A. also leaves it to be taken on trust that the editors chose the right manuscripts in the first place, that they have reported them fully and accurately (denied by Gorman), and that nothing would be achieved by a more historical approach to the tradition than his, in which no manuscript is more than a symbol (Gorman cites Bischoff's views on the date and origin of the oldest manuscripts).

Readers will therefore expect most profit, I imagine, from A.'s internal reasons for holding that Augustine wrote one thing rather than another. Very little here, though, is both new and convincing. At 1.2(2) (p. 44) his defence of *inferi* will need to be accepted or answered. At 10.28(39) (p. 32) *naufragat tolerantia* (for *ne frangat tolerantiam*), a conjecture suggested to him by a colleague but already reported by Skutella from old editions, has two drawbacks, that it obscures the tripartition and that it makes adversity bring capitulation, not just the danger of it; A. objects to the switch from indicative to subjunctive, when one is in a *quia* clause and the other in a *ne* clause, and observes that *frangere tolerantiam* occurs nowhere else in Augustine, when the moral qualities collected at *TLL* 1246.64–1247.18 as objects of *frangere* include *patientia* in Rufinus besides *ambitio* and *invidia* in Augustine himself. Particularly unconvincing is A.'s attempt to rescue at least the *-ne* of the *-nem* that B. Löfstedt removed from *locutionem* at 3.4(7) (p. 51); the noun contrasted with *quod loquebatur* can hardly be left unexpressed between *neque* and *sed*. Furthermore, I often found A. unhelpful to someone like me who is not immersed in Augustine. He rarely translates, a service that I felt an acute need for at 1.11(18) (p. 47), 3.7(12) (p. 51), and 7.6(8) l. 14 (p. 62); and if, for instance, at 1.8(13) one would rather postpone a decision between *natuque maiorum hominum* and *nutuque maiorum hominum* (p. 45) until one has looked for other occurrences in Augustine of *nutus* and *maiores homines*, one is nowhere told about the printed concordance to the *Confessions* (Hildesheim, 1991) or the *Thesaurus Augustinianus* on microfiche (Louvain, 1989). At 5.6(11) (p. 57) he fails to mention that *efferebam* requires *atque* for *ac*.

Two footnotes are repeated out of place, n. 28 in n. 25 and n. 64 in n. 87. At 1.10(16) (p. 46) Skutella confirmed my conjecture that CD have *micante*. In n. 139 '315' should be '215'. On p. 68 the last occurrence of *indidem* should be *in idem*. Despite n. 186, there has been no discussion of *praepositos* at 9.8(18) (p. 78). The manuscripts cited on p. 96 for *naufragat* are not those cited on p. 32.

The title of the monograph seemed to herald a book several times larger, but I came away wondering if even a short article would have repaid A.'s trouble.

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SYMMACHUS' LETTERS

G. A. Cecconi: *Commento storico al libro II dell'epistolario di Q. Aurelio Simmaco. Con introduzione, testo, traduzione e indici.* (Biblioteca di Studi Antichi 86.) Pp. 467. Pisa: Giardini Editori e Stampatori, 2002. Paper. ISBN: 88-427-0317-6.

The historical commentary by G. A. Cecconi on the second book of the letters of Q. Aurelius Symmachus is the latest addition to the collection of historical commentaries on Symmachus' vast epistolary corpus that began over twenty years under the supervision of Lellia Cracco Ruggini. The collection, which provides a useful companion to the recently completed edition with French translation by

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J.-P. Callu (*Symmaque: Lettres. Tome IV* [Paris, 1972–2002]), is far from being complete, but C.'s monumental commentary fills a gap and offers an important contribution to Symmachan scholarship.

As in the other volumes of the collection, C.'s commentary includes the Latin text, following for the most part Callu's edition, but with frequent comments on questions of textual criticism, a translation into Italian, a detailed introduction, and full commentary.

The introduction (pp. 29–77) offers a thorough reconstruction of the personal relationship between Symmachus and Nicomachus Flavianus, whose correspondence covers a period of thirty years, from their first tenure of office in A.D. 364 until Nicomachus' suicide on the Frigidus in A.D. 394. On the basis of the relatively small numbers of letters included in Book 2 (ninety-one letters in thirty years), C. concludes that Symmachus and, after his death, his son carefully edited the letters for publication, systematically expunging the ones politically 'damaging' (pp. 29–30). To his credit, C. avoids indulging in speculation about the eliminated letters and offers a balanced assessment of the editorial intervention of the Symmachi by pointing out that the letters were subject to self-censorship from the beginning, as shown by Symmachus' remarks with regard to the interception of correspondence (*Ep.* 2.12 and commentary pp. 177–80).

But, as already mentioned, the main aim of the introduction is to investigate and reconstruct the history of the friendship between Symmachus and Nicomachus Flavianus, and C. does not shy away from consideration of the psychological element. C. is openly critical of 'psychohistory' and aware of the dangers involved in reconstructing the personality of the correspondents on the basis of letters, which tend to reflect a constructed image of the self, especially when carefully edited—and C. forcefully argues that Symmachus' letters were. However cautious, C. is ultimately optimistic about the possibility of gaining some insight into the personality of the two correspondents, but ends up focusing primarily on the character of Nicomachus Flavianus. His portrayal of Flavianus' character is tantalizing, but one should not forget that the reconstruction is based solely on Symmachus' words, since Flavianus' letters are not included in the epistolary.

Not surprisingly, C. devotes ample discussion to Flavianus' and Symmachus' attitude towards religion, and to their rôle in the religious controversies of the time. C. argues rather convincingly that the clear-cut distinction between different currents in paganism, championed respectively by Symmachus, Flavianus, and Praetextatus, is essentially a construct of modern scholarship and points out the interconnection between the traditional religion of Rome and the oriental cults. But C.'s assessment of Flavianus' religious attitude seems a little incongruous. After rightly emphasizing Flavianus' frequent absence from pagan religious festivals and adamantly rejecting the identification of Flavianus as the urban prefect described as a rabid pagan in the *Carmen contra paganos*, C. seems to argue for Flavianus' active religious opposition against Christianity and aligns himself with the position expressed by H. Bloch and criticized effectively by A. Cameron, but recently revived with modifications by C. Hedrick (H. Bloch, 'A New Document of the Last Pagan Revival in the West, 393–394', *HThR* 38 [1945], 199–244; A. Cameron, 'The Last Pagans of Rome', in W. V. Harris, *Transformations of the Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity* [Portsmouth, RI, 1999], pp. 109–21; C. Hedrick, *History and Silence. Purge and Rehabilitazion of Memory in Late Antiquity* [Austin, 2000]).

The translation is as close as possible to the original, and C. declares in the preface (p. 12) that he has chosen to avoid any stylistic embellishments. In one case in

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particular (*Ep.* 2.22), C.'s translation rectifies a mistake in Callu's, correctly interpreting 'maturus partus' as 'timely birth' rather than 'premature birth' and offering full commentary on the implications of this translation (pp. 214–15).

The lion's share of the book pertains to the historical commentary (290 pages against 50 pages of text and translation and 49 pages of introduction). The commentary offers an immense wealth of information on every possible aspect touched upon by the letters. By his own admission, C. occasionally engages in 'discussions that may appear pedantic and verbose' (p. 11), since they do not offer a definitive solution to a given problem, but offer an overview of the different positions in the debate. Such detail could—and occasionally does—lead to the dispersal of information throughout the massive body of the commentary, but C. seems aware of the problem and is usually successful in the organization of the material, which can be easily accessed with the help of the index. Arguably the best example of C.'s organizational skills is the discussion of the much debated question of the chronology of Flavianus' career, which is presented as a digression in the commentary (pp. 165–9). Although ultimately endorsing the chronology proposed by Callu among others, C. presents the different points of view with fairness and usefully summarizes the various solutions in a table at the end of the digression.

In summary, this is a commentary impressive in erudition and sophisticated in presentation. The wealth of information it provides makes it an indispensable tool not only for scholars of Symmachus, but for all scholars of late antiquity.

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AVITUS

D. Shanzer, I. Wood: *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose. Translated with an Introduction and Notes*. (Translated Texts for Historians 38.) Pp. xxii + 450, maps. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002. Paper, £14.95. ISBN: 0-85323-588-0.

Danuta Shanzer and Ian Wood bring extensive knowledge of the late Roman and early medieval periods to this translation project on the letters of Alcimus Ecdicius Avitus, bishop of Vienne in Gaul, together with two of his theological treatises in epistolary form and two homilies. In the early sixth century the kingdom of the Burgundians was living out its final years before absorption into the Merovingian kingdom. Its leaders lived amid intricate political relationships with other Germanic nations and both halves of the Roman empire. Rivalry between Catholic and Arian bishops contributed to tenuous relationships within and beyond the kingdom's borders. In this complex environment, secular and ecclesiastical leaders negotiated by letter across time and space. In Avitus' own day, Ruricius, bishop of Limoges, celebrated letter-writing as a way to achieve presence in absence (p. 59). Avitus, too, sought through letters to achieve a virtual presence for himself or the sovereign in whose name he dutifully wrote.

Avitus' is a working correspondence, where manner as well as message is important in the extreme. Observation of protocol in his aristocratic Latin-based culture meant preference for allusive speech, convoluted phrasing, and care about what should be left unsaid—'coded communication', as the translators rightly call it. That makes understanding the letters difficult; but the translators' detailed knowledge of the

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