

Roald Dijkstra (ed.): *The Early Reception and Appropriation of the Apostle Peter (60–800 CE). The Anchors of the Fisherman*. Leiden/Boston: Brill 2020 (Euhormos 1). XVI, 342 p., 26 ill. \$ 140.00/ € 116.00. ISBN: 978-90-04-42567-5.

This sleek, visually attractive collective volume edited by Roald Dijkstra consists of fourteen chapters that have been written by as many different individuals with a view to exploring the use of the figure of the apostle Peter as an ‘anchor’.¹ Rooted in the theoretical musings of Sluiter and Raimondi Cominesi,² the concept is applied to the figure of Peter and the various ways in which people made use of this apostolic figure between the earliest years of Christianity and the early Middle Ages. To that end, the volume is divided into four parts. The first effectively furnishes readers with an overview of the whole as well as a theoretical grounding accompanied by some opportune reflections. Hence, the contributions of Roald Dijkstra (3–25) and Olivier Hekster (26–40) serve, in complementary fashion, as an introduction to the themes to be explored. The second part is devoted to the topic of authority and the figure of Peter. The contributions of John R. Curran (43–57) and Thomas F. X. Noble (58–80), with their respective focus on the title of *pontifex maximus* and papal inscriptions, explore the use of Peter to construct the authority of the bishops of Rome. The contributions of Markus Bockmuehl (81–98) and Régis Burnet (99–112) explore the construction of the figure of Peter as depicted vis-à-vis the Roman and Jewish authorities and as conceived by marginal communities in Syria and elsewhere in the Roman empire. The third part is dedicated to the topic of artistic representations of the apostle Peter. The contributions of Jutta Dresken-Weiland (115–134) and Markus Löß (135–171), with their respective focus on the life and death of the apostle, offer a review of the salient themes and instances to be found in visual artwork such as mosaic and sculpture on sarcophagi. The contributions of Mark Humphries (172–187) and Carl P.E. Springer (188–199), which focus on the poetry of Prudentius and Sedulius respectively, illustrate the ways in which

1 For the table of contents, readers are referred to the end of this review.

2 I. Sluiter: *Anchoring Innovation: a Classical Research Agenda*. In: *European Review* 25.1, 2017, 20–38, and A. Raimondi Cominesi: *The Past on the Wall. Anchoring Political Innovation in the Decoration and Architecture of the Imperial Residences on the Palatine (44 BCE–235 CE)*. Diss. Nijmegen 2019.

mainstream poets imagined the figure of Peter and contributed further to the myth. The fourth part is concerned with the pragmatic, tangible effects of the cult of the apostle Peter. Hence, the contributions of Annewies van den Hoek (203–230) and Kristina Friedrichs (231–249) look at the architectural settings created for worship in conjunction with the memory of Peter, focusing on the Memorial of the Apostles along the Appian Way and the Vatican basilica. This attention to architecture is complemented by an attention to cult and liturgy in the contributions of Alan Thacker (250–276) and Els Rose (277–292), dealing in turn with early martyr cult at Rome and later liturgical developments elsewhere in the Latin-speaking West. Although visibly arranged in pairings, these variegated pieces possess numerous points of correspondence, thus making for what is arguably an organic whole.

The materials covered by this collective volume are quite varied, which fact contributes in no small way to its utility. The geographical scope, for instance, is vast, extending from Spain and Gaul to Syria and from London (British Museum) to Africa and Egypt. There is no provincial limitation here to the mere setting of Rome (or other locations associated with the apostle's biography), but an ecumenical coverage in the full sense of the term. The temporal scope of the volume is likewise ample, ranging from the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth to the age of Charlemagne and beyond (e.g., the Hagia Sophia mosaic of the late tenth century CE that represents Constantine holding a model of the church³ and the so-called *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum* of the eleventh century CE). In terms of content, the material remains examined include cameos, mosaics, frescos, medallions, bas-reliefs, sarcophagi, graffiti, monumental inscriptions, buildings, whereas the texts discussed belong to genres as diverse as poetry, liturgy, history, hagiography, and law (it is worth adding that even a ground-plan and an artist's reconstruction are offered for the basilica of St Peter in the Vatican). Disciplines as diverse as philology, jurisprudence, history, and archaeology thereby come into play, shedding light on material and immaterial artefacts. In short, the reader is reminded (were that necessary) of the wealth of material available for the study of the reception of the apostle

3 For the genesis of this mosaic, now see L. Riccardi: Alcune riflessioni sul mosaico del vestibolo sud-ovest della Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli. In: A. Rigo/A. Babuin/M. Trizio (eds.): *Vie per Bisanzio*. VII Congresso Nazionale dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini. Venezia, 25–28 novembre 2009. Vol. 1. Bari 2013 (Due punti 25,1), 357–371.

Peter. Much of this is likely to be useful, as it will introduce readers to new or rarely reproduced images (e.g., Brandenburg's reconstruction of the interior of the Vatican basilica [fig. 7.4]; the denial of Peter [fig. 7.3: Ospedale S Spirito sarcophagus]; and Peter and the dog of Simon Magus [fig. 7.2: sarcophagus lid in Muzeum Narodowe of Krakow]) and texts that are equally esoteric for modern readers (e.g., the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and the *Acts of Peter*). The wide range of evidence considered is one of the noteworthy strengths of this volume, making it useful for seminars (as a whole book) and survey courses (as single chapters).

On the other hand, it might be observed that this variety does not preclude overlap and what at times seems useless, ineffectual repetition. Was there really a need for both Hekster (29–33) and Curran (49–55) to focus at length upon the title of *pontifex maximus*? After all, as readers will be aware and as the authors themselves remark, the title of *pontifex* was merely one of many employed by the bishops of Rome in Late Antiquity, and that of *pontifex maximus* was only appropriated by the successors of Peter in the fifteenth century as part of the process of reclaiming the Classical past that we now know as the Renaissance. To cite another example, even though the perspectives taken by Bockmuehl, Burnet, and Thacker are unquestionably different, the need to introduce readers to sources such as the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and the *Acts of Peter* results in a paradoxical situation of overlapping treatment and arguably insufficient background information. To give yet a third instance, we might note that the graffiti of the *trichlia* of the *Memoria Apostolorum* are discussed in some depth and illustrated (figs. 11.1; 12.1) in the contributions of both van den Hoek and Friedrichs. Certainly, that monument with its hundreds of inscriptions is extremely significant, but one must wonder why the discussion was not tightened up and then extended so as to take note of the Constantinian basilica apparently built over the site at a moment when the cult of both saints was still observed there.

The failure to discuss the Constantinian basilica of the apostles on the Via Appia raises the issue of frequent, curious gaps in the citation of the evidence, both visual and written. For instance, one might have expected some sort of reference to the celebrated Πέτρος ἐνι inscription published by

Margherita Guarducci.⁴ Moreover, as any epigrapher would note, the failure to provide at least one photograph for one of the many Damasan inscriptions is quite inexplicable. These constitute a nice contrast with the ‘do-it-yourself quality’ of the graffiti that both van den Hoek and Friedrichs have cited, on a par with the ‘day/night contrast’ between Protestant and Catholic approaches to the theology of salvation. On another note, the failure to show a photograph of any of the famous glass vases depicting the apostles Peter and Paul seems somewhat odd in view of the numerous illustrations given over to frescos, medallions, and cameos depicting other saints or Christ himself. Or, to cite something of especial interest at present, why was no representation of the Dura-Europos image of Peter offered? Students and colleagues might now, thanks to the recent war, be expected to be able to locate this site on the map. Finally, it is rather odd not to find at least one photograph or drawing of the Vatican ‘trophy’ described by Gaius. That, after all, has proved the ‘anchor’ par excellence for the apostle Peter in the landscape of Rome over the centuries.

It is impossible to leave the topic of omission without referring to the ‘elephant in the room’, viz. the debate inaugurated by Glen W. Bowersock’s landmark publication of Giacomo Grimaldi’s testimony and drawings of the brick stamps discovered during the Vatican basilica’s demolition in the late sixteenth century. While the publications of Paolo Liverani and Hugo Brandenburg are not the last word, they also display a pernicious tendency to omit and cancel. Hence, it was incumbent on Friedrichs to offer at least a minimal reference to the opposite side of the debate as it has been expressed in the publications of Bowersock, Logan, Barnes, Gem, and now Westall. This is not a personal issue (even though the reviewer’s work is involved), but concerns the work of a number of widely respected colleagues and goes to the heart of what is involved when one engages in scholarship. To blot out the other half of the dialogue for reasons of content – and not for tone – is to do a tremendous disservice to scholarship and oneself. So, in the spirit of Galileo Galilei’s “e pur si muove”, the reviewer reiterates that there is abundant, good cause to disregard the tradi-

4 M. Guarducci: *I graffiti sotto la confessione di San Pietro in Vaticano*. Vol. 2. Città del Vaticano 1958, 387–407. For critical discussion and varying degrees of acceptance, see G. W. Bowersock: *Peter and Constantine*. In: W. Tronzo (ed.): *St. Peter’s in the Vatican*. Cambridge 2005, 5–15, here 14 n. 22; C. Carletti: *Epigrafia dei cristiani in occidente dal III al VII secolo. Ideologia e prassi*. Bari 2008 (*Inscriptiones Christianae Italiae. Subsidia* 6), 265–266 (no. 167).

tional attribution of the Vatican basilica to Constantine. Collegial recognition of that fact or counterarguments would have been welcome.

Next to last, there is a problem that no reviewer wants to raise and which was hardly imagined in view of the good repute of the publisher and colleagues involved. There are tremendous linguistic issues with this collective volume. That is painfully evident from the very outset. The opening quote from the *Peristephanon* of Prudentius was taken from the Loeb Classical Library translation of that poet and yet, in spite of modifying the language to make it more modern, the editor has failed to remove what must be deemed an error in the form of an intrusive gloss (viz. “the one he who” [3]). The book is shot through with innumerable, inelegant linguistic errors, and at times it is far from clear what is meant.⁵ Such a state of affairs is unacceptable in an undergraduate paper and most unfortunate in a scholarly publication. This is a terrible disservice to readers, to the contributors, and to the publisher.

In closing, it seems appropriate to close with a few thoughts on missed opportunities as well as further possibilities for work that may be inspired by this volume. In spite of the dreadful editing, there is a legitimate case to be made for using it as a springboard for productive discussion. One topic that this reviewer would have liked to see examined seriously is the use that was made of the figure of the apostle Peter for establishing and defining geo-ecclesiological relations between Rome and other sees, as in the well-known cases of the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantino-

5 Examples chosen at random include: “the emperors [...] declare that all the people submitted to them should adhere” (6); “his combat with Simon Magus” (9); “the first written source is pretended to be written by Linus” (12); “the centre of the city was claimed for the Christian case” (14); “a bird eyes perspective” (19–20); “More than any emperor was associated with Rome, mentioning Constantine seems” (35); “The text [...] majors on Peter’s attempts” (90); “the scene with the cock transports ‘content’” (123); “a small niche assumingly for the private worship” (145); “it is only children that are taken on their wrist” 162); “bishops lists existed or had been construed” (217); “to underpin other (own) ideas” (245); “he is presented as [...] the fundament [...] of the church” (286). It is perhaps worth adding that the introduction (7) implies that Hekster’s contribution is situated in what is now the second of the four parts of this book and gives a title for that part (*Peter and Power*) which is different from what it now has (*Anchoring the Authority of Peter*).

ple.⁶ Another topic that seems to merit investigation and that suggests itself in the course of the discussions of fixed artistic representations of the apostles Peter and Paul is the possibility that the apostles' physiognomy was understood by artists and audience to symbolise the apostles' evangelisation of the Jews and Gentiles respectively. Yet a third topic that merits further discussion concerns the likelihood that the inverted crucifixion of the apostle Peter that is now a standard element in the iconography was in fact a folk invention based upon the prophecy attributed to Jesus at the close of the *Gospel of John*. As has been argued in clear, precise philological detail, the prophecy points to the apostle's death by means of the *tunica molesta* during the persecution of Nero in CE 64.⁷ As these topics show, the latent possibilities characteristic of an 'anchor' abound, inviting further attention and research, and the present volume is certain to stimulate such work.

- 6 The term derives from the seminal work of Ph. Blaudeau: *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451–491). De l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie*. Rome 2006 (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 327).
- 7 Jn 21:18–19; T. D. Barnes: *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*. Tübingen 2010 (Tria Corda 5), 3–9. Naturally, this stands in opposition to the well argued case (that Peter never visited Rome) made by O. Zwierlein: *Petrus in Rom. Die literarischen Zeugnisse. Mit einer kritischen Edition der Martyrien des Petrus und Paulus auf neuer handschriftlicher Grundlage*. Berlin/New York 2009 (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 96). For the events of CE 64 and the Neronian persecution, readers will now wish to consider the opposing views offered by B.D. Shaw: *The Myth of the Neronian Persecution*. In: *JRS* 105, 2015, 73–100; Ch.P. Jones: *The Historicity of the Neronian Persecution. A Response to Brent Shaw*. In: *NTS* 63, 2017, 146–152.

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