could be classified both under a paraenetic and a theological context, or simply about the letters' being introduced according to the context in which the exegesis appears. However, such challenges are perhaps innate to the material analysed and should not deter in any way from the great task Berkmüller had set for himself, and from the advancements this book achieves. This is an important volume which will be of use to all working on Isidore of Pelusium, his context, or more generally on late antique biblical exegesis.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH MADALINA TOCA

Urban developments in late antique and medieval Rome. Revising the narrative of renewal. Edited by Gregor Kalas and Ann van Dijk. (Social Worlds of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.) Pp. 341 incl. 42 figs and 2 tables. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021. €119. 978 94 6298 908 5

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This interesting study, an interdisciplinary essay collection published with the assistance of the Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is composed of a lengthy introduction (pp. 11–40) and ten papers: Kristina Sessa, 'Rome at war: the effects of crisis on Church and community in late antiquity' (pp. 41–39); Gregor Kalas, 'Portraits of poets and the lecture halls in the Forum of Trajan: masking cultural tensions in late antique Rome' (pp. 74–108); Jacob Latham, 'Rolling out the red carpet, Roman style: the arrival at Rome from Constantine to Charlemagne' (pp. 109–47); Dennis Trout, '[Re-]founding Christian Rome: the Honorian project of the early seventh century' (pp. 149–75); Erik Thune, 'After antiquity: renewing the past or celebrating the present? Early medieval apse mosaics in Rome' (pp. 177–203); John Osborne, 'The (re)-invention of Rome in the early Middle Ages' (pp. 205–35); Dale Kinney, 'Rewriting the renouveau' (pp. 237–78); Luisa Nardini, 'Renewal, heritage, and exchange in eleventh-century Roman chant traditions' (pp. 279–97); and William North, 'Reforming readers, reforming texts: the making of discursive community in Gregorian Rome' (pp. 299–329). The book concludes with a list of manuscripts cited and a short index. As for bibliography, each paper is accompanied by its own list, an elegant solution to what is usually a difficult problem for the editors of essay collections. It is not possible here to examine the papers in a detailed description in a comparison especially with the works of Richard Krautheimer and Helene Toubert, his student, who are quoted frequently. The list of titles just given will indicate the interdisciplinary nature of the book, making the volume as rare as it is welcome. It invites further research. Its subtitle, 'Revising the narrative of renewal', presumably chosen by the two editors, aims to show a picture of the great city of Rome remaining always Eternal Rome, not in need of any kind of renaissance. In the opening chapter, Kristina Sessa argues that even without the exact numbers of the dead or displaced individuals known, it is clear that Romans suffered greatly after the end of the Gothic wars (p. 58). Her arguments are supported by the letters of Pope Pelagius I (556–61) as primary source. She also refers to Justinian's Pragmatic Sanction, issued by the emperor's consistory in August 554. This much debated document (or bundle of documents) supports the picture

created by the letters of Pope Pelagius. Not mentioned, however, either here or in any of the other essays are the legal and/or political implications. Rome had to cede authority to Constantinople; the references to collaboration between senators in Rome and emperors in Constantinople was as close as indicated in the essay of Gregor Kalas. Under constant threat from the Lombards, Rome and Italy were simply outliers in Byzantine politics. Much of the city's infrastructure had decayed by the sixth century, as we can gather through the frequent references to 'redecorations'. It is all the more interesting to note how doggedly the Romans themselves clung to their glorious past, personified through a general veneration of the Emperor Trajan. One of the editors, Gregor Kalas, examines the 'audience' halls in the Forum of Trajan as well as the statues with their inscriptions on the plinths erected to support the statues to honour the poets Claudian (*c.*370–404 AD), and the poets who followed his style of poetry, Merobaudes and perhaps Sidonius Apollinaris. Claudian, generally considered one of the best Latin poets of this period, was breaking with predecessors who had written in prose, and composed panegyrics only in hexameters. The bronze statues awarded to both Claudian and Merobaudes were placed close to the entrance to one of the audience halls (p. 88). Their poetry served to demonstrate the link to Rome's past according to Kalas. It seems almost ironic therefore when the city's misfortunes by implication increased the city's fascination with poetry, and thus all the troubles Rome suffered might be seen as a boon. Jacob Latham shows a different side of cultural continuity in his paper that describes the love of the Romans for processions, something that is particularly well demonstrated by Luisa Nardini who examines liturgies and their content on the basis of manuscript studies. Latham demonstrates the continuity of the adventus ceremonies. These ceremonies underwent, however, great changes during the period under consideration by this author, who debates a few of them. Dennis Trout turns to the important undertakings of Pope Honorius I (625–38) in the early seventh century, a period of stability. This was a good thing, for his unusually long pontificate gave the pontiff a chance to engage in urban planning. 'He inherited a city diminished and in tatters' (p. 152), but used his pontificate to restore and newly build churches over the tombs of sainted martyrs, most famously the church of S. Agnese. Old St Peter's was also renewed and richly endowed. Fig. 5.1 is extremely useful (p. 155), especially in light of the following paper by Erik Thune. Honorius was not only a builder but also an excellent poet whose inscriptions on the apse mosaics were imitated over several hundred years 'creating a new timeless reality' (p. 178). Erik Thune argues in his persuasive essay that the formulaic inscriptions, reaching back to the fourth-century Pope Damasus, created 'a network of martyrs across time and space' (p. 197) leading to fresh perspectives. The crucial issue of how Rome, the city of the Caesars, became the Rome of the popes (p. 224) is taken up by John Osborne. It might be noted that Empress Agnes, mentioned to show continuity in the imperial connections of Rome, was the wife of Emperor Henry III and not of Henry II (p. 224). Luisa Nardini shows best the creative powers of Christian Rome in her study of the development of liturgies that incorporate aspects of other Italian regions besides Roman traditions. The essay by Dale Kinney reaches out to Rome in the eleventh century, claiming that the reform ideals formulated by popes and

antipopes, as well as the curia as a whole, permeated the city (p. 268). On the basis of surviving manuscripts written at S. Maria in Trastevere and a sculptured portal, Kinney shows that major building projects had to wait until the twelfth century. Beginning with the theories of Brian Stock, William North establishes that in the eleventh century a textual community in the City came into existence. North arrives at this conclusion through his study of the writings of three eleventh-century authors, Peter Damian, Cardinal Atto of S. Marco and Bruno, cardinal-bishop of Segni. Their very different works none the less demonstrate cultural community at the curia. William North's paper takes the discussions right up to the ecclesiastical reforms of the eleventh century.

This volume is a valuable addition to the history of the City of Rome. Although it never quite fulfils the implications of its subtitle, the book opens new perspectives on late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

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Prognostication in the medieval world. A handbook. 2 vols. Edited by Matthias Heiduk, Klaus Herbers and Hans-Christian Lehner. Pp. xiv + 710, xii + 711–1027 incl. 57 colour and black-and-white ills. Berlin–Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021. £253.50. 978 3 11 050120 9

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The interest in the future and in methods of revealing it is a constant in history. As early as the third millennium BC, already sophisticated methods of interpreting the future were used in the Middle East, such as hieromancy, the prognostic interpretation of sacrificial material, particularly well known from Roman antiquity. The abundance of methods also remains a constant in history, outlasting all ideological upheavals. One of the achievements of the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities: Fate, Freedom and Prognostication, established in 2009 at the University of Erlangen (Bavaria), is to illustrate this again and again, especially for East Asia and Europe, through conferences and publications. It has now produced a comprehensive two-volume handbook, mainly written by staff and former Fellows, which presents numerous attempts to explore the future in the field of the three Abrahamitic religions in the medieval world. The editors convincingly point out that the development of the various prognostic approaches and methods can only be understood by taking into account the intensive exchange between representatives of the three religions, which could lead on all sides to the expansion as well as the profiling of their own agendas.

After the editors have discussed basic terms and concepts and given advice on the handbook's use, the tripartite work starts with overviews of the history of prognostication, presenting both antiquity and the early modern period and also addressing the pagan traditions among Celts, Germanic peoples and Slavs, before discussing Western and Eastern Christianity, Judaism and Islam in the medieval epoch. Pre-Islamic traditions do not play a role due to the research situation. The second part presents the central traditions and practices of prognostication in the Middle Ages. The first eight topics (eschatology and millenarianism, prophecy and visions, dream interpretation, mantic arts, astral sciences, medical prognostication, calendrical calculations, weather forecasting) are discussed in four steps: