

commentary is exemplary, if maybe too rigorously scholarly in outlook. Indeed, the *Origo* sometimes lists bizarre information, for example about famous gluttons who not only overate, but also consumed unusual items. The commentary brushes this aside as an invention, but recent history knows of individuals who ate strange things, such as Michel Lotito, a Frenchman (d. 2007) who was estimated to have eaten nine tons of metal during his life. Obviously, many of the details reported in the *Origo* are exaggerated, but there may be more to these entries than mere invention.

The second work is a section of the calendar of Polemius Silvius, his list of Roman emperors from Caesar to Valentinian III and his summary of history. This will now become the edition of reference, because it takes a newly discovered manuscript into account. Given the focus on historiography, it is understandable that this edition only publishes the two sections of the calendar that are historical in nature. Yet they were never intended as independent works and were part of a larger compendium of knowledge. A very detailed examination of language and style (especially prose rhythm) rehabilitates Polemius Silvius somewhat as a writer. The last text is a set of imperial biographies from Valentinian I to Theodosius II, the edition of which does not deviate much from Mommsen's text. As it does not contain much original information, its interest lies rather in signalling the existence of such brief summary accounts.

The series KFHist is one of the projects that is currently transforming the study of late antique historiography. Until recently, most attention went to preserved narrative histories like Ammianus Marcellinus and Procopius. Chronicles tended to be neglected, as were other minor genres. This situation now belongs to the past, due to editorial projects like this one, the *Translated Texts for Historians* series and the inclusion of ecclesiastical historians in series such as *Sources chrétiennes*. With late antique historiography in all its variety becoming more accessible, it is to be hoped that literary and historical studies will complement the mainly philological focus of the past years and explore new approaches to the genre. As a sign of the work still to be done, one can signal that narratological analysis, very much practised in the study of classical historiography, is rarely applied to its late antique counterpart. Such studies can only be performed once we have good access to the texts. Setting a high philological standard and substantially improving our understanding of the individual texts, KFHist provides a secure starting point for a new look at the genre that is long overdue.

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K. BOLLE, C. MACHADO and C. WITSCHERL (EDS), *THE EPIGRAPHIC CULTURES OF LATE ANTIQUITY* (Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 60). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2017. Pp. 615, illus. ISBN 9783515115582. £74.00/€84.00.

The editors were right to use the plural 'epigraphic cultures' in the title: this much-needed volume deftly portrays the diversity and vitality of inscriptional practice in the late Roman world. The seventeen essays, plus an introduction, include both regional and thematic studies and cover a broad geographical scope, from the Iberian peninsula to the province of Arabia. The volume does not purport to be comprehensive; a map in the introduction (22) helpfully indicates which regions have been left out, notable among which are Egypt, Syria and Britain. The temporal range is primarily from the late third century C.E. to the end of the sixth, with some essays stretching into the eighth and beyond.

The papers are for the most part expansions on those presented at a conference in 2009, with essays submitted in 2010–11 and some subsequently updated. Although the publication of the volume is long overdue, the reader hardly notices the time-lag since, with some exceptions, the bibliographies have been brought up to date and in several instances the approaches of these authors are on the cutting edge of epigraphic studies more broadly, with emphasis laid on the context of the inscribed texts. Written both by well-established scholars in the field of late antique epigraphy and by newcomers, the essays are in English (11), German (4), Italian (1) and French (1) and are divided into three sections: I 'Regional Studies', II 'Genres and Practices' and III 'The

(New) World of Christian Epigraphy'. As is to be expected, the material covered is mainly that on stone or, on occasion, mosaic. Several papers include appendices with collected data.

The regional studies begin with Christian Witschel's overview of late antique epigraphic culture in the West (33–53), which sets the stage for the following essays dealing with the same area. He offers both quantitative analyses and a consideration of the display of the texts. Judit Végh's entry (55–110) synthesises a great quantity of material from Hispania and offers two in-depth case studies: a comparison between provincial capitals, Tarraco and Augusta Emerita, and a close look at a small town, Myrtilis (Lusitania). Lennart Hildebrand (111–46) asks whether elites in southern Gaul still used inscriptions as a means of representation in Late Antiquity. A descriptive list of civic texts, milestones and Christian inscriptions follows, with a particular analysis of those relating to Rasticus, Bishop of Narbonne. Katharina Bolle (147–212) rounds out the overview of south-western Europe with an in-depth look at the province of *Tuscia et Umbria* in central Italy. A visual juxtaposition between a second-century Roman bath dedication and a late antique text inscribed on its reverse is particularly innovative. The gradual fading of the habit of erecting inscriptions in public spaces is charted, as is the increased concentration of 'Inscripflichkeit' in Christian contexts (201).

Ignazio Tantillo's contribution (213–70) on North Africa begins with a traditional overview of the number of dedications under each emperor, before forcefully arguing that the type of quantitative analysis he has just offered tells only half the story: at Leptis Magna, a significant percentage of older bases were reused or erased, thereby becoming desemantised. In the third and fourth centuries, the number of these 'phantom' inscriptions was greater than newly carved texts: 'il tasso di mortalità era più alto di quello di natalità' (237). Stephen Mitchell (271–86) provides an overview of the burgeoning Christian epigraphic habits of inland Asia Minor and posits that the rigorist sects there created an atmosphere that encouraged the projection of pious Christian identity on gravestones. Leah di Segni (287–320) provides an update to her previous work on the late antique inscriptions of Palaestina and Arabia, with a quantitative analysis showing a peak in the sixth century and a comparison of material from the regions to the east and west of the Jordan.

The second section of the volume, 'Genres and Practices', begins with Carlos Machado's inventive exploration of the reuse of statue bases in Italy (323–57). Rather than a sign of decline or decadence, the practice of reuse 'helped to define a specific epigraphic culture as different from the one that preceded it' (351). Ulrich Gehr (363–405) gives an art historical analysis of togate statues and their inscribed bases, arguing that those in the West maintained imperial toga types to project the traditional role of the senatorial aristocracy. Silvia Orlandi (277–94) compares honorary texts with earlier Roman ones, identifying a process of 'rhetoricisation' in which highly decorative language was used, as opposed to the earlier Roman preference for clarity and concision. Lucy Grig's masterful analysis of the metrical inscriptions of Rome (427–47) pairs nicely with Orlandi's essay: Grig argues that these texts embody the performance of literary culture as an element of cultural capital and an attempt to carve out a place among the increasing number of late Roman senatorial elites, both Christian and pagan. Continuing the theme of epigrams, Erkki Sironen (449–71) documents the use of mythological/historical vocabulary in epigrams in Greece, and especially in Achaia. Denis Feissel (473–500) examines the inscriptional evidence for three poorly understood late antique civic offices (*curator*, *defensor* and *pater civitatis*) and their activities in the cities of the East.

In Section III, 'The (New) World of Christian Epigraphy', Charlotte Roueché and Claire Sotinel (503–14) assess the development of the field as a whole and the historical cleaving of 'Christian' and 'Classical' epigraphies. They argue for care in the use of the term 'Christian' inscriptions, a point which some of the other authors in the volume may wish to consider. The next essay, by Georgios Deligiannakis (514–33), explores the potential heterodox background of a number of inscriptions from the Aegean islands, eschewing scholarly certainty to offer thought-provoking, 'unorthodox' (530) readings of these texts. Rudolf Haensch (535–54) usefully compares the church dedicatory inscriptions from two distinct regions: Italy (minus Rome) and the eastern patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch. Although the exact numbers of texts and percentages may depend on preservation bias, general epigraphic features in the two regions (e.g. the use of the bishop as a dating formula in the East but not the West) emerge clearly. The final paper, by Mark A. Handley (555–93), considers western devotional graffiti from several angles, including variations in regional practices and the difficulties of identifying the individual behind the graffiti.

Although the essays vary somewhat in quality, each provides something of interest. The region of Italy is particularly well treated, with eight papers wholly or partially devoted to it. Throughout, the production quality of the volume is high: the editing is thorough, the printed illustrations are sharp

and the maps are uniform. Some of the colour pie-charts at the end of the volume would have been equally intelligible in black and white, but that is of no concern to the reader. The Greek and Latin texts are sometimes translated and sometimes not; this reviewer thinks that including translations heralds not the demise of rigorous language training, but rather makes the material more accessible to non-philologists. As a whole, this volume serves as both an in-depth introduction to the field of late antique epigraphy for scholars new to the topic and a thought-provoking impetus for further work for those already engaged in it. It was certainly worth the wait.

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J. CARLETON PAGET and J. LIEU (EDS), *CHRISTIANITY IN THE SECOND CENTURY: THEMES AND DEVELOPMENTS*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xi + 354. ISBN 9781107165229. £74.99.

Second-century Christianity, if such a thing exists even in multiple forms, is a concept that has been so repeatedly dissected and problematised that it is difficult to speak of it at all without a seemingly gratuitous use of inverted commas: ‘orthodoxy’, ‘heresy’, ‘gnostic’, ‘Christian’ and ‘apocryphal’ are all designations the meanings of which have been thoroughly contested. It was thus with considerable courage that the editors of the present volume sought to gather together a cohort of scholars at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Cambridge, in order to confer with one another on the essential themes of Christianity in a period in which every possible hair has been split and every historical commonplace has been tortuously called into question.

Several animating questions underwrite the project, the first of which is the context within which Christianity is understood. In ‘Empires, diasporas and the emergence of religions’ (25–38), G. Woolf carefully and deliberately argues that the emergence of Christianity should be placed in the context of immigration-promoting empires in which emergent religious groups were shaped in particular ways in urban centres and diaspora contexts. In a similar vein, L. Nasrallah (‘Lot oracles and fate’, 214–32) and T. Morgan (‘Belief and practice in Graeco-Roman religiosity’, 200–13) offer substantive discussions of the literary and material evidence for divination and Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride*, to show that the doctrine/praxis binary that has informed so much study of the interaction of Christian and pagan religiosity is deeply flawed.

A second cluster of essays interrogate the ideologically charged questions of continuity and discontinuity in the early Church. J. Carleton Paget’s ‘The second century from the perspective of the New Testament’ (91–105) deconstructs the seemingly accidental and arbitrary fissure between the Jesus movement of the first century and the ‘early Church’ of the second. W. Löhr’s riveting ‘Modelling second-century Christian theology’ (151–68) parses the ways in which Christians did and did not self-identify as philosophers, and how they redefined heresy by the turn of the fourth century.

Building upon recent North American scholarship in this area, two erudite essays further interrogate the invention of Christian ethnicity. E. Gruen asks ‘Christians as “third race”: is ethnicity at issue?’ (235–49) and O. Skarasuane tracks ‘Ethnic discourse in early Christianity’ (250–64). Here both authors use the invention of Christian difference and individual identity in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Clement of Alexandria, the *Proclamation of Peter*, Justin Martyr and Tertullian. Noting the lack of ethnic discourse (in a modern sense) in Tertullian, they complicate the picture adduced from Clement’s very idiosyncratic use of the term. They also gesture to an idea, more greatly drawn out in W. Horbury’s contribution, ‘Church and synagogue vis-à-vis Roman rule in the second century’ (71–88), about the way that the experience of persecution informed Christian self-definition. Horbury uses a broad collection of evidence to show that while Christians and Jews both experienced legislative pressure in the second century, they could be distinguished from one another by outsiders. He concludes that ‘at the beginning of the century, there was probably no Roman aim to destroy Judaism and Christianity jointly, as Sulpicius Severus might suggest’ (87).