is unjustified speculation. P.'s collection is more closely tied to the Parthian war of 161–6 than S. realizes.

Despite these criticisms, this welcome, erudite contribution, invaluable to cultural historians of the second century and students of Greek literature, establishes S. as a talented scholar of Greek historiography and a refreshing new voice in Second Sophistic studies.

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DIO

C. L. MURISON: *Rebellion and Reconstruction. Galba to Domitian. An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's* Roman History *Books 64–67 (A.D. 68–96)*. Pp. xxi + 291, maps. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999. Cased, £42. ISBN: 0-7885-0547-5.

The appearance of an historical commentary on a portion of *The Roman History* of Cassius Dio is a very welcome event, and an important one for Roman historians—particularly in this day and age, when more people need access to the classical sources whilst fewer can grapple unaided with the complexities of a difficult and controversial Greek text. This is the ninth volume in a series which will make Dio's extensive history more widely available.

The books of Dio chosen for the present commentary concern the civil war which precipitated and followed the death of Nero in A.D. 68 and the ensuing rise and fall of the Flavian dynasty (A.D. 69–96). This is by any standards an episode in Roman history that is difficult to interpret, and for which it is difficult, too, even to establish the 'facts'; these problems are not helped by the complexities of the source-tradition, around which in recent years has grown a considerable bibliography. Murison's 'credentials' for such a task as this need no stressing, as he has already published widely and significantly on many of the controversies which arise in the interpretation of the events of A.D. 68–9.

M.'s introduction (pp. 1–27) covers the topics that are standard, and includes particularly helpful and succinct 'essays' on Dio's life, on his sources, and on the effects of epitomization. His attitudes, too, to emperors are discussed, demonstrating that, whilst Dio echoes the 'moral outrage' over Otho's succession (a theme familiar to the reader of Tacitus' *Historiae*), he is at the same time much less critical of Vitellius than are either Tacitus or Suetonius: M. persuasively attributes this (p. 24) to the lack of an obvious 'double' for Vitellius in the events of the 190s. Indeed, this section of the introduction, which holds up for comparison the imperial figures of 69–96 with those of Dio's own lifetime, is especially valuable and penetrating.

Reviewing the commentary itself is a less than simple task, because by its nature it necessarily lacks obviously 'followable' themes and arguments. Its layout is clear and straightforward, and the reader/user is guided through it by short subsidiary introductions to new themes in the narrative. Substantial efforts are made to clarify details of campaigns and, thereby, to demonstrate areas of Dio's (or his Epitomators') confusions; the user of the commentary is frequently and helpfully referred to the larger treatments of these matters by Wellesley and Chilver. M.'s notes are throughout clear and succinct, with thorough discussion and relevant bibliographical citation: comments are always illuminating and to-the-point, without falling for the temptation,

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sometimes seen in such enterprises, of exceeding the brief of the passage in question. Throughout the commentary on Books 64 and 65, the reader is kept closely aware of the parallel treatments of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Plutarch.

The Flavian emperors have all benefited in recent years from modern biographical treatments; thus, the extension of the commentary to include Books 66 and 67 performs an especially valuable service in contributing to a widening of accessibility to the 'post-Julio-Claudian' period and its wealth of controversies. Rightly or wrongly, family parallels with the Severans (a dynasty-founder with two variably appealing sons) abound. One wonders, however, with M., how far this may have led Dio to distortion; it is, for example, an interesting suggestion (p. 25) that Dio's Vespasian is the kind of emperor 'whom he would have wished Septimius to be'. Further, Dio's Domitian emerges as a mature embodiment of evil—the precursor of the odious and unredeemed Caracalla—whereas other sources allow for deterioration and some positive comment (pp. 203–6).

The commentary is well-indexed, and provided with helpful and attractively produced maps; the only problem is that, on Map 1 ('The Vitellian Invasion of Italy'), principal locations on the river Po have been misplaced. Other than that, M. is indeed to be congratulated on the production of a commentary that is informative, relevant, and scholarly, and one which ultimately has the great advantage of being thoroughly user-friendly. It is surely a 'must' for all those who work in and study the field of the early Roman Empire, a new tool of high quality and value.

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VITA CONSTANTINI

AVERIL CAMERON, S. G. HALL: *Eusebius,* Life of Constantine. *Introduction, Translation and Commentary.* Pp. xvii + 395, 1 map, 11 figs. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Paper, £19.99. ISBN: 0-19-814924-7.

The *Life of Constantine* has in the past been less fortunate than some other works of Eusebius in its editors and English translators. Heikel's unsatisfactory edition of 1902 has still not been replaced for the three appended speeches that formed an integral part of Eusebius' design; the full text of one of these (the speech delivered by Constantine in Nicomedia at Easter 325) has never yet been rendered into English; and the translation of the two speeches of Eusebius published in 1976 is not wholly reliable (in the opening paragraph of the speech of 336, for example, it mistook the jussive main verb θελγόντων for a participle and transformed the participles μετιόντες and ἀσπαζόμενοι into main verbs to produce '[they] pursue and embrace . . . in order to please' instead of 'let those who pursue . . . charm'). The four books of *Life* proper, however, were superbly edited by Friedhelm Winkelmann in 1976, and there is now a reliable translation in the Clarendon Ancient History Series. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall have rendered the *Life* into English expertly and accurately. The translation is preceded by a lengthy introduction (pp. 1–53) and followed by a substantial commentary (pp. 183–350), both of which set out the issues involved in interpeting an unusually problematical text for the most part with lucidity and fairness.

More than thirty years ago, the Clarendon Press commissioned me to edit and translate the *Life of Constantine* for the then new series of Oxford Early Christian Texts. After very little preliminary work, I decided that it would be labour wasted to

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