history and archaeology; this is a stimulating contribution in the right direction, which provides a careful methodological reflection on the difficult way ahead.

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Roman History

As I write this, my wife and I are awaiting the imminent arrival of our first child. A natural tendency to find reassurance in research has led me to read a series of modern takes on fatherhood, which have proved of varying value. Imagine my delight, then, when *Infancy and Earliest Childhood in the Roman World* arrived on my desk.[1] What better source of information? Unsurprisingly, *What to Expect When You're Expecting* this is not, though I have noted Soranus' sage advice not to indulge pregnant women's cravings for charcoal or earth (*Gyn.* 1.15.48; 50). What Maureen Carroll's major new work does offer is the first systematic study of the youngest Romans, those in their first year of life, a topic which – despite the raft of work on the Roman family and life course over the last few decades – still stands in need of a synthesis. As well as evidence-gathering, Carroll's work has a central thesis; that 'the evidence from archaeology, funerary epigraphy, and material culture marshalled in this study dispels the long-held notion that the very youngest infants were insignificant beings without a social persona whose lives were treated with indifference' (7). Instead, what Carroll paints is a picture of the first year of life marked by both regular milestones – 'from the naming day at eight or nine days, the official registration of birth by the thirtieth day, the release from swaddling bands at forty to sixty days, and the beginning of teething at six months, to the achievement of the child's first birthday' (12) – and ongoing and substantial parental investment.

The structure of the book is a little unclear, with chapters defined alternately by chronology, life stage, evidence medium, and topic. After laying out the terms of her study in Chapter 1, Carroll turns in Chapter 2 to a long survey of the material evidence for infancy in the pre-Roman period, from the eight century BC. We then move to the Roman world proper. Having considered foetal development, childbirth, midwives, breastfeeding, weaning, swaddling, health, and care (both practical and divine) in Chapter 3, Carroll looks at the material culture of infancy in Chapter 4, covering feeding bottles, clothing, cribs, cradles, blankets, apotropaic jewellery, pets, and toys (the adorable stone votive depicting a swaddled infant in a cradle with a dog curled up on its feet [96] is a highlight; the creepy textile doll from Egypt with real human hair [115] not so much). Chapter 5 considers the portrayal of infancy and the family in Roman art, from the Ara Pacis (the first appearance of infants in Roman state art) to a rare extant statue of Messalina with the infant Britannicus. Chapters 6 and 7 are paired. The former addresses infant mortality, the location of infant burials (showing

[1] *Infancy and Earliest Childhood in the Roman World. 'A Fragment of Time'*. By Maureen Carroll. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. 336. 86 b/w illustrations, 8 tables, 2 maps. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-968763-3.

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that infants were regularly buried together with their families), infanticide (including 'child sacrifice' at Carthage), and infant exposure. The latter looks at funerary ritual, both the preparation of infants for burial by mummification, cremation, and inhumation, and the vessels and grave goods associated with the latter (including some heart-wrenching miniature coffins [190–3]). Chapter 8 reviews how infants were commemorated in art and inscriptions, looking at whether they were memorialized in epitaphs (which they were), how parental sentiment was expressed, and how both were depicted in images. In Chapter 9, having privileged the archaeological, material, and iconographical evidence in what went before, Carroll turns to the better-known literary sources to assess their picture against her painstakingly constructed image of Roman infancy. While she sometimes exposes straightforward errors – Plutarch's suggestion that the graves of infants were not given much attention (*Consolatio ad uxorem* 11; 238–9), for example – what she really provides here are the layers of nuance necessary to put ancient elite literary discourse in context. Put simply, what elite Stoics thought appropriate for the public display of particular mourning practices need not determine our overall picture of how Roman parents engaged with their youngest children.

This book is an impressive achievement. Methodologically, the explicit privileging of material evidence is interesting, and the sheer volume of data assembled from scattered site reports will make it a hugely valuable resource, aided by the eighty-six illustrations and eight tables of infant burials. As that suggests, this is not necessarily an easy read: unsurprisingly, infant mortality casts a long shadow, not only because three chapters are explicitly dedicated to it, but because almost all of the archaeological evidence on which the book is built comes from a funerary context. But Carroll's developing thesis – that children in the first year of life were loved, valued, and mourned accordingly – perhaps eases that discomfort, and serves not only to bring into focus one of the areas of ancient life that had previously remained rather opaque, but to provide one of those sympathetic links between the modern and ancient worlds that can make our subject so compelling. Though some of the evidence is occasionally stretched a little further than is comfortable, the overall picture is persuasive. In private, Romans felt the same variety of emotions about their children, young or not, that we do. It was in elites' public attitude to demonstrations of emotion that their society could differ so greatly from ours.

The prolific 'Women in Antiquity' series sees two more additions in Barbara Gold's and Nathanael Andrade's respective studies of Perpetua and Zenobia.[2] About time they showed up, one might think; this series was made for women such as these. The former was an iconic North African martyr and new mother who faced down a succession of men – her father, governor, and jailor – in short order (and all the expectations of family and society that they sought to impose on her), had dreams that would have given Freud a field day, and (maybe) wrote about all this in her own hand. The latter was a queen of a desert city, Palmyra, who made herself a Roman empress, successfully ruled a third of the Roman Empire, became a thorn in the side of multiple emperors, and – arguably most impressive – kept herself and her children alive through the

[2] *Perpetua. Athlete of Gold*. By Barbara Gold. Women in Antiquity. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. viii + 261. 7 halftones, 3 b/w figures. Hardback £47.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-538545-8; *Zenobia. Shooting Star of Palmyra*. By Nathanael J. Andrade. Women in Antiquity. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xvii + 284. 33 illustrations. Hardback £22.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-063881-8.

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turbulent years of the later third century, even after her own defeat. Both books are worthy additions. But they are also useful for considering some of the challenges faced by the series as a whole and the various solutions to those challenges.

All works in this series confront a basic and fundamental issue of evidence: specifically, the limited extent of, and male authorship of, literary evidence for ancient women (see also my last review in *G&R* 66.1). Both these new additions deal with the latter issue admirably. With Perpetua we are of course blessed with what claims to be an autobiographical account of her prison experience – if authentic, the earliest-known such document by a woman. But that authenticity has been seriously questioned, particularly in recent years, an issue that Gold is well aware of and addresses head on. Her solution is to have her cake and eat it too, so she considers the consequences if the diary is authentic, and if it is not. The book is thus a study not just of the historical Perpetua but of the literary one too; of the original woman and of the men who have successively rewritten her. Chapters thus alternate from the *Passio* itself (the narrative describing her suffering and death in which the diary is embedded), to questions of gender and athletes, before returning to literary relationships between the *Passio* and earlier forms of Graeco-Roman and Christian narrative writing, and then switching to Carthaginian culture. For Andrade, the literary sources are even worse, with the *Historia Augusta* at its most flagrantly fictional here, unable to resist the temptation of the stereotypes on offer for an Eastern queen. Andrade is rightfully fairly disdainful of its value, but his task is made easier by the quality of the material evidence available for studying daily life at Palmyra, and the good epigraphic material on Zenobia herself. Both studies then, in different ways, offer strong models for how gender history can be written.

The second evidentiary difficulty, however – its very paucity – produces rather different results. Put simply, since there is never enough specific evidence to construct a detailed biography for any ancient woman (it is hard enough for any ancient figure), authors are forced to include quite a lot of general contextual information. This has differing results. Gold includes chapters on, for example, culture, religion, and society in North Africa, early Christianity in Carthage, and martyrdom and martyr literature as a whole. Andrade similarly includes chapters on the urban and social landscape of Palmyra, as well as treating adolescence, marriage, and death in Palmyrene society. Both conclude with fascinating accounts of the later reception of their heroines. But the overall effect is rather different in each case. Certainly there is much of concrete value in the wider context – the ability of Bedouin women to 'assume political leadership and jural authority when necessary' (Andrade, 42), for example. But the key to such wider excurses is to integrate them into the focused study of the individual at hand, and Andrade is more successful here than Gold, some of whose chapters occasionally feel like generalized introductory surveys to huge topics. It is precisely these successes and failures, however, that make this series such a valuable one, and worth reading *as* a series. Because the central endeavour is inevitably compromised, taking this growing series as a whole showcases a range of possible approaches, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. And the latter are just as interesting and informative – in particular for an undergraduate course on gender history, for example – as the former.

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The Roman provinces prove to be another fecund area of publication, with two different but complimentary new edited collections. The first, essays collected by Tatiana Ivleva, Jasper de Bruin, and Mark Driessen to honour Carol van Driel-Murray, focuses on frontier regions.[3] The honorand is known for her work on women and leather – and shoes in particular – but also for her interest in comparative, interdisciplinary work. Both content and approach are echoed here, with twenty essays in five parts ('It's a Man's World'; 'Gender Matters'; 'What's Cooking? Military and Civilian Foodstuff'; 'A Long Walk From Rome: The Leatherwork at the Empire's Edges'; and 'Filling the Gaps: Investigating the Unexplored Areas in Provincial Studies'). The collection ends with a bibliography of van Driel-Murray's works (197–202), and twelve beautiful colour plates, including two tremendous photographs demonstrating how hairpins and glass bangles might affix either to a woman's bun or to a horse's mane. The latter pertain to Tatiana Ivleva's essay on 'Multi-Functionality of a Romano-British Glass Bangle: Between Theory and Practice' (71–85), which, in purpose, content, and format, is arguably representative of the volume as a whole. Following van Driel-Murray's work on female- and child-associated artefacts in military installations, Ivleva looks here at coloured glass bangles or armlets from the first and second centuries in (mostly northern) Roman Britain. She argues that the great variability in their size tells against a single function as adornment. Using comparative ethnography as well as ancient archaeology from other sites, she suggests multiple purposes for glass bangles on both humans (men, women, and children) and animals – as armlets, yes, but also as anklets, ring-pendants, hair-rings, and purse-stiffeners (and, in the light of Carroll's book, above, we might add binders for holding swaddling bands in place; 87–8). Experimental archaeology – making and testing authentically made replicas – suggests which of these seem more practical (armlets and hair-rings, as it turns out). The paper also serves 'to raise a warning and awareness of the uncritical attribution of one function and one gender to such objects' (82).

The second book is a collection of essays on the Mediterranean islands under Roman rule, edited by Anna Kouremenos.[4] The volume gathers a series of case studies considering the diverse ways in which islands thought of their own identities under Roman hegemony. The focus on identity is well-trodden ground, but the insular theme brings to the foreground territories less often treated in work on the Roman provinces. Moreover, it serves to highlight the importance of mobility and connectivity in identity formation. Put another way, islands offer extremes of both 'interconnectivity and isolation' (1) and thus make for particularly interesting case studies in identity terms. The papers focus on four major islands and four island groups respectively, progressing from east to west – Jody Michael Gordon on Cyprus (4–40), Kouremenos herself on Crete (41–64), Alkiviadis A. Ginalis on the Northern Sporades (65–76), Sophia Zoumbaki on the Ionian Islands (77–107), Danijel Dzino

[3] *Embracing the Provinces. Society and Material Culture of the Roman Frontier Regions. Essays in Honour of Dr Carol van Driel-Murray*. Edited by Tatiana Ivleva, Jasper de Bruin, and Mark Driessen. Oxford and Philadelphia, PA, Oxbow Books, 2018. Pp. xi + 202. 12 colour plates. Hardback £48, ISBN: 978-1-78925-015-2.

[4] *Insularity and Identity in the Roman Mediterranean*. Edited by Anna Kouremenos. Oxford and Philadelphia, PA, Oxbow Books, 2018. Pp. vi + 208. 59 figures, 4 tables. Paperback £38, ISBN: 978-1-78570-580-9.

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on the Central Adriatic, or Dalmatian, Islands (108–24), Maxine Anastasi on Malta and Gozo (125–43), Andrea Roppa on Sardinia (144–64), and Jean-Baptiste Mary on Corsica (165–98). The overall purpose is to try to bring a more holistic view to the study of islands, which are often addressed – particularly archaeologically – independently. That holistic view comes out most clearly in Swii Yii Lim's 'Conclusion' (199–205). After summarizing the preceding papers, she teases out what unites them, and their consequences for future study. She highlights the necessity of using archaeological evidence in undermining 'perspectives that have been unduly influenced by ideological bias or the worldview of the Romans themselves' (204); of aligning that material evidence with theory; of defining terms (especially insularity itself, which, as Lim notes, this volume does not do); and of valuing diversity and complexity. One could perhaps hope for a little more in terms of payoff – though it is, of course, often difficult to elucidate exactly what a collection of contributions says as a whole – but the papers themselves will be important case studies, and the book is a significant step towards the study of islands as a collective, on which future studies will no doubt build.

A third book merits brief consideration here: Duncan Campbell's whodunit on the unsolved mystery of when and where in the provinces the Ninth Legion disappeared.[5] This little nugget of Roman history has inspired tall tales in multiple media (Channing Tatum and Jamie Bell trudging through the northern rain in 2010's *The Eagle* being a personal favourite). Campbell here assembles the known evidence (primarily epigraphic) while he walks through the history of scholarly interpretation. After a sketched introduction to the study of both epigraphy and the Roman army, the hunt begins in earnest with the 1854 publication in the *York Herald and General Advertiser* of an inscription mentioning the Ninth Legion from AD 108. From there we whizz around in time and space, from the seventeenth-century discovery of tiles stamped with the mark of the Ninth Legion in Britain, through a nineteenth-century Italian count working away in political exile in the Republic of San Marino, to the second-century tomb of Lucius Aninius Sextius Florentinus in Petra. Campbell provides a thorough picture of the various answers given over the last few centuries to this enduring mystery. And it's a lively tale, if at times rather hard to pin down (like the Ninth. . .). But we slowly narrow the search, glimpsing the Ninth and its commanders in various moments and in places – still extant in and (perhaps) even after the reign of Hadrian; not destroyed in Britain at all but living to fight another day (perhaps) in the East. But just when we are set up for the big reveal. . .none comes. The fate of the Ninth remains a mystery. Not surprising, but it means that this book reads like the first chapter of a thesis, working systematically through previous treatments across the continent, but without the original interpretation that usually follows, and which rather justifies the labour. Nevertheless, this brief book will serve the general reader or undergraduate well as an introduction not just to the value of epig-

[5] *The Fate of the Ninth. The Curious Disappearance of One of Rome's Legions*. By Duncan G. Campbell. Glasgow, Bocca della Verità Publishing, 2018. Pp. xii + 155. 11 illustrations. Paperback £11.99, ISBN: 978-1-791-76833-1.

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raphy and prosopography, but also to the weight of learning that underpins all modern work, and the need nevertheless to dig through it to pinpoint those un-evidenced romantic conjectures that have unduly influenced everything that followed.

Two major new studies of Nero are up next: John Drinkwater's reassessment of Nero's rule,[6] and *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Nero*, edited by Shadi Bartsch, Kirk Freudenburg, and Cedric Littlewood.[7] Where the latter three are well known for their studies of Nero, this represents something of a departure for Drinkwater, whose earlier publications have focused on the later Roman West. In this monograph, ten years in the making, Drinkwater sets up a distinctive stall in the crowded scholarly Neronian agora (which is pithily sketched, from Cardano to Kimmerle; 10–12). His wares? A Nero steered and buffeted by those around him, a thesis openly inspired by the crowded courts of late antiquity (xiii). Drinkwater gives us a rational and pacifistic Nero, a populist but nevertheless almost always on good terms with the Senate, guilty of no action outside the law, whose major fault was a growing disinterest in government from AD 58 to 68, distracted as he was by the substantial training and effort needed to hone his genuine skills in Hellenic art and sport, the psychological drive to prove those skills on the highest stage, and the heartfelt desire to promote them in Rome. The 'Team' (e.g. 59) calling the shots around him – a model apparently established by Agrippina's 'experiment in regency' (55) – is a rostra of familiar faces that coalesce into a parade of successive alliances: 'the ever-changing supporting cast of the Neronian imperial soap opera – Agrippina, Pallas, Seneca, Burrus, Acte, Poppaea, Tigillinus and the rest' (162), the rest being Faenius Rufus, Statilia Messalina, Nymphidius Rufus, and Sporus, and then the larger 'special interest groups' of intimates, military prefects, *liberti*, *amici*, *consilium*, senatorial commissioners, and financiers. This is not, as its author stresses, a conventional biography, but more 'a study of how the Roman Empire was run' (1). But, despite a not entirely chronological structure, we still cover all the usual hot topics – art and arson; Christians and crisis; murders and madness; palace and performances; women and war.

First, and arguably most importantly, this is a very enjoyable book. Its 400-odd pages race by as it paints its expansive vision of the mid-first century. Drinkwater offers a lucid, readable, and believable portrait of Nero and his (?) government. But believable is the operative word here, and Drinkwater's study raises interesting questions of method. Drinkwater is a self-proclaimed positivist: 'My approach is not based on any theorising but is a consciously old-fashioned, cautiously positivist, empirical and evidence-based enquiry' (3). Fair enough. But he goes on, 'we have to accept that Ancient History is disciplined novel writing: as long as we do not go beyond the evidence and reasonable plausibility, we must dare a high degree of speculation'. Now, the ancient sources remain the starting point for most ancient historians. And weighing them up against each other, and whatever numismatic, epigraphic, papyrological,

[6] *Nero. Emperor and Court*. By John F. Drinkwater. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xviii + 449. 11 b/w illustrations, 5 maps, 4 tables. Hardback £32.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-47264-7.

[7] *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Nero*. Edited by Shadi Bartsch, Kirk Freudenburg, and Cedric Littlewood. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xx + 402. 40 b/w illustrations, 2 maps. Hardback £78.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-05220-8; paperback £24.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-66923-9.

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archaeological, and artistic material we have access to, is the bread and butter of history writing. Some of Drinkwater's conclusions therefore rest on firm ground. But his novelist persona also means that, uncomfortably often, his acceptance or dismissal of an ancient author's anecdote is based on its 'plausibility' – to use Drinkwater's chosen term above and throughout. But by plausibility what is usually meant is the degree to which it conforms to the image of Nero that Drinkwater is advocating. The dangers should be obvious. The natural response to any such imperial rehabilitation is to say, 'Ah, but what about X?' Accordingly, much of the book ('Part II: Assessment', 169–368) comprises a walk-through of rumours and reports that tell against Drinkwater's interpretation of Nero, and his explanation of why they in fact do not. But if the basis of the dismissal of any material that points towards a different Nero is that it cannot be relied upon because it does not fit with our Nero, then the question of whether the thesis is being made to fit the evidence, or the reverse, raises its head. I hope that Drinkwater's Nero will find a wide audience: he is a compelling, often sympathetic figure, presented in page-turning prose. But the possible Nero of the novelist is not quite the same thing as the persuasive Nero of the historian.

The collection of Bartsch *et al.* has much in common with Drinkwater's book. Also long in the making, it similarly derives from an interest not in the man himself but in 'the workings of the Roman world under Nero' (1). Like Drinkwater, the contributors are interested in the cultural world of the Neronian period, though its format means that it can dedicate more time to each of that era's major authors. It is equally suspicious of 'the monsters that Nero was made into', and so dedicates space to their origins not just in antiquity (as Drinkwater) but in later reception too. There are many individual points of agreement too. So, for example, Josiah Osgood's treatment of the Senate (34–47) finds, like Drinkwater, a much better relationship between that body and its emperor than posterity has usually envisaged. And Carlos Noreña's discussion of the complexities of Imperial government in the mid-first century (48–62), which argues that 'the overall structure of imperial government was largely insulated from the particular impulses of this or that emperor' (49), reinforces much of Drinkwater's basic thesis (not a coincidence, since it is influenced by an earlier publication of his).[8]

However, the major difference between the two works is that the *Cambridge Companion* makes no attempt to produce a single picture of Nero. Now that is in part, of course, dictated by multiple authorship (just the idea of trying to marshal twenty contributors towards a single conclusion would make any editor think twice, and anyway rather defeat the purpose of the exercise). But it is also an intellectual decision here, taken because 'it would risk sending the wrong message, since it would make the Nero so attained (the one offered as historically plausible by consensus) seem. . .somehow more real and historically significant than the monsters into which he was made' (3). While Bartsch *et al.* do treat history, their approach is one determined, entirely legitimately, by their literary backgrounds, and is at heart fundamentally different from that of Drinkwater. This is perhaps most telling in their different approaches to Nero's desire to appear on stage. For Drinkwater, this is best read

[8] John Drinkwater, 'Nero Caesar and the Half-Baked Principate', in A. Gibson (ed.), *The Julio-Claudian Succession. Reality and Perception of the 'Augustan Model'* (Leiden, 2013), 155–73, a prolegomenon for the now-published monograph.

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straightforwardly: Nero acted because he wanted to, and because he was good at it. He allows that the emperor wanted to be a different kind of *princeps*, but not that he wanted a different kind of Principate (418). A large percentage of the essays in the *Cambridge Companion*, on the other hand, take their lead from 'the performative turn' and see the same activities as

self-work, and as the assertion of a certain kind of political identity. . .as a means of centring and defining himself, in acts of posing (so as to become) a self of a certain kind. . .as a means of political self-realization and getting things done. (3)

So, for example, where Drinkwater sees Nero's famous fleshy-faced coins as evidence of his exceptional fitness and strength – not anyone can drive a ten-horse chariot, after all – and their possible side-effects: hypertrophy of his upper body muscles or iodine deficiency-inspired goitre (302–7), Carrie Vout (179–94) sees instead the emperor's desire to 'seem so much larger than life. . .his penchant for the colossal. . .Nero's love of "going large"' – the same aesthetic drive behind much of the poetry of the age (183–6). As with the biographies above, then, these two works are usefully read together as much for questions of method as for their content.

Lastly, into the late antique scholarly territory vacated by John Drinkwater comes a young pretender, Adrastos Omissi, with his first monograph, *Emperors and Usurpers in Late Antiquity*.[9] Omissi's is a study of 'the language of Roman usurpation; a deep and far-reaching doublethink that admitted no shades of grey into its world of black and white' (200). His bold goal is to demonstrate the pervasive influence of panegyric on our understanding of the political history of the fourth century (specifically, from 289 to 389), and to use a more critical reading of the former to correct the latter. It proves a successful enterprise. The book begins with two preparatory chapters. The first provides the backstory for the period considered here. Omissi gives a pithy and sensible survey of the history of imperial succession for the first three centuries AD, picking out key moments for what would become the norm of imperial politics in the fourth century – the experimental power-sharing of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius, for example (8–9), or the ugly spree of usurpations of the mid-third century (9–12). Omissi then draws out how the imperial succession gradually became more and more unstable: the gradual increase in candidates, symbolized by the Years of the Four, Five, and Six Emperors; the decline of the Senate, the decreasing importance of Rome, and the increasingly centralized nature of imperial government; the difficulty of controlling imperial power; and the very nature of imperial power itself (meritocratic, the lack of clear criteria for accession, and the move towards shared rule) (12–21). He then considers how to distinguish a usurper. The Romans did it on moral rather than constitutional grounds, so Omissi has to suggest other criteria: being declared emperor while another was ruling, and without the latter's consent, and taking imperial power after the murder of an emperor in which they had been demonstrably involved (21–34). Most of this will be familiar to experts, but it will be very useful for undergraduates and readers from other fields. The second introductory chapter justifies the book's

[9] *Emperors and Usurpers in the Later Roman Empire. Civil War, Panegyric, and the Construction of Legitimacy*. Oxford Studies in Byzantium. By Adrastos Omissi. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xix + 348. 6 b/w figures. Hardback £80, ISBN: 978-0-19-882482-4.

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conceit: not only that we can use surviving panegyrics to understand and produce a narrative of political history of the fourth century, but also that panegyric had a lasting influence on most ancient historiography for the period. Panegyrics display an almost obsessive interest in usurpation, a topic most other media avoid like the plague; it was the poorly healed scab that both orators and audiences could not help but pick (45). They also present us with 'a series of historical snapshots, the ideas and ideology of a given moment which have not been made to conform to a later reality' (48–9). More than that, what they show us is not just one orator's take on his contemporary moment, but their reflection of the court ideology in which they were immersed, and to which they needed to respond. And panegyrics of course also served to further disperse that carefully curated imperial image – to the members of the court (and their future audiences, staff, and troops), to their authors' students, and to posterity, primarily via historiography (about their role as source material for which panegyricists were, as Omissi demonstrates, explicitly aware).

The next chapters provide the aforementioned politics through panegyric. Chapter 3 is a rather strange three-page *amuse-bouche* justifying the focus of what follows ('an account of the political history of the late Empire as a series of civil wars has never been written'; 72), but then we are into the meat of the meal. We begin with the first tetrarchy. Chapter 4 uses *Pan. Lat.* 10, 9, and 8 to consider the changing programme of the diarchs and tetrarchs against the British Empire of Carausius and Allectus. The martial confidence of the first, for example, is replaced in the second by a studied focus on other imperial qualities after Maximian's defeat in 289 or 290, and an intensified urging of the diarchy's unity in the face of Carausius' attempt to worm his way in. The third, on the other hand, addressing the successful Constantius in 297, delights in the destruction of Allectus and uses it as a vindication of the entire tetrarchic project. Chapter 5 turns to the rise of the usurper Constantine, 'a story ordinarily told as a series of battles, but. . .here played out in a series of audience chambers' (103). Through *Pan. Lat.* 7, 6, 5, 12, and 4, Omissi traces Constantine's changing programme of legitimation – in particular, his changing relationship with his retirement-shy father-in-law, Maximian, his marginalized brother-in-law Maxentius, and his supplanted brother-in-law Licinius – as he successfully brought an end not only to the tetrarchic experiment but to its memory, and created instead the basis for a dynastic foundation myth that would endure for the next half-century. Chapter 6 considers, through Libanius' *Or.* 59, Themistius' *Or.* 1–4, and Julian's *Or.* 1, how the imperial courts dealt with the fracturing relationships among Constantine's three sons after his death, and then how the last man standing, Constantius, handled the (apparent) usurpations of Magnentius and Vetranio. Chapter 7 turns to another famous usurping emperor, Julian, and, through Julian's *Epistula ad Athienses*, Mamertinus' *Pan. Lat.* 3, and Libanius' *Or.* 13, sketches how Julian and his court managed the tightrope walk of his relationships with his Constantinian heritage and his cousin Constantius, against whom he had usurped. Chapter 8 focuses on the accessions, after Julian's untimely death, of Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens in short order, the usurpation of Procopius, and the accession of Valentinian II (also, for Omissi, a usurpation; 250–3). In Themistius' *Or.* 5 and 7, and Symmachus' *Or.* 1, we see not just imperial management of its own recent history, but orators' attempts to shape imperial behaviour (as Themistius fights for Constantinople's life after its role in Procopius' usurpation). Finally, Chapter 9 turns

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to Theodosius' own usurpation, and his rhetorical appropriation of the respective usurpations of Magnus Maximus and Eugenius to shore up his position, all seen through Ausonius' *gratiarum actio*, Themistius' *Or.* 14, 15, and 18, and Pacatus' *Pan. Lat.* 2. The concluding chapter looks at the way in which the imperial office evolved in the fifth century, and why that marks the end for this book. A brief epilogue summarizes the whole: a century-long picture of how an apparently mono-dimensional and rather dull oratorical genre was in fact the key mechanism by which successive emperors argued for their own legitimacy, and thereby successfully fought for their own place in, and version of, history.

This is an excellent first book. Omissi is deeply immersed in the source material and a sure guide to the scholarly landscape. And though this is a book built on the back of the boom in work on panegyric over the last twenty years, it more than justifies its place among those works. First, where many of the latter studies considered individual panegyrics, the panegyrics of a single author, or a particular collection in one language (most often the *Panegyrici Latini*), Omissi's study is distinctive for its consideration of the panegyrics of the fourth century, in both Greek and Latin, and as a whole. Second, his careful and sensible ability to read between the lines means that at a number of points he offers important correctives to traditional readings (as in the insight that Nazarius' discussion of Constantine's attempts to secure a treaty with Maxentius really has in mind the former's later relationship with Licinius; 149–51) that affect our picture of fourth-century history (for example, that Vetranio never betrayed Constantius; 181–90). And third, he demonstrates for the few panegyrics that have survived such an influence on late antique historiography (including Aurelius Victor, Ammianus, Orosius, and Zosimus, among others) that he (and we) can legitimately ask 'Had time not destroyed so much panegyric and so much history, how many more such connections might begin to emerge?' (208). A thesis rooted in a bilingual corpus of evidence that influences our picture of an entire century and problematizes our relationship with multiple ancient genres of writing – this is great history, and a fitting note on which to close.

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Art and Archaeology

Attributes are fundamental to the study of classical archaeology, just as they are to the discipline of art history at large. When it comes to identifying figures on an Attic vase – or for that matter the subject of a medieval fresco, Renaissance canvas, or Neoclassical statue – scholars regularly rely on the associative value of objects. Consider the ease with which we recognize 'Heracles' on the grounds of a club or lionskin; observe, too, how often a spiked wheel is understood to signal 'St Catherine', or a golden key to betoken 'St Peter'. In all these scenarios, viewers have learned to 'read' certain objects in certain culturally conditioned sorts of ways. Despite their non-verbal medium, attributes come to function almost like textual labels: inserted within the field of visual representation, they inscribe an identity, narrative backdrop, or semantic

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