

This study offers valuable information on the early Roman cult and veneration of the first Christian martyrs. This is not a simple list of the different sources on which the honour of martyrs was established, but the author attempts to integrate them into the topographical environment in which they lived and performed their miracles. For her analyses she offers pictures and the locations of the material remains so that the readership can search for traces on a future visit to the city of Rome. The stone with the small indentations can now be found in the wall of the presbytery of the Church of S. Francesca Romana.

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Philip Burton (ed.), *Sulpicius Severus' Vita Martini*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017, xv + 298 pp., ISBN 978-0-19-967622-4, US\$ 175 (hb).

Students inspired Philip Burton to rework his lecture notes on Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* into this publication: an introduction to, translation of and commentary on the *Life of Martin* for a wider circle of readers. By doing so, they obliged that wider scholarly world. Burton's presentation of this all-time classic is a valuable addition to existing, and equally 'classic' commentaries on the same text, most notably the work of Jacques Fontaine completed between 1967–1969 (Sources Chrétiennes 133–135). Burton does not make Fontaine's work redundant, nor does he in any way claim that he aims to do so. He does full justice to the weight of Fontaine's edition *cum translatione cum commentario*, mentioned in the section 'Note on Background Reading' together with Clare Stancliffe's fundamental historical study of 1983, as 'the best introduction' to Sulpicius Severus and his (*Life of*) Martin (p. xiii). Burton's approach, nevertheless, is in many respects refreshingly different from Fontaine's. The work is evidently a welcome and accessible tool specifically to those less familiar with the French language. In that sense, it is a loss to find only the 27 chapters of the *Vita* translated and commented on, and not the three *Epistulae* that recount Martin's final days and death. These three letters are usually seen as one with the *Vita*, if only for the simple reason that a life needs an end, in particular a saint's life which ends in blissful death and access to heavenly life. As such, the medieval manuscripts that transmitted Sulpicius' work (including the Utrecht twelfth-century codex 124 that adorns the book's cover) usually let the *Epistulae* follow on the *Life* without much rupture.

Aspects in which Burton's general approach to Sulpicius' *Vita Martini* stands out include his elaborate study of style and classical influences on the text. A first, global overview of such classical influences (next to the biblical and early Christian hagiographic fond that Burton sketches first) is illuminating in the sense that it brings the multi-layered content and possible aims of the text into relief. Numerous references to classical authors as diverse as Cicero, Virgil and, most importantly, Sallust (pp. 80–81) give a clear impression both of Sulpicius' education and of the literary expectations of his readers. The many allusions to and rewritings of classical passages are explained as a deliberate choice by Sulpicius to 'spare' his readers: even if his Martin is not 'a classical hero' (p. 219), it will not harm the sophisticated reader to get acquainted with his life and deeds through this text (p. 81; see also p. 255).

By accentuating Livy and Tacitus as influential sources of inspiration, Burton presents Sulpicius' text also as a source with possible political purposes and the ambition to write an alternative foundation narrative to Livy's grand work (pp. 31–32). In this context, it is regrettable that other early Christian foundation narratives, most notably the so-called 'apocryphal' Acts of the apostles, remain in the shadow. Burton repeatedly refers to the apostle Paul as one of the biblical models of Martin (pp. 27–28; 39; 118), and rightly so. He discusses in detail the allusions to Paul's letters as well as the canonical book of Acts in the *Life of Martin*. Conversely, the apocryphal *Acta* or, in Latin more often, *Virtutes apostolorum* are not mentioned at all. This in contrast with Fontaine's suggestion that precisely these contemporaneous Latin rewritings of the early Christian Greek apocryphal Acts added to and nuanced the image of Martin as a *uir uere apostolicus* (SChr 133, p. 117).

On the other end of the spectrum of influential authors, Burton clarifies that Sulpicius remains sufficiently close to specific elements of the Christian Latin register to make the text acceptable to Christian readers. In his presentation of Sulpicius' work as part of "the dialogue between 'classical' and 'Christian' elements" (p. 41), Burton brings in the numerous ways in which Sulpicius must have surprised, even embarrassed his readers with classically oriented ears and eyes. In many aspects, Sulpicius stands out as a 'Christian' Latin author. In that respect, the work of the École de Nimègue, especially Christine Mohrmann herself, could have received a more important share in the introduction, where now (apart from Joseph Schrijnen) only English studies on this approach to late ancient and early medieval Latin are mentioned (p. 45: Leonard R. Palmer, Burton himself).

In this light, it is interesting to see how Burton deals with some specific Christian Latin elements in his translation of the text. His interpretation of

the adjective *pro* genitive-construction, frequent in Christian authors as is discussed by Mohrmann in the first volume of her *Études sur le latin des chrétiens* (Rome, 21961, pp. 169–175), may serve as an example. Sulpicius' repeated use of the phrase *prophetica voce* with reference to a passage from the biblical Book of Psalms is translated by Burton with an adverb ('prophetically', pp. 100–101), whereas in a Christian Latin interpretation this would be rather rendered as 'with the word of the Prophet', i.e. the Psalmist (what follows in c. 6.2 is indeed a quotation from Ps. 55,12). Likewise, the *lectio prophetica* in c. 9.4 (translated as 'the prophetic words of the reading', pp. 104–105) is not explicitly recognized as 'a reading from the Prophet', i.e. again, a reading from the Book of Psalms (sc. Ps. 8,3).

There are other deviations from Fontaine's earlier translation with more far-reaching interpretative implications. One of those is found early in the *Life*, where chapter 2 depicts Martin's singular behaviour as a military officer. Caput 2.5 includes the famous passage where Martin serves his single slave (although he would have been entitled to own more, as Fontaine notes: SChr 134, p. 459) in an inversion of roles: *cui tamen versa vice dominus serviebat*. Where Martin takes off his slave's *calciamenta* and washes [them] (*adeo ut plerumque ei et calciamenta ipse detraheret et ipse detergeret*, p. 96) before he shares his meal with his servant, Burton refers to two biblical influences (p. 156): John the Baptist on not being worthy to take off Christ's shoes (John 1, 27), and the pedilavium, esp. John 13, 5. Translating 'taking off his shoes and rubbing him down' (p. 96), Burton implies that the slave's feet are being washed here (as Martin factually does much later in the *Life*, to Sulpicius himself; see c. 25.3). However, in Fontaine's interpretation (which seems to be more in line with the Latin), not the slave's feet but his *calciamenta* are cleaned ('c'était lui qui lui retirait ses chaussures, lui encore qui les nettoyait', SChr 133, p. 255). Here, a reading of Paulinus of Périgueux' fifth-century versification (brought in by Burton elsewhere to contextualize Sulpicius' text, e.g. pp. 17, 85, 201) clarifies how near-contemporaries interpreted the passage. Rather than alluding to a washing of feet or the ritual of the pedilavium, Paulinus highlights how Martin actively resisted the – also in Christian circles – traditionally accepted master-slave relation. Paulinus takes more than 10 verses to explain what in his eyes happened here: the liberation of a slave, set free from the legal condition into which he was born and now to be envied by *nobiles* (Paulinus of Périgueux, *De vita sancti Martini libri sex*, 1, l. 43–53). In Paulinus' interpretation, Martin's action as presented by Sulpicius immediately leads to the release of a slave from the bonds that so many confrères of the fourth-century bishop were inclined to accept.

Fontaine, in his turn, leaves some important room for further and more detailed interpretation of Sulpicius' text at pivotal points in the *Life*, some of them being picked up by Burton, others less so. Thus, Martin's quintessential decision to ask to be released from duty when still in function as an officer (ch. 4), and in particular his attitude towards Emperor Julian as his commander-in-chief is presented by Fontaine as an example of Stoic *apatheia* (SChr 134, p. 526s; cf. Burton's comments on p. 258). Burton, re-evaluating the character of Julian as *tyrannus*, reads Martin as an example of *parrhesia*, the prerogative of the Christian martyr in front of a persecutor (p. 168; see also pp. 235–236). This act of free speech in the face of a ruler marks Martin's behaviour as an example of 'good citizenship' (p. 168). Similar civic behaviour comes to the fore in chapter 18, located in the city of Trier. In this passage, Martin does not perform *parrhesia* himself, but is a mediator of free speech for the demoniac he urges to speak in public (pp. 114–115). The liberation of the city which is the immediate result of the possessed man's 'confession' is, according to Burton, also the result of Martin's 'good statesman[ship]' (p. 229).

In view of the explanation of c. 18.1–2 as an example of good citizen- and statesmanship in a saint's life, it is surprising to find so little emphasis on the civic implications of the miracle story that follows in c. 18.3 (the cure of the leper of Paris), a story that immediately mirrors the most famous passage of the *Life*: the division of the cloak in chapter 3. The stories have much in common, which is, as Burton remarks, immediately visible in the '*mise en scène* at the city gate' (pp. 229–230). The crucial setting is, however, not further commented on, not in the discussion of chapter 18 nor of chapter 3 before. The civic implications of a miracle that takes place in the liminal space of the city gate, or how this miracle changes the persons and elements involved (the thaumaturge and the leper or the naked beggar respectively as well as the city itself) is not teased out. Thus, Burton's excellent study inspires not one but numerous and repeated re-readings of this classic text, which is still not exhaustively discussed.

A few typos caught my eye: on p. 59, the future participle is found at sentence-initial position in 24.5 (*descensus ad terram*), not 24.7. On p. 110, the text should read *nullus locus* (not *nullos locus*), whereas on p. 218 the technique is obviously Sulpicius', not Martin's invention.

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