

## RECENZII ȘI NOTE BIBLIOGRAFICE / RECENSIONI E SCHEDE BIBLIOGRAFICHE

M. TULLI CICERONIS *Actionis secundae in C. Verrem: Liber V*, Luigi PIACENTE recognouit, adnotationes criticas et indices adiecit, Claudia TĂRNĂUCEANU Dacoromanice uertit, notis atque commentariis instruxit, Luigi PIACENTE et Claudia TĂRNĂUCEANU praefationem composuerunt = M. TULLIUS CICERO, *A doua acțiune împotriva lui Verres: Cartea a V-a*, restabilirea textului latin, apparatus criticus, indici de Luigi PIACENTE, traducere în limba română, note și comentarii de Claudia TĂRNĂUCEANU, introducerea de Luigi PIACENTE și Claudia TĂRNĂUCEANU, Editura Universității din București, 2023, 180 p., ISBN 978-606-16-1317-5

Cicéron – une personnalité exceptionnelle. Durant ses études, il avait tellement épaté ses camarades par son intelligence et ses connaissances que les enfants disaient à leurs parents que dans leur classe il y avait quelqu'un qui sortait complètement de l'ordinaire ; les éloges étaient si chaleureux et si surprenants que les parents venaient à l'école pour s'en rendre compte par eux-mêmes<sup>1</sup>. En l'année 70 av. J.-C., le jeune Cicéron remporte la victoire devant le *rex judiciorum*, dans la personne de Quintus Hortensius Hortalus, l'orateur le plus célèbre de l'époque, et entre dans les rangs des avocats couronnés de succès. Ce qui a valu cette renommée au jeune orateur, c'est le triomphe que lui a valu la toute première action du procès intenté par les Sicules contre l'ex-gouverneur spoliateur de la province de Sicile, Caius Verrès, procès dans lequel Cicéron a assumé le rôle d'accusateur.

Dans l'admirable apparition éditoriale de cette année, intitulée Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Seconde action contre Verrès, Livre cinquième*, les réputés philologues classiques Luigi Piacente et Claudia Tărnăuceanu se sont arrêtés sur ce moment retentissant de la carrière de Cicéron, en restaurant et en dotant d'un impressionnant appareil critique et d'une traduction en roumain l'un des sept discours juridiques où l'Arpinate plaide contre Verrès. Plus précisément, les deux spécialistes ont retenu le dernier discours de l'*Actio secunda* contre Verrès, intitulé *De suppliciis*, qui est, comme le souligne Claudia Tărnăuceanu, « le discours probablement le plus troublant de la série des *Verrines* »<sup>2</sup>. Le titre latin de cette édition bilingue tant attendue

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<sup>1</sup> Plut., *Cic.* 2.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *A doua acțiune împotriva lui Verres: Cartea a V-a* [*Seconde action contre Verrès, Livre cinquième*], restauration du texte latin, appareil critique,

est *Marci Tullii Ciceronis Actionis secundae in C. Verrem : Liber V*. Le volume a été publié cette année par les Presses de l'Université de Bucarest, dans une exemplaire collection savante appelée *Éditions de textes*, visant à publier « des éditions de textes appartenant à diverses périodes, de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne, avec des thèmes à l'intersection de plusieurs disciplines, qui peuvent intéresser à la fois les spécialistes et le grand public » (p. 2).

Les index, *Index nominum* et *Index auctorum*, les notes de bas de pages, accompagnant pertinemment le texte latin, l'examen des éditions, je me réfère ici au *Conspectus Editionum quae in apparatu critico commemorantur*, les sigles et les abréviations, à savoir *Sigla philologorum*, *Conspectus siglorum*, *Abbreuiationes*, et la restauration du texte latin sont signés par le distingué classiciste italien Luigi Piacente, professeur à l'Università degli Studi di Bari. Il serait difficile d'énumérer toutes les réalisations scientifiques et culturelles de Luigi Piacente. Nous nous contenterons de mentionner le fait que l'étude des œuvres de Cicéron tient une place importante parmi les préoccupations de l'érudit barésien, ce qui se reflète dans les nombreuses études et articles consacrés à l'auteur romain, ainsi que dans son travail méticuleux de philologue et d'éditeur des œuvres cicéroniennes.

Ainsi, Luigi Piacente a classifié les manuscrits des *Verrines*, a analysé la numérotation et les titres des sept discours contre Verrès et a identifié de nouveaux fragments cicéroniens dans les œuvres de certains auteurs d'expression latine. Voici quelques titres : Un tal Cicerone ? (*Aug., Conf. 3, 4, 7*), dans *Auctores nostri*, 2010 ; *Le epistole di Cicerone nella biblioteca di Frontone*, dans *Aufidus*, 2006 ; *Cicerone a riflettóri spenti. Episodi della tradizione testuale di orazioni ed epistole*, dans *Invigilata Lucernis*, 2014, *Un nuovo frammento ciceroniano in Beda*, Herder, 1986. D'autre part, la traduction en roumain du dernier discours de la série des *Verrines*, la note sur l'édition, ainsi que les annotations et les commentaires ajoutés appartiennent à Claudia Tărnăuceanu, exceptionnelle philologue classique de Iași, maître de conférences à la Faculté des lettres de l'Université « Alexandru Ioan Cuza », vice-présidente de la Société d'Études Classiques – Filiale de Iași – et membre du Centre d'Études Classiques et Chrétiennes.

Outre ses nombreuses préoccupations philologiques, telles que les articles et les livres consacrés à la syntaxe ou à la morphologie de la langue latine ou les ouvrages dédiés à l'œuvre du savant moldave Dimitrie Cantemir, Claudia Tărnăuceanu n'a cessé d'étudier, de traduire et d'éditer les discours cicéroniens. La récente traduction du dernier livre de l'*Actio secunda*

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index par Luigi Piacente, traduction roumaine, notes et commentaires par Claudia Tărnăuceanu, introduction par Luigi Piacente et Claudia Tărnăuceanu, Presses de l'Université de Bucarest, 2023, p. 12. Veuillez noter que pour les références futures dans la présente édition, nous indiquerons la page entre parenthèses.

du discours *In Verrem orationes septem* vient donc compléter certaines préoccupations scientifiques en ce sens ; *exempli gratia* : deux autres éditions de la série des *Verrines* : Marcus Tullius Cicero, *In C. Verrem actio prima/ Premier discours contre Verrès*, Iași, 2014 ; et Marcus Tullius Cicero, *In Q. Caecilius oratio quae divinatio dicitur/ Le discours contre Quintus Caecilius appelé „divinatio”*, Iași, 2013, ou bien Marcus Tullius Cicero, *In L. Catilinam orationes quatuor / Les quatre oraisons contre Catiline*, 2013, dont Claudia Tărnăuceanu a traduit le premier discours des *Catilinaires*.

Ces efforts de notre collègue Claudia Tărnăuceanu voués à la traduction des discours cicéroniens font partie d'un domaine d'intérêt plus large, correspondant à l'édition et à la traduction de l'œuvre monumentale de Cicéron, un domaine brillamment représenté, depuis longtemps, par les spécialistes et aux chercheurs de Iași, dont Traian Diaconescu, Mihaela Paraschiv, Nelu Zugravu, Constantin Răchită ou Constantin-Ionuț Mihai, qui ont contribué à la publication des textes de Cicéron dans des éditions bilingues de haute qualité scientifique. Ainsi, sous la direction de ces spécialistes, ont vu le jour : les *Philippiques*<sup>3</sup>, les *Catilinaires*<sup>4</sup>, les ouvrages de philosophie à caractère métaphysique : *De divinatione*<sup>5</sup>, *De Fato*<sup>6</sup>, *De natura deorum*<sup>7</sup>, *Topica*<sup>8</sup>, *Partitiones oratoriae*, *De optimo genere oratorum*<sup>9</sup>, *Paradoxa*

<sup>3</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Philippicae/ Filipice [Les Philippiques]*, Volume I, édition bilingue, traduction et index par Mihaela Paraschiv, note sur l'édition par Mihaela Paraschiv et Nelu Zugravu, notes et commentaires par Nelu Zugravu, étude introductive par Constantin Sălăvăștru, Iași, Presses de l'Université « Alexandru Ioan Cuza » de Iași, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *In L. Catilinam orationes quatuor/ Cele patru cuvântări împotriva lui L. Catilina [Les quatre discours contre L. Catiline]*, édition bilingue, coordonnée par Mihaela Paraschiv, traduction, note historique, notes et commentaires par Claudia Tărnăuceanu (*Catilinara I = La Première Catilinaire*), Constantin Răchită (*Catilinara II = La Deuxième Catilinaire*), Constantin Ionuț Mihai (*Catilinara III = La Troisième Catilinaire*), Mihaela Paraschiv (*Catilinara IV = La Quatrième Catilinaire*), index par Claudia Tărnăuceanu, étude introductive par Constantin Sălăvăștru, Iași, Presses de l'Université « Alexandru Ioan Cuza » de Iași, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Despre divinație [De divinatione/ De la divination]*, édition bilingue, traduction de Gabriela Haja et Mihaela Paraschiv, étude introductive et notes de Mihaela Paraschiv, Iași, Polirom, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Despre destin [De fato/ Le destin]*, édition bilingue, étude introductive, traduction, notes et commentaires de Mihaela Paraschiv, Iași, Polirom, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Despre natura zeilor [De natura deorum/ La nature des dieux]*, édition bilingue, traduction, étude introductive, notes et index par Mihaela Paraschiv, Iași, Presses de l'Université „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” de Iași, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Topica. Despre argument [Topica/ Les topiques]*, Texte bilingue latin-roumain, traduction, préliminaires, notes, commentaires et index par Traian Diaconescu, étude introductive par Constantin Sălăvăștru, Iași, Presses de l'Université « Alexandru Ioan Cuza » de Iași, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Les traités de rhétorique *Partitiones oratoriae* et *De optimo genere oratorum* sont parus, en traduction, dans : Cicéron, *Arta oratoriei [L'art oratoire]*, édition bilingue,

*Stoicorum*<sup>10</sup> et bien d'autres. Tout cela confirme l'existence, à Iași, d'une véritable orientation de recherche visant à publier des éditions critiques rigoureuses des œuvres de Cicéron.

Nous précisons que nous n'avons pas utilisé ici le terme « scientifique » à la légère, mais pour souligner les mérites réels de ces éditions minutieuses et solides, qui, comme celle d'aujourd'hui, ont été présentées au public dans leur version bilingue, avec des études liminaires approfondies, un appareil critique, des notes et des commentaires attentivement élaborés, des index et des acronymes, ainsi qu'une bibliographie rigoureusement mise à jour. Il faut également rappeler le fait que, dans notre pays, les auteurs classiques n'ont pas toujours été édités de manière adéquate ; les maisons d'édition ont parfois tout misé sur la traduction en roumain d'un texte classique, sans joindre, en miroir, le texte latin, voire, pire encore, elles ont parfois omis d'inclure l'appareil critique, l'étude liminaire, les notes et les commentaires ou la bibliographie qui s'imposent afin d'assurer une réception avisée du corpus et de le contextualiser de manière adéquate.

Pour revenir à la récente édition dont il est question aujourd'hui, nous souhaitons mettre en évidence le sérieux de la démarche, ainsi que l'ampleur du résultat : le texte latin de la dernière oraison de l'*Actio secunda* des *Verrines* a été non seulement reproduit, mais intégralement restauré par le professeur Luigi Piacente, étant doté d'un considérable *apparatus criticus*, revu et enrichi par rapport à celui de l'édition *M. Tulli Ciceronis Actionis secundae in C. Verrem. Liber V*, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1975, dirigée par le même Luigi Piacente et dont le texte original latin a d'ailleurs été suivi par Claudia Tărnăuceanu en vue de l'équivalence philologique en roumain. La traduction à la fois naturelle et subtile que cette philologue classique roumaine propose du texte cicéronien témoigne d'un véritable talent littéraire et d'une érudition enrichissant la version roumaine de notes et de commentaires aidant le lecteur – spécialiste ou non en la matière – à mieux saisir le contexte historique et juridique où a été composé le discours, ou encore les aspects linguistiques de celui-ci. Nous tenons à préciser, en outre, que, dans la culture roumaine, les *Verrines* apparaissent pour la première fois dans une édition critique bilingue.

Jusqu'à présent, le cinquième livre de l'*Actio secunda* des *Verrines* a connu seulement deux traductions : l'une, très ancienne et dépassée, du dé-

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texte latin et traduction, accompagnés d'une étude introductive, de notes et d'un index par Traian Diaconescu, Bucarest, Saeculum I.O., 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Cicéron, *Paradoxurile stoicilor* [*Paradoxa Stoicorum/ Les Paradoxes des stoïciens*], édition bilingue, traduction, note sur l'édition, notes et commentaires, index et post-face par Traian Diaconescu, préface par Gheorghe Vlăduțescu, Bucarest, Saeculum Vizual, 2011.

but du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>11</sup>, appartenant à I. Suchianu, et l'autre, incomplète, de Daniel Ganea, incluse il y a un demi-siècle dans un choix de textes extraits de l'œuvre de Cicéron<sup>12</sup>.

Nous saluons donc vivement la publication de cette édition critique, intégrale et de parfaite actualité, réunissant tous les éléments d'un appareil critique rigoureux. Périodiquement, les nouvelles générations de philologues classiques devraient se repencher sur les grands textes des auteurs classiques afin de surpasser et de doter de nouveaux éclairages les versions de leurs prédécesseurs. L'édition dont il est ici question atteste sans réserve que cela est déjà une réalité.

J'aimerais m'arrêter maintenant sur l'étude liminaire bipartite. Dans la première partie, consacrée à l'ensemble des *Verrines*, Luigi Piacente rappelle le contexte dans lequel eut lieu le procès de l'année 70 av. J.-C. Verrès avait commis de nombreux actes de pillage en Sicile entre 73 et 70 av. J.-C. Cicéron l'accusa, à la demande des Sicules. En 77, suivant la mort de Sylla, Cicéron revint à Rome après un voyage en Orient (en Asie Mineure, dans l'île de Rhodes, à Athènes) et, en 75 av. J.-C., il devint *quaestor* en Sicile, à Lilybée, où il se fit remarquer comme un administrateur des finances juste et averti. L'incorruptibilité que Cicéron avait montrée à l'époque détermina, plus tard, les Sicules à l'élire en tant que *patronus*, le défenseur de leurs intérêts à Rome. Après ce procès, Verrès fut exilé, mais il repartit avec toute sa fortune.

L'attention que Luigi Piacente accorde aux détails est en tous points remarquable. Nous apprenons, par exemple, que : Verrès fit un usage abusif de la *Lex Cornelia de imperio*, en prolongeant sa période de gouvernement au-delà de la limite fixée (p. 7) ; que Cicéron remplit, en 75 av. J.-C., l'office de *quaestor* auprès du préteur Sextus Peducaeus (p. 7) ; ou encore que, pour éviter la condamnation, Verrès fit semblant d'être malade et partit en exil volontaire à Marseille, où il resta jusqu'à ce qu'il devînt à son tour victime d'un abus, car Antonius, envieux des œuvres d'art volées par Verrès en Sicile, inclut celui-ci sur ses listes de proscrits (p. 8). En même temps, Luigi Piacente fait des allusions pertinentes à la structure composite du corpus des *Verrines*, qui pourrait être la même que celle des originaux cicéroniens (p. 8), et souligne, par exemple, que, pendant l'Antiquité tardive, seuls certains grammairiens préfèrent la numérotation « heptadique », tandis que la plupart adoptent le système de citation « pentadique ». Luigi Piacente aborde aussi la question des titres des sept discours du corpus des *Verrines*,

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<sup>11</sup> M. Tullius Cicero, *Verrinele* [*Les Verrines*], Tome II, traduit par I. Suchianu, Bucarest, Casa Școalelor, 1925.

<sup>12</sup> Cicero, *Despre torturi* [*De suppliciis/ Des supplices*], trad. par Daniel Ganea, dans *Opere alese* [*Œuvres choisies*], Tome I, éd. par Gh. Guțu, Bucarest, Univers, 1973, 202-248.

qui ne peuvent vraisemblablement pas être attribués à Cicéron (p. 9), ou bien il analyse la tradition manuscrite des discours prononcés par Cicéron contre Verrès (p. 10), reposant, aujourd'hui, sur 80 codex, dont le plus ancien remonte au IV<sup>e</sup> s. apr. J.-C. (*Palimpsesti Vaticani fragmenta, Reginensis 2077*). En conclusion, Luigi Piacente souligne que cette dernière oraison des *Verrines* est « une merveilleuse synthèse de tous les méfaits commis par le gouverneur de Sicile » ou bien « une sorte de *peroratio* de tous les discours » (p. 10).

Dans la seconde partie de l'introduction, consacrée surtout à la Cinquième *Verrine*, Claudia Tărnăuceanu signale l'unicité de cette série de discours destinés à accuser le préteur Verrès : « Suivirent les *Verrines*, qui, parmi toutes les oraisons du rhéteur, tiennent une place à part, représentant ses seuls discours juridiques d'accusation publiés. » (p. 11). Claudia Tărnăuceanu note également que, dans la Rome antique, le rôle du défenseur était apprécié, alors que celui de l'accusateur, *actor causae*, était quelque peu dédaigné (p. 11). Cicéron met cependant en évidence, très adroitement, l'essence de son positionnement : il ne souhaitait pas particulièrement devenir l'accusateur de Verrès, mais avait plutôt l'intention de défendre les Sicules et de leur rendre justice (p. 11). De toute évidence, accessoirement, Cicéron profita de l'occasion, selon Claudia Tărnăuceanu, pour affronter une fois de plus l'orateur le plus titré de l'époque, à savoir Quintus Hortensius Hortalus (p. 11). Dans la dernière oraison des *Verrines*, précise Claudia Tărnăuceanu, Cicéron chercha à sensibiliser les lecteurs « par la véhémence de son langage, l'abondance des détails émotionnels, la négation de toute qualité de l'accusé et la caractérisation de celui-ci reposant exclusivement sur des vices » (p. 12). La philologue classique roumaine observe que l'Arpinate joint les éléments juridiques aux éléments de nature morale et affective, en insérant parmi les preuves relatives à l'accusation de concussion des témoignages liés à la moralité de Verrès qui ne sont pas étroitement liés à l'affaire (p. 12). L'orateur insiste sur les actes de cruauté dirigés en particulier envers les citoyens romains. Verrès n'était pas seulement responsable d'une punition abusive des coupables, il bafouait la qualité même de citoyen romain. L'excellente version roumaine fournie par Claudia Tărnăuceanu dans l'édition qui nous occupe permet une analyse détaillée de ces épisodes, surtout si l'on y parcourt les notes de référence, qui mettent au clair de nombreux aspects d'ordre littéraire, linguistique, juridique, historique ou rhétorique. Un premier obstacle que doit surmonter Cicéron est « la réputation de bon général » / *boni nomen imperatoris* (p. 27) de Verrès. Progressivement, en utilisant divers procédés rhétoriques tels que la *sustentatio* (le « maintien en suspens » (p. 139) ; les notes de bas de page présentent Quintilien citant des passages de Cicéron pour exemplifier les procédés rhétoriques d'usage) ou l'*amplificatio* (« amplification, grossissement »), Cicéron démontre que Verrès est « un général d'une nouvelle espèce » (p. 43) / *novo quodam ex genere im-*

*perator* (p. 42), qui, au lieu de se faire distinguer dans les guerres, comme Paulus, Scipion et Marius (p. 32 et 33), se fait remarquer pendant « la bataille de la luxure à Cannes » (p. 43)/ *Cannensem pugnam nequitiae* (p. 42). Si Hortensius Hortalus devait agir comme l'orateur grec Hypéride et déchirer les vêtements de Phryné, ou bien comme Marcus Antonius, le grand-père du triumvir homonyme, qui coupa la tunique du consul Marcus Aquilius « pour que le peuple romain et les juges voient ses traces de blessures au visage » (p. 27)/ *ut cicatrices populus Romanus iudicesque adspicerent aduerso corpore exceptas* (p. 26), alors, à propos de Verrès, une fois le torse de celui-ci mis à nu, l'avocat de la défense ne trouverait, dit Cicéron, que « les cicatrices des morsures de femmes, des traces de la débauche et de la méchanceté » (p. 45)/ *cicatrices [...] ex mulierum morsu vestigia libidinis atque nequitiae* (p. 44). De même, Verrès n'est pas « un préteur ordinaire » (p. 35) / *mediocris praetor* (p. 34), mais un préteur abusif et injuste, qui, au lieu de suivre le traditionnel *mos maiorum* (p. 36-37) et d'agir « avec gravité et sévérité » (p. 39) / *graviter severeque* (p. 38) à l'égard des vrais coupables, libère « des esclaves condamnés par ce crime qui menace la tête et la vie de tous les hommes libres. » (p. 33) / *eius facinoris damnatos servos quod ad omnium liberorum caput et sanguinem pertineret* (p. 32). Au lieu de condamner des coupables avérés, Verrès élève sur la croix des citoyens romains. Le rôle de l'épisode tragique de Gavius de Consa est souligné tant par Luigi Piacente, que par Claudia Tărnăuceanu à travers l'introduction, la traduction, les notes de bas de page ou l'index des noms/ *Index nominum* : « Sur la croix as-tu osé crucifier quelqu'un qui disait être citoyen romain ? » (p. 121) / *In crucem tu agere ausus es quemquam qui se civem Romanum esse diceret ?* (p. 120) ou « Mais que <dire> de plus au sujet de Gavius ? [...] Vous étiez, dis-je, l'ennemi non pas de cet homme, mais de la cause commune de la liberté. » (p. 125) / *Sed quid ego plura de Gauio? [...] Non illi, inquam, homini, sed causae communi libertatis inimicus fuisti.* (p. 124).

De nombreux passages de la traduction reflètent les gestes oratoires de Cicéron, son habileté à manier l'ironie et les procédés rhétoriques. Il y a d'ingénieuses transpositions des questions répétées et abruptes qui harcèlent l'auditeur : « Que dis-tu ? » (p. 29)/ *Quid dicis ?* (p. 28) ; « Que dis-tu, bon gardien et défenseur de la province ? » (p. 33)/ *Quid ais, bone custos defensorque provinciae ?* (p. 32) et d'éloquentes versions des impressionnantes images plastiques évoquées par Cicéron. Le texte en roumain laisse voir l'attitude incisive, tourmentée, transportée de Cicéron l'orateur. Le phrasé en roumain bouleverse, frappe, incite et stimule le lecteur. La dernière oraison de Cicéron ne fut plus jamais prononcée. Toutefois, rien que sous sa forme écrite, elle vibre et nous touche, dans son expression latine aussi bien que dans sa transposition roumaine.

Sur ce, nous vous invitons à prendre contact avec la première édition critique bilingue du Cinquième livre du corpus des *Verrines* et à lire cette émouvante oraison dans la version proposée par Luigi Piacente et Claudia Tărnăuceanu.

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AURELIO VITTORE, *De Caesaribus*, traduzione, introduzione e commento a cura di Mario IERARDI, Amazon Fulfillment, Wrocław, 2023, 219 p., ISBN 9798398123869

Ocupându-ne de peste un deceniu și jumătate de breviarul latin din veacul al IV-lea Sextus Aurelius Victor, am constatat cu surprindere că, spre deosebire de mediul cultural francez, german, englez, spaniol, rus, românesc, în cel italian nu există nicio ediție integrală bilingvă sau doar tradusă a scrierii acestuia *Historiae abbreviatae* sau *Liber de Caesaribus* (*De Caesaribus*, *Caesares*), deși exegeza dedicată istoriografiei Antichității târzii din peninsula îl pomenește adesea. Foarte recent, însă, un pasionat incurabil de civilizația romană, Mario Ierardi, venit dinafara mediului universitar, a oferit, pe speze proprii, prima traducere italiană a lucrării amintite – fapt pe care trebuie să-l salutăm cu toată bucuria și recunoștința, gândindu-ne că poate fi un stimulent pentru realizarea unei întreprinderi științifice, de nivel academic. După o *Premessa* (p. 3) ce precede Cuprinsul (p. 5), ediția are următoarele secțiuni: *Introduzione* (p. 7-13), *Abbreviazioni* (p. 15), textul italian al breviarului (p. 17-105), *Cronologia* extrem de utilă (p. 107-123), *Bibliografia* (p. 125-129), *Note* ce conțin explicații utile și corecte despre personalități, evenimente politice, militare, religioase, instituții, monumente, precum și trimiteri la alte izvoare sau scurte indicații bibliografice (p. 131-204), *Mappe* (p. 205-208), *Cartine* (p. 209-212), *Appendice* (p. 213-217).

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Fanny DEL CHICCA, *L'importanza di nascere clarissimus: per l'interpretazione dell'oratio VIII di Simmaco*, Morlacchi Editore U.P., Perugia, 2023, 194 p., ISBN: 978-88-9392-448-1

Exegeza operei lui Symmachus este inegală<sup>1</sup>. Cercetătorul interesat poate consulta în limba franceză ediția completă a lucrărilor sale – *Epistulae, Relationes* și *Orationes*, realizată de Jean-Pierre Callu<sup>2</sup>; corespondența sa personală și administrativă este accesibilă, fie și parțial, în limbile engleză<sup>3</sup>, germană<sup>4</sup> și italiană<sup>5</sup>. De asemenea, remarcăm existența unor traduceri ale discursurilor lui Symmachus – mai puțin riguroase, concepute în scop didactic, în spațiul academic nord-american<sup>6</sup>. Cu totul altfel se prezintă acest bilanț dacă avem în vedere comentariile istorice care au apărut în ultimele decenii. În acest sens, putem menționa proiectul istoriografic italian de *commenti storici* dedicat corespondenței personale<sup>7</sup> și administrative<sup>8</sup> ale autorului tardoantic.

Din colecția de opt discursuri ale lui Symmachus, doar prima *oratio* s-a bucurat de o astfel de inițiativă<sup>9</sup>. La patru decenii distanță, Fanny Del Chicca semnează o nouă lucrare, de această dată despre *Or. VIII Pro Valerio Fortunato*, un izvor de o importantă „valore di testimonianza storico-istituzionale” (p. 21) pentru perioada postconstantiniană. Pe baza sa, editorul își propune să cerceteze unele probleme specifice pe care le ridică exercitarea magistraturilor inferioare din *cursus honorum* senatorial (*quaestor, praetor*), păstrarea rangului de *clarissimus* sau accesarea în Senat în a doua parte a secolului IV.

Lucrarea cuprinde patru capitole, fiind precedate de o scurtă prefață (*Premesso*, p. 9-11).

Primul capitol, intitulat *L'autore e l'opera* (p. 11-36), are o structură clasică, autorul împărțind materialul introductiv în mai multe subcapitole dedicate vieții și operei lui Symmachus. În prima parte, biografia este prezentată pe scurt, aproape didactic, urmărind îndeaproape cariera sa politică (principalele magistraturi deținute, raporturile cu Curtea imperială); punctul culminant al activității publice a senatorului – implicarea în controversa

<sup>1</sup> Seeck 1883 a rămas pentru mult timp singura ediție critică modernă.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistulae* – Callu 1972-2002; *Orationes, Relationes* – Callu 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Relationes* – Barrow 1973. *Epistulae*: cartea I – Salzman and Roberts 2011.

<sup>4</sup> *Orationes* – Pabst 1989.

<sup>5</sup> *Epistulae*, cartea VIII – Ruta 2023.

<sup>6</sup> *E.g., Or. I-VII*, translated by Barbara Saylor Rodgers – <https://www.uvm.edu/~bsaylor/>

<sup>7</sup> Cartea I – Vera 1981; Cartea II – Cecconi 2002; cartea III – Pelizzari 1998; cartea IV – Marcone 1987; cartea V – Rivolta Tibergera 1992; cartea VI – Marcone 1983; cartea IX – Roda 1981.

<sup>8</sup> Vera 1981.

<sup>9</sup> Del Chicca 1984.

altarului zeiței Victoria, este tratat superficial, inclusiv printr-o trimitere bibliografică puțin relevantă (n. 43, p. 20), în care Del Chicca discută nuanțele toleranței sale religioase față de creștinism (e.g., F. Canfora – „tolleranza repressiva”). În partea a doua, noțiunile introductive despre *Orationes* sunt judicios sistematizate, Del Chicca prezentând informații utile despre tradiția scrisă a *corpus*-ului encomiastic, mărturiile ale discursurilor pierdute – inclusiv cel susținut în onoarea uzurpatorului Magnus Maximus în 388, conținutul tematic al celor opt *orationes* fragmentare care s-au păstrat – în fine, o caracterizare generală a stiliului oratorului tardoantic („eloquenzia symmachiana”, p. 35-36), marcat prin concizie (*brevitas*) și varietate lexicală (*copia dicendi*).

Capitolul al II-lea, intitulat *Le condizione per l'ammissione al Senato nel IV secolo D.C.* (p. 37-86), ocupă cea mai importantă parte a cărții. Del Chicca își propune să investigheze aici cele mai importante probleme pe care le ridică procesul de a accede în Senatul tardoantic. În ciuda unor studii speciale, semnate de A. Chastagnol sau P. Garbarino, nu au putut fi clarificate satisfăcător toate detaliile acestui subiect istoric complex. Prin urmare, Del Chicca are dificila sarcină de a propune noi soluții sau corecta opinii deja încetățenite în istoriografie. În acest sens, istoricul italian a reluat lectura principalelor izvoare ale vremii, în special edictele imperiale, adăugând însă și *testimonia* inedite oferite de discursul VIII al lui Symmachus sau unele *epistulae* și *relationes* din opera sa. În analiza pe care a făcut-o, autorul nu se limitează doar la spațiul occidental al Imperiului, ci urmărește și evoluția noului Senat constantinopolitan, care este bine reflectată în izvoarele perioadei.

Dintre cele mai importante concluzii la care a ajuns Del Chicca, menționăm: 1. din punct de vedere terminologic, în mărturiile perioadei, termenul *clarissimus* nu este sinonim cu *senator*; 2. obligativitatea asumării de către *clarissimi* din naștere a magistraturii de *quaestor* sau *praetor* pentru admiterea în Senat; 3. *sumptus* obligatoriu impus pentru candidați, care este însă atent reglementat de autoritatea imperială în funcție de *dignitas* a candidatului, inclusiv pentru cazuri speciale (cei aflați în imposibilitatea de a și le permite financiar); 4. vârsta medie a fiilor de senatori care își asumă primele magistraturi, plecând de la *epigraphic habit* al perioadei, este în jur de 20 de ani; 5. Senatul își afirmă dreptul de a ratifica primirea oricărui candidat din afara ordinului senatorial (*adlectio*), cu mențiunea că cei admiși trebuiau să asigure jocuri publice (*munia publica*).

Un alt capitol, intitulat *Un onere peculiare: la functio glebalis* (p. 87-106), este circumscris unei singure problematice, cea a taxei funciare (*gleba*) (având la bază „proprietă fondiară” – p. 88) plătită de membrii ordinului senatorial tezaurului imperial începând cu domnia lui Constantin I. Del Chicca prezintă evoluția sa, remarcând că era o „onere personale, strettamente connesso al rango” (p. 89). Analiza este completată de mai multe

cazuri specifice privind aplicarea sa pe parcursul secolului IV, în principal exempțiuni, dar și erori birocratice (dublă taxare). La mijlocul veacului V, această obligație fiscală este desființată în Imperiul răsăritean, de către împăratul Marcian, dispariția sa în *pars Occidentalis* fiind presupusă mai târziu, în secolul VI.

În fine, ultimul capitol, *Testo critico, traduzione e commento dell' Oratio VIII* (p. 109-148), cuprinde textul, traducerea și comentariul discursului VIII. Textul latin al discursului, al cărui început s-a pierdut, din păcate, este reprodus după ediția critică a lui Otto Seeck și cea mai recentă semnată de Jean-Pierre Callu; în aparatul critic sunt menționate coruptelele, emendările propuse de autorul italian. Traducerea este însoțită de un bilanț al receptării discursului în istoriografie (*I nodi della vicenda*, p. 112-116); soluțiile propuse de istorici de-a lungul timpului subliniază importanța unei interpretări istorice adecvate, care are în vedere prefacererile legislative care au afectat ordinul senatorial în secolul IV. Comentariul propus de Del Chicca (p. 117-148) aduce astfel necesare clarificări textului symmachian, precum cea referitoare la obținerea titlului de *clarissimus* în această perioadă și implicațiile sale, la care face aluzie un fragment din paragraful 1 al textului – *quod mater familias in usum vertit suorum* (p. 119-122).

Cartea se încheie cu *Bibliografia* (p. 149-184) și *Indice dei nomi delle cose notevoli* (p. 185-193). Din bibliografia de la final lipsesc unele articole semnate de John Weisweiler, utile pentru înțelegerea Senatului în secolul IV, mai ales că fac trimitere frecvent la opera lui Symmachus<sup>10</sup>.

Lucrarea semnată de Fanny Del Chicca continuă tradiția istoriografică italiană de *commenti storici* dedicate operei autorului tardoantic. Regăsim în acest tom aceeași preocupare pentru acribia istorică și filologică, eleganța stilistică, inclusiv în contexte polemice (*e.g.*, p. 38-40). Volumul recenzat se impune ca o lucrare extrem de utilă pentru cei interesați în mod particular de anumite aspecte ale ordinului senatorial tardoantic în *pars Occidentalis* și de discursurile lui Symmachus. În continuare, așteptăm o astfel de cercetare și pentru celelalte *orationes*, a căror relevanță istorică, ideologică, retorică pentru această perioadă este întrecută doar de *Panegyrici Latini*.

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<sup>10</sup> Weisweiler 2011; 2016. Vezi și Weisweiler 2020.

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PAUL N. PEARSON, *The Roman Empire in Crisis, 248-260. When the Gods Abandoned Rome*, Pen & Sword Military, South Yorkshire, 2022, 312 p., ISBN 978 1 39909 097 1

Paul N. Pearson holds the position of Professorial Research Associate at University College London and serves as an Honorary Professor at Cardiff University in Wales, UK. Stratigraphy, paleobiology, micropaleontology, and paleoclimatology are among his fields of interest. In 2016, Paul N. Pearson commenced his academic career within the realm of historians by publishing the volume *Maximinus Thrax: From Common Soldier to Emperor of Rome* under the banner of the British publishing house Pen & Sword. We presented the book in the context of a scientific meeting organized on November 14, 2019 by the Center for Classical and Christian Studies and the Ancient History and Archeology Student Circle, Faculty of History, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University from Iasi; using a review format, our conclusions were published in Romanian, in issue 15/2020 of *Classica et Christiana* (ISSN: 1842 – 3043 / e-ISSN: 2393 – 2961), as well as in English, in issue 26/1, 2020 of *Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica* (ISSN 1224-2284 / ISSN-L 1224-2284).

Sword & Pen published *The Roman Empire in Crisis, 248-260. When the Gods Abandoned Rome* in 2022, and it is divided into two parts: part I, *Philip to Decius, 248-251*, comprised of the chapters 1-6: Chapter I: *Empire at the Millennium* (p. 3-17); Chapter II: *Rebels* (p. 18-32); Chapter III: *The Forces of Conservatism* (p. 33-42); Chapter IV: *Escalation of the Gothic War* (p. 43-57); Chapter V: *Ostrogotha Takes the Initiative* (p. 58-81); Chapter VI: *The Road to Abritus* (p. 82- 105); part II, *Gallus to Valerian, 251-260*, comprised of the chapters 7-12: Chapter VII: *Gallus* (p. 109-126); Chapter VIII: *253: World in Flames* (p. 127-155); Chapter IX: *Restorers of the Human Race* (p. 156-175); Chapter X: *Turbulence* (p. 176-193); Chapter XI: *Nadir* (p. 194-211); Chapter XII: *Disintegration* (p. 212-230); the chapters are preceded by *Acknowledgements* (p. vi), *List of Plates* (p. vii-viii), *List of Maps* (p. ix-xii), *Introduction* (p. xiii-xiv), *Prologue: Millennium* (p. xv-xxi) and are followed by *Epilogue: Rome Abandons the Gods* (p. 231-236), *Literature Cited* (p. 237-255), *Notes* (p. 256-294) and *Index* (p. 295-312).

In the introductory section, Paul N. Pearson **underscores that, notwithstanding his scholarly credentials, his objective is not directed exclusively towards the academic community**. Rather, he aims to engage a broader audience encompassing individuals with an interest in ancient history (p. xiii). Consequently, the present publication encapsulates a synthesis of pivotal events shaping Roman society over a 12-year timeframe, spanning from 248 to 260. This period is integral to what is historically denoted as the Crisis of the Third Century or the era of Military

Anarchy. The era marked by socio-political instability, spanning from 235 to 284, commenced under the rule of Emperor Maximinus Thrax (235-238). While some researchers posit the roots of this instability reaching back to an earlier phase, its resolution unfolded within the context of the ascendancy of Emperor Diocletianus (284-305). Over a span of 50 years, Roman society witnessed the governance of 27 emperors and grappled with destabilization caused by approximately 33 usurpers. It confronted a series of barbarian invasions, engaged in military campaigns against its perennial adversary, the Persian Empire led by the Sassanid dynasty. Furthermore, the Roman Empire confronted a myriad of challenges, including natural disasters, such as epidemics (the notorious Plague of Cyprian), which afflicted numerous provinces between 249 and 270. Additionally, the epoch was marked by the impact of climate change. In addition to the aforementioned challenges, it is imperative to note that commencing from the year 260, the Roman world underwent a political fragmentation into three distinct entities. The first among these was the Gallic Empire, consolidating the provinces of *Gallia*, *Britannia*, and *Hispania*. Notable figures who assumed the imperial mantle during this period include Postumus (260-269), Marius (269), Victorinus (269-271), Victoria (271), Tetricus I (271-274), and his son Tetricus II (273-274). This political landscape was further complicated by the presence of usurpers such as Laellianus (269), Domitianus II (271), and Faustinus (273/274). In the eastern domains, specifically spanning the provinces of *Syria* and *Aegyptus*, the Palmyrene Empire emerged as a distinct political entity. The orchestrator of the state affairs during this period was the noteworthy female figure, Zenobia (272-274). Intermediate to these two entities stood the Roman Empire, with its seat of governance located in *Urbs Aeterna*.

According to Pearson, delving into the historical period ahead poses a formidable challenge in terms of research, because “events are fast-moving and intricate and the historical sources are particularly patchy and challenging to interpret”; however, “significant archaeological finds have been made that are directly relevant to the period” (p. xiii-xiv); an archaeological discovery of significant importance is the battlefield at *Abritus*, a site that the author personally visited, as detailed in the provided information (p. xiv). According to Pearson, this period in the evolution of Roman society is deemed “of extreme crisis”, marked by military, political, economic, social, and spiritual conflicts. However, unequivocally, it also signifies “the most extraordinary phase of its history” (p. xxi).

Continuing from the biography of the first soldier-emperor, Maximinus Thrax, the book is skillfully written by the author, ensuring a reader-friendly experience. Within its pages, readers encounter two predominant categories of characters. On one hand, the protagonists of the book are the Romans, led by key figures including Philippus Arabs (244-249), Traianus

Decius (249-251), Trebonianus Gallus (251-253), Valerianus (253-260), and Gallienus (253-268). On the other hand, the antagonists in the present work are the Goths, represented by figures such as Ostrogotha and Cniva (p. 14-16, 18, 20-21, 27-29, 34, 43-48, 57-61, 66-69, 71-75, 78-83, 85, 90, 92-94, 97, 99-100, 103-105, 109-110, 117, 120-123, 127, 141, 145, 151-153, 155, 160-162, 164, 167, 172, 174, 178-181, 187, 194-195). Additionally, the Persians play a significant antagonistic role (p. 3, 12-15, 25, 117-120, 127-130, 132, 134-137, 139-142, 144, 152, 165, 181-186, 199-200, 202-207, 209-211, 213-214, 216-218, 228, 233). Armenians make occasional appearances in the narrative (p. 117-120, 142). Moreover, the book features additional "special guests", including Roman emperors such as Severus Alexander (222-235) (p. 138, 202), Gordianus III (238-244) (p. 12, 25), Aurelianus (270-275) (p. 166, 170-171, 233), Probus (276-282) (p. 166, 171). The narrative also introduces various usurpers like Pacatianus (p. 20-22, 25-27, 29, 46, 52, 227), Iotapianus (p. 22-26, 34, 185, 227), Iulius Valens Licinianus (p. 61-62), Titus Iulius Priscus (p. 71-72, 75, 81, 83), Marcus Aemilius Aemilianus (p. 115, 122-123, 127, 141-148, 160, 162, 164), Mariades (Myrades/Mareades/Mariadnes/Cyriades/Kyriades) (p. 127-129), Uranius (p. 138-141, 164-165, 185), Silbannacus (p. 147-150), Ingennus (p. 187-189, 192, 212, 224), Aureolus (p. 188-189, 212), Cecrops (p. 212, 223), Antoninus (p. 212), Ballista (p. 213-216), Regalianus (p. 224-225, 228, 232), Sponsianus (p. 225-228, 232), Macrianus (p. 228-229, 232-233), the rebel Faraxen (p. 201-202), and rullers from the Gallic and Palmyrean sphere of influence such as Septimius Odenathus (p. 184-186, 193, 217, 228, 232-233), Zenobia (p. 233), Postumus (p. 189, 200, 219, 221-223, 228-229, 231-233).

In evaluating the worth of this book, a **threefold perspective** emerges. Firstly, the author's writing approach accommodates readers unfamiliar with ancient/Roman history, as well as prospective students venturing into the realm of knowledge to better grasp this era. Secondly, the book's value is accentuated by the application of a scientific methodology in presenting historical events, ensuring a thorough and scholarly examination of the subject matter. Lastly, the writing style of the author contributes to the overall appeal and comprehension of the narrative, enhancing the reader's engagement with the material.

Concerning **readers**, Pearson assumes the role of a professor who, with understanding, patience, and compassion, cultivates an atmosphere akin to attending a history seminar. He adeptly imparts information and explanations that span diverse areas of interest, fostering an enriching and engaging learning experience:

a) the author employs toponymy, incorporating both ancient and contemporary names of cities or regions in the narrative; this inclusive approach provides a comprehensive perspective that acknowledges historical as well as modern geographical designations (p. 21, 23, 27, 34, 37, 39, 41-2, 46-47,

50, 52, 55, 59, 67, 74-75, 85, 94, 118, 123, 134-135, 139, 142, 145, 150-151, 153, 162, 169, 174-175, 178-179, 189, 195, 197-198, 201, 209, 212, 221-222, 282-283 (note 16));

b) the author delves into etymology, offering insights into the origins and meanings of certain words: *palimpests* (p. 43); *ostrogoths* (p. 44-45) etc.;

c) the author engages in elucidating the significance of certain ancient phrases: 1) **miscellaneous**: *ludi saeculares* (p. xvi); *senectus mundi* (p. xvi); *via sacra* (p. xvi); *thermoperipatos* (p. 67); *oikonomos* (p. 121); *arena* (p. xix); *officinae* (p. xix); *provincia* (p. xx); *mare nostrum* (p. xxi); *pax romana* (p. xxi); *stipendium militum* (p. 5); *religio licita* (p. 8); *superstitio* (p. 8); *barbaricum* (p. 14); *classis moesica* (p. 18); *alae* (p. 20); *cohortes equitata* (p. 20); *cohors equitata sagittariorum* (p. 20, 58); *cohors sagittariorum* (p. 20); *frumentarii* (p. 21, 192); *via diagonalis* (p. 21); *sacramentum* (p. 26, 29); *equites singulares augusti* (p. 31); *via postumia* (p. 31); *ensor* (p. 36); *libellus* (p. 36); *thermae decianae* (p. 55); *porticus* (p. 55); *principia* (p. 66); *valetudinarium* (p. 66); *tubicen* (p. 86); *cornicen* (p. 86); *lorica hamata* (p. 87); *lorica squamata* (p. 87, 97); *gladius* (p. 87, 97); *pileus* (p. 88); *tarabostes* (p. 89); *falx* (p. 89); *adventus* (p. 111); *classis pontica* (p. 121, 178); *theatrum caesaris* (p. 128); *drafsk* (p. 130); *gund* (p. 130, 135); *yazards* (137); *gund-salar* (p. 139); *vexilla* (p. 145); *propugnator* (p. 149); *optio principis* (p. 151); *archon* (p. 152); *classis germanica* (p. 157); *terrae motus* (p. 281, note 9); *mutatio* (p. 164); *bullae praetextae* (p. 172); *toga virilis* (p. 172); *rationibus* (p. 177); *damnatio ad metalla* (p. 177); *clibanarii* (p. 185); *ornamenta* (p. 186); *limes* (p. 195); *massa candida* (p. 288, note 23); *medici* (p. 199); *cardo* (p. 218); *decumanus* (p. 218); *foederati* (p. 220); *cubicularius* (p. 226); *basileus* (p. 266-267, note 5); 2) **titles indicative of social status**: *rector orientis* (p. 14); *dux ripae* (p. 132, 181); *strategos* (p. 185); *decurion* (p. 186); *eques romanus* (p. 201); *patronus provinciae* (p. 202); *praeses* (p. 219); 3) **titles indicative of imperial status**: *Augustus* (p. xvi, xix, 24, 78); *pontifex maximus* (p. xvii, 10); *augusta* (p. xx), *imperator* (p. 24); *invictus* (p. 25); *optimo princeps* (p. 33); *caesar* (p. 36); *restitutor sacrorum* (p. 36); *princeps iuventutis* (p. 41); *mater castrorum* (p. 87); *Chrysogone* (p. 161); *restitutor gener humani* (p. 165); *germanicus max ter* (p. 170); *germanicus max v* (p. 174); 4) **words (legend) engraved on coins**: *saeculares augg* (p. xix); *saeculum novum* (p. xx); *romae aeternae* (p. xx); *pax fundata cum persis* (p. 14); *victoria persica* (p. 14); *victoria carpica* (p. 15); *fortuna redux* (p. 22); *romae aeter(nae) an(nus) mil et primo* (p. 25); *felicitas saeculi* (p. 56); *victoria augg* (p. 78, 148); *victoria germanica* (p. 78); *marti pacifero* (p. 112); *fecunditas aug* (p. 141); *concordia augustorum* (p. 174); *adventus augg* (p. 174); *victoria parthica* (p. 186); *Gallienus cum exer(citus) suo* (p. 188); *pax augg* (p. 193); *virtus augg* (p. 193); *conservat aug* (p. 193); *iovi conservat* (p. 193); *religio augg* (p. 193); *salus provinciarum* (p. 222); 5) **proper**



**nouns:** Christ (p. 8); Iotapianus (p. 23); Argaithus (p. 49); Guntheric (p. 49); Cniva (p. 59) etc.; 6) **names of Roman divinities:** *Iupiter Optimus Maximus* (p. xvii); 7) **names of monuments:** *Colosseum* (p. xix); *Philippeion* (p. 11-12); 8) **names of military settlements:** *Sexaginta Prista* (p. 20); 9) **names of military units:** *cohors II flavia brittonum equitata* (p. 20); *legio II fulminata* (p. 23); *ala I thracum victrix* (p. 71); *cohors I thracum syriaca* (p. 71); *cohors I thracum sagittaria* (p. 71); *cohors XX palmyrenorum* (p. 185); *cohors I asturum* (p. 201); *vexillationum equitum Maurorum* (p. 201); 10) **names of judicial sources:** *codex iustinianus* (p. 31); 11) **names of chronicles:** *Chronicon Paschale* (p. 42); 12) **names of battlefields:** *Thermopylae* (p. 153); 13) **translation of latin quotes:** *vae victis* (p. 110);

d) the author provides comprehensive information on various aspects of Roman culture and civilization: 1) religion, society, urban planning and administration (p. xv-xxi, 3-8, 11-12, 20-23, 33-35, 49-50, 52, 55, 58-59, 67, 75, 102, 134, 140, 150, 153, 156-157, 166-167, 171, 197, 218); 2) the transition from the regal period to republic and finally the establishment of the empire (p. xv-xvi); 3) military organization (p. 5, 18, 20-21, 23, 31, 33-34, 49-50, 59, 66, 74, 89, 99-100, 128, 132, 136, 139, 142, 157, 160-162, 222);

e) the author presents insightful information about pivotal moments in ancient history, particularly within Roman society: 1) the Jewish revolt of 66 against the Roman administration, leading to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 (p. 8); 2) the Roman conquest of the kingdom of Decabalus (87-106) by Emperor Traianus (98-117) and its subsequent transformation into the province of *Dacia* (p. 15, 33-34, 49, 67, 88-89, 102, 224); 3) the rise of Vespasianus (69-79) and Septimius Severus (193-211), initially perceived as usurpers (p. 26); 4) the author also suggests a potential link between the Marcomannic wars and the migration of the Goths (p. 46); 5) the historical significance of the renowned Battle of *Thermopylae* in 480 BCE, where courageous hoplites fought under Spartan king Leonidas I (489-480 BCE), aided by other Greek allies, against the armies of Persian king Xerxes I (486-465 BCE); the significance of the *Thermopylae* battlefield extended beyond this famous clash, influencing other conflicts such as the Lamian War of 323 BCE; additionally, it became a notable site during the battle of 191 BCE between the Roman army under consul Manius Acilius Glabrio and the Seleucid king Antiochus III; furthermore, the significance of *Thermopylae* persisted into modern times, as demonstrated during the invasion of Greece in 1941, when the Allies successfully delayed the German army (p. 153-154); 6) the geographical locations of the kingdoms of Cimmerian Bosphorus and Colchis along the Black Sea coastline are subjects of inquiry; additionally, an examination is made into instances where the Romans provided military assistance to fortify the defense of these regions; furthermore, Colchis is characterized as a region enveloped in an aura of

mystery and romance, notably recognized as the reputed destination of Jason and his Argonauts in their legendary quest for the Golden Fleece (p. 167-168); 7) the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 (p. 179-180); f) the author furnishes insights into the social standing and accomplishments of numerous historical figures: 1) **Greek and Latin ancient historians**: Cassius Dio (p. xvi); Asinius Quadratus (p. xx); Dexippus (p. xx, 43, 46, 80-81); Tacitus (p. 10); Aelius Aristides (p. 12); Zosimus (p. 31, 93, 101); Strabo (p. 42); Jordanes (Gothic descent) (p. 44); Cassiodorus (p. 44); Herodotus (p. 46); Gregory Thaumaturgus (p. 114); Orosius (p. 256, note 8); Lactantius (p. 264, note 12); 2) **Byzantine historians**: Zonaras (p. 93); George Cedrenus (p. 65, 113), George the Monk (p. 113); 3) **clerical figures**: Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (p. 10-11); Fabian, bishop of Rome (p. 38, 64); priests Moyses and Maximus and the deacon Nicostratus (p. 38); Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem (p. 38); Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus, bishop of Chartage (p. 39); Origen of Alexandria (p. 40, 65, 114); deacon Felicissimus (p. 63-65); Novatian, Cornelius, Fortunatus, Maximus (p. 64-65); 4) **others**: Egyptian philosopher Plotinus (p. 7); sage Apollonius of Tyana (p. 7); Agathangelos (p. 117); Eutychius of Alexandria (p. 119); Lucian of Samosata (p. 134); Firdawsi, an Iranian national poet juxtaposed with Homer and Virgil by the author (p.204-205); g) the author offers succinct portrayals of diverse barbarian nations: Carpi (p. 14, 41, 59, 89, 167); tribes from *Nubia*: Blemmyes, Megabaroi, Noubai, and Troglodytes from the Red Sea coast (p. 42, 46, 57); Marcommani (p. 46, 50, 170, 194, 220, 232); Heruls (p. 47); Vandals (p. 47, 195, 198); Tervingi (p. 47); Bastarnae (p. 47, 59); Sciri (p. 47); Sarmatians (p. 47); Alans (p. 47); Taifali (p. 47); Peucini (p. 48); Gepids (p. 54-55); Borani (p. 167-169, 172, 178); Franks (p. 195, 212); Allemani (p. 195, 197-198) etc.; h) the author provides comprehensive information about Christianity: 1) its development and ascent as a favored religion (p. xxi, 8-10); 2) historical occurrences of persecutions of Christians (p. 36-40, 62-65, 109, 116, 123-124, 176-178, 189-192, 194, 200, 235); 3) the schisms within Christianity (p. 63-65, 123-124, 176-177); i) the author provides information regarding various philosophical movements, highlighting the following: stoicism (p. 6-7, 62); neoplatonism (p. 7); neopythagorans (p. 7); j) the author provides details about Cyprian's plague, offering insights into the characteristics, consequences, and historical context of this pandemic (p. 16-17, 31-32, 35, 42, 90-93, 111-116, 120, 127, 156, 188, 199, 204, 206, 213, 224, 234); k) the author provides explanations regarding ancient numerical estimates of army sizes (p. 269, note 4).

Pearson's **research approach** places a distinct emphasis on analytical and comparative methods. In the examination of various historical

phenomena within the defined chronological period of 248-260, the author adopts a systematic methodology. Initially, Pearson presents the perspectives of ancient historians and Byzantine chroniclers, delving into primary historical accounts. Subsequently, he evaluates the viewpoints of contemporary researchers, engaging in a comparative analysis of modern interpretations. Finally, Pearson offers his own insights, thereby contributing a synthesized perspective to the broader discourse on the historical events under consideration. For students engaged in historical research, Pearson's scientific approach stands as a benchmark. His methodology serves as a guiding example. In the exemplification of our perspective, the inquiry into Philip the Arab's religious affiliation, as manifested in the subtitle *Was Philip a Christian?* (p. 10), serves as a notable illustration. Pearson initiates the discussion by highlighting that certain ancient authors, notably influenced by Eusebius of Caesarea, portrayed Philip as a Christian ruler. Eusebius, through his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, incorporates a commentary attributed to Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria, affirming that the Roman emperor was "a ruler who had been not unfavourable to us". The narrative further unfolds with depictions of Philip's desire to pray in the Church, constrained only by the requirement to confess his sins. Pearson underscores alternative versions presented by John Chrysostom, adding complexity to the historical narrative. Drawing from Eusebius' work, Pearson cites other ancient authors like Hieronymus, Jordanes, and Bede the Venerable, who perceived Philip as a Christian emperor (p. 10-11, 257 /note 14/). Subsequently, the author draws attention to contemporary historians such as I. Shahîd and I. Syv anne, who endorse this episode as historical reality, while others like C. K rner find it implausible (p. 11, 257 /note 14/). In conclusion, Pearson offers his own stance on the matter, asserting that the tradition cannot be entirely dismissed. He posits that Christian authors likely presented a version rooted in truth, suggesting that Philip, in his role, either respected and tolerated the emerging religion or held beliefs that did not inherently conflict with his societal role within the Roman Empire (p. 11).

Building upon the aforementioned example, Pearson articulates his perspectives on various historical topics within the context of the examined period (248-260). These viewpoints encompass the following: 1) Pearson posits that factors such as the non-payment of troops and participation in festivities in Rome contributed to the revolts of Pacatianus and Iotapianus. He underscores the absence of key regional leaders, Iulius Priscus and Otacilius Severianus, as critical elements in these usurpations (p. 20-22); 2) regarding Traianus Decius' edict, Pearson asserts that the emperor aimed to assess the realm in terms of population, wealth, and resources; the author believes that citizens were informed about the ascent of a new leader (p. 36-37); 3) in analyzing the Roman authorities' response to the spread of disease, particularly the "plague of Justinian", Pearson believes that measures

were taken, including a focus on hygiene, limitations on gatherings, and restrictions on movement from infected areas (p. 35); 4) Pearson proposes that Ostrogotha attacked Roman *Dacia* concurrently with the military campaigns of his subordinates south of the Danube (p. 54-55, 265 /note 25/); 5) Pearson suggests that in January 251, the Gothic forces were organized into three divisions, each with its own objectives (p. 59, 266-267 /note 5/); 6) regarding the revolt of Valens, Pearson challenges the conventional view placing it in Rome, arguing against the likelihood of a usurper revealing intentions in the capital; he explores alternative perspectives, referencing the *Historia Augusta's* account that places Valens briefly leading in *Illyricum* (p. 61-62, 267 /notes 7-8/); 7) Pearson examines an episode during the siege of *Philippopolis* where Cinva allegedly promised 500 coins to the first man to scale the city wall, discussing various interpretations of the origin of these coins (p. 79, 268 /note 31/); 8) the circumstances of a potential battle at *Romula* are elucidated by Pearson (p. 82-90); 9) Pearson questions whether Silbannacus should be perceived as a usurper or a legitimate emperor (p. 149-150); 10) the role of climate in the unfolding of events is emphasized by Pearson (covered on pages (p. 158-159, 281 /note 9/) etc.

Certainly, Pearson's approach, as reflected in his commitment outlined in the *Introduction* section, demonstrates a dedication to engaging with a diverse array of questions actively studied by specialists: "I have engaged with a wide range of questions that are actively being studied by many specialists. Occasionally I have made what I believe to be proposals that may be worthy of broader consideration by scholars. I have made copious use of footnotes to try to do justice to the wide range of primary and secondary literature and so that none of my suggestions or inferences stands unsupported" (p. xiii).

In terms of **writing style**, Pearson emerges as a masterful wordsmith, skillfully immersing the reader in the vivid and dynamic scenes of Roman military confrontations. The narrative evokes a sense of being a soldier enlisted in the Roman army, actively participating in the significant military engagements recounted in the book. Notably, the campaign orchestrated by Traianus Decius against the Goths is depicted with a cinematic quality, capturing the intensity of events. The reader is taken through gripping episodes, such as the siege of *Marcianopolis*, the victorious battle of *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, the harrowing sacking of *Philippopolis* by the Goths, the hypothetical battle of *Romula*, and the catastrophic Roman military defeat at *Abritus*. Drawing inspiration from the works of ancient authors, Pearson skillfully invites the reader to traverse the realms of imagination and bear witness to pivotal moments. For instance, the tragic death of Herennius Etruscus, son of Decius, on the battlefield is portrayed as a poignant event, followed by his ascension to the ranks of the gods. The narrative also

explores the consequences of Decius' desire for revenge, which, despite numerous sacrifices made to the gods, ultimately leads to his abandonment.

Pearson, in the *Prologue* section, sets the tone for an engaging and immersive journey through time by establishing a friendly rapport with the reader. He assumes the role of a guide, leading the reader through the significant moments of the historical narrative: "Let us, then, attempt to relive those years when to many people it must have seemed that the gods had abandoned Rome" (p. xxi). Given that the central themes of the work are anchored in the dramatic events of the historical era – ranging from conflicts between factions and calamities such as plague epidemics to persecutions of Christians – which constitute a significant portion of the narrative, the author's deliberate strategy of intermittently disengaging the reader from this overarching narrative thread is commendable. Indeed, Pearson leverages his cinematic expertise, a practice previously demonstrated in his work dedicated to Emperor Maximinus Thrax, to incorporate what is commonly referred to as "comic relief" in Anglo-Saxon language. This involves the inclusion of brief descriptions wherein the author establishes entertaining associations, seeking to provide moments of relaxation and amusement for the reader.

An illustrative example of Pearson's use of cinematic knowledge and "comic relief" can be observed when he introduces the cities of *Marcianopolis* and *Philippopolis*, both besieged by the Goths. In this portrayal, Pearson establishes an antithetical relationship between the Roman citizens and the Goths, particularly in terms of clothing and grooming practices. Roman citizens are vividly depicted as adorned in quality attire, with the ladies showcasing fashionable hairstyles and the men sporting well-groomed beards. In contrast, the Goths are humorously characterized as shaggy and wild-eyed individuals resembling desperados, a trope commonly associated with negative characters in Western films (p. 50). Additionally, Pearson brings attention to the tumultuous life of Anak, an oriental character believed to be of Armenian descent with Parthian origins. According to the narrative, Anak engages in discussions with the Sassanid sovereign and, enticed by promises to regain his ancestral lands, agrees to embark on a perilous mission – the assassination of the Armenian King Khosrov II. After successfully carrying out the promised deed, Anak meets a tragic end, being killed by Armenian nobles along with his entire family. Notably, two sons manage to escape, with one sent to Rome and the other to Persia. In a cinematic twist, Pearson interjects, highlighting the speculative nature of the fate of these children. He suggests that if Hollywood were to adapt works related to this historical episode, it would likely craft a dramatic film. This hypothetical adaptation, according to Pearson, would undoubtedly culminate in a gripping confrontation between the two brothers—one aligned with the interests of the Persian world, and the other embracing Roman ideals (p. 118).

Finally, in the depiction of the persecutions of Christians orchestrated by Emperor Valerianus, Pearson introduces an intriguing element. He notes that, according to certain ancient authors, Fulvius Macrianus “managed to turn him to the dark side”, employing a well-known phrase from the Star Wars cinematic universe (p. 177). Furthermore, Pearson employs the phrase “game of thrones” when elucidating the ascent of Traianus Decius and his endeavor to deceive Philippus Arabs. This reference draws from the renowned series of books by G. R. R. Martin, adding a contemporary cultural touch to the historical narrative (p. 29). Simultaneously, in his discourse on the plague, Pearson employs another phrase, namely “zombie apocalypse”, a term that has become entrenched in the contemporary collective consciousness through various films (p. 32). Further interventions aimed at providing relaxation and amusement to the reader include the following instances: Pearson notes that the year 251 was the “third year of the millennium, if anyone was still counting” (p. 55); additionally, he highlights Apostle Paul’s instruction that a woman who “prayed with her head uncovered should have it cut off”, followed by an open parenthesis to clarify that it pertains to hair (p. 65).

We believe that Pearson has skillfully employed certain strategies at pivotal moments in the book to engage the readers’ imagination, ensuring they won’t “turn to the dark side of the force”. One of Pearson’s strategic approaches involves crafting subheadings that are tailored to capture attention and ready the reader for the unveiling of historical moments laden with profound psychological and emotional significance: 1) regarding the plague: *The monster wakes* (p. 16); *Death on the Nile* (p. 32); *Pestilence strikes Carthage* (p. 90); *Universal pestilence* (p. 112); 2) regarding battles: *Ostrogotha invades* (p. 18); *Five hundred darics* (p. 78); *Treachery in Armenia* (p. 117); *Surprise attack on Antioch* (p. 127); *Duel at Tower 19* (p. 181); 3) regarding the persecutions of Christians: *Cyprian to the lions* (p. 38); *Qitmir* (p. 40) etc.

Another effective strategy employed by the author involves the strategic use of phrases such as “one can imagine”, “we can imagine”, “one imagines” and “one cannot help imagining”. Notably, the emphasis on the collective “we” underscores a shared journey of time travel during the Crisis of the Third Century, creating a dynamic interaction between the professor and the reader(s). Certainly, this approach serves to stimulate the imaginative faculties, and its application is evident in various contexts throughout the book: 1) when Traianus Decius received the decomposing head of the usurper Iotapianus (p. 34); 2) when it was highlighted that Traianus Decius, seated in his palace in Rome, contemplated the challenges ahead (p. 35); 3) when the victorious Roman troops acclaimed Traianus Decius after the battle of *Nicopolis ad Istrum* (p. 71); 4) when *legio XII fulminata* swiftly mobilized in response to the Persian forces attacking Armenia (p. 119); 5)

when Silbannacus was briefly proclaimed emperor (p. 148); 6) when Valerianus and Gallienus devised a joint “strategy for asserting their authority and protecting it against multiple threats being faced” (p. 161); 7) when considering the fate of the rustic population during barbarian raids (p. 197); 8) when describing a ceremony involving traditional sacrifices (p. 219); 9) when discussing the challenging situations faced by the people of that era (p. 230).

Certainly, the author employs a third strategy, which involves providing physical and personality descriptions of the Roman emperors. This approach aims to acquaint the reader with the key characters around whom the narrative revolves. By offering insights into the emperors’ physical attributes and personality traits, Pearson enhances the reader’s engagement with these historical figures, making them more vivid and relatable: Traianus Decius (p. 33-34, 36, 46, 57, 69, 90, 99); Herennius Etruscus (p. 36); Trebonianus Gallus (p. 48, 111-112); Valerianus (p. 159, 281 /note 11/); Gallienus (p. 170, 187, 200) etc.

Certainly, the fourth strategy involves the graphic description of historical events. Whether depicting the outbreak of the plague in cities, narrating the persecution of Christians, or detailing the intense battles between Romans and various adversaries such as Goths or Persians, Pearson employs detailed language (p. 16-17, 31-32, 38-39, 52-54, 78-81, 93-103, 181-184 etc.). The reader is placed in the center of these situations, but the author ensures that the former is not overwhelmed by the hardships experienced by the people of those times. Later, the author returns to the tense situations when he considers that the reader is ready to discover the continuation of the stories or their resolution. For instance, when describing the persecution of Christians, Pearson states: “At this point in the narrative, we must leave Dionysius and Cyprian in hiding, and poor Origen with his tormentors, shut in an iron collar with his flesh subjected to flying claws. Sadly, he was to remain in that miserable state for some time” (p. 40). After several pages, the author returns to Origen: “he was still being kept alive under appalling conditions by his tormenters in *Caesarea*, Palestine. The Roman governor there had decreed that Origen was to be released only if he publicly renounced his faith, of course, he refused to do” (p. 65). After another several pages, we find out that Origen “was still in grim detention” (p. 114). Finally, at page 160, we discover that he was “released from his prolonged imprisonment”. Another example of this technique is the use of the phrase “meanwhile” when the author wants to direct the reader’s attention from military conflicts to the plague, then, again, from the plague to the problems encountered by the Romans in their confrontation with the Goths. This transitional phrase helps maintain a dynamic narrative flow and keeps the reader engaged in multiple storylines (p. 90-93).

Another noteworthy aspect of Pearson's writing style is the introduction of small stories that serve to corroborate the ideas stated in the text: 1) the story of the so-called "seven sleepers of Ephesus"; according to the scenario of this story, in the context of the persecutions of Traianus Decius, seven devout youths gave up their fortunes and took refuge in a cave; 250 years later, they woke up during the reign of Theodosius II (402-450) and were amazed and delighted at the triumph of Christianity (p. 40-41); 2) the story of the meeting between Giovanni Battista De Rossi and Pope Pius IX (p. 125-126) etc.

Furthermore, Pearson informs us that he visited *Oescus*, about which he mentions that "he knows no better place to open a copy of Gibbon and contemplate the glory that was Rome" (p. 59, 266 /note 3/), but also the battlefield at *Abritus* (p. xiv, 97).

Lastly, the author draws parallels between ancient monuments, battles, and demography and their counterparts in the contemporary period to help readers better comprehend the concepts presented: 1) he notes that the enormous statue of the goddess Roma in the Eternal City had a comparable impact on the population as the modern Lincoln Memorial does on contemporary people. (p. xviii); 2) he draws a parallel between the military disasters of *Abritus* (for Traianus Decius) and Waterloo (for Napoleon), emphasizing the shared aspect of defeat in both historical events (p. 100-101); 3) he describes a subterranean chemical warfare reminiscent of the tactics employed on the Western Front in 1917 (p. 181-184); 4) regarding the population of the Roman Empire in 240, the author notes that estimates suggest it probably stood at around 65 million people; he draws a contemporary comparison, stating that this is equivalent to the current population of France or the United Kingdom, with a slightly better comparison being the population of the United States around the year 1900 (p. 3).

We have identified some minor oversights; however, they do not impact the overall quality of the volume: 1) on page 42, the author mentions that Pliny the Elder and Strabo provided different perspectives on the Nubian Blemmyes tribe; however, on page 265 (note 22), only the second ancient author, Strabo, is cited; 2) on page 42, the author makes a reference to the seventh-century Byzantine source known as *Chronicon Paschale*, but on page 263 (note 23), this source is not cited; 3) On page 66, the author argued that in modern times, a desecrated bronze head of Gordianus III, with ears cut off, was found in a river, but on page 267 (note 16), he wrote the name Claudius; 4) On page 266 (note 29), he points out that Emperor Commodus (180-192), despite his actions, was "deified by a successor, presumably to underline the fact that whatever his deeds, his right to rule was absolute"; it's correct that the note itself is consistent, and the author likely aimed to avoid burdening the reader with extra information; additionally, we can supplement the author's information by noting that the rehabilita-



tion of Commodus was carried out by Septimius Severus (193-211); after defeating Pescennius Niger (193-194) and Clodius Albinus (193-197), Septimius Severus secured his power; in a surprising move, he declared himself the adopted son of Marcus Aurelius (161-180) and the brother of Commodus; subsequently, he orchestrated the Senate's approval for Commodus' apotheosis, a turn of events that surprised many, given the Senate's previous condemnation of the tyrant (Dio Cass., LXXV, 7; 8; LXXVI, 9; Aur. Vict., *Caes.*, 20, 30; *SHA, Comm.*, XVII, 11-12; *Seu.*, XI, 4; XII, 8; XIX, 3; *Get.*, II, 2).

In conclusion, we firmly believe that Paul N. Pearson's work – *The Roman Empire in Crisis, 248-260: When the Gods Abandoned Rome* – deserves a prominent spot in the libraries of students and professors intrigued by Roman history or delving into the complexities of the Crisis of the Third Century. We also encourage the author to continue his scholarly pursuits, so that the entire academic community, including professors and students, as well as those new to the field of history but eager for knowledge, can benefit from and anticipate a third volume dedicated to the period from 260 to 284.

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