

A final Appendix (495–636) discusses the Lives of Saints and the *passiones* at a very high methodological and critical level. This part of the book is well-designed to introduce interested readers who may not be well acquainted with hagiography to the basic problems. However, this impressive study has its drawbacks, in particular in the range of modern works cited: French, Italian and Spanish scholarship is not present at the necessary level. Maybe this is due to the enormous quantity of published material. But all in all, S.'s study has opened new perspectives, and will be important for many years to come.

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J. HERRIN and J. NELSON (EDS), *RAVENNA: ITS ROLE IN EARLIER MEDIEVAL CHANGE AND EXCHANGE*. London: Institute of Historical Research, 2016. Pp. xviii + 363, illus. ISBN 9781909646148. £40.00.

As the editors explain in their clear introduction, the basis for this volume was a workshop organised by Judith Herrin at the Institute of Historical Research, London, in June 2013. H. recognised the need to bring together a wide range of specialists who were interested in reconsidering Ravenna's role as a centre of change and exchange in Late Antiquity and beyond by confronting both artefactual and textual evidence. The result of this dialogue between both established and younger scholars (from Italy and elsewhere) is this very welcome addition to previous studies on Ravenna, many of which 'tended to be clearly delineated, and often compartmentalized, by disciplinary affiliation and linguistic competence' (4).

The fifteen contributions, more or less chronologically arranged, cover a wide range of topics varying from episcopal and lay patronage to the circulation of marble, and from the evolution of the mint to the tradition of naming in Ravenna. The sources are equally wide-ranging, with archaeological remains, inscriptions, mosaics, papyri, letters and other documents presented as evidence. Within the 'earlier medieval' time-frame of seven centuries, some of the papers cover longer time-spans, but the majority focus on a particular period in the history of Ravenna.

The editors state that the aim of the collaborative volume is 'to seize new opportunities to get to grips with new evidence and/or apply new methods to interpret evidence old as well as new' (4). A fine example is Peter Heather's contribution on Rome and Ravenna under Gothic rule (15–38), in which he gives a new interpretation of well-known texts, convincingly arguing for a strong interrelation between Rome and Ravenna instead of a deep rift, and offering a new explanation (Theodoric's succession problems) for the murder of Boethius. That a different viewpoint can offer new insights becomes clear in the chapters by Maria Cristina Carile (53–86), Salvatore Cosentino (133–50) and Jinty Nelson (239–52). By discussing surviving mosaics from the perspective of visual culture, Carile demonstrates the existence in Ravenna of a vivid local image tradition that lasted until the twelfth century. Cosentino's focus on the text of Papyrus 49 (Tjäder) reveals how the transformation of the identity of the 'Arian' Ostrogoths was enforced by the Orthodox Church after the Byzantine conquest. From eighth-century letters between Pope Hadrian and Charlemagne, Nelson detects not only the well-known importance that Ravenna held for the latter, but also the tension between Rome and Ravenna when it came to claims of ecclesiastical power by the bishop of Ravenna.

Alternative and additional key moments in the history of Ravenna are proposed in the contributions by Deborah Deliyannis (39–52), Carola Jäggi (87–110), Andrea Augenti and Enrico Cirelli (297–322), and Tom Brown (335–44). Deliyannis places the emergence of a more important role for Ravenna's bishops in building activity not in the sixth but in the middle of the fifth century. By comparing the textual evidence in Ravenna with that in Rome, she argues that the patronage of the bishops in Ravenna was inspired by competition with the Roman popes. Carola Jäggi, focusing on archaeological material, likewise proposes an alternative turning point: not the Byzantine conquest but the period after the death of Theodoric was decisive for the foundation and construction of the highlights of Ravenna's ecclesiastical architecture, San Vitale and Sant'Apollinare in Classe, and served as a prelude to the break with the Roman see in the

seventh century. The evidence of the recent excavation of a late ninth-century monastery complex in the area of San Severo in Classe, presented by Cirelli and Augenti, shows that religious building activity did not come to an end with the construction of the basilica of San Severo around 570. Using other archaeological and textual evidence, Tom Brown even dares to characterise Ottonian Ravenna as ‘an extremely dynamic society’ instead of a period of decline.

Several chapters capture in one way or another the important themes of continuity and re-use of the past in the Ravennate context. Simon Corcoran (163–98) questions the alleged role of Ravenna as a red thread in the making, teaching and transmission of Roman law from the fifth to the eleventh century; he sees only evidence for continuity with regard to the use of Roman law as well as documentary practice. In the same vein, but using Peter Damian’s letters as evidence, Michael Gledhill (323–34) shows that law schools both continued and adapted the use of ancient forms and formulae of Roman law. Focusing on coinage in the period from the fifth to the eighth century, Vivien Prigent (151–62) notes that although the mint of Ravenna went into decline after the exarchate ended, it kept its symbolical power and offered prototypes for what ultimately would develop into coinage depicting tutelary authorities. For the seventh century and from the perspective of ecclesiastical history, Ortenberg West-Harling rightly argues that the tense relationship with Rome (leading to autocephaly, with help from Constantinople), as well as with the imperial capital itself, arose from Ravenna’s heightened self-esteem based on claims of the antiquity of the Ravennate Church and its status as a former capital. In his analysis of the transformation from Byzantine military aristocracy to northern Italian nobility between the seventh and eleventh centuries, Edward Schoolman (211–38) argues that this gradual process is characterised by aspects of continuity (the dominance and influence of the local Ravennate elite) as well as dramatic change (claims to political power and authority shifting from military to hereditary identification). Using the same documentary sources as Schoolman, Wolfgang Haubrichs detects patterns of continuity of tradition and change in naming practices in Ravenna from the sixth century to the tenth (253–96).

The contribution by Yuri A. Marano (111–32) falls outside the scope of the book because it does not specifically address Ravenna. Marano traces the distribution of marbles from the Byzantine capital to the Adriatic in the sixth century, and sees the prestigious building activities of bishops in the region as the most important impulse for it.

Judged on their own merits, the individual contributions are all interesting and of good to excellent quality, but there are some critical remarks to be made about the overarching theme and structure of the book. The title promises insights into Ravenna’s role in earlier medieval change and exchange; but instead of investigating the extent to which Ravenna was an instigator of change in earlier medieval times, most chapters in fact focus on changes within Ravenna and how they were influenced by developments elsewhere, or how transformation was enforced by regime change. Moreover, when it comes to exchange (a phenomenon based on reciprocity), the book is more about Ravenna on the receiving end in its relationship with others. These changes to the original focus of the 2013 workshop, combined with the inclusion of contributions by authors who did not participate in the original workshop and the decision to arrange the contributions in chronological rather than thematic order, have inevitably resulted in a certain lack of coherence in the volume. A greater use of cross-references could have compensated for this. Nonetheless, the editors ought to be praised for this inspiring volume, which shows that by taking different viewpoints new insights can be yielded on an already well-researched subject.

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