

Aunegunda ‘changes her mind’ over her marriage and is immortalized in the Burgundian Law Code (I.100–2). One Amanda wins praise because she ‘shoulders the load’ leaving her husband free for saintly pursuits (I.171), while Susanna, the Mrs Proudie of sixth-century Trier, ‘loses her cool’ (I.188–9). The cumulative effect of this chatty presentation and the often subversive activities highlighted in the texts is of a society of oddballs; of rebellious women coexisting with the impossibly saintly; of irate bishops struggling vainly to control each other, their clergy, their enterprising laity, and their political and military masters; and of a theoretically hierarchical system under constant attack from dissidents and eccentrics.

But the imposing of twenty-first-century perspectives has its downside. The Gallo-Roman nobility are labelled as ‘pompous and prating’ (I.27), and the young soldier Martin of Tours as an ‘army brat’ (I.75). This is not the way to encourage readers to appreciate the ‘otherness’ of Late Roman society. The discourse of aristocratic self-representation or hagiography may at times be uncongenial to us, but it requires of the historian sympathetic understanding in its own terms. The values and style of Sidonius or Ruricius, both of whom are extensively represented, were what was expected of noblemen and bishops; their literary self-laudation does not mean that they were actually ‘conceited’ (I.38), or that they were perceived as such by contemporaries.

The same caveats apply to the imposing of modern values in other ways. Did the ‘people’ of late antiquity share the individualistic assumptions implied in ‘personal expression’ of the title? What was meant by ‘family’ (or ‘household’), and how far were the ‘personal’, social, and economic interests of the individual subordinated to it? M. is ultimately subverted by his own texts. The fixed hierarchical order assumed by the contrast of ‘the aristocratic elite’ (Chapter 1) with the ‘socially less privileged’ (Chapter 2), including the decurionate from which many bishops were drawn, does not stand up to scrutiny in the light of the sources. With charm and style, M. provides his readers with the material to make their own judgements, but little of the historical framework to help them to do it.

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## DAMNATIO AND REHABILITATION

C. W. HEDRICK, JR: *History and Silence. Purge and the Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity*. Pp. xxviii + 338, ills. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. Cased, US\$37.50. ISBN: 0-292-73121-3.

In A.D. 431 a statue of the senator Virius Nicomachus Flavianus was erected in Trajan’s Forum at Rome. On its base was inscribed an imperial letter that rehabilitated Flavianus’ reputation (*CIL* 6.1783). Flavianus had committed suicide after the usurper Eugenius, whose revolt he had supported, was defeated in 394. In the aftermath, Flavianus was subject to *damnatio memoriae* for his part in the rebellion. This disgrace and subsequent rehabilitation form the theme of H.’s study, which has at its heart a study of the inscription on the statue base. Over 300 pages might seem excessive for such an undertaking, but H. has so much to say along the way about, for example, various manifestations of late Roman élite culture and historiographical method, that this study must rank as one of the most imaginative and stimulating books on late antiquity of recent years. Moreover, H. seeks to reopen a debate of central importance. Herbert Bloch’s thesis of a senatorial ‘pagan revival’

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in the 390s has been superseded by a new orthodoxy, advocated by Alan Cameron, which argues for a distinction between senators' political ambitions and their literary and religious interests. While he does 'not propose a crude or uncritical return to Bloch's position', H. challenges Cameron's 'idea that the various cultural activities of the late antique senatorial class have nothing to do with one another' or with politics (p. xix).

H. begins with a text and translation of *CIL* 6.1783 (Chapter 1), supported by a detailed appendix on its physical condition and problematic readings (pp. 247–58). Subsequent chapters enlarge upon themes suggested by the inscription. H. scrutinizes first Flavianus' political career and its relationship to his *cursus* as given in the inscription (Chapter 2). He argues against a tendency of much epigraphical and prosopographical research to quarry such inscribed *cursus* as sources for 'hard facts'. Instead of seeking to harmonize the inconsistencies between an individual's *cursus* as recorded in different inscriptions, H. stresses that 'any particular *cursus* must be regarded as an "edition" of a life, rather than as a "transcription"', and that it was 'manufactured for a certain occasion' (p. 10). Moreover, H. contends that the omission of particular offices from a *cursus* would have been noticed by contemporaries. Thus the form of Flavianus' *cursus* on the inscription of 431 is important as much for what it leaves out as for what it includes (pp. 33–6).

The rest of the book considers such omissions in the context of Flavianus' disgrace and rehabilitation, and extrapolates from them broader insights into the nature of late Roman culture. The most obvious silence concerns Flavianus' paganism: Eugenius' usurpation was presented by Christian authors as a pagan revolt, and Flavianus has often been regarded as one of its ideologues. H. reassesses this question in a wide-ranging analysis of cultural and religious transformation among the Roman élite (Chapter 3). He attempts to understand the ways in which paganism was viewed from the perspective of the 430s. The contemporary *Saturnalia* of Macrobius is central to H.'s investigation, since it emphasized Flavianus' paganism, thus making its omission from the inscription obvious (pp. 79–85). This does not get H. very far, however. He concedes that comparison of the inscription and the *Saturnalia* is 'both enlightening and puzzling', and that the 'utter silence' of the inscription 'is an enigma'. His conclusion—that 'paganism remained a matter of some sensitivity' (pp. 86–7)—is unsurprising.

H. moves next to a sophisticated analysis of the mechanics of *damnatio memoriae* (Chapter 4). He emphasizes how monuments from which names had been erased were often left in place, and speculates that Flavianus' monument (where the inscription of 431 is clearly carved over an earlier erasure) continued to stand in Trajan's Forum after his suicide as 'a mute reminder of [his] disgrace' (pp. 109–10; but cf. p. 11). Thus *damnatio memoriae* was designed not to expunge memory but to provide 'a continuing reminder of the disgrace of a public enemy' (p. 113). Further chapters explore metaphors suggested by the text of the imperial letter. Most successful is Chapter 6, where H. takes advantage of the letter's use of terms suggestive of textual emendation (e.g. *emendatio*, *interpolatum*) to launch an investigation of the editorial activities of the late Roman senatorial élite. Bloch saw these as a key manifestation of the senatorial 'pagan revival'; Cameron disagreed. For H., such editorial work is bound up with a senatorial sense of identity, as part of their complex negotiation of their pagan past in the Christian present of the fifth century. Rather less successful, to my mind, is H.'s exploration of the rôle of silence in historiography (Chapter 5). Here H. has much that is interesting to say on history and silence in Tacitus, but I thought it sat uncomfortably with the focus of the book as a whole, and wondered if some late antique historian

might have provided a more apposite case study. As it is, H.'s efforts to integrate Tacitus, by noting his late-antique readers (pp. 143–4), struck me as forced. The material on Tacitus surely deserves an audience, but is this the right place for it?

A final chapter summarizes H.'s theses on history and silence in the context of Flavianus' rehabilitation. By emphasizing certain aspects of his career and disgrace, and passing over others in silence, the inscription represents a renegotiation of a painful episode in the senate's recent past. As such, it encapsulates the complex processes of transformation that characterize late antiquity as a whole. Thus H.'s conclusion vindicates his project as a whole: he has taken a brief text and made it speak volumes on issues of profound importance. It is refreshing to find a book on late antiquity that so honestly uses insights drawn from modern literary theory and semiotics, and does so, for the most part, without descending into obscure verbiage. Readers may not agree with all of H.'s conclusions, not least because in seeking to recover what has been passed over in silence he must resort repeatedly to speculation; but this book is so packed with interesting ideas that anyone who reads it will do so to their considerable benefit.

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## THE THEODOSIAN CODE

J. F. MATTHEWS: *Laying Down the Law. A Study of the Theodosian Code*. Pp. xvi + 314. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001. Cased, £27.50. ISBN: 0-300-07900-1.

At the outset of *Laying Down the Law*, John Matthews states that his book will attempt to provide 'an understanding of the nature of the [Theodosian] Code and how it was produced', and that it will be 'about the Code itself and not about the Roman Empire portrayed in its pages' (p. vii). The nervous reader might anticipate dry exegesis of legalistic minutiae, particularly when M. goes on to express the concern that this will be his 'least "popular" book' (p. xi). Neither M. nor the nervous reader should be concerned. *Laying Down the Law* is quintessentially a Matthewsian book, sharing many of the virtues and much of the style of his *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364–425* (Oxford, 1975) and *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989). Just as *Western Aristocracies* began with the deportment of the Roman élite in the 380s and *Ammianus* with Ephrem of Nisibis pouring scorn on Julian's corpse in 363, so *Laying Down the Law* begins (Chapter 1) with a vivid evocation of a moment in time: the visit to Constantinople in 437 of Rufius Antonius Agrypinus Volusianus and Anicius Acilius Glabrio Faustus, distinguished envoys from the Senate in Rome. Before they could return home in 438, Volusianus died, so it was left to Faustus to present to the Senate a copy of the Theodosian Code that he had received from the hands of the eastern emperor Theodosius II himself. M.'s exposition of this event takes in others. Volusianus and Faustus were not the only westerners at Theodosius' court in 437–8: the western emperor Valentinian III was there, too, for his marriage to Theodosius' daughter Eudoxia. Soon afterwards, Theodosius' empress Eudocia embarked on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, thereby fulfilling a vow she had made before her daughter's wedding. By placing these diverse happenings side by side, M. argues that they are not 'proof only of the obvious fact that Constantinople was a great capital city in which all sorts of events took place'; rather 'They are expressions of the complex cultural setting in which the Theodosian

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