points the reader to significant scholarship on particular issues and texts. The translation are clear and bring out well Jerome's distinctive and often biting style. Ample bibliography, notes, and index complete the work. And all this in 211 pages! *Jerome* is an excellent example of how the best scholarship can be made available to a non-specialist audience in a manner that is neither condescending nor simplistic. I highly recommend this book for courses as well as for general reading.

Duke University ELIZABETH A. CLARK

JEROME'S LETTERS

B. CONRING: *Hieronymus als Briefschreiber. Ein Beitrag zur spätantiken Epistolographie*. (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 8.) Pp. x + 273. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001. Paper, DM 98. ISBN: 3-16-147502-X.

When you tell Germans you do Jerome, they ask: 'Sind Sie Theologe?' C. is; however, the present study contains little *Theologie* and much interesting *Literaturwissenschaft* that ranges beyond the narrow realm of *Altphilologie*. Page 1 of the 'Introduction' defines the book's object as the examination of Jerome's letters in the light of the rhetorical features peculiar to the genre of epistolography. Chapter 1 starts with a survey of epistolographic theory and practice in the classical world. It then presents a useful and well-informed discussion of the findings of modern scholarship in the field. Here particular attention is given on the one hand to the topoi of the genre and on the other to communication theory, while the old distinction between 'real' and 'literary' letter turns out to be inadmissible. One sentence in this chapter (p. 13) would seem to give cause for cavil, since it glosses a passage from Julius Victor's important treatment of epistolography (*Rhet*. pp. 105.12–13; ''sententiarum pondera', 'verborum lumina' und 'figurarum insignia conpendii' [*sic*]') as 'gewichtige Worte, deutliche Sprache und knapper Ausdruck'. Here, however, *sententiae* are evidently not mere 'Worte', but rather 'terse and pointed observation[s], esp. of a moralistic tone' (cf. *OLD* s.v. 6b), while the sense of *lumen* is not 'deutlich', but '(rhet.) an outstanding beauty of . . . phrase' (cf. *OLD* s.v. 11b; *TLL* s.v. 1820.34–9). Since *conpendii* goes instead with the ensuing *opera*, the meaning of *figura* is '(rhet.) a form of speech departing from the straightforward and obvious' (cf. *OLD* s.v. 11a; *TLL* s.v. 731.79–733.84); for *insignia* in such a context cf. *TLL* s.v. 1900.55–67. C. ends the same sentence by paraphrasing the end of Julius Victor's sentence: 'daß . . . [der Brief] eher am Gespräch denn an der Rede (hier verstanden als Gattung, *oratio*) orientiert sei ('orationem proprius sermo explicet')'. However, Victor's meaning would appear to be simply: 'a natural form of expression should set out what we have to say' (for this sense of *oratio* cf. *OLD* s.v. 5a, while for *proprius* cf. *OLD* s.v. 8b). This sentence of Julius Victor has also been seriously misunderstood by A. J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta, 1988), p. 63. Chapter 2 provides a brief sketch of Jerome's life and epistolographic activity. On p. 43 C. states that Labourt's French translation 'nach [ihrem] Kenntnisstand die einzige komplette moderne Übersetzung darstellt'. Here she overlooks the Italian translation of all the letters by S. Cola (Rome, 1962–4; revised edn 1996–7) and the complete Spanish versions by both D. Ruiz Bueno (Madrid, 1962) and J. Bautista Valero (Madrid, 1993-5). The third chapter examines Jerome's view of epistolography; here attention is paid to his letters'

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Sitz im Leben as well as to his own pronouncements on this subject. C. begins by devoting a very lengthy discussion to Jerome's use of the concept of 'brevitas epistolaris'. Here she unfortunately fails to mention G. J. M. Bartelink, 'Een gemeenplaats uit de briefliteratuur bij een christelijk auteur: Brevitas epistolaris bij Hieronymus', *Lampas* 10 (1977), 61–5. In her discussion of the 'Vorgang der Brieferstellung' she affirms (p. 107): 'Ein weiterer von Hieronymus für den Schreiber verwendeter Begriff ist "scriba velox" ' (*Epist*. 65.7.1). It should, however, be pointed out that here 'scriba velox' is merely Jerome's literal rendering of the Hebrew 'sopher mahir' (Ps. 45.2), which he at once proceeds to gloss as *notarius* (*ibid*. 7.2).

Chapter 4, which opens with an impressive discussion of theoretical approaches to epistolography, then moves on to a detailed examination of four of Jerome's letters, which have been judiciously chosen to illustrate the diversity of his correspondence: no. 34 to Marcella on exegetical issues in Ps. 127, no. 54 to Furia on the preservation of widowhood, no. 15 to Pope Damasus on trinitarian terminology, and no. 109 to the priest Riparius in defence of vigils and the cult of relics. C. rounds off this section by concluding that exegesis is the staple of Jerome's letters, that he adopts the rôle of teacher in them, that he fills them with topoi and that in the course of them he tends to get carried away. The final chapter deals with Christian and pagan elements in Jerome's epistolography. C. rightly concludes that the latter are largely there to impress.

Throughout this perceptive and valuable book C. shows a commendable awareness of the importance of rhetorical technique for a proper appreciation of Jerome's work. Here a more specific terminology might sometimes have been employed: e.g. polyptotic *redditio* instead of just 'dreigliedrige Alliteration' (p. 76), or *sermocinatio* and *dilemma* instead of mere 'Fragestränge' (p. 191).

University of Nebraska—Lincoln NEIL ADKIN

AUGUSTINE ON *GALATIANS*

E. PLUMER: *Augustine's Commentary on* Galatians. *Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes*. Pp. xvii + 294. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-19-924439-1.

Augustine wrote his commentary on St Paul's *Letter to the Galatians* in 394 or 395 during the relatively short period of his priesthood at Hippo (391–5/6) before his ordination as bishop. At that time he was living in the monastic community he had set up, based on a group of his friends. Moreover, this was the time when, having recently read Jerome's commentary on the *Letter to the Galatians*, Augustine opened a correspondence with the prickly biblical scholar in Bethlehem, to discuss various points of translation and interpretation. These three aspects of Augustine's life at this period—as priest, monk, and incipient biblical scholar—are, according to Eric Plumer in his introduction to this annotated edition and (almost flawless) translation of Augustine's commentary, crucial to our understanding of Augustine's purpose in writing this neat work in which so much of what comes to be seen as typical of Augustine's thought is already present. Through his interpretation of St Paul's letter to the pagans turned Christians in Galatia, a letter which deals primarily with the value accorded to Jewish law and Christian faith and grace, Augustine allows the reader to perceive many of the hermeneutical presuppositions fundamental to his later exegesis: here we can see his belief in the truth of Scripture, the unity of the Bible, the primacy of love and humility, as well as his interest in spiritual and pastoral

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