might have been added to the excellent thematic index—is a highly competent and perceptive study, that deserves to take its place alongside Fuhrer's work as essential reading for all students of Augustine's philosophy and his reception of Cicero.

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## SYMMACHUS: *LETTERS* III

A. PELLIZZARI: *Commento storico al libro III dell'epistolario di Q. Aurelio Simmaco.* Introduzione, commento storico, testo, traduzione, indici. (Biblioteca di Studi Antichi 81.) Pp. 348. Pisa and Rome: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1998. Paper. ISBN: 88-8147-115-9.

It has long been noted that the letters and speeches of Symmachus provide a fascinating window onto the *mentalités* of the late Roman senatorial aristocracy, a factor expertly elucidated by John Matthews in his *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, AD 364–425* (Oxford, 1975). Nevertheless, Symmachus remains a formidable author, particularly for students intimidated by the austerity of Otto Seeck's edition (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi* 6.1 [Berlin, 1883]). The situation is improving, however. His *Relationes* (his official correspondence from his term as *praefectus urbi* at Rome in 384–5) were translated into English long ago (R. H. Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor* [Oxford, 1973]), and I am reliably informed that an English translation of his entire output is in hand. J. P. Callu's Budé edition with French translation and commentary now encompasses Books 1–10 of his letters. Meanwhile the Italian series, in which P.'s volume appears, includes studies of Books 2–6 and 9. Such endeavours update Seeck both in terms of providing a revised text, and in locating his writings in a late antique social context that has itself been the subject of reconsideration in recent decades.

P.'s study of Book 3 does not pretend to be a new edition: his text, with only minor emendations noted ad loc., is that of Callu's Budé (*Symmaque, Lettres II [livres III–V]* [Paris, 1982]). Indeed, the Latin text and Italian translation (which regrettably are not printed on facing pages) take up only a fraction of the volume (pp. 247–303). P.'s explicit aim is to provide a historical analysis of the letters, which he accomplishes both in the massive commentary itself (pp. 63–244) and in a lengthy introduction (pp. 21–57). There are also useful indices of names and topics, modern authors, and ancient literary, legal, and epigraphic texts, as well as a very helpful table (pp. 58–60) that lists each letter's recipient, purpose, and date (for which P. gives not only his own conjectures, but also those of Seeck and Callu).

The commentary itself is extremely comprehensive, and not simply in terms of its citation of ancient sources and modern scholarship (this latter impressively up-to-date and international). Each group of letters to a particular recipient opens with a summary of that individual's career and his dealings with Symmachus. Such entries complement and update the information about these figures presented in, for example, the first volume of the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1971). The discussions of specific letters not only explore pertinent historical points about the setting and significance of each text, but also examine the literary and historical allusions they contain. It is in the commentaries to individual

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letters that P. offers justification when his dating of them diverges from those of other scholars, although he notes rightly that the details contained in many of the epistles is too vague to allow them to be dated precisely (e.g. pp. 109, 183–4, 242). P. also discusses Symmachus' epistolographical techniques, a topic especially pertinent to Letters 11–12, 22, 44, 57, and 79, in which Symmachus addresses his correspondents specifically on questions of style. Verbal and thematic parallels elsewhere in Symmachus' writings are noted throughout the commentary.

These commentaries on individual letters will prove useful to all scholars of Symmachus. The value of the volume is much greater, however, owing to P.'s perceptive general introduction. He stresses the coherence of the material contained in Book 3: the letters date from the 370s to the 390s, and the recipients are mainly persons associated in some capacity with the imperial court. P. demonstrates that the letters reveal Symmachus to be a canny observer of contemporary affairs of state. Discussions of Symmachus' political activities in the age of Theodosius I have been dominated by two episodes: his debate with Bishop Ambrose of Milan over the altar of Victory in 384 and his ill-advised attachment to the usurper Magnus Maximus in 387–8. P.'s thorough analysis of Book 3 shows, however, that these affairs need to be seen in the wider context of Symmachus' longer-term contacts with influential personages at court. Throughout the period, Symmachus corresponded not only with members of Western élites, but also, and more importantly, with prominent figures at the Eastern court (such as the generals Promotus, Timasius, and Ricomer, and the *magister officiorum* Rufinus). P. argues convincingly that the letters collected in Book 3 reflect 'il tentativo dell'autore di creare le condizioni opportune per una possibile co-gestione del potere da parte del senato' (p. 53). Thus P. has produced a volume that is not only indispensable to scholars of Symmachus, but which will repay careful study by anyone interested in the political history of the late empire, and particularly the rôle of the Roman aristocracy within it.

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## LATINIUS DREPANIUS PACATUS—THE FULL STORY

A.-M. Turcan-Verkerk: *Un poète latin chrétien redécouvert: Latinius Pacatus Drepanius, panégyriste de Théodose*. (Collection Latomus 276.) Pp. 194, pls. Brussels: Éditions Latomus, 2003. Paper, €26. ISBN: 2-87031-217-2.

This remarkable piece of scholarly detective work follows an unusual variety of lines of enquiry, delving into poetry and oratory, prosopography and history, palaeography and codicology, and liturgiology and theology to present a fascinatingly new picture of the man best known to scholars as the panegyrist of Theodosius and the friend of Ausonius. The investigation centres on a short poem in MS Par. lat. 7558, whose multiple contents—it is a notable testimony to the popularity of classicizing verse, especially in the epic metre, among Christians in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages—include some works seldom printed and studied. For one of these, entitled *De cereo paschali* (about the wax taper in the Easter Liturgy), its early editor Fabricius invented an author Drepanius Florus, crudely combining the Drepanius in

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