

The final section – ‘Engagements’ – explores Christian Platonist engagement with natural science (Davison and Sherman); nature and the environmental crisis (Hampton), ignoring (I suppose inevitably) Philip Sherrard and his Platonically-inspired deep and early concern for the environment; art and meaning (Viladesu); attacks on value, dualism, in the interests of materialism – all understood as anti-Platonic (Taliaferro); Christian love and Platonic friendship (Pickstock) – dense and fitfully illuminating; and, finally, Stephen Clark with a scintillating discussion of multiplicity in earth and heaven. This forms a fitting conclusion to a book that, in its introduction, proclaims ‘the central message of Christian Platonism’ as ‘not an intellectualizing and abstract tendency, but rather a focus on the incarnational, participatory, and sacramental character of being, which calls us back to its motive force in love’. The book is dedicated to Mark A. McIntosh, whose inspiration the volume was, and whose tragic and untimely death has robbed us of a supreme advocate of Christian Platonism, a friend and encourager of many scholars.

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*Weisheit und Alter in der Spätantike. Die Konstruktion von sapientia und senectus bei Ambrosius von Mailand und Paulinus von Nola.* By Caroline Sophia Kreutzer. (KLIO Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, 33.) Pp. xii + 557. Berlin–Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021. £91. 978 3 11 070503 4; 1438 7689  
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In the introduction and chapter i of her book (pp. 1–21), Kreutzer uses a text-based, philologically-oriented approach to investigate the relationship between the concepts of wisdom and old age across authors and according to historical, philosophical and religious context from Greek and Latin traditions, later expanding the focus on late antiquity with Ambrose and Paulinus.

In the second chapter of her study (pp. 22–135), Kreutzer gives a text-based overview of the individual stages of the traditional Greek-philosophical, Roman and biblical concepts of wisdom and old age, as well as the connection between the two. Plato classifies wisdom as based on the principle of lifelong striving and learning and as the sole knowledge of the divine ideas, only attainable by gods. Aristotle, on the other hand, points out that the ‘old sage’ is an unrealistic ideal, as wisdom gained with age is only apparent.

Kreutzer then investigates the concept of wisdom throughout Hellenistic philosophy. Neither in the philosophical tradition of Epicurus nor in the works of the Stoics Zeno of Citium and Chrysippus of Soli is wisdom particularly associated with age. The idealisation and unattainability of human wisdom, Kreutzer concludes, do not lead to connections between wisdom and age in Greek-Stoic thinking (p. 43).

In the second part of chapter ii Kreutzer draws a map of the broad semantic spectrum of the concept of *sapientia* in early Latin literature and focuses on Cicero and Seneca. She analyses Cicero’s *sapientia* as practical-political cleverness in *De orator* and letters and as a theoretical concept in his philosophical works. Cicero’s investigation of the concept of old age in *De senectute* and *De officiis* points out a clear dichotomy between ‘young’ and ‘old’, and the generally positive

image of the 'old wise'. Notwithstanding, the dignity of old age established by *sapientia* is not a matter of course, but a precious good (p. 89).

Kreutzer later investigates Seneca's letters and draws connections between Cicero and late antiquity. By reducing the concept of *sapientia* to the philosophical field, Seneca paves the way for the triumph of the Stoic definition of wisdom: as a philosophical ideal of the art of living, wisdom is less the result of intensive study, but is rather based on a world ruled by the gods (p. 103). Seneca's letters, *De brevitate vitae* and *De vita beata* are also taken into account to highlight the multifaceted, not always positive, connotation of old age and its relationship to wisdom.

The third part of chapter ii deals with wisdom and old age in the Old Testament, where true wisdom is not attainable by man alone, but is instead bestowed by God, and old age is either positive or negative according to context. In the New Testament, Paul (First Letter to the Corinthians) and James adopt and emphasise the Platonic-philosophical and Jewish-based distinction between human and divine wisdom so that a *Weisheitsdualismus* arises, serving as the basis for the religious disputes between Judaism, paganism and Christianity (p. 129). Kreutzer concludes that the *topos* of link between old age and wisdom does not exist in the New Testament, since Christ is identified with the Old Testament's divine wisdom.

Entering late antiquity, the third chapter (pp. 136–308) is dedicated to the concept of wisdom and old age in Ambrose. Through an in-depth analysis of Ambrose's exegetical, moral works and letters, Kreutzer explains how the Ambrosian concept of *sapientia* feeds on numerous different philosophical currents – Plato, Plotinus and Cicero – and theological models. Ambrose builds his own Christianised notion of *sapientia* in different ways depending on the context and his intentions. Kreutzer depicts Ambrose as a master of syncretism as regards the *triplex sapientia*, the stoic *vita beata* and the philosophical-Ciceronian cardinal virtues or the allegorical interpretation of the Bible. Likewise, Ambrose's traditional images of old age confirm on the one hand the longevity of the literary *topoi* – so as the *puer-senex* – and on the other reflect his own Christian worldview. Ambrose therefore becomes representative of the entire epoch and exerts influence on Augustine and Paulinus.

The analysis of Paulinus' letters and *carmina* constitutes the fourth and final chapter of the book (pp. 309–461). Paulinus' Christian *sapientia* is detached from any theoretical and philosophical striving for wisdom and from *topoi* of life experience such as knowledge, education and age, hence it loses its earthly reference and becomes a vehicle to eternal life. Old age hardly plays a significant role in the attainment of Paulinus' wisdom, while *sapientia* is still a positive descriptive feature of the *senectus*, particularly in the context of the *aetas spirituales* and the *puer-senex*-motif.

In the conclusion (pp. 462–6), approaching the remarks of Homeyer ('Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte von sapientia', *L'Antiquité classique* xxv [1956], 301–18), Kreutzer highlights the tension between pagan education and the biblical ideas of fourth-fifth century Christianity. Ambrose, Paulinus and Augustine adopted the biblical wisdom motif by taking up the connection between Old Testament wisdom and Christ and identifying divine wisdom with Christ. Kreutzer's study adopts a strong, effective diachronic perspective and places late ancient discourses in the broader context of the history of ideas. Her work fits into today's renewed

debate concerning tradition and innovation in late antique philosophical and moral thought and fills a void in today's research, in particular regarding Paulinus.

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*Tyconius' book of rules. An ancient invitation to ecclesial hermeneutics.* By Matthew R. Lynskey. (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*, 167.) Pp. xviii + 456. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2021. €138. 978 90 04 45483 5; 0920 623X  
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Students of Augustine will locate Tyconius' *Liber regularum* within the array of sources repurposed by the bishop of Hippo, noting its author's ambivalent relationship to his own Donatist communion. Deploying elements of this hermeneutical handbook as scaffolding for his own method of scriptural interpretation, Augustine's approbation helped to preserve Tyconius from the taint of schism, bequeathing the *Liber* to the repository of Western Christianity. In this work are found the seeds of Augustine's description of the Church as an ambiguous body, a mix of sinners and saints; and those, though presently undistinguishable, who are predestined to starkly different eternities. Aside from his Augustinian reception, Tyconian scholarship has revealed his intrinsic interest as an important voice in the complex story of North African Christianity, and the development of Latin scriptural interpretation at the turn of the fifth century.

Matthew Lynskey's contribution to the resuscitation of Tyconius resists easy definition. While Lynskey engages with Tyconius on his own merits (Augustine is present, but in the background), this is not a straightforward historical and theological survey of Tyconius' life or work. Lynskey's study aims to demonstrate how Tyconius' ecclesiology and understanding of biblical interpretation are intimately connected; and that both are drawn entirely from the content of Scripture. The result is a minutely worked-out analysis of Tyconius' hermeneutics, with a clear intention that it be put in the service of the Church, reading the Bible. This is a book for those who 'seek the meaning of the Scriptures' (p. 4), and particularly for exegetes, who have responsibility for conveying that meaning to others. In a world of 'interpretive fragmentation' (p. 5) where Christians also argue about Scripture, Lynskey turns to Tyconius for *ressourcement*, so that 'the church can humbly and critically listen to biblical exegetes of the past' (p. 6) for present direction. In this project, Tyconius' marginality is an important factor: as an African Christian drawn into a European narrative of Christian history; as a member of the Donatist Church but atypical within it and as a neglected theologian whose ideas can stand alone without the overlay of his own, more illustrious, interpreter.

Lynskey's study is divided into two uneven halves. Part I first introduces the work's purpose and method, before offering a lengthier second chapter on Tyconius and his North African context. Part II comprises five chapters, treating the key ecclesiological motifs of the *Liber*, and the hermeneutical principles which are their counterpart. Thus chapter III surveys the motif of the Church as Body of Christ, and the 'ontological hermeneutics' which flow from it, whereby the ecclesial reader comprehends his or her identity within that Body, and in relation to its Head. Chapter IV explores the Church as a bipartite body, and