

Valentinian is comparable to the eclipse of Pannonians under Theodosius I (158). Throughout, he shows that modern scholars have been too willing to accept the imperial historical and panegyric rhetoric that makes into barbarian invaders the regularly recruited forces of usurpers and imperial rivals. Equally, he shows how the extant Latin panegyrics make much out of little, not simply out of the generic need to show emperors victorious, but more specifically to balance the western emperors against their eastern counterparts: Diocletian had defeated a king, so Maximian needed a king to defeat and found a likely Frank; Galerius had won a spectacular foreign victory in Persia, so Constantius duly launched and declared victory in an Alamannic campaign. Likewise Valentinian, naturally cautious but needing western victories to match those of Julian, pursued a defensive strategy along the Rhine which he presented, as he had to, as conquest (299). D. never denies the reality of barbarian frontier violence, but he shows that within the disparity of power relations, the Alamanni and all the Empire's other neighbours were acted upon much more than acting.

There are points which one might dispute, of course. In his final chapter, on the Franks and Alamanni at the end of the fifth century, D. reverts to a dichotomy between Roman and *Germani* — and the basic likeness of different *Germani* — which his earlier discussions profitably ignored. He is suitably sceptical about the ways in which cultural differences visible in the archaeological record might reflect political distinctions, but he shows too much confidence in German archaeological findings contaminated in the process of excavation by the assumption that fibulae and belt-buckles carry ethnicity. This plays into the single most dubious inference in the book — that the Burgundians, as 'Eastgermani', were somehow harder to absorb into the local populations of south-western Germany than were the myriad other different political groups for whom D. uses the term *Elbgermani* (107–16). These are minor complaints when set beside the overwhelming success of this book. As scholarly fashion drifts back towards barbarian invasion as the cause of Rome's fall, D. shows in exemplary detail that the lives of those barbarians, like the lives of Romans, were entirely at the mercy of imperial politics, its ever-shifting minor exigencies and its constant need of a foreign enemy to sustain the logic of its own existence.

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J. DEN BOEFT, J. W. DRIJVERS, D. DEN HENGST and H. C. TEITLER (EDS), *AMMIANUS AFTER JULIAN: THE REIGN OF VALENTINIAN AND VALENS IN BOOKS 26–31 OF THE RES GESTAE*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007. Pp. x + 326, 1 pl. ISBN 978-90-04-16212-9. £99.00/US\$139.00.

After Julian sees the editors of the Philological and Historical commentary series on Ammianus turn their attention to the final surviving hexad of the *Res gestae*. Book 25 concludes with the death of Jovian, Julian's short-lived sole successor, and when the curtain rises on Book 26 Ammianus makes it clear that the stage is set for a new era. The historian redefines his method with a new prologue and the narrative restarts with the selection and elevation of the Pannonians, whose reigns will bring us to the end. In and of itself, this volume is an attempt to herald the next stage. The impetus for the colloquium from which it stems was the publication of the commentary on Book 25 in 2005. This ensuing volume provides a second selection of contemporary Ammianus studies begun by a previous colloquium and collection, *Cognitio Gestorum. The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (1992), itself precipitated by the completion of the commentary on Book 21 (which ends with Constantius' necrology).

The first section, 'History and Historiography', demonstrates how the *Res gestae* may be made to relate profitably to other texts and the period, thereby showing Ammianus' historiographic artifice in action. Bruno Bleckmann discovers layers of authorship within the narrative through analysis of Late Greek and Byzantine sources. Noel Lenski takes us to the eastern frontier to revise Seck's chronology for events involving Persia, Armenia and the Saracens between A.D. 364 and 378, drawing on church historians, Themistius and the Armenian Epic Histories to fill in Ammianus' impressionistic narrative. Jan Willem Drijvers focuses on Firmus' revolt in Mauretania Caesariensis, where he finds Ammianus' unusually lengthy report geographically inaccurate and compressed and evasive in chronology. He discovers a dense portrait amplified in importance and proposes that the historian constructed this event as a parallel to Tacitus' Tacfarinas revolt and Sallust's Iugurthine war, as well as a forum for some covert criticisms of Count Theodosius. Harmut Leppin draws on church historians to suggest that Ammianus has inverted the novel imperial self-promotion as men with experience of the real world to create an

image of the Pannonians as boorish and ill-qualified. The speculation must be that this is an implicit comparison with the highly educated but somewhat impractical Julian. David Hunt examines the evidence for Valentinian's Ammianus-praised religious toleration, and sets it in the context of Theodosius' legislation. Hans Teitler too begins with the necrology, and produces a counter argument to Paschoud's famous proposal that Ammianus has produced a maliciously distorted depiction of Valentinian I. He acknowledges the over-all effect of injustice and cruelty, but suggests that this is modified by the more nuanced assessment of the *elogium*.

'Literary Composition' turns to the mechanics of narrative. Stéphane Ratti suggests that Ammianus' description of the transport of the Visigoths over the Danube in A.D. 376 should be read as a deliberate subversion of the motif of the hero crossing the river. From the epic to the comic: Daniel den Hengst examines the second satirical digression on Rome at 28.4, setting it alongside its partner digression at 14.6, seeing excoriating intent, an uneasy fit with the treason trials which open Book 28, and a relationship less to Juvenalian than Menippean satire. Giuseppe Zecchini takes up the eternal question of Greek v. Roman in the *Res gestae*, and analyses those sections where examples from Greek and Roman history are compared. His conclusions include the discovery that Ammianus emphasized Greek superiority in law and astronomy, and presented Alexander the Great as the exemplar for Roman emperors. Gavin Kelly begins at the end, and insightfully reconciles current debate about the *spraghis* by suggesting that the aim was multi-faceted. The contradictory notions of panegyric and grand historiography are not exclusive, since one is a recommendation and the other a pragmatic assessment of what is possible. He suggests that Ammianus exploits similar ambiguity to conclude the Gothic narrative while presenting open-ended vignettes to emphasize that the Gothic 'problem' remained open.

Finally, 'Crisis of Empire' expands upon Ammianus' great themes of the use and abuse of power, the moral climate of state and the emperor ideal. Sigrid Mratschek shows how the Lepcis Magna affair has been constructed as a universal tragedy: Iustitia lets down the Roman state, while the historian intervenes to reveal Theodosius' concealed enemies. Christopher Kelly perceptively demonstrates how the fractured and decomposing structure of the final hexad is deliberate, intended to reflect the terrifying whimsy of imperial autocracy, where everyone, even conspirators, leaps to erroneous conclusions based on partial and imagined evidence. Nothing is what it seems in this new world, and no simple or conclusive judgement can be made by emperor, subject, audience or historian. Lastly, Jan den Boeft reveals Ammianus' sensitivity to the use and abuse of history, nervous that by recording bad conduct he will enshrine it as exemplum. Charmingly he then ends with an imagined dialogue with the historian, in which Ammianus states his core principles.

This useful and illuminating contribution highlights the techniques and themes of the last six books: impressionistic, fragmented, textually dense, preoccupied with the correct wielding of power in a world without Julian, and with the Goths after Adrianople in the time of Theodosius. In advance of forthcoming commentary volumes, to which it will be an invaluable adjunct, *After Julian* constructs a persuasive image of Ammianus as an author of dramatic and artful juxtaposition in literary technique and historical judgement, using moralizing historiography in a time of troubles to exhortative effect.

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B. DIGNAS and E. WINTER, *ROME AND PERSIA IN LATE ANTIQUITY. NEIGHBOURS AND RIVALS*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xvi + 347. ISBN 978-0-521-84925-8 (bound); 978-0-521-61407-8 (paper). £45.00 (bound); £17.99 (paper).

This translation of *Rom und das Perserreich* (2001), with limited additions and up-dating, aims to investigate the crucial international relationship of the ancient Near Eastern world in a more balanced way than has been achieved in its more Eurocentric predecessors, with proper attention to Eastern visual and textual evidence. The approach is to provide a succinct narrative that covers four centuries of interactions in forty pages, and then combine translated evidence with brief introduction and comment in nine thematic chapters: Political Goals, Warfare, Military Confrontations, Diplomatic Solutions, Arabia, Shared Interests, Religion, Emperor and King of Kings, and Exchange of Information. The results are mixed. As a straight source book it does not have the space to compete with the pair of Routledge volumes produced by Dodgeon and Lieu (1991) on the earlier period and Greatrex and Lieu (2002) on post-Julianic relations, even though