

even for dining. It is intriguing that Roman sources thematize the left hand more often than is the case for Greek texts. According to W., this is due to the fact that religion and cult, with their normative set of regulations, influenced all areas of Roman society, in particular with regard to the function of the right hand as a symbol of *fides*.

The final chapter (209–40) investigates how ancient sources describe and assess the phenomenon of left-handedness. While Plato pleads for an equal use of both hands, Aristotle accentuates the natural superiority of the right hand. Pliny the Elder observes that few people have a left hand that is more powerful than the right hand. On the whole, left-handedness is regarded as an exception and a curiosity, but precisely for that reason it makes certain left-handers such as painters or gladiators stand out from the crowd. On the other hand, it may also be employed as an element of negative characterization, as in the case of Suetonius' portrayal of the emperor Tiberius.

W. lucidly summarizes his results in a final chapter (241–7), to which he adds an extensive bibliography (250–67), a short index and twelve pages of illustrations. In sum, despite a certain lack of careful attention to important methodological considerations, this is an engagingly written and well-structured book which covers a wide range of material.

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J. RÜPKE (ED.), *FASTI SACERDOTUM: A PROSOPOGRAPHY OF PAGAN, JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS OFFICIALS IN THE CITY OF ROME, 300 BC to AD 499*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Pp. viii + 1107. ISBN 978019991137. £325.00.

A thousand pages of priests may not be everybody's idea of heaven, but this book provides an extraordinarily useful research tool for those who work on the religious history of Rome or on many other areas of Roman life in which priests played a part. *Fasti sacerdotum* first appeared in German in 2005 as a three-volume work. This review concerns the one-volume translation published in 2008. The original consists (in Volume 1) of a year-by-year list of the names of certain or probable holders of religious office (51–572), followed by a list of the members in alphabetical order under their offices (573–646); and (in Volume 2) an alphabetical list of those listed in Volume 1 with short accounts, not so much biographies in the normal sense of the word, as basic information focusing on the evidence for, and the dates of, their religious office-holding; thus Volume 2 provides the evidence supporting the lists in Volume 1. Volume 3 consists of a series of studies of problems connected with the various office-holders and of the records through which we have knowledge of them.

This translation (by David Richardson) is a single-volume work, very substantial in bulk and price, and provides the three main lists in full together with the introduction to Volume 1, but only a selection of the studies from Volume 3 — four out of the thirteen sections. The four included are valuable and in many ways challenging studies (Livy and the *Annales Maximii*; the lists of *calatores*; the cult-personnel of Iuppiter Dolichenus; religion and administration in the later Empire); the situation left, however, is not entirely satisfactory, because the reader will need to check the German original to be sure what the 'book' discusses and what it does not. The boundary between what is a translation and what a new work derived from the original gets blurred at this point. Nor is it clear how the reader of the translation would find out what she/he is missing. What might seem curious is the fact that Volume 3, all in German, has to be so truncated; while Volume 1 is included, although it consists almost entirely of the names of officials and therefore, apart from the occasional footnote, has no need to be translated. This last point, however, is not in fact a mistake, but a necessary feature of the whole plan, because the strength of the one-volume format is precisely that the two main lists are available within the single volume. They are strictly interdependent, because the evidence for the annual lists of names and all the debates about who were members and who were not at different moments is to be found in the biographic section. So the user, working for instance on priestly colleges, has to turn constantly from one section to the other and back.

Nobody could possibly doubt the scholarly usefulness of this work. It covers 800 years and provides information about 3,590 religious officials in the city of Rome, only counting those allotted a running number, not those listed but not numbered as dubious or even forged. They include the official priests of Rome, but also other pagan priests and Jewish and Christian priests.

The lists are the work of a substantial team working under the direction of Jörg Rüpke. Everyone working on the history of religions of Rome will be deep in debt to R. and his team. The work replaces a series of previous part-listings starting from the pioneering work of Ludwig Mercklin in 1848 and Carl Bardt in 1871, both limited to the republican period; this historiography is briefly surveyed at pp. 3–6.

The translations are workmanlike and, on the basis of random sampling, reliable enough. There are minor inconsistencies that might confuse some readers: thus *die grosse Kollegien* (*amplissima collegia*), normally in English ‘the major colleges’, appear sometimes as ‘the great colleges’ instead. That might be mistaken for a meaningful distinction, but is in fact just *variatio*. But my impression is that such infelicities are not often troublesome. The reader using the annual listing by colleges needs to be aware of the typographical conventions, discussed at pp. 18–19, that indicate which of those listed were certainly members in that year; which for one reason or another are only probable or possible members; and which may have joined in the course of the year. The argumentation and evidence behind these categories are to be found under the member’s biography.

It is intriguing that the only form of listing that R. avoids is the form that Bardt adopted, *viz.* to list the republican priests recorded by Livy (218–167 B.C.E.) successively each under his *decuria* — the seat, plebeian or patrician — in the college to which he belonged. Yet this is the format adopted by the only (and admittedly miserable) fragments we have of the priestly *fasti* as inscribed in the time of Augustus (*ILS* 9338). The earlier names in these lists may well be fabricated (as R. argues for all early records (27–30)), but it is at least probable that the inscribed records were following the form of records kept in the college’s *commentarii*. If so, the early annalists would have found the names of the priest who had died and of his successor, dated by consular year, and we need not postulate a record in the *annales maximi*, which R. as a matter of fact regards as ‘the most successful of all instances of apocryphal literature’ (38). It is a remarkable feature of the Livian entries that one can successfully reconstruct almost perfect lists of the membership of the augurs and pontifices for the whole of this period. The crucial clue may be provided by the *decemviri s.f.*, for whom Livy’s entries provide records of five, not ten places, two patrician, three plebeian, with no trace of the missing five. It is hard to see how complete *decuriae* could have dropped out, unless the entries were originally organized by *decuriae*, not scattered through an annual record.

There can be no question that the range of persons included in the prosopography has and will have great value in research. But there is some reason to have misgivings at least about the title: *Fasti sacerdotum*. The wording of the book’s subtitle hints at the problem, but the book does not seem to explore the implications. Just as *religio* is not what we today think of as a ‘religion’, so *sacerdos* is not what we think of as a ‘priest’. In the case of the Roman priests themselves, there is no doubt that they have some priestly functions, but the key religious mediators between the Roman people and their deities were arguably magistrates rather than priests. It is magistrates who carry out the public rituals and take vows on behalf of the state, while decisions on religious matters are taken by the senate, being the ex-magistrates, albeit on the advice of the priestly colleges. So the interface between priests and magistrates should not be seen as being between religious and secular; rather it is between the sphere of action, the negotiating between men and deities, and the sphere of reflection on the principles and rules controlling relations between men and deities. It is the priests who keep records of past decisions and successful procedures (on this whole issue, see John Scheid, ‘Le prêtre et le magistrat’, in C. Nicolet (ed.), *Des ordres à Rome* (1984), 243–80).

If you were to draw circles representing the range of activity of the different groups of ‘officials’ included in this book — Roman, Greek, Isiac, Jewish, Christian — they would certainly all intersect to a limited extent; but much of their activity would radically differ. The Roman model does not even fit the Greek case, still less the Christian. The possible complexities of definition are well illustrated by the curious case of the ‘priests’ of Iuppiter Dolichenus, known to us from the inscriptions of the sanctuary on the Aventine. In one of his extended discussions (51–6), R. tries to make sense of the multiplicity of different grades and denominations referred to in these documents; as one would expect of him, he has an original and trenchant theory, which may be right. But what is quite clear is that the complexities are very considerable even as displayed in a limited documentation. Meanwhile other cases would produce different problems of definition. The risk is that readers, and particularly non-specialist and occasional readers, may be deceived into thinking that those included in the book shared some fundamental religious unity of type, when they have in fact little to unite them except the modern decision to call them ‘priests’. It

would be a mistake to infer, for example, that Romans thought of Jewish priests as resembling what they understood by *sacerdotes*. Of course, *Fasti sacerdotum* is not making any such claim; but there is room here for rich misunderstanding.

It would, however, be unpardonably ungracious to carp at so useful a work, the fruit of so much care, commitment and thought: future generations of scholars searching for elusive Roman priests will have every reason to bless the name of Rüpke.

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Z. VÁRHELYI, *THE RELIGION OF SENATORS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE: POWER AND THE BEYOND*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xii + 267. ISBN 9780521897242. £55.00/US\$95.00.

This compact book (based on the author's 2002 PhD thesis) explores the religious activities and beliefs of individual senators and the senate as a body over the first two and a half centuries of the Principate, with a particular focus on the inter-relationship between religious activity, political authority and senatorial identity. The theoretical framework, clearly articulated in the introduction, deploys a sociologically-informed understanding of religion; invoking the 'practice theory' associated with historians such as Gabrielle Spiegel, Várhelyi argues that ritual practices can be seen as constitutive of belief and vice versa without collapsing the distinction between them (12). Aiming to track both normative trends and significant variations, her study is interested less in the potential religion offered for subversion than in senators' creative and dynamic engagement with the religious order.

The book is divided into three parts, with Part I focusing on religious activity in relation to collective identity. Ch. 1 ('The New Senate of the Empire and Religion', based on a geographically nuanced analysis of a large number of dedications made by 'new men') assesses the rôle of new provincial senators as generators of religious innovation. V.'s argument here is that, notwithstanding the increasing rate of recruitment to the senate under the Principate, the tendency to religious conservatism on the part of almost all first-generation senators suggests that even a relatively high degree of social mobility need not have undermined a strong sense of senatorial identity. This seems eminently plausible, even if it does not in itself constitute evidence for a strongly distinct senatorial identity. V. does, however, argue persuasively for the strength of the senate's collective religious authority. In stressing the close relationship between social status and religious affiliations, V. thus challenges the idea of the 'religious marketplace' articulated most influentially by Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price in *Religions of Rome* (1998).

Ch. 2, on religious sub-groups among senators, has many perceptive observations to offer about priesthoods and other religious groupings. In particular, V.'s systematic study of provincial prosopography makes clear that while provincial *flamines* did not themselves generally gain access to the senatorial order, their descendants frequently did (such priesthoods were thus hardly a political dead-end, as earlier scholars argued). Besides epigraphy, V. makes use of a range of literary texts to characterize the religious life of the senatorial élite, concluding with a discussion of rituals associated with illness, in particular the custom of friends gathering at the bedside of the sick and offering prayers for recovery. Despite her interesting comments on the part such rituals played in affirming social networks, it is difficult to argue that specifically senatorial behaviour is distinct in this respect from that of the social élite more generally.

Chs 3 and 4 (Part II) offer surveys of the religious activities, frequently combining piety and euergetism, undertaken by individual senators in, respectively, Italy and the provinces. Just as the position of the emperor was theorized and performed in part in religious terms, so too, V. contends, individual senatorial posts gained religious significance. Here, also, V.'s discussion is informed by an impressive command of epigraphy. The picture which emerges, arguing for a link, for instance, between particular magistracies and specific cults (such as the urban praetorship and the cult of Hercules) is richly detailed and further confirms the tendency for social and political power to be articulated in religious terms.

Part III concerns the development of religious concepts, particularly in relation to political authority. Ch. 5 ('Towards a "Theology" of Roman Religion') argues for an increasingly close relationship between religion and philosophy from the latter decades of the first century C.E. While it is certainly the case that debates in the senate about the divinization of deceased emperors were