

Christian Church. From the accession of Theodosius I in 379, Placidia's story is traced through her residence at Rome as a child down to the fall of the city in 410 (pp. 6–63); her sojourn as a hostage with the Goths and her marriage to their philo-Roman king Athaulf in 414 (pp. 64–111); the murder of Athaulf, her second marriage to Constantius III and the birth of their son Valentinian III (pp. 112–38); her period of power in the West as the guardian of her young son (pp. 139–73); her last years (of which little is known) and her peaceful death (pp. 174–200). A devout Christian, Placidia corresponded with Christian clergy and took an interest in ecclesiastical controversies. She was also an active builder, for example of the basilica of St John the Evangelist at Ravenna and its associated library (pp. 150–2). Salisbury's heroine is set in the wider context of the military, political and social history of the time and the many gaps in the record are filled with racy accounts of the customs of the Goths relating to food and dress, or the processes of Roman childbirth, as recounted by instructors of midwives, or the landscapes that Placidia would have encountered on her journeys. Salisbury's narrative is also shaped by her sympathetic awareness of emotion. While inevitably speculative, she hints at Placidia's romantic preferences through her comparison of the handsome (if short) Athaulf with the dour and unprepossessing Constantius; more poignant was Placidia's choice, in 450, to be buried with Athaulf's baby son, who had died in infancy thirty-five years before. Some however may disagree with Salisbury's perspective on the power of the fifth-century empress. It does not detract from Placidia's achievement that her freedom of action was institutionally limited; crucially (pp. 147–9), Salisbury ignores the central role of the quaestors, the top imperial officials who created the texts and often the substance of laws. While power, as the Romans knew, came in many forms, and was exercised through a constant process of negotiation, Placidia could have recollected what Ambrose (and others) had said, that the toughest contests bring the greatest rewards.

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

JILL HARRIES

*The bishop of Rome in late antiquity.* Edited by Geoffrey D. Dunn. Pp. xi + 273.

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*Roma locuta, causa finita* is one of many things Augustine did not say. Did late antique bishops of Rome think that they were entitled to say the final word and to intervene in the concerns of other churches? In late antiquity other churches had popes, and Roman claims to primacy were contested, whether they rested on apostolic succession from Peter or derived from Rome's place in the political hierarchy. This edited volume aims to recover, without presupposing the rise of the papacy or retrojecting later debates on universal primacy, the specific contexts of several bishops of Rome and their relationships within their own diocese, with bishops in other regions, and with the civil authorities.

Part I offers four papers on the fourth century. The first two use material culture in the city of Rome to assess the bishop's relations with the Roman elite. Glen Thompson considers the church-building programme, the development of urban and suburban parishes, and scholarly debate about house-churches and

*tituli*. He thinks that the bishop, who ordained the clergy, was involved even when churches had private sponsors, and that bishops and officials expected to deal with a single bishop of Rome, even in times of disagreement about who was that bishop. Marianne Sághy suggests that Damasus, who faced schism and lacked aristocratic patrons, used his commemorative epigrams in suburban catacombs to claim martyrs as part of his own community and to focus the loyalty of local congregations.

Next, relations with bishops outside Italy. The letters of Siricius, successor of Damasus, are called the first decretals because of their new authoritative style, and two papers focus on the earliest, his response to Himerius bishop of Tarragona. Christian Hornung shows how its vocabulary and structure mirror imperial documents which move from specific reply to general legislation. Alberto Ferreiro thinks that the letter is pastoral in tone; that Siricius's response reaffirmed accepted principles rather than seeking to impose new rules in reaction to Priscillian; and that he asked for publication only in Hispania and southern Gallia, not in all churches. Even so, Ferreiro acknowledges novelty as well as continuity in the claims to primacy made in this letter.

The five papers of part II extend across the fifth century. Geoffrey Dunn considers the letter of Innocent, successor of Siricius, to bishops who attended the Synod of Toledo (400). Two Spanish bishops had visited Innocent to say that the canons of the synod were disregarded, and that some bishops had broken off communion. Dunn argues that they sought advice and support; neither they nor Innocent thought that Rome had primacy over the churches of Spain, though Rome was increasingly the place for appeals against the decisions of provincial bishops. (Some provincial bishops, understandably, objected.) Michele Salzman challenges the view that Prosper of Aquitaine was secretary and theological adviser to Leo, bishop of Rome (440–61), who was mostly an administrator. Prosper, she argues, was a Gallic aristocrat, and Leo was eager for connections with western churches; Roman church bureaucracy was still undeveloped; and Leo was active in theology and pastoral care. Philippe Blaudeau takes it as accepted that Leo developed the 'Petrine ideology' in which Christ's promise to Peter applies to all Peter's successors; he suggests that this belief in timeless authority helps to explain why there was no history of the Roman Church. Blaudeau discusses the complex tradition of the *liber pontificalis*, the compilation of brief lives of the bishops of Rome, arguing that it was prompted by the Laurentian schism at the start of the sixth century and was several times redacted in response to the activities of later bishops, especially their intervention in eastern controversies. Not, then, a reliable source for actions attributed to earlier bishops.

Part II ends with two papers on Gelasius, whose letter to the eastern emperor Anastasius subordinates earthly to priestly authority, criticises the emperor and his advisers, and affirms that Peter's successors at Rome are the guarantors of orthodox belief. George Demacopoulos sets the letter in its local context, where Gelasius could not prevent local aristocrats from celebrating the Lupercalia and mocking one of his priests, excommunication was an empty threat to the owners of private churches, and Gelasius lacked support among his clergy. The letter to Anastasius would not affect the eastern empire, but could be publicly displayed at Rome: its affirmations of Petrine authority, and of the personal authority of

Gelasius, were designed for a Roman audience. Bronwen Neil offers a different range of interventions by Gelasius. His letters engage with the needs of displaced persons, of people whose patrons could no longer help them, and of victims of judicial failures and of conflict within and beyond the church. Perhaps, Neil suggests, Gelasius (*natione Afer* according to the *liber pontificalis*) imported to Rome an African style of crisis management.

Part III offers two contrasting papers on sixth-century bishops. Dominic Moreau asks why, in September 530, Boniface II was uncanonically nominated as bishop by his dying predecessor, without the support of most Roman clergy. Moreau's answer invokes the lasting effects of the Laurentian and Acacian schisms, theological differences about theopaschism, and political tensions between Ostrogoths and Byzantines. Christopher Hanlon, in a more traditional assessment of Gregory the Great, offers a detailed account of his intervention in Sicily, his relationships with local bishops and officials, and his arrangements for managing the lands and resources owned by the Roman Church.

Geoffrey Dunn's useful introduction to the volume provides the context in current scholarship and draws out themes, interconnections and differences of interpretation in this volume. Change over time, he suggests, varied with changes in the political system, with individual personalities, and especially with geography: it was much easier to intervene in churches nearer to Italy. These papers support his conclusion that the rise of the papacy was not smooth, or undifferentiated, or inevitable.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

GILLIAN CLARK

*Old Saint Peter's, Rome.* Edited by Rosamond McKitterick, John Osborne, Carol M. Richardson and Joanna Story. (British School at Rome Studies.) Pp. xxx + 484 incl. 108 ills and 7 tables + 15 colour plates. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. £100 (\$160). 978 1 107 04164 6  
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Ralph Waldo Emerson described the present St Peter's Basilica, Rome, as 'an ornament of the earth ... the sublime of the beautiful', and for those whose passion is the fusion of Renaissance and Baroque architecture and style, it remains unsurpassed. However, those whose interests lie in the earlier centuries of classical Christianity will always have a tinge of regret that Old St Peter's could not be saved, and that the present building replaced the older Constantinian church. That said, some parts of the old structure were incorporated into the new basilica, and many artefacts and reminders of the earlier church still survive. This collection of essays, with rich illustrations and diagrams, tell the story of what at present we know of the structure and life of the former building. Built over a protracted period in the fourth century, it was designed to enclose and showcase that part of the area of Vatican hill where tradition placed the burial site of the Apostle Peter. Though the Lateran was the official cathedral, St Peter's was the place that drew pilgrims, and with the withdrawal of the imperial court to Milan and then Ravenna, the pope came to fill the leadership vacuum which this created. Leo I developed the ideology of Peter and Paul, replacing Romulus and Remus as Rome's special guardians, and it was Leo who established the first monastery