

image of the Pannonians as boorish and ill-qualified. The speculation must be that this is an implicit comparison with the highly educated but somewhat impractical Julian. David Hunt examines the evidence for Valentinian's Ammianus-praised religious toleration, and sets it in the context of Theodosius' legislation. Hans Teitler too begins with the necrology, and produces a counter argument to Paschoud's famous proposal that Ammianus has produced a maliciously distorted depiction of Valentinian I. He acknowledges the over-all effect of injustice and cruelty, but suggests that this is modified by the more nuanced assessment of the *elogium*.

'Literary Composition' turns to the mechanics of narrative. Stéphane Ratti suggests that Ammianus' description of the transport of the Visigoths over the Danube in A.D. 376 should be read as a deliberate subversion of the motif of the hero crossing the river. From the epic to the comic: Daniel den Hengst examines the second satirical digression on Rome at 28.4, setting it alongside its partner digression at 14.6, seeing excoriating intent, an uneasy fit with the treason trials which open Book 28, and a relationship less to Juvenalian than Menippean satire. Giuseppe Zecchini takes up the eternal question of Greek v. Roman in the *Res gestae*, and analyses those sections where examples from Greek and Roman history are compared. His conclusions include the discovery that Ammianus emphasized Greek superiority in law and astronomy, and presented Alexander the Great as the exemplar for Roman emperors. Gavin Kelly begins at the end, and insightfully reconciles current debate about the *spraghis* by suggesting that the aim was multifaceted. The contradictory notions of panegyric and grand historiography are not exclusive, since one is a recommendation and the other a pragmatic assessment of what is possible. He suggests that Ammianus exploits similar ambiguity to conclude the Gothic narrative while presenting open-ended vignettes to emphasize that the Gothic 'problem' remained open.

Finally, 'Crisis of Empire' expands upon Ammianus' great themes of the use and abuse of power, the moral climate of state and the emperor ideal. Sigrid Mratschek shows how the Lepcis Magna affair has been constructed as a universal tragedy: Iustitia lets down the Roman state, while the historian intervenes to reveal Theodosius' concealed enemies. Christopher Kelly perceptively demonstrates how the fractured and decomposing structure of the final hexad is deliberate, intended to reflect the terrifying whimsy of imperial autocracy, where everyone, even conspirators, leaps to erroneous conclusions based on partial and imagined evidence. Nothing is what it seems in this new world, and no simple or conclusive judgement can be made by emperor, subject, audience or historian. Lastly, Jan den Boeft reveals Ammianus' sensitivity to the use and abuse of history, nervous that by recording bad conduct he will enshrine it as exemplum. Charmingly he then ends with an imagined dialogue with the historian, in which Ammianus states his core principles.

This useful and illuminating contribution highlights the techniques and themes of the last six books: impressionistic, fragmented, textually dense, preoccupied with the correct wielding of power in a world without Julian, and with the Goths after Adrianople in the time of Theodosius. In advance of forthcoming commentary volumes, to which it will be an invaluable adjunct, *After Julian* constructs a persuasive image of Ammianus as an author of dramatic and artful juxtaposition in literary technique and historical judgement, using moralizing historiography in a time of troubles to exhortative effect.

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B. DIGNAS and E. WINTER, *ROME AND PERSIA IN LATE ANTIQUITY. NEIGHBOURS AND RIVALS*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xvi + 347. ISBN 978-0-521-84925-8 (bound); 978-0-521-61407-8 (paper). £45.00 (bound); £17.99 (paper).

This translation of *Rom und das Perserreich* (2001), with limited additions and up-dating, aims to investigate the crucial international relationship of the ancient Near Eastern world in a more balanced way than has been achieved in its more Eurocentric predecessors, with proper attention to Eastern visual and textual evidence. The approach is to provide a succinct narrative that covers four centuries of interactions in forty pages, and then combine translated evidence with brief introduction and comment in nine thematic chapters: Political Goals, Warfare, Military Confrontations, Diplomatic Solutions, Arabia, Shared Interests, Religion, Emperor and King of Kings, and Exchange of Information. The results are mixed. As a straight source book it does not have the space to compete with the pair of Routledge volumes produced by Dodgeon and Lieu (1991) on the earlier period and Greatrex and Lieu (2002) on post-Julianic relations, even though

these contain almost no material evidence and offer less introduction and comment. On the other hand, as an introduction to the developments of Roman-Persian relations in Late Antiquity, it is scarcely more detailed than the overview in Wiesehöfer's *Ancient Iran* (1996), and lacks the depth of more focused studies such as Blockley's *East Roman Foreign Policy* (1992) or Greatrex's *Roman and Persia at War* (1998).

The *Neighbours and Rivals* theme of the subtitle points to the importance of the new chapter II.8 on the relationship at royal level. Discussion of the concept of mutual recognition is flawed by the failure to recognize the subtleties of diplomatic dealings. The openings of the letters exchanged between Constantius II and Shapur II preserved in Ammianus are cited to demonstrate acceptance of equality of rank (232), whereas the balance of epithets clearly demonstrated reciprocal jockeying for superiority. The notion of equality is pursued in the dealings between Khusro II and Maurice where the father-son language, while suggesting a difference in status, is also said to imply equality (239), though the earlier treatment of the Senate's approach to Khusro on Heraclius' behalf is less clear on this (45). It is a pity that Malalas' record (449.19–20) of an exchange between Kavadh and Justin I is not quoted, since this demonstrates the potential for coded insult in cosmic symbolism. Use of the language of equality, as by Shirōe to Heraclius in A.D. 628, was a sign of need, while recourse to father-son terminology indicated desperation. Khusro I's detour to Seleucia to bathe in the Mediterranean might also have been noted for its claim to universal heavenly authority.

Another important aspect of mutual relations was religion, specifically the emergence in Persia of a substantial Christian community, and here the German text has been expanded by a section devoted to the sixth and seventh centuries (II.7, §33). Inevitably, granted its length (seven pages), this scarcely scratches the surface. The significance of Edessa as a Christian city with a special guarantee of protection from Christ is not mentioned, although the Persians seem to have known of this and been affected by it. The removal of the relic of the Holy Cross from Jerusalem in A.D. 614 is not so much a demonstration of 'religious antithesis' (230) as the combination of an *evocatio* of an enemy talisman and appropriation of a prized relic which would enhance royal prestige with Persian Christians. The fact that Khusro II's leading general, Shahvaraz, appears to have been Christian, or at least that his sons were given Christian names and were linked to Emperor Heraclius by god-parental ties, is not noted, although this would help to explain Heraclius' otherwise surprising support for his usurpation (47).

The volume is better on the early Sasanid period, where it sets relations with Rome in an appropriately broad historical context. Treatment of the later period, especially in the additions, is less convincing. Sebeos, a revealing source for the Armenian dynamic in Roman-Persian dealings as well as for a prominent Christian at the Sasanid court, is not mentioned, and more could have been made of Menander who had access to extremely good information about the mechanics of diplomacy. The notion that the power of the traditional nobility was broken once and for all in the sixth century (99) might not have convinced Hormizd IV in A.D. 590 or Khusro II in A.D. 628, when each was toppled by coups which united one of their sons with elements in the nobility. There are minor errors: the Hephthalites are presented as Turkish (236), whereas they had earlier correctly been distinguished from the Western Turks (42); John of Ephesus is described as bishop of Constantinople (226 — in fact Ephesus); there are not 'many other sources' for Khusro's dedications to Sergius (229 n. 106), merely versions in Evagrius and Theophylact which are indirectly linked; Theophylact's account of a speech by King Hormizd is cited for its insight into Persian attitudes (236–7), whereas this is a traditional composition by a classicizing historian, appropriate in general to a usurpation but not indicative of Persian views.

The authors knew that their approach risked positioning themselves between two stools (4): there is insufficient space either for a thorough analysis of Sasanid Iran and its relations with Rome, or for a fully representative selection of translated evidence. There are some valuable discussions (e.g. of the significance of the Achaemenid inheritance in the early period, 56–62), so it is disappointing that there are not more.

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