

BOOK REVIEW

L. Annaeus Cornutus: Greek Theology, Fragments, and Testimonia. By GEORGE BOYS-STONES. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2018. WGRW. Pp. xiv + 242. Paperback, \$35.95. ISBN 978-1-62837-210-6.

As a member of the board of directors of the WGRW series, I happily accepted this first published English translation of Cornutus' *Epidromē* (after the unpublished dissertation by Robert Hays, *Lucius Annaeus Cornutus' Epidrome*, University of Texas-Austin, 1983) and all fragments. Its volume editor is Glenn Most. José Torres published a critical edition, *Compendium de Graecae theologiae traditionibus*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018: the draft was made available to Boys-Stones, who otherwise based his translation on Lang's edition. In Italian, the most complete work is my *Anneo Cornuto, Compendio di teologia greca*, edition of the Greek text (changing Lang's edition, especially retaining glosses and expansions which he cut), monographic essay, integrative essay, translation, full commentary, and bibliography,¹ and my *Allegoria: L'età classica*, Milan: Vita&Pensiero, 2004, Chapter 6, and *Allegoristi dell'età classica*.² I contributed English essays on Cornutus' allegoresis and mythography;³ Gretchen Reydam-Schils provided an overview.⁴

The Introduction offers an account of the life of Cornutus, likely a freeborn citizen of Leptis,⁵ and situates him within the recent reevaluation of Roman philosophy and Cornutus' Stoic milieu. Stoicism in the first century CE is depicted as an international movement and a textual community. This reminds me of how Guy

¹ Milan: Bompiani, 2003. On my essays and commentaries here are expressly based (see *Vorwort*, p. VII) the introduction, translation, and notes of *CORNUTUS: Die Griechischen Götter*, ed, Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.

² Milan: Bompiani, 2007, 485-560.

³ "Annaeus Cornutus and the Stoic Allegorical Tradition: Meaning, Sources, and Impact," *AITIA* 8.2 (2018); "Cornutus," in *Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Mythography*, forthcoming.

⁴ "L. Annaeus Cornutus," in Christian Riedweg et al. (ed.), *Philosophie der Kaiserzeit und der Spätantike*, Basel: Schwabe, 2018, 141-143.

⁵ Historical and political aspects of Cornutus' life examined in my "Anneo Cornuto e gli Stoici Romani," *Gerión* 21 (2003) 283-303; "Lucius Annaeus Cornutus," in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, Oxford, updated 22 June 2018. <http://www.encyclopediaofancienthistory.com>.

Stroumsa represented early Christianity as a textual community in *The Scriptural universe of Ancient Christianity* (Harvard, 2016), with my remarks in *JRS* 108 (2018) 295-297. The intellectual program of post-Hellenistic Stoicism is characterised as interested in practical ethics (this might be the case with a semi-popular philosopher such as Musonius),⁶ but also in logic and science, as is clear in Manilius,⁷ and in the allegoresis of authoritative traditions, shared by Cornutus and Chaeremon.⁸ Cornutus' profile as a philosopher, which indeed "attests to real philosophical vitality in the early empire" (35), concentrates on his dialectics, including logic—with his criticism of Aristotle's *Categories* known from Porphyry—and rhetoric; physics (from scattered bits in his work, Chrysippean physical tenets are reconstructed, based on a fluid substance transformed into various elements to produce a cosmic order), and ethics. Notwithstanding the lack of technical terms in this elementary work, Cornutus maintains the *akolouthia* of all virtues, a (Stoic) tenet that I observe Origen, excellent knower of Cornutus, took over and even applied to Christ with a number of theological consequences (as a work on Origen will make clear).

Boys-Stones offers a profile of Cornutus' works: transmitted (*Epidromē*; *On Pronunciation or Orthography*), attested (*On Virgil*; *Against Aristotle*, likely on the *Categories*), dubious, such as the *Octavia*,⁹ and spurious.¹⁰ It is right that *Epidromē* is a "highly derivative" work, likely a "distillation of earlier work" (41). Unlike Torres, Boys-Stones thinks that the order of the text does not derive from a source (42) and offers a general reconstruction (43-44). He suggests that Cornutus was in conversation with the *Timaeus* (46-47): I think that Origen, reading

⁶ My *Musonio Rufo*, Milan: Bompiani, 2001; Valéry Laurand, *Stoïcisme et lien social*, Paris: Garnier, 2014.

⁷ Whose Stoic inspiration I studied in "Manilius and Stoicism," in *The Philosophizing Muse*, eds. Myrto Garani, David Konstan, Cambridge 2014, 161-186; *Stoici Romani minori*, Milan: Bompiani, 2008, 1-688.

⁸ On Chaeremon see my *Allegoria*, Ch. 7; *Allegoristi*, 671-707. His philosophical asceticism is studied in my *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery: The Role of Philosophical Asceticism from Ancient Judaism to Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2017, 52-54, 237.

⁹ For another attribution see Alessandro Galimberti, Ilaria Ramelli, "L'*Octavia* e il suo autore," *Aevum* 75 (2001) 79-99.

¹⁰ Analysis of all works in my *Cornuto*.

Cornutus, was well aware of this connection; like Bardaisan,¹¹ he read the Genesis account with the *Timaeus* in mind.

Finally, Cornutus is briefly placed within the long tradition of allegoresis, with reference (48) to my commentary and monographic essay in my *Cornuto* for an exhaustive treatment.¹² The translation is fluent but generally accurate, and the notes essential. Then comes the preface and translation with facing text of *On Pronunciation or Orthography*, a work plausibly connected with Cornutus' interest in etymology and in Virgil. I note interesting parallels with the book on grammar in Martianus' *De Nuptiis*, who interestingly shared a lot of material with Stoic allegoresis.¹³ He may also have read this work of Cornutus preserved by Cassiodorus. Fragments and *testimonia* are not separated, but collected thematically: Cornutus' Life (Diogenes Laertius, who included Cornutus in Book 7, and Cassius Dio are the most important sources¹⁴), Exegesis of Greek Theology (both Porphyry and Jerome attest to the knowledge that Origen had of Cornutus—Porphyry in order to bypass Philo's influence¹⁵) and *On Aristotle's Categories* (a criticism, the main sources being Porphyry and Simplicius). The Aristotelian category of *prosti* was used by Cornutus (*ap.* Simplicius, *C. Cat.* 187.28-36 Kalbfleisch) in connection with the category of hypostasis ("Cornutus maintained that beings are relative [*prosti*] when they have a relation [*skhesis*] with one another, not syntactically... but according to reality [*proshypostasin*: according to their individual substance], when one is in relation to the other [*prosheteron*] in its being"), which Origen applied to the Trinity. With Cornutus in mind, I suspect, whom Origen knew well, he applied to the Trinity, especially the Son-Father relation, the category of *prosti* and found a Biblical basis for this in the Johannine Prologue: the Logos "was *prostōn theon*" in relation to God the Father. Arius criticised Origen's theology claiming that the Son "is not eternal or coeternal with the Father, nor has he got his being

¹¹ As I argued in "Bardaisan: a Christian Middle Platonist from Edessa and his Reading of Scripture in the Light of Plato," in *Biblical & Qur'anic Traditions in the Middle East*, eds Cornelia Horn and Sidney Griffith, Warwick, RI: Abelian Academic, 2016, 215-238.

¹² In the literature on ancient allegory (49), my monograph *Allegoria* is missing, likely qua Italian. Another book, which could not be mentioned, is the *Oxford Handbook to Greco-Roman Mythography*, which, at the time of writing, we are eagerly awaiting.

¹³ My *Marziano Capella*, Milan: Bompiani, 2001; *I commenti a Marziano*, Milan: Bompiani—Istituto per gli Studi Filosofici, 2006; "Martianus Capella," in *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, Oxford 2020.

¹⁴ See also my full analysis in *Cornuto*.

¹⁵ As I argued in "The Philosophical Stance of Allegory in Stoicism and its Reception in Platonism," *IJCT* 18 (2011) 335-371, further in a work on Origen in preparation.

together with the Father, as some say that they are correlative / speak of the category of relation [*ta prosti*]" (Letter to Alexander, *ap.* Athanasius, *Syn.* 16). Nyssen will draw this category from Origen and emphasise it in the Trinitarian sense.

Other headings are Physics and Metaphysics (including a passage by Iamblichus on Cornutus' idea that the soul, corporeal, perishes with the body, a Stoic concept), Rhetoric, Fame as a Critic, On Vergil, on Lucan and miscellaneous. All this attests to Cornutus' breadth of intellectual interests, aligned with the Stoic tradition, evident already in Chrysippus and unified around the Logos, as I argued.¹⁶ The relation of discipleship and friendship between Cornutus and Persius is explored through the *Life of Persius* and Persius' *Satire* 5.¹⁷ Typos are rare (e.g. 182: 'known to have published commentary' > '... a commentary'). The bibliography includes much relevant material. This is a precious resource for English readers of Cornutus.

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¹⁶ My "Valuing Antiquity in Antiquity by Means of Allegoresis," in *Valuing the Past in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. James Ker and Christoph Pieper, Leiden: Brill, 2014, 485-507.

¹⁷ Analysed in my "Persio e Trasea," in *Stoici romani*, 1361-1515; "Persio," in *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, dir. Virgilio Melchiorre, Milan: Bompiani, 20062, IX.8526; "Persius, Aulus Flaccus," in *Encyclopaedia of Second Temple Judaism*, eds. Loren Stuckenbruck, Daniel Gurtner, London: T&T Clark, 2019, 600.