

providing an initial listing of the sections to which each ancient author contributes and a useful glossary of technical terms.

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DARMON (R.) *Dieux futiles, dieux utiles. La mythographie comme forme de savoir dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*. (Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 637.) Pp. 443, ills. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2022. Paper, €49. ISBN: 978-2-600-06341-8.

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D. studies the relevance of ancient mythography in a series of forgotten authors from the sixteenth century. She defines a corpus of eight works, composed between 1525 and 1567 in Austria, Flanders and Italy, which have pagan gods as their subject and which move away from the compilation of entertaining stories in order to propose a real elaboration of knowledge at the beginnings of modernity. The Graeco-Latin gods, far from being 'futile', are therefore quite 'useful', as the title suggests. The selected mythographers are Montefalco (*De cognominibus deorum opusculum* [1525]), Pictorius (*Theologia mythologica* [1532] and *Apotheseos ... deorum libri* [1558]), Haurech (*De cognominibus deorum gentilium* [1541]), Giraldi (*De deis gentium ... historia* [1548]), Herold (*Heydenwelt und ihrer Götter* [1554]), Cartari (*Le Imagini con la spositione de i Dei de gli antichi* [1556]) and Conti (*Mythologiae, siue Explicationum fabularum libri decem* [1567]). Their sophisticated treatises, most of them written in Latin and then translated into the vernacular, due to their success, explore observations on the course of the stars, laws of natural philosophy or political precepts guiding princes in the art of governing.

The work comprises six main parts. The first recalls how late antique and then medieval mythography, with the *Mythologiae* of Fulgentius and the *Mythographus Vaticanus III*, stands out from conventional grammatical commentary in favour of a construction of abstract knowledge. It is unfortunate, however, that D. does not engage with the medieval encyclopaedism of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, which would have supported her thesis with an epistemological mythography. The mythological theology is thus very much prior to Boccaccio. The mythographers of the sixteenth century also reconnected in an original way with a fabulous discourse crossing poetry and physics, reflecting on polytheism (Haurech), on a non-genealogical 'history' (Giraldi) or on the meaning both textual and pictorial of the picture (Herold, Cartari, Pictorius). Part 2 recalls how these mythographers refer explicitly to the ancient use of mythography as 'total knowledge' (Aristotle, Theophrastus, Pliny, Strabo).

Part 3 analyses the stylistic realisation of a rhetoric of *variatio, copia* (encyclopaedic abundance) or *enargeia* in the text-image relationship. Part 4 studies, in a similar way, the iconography presented in the editions of Herold (engraved wood), Pictorius (1558) and Cartari (revised by Pignoria in 1615). Part 5 identifies the auctorial intentions of which the mythographers avail themselves: to recompose a dispersed material (the 'body of Hippolytus'); to preserve ancient knowledge threatened with extinction; to rearrange previous interpretations to create new ones; to pursue an open and polyphonic work. Part 6 questions the reception of these works and the way in which the

Renaissance approached, in the context of religious conflict, the cultural, political and religious otherness represented by pagan gods. The volume could have benefited from a section devoted to a typology of the knowledge in question, to their philosophical questioning; it would have been helpful if D., beyond the formal issues, had presented a more precise idea of these contents. But the work is nonetheless rich and instructive.

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