to Constantine's Christianity. Eusebius is at once the chief informer and the chief deceiver. However, Van Dam is anxious to demonstrate Constantine's own control of his image, and to prove in the process how prone he was to conversions, undergoing or contriving several. The emperor was liberated, therefore, from the clerical agenda, and provided his successors, in a veritable swirl of developing mythology, with their own models of how to keep expectations at bay.

Michael Maas brings us suitably to Justinian, and mines Procopius above all for evidence of a changing ethnography of otherness and similarity. As in the case of Rebecca Lyman's Justin, the question was how (like the Tzani of the Taurus foothills) one could elevate oneself to the level of imperial culture without ceasing to be what one was—an issue made additionally complex when any such move involved an acceptance of Christianity on Justinian's terms. Solutions revolved around a distinction between *diaita* and *ēthos*. While neither species of 'custom' was automatically compatible with the religious expectations of the empire, the shade of difference between them (one more social, perhaps, the other more personal) might allow alliance without imposing either absorption or denial of self.

Finally, we have Julia Smith's expedition into the world of Einhard. At the heart of her inquiry lies competition between the courtly and the clerical: both wish to assist in and define the régime's drive to 'emend' what is already a Christian society; and both do so by prompting and orchestrating veneration for the relics of martyrs. Two dialogues are thus exposed: one among the élite themselves, the other between the élite and the broader population. Just as startling as the rivalry among the powerful is the variety among the populace. While their betters jostle for the control of policy, the people—local peasants, eager pilgrims, chance passers-by—invest the objects of devotion with a range of enthusiasms somewhat distant from the preoccupations of Aachen.

What will be drawn chiefly from this exciting collection? Probably, an awareness that Arthur Darby Nock is definitively dethroned. It is no longer acceptable to interpret conversion as a predominantly psychological and individual event. The circumstances of conversion varied, models (especially written models) competed, expectations were often narrow, and commitment was neither immediate nor total. What made that the case was the social context within which conversions were played out; a context not only divided among quarrelling parties but not even always particularly religious. Total abandonment of one's past is rarely convenient and often unstable; yet a culture can change as its inhabitants adapt to fashion and advantage.

Catholic University of America PHILIP ROUSSEAU
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni161

SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

J. W. Drijvers, J. W. Watt (edd.): *Portraits of Spiritual Authority. Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium and the Christian Orient*. (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 137.) Pp. xiii + 227. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 1999. Cased, US$75. ISBN: 90-04-11459-9.

This volume presents revised versions of ten papers delivered at a workshop in Cardiff in May 1998: Elizabeth A. Clark, 'Rewriting Early Christian History:

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 1 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni162 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Augustine's Representation of Monica' (pp. 3–23); Alastair H. B. Logan, 'Magi and Visionaries in Gnosticism' (pp. 27–44); Christine Trevett, 'Spritual Authority and the "Heretical" Woman: Firmilian's Word to the Church in Carthage' (pp. 45–62); Rowan Williams, 'Troubled Breasts: The Holy Body in Hagiography' (pp. 63–78); Jan Willem Drijvers, 'Promoting Jerusalem: Cyril and the True Cross' (pp. 79–95); Stephen Mitchell, 'The Life and *Lives* of Gregory Thaumaturgus' (pp. 99–138); Han J. W. Drijvers, 'Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa: Spiritual Authority and Secular Power' (pp. 139–54); John W. Watt, 'A Portrait of John Bar Aphtonia, Founder of the Monastery of Qenneshre' (pp. 155–70); Gerrit Reinink, 'Babai the Great's Life of George and the Propagation of Doctrine in the Late Sasanian Empire' (pp. 171–95); and Peter Hatlie, 'Spiritual Authority and Monasticism in Constantinople during the Dark Ages (650–800)' (pp. 195–222). The essays are concerned with the nature of authority exercised by members of the late antique religious hierarchy, or individuals closely connected to them, as depicted in literary texts. As the editors remark in their preface (pp. ix–xiii), historians these days are increasingly sensitive not only to different types of authority, but also to how that authority is represented or manipulated by the authors of texts. As such, then, the volume presents a useful complement to the text-sensitive reconsideration of his views on the late antique holy man that Peter Brown provided in his *Authority and the Sacred* (Cambridge, 1995), Chapter 3.

Clark's opening chapter begins with a heavily theoretical assault on the failure of modern historians (in general—not just those writing about Christian antiquity) to incorporate methodologies from contemporary literary theory when approaching their texts. Curmudgeonly readers (whose existence must be presupposed by Clark's polemic) may view this censure with distaste, but Clark goes on to show the rich results that may be reaped by adopting such methodological tactics. In her assessment of Augustine's depiction of his mother in the *Confessions* and Cassiciacum dialogues, Clark points out the hopelessness of trying to recover a 'realistic', 'factual', or 'transparent' portrait of Monica from these texts. More fruitful, Clark argues, is analysing the function that Monica fulfils in each text as a spiritual cipher, representing potential routes to Divine Truth for the uneducated. Of the other essays in the volume, only Logan's study of Gnosticism is so explicit in its use of theoretical approaches. He deploys methodologies derived from the sociological study of religion to assess the emergence of authority figures in Gnostic groups. He argues that no single sociological characterization of a cult fits the case of Gnosticism perfectly, but the different religious strategies identified by sociologists nevertheless provide useful tools for analysis.

The remaining essays stress the need for a close reading of texts in their immediate cultural contexts. Thus Trevett analyses the letter of Firmilian, bishop of Cappadocian Caesarea, to Cyprian of Carthage about the behaviour of an ecstatic woman who performed baptism and celebrated the eucharist. For Trevett, the key issue is not whether the woman really existed, but how Firmilian's portrait of her was calibrated to persuade Cyprian of the dangers posed to the Church by Cataphrygian New Prophecy. Williams's paper argues for a subtle approach to the holiness of saints as depicted in hagiography that is sensitive to sacramental theology and Christology. He admits that this approach to the topic is complex, but insists that it 'should warn us against the more prevalent clichés about "positive" and "negative" valuations of the body in early Christianity' (p. 76). Jan Willem Drijvers considers the writings and career of bishop Cyril of Jerusalem in the context of contemporary imperial and ecclesiastical politics. Cyril's promotion of veneration of the True Cross buttressed his efforts 'to increase the glory of [the see of] Jerusalem' (p. 85) at a time of intense rivalry between Jerusalem

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni162 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and Caesarea. His account seems to me, however, to prioritize the worldly at the expense of the spiritual and miraculous: perhaps a more subtle reading is possible.

The papers in the second half of the volume examine how the spiritual authority of individuals was represented in texts. Mitchell's paper (one of the strongest in the volume) epitomizes the difficulties that literary texts present. He focuses on how the life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, a third-century bishop of Neocaesarea in Pontus, was recast in a series of works (including *Lives* in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Armenian, and accounts incorporated in, for example, Rufinus' *Ecclesiastical History* and Basil of Caesarea's *De Sancto Spiritu*) written from the late-fourth century onwards. He contrasts these later accounts with the earlier narrative of Eusebius of Caesarea and Gregory's own surviving writings, and argues that these later accounts were constructed for a specific audience. Thus Gregory of Nyssa's panegyrical *Life* certainly addressed its subject's reputation as a wonder-worker, but it also emphasized biblical parallels to the bishop's life and made him a proponent of Trinitarian orthodoxy that suited Gregory of Nyssa's theological agenda amongst the episcopate of Asia Minor *c.* 380. Other accounts (such as the Latin *Life*, which Mitchell tentatively ascribes to Rufinus, pp. 133–5), however, were aimed at a more popular audience and so laid particular stress on Gregory's performance of miracles. Such questions loom large also in the papers by Han J. W. Drijvers, Watt, and Reinink, all of which are concerned with the presentation of authority figures in Syriac texts. All three stress the importance of locating texts in their specific cultural milieux if their contents are not to be misinterpreted. The final essay, by Hatlie, concerns the fate of the 'holy man' in early medieval Byzantium. Such figures were much less prominent in seventh and eighth century Byzantium than in late antiquity. Hatlie argues that we should not succumb to the temptation to associate this purely with the reverberations of the Iconoclast controversy; instead he posits a series of changes—social, economic, and institutional—that transformed the place of monasticism and 'the holy' in Byzantine society.

National University of Ireland, Maynooth MARK HUMPHRIES
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni162

SEXUAL ETHICS

K. L. Gaca: *The Making of Fornication. Eros, Ethics and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity*. (Hellenistic Culture and Society 40.) Pp. xviii + 359. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003. Cased, US$60, £39.95. ISBN: 0-520-23599-1.

Even if one could quarrel with its thesis that the cult of sexual abstinence was unknown to the classical world before the advent of Christianity, one could not fail to learn a great deal from this clever, ambitious and impressive book. Most readers will know that Plato depicted appetite as a ravening conglomerate of hunger, thirst, and sexual desire in his *Republic*; even those who have read his entire corpus may not recall his account in the *Timaeus* of the diseases that afflict the dormant womb, or his pronouncement in the *Laws* that elderly guardians may engage in lawful acts of sexual congress, though they expect no issue from them. Again, it is well known that the early Stoics acknowledged no natural ban on incest, but, as G. points out, it has

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 1 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni162 Published online by Cambridge University Press