A NEW APPROACH TO LATE ANTIQUITY

P. GARNSEY, C. HUMFRESS: *The Evolution of the Late Antique World*. Pp. xv + 252, maps. Cambridge: Orchard Academic, 2001. Paper, £14.99. ISBN: 1-90328-300-0.

It is a considerable achievement to construct a new approach to the late antique world, but this has been accomplished by Garnsey and Humfress in a volume which will serve as a valuable complement to Averil Cameron's *Later Roman Empire* and Peter Brown's *World of Late Antiquity*, among others. One great merit of G. & H.'s approach is that the various developments of late antiquity are placed in the context of a realistic assessment of the earlier Roman empire: too often late antiquity is identified as a period of decline in comparison with a rose-tinged view of previous conditions, whether in the context of administration, law, or military matters. G. & H. also range beyond traditional themes and their treatment is distinctive. Emperor and government are naturally covered, but these are illumined by an investigation of late Roman judicial practice and sensitive analysis of the conflicting hierarchies of this complex world; the chapter on law, which argues strongly for the creative vitality of late Roman legal work, is one of the highlights. Christianity is another inevitable theme, and here G. & H. usefully argue for the reality of religious difference and serious debate against acceptance of Peter Brown's enticing model of a community of shared *paideia* (Chapter 7). They also probe the limits to the impact of Christian morality upon social behaviour; some key Patristic texts which might imply radical views on major issues such as wealth, slavery, and toleration are intelligently placed in their full rhetorical context. The Church emerges as a much more conservative body than might be expected, but at least this perception is based on a careful reading of the evidence, while the marginal location of genuine radicalism can be better appreciated. The individuality of G. & H.'s approach is signalled by the texts chosen for citation: there is as much *Divine Institutes* and *City of God* as the more standard Ammianus and *Theodosian Code*.

This is not, however, and could not be within such a volume, a complete survey of the development of late antiquity. On economic issues, agriculture as well as trade, readers are referred to chapters in *CAH* 13; newcomers to the period might have benefited from a brief overview of evidence for recent optimistic assessments of agricultural prosperity, although G. & H.'s assessment of the status of *coloni* stands by itself (pp. 85–8). More problematic is the decision to avoid military matters, since the evolution of the army is seen as a crucial factor (p. 49), relevant to the developing style of emperors and the diminished rôle of senators; it is an area where, in contrast to other sectors of society, emperors failed to control manpower (pp. 48–9), and this invites explanation. G. & H. in fact adopt a traditional view of the late Roman army, with aliens outnumbering citizens (pp. 89–90; no reference to the recent argument to the contrary in Nicasie, *Twilight of Empire*), and Adrianople as the turning point in the controlled assimilation of barbarians (p. 101; Nicasie is again relevant, as well as Cameron and Long's *Barbarians and Politics*); the unwary might infer that 'federate' armies were the norm in the later fourth and fifth centuries (p. 89). The historiographical final chapter, on Gibbon's conception of imperial decline, is at odds with the social and religious focus of the rest of the volume, and serves as a reminder that the chronological limits of the volume, roughly Diocletian to the *Theodosian Code*, allow G. & H. to avoid commiting themselves to an analysis of reasons for imperial collapse in the west.

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There are blemishes. The images are unclear, a line or more has dropped off the bottom of p. 29, and my copy lacked at least one page of index. Some references are imprecise, sometimes to a whole article or text, which will make it difficult for enthusiasts to pursue lines of enquiry (e.g. p. 163 n. 105). The *Life* of Theodore of Sykeon is introduced in the context of fourth-century religious violence as a counter-example of a holy man acting as a calming influence (p. 149); no chapter reference is provided, so that readers may not realize that the incident is probably about property boundaries in a Galatian village. It is also two centuries later than the material from Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Libanius, which it is being set against, and doubts might be raised about its comparability.

It would be wrong to end on a negative note. The topics which G. & H. have chosen to cover are presented in a clear and stimulating manner, and this should be a standard element on late Roman reading lists for a good time to come.

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ROME IN THE FOURTH CENTURY A.D.

J. CURRAN: *Pagan City and Christian Capital. Rome in the Fourth Century*. Pp. xx + 389, ills. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. Cased, £48. ISBN: 0-19-815278-7.

John Curran's book exhibits a degree of sheer sloppiness that seems surprising in an Oxford Classical Monograph. At the merely technical level, Mommsen's standard edition of the *Chronica Minora* 1 (1894) is habitually cited by the abbreviation '*MGH* I' (e.g. pp. 43–9 nn. 1, 4, 10, 30) or '*MGH* i' (e.g. pp. 125–32 nn. 53, 82, 86, 88, 98)—as if it were not the ninth volume in one of the many separately numbered sub-series that comprise the Monumenta Germaniae Historica (in this case, the *Auctores Antiquissimi*). Misunderstandings of simple Latin abound: the dating formula *his imper*(*atoribus*) = 'in their reign' is rendered 'by these emperors' (p. 44); the adverb *prius* in Damasus' epigram on Peter and Paul (*Epigrammata* 20 Ferrua) is mis-translated as 'first' instead of 'formerly'; the phrase *eundem nominatum praetorem diem functum esse* is taken to refer to 'an incumbent praetor' in an imperial constitution which discusses whether daughters as well as sons are liable for performing the *munera* of a man nominated praetor who dies before assuming office (p. 231, on *CTh* 6.4.17). Simple factual errors are equally frequent: a single table confuses both Constans with Constantius and Constantine with his son Constantinus (p. 226); Paul of Thebes, who was invented by Jerome as a predecessor of Antony, is turned into 'Saint Anthony's most famous disciple Paul' (p. 275); and the exile of Liberius is lengthened from its attested two years to three (pp. 131–5, cf. *CSEL* 35.2.3–8; on the actual dates, see 'The Capitulation of Liberius and Hilary of Poitiers', *Phoenix* 46 [1992], 256–65). Bad judgement is also on frequent display. C. accepts too much outright fiction from the *Historia Augusta*; and, although he claims with some justice to apply 'new perspectives' that have revealed a more complex fourth century than was traditionally assumed (pp. vi–viii), he often reverts to old-fashioned modes of interpretation as soon as he extends his purview beyond the walls of Rome: thus he asserts that Constantius was 'a fervent Arian' without explaining what he means by this slippery term (p. 130). He also commits a howler for which even an undergraduate would justly be pilloried. C. states that in 238 the emperors Maximus and Balbinus 'are reported by the usually reliable Dio to have

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