeance amid tribulation. In Psalm I he prays for restoration of his soul's impassibility in his request to God to rebuild the ramparts of Jerusalem. The comparison of David with an angel in 2 Samuel xiv means that he knows all events on earth (*scholia* vi on Psalm iv.7). Psalm lxxvii.25 mentions that he has eaten the bread of angels, which is David as the exemplary soul approaching perfection. 'Always in the hands of God' means he is always delivering judgements (*scholia* xlvi on Psalm cxviii.109).

To deal briefly with the more technical final chapters in the introduction, these establish that there are two main branches of the manuscript tradition. One is roughly Alexandrian, and the other is more associated with Theodoret. Where the two branches of manuscript tradition agree, that is usually a guide to a secure reading. The editors seek to moderate the debate between M.-J. Rondeau (some should be attributed to Origen) and Gilles Dorival (it comes directly to Evagrius). What we have is possibly a selection made from a larger *catena*. The work of Géhin on the Evagrian *scholia* on Proverbs comes in very useful for arriving at judicious opinions.

The *Sources Chrétiennes* project began with translations, but quickly these became annotated and very soon the facing original text was printed too, but usually on the basis of someone else's critical edition. It is a sign of maturity that increasingly the series produces editions, and so much more. This is very much and yet is more than an edition, and despite the disclaimer what we have before us is not just that but texts illuminated, enabling Evagrius to speak and even be understood. This is a world-sized Evagrius.

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