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Political history remains the primary focus of the “Documents” section that follows. Surprisingly, and despite offering no fewer than six excerpts (out of a total of thirty-two) from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sources, this section includes no contemporary source on the rise of Cosimo or on the oligarchic Albizzi regime that preceded it: a reflective extract from the *Commentaries* of Pope Pius II (r. 1458–64) has to suffice. Setting this lacuna aside, the choice of documents is pleasing in its scope. A mistranslation from the medieval Latin has a 1448 letter from the Medici bank coming to Cardinal John Kempe, archbishop of York, from “the villa [*sic*] at Bruges” (91). The bank (*Petrus de Medicis et socii*, and not, as claimed here, Piero himself, who was in Florence at the time) writes to inform the cardinal that its branch in Rome has secured a papal bull for his nephew’s appointment to the bishopric of London—if only His Most Reverend Paternity will pay up. The extract offers a good picture of the family’s European financial firepower and reach and its influence at the papal curia that were so essential to its rise. This provides a nice counterpoint to the documents from the period of Lorenzo the Magnificent, showing something of the evolving character of the regime and the cultural climate in which it operated: his expenses, his collections, his advice to his son Giovanni (the future Pope Leo X) on becoming a cardinal at fourteen years of age, and (particularly welcome) an allegory by the poet Luca Pulci of Lorenzo and Florence, told through the story of a satyr and his poetic contest for the love of a nymph. Again, as in the narrative section, the selection for the Savonarolan period is helpful and rich. It encompasses short excerpts from Savonarola’s treatises and sermons, but also sources from other contemporary witnesses and participants. Although the extracts are short, Bartlett’s valuable selection offers students a varied and interesting foundation.

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FLORIS BERNARD and CHRISTOPHER LIVANOS, eds. and trans., *The Poems of Christopher of Mytilene and John Mauropous*. (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 50.) Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2018. Pp. xxii, 599. \$29.95. ISBN: 978-0-674-73698-6.
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Wit, irony, drama, lament, devotion, and hope are all to be found in this sleek and elegant volume with poetry from a Byzantium ready for one more social and cultural change. In the decades to follow the composition of the texts translated in this book, appreciation for rhetoric—and especially poetry—became an essential characteristic of a close-knit group, manning church and state administration. The playful rhythm of poetry carried truth and criticism, but also Christian piety and personal emotions. John Mauropous and Christopher Mitylenaios were among the first to represent that trend, which became most relevant from the twelfth century on. The two authors lived contemporaneously around the middle of the eleventh century in the capital of Byzantium, Constantinople, and they wrote in an artificial linguistic form minted for and through literature, Byzantine Greek. Their poetry was not combined in medieval manuscripts and it is unclear whether the two ever encountered each other. But Floris Bernard and Christopher Livanos are right in choosing to discuss their works in parallel, for these verses are sole surviving examples of similar intellectual choices, presumably widespread at their time. The perseverance in the pace of time of Mitylenaios’s and Mauropous’s poetry should be rather attributed to luck and the choices of the authors, as their collective works survive mainly in single copies for the compilation of which they had been personally responsible.

The volume, part of the prestigious series Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, is divided in two sections. The first section offers a full translation of the playful and vivid poems by Mitylenaios. This author followed a career in public administration. His poetry, addressed

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to friends and enemies, is about personal and daily matters he encountered in the city, such as his friend's gout, his cousin's cake with a firmament-inspired decoration, his passion for horse races, gifts to friends, and even the mice in his home. Yet, his texts follow conventions appropriate to the Byzantine epigram, as well as rhetorical *ethopoiiae* ("character drawing") and *ekphraseis* (creative descriptions of people, occasions, or objects). The informal undertone of Mitylenaios's texts is enriched by his quotation of popular proverbs. Mitylenaios's poetry is a gem, as texts concerning trivia have rarely survived, being deemed unimportant for (and by) posterity—although (alas!) the single extant manuscript of his poetic book is in a wretched condition because of the work of the mice he complained about (poem 103, at 204–11).

The second section of the book offers a translation of John Mauropous's poetry. Mauropous's profile is different from that of Mitylenaios. He was the metropolitan of Euchaita (in Asia Minor) and a renowned teacher—he even taught the great Michael Psellos. Mauropous wrote epigrams to accompany his books and orations (also collected by himself) and created various works of art. His poetry is rather serious compared to that of Mitylenaios and demanding, as it encapsulates and explores the entire spectrum of classicizing learning and *paideia* in general (from Euripides to Gregory of Nazianzus). Time has been kind to his texts and their robust tone is appropriate in the context of his collection: Mauropous saved poetry that he deemed profitable for his friends (see Mauropous, poem 1, verses 26–30, at 319).

Such a wealth of primary sources has been made available to a wide audience thanks to this publication of their first complete English translation and commentary. The expert will benefit from the translators' textual emendations and suggestions that improve on current editions. The translation of the heavily damaged poems by Mitylenaios, which are admittedly hardly comprehensible, particularly deserves praise. The notes at the end of the translations allow the reader to navigate through their meaning and highlight the significance of each individual poem. The volume (as well as the series) should be applauded for the presentation of the original Greek text facing the English translation, allowing the reader equal access to both forms.

The only point of criticism for this most valuable publication is the fact that the authors are hesitant to break a number of misconceived modern conventions related to the discussion of Byzantine literature. In the past fifteen years scholars have strongly argued for a rejection of such conventions. Consider, for example, the very appellation of the first of the two Byzantine poets, "Christopher of Mytilene." Christopher's second name is "Mitylenaios" (*sic*), which may or may not indicate a direct relation to the city of Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. In fact, the authors state that "the designation 'of Mytilene' is . . . something of a misnomer." It may have become "his standard appellation in modern Anglophone scholarship" (x), but this does not mean that the misleading convention should be perpetuated—especially in a landmark volume for the study of his work. The same holds true for the translation of the word *epigramma*, which is inconsistently rendered as "inscription" or "epigram." As has been repeatedly discussed in current scholarship (certainly familiar to Bernard and Livanos), although an *epigramma* may be published as a verse inscription, nothing guarantees that it was primarily composed for an inscriptional context (except of course if found *in situ*). Equally baffling is the literal translation of official terms related to public administration and other court titles. Such translations not only result occasionally in amusing formulations (e.g., "census taker" for *kēnsoualios*, at 145), but they also deny a political system of the past its individuality, inviting the reader instead to interpret the texts according to a familiar—Western—system of rulership.

Again, such issues are minor when weighed against the service that this volume offers within the fields of medieval history, art history, and literature.

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