

imperial aesthetic), informing the plays and comparable to contemporary visual culture; in looking for comparable dramatic genres, she suggests pantomime for its ‘running commentaries’, introspective monologues, narrative set-pieces and attention to the body. Shadi Bartsch (ch. 10) writes on philosophy’s (and philosophers’) appropriate relationship to and roles within public life; she traces an arc of Senecan rhetoric on the subject of civic participation from the *De Clementia* to the *Letters*. Catharine Edwards (ch. 11) gives a multi-faceted introduction to the subject-matter and style of Senecan epistolography through the lens of *virtus* and *gloria*.

Part IV focuses on art and visual culture. Caroline Vout (ch. 12) considers the inclination of Neronian portraiture and painting to exaggeration, deconstruction and self-indulgence. Eugenio La Rocca (ch. 13) surveys Neronian solar imagery and the *Domus Aurea*; he also provides a useful appendix on portrait types (354–8). John Pollini (ch. 14) offers good commentary on the ancient accounts of the fire, surveys early Christianity and suggests that Christians may have been involved in the fire of 64 (see below). Eric Varner (ch. 15) surveys Nero’s memory in Flavian Rome through recut or repurposed portraits and buildings.

Part V covers aspects of Nero’s reception. Donatien Grau (ch. 16) looks at his representation in Pliny the Elder, Suetonius, Tacitus and Dio. J. Albert Harrill (ch. 17) considers early Christianity in Rome through the lens of Paul’s letter to the Romans as well as Nero’s reception in early Christian writings. Peter Stacey (ch. 18) introduces Nero’s image in Renaissance political thought; he provides the political and intellectual context of Petrarch’s reception of Seneca. Elena Russo (ch. 19) examines Nero in the Enlightenment, concentrating on Voltaire and Diderot. Martin M. Winkler (ch. 20) fast-forwards to Nero in Hollywood.

In the final essay (in its own section) Erik Gunderson (ch. 21) considers the ‘symptom’ of Nero in the notions of decadence and power; he begins with Tacitus and ends with the film *The Dark Knight*.

Criticisms are few. It is unfortunate that B. D. Shaw’s paper in *JRS* 105 (2015), 73–100 appeared too late to be addressed properly in Pollini’s chapter. Pollini’s summary of Shaw’s ‘major premise’ is misleading (213): he does not argue that Christians were not targeted as arsonists but ‘suffered punishment—or rather “persecution”—for their faith’, but rather that the whole incident is an anachronism better fitting the first decades of the second century and that there was no Neronian persecution. More help was needed with Varner’s illustrations: it is not clear what suggests that a portrait had been warehoused, and in figure 15.4 the key evidence at the back of the head is not visible in the frontal view. I would have liked a chapter offering guidance on Nero and the Victorians or the nineteenth century. In Gunderson’s chapter the structure (half Tacitus, half *Dark Knight*) and its loose connections (e.g. 347: ‘None of this is Nero and it’s not even reception’) impeded its effectiveness.

The overall quality of the volume is on a par with E. Buckley and M. Dinter’s *A Companion to the Neronian Age* (2013), it makes a stimulating pair with A. A. Barrett, E. Fantham and J. C. Yardley’s *The Emperor Nero: A Guide to the Ancient Sources* (2016), and all three will come together well in the classroom. This is a top-notch primer to Nero and his age.

University of Sydney
paul.roche@sydney.edu.au
doi:10.1017/S0075435820000325

PAUL ROCHE

VOLKER GRIEB (ED.), *MARC AUREL: WEGE ZU SEINER HERRSCHAFT*. Gutenberg: Computus Druck Satz & Verlag, 2017. Pp. xiii + 466, illus., maps. ISBN 9783940598271. €98.00.

This book is intended to distinguish the historical Marcus Aurelius and his rule from his idealized reputation as a philosophical emperor. In the preface, the editor presents his own assessment of Marcus Aurelius’ reign, anticipating most of the results found in this volume (especially ix–xii). The observation that Marcus Aurelius’ inclination towards philosophy was primarily reflected in the private and court environment, but was only of subordinate importance in his actual governmental duties, will surprise few readers (xii).

Stefan Priwitz (1–22) discusses the question of how the double principate came about at all. Although it was predictable that military conflicts would arise after the death of Antoninus Pius, the severity of this military crisis was not predictable and therefore should not be interpreted as a reason for the dual principate (4–6). He correctly identifies the causes to be domestic and political:

pietas towards Hadrian and Aelius Caesar, respect towards Lucius, and above all the pressure of the Ceionii faction, which certainly felt cheated by the regulation of Antoninus Pius (18–20). This also explains why there was no double principate between 169 and 177. The appointment of Commodus as Augustus was a reaction to Avidius Cassius' uprising, and proves once more that Marcus Aurelius was a pragmatic ruler (16–18).

Christoph Michels (23–48) asks why there were usurpations at all under the watch of the 'good' emperors Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. Concerning the usurpation of Avidius Cassius, he very carefully weighs the arguments for and against a possible misunderstanding concerning the alleged death of Marcus Aurelius (40–3). In my opinion, the crucial point for assessing Avidius' uprising is the lack of coinage: serious usurpers brought coins displaying their portrait into circulation as quickly as possible. Michels evaluates the usurpation attempts mentioned under Antoninus Pius as literary duplicates (Titianus) and historiographical exaggerations of minor unrest (Priscianus) (31), emphasising the emperor's skills in crisis management. That said, the usurpation attempts are also mentioned in the *fasti Ostienses* and find expression — in my opinion — in the coinage (S. Börner, *Marc Aurel im Spiegel seiner Münzen und Medaillons* (2012), 80–6). They can therefore hardly have been so insignificant.

Michael A. Speidel (49–74) rightly stresses that Marcus Aurelius' military abilities have often been neglected in favour of his self-reflections and his 'role' as philosophical emperor (although this has been corrected in recent scholarship, e.g. R. Hund, *Studien zur Aussenpolitik der Kaiser Antoninus Pius und Marc Aurel* (2017)). Through detailed investigation of his coinage, Speidel argues that in his 'daily work' as emperor, Marcus Aurelius very clearly subordinated his undisputed personal affinity for philosophy to the needs and requirements of the state (70–4). His military abilities were also promoted at an early age: the *Iuventas* coinages of the years 140–144 (57) are clearly connected with his appointment as *princeps iuventutis* (cf. Börner 2012, 22–3).

Michael Sommer (75–92) approaches the key question of how Lucius Verus — in contrast to Crassus, Antonius, Nero or Trajan — achieved comparative success against the Parthians. His inclusion of coinage from Edessa for his analysis of the events in the 160s is particularly exciting, as it helps shed light on the local power relations with regard to Rome (83–4). Christoph Schäfer (93–108) again deals with the role of the emperor as military commander in contrast to his reputation as philosophical emperor. Analysing the scarce source material, he too comes to the unsurprising conclusion that Marcus fulfilled his duty; the article offers little else new. Sven Th. Schipporeit (109–34) deals with the significance of triumphs, and points out the importance of dynasty preservation in connection with triumphs over the Parthians and Teutons. In this way the triumph was reformulated as a legitimisation ritual.

The next two contributions both come from Peter Weiß (135–62). The first essay makes the exciting observation that the serial production of military diplomas in bronze collapsed between 168 and 177. During this time much of the linguistic and technical practice was apparently lost, but the physical form of the diplomas was subsequently designed in a more uniform fashion. The second article illustrates these changes and their effects through a detailed analysis of a Commodan diploma from the lower Danube.

Burkhard Meißner (163–88) makes an abstract and elaborate argument that the Second Sophistic saw historiography as part of political communication (187–8). Historiography under the Antonines was both a propaganda tool and an orientation tool; but this is certainly true also for other periods. Claudia Horst (189–210) also deals with the role of the Second Sophistic under Marcus Aurelius, showing that the emperor integrated the educated upper class into power structures where possible, and interprets this as an attempt to tie politics and philosophy together (202). Helmut Halfmann (211–22) takes one of these important philosophical protagonists, Herodes Atticus, as an example, tracing his life, self-image and relationship to the imperial family.

Kai Ruffing (223–48) addresses financial policy under Marcus Aurelius. He assigns him no serious financial crisis — despite an additional financial burden from various wars — and sees continuity with the policy of his predecessors (241). He rightly sees the increased need for money to finance wars as the cause of the slightly decreasing silver content in the denarius (228).

Torsten Mattern (249–84) argues that Marcus used building policy as a means of communication with the public less than other emperors (253). Furthermore, he tries to link his attested construction projects to imperial virtues (not always convincing). In his presentation of numismatic sources, the reference is only occasionally indicated in the caption (fig. 3), and legends are missing (fig. 1) or incomplete (fig. 4).

Hilmar Klinkott (285–306) considers the ‘Antonine plague’ first and foremost as a literary device to upgrade the image of the good emperor Marcus Aurelius. This is certainly true for the later literary sources, but cannot account for the epigraphic and papyrological evidence. In addition, it is not quite clear why Klinkott cites the *MEDICVS* title in connection with the Antoninian plague (296): Marcus Aurelius held this title only in 166 after the partial conquest of Media. Clemens Koehn (307–24) examines tendencies in Marcus Aurelius’ legislation and concludes that the emperor strengthened the rights of children, especially orphans, but otherwise followed the trend of the Antonine era concerning inheritance law (323).

The following three articles deal with Marcus’ religious policy. Wolfgang Spickermann (325–42) outlines the increasingly central role of ‘foreign’ cults, arguing adeptly on the basis of numismatic sources (especially 325–9). Following the tradition of his direct predecessor, Marcus Aurelius strengthened the imperial cult and the *domus divinae* (cf. also C. Rowan in *Proceedings of the XIV International Numismatic Congress* (2012), 991–8). On the other hand, his stoic monotheistic inclinations (332) did not come into conflict with state policy or the polytheistic principle.

Joachim Molthagen (343–62) and Henrike M. Zilling (363–80) study the relationship between Marcus Aurelius and the Christians. Molthagen shows that a wave of persecution (e.g. the martyrdom of Polycarp) can in fact be dated under Antoninus Pius (349). In addition, he shows that the persecution of the 160s was considerably smaller in size than previously assumed and did not affect the legal status of Christianity (350–1). Examining Marcus’ image in Christian historiography, Zilling concludes that Justin, Melito and Athenagoras ahistorically stylised the emperor as a *protector christianorum* (380).

Finally, Volker Grieb (381–400) deals with the significance of Marcus’ beard. He convincingly disproves the assumption that the emperor’s emerging beardedness should be explained by his alignment with intellectual circles in the Greek East, and sees the cause rather in military fashion (400). He rightly argues that Marcus’ beard-fashion — especially in his youthful portrait — was strongly oriented towards Aelius Verus and was thus dynastically legitimised (383–6).

In conclusion, the essays are of varying quality and topicality; however, several contributions are well worth reading and bring new insights to our understanding of Marcus Aurelius and his time.

Seminar für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik, Universität Heidelberg
susanne.boerner@zaw.uni-heidelberg.de

SUSANNE BÖRNER

doi:10.1017/S0075435820000027

OLIVIER HEKSTER and KOENRAAD VERBOVEN (EDS), *THE IMPACT OF JUSTICE ON THE ROMAN EMPIRE: PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTEENTH WORKSHOP OF THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK IMPACT OF EMPIRE (GENT, JUNE 21–24, 2017)* (Impact of Empire: Roman Empire 34). Leiden: Brill, 2019. Pp. viii + 233, illus. ISBN 9789004400450. €121.00.

Rome brought *iustitia* to her subjects: thus ran one central legitimising claim of the empire’s ideology. It is this contention that the reviewed volume (the conference proceedings from the *Impact of Empire*’s 2017 Network meeting) takes as its starting point. The editors should be congratulated on the speed from conference to publication. Stylistic imprints occasionally result, as some of the entries are lightly referenced and perhaps remain close to the spoken papers; a few typological errors have also slipped through. But these do not generally detract from the quality of contributions in a volume that constitutes a logical addition to the *Impact* series.

The focus of the book is neither juristic nor philosophical. Instead, Koenraad Verboven and Olivier Hekster express their intent to explore the construction of Rome’s offer of justice from the point of view of various subject groups (2): what did they consider just? How were such views legitimated, did they change over time and how in turn did they affect various aspects of Roman practice (administration, policy making, judicial)? ‘Notions, practice and ideology’ (3) underpin the contributions and are used as unifying principles across the volume, which is divided into three sections. These encompass eleven chapters plus the general Introduction, involving fourteen contributors in total.

Part I, ‘The Emperor and Justice’ (four chapters) considers the various discourses surrounding the central imperial figure. Stéphane Benoist and Anne Gangloff (ch. 2) link imperial *iustitia* neatly back to ideas in the republican era, giving a longer perspective to a section that would otherwise focus