

In the Conclusion, L. revisits his arguments for placing Shenoute's career in the context of the fifth-century competition for rural patronage. Appendix A proposes an alternative chronology of Shenoute's career, rejecting Emmel's dating of his birth to 346/347, and death at the shockingly advanced age of 118; the question remains controversial, but is of little consequence for L.'s arguments. Appendix B is a very brief overview of the sources for Shenoute's life, namely his own writings and later biographical traditions. Finally, the Abbreviations include a useful enumerated list of Shenoute's extant *Letters*.

L. sometimes generalizes too much, such as the claim that 'true literature — that is, the use of language as an art — was with very few exceptions Greek literature', which is accompanied by an inadequate, single-paragraph comparison of Coptic and Syriac (13). Shenoute's writings were carefully copied and read alongside biblical literature by trained scribes for centuries after his death; as rhetorically sophisticated works with calculated effects, they are certainly works of literary art. Nor does L. apply his analysis of patronage and care of the poor to Shenoute's authority over his own disciples, despite significant common themes: for example, some monks accuse him of doing 'violence' to them, the same charge he makes against Gesios. In short, Shenoute's leadership over a large monastic community was itself a complex form of patronage. But these remarks do not detract from the strength of L.'s work, which represents an important advance in situating Shenoute more firmly in the social and economic history of Late Antiquity, and will also serve as a useful introduction to this figure for late Romanists, especially those without Coptic.

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J. DEN BOEFT, J. W. DRIJVERS, D. DEN HENGST and H. C. TEITLER, *PHILOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS XXIX*. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. xxi + 298, maps. ISBN 9789004261532 (bound); 9789004267879 (e-book). €125.00.

Book 29 of the Dutch commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus has appeared at the now regular interval of two years after its predecessor. Three of the four authors have been on the team since Book 20 in 1987 (Drijvers joined for Book 22) and they look set to reach the 31st and last book in 2017. The applause merited by previous volumes (see my reviews of 25 and 26 in *JRS* 99 (2009), 294–6, and of 27 and 28 in *JRS* 103 (2013), 351–3) is equally due here. Reviews of commentaries will tend to pick up on points of detailed disagreement, but any quibbles below should be read bearing in mind the consistent thoroughness, good judgement and originality of the authors across linguistic, literary and historical scholarship.

In Book 29, as in 27, 28 and 30, sections tend to cover particular regions for periods of several years; as in earlier volumes, the authors follow the introduction with a useful chronological discussion, though the problems are less vexed in this book. Book 29 begins with treason trials under the emperor Valens in Antioch and elsewhere in the eastern provinces (chs 1–2); these should perhaps be seen as starting in A.D. 372 rather than in winter 371/2. The account forms a pair with the Roman magic and adultery trials at the start of the previous book (various significant intratexts are pointed out). The commentators also demonstrate the interesting likelihood that Ammianus used a handbook of magical practices for the famous scene where the conspirators divine the first letters of the next emperor's name, ΘΕΟΔ-. Meanwhile, in the West, under the baleful influence of the prefect Maximinus, the emperor Valentinian also permits cruel injustices (3), but remains an exemplary Commander-in-Chief (4). The long fifth chapter describes the Mauretanian campaigns of Count Theodosius, Valentinian's best general, against the rebel Firmus, between 373 and 375. Sallust's *Jugurtha* is an obvious influence. The fact that Theodosius' homonymous son later became emperor (fulfilling the conspirators' prophecy) has led to the confusing juxtaposition in Ammianus' narrative of panegyric celebration with frank description of the hero's old-fashioned discipline. In a previous article (in the commentators' edited book *Ammianus after Julian* (2007)), Drijvers had sympathized with the view of Robin Seager, who argued beguilingly in *Histos* 1999 that Ammianus subtly and deliberately undermines Count Theodosius; however, the detailed examination of relevant passages here leads, regrettably but rightly, to a rejection of this argument. The sixth and last chapter tells how the treacherous murder of King Gabinius of the Quadi led to barbarian attacks across the Danube and how the

younger Theodosius as *dux Moesiae* successfully resisted, before closing with the peaceful urban prefecture of Claudius (attested in 374), including a brilliantly impressionistic description of Rome transformed by the Tiber's floods into an archipelago: the commentators let their appreciation of the writing shine through at such moments. But in commenting on the fact that, after describing every prefecture of Rome between 353 and 372, Ammianus omits at least two (xii, xviii, 246, cf. ix), they should at least have mentioned the theory of Otto Seeck (*Hermes* 18 (1883), 291), recently revived by Timothy Barnes (1998, App. 8), that an account of these prefectures has been lost in the lacuna of 29.5.1.

For the text of Book 29 is not good. The principal ms, Vat. Lat. 1473 (V), is beset by a series of lacunae marked as around three lines long, between 29.3.4 and 29.5.1 and again between 29.5.22 and 36 (probably not coincidentally, these fall within a quaternion misplaced after 29.1.17 earlier in the transmission). For the most part Den Boeft *et al.* ably reconstruct the contents of lacunae, and are also in commanding form on textual problems elsewhere: they suggest or consider over forty changes from the text of Seyfarth's conservative Teubner. With a few exceptions where the text of V is restored (rightly with *aliqua* at 29.2.13 and *procincti* at 29.4.5, dubiously with *consonans* against Gelenius' *consonos* at 29.1.31), these are conjectural emendations, including about half a dozen of their own. The best is at 29.2.17, where they modestly credit comparison to Suetonius, *Tib.* 61.5 for *poenarum maturitate* ('an early end to their tortures'); at 29.2.19 they use comparison to Ammianus' source Gellius in repairing the exemplary tale of Dolabella and the woman of Smyrna. There are a few places where problems in the text have not been spotted. At 29.2.6–8, they regrettably stick to an extraordinarily forced interpretation of the text, admittedly found in all translations that I know of, that makes the conspirator Heliodorus a court chamberlain — who then has secret discussions with the court! The passage is correctly interpreted by Josef Češka in *SPFB* 39 (1994), 139–45. At the start of ch. 6, the transmitted text tells us that the *Quadorum natio mota est inexcita repentino*: they point out reasonably that *inexcita*, unaroused, needs to be qualified by something like *diu* (transposable, following Heraeus, from a few lines below); but the problem with *repentino* is not whether it can be an adverb, which it can, but its position. The simplest solution is the conjecture of ms E: *motu est excita repentino*. As I have commented in previous reviews, Den Boeft *et al.* often adduce Ammianus' exceptionally regular accentual clausulation as a factor in textual decisions, but sometimes do not mention it when it supports a case made on other grounds: 29.2.24 *nóta <ac> pervulgáta* (Gelenius), 29.1.32 *litterae pósterae* (Heraeus, for *postrémae*); they sometimes regard linguistic rarities as defensible even though against the *cursum*. In 29.4.5 there is no intrinsic problem with the participial form *animati* replacing a main verb, or with *suspecti* (E's emendation of V's *suspencti*) having an active meaning (though nowhere else in Ammianus), but prose rhythm requires *animati <sunt >* and *suspicati*.

For all these minor disagreements, this is a model work of collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship. Fans of Ammianus look forward eagerly to the *quadriga Batavorum* on 30 and 31.

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A. CAIN, *JEROME'S EPITAPH ON PAULA: A COMMENTARY ON THE EPITAPHIUM SANCTAE PAULAE WITH AN INTRODUCTION, TEXT, AND TRANSLATION* (Oxford Early Christian Texts). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xxx + 569, map, plan. ISBN 9780199672608. £140.00.

The bishop of Rome Damasus was notoriously styled *matronarum auriscalpius* (*Collectio Avellana* 1.9), 'ear-tickler of matrons', or better, 'ear-prober' (cf. Scribonius Largus 41 and 230). The same might have been said of Damasus' scholarly, sometime client Jerome, whose devotion to the ascetic matrons of Rome was the topic of criticism; his particular attention, from Rome to Bethlehem, to Iulia Paula and her daughters occasioned gossip early and late (Jer., *Ep.* 45.1–4, 65.1; *contra Rufinum* 1.9.12; Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 36.6 and 41).

Blesilla, Paula's eldest daughter, died of fever in her mid-twenties (at most), in late November A.D. 384 (*Ep.* 38 and 39). To what extent her spiritual director's ascetic urgings contributed, we shall never know. Jerome's letter of consolation to Paula concludes in maudlin register: Blesilla will