

Scott MCGILL, Cristiana SOGNO and Edward WATTS, eds., *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Later Roman History and Culture, 284–450 CE*. *Yale Classical Studies* 34. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. 332. 1 Illustration. Hardcover, £55.00/\$95.00. ISBN 978-0-521-89821-8.

This volume reflects the high standards normally associated with the *Yale Classical Studies* series and with the scholarship of John Matthews, whose seventieth birthday it celebrates. It is distinctive in two respects: the degree to which its contents connect insightful observations about specific authors or texts to broader issues of central importance to the period in question; and the attentiveness of its editors and individual contributors to cohesion within the components of its three sections and between the sections themselves.

David Potter begins “Politics, Law, and Society,” the first of those sections, with an intelligent examination of the history of the relationship between imperial and regional identities and people with power—men who sometimes held administrative positions but at other times recognized that they need not bother to do so, that it was their personal power which legitimated the offices they held and, by extension and up to a certain chronological point, the unified empire itself. Peter Garnsey’s subject is the persistence of patronage in the face of immense historical change, especially in the realms of politics, religious practice and imperial administration. This staying power was in part the result, in part the cause, of what he sees as two complementary styles of patronage, that of the *homo politicus* and a that of a type closer to what we might associate with the upper echelons of employment agencies or dating services (the analogies are mine). Cristiana Sogno studies links between the themes of matchmaking and patronage in the correspondence of Pliny, Augustine and Symmachus and concludes with the less-than-surprising observation that “Symmachus’s letters reconfirm ... the importance of marriage for the formation of family alliances” and the perhaps reductionist assertion that matchmaking “seems to have been just another form of patronage” (p. 71). Jill Harries removes Constantine the Great’s legislation on wills from the novel Christian context in which Eusebius had placed it and repositions it within a tradition of addressing under long-standing principles of Roman law problematic aspects of the adjudication of wills. Serena Connolly uses *Cod. Just.* 12.46.1, a fuller but interpolated version of an original that *Cod. Theod.* 7.20.2 preserves in abbreviated form, as a means of gauging how Constantine wished to project his commitment to the army—i.e., as “a sympathetic respon-

dent to unhappy veterans”—and the late imperial style in which he would govern (p. 107).

Edward Watts opens Part II, “Biography and Panegyrics,” with an investigation of how Iamblichus’ *On the Pythagorean Life*, Eusebius’ *Life of Origen*, Athanasius’ *Life of Antony* and Augustine’s *Confessions* employ a rhetoric of philosophical biography to chart a Christian philosophical path. This is important stuff, but I am not so sure that late antique philosophical biographies, as opposed to the autobiographical *Confessions*, “introduce their readers to a set of esoteric teachings and argue for their importance” (p. 132) as much as they hold up to their readers certain *bioi*—styles of life—to serve as models or inspirations for the tendance of soul(s). Josiah Osgood employs Paulinus of Pella’s autobiographical *Eucharisticos*, written in hexameters replete with echoes of Virgil and composed partly as a repudiation of Paulinus’ formal schooling, to chart the complex currents of continuity and change in education during the fourth and fifth centuries. Scott McGill reveals the broad and important implications for the study of late antique biography of Phocas’ hexameter *Life of Virgil* and of its author’s incorporation into a substrate borrowed from Aelius Donatus of material Phocas knew and assumed his readers would know was fictional. Susanna Elm closes Part II with a fine contribution on Gregory of Nazianzus’s *Orations* 4 and 5, in which she demonstrates how *common* ground paradoxically served to separate Gregory of Nazianzus from the saint’s own cautionary literary creation, his Julian the Apos-tate.

The trio of contributions that constitute Part III—“The Faces of Theodosius”—will repay being read together. Peter Heather analyzes Themistius’ role as “spin doctor” for the failed warrior-emperor Theodosius in the aftermath of military setbacks against the Goths and a potentially humiliating compromise peace. Heather concludes that the movement into the empire of the Goths and others like them, by destroying “the subject matter, the authors, and even the potential audience for large-scale classicizing histories,” hastened and made more complete the triumph in the Latin west of the Christian chronicle, a historiographical form inseparable from the person of Jerome, and that the Council of Constantinople in 381 “would also change the world forever” (p. 213). Neil McLynn presents Gregory of Nazianzus’ portrait of Theodosius in the saint’s *De vita sua* as another example of the type of “rebranding” in which Themistius had engaged and thanks to which Theodosius, despite his undeniable ecclesiastical agenda, had emerged “Teflon-coated from the toxic quarrels of his churchmen” (p. 238). In his very important contribution, Brian Croke reveals how the physical pres-

ence in Constantinople of Theodosius I—focused on court and capital rather than camp and campaigns—and Arcadius first fashioned “the fundamental core of Byzantine public life and liturgy” (p. 264). Mark Vessey concludes with an investigation centered on Jerome’s *Chronicle* and its role in the process through which a Christian “literature” (p. 270) replaced traditional Roman historiography in the west.

A bibliography of works cited and a good index are important value-added features. On p. 13, n. 1, there is a smooth where there should be a rough breathing; Fl. Merobaudes (*PLRE* I, pp. 598–9) has become Meroboduus on p. 31 and in the Index; on p. 172, n. 4, and in the bibliography (p. 309), Seyfahrt should be Seyfarth. The failure at p. 42 to gloss *homo politicus* with a reference to Max Weber will leave some readers confused, as will Garnsey’s accompanying note. Finally, the influence of some of the essays collected and edited by Gabriele Marasco in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, particularly with respect to the place of Nicomachus Flavianus’ *Annales* within the contexts of late antique history and historiography, somewhat vitiates portions of Vessey’s contribution.¹

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¹ On the shortcomings of Marasco’s collection (Leiden: Brill, 2003), see Richard Burgess’ review, *BMCR* 2004.03.49, noted by Vessey, p. 275, n. 29, and, on Nicomachus, Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), especially pp. 627–90.