audience and reception. Finally, Elm assesses with aplomb the performative and metaphorical character of Gregory of Nazianzus' influential invective against Julian which came to eclipse Ammianus' near panegyric of the emperor. She shows how Gregory's portrayal of Julian's reign as a transient theatrical performance, and his conceit that this invective was, as it were, transcribed on a pillar in the agora, were part of an overarching pedagogic strategy to demonstrate how men should comport themselves.

In Part Three, four authors consider different aspects of the period immediately after Theodosius I's return to Constantinople after the disastrous Gothic campaign. Heather explores Themistius' oratorical reinvention of Theodosius, from emperor destined to win against the Goths, to bringer of civil peace to the eastern empire, and sets this against Theodosius' beleagured attempts at 'regime-building'. He relates the Gothic settlement to the Roman failure to address systemic problems, to Alaric's revolt, and eventually to the unravelling of the western empire. This is, like Potter's chapter, an ambitious and broad-brush piece of analysis. McLynn uses Gregory of Nazianzus' muted characterization of the policies of the living emperor to lead into an assessment of Theodosius' judicious and responsive interventions in church and state in the eastern empire. M. makes numerous telling links between his work and that of his fellow contributors, making this one of the best-connected essays in the volume. Croke addresses Theodosius' transformation of Constantinople into an imperial and Christian capital, based on ceremonial and monumental aspects of the city. Vessey ends the section and volume with a bravura meditation on the range and ambition of Jerome's chronicle, set against Ammianus' classicizing historiography.

It is clear that there has been some productive, if rarely combative, exchange between the authors of these essays, as indicated by explicit cross-references between chapters. This, along with the contributors' common, if differently nuanced, characterization of Late Antiquity as a period of continuity with a long Roman past, rather than a post-classical period of rupture and difference, contributes to an overall impression of coherence and internal integration which is rare in such edited volumes.

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J. LIEBESCHUETZ, *AMBROSE AND JOHN CHRYSOSTOM: CLERICS BETWEEN DESERT AND EMPIRE*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 303. ISBN 978019-9596645. £60.00.

This book compares the careers of Ambrose and John Chrysostom with a focus on their asceticism and readiness to critique secular authorities. The book's structure is unusual: the first two chapters survey the classical roots and Christian development of asceticism and freedom of speech (*parrhesia*). The second part focuses on Ambrose and the third on Chrysostom. Liebeschuetz aims to understand Chrysostom's asceticism against the background of Syrian and Mesopotamian practices. L. notes that this third theme resulted in the book becoming 'somewhat unbalanced'(4), with more pages on Chrysostom and asceticism, and less on Ambrose and freedom of speech.

In their outspokenness and asceticism, both men reflected their times. In the late fourth century, the imperial court was 'for the first time overwhelmingly Christian' (1). As a result, imperial authorities recognized episcopal power, but the extent of this power had not yet been settled — perhaps the lack of precedents explains why these two important bishops stood up to imperial power. L. does not draw a causal relationship between asceticism and outspokenness, but in both respects Ambrose and Chrysostom distinguished themselves as men who 'practised what they preached'(2).

The first chapter provides an overview of asceticism in antiquity. The topics covered here range from Essenes to Vestal Virgins, from Socrates to Gnostics. L. argues persuasively that intellectuals' views of asceticism did not necessarily differ from those of ordinary people (19). Ch. 2 examines freedom of speech in antiquity. The Roman value of outspokenness originated in the Republic, and continued during the Principate among philosophers, whom emperors sometimes persecuted, sometimes tolerated. Ambrose and John Chrysostom drew on these traditions as well as a Christian critique of authority that developed during the persecutions (47–8). Two factors were unique to freedom of speech in a Christian empire: a bishop might feel compelled to rebuke the

emperor out of pastoral concern; also, once emperors began attending church, they became vulnerable to pastoral critique (53–4).

Part Two surveys Ambrose's ecclesiastical career, with an emphasis on his ascetic treatises and his interaction with imperial authorities. His ascetic treatises emphasized celibacy, which he required of his clergy (66). L. observes that asceticism must have been an especially appealing topic for Ambrose and Chrysostom because it was 'theologically neutral ground' for Nicene and *Homoian* Christians (71, 140). In his account of priestly duties, Ambrose includes resistance to authority when the laws of God are at stake. His sermons teach that kings must accept criticism from priests, or face exclusion from church and salvation (82–3, 91–4). Ambrose followed these instructions when he resisted imperial demands. When Valentinian II and his mother, Justina, asked for a church for the *Homoians*, he refused (85–9). In his most famous act of outspokenness, Ambrose required the emperor Theodosius to repent for the massacre in Thessalonica (89–91). Although nothing like this had happened before or would happen again, the authority of the Church over the emperor was brought out of the realm of theory and into reality.

The section on Chrysostom begins with a background chapter on asceticism in Syria and Mesopotamia, where an even greater emphasis on celibacy and a wide variety of ascetic lifestyles prevailed. The following chapters focus on Chrysostom's early life and writings, many of which deal with asceticism. L. compares Chrysostom vividly to a 'student radical' who hoped to convince ordinary Christians to embrace asceticism (139). After gaining pastoral experience, Chrysostom remained idealistic, but developed more empathy for laypeople (177–84; 199). His writings propose that priests hold authority over rulers (148–52; 216–17). His career shows that he lived according to this precept. L. provides a lengthy account of Chrysostom's conflict with the imperial court (ch. 15). Standing his ground, Chrysostom refused a Gothic general's request for a church for the Arians. Later, when faced with a powerful empress, Chrysostom criticized her greed and vanity despite her power to retaliate against him.

In his conclusions, L. summarizes his comparisons of the two men: both were educated men who were raised by single mothers and drawn to the ascetic life (251–4). Both wrote treatises on the duties of priesthood and both acted on these beliefs with varying measures of success. Their similarities resulted in large part from the unity of Christian culture in East and West at this time. L. argues persuasively that Ambrose's success and Chrysostom's failure to wield authority over emperors were due to the different political situations rather than to the differences in their personalities (257–61). While there is no proof that Chrysostom read anything by Ambrose, L. suggests that Chrysostom was likely influenced by Ambrose's refusal to provide a church for *Homoian* Christians (5, 89, 229, 240, 261–4).

This book contributes to current scholarship on bishops in Late Antiquity. L. convincingly argues that these two famous Church Fathers were products of their times in their asceticism, their advice for laypeople, and their complex relationships with imperial authorities. The main weakness of this book is the structure: the seventeen short chapters are not all clearly related to the main themes of the book (especially chs 7, 13 and 17). L. acknowledges in the introduction that the book is lopsided in Chrysostom's favour, but one would still expect, for example, an introductory chapter on Western asceticism as a counterpart to the chapter on Syrian and Mesopotamian asceticism.

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J. A. VAN WAARDEN, *WRITING TO SURVIVE. A COMMENTARY ON SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS,* LETTERS *BOOK 7. VOLUME 1: THE EPISCOPAL LETTERS 1–11* (Late Antique History and Religion 2). Leuven: Peeters, 2010. Pp. ix + 659, map. ISBN 9789042923201. €85.00.

Sidonius Apollinaris is many things to late antique historians: senatorial eyewitness to fifth-century turmoil; emblematic case of Christianization (the Urban Prefect of Rome who would become bishop of Clermont-Ferrand); spokesman for a southern Gallic aristocracy coming to terms with barbarian rulers. Partly as a result of Jill Harries' seminal study of his career in *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome* (1994), Sidonius has become a central figure in any number of weighty late antique debates. Johannes van Waarden's commentary on Book 7 of his letters is a valuable addition to the recent scholarship on Sidonius, not least because it steps back from these grand historiographical themes to consider Sidonius' literary output on its own terms.