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EVA ELM – NICOLE HARTMANN (eds.), *Demons in Antiquity. Their Perception and Transformation in Different Literary Genres* (Transformationen der Antike 54). Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter 2020. 176 pp. – ISBN: 978-3-11-062672-8 (€ 79,95)

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The volume under review stems from an international conference organized in Berlin in 2015 within the broader project SFB 644 “Transformationen der Antike”, which gave the title of the series in which this book is published. This collection of essays brings together eight contributions, framed by an introduction and an epilogue. Besides being set plainly in the volume’s title, the aim of this scholarly endeavor is further explicated by EVA ELM in the opening piece (pp. 1–14): the essays focus on the literary facets of the transformations and contextualizations through which demons underwent in Late Antiquity, how these shifts are reflected throughout some late antique pagan and Christian literary genres, as well as the social context from which they stem and for which were destined (p. 7). ELM grants some attention to the category of literary genre (p. 8), to which JAN BREMMER comes back in the closing piece (pp. 171–172).

The first two pieces tackle the ties between demons and disease. Thus, in “Demons and Disease” (pp. 15–39), CHRISTOPH MARKSCHIES (hereafter, M.) shows how in ancient Christian texts demons appear as instrumental for explaining both the causes and the cures of diseases, and “to what extent pagan and Jewish concepts of demons were changed or adopted”. In the preamble, M. makes three methodological remarks:

First, taking healing as an example, M. states that it is difficult to prove a “direct cult continuity” between the pagan temples and the Christian churches built on the site, in those cases in which one or the other emerge in the literary or archaeological sources as an incubation center (p. 15). Secondly, M. signals that when tackling the topic “Ancient Christianity and Medicine, Health and Disability”, the traditional framework that postulates the “adoption of pagan ancient medicine in Christianity should be replaced by a model of a transformation of knowledge bases”, quintessential formulated as “Allelopoiese”, a term coined by HARTMUT BÖHME (p. 17). Thirdly, the enduring distinction between “temple medicine, Hippocratic Galenic and so-called folk medicine” should not be applied generally, and

this not only because of the inadequacy of the term “folk medicine” due to its inferior connotations.

After all, amulets were indeed prescribed by educated physicians as well (p. 18). Furthermore, commenting on several late-antique amulets allows M. to exemplify further terminology developed in recent years, such as “appropriation” and “encapsulation”. The emergence of demons as being able to cure illnesses also shows that while the version of Christianity prescribed by bishops and synods sought to impose the exclusively negative connotation of demons, their ambivalent character persisted. M. chooses to make recourse to philosophical demonologies and, thus, substantiate the causal relation demons-disease also through quotations from “philosophical (Christian) texts”. In so doing, M. breaks the chronological limits when selecting two ps.-Psellian passages (p. 29, n. 60). The first is from the dialogue *Τιμόθεος ἢ περὶ δαιμόνων* [THE 168],<sup>1</sup> which M. takes from the older edition in PG 122, though referencing the newer by PAUL GAUTIER. This latter reference should be to GAUTIER (1980), pp. 153, 283–155, 303. The other opusculum is [PHI 112].<sup>2</sup> Since M. grants the dialogue [THE 168] the paternity of “the Byzantine author Michael Psellus (or a later Byzantine Anonymous)”, one should mention GAUTIER’s suggestion, which points towards Nicholas the bishop of Methone from the twelfth-century.<sup>3</sup> More recently, PAMELA ARMSTRONG hypothesized the authorship of Theodoros Prodromos or Michael Italikos.<sup>4</sup>

The second piece, “Disease and Healing in a Changing World” (pp. 41–56) by ANNETTE WEISSENRIEDER (W.) is an incursion into the old Latin translation of the Gospel according to Luke that preceded the standardized version of Vulgata. W. confronts the Latin terminology used in the African tradition of the *Vetus Latina* when rendering those passages from Luke which involve healing and exorcism, such as the healing of the crip-

1. PAUL MOORE, *Iter Psellianum*. A detailed listing of manuscript sources for all works attributed to Michael Psellos, including a comprehensive bibliography (*Subsidia Mediaevalia* 26). Toronto 2005.

2. MOORE, *op.cit.*

3. PAUL GAUTIER, *Le De daemonibus* du Pseudo-Psellos. *REByz* 38 (1980) pp. 105–194, at p. 128sqq.

4. PAMELA ARMSTRONG, *Literary Polemic in the Twelfth-Century Constantinople*. In: AYLÄ ÖDEKAN et al. (eds.), *On ikinci ve on üçüncü yüzyıllarda Bizans dünyasında değişim*. 1. Uluslararası Sevgi Gönül Bizans Araştırmaları Sempozyumu, İstanbul, 25–28 Haziran 2007 / *Change in the Byzantine World in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. First International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, İstanbul, 25–28 June 2007. İstanbul 2010, pp. 333–341, at p. 339.

pled woman from Lk 13:11–3. The analysis of the demons’ name in *Vetus Latina Luke* leads W. to observe that for Luke a daimon was no “neutral expression”, but “it refers to intermediary beings capable of having harmful effects on humans” (p. 47). Another significant question W. seeks to answer is whether the narratives mentioning demons refer to ancient medicine or they do in fact have a strong Christian emphasis (p. 48). As does MARKSCHIES, so W. touches upon ‘folk medicine’ vs ‘rational medicine’ when trying to determine if the *Vetus Latina Luke* “relates to the illness phenomena as ‘folk medicine or not’” (p. 49) and she notes that even “when the physical symptoms are expressively understood in a medical sense, but the etiology is described demonologically”, the system isn’t “less medical” (p. 53). Notably, though cautiously formulated, W. infers that the Latin translation of Luke 13:11–13 departs from the Greek text (p. 51). The medical vocabulary employed by this Latin translation of Luke makes W. agree with the thesis that Jesus is presented as a practical physician rather than a charismatic worker (p. 55). Commendably, W. makes sure to briefly introduce the reader to the textual traditions of the *Vetus Latina* and she helps the reader remain focused throughout her dense piece by regularly and plainly clearly stating her points in the form of conclusions.

Next, in “On Demons in Early Martyrology” (pp. 61–80) NICOLE HARTMANN (H.) switches to the acts of martyrs. She confronts the reader with the almost ‘non-dealing’ with demons of the pre-Eusebian martyrdom literature. H. raises more clearly the issue of choosing between the forms “demons” or “daimones” when discussing this segment of the late-antique Christianity, and she opts for the former term as more aptly referring to a “yet unevilized, not yet Christianized, multifaceted class of superhuman or intermediary beings” (p. 62). A part of this piece surveys also the contemporary demonic notions from the handed-down apologetic texts. As explanations for the almost non-dealing of the martyr literature with demons, W. highlights “the everydayness of all sorts of interaction in the demonic field” whilst “martyr accounts reported extreme non-everyday events” (p. 65), as well as the fact that assigning daimones a place in the Christian cosmology was out of the scope of the acts of the martyrs. Therefore, as H. concludes, “early martyrology did not contribute substantially in the shaping of specific Christian demonology” (p. 77). A noteworthy point made by H. is that whenever they appear in the *Acta*, references to evilized demons must raise questions on them being later insertions (p. 71).

The fourth essay “Demons of the Underworld in the Christian Literature of Late Antiquity” (pp. 81–94) by EMMANOUELA GRYPEOU (G.) centers on the tormenting angels residing in hell as they emerge in late-antique apocalyptic literature, but also later acts of martyrs and hagiography, across several literary and belief traditions. The early Jewish and Egyptian sources have these dwellers of the underworlds with monstrous and beastly traits and nature still retaining the ambiguity of angels. G. shows how the frightening appearance is not retained by the early Christian apocalypses (p. 83), yet it is prominent in other genres that refer to the afterlife. The “evil angels” surface in the fourth century Apocalypse of Paul, a text which also mentions names of such punishers, among which G. closely traces one (Tartarouchos) in subsequent Christian literature. While initially, the punishing angels are instruments of divine justice and mediators between the divine and the mortals, they are eventually “explicitly identified with the ‘angels of Satan’ and thus acquire a distinctive quality” (p. 86). G.’s essay merits to be highlighted for including a wide range of ‘genres’ (from apocalypses to spells) of different traditions (not just Greek, but also Latin, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Syriac).

In turn, in the fifth piece “Demons in Early Latin Hagiography” (pp. 95–117) ROBERT WIŚNIEWSKI (W.) peruses the early Latin *vitae* in search of the role of demons. Formulated in the beginning, the question of to which degree are the views towards demons in the lives representative of the view held by their contemporaries is key for W. The answer is rather negative, since concerning demons there is considerable variation even within the corpus of Latin lives produced in the late-antique period. W. rightly mentions “the Antony syndrome” (p. 95) that often may lead those approaching hagiography into generalizing the central place diabolic spirits occupies in Athanasius’ work. Moreover, as proven by W., the presence of demons is setting apart the bishops’ lives and those of ascetics, since in the former demons hardly play a role when they occur. The “absence of demons” (pp. 105–107) is one aspect that deserves being mentioned: W. refers to those issues harming to humans to which hagiographers could have attributed demonic causes and yet, they did not (e.g. natural disasters, diseases, sometimes not even heresies). Demons get involved in the narratives just when they are needed.

Keeping the focus on Latin hagiography, the next contribution by the editor EVA ELM, whose title references to an exorcistic episode from the *Life of Hilarion* by Jerome (“Hilarion and the Bactrian Camel” (pp. 119–133)), is

craftily framed by GUSTAVE FLAUBERT's novel from 1874 *La Tentation de saint Antoine*. The analogy between the two works written almost fifteen centuries apart serves as the starting point for ELM's look on demons in Jerome's oeuvre: where FLAUBERT made use of the *Vita Hilarioni* in his take on Antony's biography, Jerome used the *Life of Antony* when writing the life of the anchorite Hilarion. Elm's analysis allows her to contrast Latin hagiography with the eastern one (in continuation to remarks made by W.): in Western lives, the struggle of the holy figure with demons is rather superficially depicted (p. 123), and there are lives where demons play no role (p. 126). Also, the use of demons for expressing publicity as ascetic torment in a monastic and ascetic context is specific to the Latin lives (p. 122). The different perspective that they offer in the struggle holy man vs demons sets apart the Latin hagiography from the Eastern one. The interior perspective where the reader is given insight into the saint's personal struggle from *Vita Antonii* contrasts with the focus on the exterior in the Latin lives. In the former, the social dimension of the demonic attacks is principal (p. 126).

In the "Ambiguity of the devil" (pp. 135–150) NIENKE VOS proposes a discourse-linguistic reading of two chapters from the fourth century *Life of Martin of Tours*. VOS draws on the methodology developed by scholars of Classics at Amsterdam that merges the Labovian narrative structure with the theory of discourse modes. After making the reader acquainted with these tools, VOS proceeds at illustrating to illustrate how Sulpicius Severus argues for the saint's power of discernment, that is, the ability to recognize demons irrespective of the form that they would assume. Thus, as shown by VOS, the two narratives given in chapter twenty-one and twenty-four, which both make up a unit, of the *Vita Martini* are built in such a way as to serve an argumentative function.

Moving on, in "Demonic Speech in Hagiography and Hymnography" (pp. 151–166) LUNN-ROCKLIFFE (L.-R.) centers partly also on "rhetorical and grammatical strategies". L.-R. looks on late-ancient texts to answer two questions, namely "how did demonic speech and language relate to human speech and language, and how far was it a stable and reliable expression of demons' identity and selfhood" (p. 151). The material interrogated falls into two categories, bio-hagiographies of Greek, Latin, and Syriac expression, and Syriac and Greek hymnography, each being analyzed in separated sections of this essay. L.-R. notices that the two kinds of literary productions use different rhetorical and grammatical strategies for reporting the

demon's speech: where hagiography most frequently represents it diegetically, hymnography does it mimetically. For the Christian hymns, L.-R. discerns multiple functions fulfilled by the demonic speech: except for the ethical effects sought by impersonations (when hymns do voice the demons and Satan), L.-R. underlines comic effects and the function of "filling scriptural obscure places" (as in the case of the descent to hell). I suggest that a statement such as "Romanos also composed [...] kontakia to be sung by a cantor in a church in Constantinople" (p. 162) would have been worth (even very brief) explication since it is not common knowledge that a kontakion could not have been interpreted by a group of psaltes. The same about, as L.-R., "they [the kontakia] also display a kind of knowing comedy in their integration of a confessional refrain as the last line of each strophe, to be sung by the whole congregation" (p. 163).

Finally, JAN N. BREMMER is responsible for the epilogue (pp. 167–173), where he sketches the evolution of the Greek *daimōn* (δαίμων) and evaluates the extent in which the essays contributed to responding to questions on demons (e.g. who are the demons, their gender and the gender of those they possess, etc.).

The main critique that I want to address regards the form of this publication, rather than its content since it concerns the rendition of the Greek texts. If it weren't the case that incorrect accents, when not substituted by aspiration marks, were fairly equally distributed throughout the volume one could just overlook them as minor deficits (e.g. ὁ θεός ὄνειδιεῖ ὁ ἐχθρός παροξυνεῖ at p. 32, n. 77; ὑπηρέταις at p. 75, ἀνόμων ... ἀσεβῆ ... ἀναγκάζεσθαι, in n. 74; ἄγγελος at p. 82, ἔχων, in n. 9; ἀθέους (followed by the English rendition unmarked by quotation marks) at p. 67; ἀγγέλων at p. 85, n. 22. Also, there are several typos and errors that made it into the book version: "Ammanius" for which Ammianus is meant (p. 50); "translation by Timaeus", where "translation of Timaeus" is meant (p. 30, and the German "bzw." in n. 69); the quotation from LANGSLOW (2000), p. 194 is missing the bit "implied by the vocabulary" (p. 54), which makes it rather unintelligible.

All in all, this is a well-balanced and cohesive volume. A consistent nexus between several of the contributions is the demonic identity, be it the nomenclature of demonic entities (GRYPEOU), their power of assuming different forms (VOS), the physical markers of their presence (they are malodorous spirits), as well as the characteristics of their speech (LUNN-ROCKLIFFE). Another recurring theme is their significant non-presence (HARTMANN and WIŚNIEWSKI). The literary approach in this volume is paired with

cultural and social history, and while as underlined by ELM in the “Introduction”, inevitably only some literary forms are being covered, the volume successfully sets models of analysis for future research on later literary productions.

**Keywords**

demonology; demons; hagiography; health; Late Antiquity; medicine