

and materials (12, chart 1). S. is also concerned to contextualize the engraved iconography; he discusses each individual gem or type in light of its larger visual context, and across an array of different artistic media.

As the price suggests, the book is clearly intended for a specialist audience. Still, it also caters to an array of different scholars — not just those interested in gem production *per se*. For this reviewer, it is the corrective to standard accounts of early Christian iconography that most stands out. So it is, for example, that we find scenes of the crucifixion on gems dating even as early as *c.* A.D. 300, preceding almost all other extant representations (were miniature cameo depictions somehow less irksome?); some of those depictions fly in the face of Scriptural accounts (Christ crucified in the presence of the twelve apostles, for example), and another depicts Jesus naked (no. 443). Equally important is the fifth chapter, which demonstrates the continuities between gems of the Graeco-Roman *kriophoros* type and Christian depictions of the Good Shepherd; earlier in the book, we also read about the history of the engraved chi-rho monogram in the East (which appears long before Constantine's apparition after the Battle of Milvian Bridge (32–4)). Other conclusions concur with what can be gleaned from the earliest catacomb paintings and sarcophagi reliefs: the preference for Old over New Testament themes in the third and fourth centuries (ch. 6), for example, or the appropriation of other pagan symbols and ideograms (ch. 3).

Different chapters will appeal to different scholarly interests. Quite apart from the important chapters on Christian magical gems, the distinctive traits of Syrian-Palestinian gems, and later rock-crystal pendants, the sixteenth chapter on Jewish seals will be of particular importance. As S. points out, gems seem to have negotiated broader Judaic prohibitions against gentile idolatry (hence those intaglios which depict Old Testament subjects complete with Hebraic titles or texts). For Jews, as for Christians, these objects seem to have been associated with a special visual status or 'ontology' — providing not only inscribed miniature images, but also (when used as seals) impressed representations after each impressed engraving. It is Judaic Scripture, after all, which gives us the mantra, 'set me as a seal upon thy heart' (Solomon 8:6).

Such broader questions about the special status of gem imagery are somewhat ill-served by the catalogue genre. The aim of his book, S. writes, is to 'provide a basis for the further study of what is in fact a fairly substantial body of material pertaining to late antiquity, early Christianity and Judaism' (9), S.'s volume more than fulfils that remit. But the task now is to rethink how these little objects relate to larger Christian discourses of representation and replication — discourses that were at once constructed and reflected by images and texts alike. Within that grander intellectual historical project, S.'s excellent compendium will prove an indispensable first resource.

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I. MENNEN, *POWER AND STATUS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE, AD. 193–284* (Impact of Empire 12). Leiden: Brill, 2011. Pp. xiv + 306. ISBN 9789004203594. €103.00/US\$141.00.

This book is a valuable study of senior senators and high equestrians. Mennen's point of departure is the scholarly consensus that 'events of the third century AD affected imperial appointment policies and social hierarchies and foreshadowed the reforms carried through by Diocletian' (1). She seeks to study 'the process by which appointments and hierarchies changed, and particularly its effects on power and status relations' (ibid.). Ch. 2 concerns leading senators (49–81), with an accompanying prosopographical 'excursus' on eighteen prominent families (83–134); ch. 3 concerns senior equestrians (135–91); and ch. 4 contrasts senior military officers under Septimius Severus and Gallienus (193–246).

M.'s main interest in ch. 2 is to highlight continuity in the political rôle of senators. Her approach is to identify four high positions — the ordinary consulship, city prefecture, and proconsular governorships of Africa and Asia — and to trace eighteen *gentes* whose members were particularly prevalent in these offices. M. has a point, of course: these posts are very much where one would tend to expect continuity. For the present reviewer, however, what stands out is that these eighteen *gentes* did not maintain overall dominance even here: excluding emperors and their prospective heirs, M. calculates that they accounted for 34–39 per cent of ordinary consuls, as well as 25–27 per cent of city prefects and 17–20 per cent of proconsuls of Africa and Asia (table 2.1, p. 54). Hence, although certainly well represented, they remained very much part of a wider

group. The prosopographical excursus reinforces this impression. M.'s dossier is interesting but not because it shows the continuity of a nucleus. On the contrary, eleven of these eighteen *gentes* (tables E.1, E.3, E.5–11, E.13–14) either disappeared or faded from prominence before A.D. 284, perhaps most notably in the 240s. Conversely, three other *gentes* appear to have risen to prominence within the period (tables E.2, E.12 and E.15 — the last *gens* slipping again soon after). We are looking, therefore, at a significant turnover, much of it probably natural. M. might be right to emphasize the continuing significance of the senate; but that continuity was largely corporate, not biological.

Ch. 3 surveys the increasing rôle of equestrians as provincial governors, military officers and imperial secretaries, followed by a 'case study' on the praetorian prefecture. M. is alert to the fact that equestrians were frequently appointed, nominally, as deputies for absent senatorial officials (138–41). Conversely, she perhaps understates the significance of the elevation of praetorian prefects to the senatorial rank of *clarissimus* and, under Severan emperors, the practice of treating *ornamenta consularia* as equivalent to an ordinary consulship (177–9). Ch. 4 charts a contrast in military commands under Septimius Severus and Gallienus, highlighting 'two main developments': '(1) the rise of *equites* as leading men in military crises, and (2) a widening gulf between military power and senatorial status' (246). Both points have long been received wisdom but M. provides useful detail.

Two reservations about structure arise and a third about the theme of power and status. First, the book is a little slow to get going: both the introduction and ch. 1 cover territory which is likely to be largely familiar to most readers, yet neither says much about M.'s arguments, which receive by far their clearest statement only in her 'Conclusion' (247–54). Secondly, the layering of concluding observations within chapter sections plus conclusions to each full chapter and an overall conclusion to the book makes for repetition. Thirdly, M.'s development of the conceptual question of power and status is rudimentary. She summarizes Dahl's model of power and the subsequent work of Bachrach and Baratz, Lukes and Foucault. But while acknowledging the added sophistication brought by each new treatment, she expressly reverts to Dahl's 'basic one-dimensional view' (6) as her main point of reference (5–6, 46, 80, 188–9, 247). No one would doubt that the third-century evidence poses challenges for the elaboration of sophisticated conceptual models; but this use of political science is too limited for the historian's palate.

The present reviewer would close with one further observation. M.'s underlying concern is with 'the transformation from the early to late Empire' (1). This is a major historical problem and M.'s contribution deserves note. One leaves her book with the strong impression that — so far as senior civil and military service is concerned — the 'late' empire had already arrived in the 260s. Yet this is not really because of the ebb and flow of office-holding between senators and equestrians: matters would shift again in the fourth century with the senatorial 'revival' and the expansion of senatorial rank. Rather, what we are looking at are symptoms of a profound invasion of imperial government by provincial aristocracies. Senators and equestrians alike were increasingly recruited from the upper echelons of provincial aristocratic society. More widely, however, and no less decisively for the character of politics, society and economy, provincial aristocrats would also come to fill the ranks of the vast civilian bureaucracy that sets 'late' imperial government firmly apart from its 'high' forerunner.

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D. BOSCHUNG and W. ECK (EDS), *DIE TETRARCHIE: EIN NEUES REGIERUNGSSYSTEM UND SEINE MEDIALE PRÄSENTATION* (Schriften des Lehr- und Forschungszentrums für die antiken Kulturen des Mittelmeerraumes [ZAKMIRA] 3). Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2006. Pp. 419, illus. ISBN 9783895005107. €39.90.

This volume presents fourteen papers arising from a colloquium of February 2004, which was itself inspired by a seminar series of 2002–3, organized by the Centre for Ancient Mediterranean Cultures of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Cologne, on the broader theme of media in antiquity. Both editors were participants in the preceding venture and indeed the paper by Werner Eck included in this volume reprises one already published in the proceedings of the earlier seminar (*Medien in der Antike. Kommunikative Qualität und normative Wirkung*, ZAKMIRA 1,