

(*Porphyrios, Contra Christianos: neue Sammlung der Fragmente, Testimonien und Dubia mit Einleitung, Übersetzung und Anmerkungen*, Berlin 2015). However, Ariane Magny, lecturer at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia, enters the academic discourse not with another edition of fragments, but rather with a fresh look at the best way to make use of the fragmentary traditions of Porphyry's work. This is not a trivial question, because there has been no consensus in this matter since Barnes's criticism. There are some who simply continue using Harnack's edition; some who add further fragments to it; some who refuse to accept the authenticity of some, but not of other fragments; and even some who doubt the historical existence of Porphyry's *Contra Christianos* altogether. Magny does not come up with a solution to this problem, and her conclusions are anything but revolutionary: There is 'no straightforward approach to the problem of recovering a lost work, which survives in a polemical context' (p. 149). Translations into modern languages seem to have obscured the manifold philological problems rather than solved them. What makes this book interesting is the process by which Magny arrives at this conclusion, and the things that she discovers along the way. In order to get firmer ground under her feet, she analyses the context of Harnack's fragments in Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine and brings to light a fascinating world of varying intentions, styles, a wide range of rhetorical tools, viz. patristic theology at its best. Eusebius, she discovers, tried to explain Christianity to those not yet converted, and introduced the idea of progress into the ancient world. Jerome, however, was more concerned with proving his own orthodoxy, and also his mastership as an exegete and translator, while Augustine, as ever, was more subtle when describing the mysterious world of the *consensus evangelistarum* and fitting pagan anti-Christian arguments into his own efforts to enhance his own vision of the two *civitates*. Magny remains true to her initial task to show the (lack of) reliability of these witnesses for Porphyry's text. Her results are disastrous for anybody trying to put any philological weight on their testimony. For those not too concerned about this, however, her book sketches a rather fascinating and positive picture of the richness of the colourful textual world of Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine. The person who is most taken aback and pleasantly surprised by these findings seems to be the author herself. A book which is to be highly recommended to anybody well versed in non-Christian ancient literature who likes to discover what, in contrast, the Fathers were like.

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Kommunikation in der Kirche des 3. Jahrhunderts. Bischöfe und Gemeinden zwischen Konflikt und Konsens im Imperium Romanum. By Eva Baumkamp. (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 92.) Pp. x + 379. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. €89 (paper). 978 3 16 153686 1; 1436 3003
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Eva Baumkamp has produced an impressive study of 'communication' in the third century, while also endeavouring to locate its origin in earlier periods. She also

argues that the precise character of the structure through which the exchange of information takes place informs the structure of the community, and hence assists in the development of one form of church order rather than another. Early Christian epistolography was comparable in some respects with its Jewish counterparts, since the latter was the means to secure a unity of practice and identity throughout the geographically separated communities of the Diaspora so that, for example, conformity with a common calendar for Passover celebrations and other feasts, and likewise biblical exegesis was achieved by means of the exchange of letters. And, in the case of Rabbinic Judaism there was a centre, in Jabne, for the world-wide network so that communities knew with whom they should communicate and indeed could receive recognition from the already acknowledged leaders of their communities who wrote the official letters. This situation was mirrored in the relations between Paul (and his communities) and Peter, James and John in Jerusalem. But what was to happen for early Christianity after the Fall of Jerusalem? There was no obvious centre or rather, if Rome's imperial position suggested that it should be the centre, there was no mechanism for establishing an authority structure within which letters could be written to and specific authority figures be acknowledged in diverse Christian communities throughout the world.

Baumkamp seeks to answer, for early Christianity, specific questions: how was the community with which information should be exchanged determined, and to which official person should information be sent? The addition of named officials in the incipit and conclusion of letters assisted this. But absent from her discussion is Hermas, *Vision 2.4* and the identification of Clement of Rome, only bishop in later succession lists, with a person with a secretarial, ministerial function. I argued for this latter in my *Augustinianum* paper (1987) and had the satisfaction of Peter Lampe independently corroborating my conclusions in the same year. Baumkamp argues that the emergence of the office of bishop at the head of a local hierarchy was reinforced by epistolary exchange of information. The expansion of Christianity was accompanied by the emergence of bishops with supreme authority over their communities, a development that led to rivalry and competition between contenders for high office. In consequence this led to an interdiocesan network exchanging information and seeking support in resolving conflict which in turn reinforced common identities. The exchange of letters was central to this process. Most surviving early Christian letters are of course official letters: none that are unambiguously personal have survived.

How and why did an interdiocesan network that serviced conflict resolution arise? Why was not local contact between a bishop and his community sufficient? And how did that contact come to assume a written rather than an oral and even conversational form? Liturgy created the symbolism of the world-wide Christian Church, and Baumkamp's example here was the Quartodeciman dispute that sought uniform witness to a common identity. Unfortunately this may not provide the evidence for the existence of a world-wide network for which she is seeking. Perhaps there is too much reliance here on Eusebius' fourth-century account of international ecclesial intercommunication: Victor may simply have excommunicated Eastern congregations in Rome. Thus her argument must rest on how an increase in urban Christian numbers altered a situation in which face-to-face communication was possible with a bishop, as preacher and

celebrant, who knew the local situation and could address it orally. Moreover individual mobility made possible by the Roman Empire fostered the exchange of information through letters, and salutations and farewells determined authority relationships: a bishop issuing a letter of commendation to an individual travelling to distant parts was thereby formalising his own position and authority.

The evidence is fragmentary up until the Decian persecution and the Cyprianic events that were its aftermath so it is on this that Baumkamp has to focus. Cyprian's flight means that only a written form of information exchange was possible between the bishop and his community. But there was a further system of ecclesial authority in Carthage, that of the confessors, who claimed the right to reconcile the lapsed without episcopal consent, a claim strengthened by his absence. At this point Cyprian used his social position and his epistolary contacts with other Christian communities, notably with Rome, to strengthen his own, weakened position at Carthage: this was seen in particular in his support for Cornelius against Novatian. This in turn led to an increase in status for him within his own community. Since there was a rival, international network of confessors alongside the episcopal network, Cyprian sought successfully for the support of the more rigorous group at Rome.

My reservations about Baukamp's description is exemplified in the way in which she regards Cyprian's flight as aiding and abetting the formation of an international network of confessors with an extra-hierarchical, ecclesial authority, as if such an authority structure in competition to that given by episcopal ordination, was not already in existence. Indeed her impressive thesis documents how Cyprian (and Dionysius of Alexandria for that matter) was able to overcome the rival exchange mechanism and establish his hierarchical replacement.

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Canon law and episcopal authority. The canons of Antioch and Serdica. By Christopher W. B. Stephens. (Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs.) Pp. xi + 288. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. £65. 978 0 19 873222 8
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This is an interdisciplinary study spanning theology and canon law that leads the reader to the struggles of the fourth century. Stephens challenges the older interpretation of the years after the death of Constantine (337) that understood the mid-fourth century as a period defined by bitter theological quarrels (between Nicenes and non-Nicenes, Arians, etc.) and the quest for the right Creed. Stephens aims to bring the (political and legal) role of bishops back to centre stage and consequently focuses on more institutional aspects of the fourth century. According to him, the role of councils and of the bishop of Rome was crucial in this formative period for the institutions of the Church; furthermore, ecclesiastical leaders needed to answer the question of how to deal with bishops who were exiled under Constantine. To this end, Stephens reconsiders the canons of the Council of Antioch (341) and of Serdica (343?) to learn more about episcopal power in the mid-fourth century. This study is intriguing because it demonstrates