

Aaron JOHNSON, *Eusebius*. London-New York, I.B. Tauris, 2014. 1 vol., xv-231 p. (UNDERSTANDING CLASSICS SERIES). Prix : 24 \$. ISBN 978-9-78076-556-3.

Eusebius of Caesarea is still an underestimated author. His commentaries are largely unread, his controversial writings after Nicaea are not translated into English, his voluminous *Preparation for the Gospel* is valued only for what it preserves from the books of others. Even his *Ecclesiastical History* has seldom received its due as a work of scholarly excavation, though in method it is the most modern specimen of historiography to survive from the ancient world. Few scholars are so well equipped to repair this neglect as Aaron Johnson, whose recent monographs on both Eusebius and Porphyry combine wide learning with literary tact. The opening offers a concise account of the “intellectual culture” that Eusebius inherited as Bishop of Caesarea, and goes on to collect the few biographical facts that can be gleaned from his reticent works and the writings of others. Too little is said, perhaps about the Christian culture of the late third century, but we are introduced to Porphyry, the pagan Neoplatonist who furnishes Eusebius with an arsenal of Greek fire against the Greeks in his *Preparation for the Gospel*. In his astute second Chapter, Johnson advises us to read this chapter pedagogically rather than historiographically: that is to say, it implies that this work is a preface to a future forthcoming *Demonstration of the Gospel*, not that pagan literature foreshadows the divine revelation of truth. On the contrary, the marshalling of texts from Egypt, Phoenicia and Israel exposes the crudity of Greek thought and its dependence on the wisdom of other peoples; for Eusebius Christianity is not, as its first apologists had boasted, the philosophy of barbarians but the canon of rational piety against which even Athens can be measured and found wanting. Johnson uncharacteristically surrenders his judgment to the prevailing fashion on p. 12, where he says that those who distinguish the Christian Origen from his pagan namesake have fallen prey to a “modern proclivity” for dividing the ancient world into rigid categories. The one point on which Porphyry and Eusebius agree in their conflicting accounts of Origen’s career is that he cannot have been a Christian and a Platonist at the same time. The existence of two Origenes is assumed rather than asserted in the extant works of Porphyry, but his statement that the pagan Origen dedicated one of his two publications to the Emperor Gallienus proves that this man cannot have been the prolific Christian author who died in the previous reign (cf. p. 200 n. 49). Johnson himself points out in chapter 3 that every teacher of philosophy in the Roman world professed allegiance to a distinct tradition. Eusebius in his commentaries follows Origen in applying to scripture the tools that had been devised for the exposition of classical thinkers by their own disciples. He is not abusing these tools when he attributes a latent meaning to the text that is at odds with its superficial application. It need hardly be said that Eusebius is no despiser of history, and such readings, though we are all too ready to call them allegorical, are in fact adopted only because a reading which limits the import of the text to the author’s own time would be less faithful to the letter. The premiss that the future is providentially adumbrated in the past informs the writing of the *Ecclesiastical History*, which is the subject of the fourth chapter. Giving due weight to his diligence and precision in the synchronization of dates, Johnson admits that Eusebius may have embellished his material where he could not find suitably edifying data, and his silence about the Jews after the

third book betrays not only his lack of a source to compare with Josephus but his desire to prove that Judaism was a superannuated religion. The chapter concludes with a succinct though detailed review of the manuscripts and a defence of the view that the work which we now possess is an integral whole rather than a product of incompetent redaction. In chapter 5 Johnson argues that the postulates of Eusebian Christology, as expounded with maturity and precision in his writings against Marcellus, are the pre-existence of Christ as the Word or Logos of God, his ubiquitous action in history, his dependence on the Father and his perfect revelation of the Godhead in his capacity as the Father's image and wisdom – two terms which cannot be applied to him only (as Marcellus imagines) during his sojourn in the flesh. The Christ of Marcellus could not have functioned as the invisible archetype of Constantine, whom Eusebius represents, both in his hagiographic *Life* and in his *Tricennial Oration* of 336, as the all-seeing viceroy of God on earth. The purpose of philosophic biography, as Johnson observes, is to paint the inner man: to this end tacit parallels are drawn in the *Life* between Constantine and Moses, while in the speech of 336 a Christian turn is given to the traditional assumption that triumph in war bespeaks the favour of the gods. Johnson's synopses of the many texts that he examines in this volume are clear and accurate, and he never fails to offer a persuasive account of the circumstances in which Eusebius undertook a particular work and his reasons for the choice of a certain literary form. Compendious in scope and copious in its references to scholarship in a number of modern languages, this book will be equally useful to historians needing assistance in theology and to theologians seeking a closer acquaintance with the most eminent signatory to the Nicene Creed.

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Daniel L. SCHWARTZ, *Paideia and Cult: Christian Initiation in Theodore of Mopsuestia*. Washington, DC, Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013. 1 vol., XII-170 p. (HELLENIC STUDIES, 57). Prix : \$ 24.95 (broché). ISBN 978-0-674-06703-5.

Le livre explore le rôle de l'éducation chrétienne et du culte dans le processus de conversion et de christianisation dans l'Antiquité tardive. L'étude analyse les *Homélie catéchétiques* de Théodore de Mopsueste comme un guide pour ceux qui souhaitent se convertir aux mystères de l'Église. On peut affirmer que les *Homélie catéchétiques* ont été adressées à un public très cultivé formé à une *paideia* classique et qui pouvait saisir le sens de l'enseignement de Théodore de Mopsueste. Son enseignement catéchétique a situé l'instruction des idées chrétiennes dans le contexte de la communauté religieuse et de la participation rituelle. Pour ce faire, il a cherché à produire une vue christianisée du monde et de la place de la conversion dans une communauté de culte. L'attention de Théodore aux composantes communes, cognitives et rituelles, d'initiation suggère une compréhension substantielle de la conversion religieuse, mais qui permet d'éviter une trop grande importance sur la transformation intellectuelle et psychologique. Tout au long de cette étude, la catéchèse apparaît comme une valeur inestimable pour comprendre la capacité des membres du clergé de former un nombre toujours croissant de nouveaux adeptes du christianisme. Schwartz aborde trois aspects importants de la catéchèse : l'immersion dans la structure sociale