

This usefully brings together evidence for settlement after formal withdrawal from the province and the authors stress that significant links with the Empire remained. They stress particularly the evidence for Christianity within the former Roman territory. This reader would, however, have especially appreciated some reflection on the implication of a rather different discovery, Cristian Găzdac's fascinating observation that coin supply to the province was radically interrupted significantly before the A.D. 270s the historically attested end date of Roman Dacia (*Monetary Circulation in Dacia and the Provinces of the Middle and Lower Danube from Trajan to Constantine I (AD 106–337)* (2003), 106). It is a finding of potentially great importance to how we understand the twilight years of this once prosperous imperial domain.

Overall, readers who view *Dacia* as an essentially introductory text will be best served. The volume's strengths lie more in its treatment of broad historical change than in its analysis of the most recent data for cultural transformation. Those data are now emerging from field projects across Transylvania and will ultimately ensure that Dacia will one day receive the attention she deserves. It will be worth the wait.

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#### IV. LATE ANTIQUITY

A. K. BOWMAN, P. GARNSEY and A. CAMERON (EDS), *THE CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY (2nd EDN), VOL. XII: THE CRISIS OF EMPIRE, A.D. 193–337*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xviii + 965, 9 maps (1 fold-out), 12 figs. ISBN 978-0-521-30199-2. £130.00.

With the publication of Volume 12, treating the long third century, the second edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* reaches completion. Nearly all the volumes of the second edition stake ambitious claims to novelty: new methods and new data, it is promised, will open new perspectives on the material organized and rehearsed with such authority a half century (or more) before. The volumes treating the post-Constantinian empire had the easiest row to hoe, the first edition having stopped with Volume 12. The new twelfth volume must content itself with a new terminus — the death of Constantine in A.D. 337, rather than the defeat of Licinius, prior to Nicaea, in A.D. 324 — and a curious exchange, devoting its single chapter on a single province to Egypt rather than Britain. This last feature is mentioned twice — a sign, perhaps, of the editors' misgivings about its rationale, and certainly a warning to readers about what is to come.

Before taking up the nature and form of the volume's revisionism, I offer three observations. First, Garth Fowden, author of ch. 17, 'Late Polytheism', records that he submitted his text in 1988 and revised its bibliography last in 1999 (521 n. 1). Quite apart from idiosyncrasies in conception, the chapters reflect very unevenly historiographic developments of the last ten years. Second, the editors specifically eschew the task of 'impos[ing] any kind of unity of view or approach on the individual chapters...'. They allow that 'the reader may well find that there is a greater than usual number of inconsistencies or differences of view between one chapter and another. We take the view that this unavoidable [sic] and we have not attempted even the minimum amount of reconciliation which was applied in earlier volumes' (xvii). Third, the volume does contain several excellent chapters, not least those by Cameron on Constantine and Bowman on Egypt, as well as those by Jean-Michel Carrié ('Developments in Provincial and Local Administration') and Mark Edwards and Graeme Clark on Christianity. The last two distinguish themselves in being pitched just right: the others, though quite superb, cannot, I think, be read even by fairly advanced undergraduates, except perhaps those who come to this volume having read the previous two.

That said, some chapters are weak, and some difficulties mar the Parts; and in many cases tighter editorial control could only have helped. For example, John Drinkwater's contribution to Part 1, treating 'Maximinus to Diocletian and the "Crisis"', stands out for its almost total refusal to cite evidence; one cannot help feeling that its too-tidy narrative could not have been written had problems of evidence been foregrounded as they are elsewhere. At a different level, Bowman's chapter on the Tetrarchy ends looking forward to the Conference of Carnuntum; the next, by Cameron, opens by looking back at the same event. Each treats it as pivotal; neither explains who was there or what issued from their converse. The chapters on 'high classical' and 'epiclassical'

law, by David Ibbetson and David Johnston, respectively, concentrate almost exclusively on the sources of law in the one period, and the nature of legal writing in the other. They have nothing to say on substance or procedure, or access to law, or local law — nothing, one might say, on law as a problem in social or political history.

Many of the authors do agree with each other as well the editors on one central point, namely, that they are less confident than writers once were that there was, in fact, a ‘crisis of empire’ between A.D. 193 and 337. They insist rather on two points: that there is a vastly greater volume of evidence available today than in the 1930s; and that by approaching it differently — by asking new questions, as well as old ones, and by refusing to understand earlier events in light of Tetrarchic and Constantinian history — the events of the third century appear less catastrophic, its developments more gradual. A subsidiary strand of argument urges that less credence be granted to the interested and not necessarily well-informed accounts of third- and early fourth-century history provided by the Latin panegyrist, Victor, Eutropius, and the *Historia Augusta*. This the volume presents as a new and hard-won orthodoxy, and this is correct. Indeed, it was already enshrined as such in Jean-Michel Carrié and Aline Rousselle’s splendid contribution to Seuil’s ‘Nouvelle histoire de l’Antiquité’, *L’Empire romain en mutation des Sévères à Constantin 192–337* (1999). As a matter of method, at this level of abstraction, all this is true enough. Such claims were of course made already in the 1930s, above all by Andreas Alföldi, who completely demolished the ‘histories’ of ceremonial offered by Ammianus, Victor and the *HA* — and indeed, by Suetonius. Those essays, collected in *Die monarchische Representation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (1970), go here uncited.

The problem with ‘The Crisis of Empire’, it seems to me, is that its structure and argument are so designed that it could not possibly fulfil its broader ambition to call into question the nature of the third-century ‘crisis’: it can neither ascertain whether there was a crisis nor diagnose its cause and extent.

Consider the volume’s structure. It offers a narrative of political events, which is altogether segregated from thematically-distinct considerations of administration, economics, and culture. These latter chapters are occasionally but not always diachronic. Separate chapters on peoples outside the Empire intrude in this volume, when success against Rome endows them for the first time with sufficient agency to warrant distinct narration. Religion, too, receives its chapters — particularly Christianity — very nearly at the end.

Described thus, this volume invites comparison to the first volume of Gibbon’s *History*, for there is nearly nothing by way of topic treated in *CAH* XII that is not embraced by Gibbon, in a similar if more artful structure. But Gibbon’s volume is the tighter, his argument stronger — rare lapses in judgement notwithstanding — because he *has* an argument: a vision why Republican constitutionalism (treated here by Lo Cascio) issued under the Severans in a crisis of legitimacy; how the failure of Republicanism as an orientation for subjectivity threatened civic life (Carrié); how population structures (not treated at all) sustained the vibrancy of the ancient city (Carrié in an institutional sense; Corbier in the perspective of economics); and so on. What is more, Gibbon’s argument has remarkable and complex roots in the full range of Enlightenment political, social, and economic theory, as John Pocock’s *Barbarism and Religion* is now revealing. It is the very catholicity of Gibbon’s theoretical reach, and the extraordinary compression of his expression, that gives his text its enduring depth. Here I might seem to indict the editors for having edited a volume, that is to say, for having commissioned chapters on discrete topics from distinct, highly qualified individuals. Perhaps so. But the strands of argument here separately pursued amount by virtue of their separation to significantly less than the sum of their parts, not least because the topics apparently assigned to authors can hardly have produced anything other than a congeries of individually thin, fairly processual treatments.

What is here lacking is a vision of what the Roman Empire as a political and economic system was; how its structures of exchange brought into being and long nurtured patterns of social and economic conduct that were historically anomalous; and hence what sort of data should be sought, and by what means they should be analysed, in pursuit of one or another definition of crisis. On this understanding, it is Corbier’s chapters on the economy that might have provided a theoretical and evidentiary lynchpin, and not coincidentally, hers seem to me among the very weakest in the book: they display no grasp of historical or political economics in any meaningful senses of those terms. Many items as late as 2000 are cited in the bibliographies, not least in Corbier’s, but no place is found for Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea*;

none for the remarkable theoretical and empirical studies by Chris Wickham, which climaxed in 2005 with *Framing the Early Middle Ages*.

I could go on. Let me say instead, that I do not doubt but that the authors and editors of this volume do in fact know those books, and could and do engage with them and kindred works elsewhere. Indeed, one might say not altogether ironically that Jean-Michel Carrié's chapter suffers not least from insufficient engagement with the full range of scholarship by Jean-Michel Carrié. But for whatever reasons, the volume that they have collectively produced has instead a narrower and more constricted vision of historical explanation than that exhibited by many of the works they have produced as individuals.

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J. HAAS, *DIE UMWELTKRISE DES 3. JAHRHUNDERTS N.CHR. IM NORDWESTEN DES IMPERIUM ROMANUM. INTERDISZIPLINÄRE STUDIEN ZU EINEM ASPEKT DER ALLGEMEINEN REICHSKRISE IM BEREICH DER BEIDEN GERMANIAE SOWIE DER BELGICA UND RAETIA* (Geographica Historica 22). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006. Pp. 322. ISBN 3-515-08880-6. €80.00.

In this exemplarily cautious piece of work, Haas painstakingly explores the notion of ecological crisis in a clearly defined geographical area by drawing on a large number of local datasets and scrupulously avoiding inadequately supported generalizations. The first half of the book is taken up by wide-ranging discussion of literary allusions to environmental problems from the first five centuries A.D. H. plausibly concludes time and again that such texts do not reliably reflect actual conditions and are best interpreted as governed by the rules of genre (23–139). However, while this somewhat unsurprising point is surely worth establishing once and for all, it contributes little to the geographically specific topic of the monograph. By contrast, scientific data are accorded only modest space (142–52): they deal with glacier movement, ice cores, growth homogeneity, erosion, sedimentation, and changes in lake levels. H. emphasizes that for all their critical importance, these data do not always permit the desired degree of chronological precision: the analysis of glacier movement in particular is beset by uncertainties of C<sup>14</sup> dating. Settlement archaeology takes up the remainder of the book (152–273). H. surveys an impressive number of local datasets but generally finds it hard to relate observed variation to specific causes: climate change, deforestation, and security are the main variables that drove changes in development and land use. Soil erosion associated with deforestation emerges as a widespread phenomenon of the early Roman period, although in some areas trees made a comeback in the third century A.D. or even earlier. Regression, where it can be inferred, tends to precede the political-military crisis of the mid-third century.

In as much as any broader trends become visible from the kaleidoscopic evidence, it appears that a (warm) climatic optimum in the early Principate was followed by climatic instability from the mid-second century A.D. onwards and a trend towards lower temperatures in at least parts of the third century, with further cooling in Late Antiquity. However, H. prudently resists spurious precision. He cautiously allows for the possibility that in the third century A.D., the North-Western provinces may have experienced dry summers and wet winters, arguably accompanied by dry winters in the Mediterranean (146). The only trend that appears to be reasonably clear is one towards increasing fluctuation and change from the second century A.D. onwards, ultimately towards a continental climate that brought first wetness and then greater cold to the North-Western provinces in the third and fourth centuries A.D., with concurrent aridity farther south. This tentative scenario is consistent with Anja Heide's earlier model of a moderate temperature rise after the first century B.C., an optimum in the first and second centuries A.D. (with increased precipitation in the Mediterranean), and gradual change in the following period (*Das Wetter und Klima in der römischen Antike im Westen des Reiches*, a valuable Mainz doctoral thesis from 1997 that has regrettably remained unpublished).

Dealing with a subject matter that will be unfamiliar to most students of antiquity and weighed down by technical terminology that presents occasional challenges even to the native speaker, this book is rendered even less accessible by H.'s style of presentation. The paucity of summaries and conclusions makes it hard to make sense of the long string of data samples that fills the second half of the work. H.'s decision to exclude graphs (even when they are explicitly mentioned in his references to pertinent scholarship) was particularly unhelpful: as a result, the scale and direction