familiar paths. Finally, D. examines what he calls 'collective heart-work' — the corporate practices of commemorating monastic founders and holy people, as well as the stark rituals of repentance found in Shenoutan literature. In this section, D. strives to align the individual practices of Part II with the communal life dictated and described in so much of the literature under survey. I was left with the sense of three domains of practice — entrance exams, spiritual exercises, group work — rather than a holistic view of monastic life. This may be a function of the texts as much as of D.'s argument, but I cannot help but wonder if greater attention to the liturgical life of the community, for example, would not open up new connections between individual and corporate experiences.

D.'s study is founded on wide reading in monastic texts. It takes in Coptic, Greek and Latin material and, though Pachomian and Shenoutan material are most prominent, readers will find discussions of Basil of Caesarea, Jerome, the *Rule of the Master*, etc. The array of texts is, undoubtedly, intended to demonstrate that the ideas D. discerns in, for example, Pachomian literature, hold true for others as well. This is quite true, at least to some extent. It would, however, have been useful to have more discussion of *difference* — at times, the similarities between texts struck me as more superficial than salient, and a more nuanced discussion of differences in practices would have been helpful. Nevertheless, there are seeds of further study sown throughout this book, and the inclusion of a number of more obscure texts should spur them to greater recognition.

D.'s work raises an overarching question — how successful is his (or, indeed, any) application of ideas from cognitive science to monastic texts? I am wary of the often rather expansive promises made by cognitive scientists, and so I was naturally sceptical of D.'s approach. I can say, though, that I am very impressed by his reading of the monastic texts, which is consistently sensitive and probing. I am, however, unclear as to how much impact cognitive approaches have really had. Certainly, they have helped D. formulate a language of 'cognitive disciplines' and 'collective heart-work', but these seem to me merely new names for the kinds of practices described by Pierre Hadot, Martha Nussbaum, Richard Sorabji and others. That is not to say that D. has done nothing new. Rather, his contribution lies precisely in his attention to both individual and group practices and the ways in which bodily, affective and cognitive practices are united in the instructions and stories of monastic communities. The nomenclature does not seem to me to add much, and D.'s insights do not owe much to it. Thus, I would heartily recommend this book as a fine study in cultural history and spirituality that unites key elements in early Christian monasticism. The cognitive scientific contribution, I think, remains to be seen.

Australian Catholic University JONATHAN L. ZECHER
Jonathan.Zecher@acu.edu.au
doi:10.1017/S0075435819000832

D. FRANKFURTER, *CHRISTIANIZING EGYPT: SYNCRETISM AND LOCAL WORLDS IN LATE ANTIQUITY* (Martin Classical Lectures). Princeton, NJ/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018. Pp. xix + 314, illus. ISBN 9780691176970. £32.95/US$39.95.

David Frankfurter has set out a generous and humane assessment of what Christianity may have meant to late antique individuals and communities in Egypt (A.D. 350–700). In doing so, he sets out to remodel Christianity, not as 'a historical achievement or monolithic cultural institution' (6), but as a syncretistic process, 'on-going and historically contingent' (257), a 'cluster of authoritative strategies … and sensational forms' (260). Foregrounding agency, he invokes Lévi-Strauss's concept of 'bricolage' to describe the diverse range of materials from which local Christianity might be assembled (16, 48–54). F.'s syncretism is active, assertive and dynamic, with an emphasis on individuals as part of communities (72), thus complementing other recent appraisals of group identity.

In some ways, the book is the converse of F.'s *Religion in Roman Egypt* (1998), with the benefit of twenty years of further scholarship. At the core of both studies are corpora that F. has actively produced, e.g. editions, translations and studies of apocryphal and 'magical' texts. His ability to guide the reader through these sources, and his selection of useful interpretative frameworks are

especially welcome. Ch. 1 defines his subject and introduces some of the theoretical approaches that will shape the work; an appeal to comparative religion in the postscript reads like a direct response to editorial comments. The subsequent chapters are organised by 'social site', defined as 'configurations of activity and personal engagement, social bonding, social identity, and movement through fixed spaces' (24).

The domestic sphere (ch. 2) is the centre from which other social sites radiate. Domestic space and time are ordered by family concerns such as protection, and continuity with the past (ancestors) and the future (children). In addition to amulets and curses, F. discusses lamps, bread stamps, female figurines, *eulogia/smou*, literary texts reproducing aspects of lullabies and legal documents affecting votive dedications. The (living) holy man (ch. 3) and the (dead) saint's shrine (ch. 4) are conceived as locations of efficacy connected to domestic and institutional spheres by festivals, processions and pilgrimage routes. Holy men and saints are convincingly argued to reorder, rather than replace, earlier traditions (such as oracles). In particular, 'beneficial aspects of spirits from the old order' are 'demonized in the new', so that people might 'seek out alternative, familiar spiritual powers *apart from* Christ and the saints, but *within* the framework imposed by the evangelists', therefore preserving their value (86). So too *thusia* (traditionally rendered 'sacrifice') is reordered in the service of rural feasting to serve the poor (120). A chapter on the workshop (ch. 5) argues that 'pagan survivals' were instead effective solutions to problems that had stood the test of time. Relying on synthetic scholarship, largely in English and French, F. does not control all this evidence as well as he might. The discussion on textiles is focused on the wearer, but illustrated in some cases by elements from soft-furnishings, and a motif identified as a cross is a rosette (fig. 11). The 'veritable explosion in the design and manufacture of' terracotta figurines in the Roman period (162) has now been re-dated to the Hellenistic period, and, in order to argue for the diversity of female figurines available to individual buyers at Abu Mina (164), one would have to confirm they were indeed of contemporary manufacture. Back on solid ground, ch. 6 identifies ways in which writers, especially clerics and monks, were mediators of Christian institutional and scriptural authority, integrating regional customs and traditional compositional forms (185). Thus the Land of Egypt Oracle and the visual world of Amente persisted, while 'magical' texts could take on elements of Christian liturgy (185). A final chapter on landscape (ch. 7) seeks to locate creative regional responses and selections of components '*built (or performed) differently*'. While theoretical approaches are borrowed from sociology and anthropology, reference to theoretical archaeology is surprisingly absent.

Throughout, F.'s thematic approach allows him to self-consciously disavow time and place, unless it is useful to a particular argument (xiv). Texts and objects dating from very different temporal and geographic contexts are set side-by-side. Although this may frustrate archaeologists, papyrologists and epigraphers among others, it is a wise choice given how insecure and/or controversial some dating is. While F. respects the chronologies (mis)assigned to objects in museum and archaeological catalogues, he adroitly avoids depending on them for his arguments. Instead of direct continuity, he invokes memory and, more useful still, efficacy. Accordingly, a historiola concerning Horus and Isis set between others about Jesus is not a 'pagan survival', but employed because it was perceived to work. Happily, direct continuity between Isis lactans and Maria lactans is rejected given the ubiquity of the generalised image of the nursing mother from the Bronze Age on (166). Still, a disregard for dating sits uneasily in a book fundamentally about Christianity as a process. The approach also minimises political developments, not least the Persian occupation (*c.* 619–629) and Muslim conquest (*c.* 641) of Egypt, for reasons that are implicit to a work on social rather than institutional history, but to my mind require an explicitly stated rationale.

While F.'s work is revered in Religious Studies circles, specialists have sometimes criticised him for playing fast and loose with the evidence (*inter alia* Smith in *Perspectives on Panopolis* (2002), 245–7), being prone to mistakes or a sloppy bibliographer. In this volume, some statements do not pass a sense-check. Apa Pisentius was indeed a holy man (86) and a monk (313), but he was foremost a bishop. The 'Alexandrian patriarch Sophronius' (135) is actually the patriarch of Jerusalem; Cyril of Alexandria is inexplicably labelled as 'the early fifth-century Chalcedonian bishop' (134), when the Council of Chalcedon in 451 was not convened until after his death. Among 'recent' archaeological sites (71), the 'Monastery' of Epiphanius was excavated over a hundred years ago. A request for a *sphragis* is not, as stated, from Epiphanius' mother (96), but is appended by John, whom she commissioned to write the letter. I do not recognise the 'great numbers of funerary stelae …, especially from the region of Thebes', to which in fact only up to six belong (161).

Mortuary practice in *P.Lond.* 1.77 does not 'reflect the author's ecclesiastical status' (179), but is paralleled in the wills of contemporary men and women. Apollo is not a 'gratuitous heathen God's name' (242), but the Greek version of Abydene Osiris; Bes's status and authority derive precisely from his position as his protector (see also Strabo 17.1.42). A lack of consistency in the use of place names and manuscript citation may also irk some specialists. An index of papyri, inscriptions and other primary sources cited would have been useful and perhaps avoided this latter issue. Finally, just a few typos mar the text, and the last chapter retains some characteristics of informal writing, which, one suspects, is residual from an oral presentation.

Mischaracterisations and errors are to be expected in such a wide-ranging study seeking to control material culture usually covered by different disciplines (if determinedly not archaeology). The work nicely demonstrates the extraordinary range of objects, including texts, uniquely preserved in Egypt, and draws together the evidence for study in a compelling and highly readable exposition. F.'s systematic reappraisal of what it was to be Christian and his deep and critical reading of material sources are especially laudable.

The British Museum ELISABETH R. O'CONNELL
eoconnell@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0075435819000145

M. ROBERTS (ED. and TRANS.), *VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS, POEMS* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 46). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017. Pp. xx + 910. ISBN 9780674974920. £19.95.

Venantius Fortunatus, a sixth-century poet writing in Merovingian Gaul, has received increasing attention as more scholars have realised the inventiveness of late antique poetry. Michael Roberts is among recent contributors to our understanding of the complexity of Fortunatus' writing with his *The Humblest Sparrow* (2009). In his new edition and translation for the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, R. provides for the first time an English translation of the entire corpus of Fortunatus' poetry (minus the *Vita Sancti Martini*, already available elsewhere). That this much needed volume features both accessible prose and an affordable price means the beauty and skill of Fortunatus' writing can be appreciated by a far wider audience.

The volume begins with a short introduction to Fortunatus' life, writings and unique style. Though brief, it provides the right balance between the necessary information for a general audience to appreciate the poems and the endnotes to lead scholars to recent in-depth studies and the critical apparatus of earlier editions by Leo, Reydellet and Di Brazzano. Following this, R. proceeds to Fortunatus' preface and the twelve books of his poetry, with the Latin edition and English translation helpfully on facing pages. Books 1–3 and 5 contain poems related to religious matters and church leaders, organised, as R. points out (ix), by status of the addressee. Book 4 collects epitaphs. Books 6 and 7 are poems addressed to secular figures, including members of the Merovingian royal family. Book 8's poems are dedicated to Radegund and Agnes, founder and abbess respectively of the Convent of the Holy Cross and close friends of Fortunatus. Books 9–11 are less organised but also contain many poems to Radegund and Agnes. The final book, 'Appendix', consists of poems not found in most manuscripts of Fortunatus' corpus, collected together by Friedrich Leo in his 1881 edition and henceforth usually treated by scholars as a twelfth book. Three figure poems are reproduced at the end, followed by short but helpful notes — again well balanced between the minor variations in his edition for scholarly reference and the clear explanation of allusions and metaphors for a general audience.

R.'s stated aims for his translation are 'to produce a readable and accurate version of Fortunatus's Latin, without slavishly following the structure of the Latin when it would produce uncomfortable English' (xviii–xix). That he largely succeeds against the challenge of Fortunatus' wordplay and masterful alliterative invention is a testament to his own poetic skill. For example, the vivid imagery of Fortunatus' 'Nunc meliore via viruit renovata vetustas / et lapsae fabricae flos redivivus adit' becomes 'Now the old, made new, is refreshed and improved, and the flower of its fallen fabric comes back to life once more' (1.13.11–12). '… qui nos Romanos vincis in eloquio' becomes '… who in your speech outdo us Romans in ours' (6.2.100). Even simply relaying the meaning of Fortunatus' words in a readable manner can be challenging, without concern for rhythms and alliterations, yet R. produces some of the most readable translations available. In an