

III. LATE ANTIQUITY

- R. W. BURGESS and M. KULIKOWSKI, *MOZAICS OF TIME: THE LATIN CHRONICLE TRADITIONS FROM THE FIRST CENTURY BC TO THE SIXTH CENTURY AD. VOL. 1. A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRONICLE GENRE FROM ITS ORIGINS TO THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES*. Brepols: Turnhout, 2013. Pp. xiii + 444. ISBN 9782503531403. €100.00.

In this first volume in a new series of translations and editions of late ancient Latin chronicles, Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski take the reader on a journey through the history of the chronicle from the third millennium B.C. until the twelfth century A.D. and from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Latin West. This journey in six chapters is concluded with eight useful appendices in which the authors explain the origins of the terms *chronica* and ‘annals’ (and why this term cannot apply to chronicles), (re-)publish excerpts from chronicles, consularia and chronographs from the ancient world, and discuss the now lost chronicles of Cassius Longinus and Thallus and Livy’s use of *Ab urbe condita* dates.

This ground-breaking study represents a final response to persistent yet erroneous claims that the Latin chronicle was of medieval, Christian or Western European origin. By highlighting the existence of chronicles in ancient Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Greece and Rome, the authors demonstrate that such claims cannot be maintained. In addition, B. and K. dispel the confusion that has arisen regarding the history, nature and characteristics of the chronicle, mainly because of the terminology not only used by ancient and medieval authors but also by modern historians of Antiquity and the Middle Ages. As the authors point out, it is not universality that makes a chronicle, but its form. A chronicle consists of brief entries (though in the Middle Ages these entries could be longer narratives, copied from narrative sources), arranged chronologically. An additional crucial characteristic of the chronicle is its paratactic nature: the ancient chronicler does not specify any connection between the events which he records (there is no *conséquence*, only *consécution* of these entries).

This volume focuses on the two main genres of Latin chronographical writing, the consularia and the chronicle. Consularia, the only native form of Latin chronography, are ‘lists of consuls with very short historical entries appended’ (12), which evolved from fasti, or calendars, and consular fasti, unadorned lists of consuls, and whose purpose was to speak ‘publicly of an individual’s connection to and support for Rome and her emperor’ (172). Surviving in manuscript and epigraphic form, the genre saw a massive decline in the Latin West from the fifth century onwards, undoubtedly mainly because of the rise in popularity of the chronicle, though ironically late ancient Latin chronicles are our main sources of information about the contents of these consularia.

The Latin chronicle’s rise in popularity in Late Antiquity was due to Jerome’s Latin translation, adaptation and continuation (c. A.D. 379–80) of an anonymous Antiochene Greek continuation (c. A.D. 350) of the *Chronici canones* of Eusebius of Caesarea (d. A.D. 340). In turn, Jerome was continued by various authors, most notably Hydatius and Prosper of Aquitaine, whose continuations were often themselves continued. This process of continuation of Latin chronicles ended with John of Biclar who continued until A.D. 589 the chronicle of Victor of Tunnuna, which was in itself a continuation of Prosper until A.D. 565. The seventh century saw a significant transformation of the chronicle genre in the Latin West as well as in the Byzantine East into what B. and K. call the chronicle epitome or breviary. Though the authors of such breviaries still saw themselves as rooted in the ancient tradition, the results of their literary production were rather different from the ancient chronicle: chronicle epitomes are heavily abbreviated in their earliest period and become only somewhat more extensive as they near the authors’ own lifetimes.

The final chapter of this monograph carefully catalogues the production of Latin breviaries from the seventh century onwards, on the Iberian peninsula as well as in England and Ireland (as late as the seventeenth century). The chapter finishes with a detailed investigation of the so-called ‘Frankish annals’, in which B. and K. show that the majority of these Carolingian texts in fact more closely resemble the ancient method of chronicle writing than the more recent Latin breviaries. Though they admit that some of these Carolingian chronicles may indeed have developed from annotated Easter Tables, the authors of this volume convincingly argue that they must be seen as the continuation of a century-old tradition of Latin chronicle tradition that goes back to Jerome’s translation of Eusebius. At the same time, the authors also pay attention to the presence of a

similar tradition in the Byzantine East, which already existed in the sixth century (for example, Malalas) but emerged more clearly after the *Chronicon Paschale* (A.D. 630s) and the *Chronographia* of Theophanes the Confessor (d. A.D. 818).

Speaking from the perspective of someone who works with Syriac and Greek chronicles on a daily basis, I believe this monograph will become the standard work on the chronicle genre. Its diachronic, multicultural and multilingual approach, cataloguing and analysing a large number of known chronicles from the ancient and medieval world, makes this volume an invaluable resource for any ancient or medieval historian, not only those working with Latin sources.

Ghent University
Andy.Hilkens@ugent.be

ANDY HILKENS

doi:10.1017/S0075435814000914

D. S. POTTER, *CONSTANTINE THE EMPEROR*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv + 368, illus. ISBN 9780199755868. £11.99/US\$34.95.

Of the many books on Constantine that have recently appeared to mark a series of anniversaries, this is the one that pretends to the greatest intimacy with its subject. Constantine, we hear, was 'a deeply complex man of seemingly boundless energy' (2); in later life he may not have been 'proud of the man that he had been in 303' (95), having come in the meantime to 'sense, or hope, that he had a divine friend' (128). He sought out human friends who 'shared his own values' (274), and his 'self-imposed celibacy' after the execution of Fausta reveals that, 'however serious the quarrel' which caused him to put her to death in boiling water, he 'never ceased loving his wife' (247). Nevertheless, this is not a hagiography; and it is indeed considerably more than a biography. There are few books from which readers new to the history of the late Roman world can learn so much so quickly, and fewer still which carry such a dense apparatus of scholarship in the notes. The lives, campaigns and policies of Constantine's predecessors, from Gallienus to Diocletian, are described with a fluent precision that betokens years of study and reflection. The significance (and occasional insignificance) of Constantine's own laws is illustrated by succinct but comprehensive observations on the position of slaves, the function of rescripts and the ubiquity of sacrifice. These sketches form the background to a portrait of an emperor who never allowed his private faith to peep through the statesman's mask which no other ruler had worn so ably since the first years of the Tetrarchy. Conscious that his religion was not shared, or was only speciously professed, by the majority of his subjects, he did not fall prey to the 'sickness' of the ageing Diocletian: he did not try to abolish paganism, continued to clothe himself and his god in the solar imagery that was now prescriptive, and did not imitate his own subjects who had begun to speak of Sunday as the 'Lord's Day'. If he was not the designing hypocrite that Burckhardt supposed him to have been, he was not the intolerant despot that some scholars suppose every Christian to be.

In discussing Constantine's conversion — 'a journey over time and in his own mind' (156) — Potter rightly argues that if we read our sources in chronological order we see a calculated process of aggrandizement which makes it impossible to reconcile them without omitting much that each witness deemed essential to his story. He might have added that no attempt to identify one or more of Constantine's dreams with a solar halo is half as cogent as the writings of Immanuel Velikovsky and Erich von Daniken on the miracles of the Old Testament. Positivists will be more content with the handling of the *Oration to the Saints*, which P. dates (as many now do) to A.D. 325, though without the vituperative certainty that characterizes the best-known defences of this position in English. My own proposal that it was intended for Rome in A.D. 315, and therefore for delivery in Latin, is courteously but illogically dismissed on the grounds that most of the sources from which it quotes are in Greek (329). The references to Plato are hardly quotations and, thanks to Cicero, one did not need Greek to read the *Timaeus*; a Latin version of the eighth Sibylline Oracle, preserving the acrostic for the most part, is attested by Augustine, and in any case the Greek is quoted by Constantine's contemporary Lactantius, who undoubtedly wrote in Latin. P. also holds, with Barnes, that the tyrant whose defeat is commemorated in ch. 25 can only be Licinius, since only he inherited the whole army of Diocletian; but on the same grounds we are bound to hold that he cannot be Licinius, since the latter could not plausibly be described as a usurper. Historians in search of a date are too apt to approach this speech as though it were written by one of themselves; but orators lie, and the things which were done among them as ensamples were not written for our admonition.