

Saint Gregory Nazianzen: *Selected Poems*. Translated with an Introduction by J. A. McGuckin. Oxford: SLG Press (Fairacres Publication 94), 1986, paper, 44 pages. Price £1.00.

The Rev. Dr. Hohn McGuckin is professor of Patristics at la Sainte Union College, Southampton (England), and not unfamiliar to the readers of the PBR. Dr. McGuckin's published work includes numerous articles on theological topics, and two books on Patristics: *Symeon the New Theologian, Chapters and Discourses*, and *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition*.

Dr. McGuckin's present publication, although small in number of pages, is a most welcome addition to the old and incomplete translations of St. Gregory's poetry by H. S. Boyd (1814), J. Brownlie (1913), F. Cordaro (Italian, 1955), P. Gallay (French, 1941), J. H. Newman (1896), M. Pellegrino (Italian, 1939). True, there are several recent books on Saint Gregory of Nazianzus besides those enlisted on Dr. McGuckin's bibliography, for instance the ones by D. F. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation* (Cambridge, MA. 1979), and R.R. Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (Oxford, 1969), which are not included in the bibliography of Dr. McGuckin. However, scholars and even the specialists consistently refrained from translating Gregory's poetry because his poetic Greek is frequently cast in Homeric style and is particularly difficult, often deliberately obscure, suggestive, ironic, and too complicated to be rendered into English verse that could claim poetic merit of its own (as Newman did for only a very few of the poems).

This selection of only twenty poems, from over four hundred that St. Gregory the Theologian composed, is nevertheless one of the largest English editions. It was a personal choice designed to represent some of Gregory's more overtly Christological writing by a few of the dogmatic poems, and some of his smaller, more intimate meditations, especially his prayers, doxologies and laments. In these Gregory chooses to meet Arian and Apollinarian heretics on their own ground and demonstrates that Christians are as cultured as the pagans. «Like a window momentarily opened on a lost and distant world: such are the joys of reading Gregory's poetry», says Dr. McGuckin so insightfully.

This charming and delightful selection offers besides helpful comments and notes, a select bibliography, also a long and useful Introduction describing Gregory's life, the historical context of the theological controversies of the period, and the significance of the points of doctrine expressed in these poems.

The reviewer cordially congratulates the author and wishes him all the strength and patience in translating many more precious poems from the πνευματοκίνητον Gregorian pen!

Kingston, New York

CONSTANTINE N. TSI-PANLIS

Barry Baldwin, *An Anthology of Byzantine Poetry*, Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben Publisher, 1985, viii+244, hard cover, n. p.

This most welcome Anthology does fill a gap, indeed, because it does not only include selections from the 4th century (all other Anthologies of Beck, Krumbacher, Trypanis, Soyter, Cantarella, and N. G. Wilson begun with the 6th century), but it also provides copious notes, introductions to and comments on each author which are very helpful and valuable even to the professional Byzantinists.

The arrangement of the material is largely chronological, to reflect both continuity and change in Byzantine civilization. Furthermore, Professor Baldwin gives the basic background information for the appreciation of each poem emphasizing linguistic matters. Learned allusions to classical and patristic authors are of course traced wherever possible. After all Dr. Baldwin is a well-known classicist, a prolific author, and continues to successfully teach classics at the University of Calgary (Canada).

It is most gratifying to see Dr. Baldwin's scholarly appreciation of the merit of Byzantine literature which in his own words «is worth reading for its own sake» in sharp contrast to the notorious and quite prejudiced conclusion of the late Romilly Jenkins (*Dionysius Solomos*, Cambridge 1940, 57) that: «The Byzantine Empire remains almost the unique example of a highly civilized state, lasting for more than a millenium, which produced hardly any educated writing which can be read with pleasure for its literary merit alone» (the emphasis is the reviewer's).

Dr. Baldwin's first selections (only four and with no translations) are, appropriately so, from the great Church Father and the pioneer of Byzantine lyric poetry *St. Gregory Nazianzenus* (329-389), who is credited with around 400 poems amounting to some 25.000 lines, and who is still the great agnostos to both the East and the West!. From Arius's poetry which is placed as second selection in the entire volume, the two surviving fragments (via Athanasius) are published in the original Greek, but again without translation. After Arius there follow 47 selections. Their original Gteek is printed clearly and impeccably. However, none of them is translated in this Anthology. Most of the selections are not long and not always the most representative ones. On the other hand, the abundant explanatory notes and bibliographical annotations are certainly the original features of this fine work of Dr. Baldwin.

Kingston, New York

CONSTANTINE N. TSIRPANLIS

Margaret Mullett and **Roger Scott** (eds.), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, Birmingham (England): Centre for Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, 1984, x+250, soft cover.

This volume is a handy collection of 19 interesting papers, which were presented by mostly Classicists and Byzantinists to the Thirteenth Spring