more strident of Christian triumphalist strains, much of Eusebius' Constantine still remains. It is Eusebius whose courtly panegyrics are presented as giving ideological voice to Constantine's religious revolution: 'Abbandonato completamente il sistema tetrarchico del "restauratore" Diocleziano, il "rivoluzionario" Costantino poneva il suo governo sotto il segno del Dio dei cristiani' (p. 82). This proclamation of such a significant break sits rather uncomfortably with M.'s wider aim to emphasize Constantine's firm grounding in the tetrarchy. (Significantly, one-third of M.'s book deals with Constantine before 312.) It is perhaps unsurprising that the bibliography (p. 117) recommends one of the the most recent enthusiasts for a Constantinian revolution, T. G. Elliott, *The Christianity of Constantine the Great* (Scranton, 1996), reviewed in *CR* 49 (1999), 492–4, rather than J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979), esp. pp. 235–44, with his brilliantly provocative argument for a close relationship between Diocletian's and Constantine's religious ideologies.

Certainly, Eusebius is difficult to shake off. Like the *Life of Constantine*, the latter part of M.'s *Costantino* is dominated by religion. Substantial extracts from Eusebius are neatly integrated into M.'s own account. As in the *Life of Constantine* (4.1–4), other reforms—fiscal, administrative, economic—are passed over in a couple of pages (pp. 97–8). Of course, this may be a correct reflection of Constantine's own priorities. But it also underlines a pressing dilemma: to what extent a modern account of Constantine is condemned—by the simple and laudable virtue of a close reliance on contemporary sources—to follow the concerns and contours of Eusebius' *Life*? M. has perhaps most successfully broken free in the detail: he is always careful to avoid Eusebius' more extravagant claims. His Constantine remains a reasonable man with a prudently moderate attitude towards Christianity. Even so, the choice of material, and indeed the very shape and emphases of M.'s elegantly compact narrative, are in danger of making his *Life of Constantine* seem at times closer than he might have wished to being read as a nearly new Eusebius.

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THE EMPEROR VALENS

N. Lenski: *Failure of Empire. Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 34.) Pp. xix + 454, maps, ills. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002. Cased, US$75/£52. ISBN: 0-520-23332-8.

It is easy to dismiss Valens as the butt of a foolhardy witticism (Amm. 26.4.1), and, as L. admits, impossible to write a book about him without saying much about Valentinian and something about Gratian too. This he duly does, and his contribution will be of great value to all who study the period.

After a brief survey of the sources, L. deals with family background (bringing out well the differences between the brothers) and their accession to the purple. On the question of power-sharing, he underestimates Valentinian's control over his troops, but is sensible on the appointment of Valens as Augustus, not Caesar, and points out that the division of territory gave Valentinian twice as much as his brother. The treatment of the propaganda of concord and fraternal equality is good, with apt use of coins and

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inscriptions (a positive factor throughout the book); that in fact both Valens and eventually Gratian were seen as dependent on Valentinian is clearly shown.

The account of Procopius' revolt is generally excellent, despite occasional awkwardness in the distribution of material between narrative and evaluative sections. L. rightly warns against regarding the rising as farcical and stresses the importance of Aequitius' holding of Illyricum. He also takes a less starry-eyed view than Ammianus of Valentinian's decision not to go to Valens' aid. His surprise that Procopius should have risked rebellion with so little military backing is perhaps unwarranted: as Ammianus makes clear, Procopius was simply desperate. L. then shows how Procopius tried to cash in on the two major factors in which the Pannonians were conspicuously weak: dynastic legitimation and culture.

On the background to Valens' first Gothic war L. claims that despite propaganda Constantine gained no more than a toehold across the Danube. No evidence suggests that the status of the Goths as *foederati* had any special significance. Almost nothing is known about the peace, and L. warns against reading facts from a later period back into it. He makes the interesting suggestion (p. 126) that Athanaric's oath never to set foot on Roman soil was a promise not to invade. There was no good reason for Valens' war, the account of which brings out well the relevance of Themistius' eighth oration. Crisis in the East in 369 made a compromise treaty necessary. The yawning gulf between Them. 10 and the facts is well displayed. However, the interpretation of 10.135a–c as a reference to a specific unnamed concession to the Goths (which L. takes to be the abandonment of Rome's claim to Gothic troops) seems forced, though the meaning is by no means clear.

On foreign policy in general L. posits the following assumptions: (i) all barbarians present a threat; (ii) that threat is best dealt with by invasion; (iii) all barbarian territory is subject to Rome; (iv) the elimination of barbarian leaders by assassination is legitimate. All of which sounds terrifyingly preminiscent of the immoralism of contemporary superpowers. But against these triumphalist presumptions I feel we must set the overwhelmingly defensive presentation of Roman policy in Ammianus and others. Indeed, L. agrees that the Romans claimed only to respond to threats and that both brothers exaggerated such threats to justify campaigns.

Turning to the complexities of the Eastern frontier, L. acknowledges that the treaty of 363 was vague and ambiguous on Armenia and that both sides sought to exploit these flaws. In Ammianus' account of Shapur's demands (30.2.1–3) L. favours the reading *deseri*, to preserve the parallel between Shapur's proposals for Armenia and Iberia. However, he does not deal with the possible objections to *deseri*, and his claim that *deleri penitus* would be meaningless because *Armenia* in Ammianus always refers only to the territory cannot stand. A purely geographical sense is indeed most common, but at 17.5.6, 14.1; 23.5.11; 27.12.1, 10 (note the transition from *Armeniam* to *gentem*), 15 (*Armenia–nationem*); 30.1.4 (*Armeniae–natio*) the ideas of the land, its people, and its form of government are all present. Neither reading is free from difficulties, but I still prefer *deleri*; for the meaning compare the practical connotations of Julian's projected 'destruction' of the Persians (Amm. 23.5.19; cf. *CQ* 91 [1997], 264).

On the agreements mentioned in 30.2.3–4, L. rejects any reference to the peace of 363. In the case of Iberia he assumes an allusion to 27.12.17–18. I am now inclined to accept that this is true of Valens. It is then all the more striking that Shapur ignores this agreement in his reply and speaks only of the peace. This is consistent with his rejection of it at the time Valens claimed it was made. For Armenia the allusion is

allegedly to the truce of 29.1.4; that this truce was more than a simple cease-fire still seems to me unlikely.

L. also offers an admirable analysis of the spin put on events and policy by Festus and Eutropius and convincing treatments of Valens' problems with the Maratocupreni, Isaurians (including a major rising in 375 neglected by Ammianus), and Saracens, in particular the rising of Mavia, equally ignored by Ammianus.

L.'s next topic is religion. At first, Valens imitated the tolerance advertised by Valentinian. Even in the context of the conspiracy of 371, Ammianus was right to speak in terms of an offence against clemency rather than an attack on paganism. Likewise, the magic trials that began in 369 arose out of a palace conspiracy that involved both Christians and pagans. There is no reason to doubt that the conspiracy was real: both emperors deserve criticism only for allowing initially justified investigations to get out of control.

Valentinian's 'Arianism' is sensibly treated: L. suggests that he became Nicene only to placate the West. The account of Valens' tribulations with the church is lucid and convincing, but perhaps too hard on the emperor, given the provocation to which he was subjected. Like his brother, he was chiefly concerned with religious harmony, for which he was even prepared to tolerate Athanasius, and the revolt of Procopius increased his caution. His treatment of Antioch also shows his tolerance of Nicenes if they caused no trouble, while at Caesarea he left Basil alone: L. rightly dismisses the alleged confrontation of January 372 as a fabrication by Gregory Nazianzen. Serious problems arose only after Athanasius' death, with arrests of Nicene bishops, the forcing of monks and ascetics into military or curial service, and the exploitation of civil legislation for religous purposes. But concern for unity moved Valens to recall exiles before the Edirne campaign, though its outcome of course sealed victory for the Homoousians.

In administration and finance the brothers' legislation often proceeded in tandem (with Valentinian taking the lead) in such fields as family law, weights and measures, education, and public entertainments. Both were harsh towards corrupt officials, attempted to remedy the desperate state of the *curiae*, and in building concentrated on the erection of useful structures. In the minimization of taxation it was for once Valens who took the initiative, trying to repair the damage done by Julian's disastrous financial policies, though his early efforts helped to cause the rising of Procopius. But in the end these innovations and his coinage reform had a deleterious effect, leading to harsh measures in the mining industry, confiscations, and the sale of imperial estates.

The chapter on Edirne offers a lucid narrative of the background to the disaster. L. argues effectively that the Goths were required to disarm, while admitting that the clause would be very hard to police. Valens was under great pressure, but he also thought he stood to gain. Auxiliaries were much harder to come by in the East than in the West, and at least in theory the admission of the Goths was limited and controlled. If negotiations with barbarians went wrong, the Romans were always ready to renege on agreements and resort to genocide: L. aptly cites the Limigantes (Amm. 19.11) and Saxons (Amm. 28.5). But this time there were simply too many Goths and too few Romans.

The reasons for the disaster are well known, but L. rightly stresses that problems on the Eastern frontier had delayed Valens' approach. He also highlights the inadequacy of Gratian's support, again using coin evidence well to demonstrate the tension between uncle and nephew since Valentinian's death. Valens might claim seniority, but in real terms Gratian at sixteen held two-thirds of the empire. Valens waited as long as he possibly could, but Gratian preferred to deal with the trivial matter of the

Lentienses. L. notes that Gratian's boasting (Amm. 31.11.6, 31.12.1, 7) must have provoked Valens to rash action. One might ask whether it was consciously calculated so to do. Zonaras (13.17) claimed that Gratian deliberately withheld reinforcements on religous grounds, Zosimus (4.24.4) that he was not much grieved to hear of his uncle's death. Perhaps they were right. Ammianus praises Gratian's *celeritas* in dealing with the Lentienses (31.10.18, 20). L. sees this as ironic, which it is, but it may be more. Perhaps Ammianus, as he does elsewhere, is making it clear to the alert among his readers that he is in fact aware of the truth he does not advertise.

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MAGISTRI MILITUM

P. MacGeorge: *Late Roman Warlords*. Pp. xvii + 347, maps, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Cased, £55. ISBN: 0-19-925244-0.

This book is composed of three extended essays on three 'warlords', Marcellinus in Dalmatia, Aegidius and Syagrius in Gaul, and Ricimer in Italy. Although the title suggests wider coverage, the focus is firmly on the Western Roman Empire in the late fifth century A.D. However, despite the lack of direct consideration of their western predecessors, like Stilicho or Aetius, or eastern contemporaries, like Aspar or the Theoderics, these studies do shed light on their activities. They also provide some useful reflections on the rôle of late fifth-century *magistri militum* (esp. pp. 82–3).

Each essay follows a similar pattern, providing a study of the individual(s), along with some discussion of the literary sources and a sketch of the relevant archaeology of the region. The first part concerns 'Marcellinus and Dalmatia' (pp. 17–67). The weaknesses of the conventional interpretation of Marcellinus as a western figure are well brought out, as is the uncertain status of mid-fifth century Illyricum. The second part is about 'Aegidius, Syagrius, and the kingdom of Soissons' (pp. 71–164). A number of comments on the Alans and place name evidence (pp. 73, 155, 231) could be revised to take into account Kovaleskaja in M. Kazanski and J. Vallet, *L'armée romaine et les barbares* (Rouen, 1993). There is a careful rejection of the minimalist arguments of James on the kingdom of Soissons. The third part, 'Ricimer, Gundobad, Orestes, and Odovacer in Italy' (pp. 167–293), is mostly concerned with Ricimer. The discussion of Ricimer's early career starts with Sidonius' claim that Ricimer had noble ancestry, which M. shows is Visigothic (pp. 178–9). However, the suggestion that Ricimer's grandfather Vallia was Ataulf's brother is only barely supported by the sources cited (p. 178 n. 3), and there is no evidence for any relationship between Vallia and Theoderic.

Overall, there is a positivist approach to the source material. Carrying out research in the late fifth century West does require an optimistic outlook, but M.'s concern (p. 2) to use 'nearly all the available sources' has perhaps overridden the very real differences between various authors. Thus Priscus' apparent concentration on diplomacy and foreign policy (p. 30) reflects the interests of Constantine VII's excerptors, not those of Priscus himself. Although Procopius has to be used as a source for the fifth-century West, it must be recognized that he writes as a sixth-century easterner, and thus what he says may not fit with what we know from fifth-century western sources. There is also a strong reaction against modern treatments of ethnicity. At its bluntest, this is expressed as 'Recent academic notions that individual cultural and ethnic identity is

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