Roman History

Weighty tomes preponderate, but I put chronology before avoirdupois. First comes a stout *Companion to the Punic Wars*, edited by Dexter Hoyos.[1] It is part of the book's comforts as a companion and one of its merits to treat not only what is named on the tin – five chapters for the first war, nine for the second, and three for the last half century of Carthage, with one chapter dealing directly with the siege of 148–146 – but other topics that are by no means peripheral. It is a bonus to have Nathan Rosenstein's revisionist views on 'Italy: Economy and Demography after Hannibal's War', or rather his demolition of long-held ones: positive arguments are briefly put. Whether Part V, 'Conclusions', lives up to its name is another matter: it consists of three papers on the aftermath, including 'Carthage and Hannibal in Roman and Greek Memory' (which I wish had been taken further). The editor's international team have satisfactorily marshalled the material in the main sections: 'Roman Politics and Expansion' between the first two wars is immediately followed by Hoyos' own 'Carthage in Africa and Spain' during the same period; similarly, 'Punic Politics, Economy, and Alliances, 218–201' precedes 'Roman Economy, Finance, and Politics in the Second Punic War'. Illustrations are not among the comforts of this volume: far from panoramas or even diagrams of famous battles, we have five plain maps.

A little later in time comes Linda-Marie Günther and Volker Grieb's well-earned international tribute to Jürgen Deininger, *Das imperiale Rom and der hellenistische Osten*.[2] Beware of this title. The volume contains thirteen essays, on diverse themes with equally varied depths of focus. Interesting though they are, then, they might not tempt purchase by anyone other than Deininger's admirers. The editors were keen to publish in good time; the book lacks index, portrait, even a list of publications, and one of the two opening papers, by Russian scholars, on the meaning of Hellenism and Alexander and on dating a new (2003) Chian inscription, wants attention to the English. (The editor's paper on a Milesian female *prophetes* is in the same detailed register.) The only other essay in English is Alain Bresson's well-argued discussion of wine, oil, and delicacies at the Pelousion customs. Of the two papers on the end of the Hellenistic era, Jean-Michel Roddaz has a vigorous defence of Antony (in French). The remaining papers are in German, including Christoph Schäfer's on Cleopatra's dealings with Caesar and Karin Sion-Jenkis' on Augustan and Caesarean dealings with Germany. The volume concludes with studies of Droysen, Max Weber, and Wilamowitz, and is just in its tribute to the scope of Deininger's work.

Another weighty dedicatory volume studies internal political and cultural life: *Letteratura e civitas. transizioni della repubblica all'impero*, edited by Mario Citroni.[3] The volume is dedicated to the memory of Emanuele Narducci, and appropriately

[1] *A Companion to the Punic Wars*. Edited by Dexter Hoyos. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Malden, MA, Oxford, and Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Pp. xxv + 543. 4 tables, 5 maps. Hardback £120, ISBN: 978-1-4051-7600-2.

[2] *Das imperiale Rom and der hellenistische Osten. Festschrift für Jürgen Deininger zum 75. Geburtstag*. Edited by Linda-Marie Günther and Volker Grieb. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012. Pp. 211. 1 illustration. Hardback €47.99, ISBN: 978-3-515-10169-1.

[3] *Letteratura e civitas. Transizioni della repubblica all'impero, in ricordo di Emanuele Narducci*. Edited by Mario Citroni. Testi e studi di cultura classica 53. Pisa, Edizione, ETZ, 2012. Pp. 454. Paperback €35, ISBN: 978-88-4673231-6.

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focuses on the thinking of Cicero, Lucan, and the younger Seneca. There are twenty-one papers, two in French (by Jean-Louis Ferrary on 'Durée et eternité' in Cicero's *De republica*, and by Jean-Michel David on 'Crise de l'éloquence et crise de la cité') one (by John Dugan, on s*criptura* and *uoluntas* in the *Brutus*) in English; Matthew Leigh writes in Italian (on the *De breuitate uitae*). The Italian contributors are hardly less well known here than those already mentioned. It is appropriate and helpful that there is an index of passages cited. The editor himself makes a substantial, pertinent, and thought-provoking contribution of his own with his paper on Cicero and the formula *res publica restituta*, in which he examines recent views and deploys Ciceronian passages to unite its various implications. Literature is not all-pervasive: Arnaldo Marcone offers a valuable study of 'Le relazioni di patronato et la crisi della repubblica romana'.

An excellent example of multiple authorship is *Two Romes*, edited by Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly.[4] It arose from a Lampeter panel that stimulated their interest in studying the two cities together and more especially in moving away from teleological interpretations. We are rightly urged not to think of Rome as destined for decline and the papacy, Constantinople to take her place (not that Romans did not fear something of the sort as early as the first century BC). Introductory chapters draw contributions together and make representational comparisons; then come urban space and development, containing John Matthews' translation of the *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae* and essays on water for Constantinople and on aristocratic housing in both cities, thus clearly out of balance. Emperors' relations with them *are* balanced, over partly overlapping periods. The inevitable Panegyric is well covered in four essays, while Christianity, again allotted four spaces, has to be more sporadically treated (and Benet Salway reinterprets the Bordeaux Itinerary as a pragmatic composition). Finally Anthony Kaldellis' epilogue argues for Byzantium as the nation-state of the Romans. Both for its thesis and for the room left in a vast theme, this welcome volume will inspire further work.

'Elegant' is not a word to dominate many reviews. But it is right for the much more slender work on the earlier city, Caroline Vout's *The Hills of Rome*.[5] It is right for the finesse of the thought, the deployment of wide-ranging scholarship (there is a list of passages discussed), and the presentation. The main title could have headed something commonplace, but the subtitle relieves that fear. Nor does Vout yield her meaning at once. Her chapter titles tempt enquiry and even the subdivisions are rarely as explicit as 'Varro's Contribution to the Story'. It is in reading that readers find where they are headed in this study of the development of an idea, and eventually are able to experience their own Rome. Chapter 2 follows the relations between 'the seven hills' and the environment, the Renaissance forming a turning point. Chapter 3 stresses the rise of 'seven', and Chapter 4 the fleshing out of that 'skeleton' (59) down to late antiquity. The next chapter is a rich survey of representations up to the nineteenth century, and it is followed by one that focuses on views from above in various senses.

[4] *Two Romes. Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly. Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity. New York, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xvii + 465. 2 maps, 26 illustrations. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-19-973940-0.

[5] *The Hills of Rome. Signature of an Eternal City*. By Caroline Vout. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xviii + 284. 72 b/w illustrations, 27 colour plates, 1 map. Hardback £24.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-02597-4.

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In Chapter 7 the author 'signs off'. Illustrations, of prime importance, are generously provided and conveniently placed. Anomalously and probably in a late development, some appear in two divergent guises, in black and white and among the colour plates (many from the Villa Giulia); Samuel Palmer's *Rome from the Janiculum* makes the jacket too. But Vout's text provides stability; readers will wish to savour that.

It is no surprise that Brian Campbell's *Rivers and the Power of Ancient Rome*[6] should be bulky: we are not far from the territory of Braudel and of Horden and Purcell. How to divide the vast geographical and historical material was a problem which he seems to have mastered, producing a work which is agreeable and even moving to read, such is the commitment of the author when the 'eternal flow of a river could be seen as taking man back to the beginning. . .of time itself' (121). First come chapters on the physical conditions, mapping, and rights (some of which have appeared in previous collections). Literature, religion, and art are the next themes, then armies and frontiers (Campbell is firm on the possibilities of rivers as boundaries), exploitation, movement of goods in west and east (our Thames does not figure much), health and relaxation, and finally Rome in control of the waters – and her loss of control. In all these chapters springs, aqueducts, canals, and dams also feature, providing variety and in the main helping the author to avoid anything list-like. The notes are copious, the maps clear, and likewise the photographs, though quite sparing; three indexes enhance navigability and the chance of using the book as a work of reference.

Say 'manual' and a computer comes dispiritingly to mind; dip into Alison E. Cooley's *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy*[7] and you may happen on the hilarious and shocking tale of Ligorio's forgeries, or the glass flasks with panoramic views of Puteoli and Baiae. This volume will enthral those who have encountered epigraphy (the author is judicious in her definition), and experts will want to check individual items (ninety, in grey boxes, fully annotated and translated, with *index locorum*); ancient historians in education will find their horizons widened; and antiquarians will want the volume on their shelf (it is well illustrated). But after two beguiling chapters on epigraphic culture in the particularly rich Bay of Naples and the Roman world (including a section on Christian epigraphy), which have numbered sections and take up more than three hundred pages, we come to the real 'manual': 'A Technical Guide to Latin Epigraphy'. This is for learners who might well be intimidated by *CIL* and other corpora. From libraries, Cooley takes us to museums and the field, with instructions for copying and making squeezes, and finally for reconstruction, where the author allows herself the indulgence of a case history of her own. The volume is of course indispensable for libraries.

A companion can be any size. *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy*, edited by Walter Scheidel,[8] is comparatively handy, considering the subject, the only map

[6] *Rivers and the Power of Ancient Rome*. By Brian Campbell. Studies in the History of Rome. Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Pp. xx + 585. 20 maps, 19 illustrations, 4 diagrams. Hardback £60.50, ISBN: 978-0-8078-3480-0.

[7] *The Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy*. By Alison E. Cooley. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xxii + 531. 100 b/w illustrations, 1 map. Paperback, price not stated. ISBN 978-0-521-54954-7.

[8] *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy*. Edited by Walter Scheidel. Cambridge Companions to the Ancient World. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xiv + 443. 6 b/w illustrations, 1 table, 1 map. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-0-521-84026-2; paperback £23.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-72688-7.

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even more modest. The book is designed as a survey accessible to all audiences, and Scheidel begins with an essay on defining the Roman economy; he draws attention to the importance of comparison and the ecology. The book proceeds with three chapters on theory (Part II), including Peter Temin on the contribution of economics: the reader is introduced to Riccardo's theory of comparative advantage and how it applies to Italy and Egypt, so he or she can go on with confidence to two chapters (Part III) on 'Labor', slave and contract. Part IV is devoted to production (raw materials and food, and manufacturing) and Part V naturally to distribution, in connexion with which Peter Fibiger Bang, recalling the rape of the Sabines, rightly does not shrink from 'predation'. Transport follows, then urbanism, money and finance, and a five-party 'Forum on Trade' (rather baffling). We exit with outcomes: physical wellbeing (by the editor), which turns out unremarkable, and post-Roman economies. The book looks tough for an introduction, but historians will not wish to miss any of these papers.

I conclude this section with a very weighty volume, *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*,[9] edited by Christina Riggs. Once in the hand, or rather hands, it proves a treasure house of information and, through the individual bibliographies (repetitive though they must be) and suggestions for reading, it gives directions for deeper inquiry. It passes in seven well-balanced sections and forty-five chapters – the work of a truly international authorship – from 'Land and State' by way of 'City. . .and Chora', 'People', 'Religion', 'Texts', and 'Images and Objects' to 'Borders, Trade, and Tourism'. This was no easy enterprise: what made Roman Egypt Roman? More is needed than a mechanical choice of material, and much is given (rather plainly as far as illustration goes); conversely not much differentiates the army in Egypt from forces elsewhere. The index takes readers to topics that straddle more than one chapter, such as the economy, though coinage does not figure much. This will be a valuable book for students of the entire empire to have on their shelves.

Now we scale down a little. Karl Galinsky's *Augustus*[10] has a modest subtitle, but within its compass offers comprehensive views as well as interesting detail. The language, relaxed American ('[Nicolaus']. . .treatment of the young Augustus is panegyrical and then some' [2]; '[Octavian] made nice with Cicero', [26–7]), reveals his target audience. The wish to show how we know what we know encouraged the use of those obtrusive 'boxes' for which there is room on a large page, but which Galinsky has even juxtaposed one after another, a repeated interruption. His text is equitably divided between a four-chapter chronological account and four other chapters on 'Augustus at Home', 'Cultural Vitality' (very illuminating), 'The Empire: Unity and Diversity', and 'The Final Days and an Assessment'. This is favourable, and Galinsky has wise words on the relation between Augustus' thinking and that of his age. On detail, scholars may demur (were the people of Rome on the dole? Did Augustus count the beginning of his reign from 23 BC?) or wish for more; overall one may feel the judgement on

[9] *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*. Edited by Christina Riggs. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xxii + 794. 1 map, 146 illustrations, 10 tables. Hardback £100, ISBN: 978-0-19-957145-1.

[10] *Augustus. Introduction to the Life of an Emperor*. By Karl Galinsky. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012. Pp. xxiv + 200. 22 b/w illustrations, 2 maps, 1 genealogical chart. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-521-76797-2; paperback £17.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-74442-3.

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his Principate and 'Constitution Plus' to be lenient. All the same, there is no doubt that the book delivers, and in a satisfying way, what is written on the cover.

Another eminent person receives treatment on the same scale, but different in kind (boxes remain), in J. Albert Harrill's *Paul the Apostle.*[11] This is an 'antibiography', for the author rejects as authentic writings of Paul all but seven epistles in the New Testament; seven others and five other pseudonymous items (listed in Appendix 1) are ditched. Nor is authority allowed to *Acts* (*Luke–Acts* is an anonymous work); finally, the martyrdom in Rome is replaced with a lynching in Jerusalem. Such an austere treatment, which yet claims Paul for one of the great figures of antiquity (Socrates, Alexander, Cleopatra, and Augustus!) is salutary, but not the end. Even more important is the thinking. Paul remained a Jew, and is no Jewish Saul turning into a Christian Paul but was a Roman, if not a citizen – and far from hostile to the empire – in his 'discourse of authority', his deployment of *auctoritas*. His dealings with rival 'circumcisionist' missionaries are vividly presented, but he did not need to be a Roman to wield such clout. After stripping the life so shockingly, the author turns to the legends, each of its kind, and here he could hardly be richer: Paul is a model, sexually, as a spiritual being, as a text, or as a deceiver. Worst, the West got Paul wrong, *via* Augustine. Readers will reconstruct their Paul as best they can.

It is gratifying to find one's instinctive structuring of what makes 'ins and outs' in society methodically expounded for significant communities, as by Kendra Eshleman in *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire*[12] (Flavians – Severans). Subsuming Christians in the category of intellectuals is bold – think of the rustics of Anatolia – but pays off where the elite are concerned. Not but what Christians were peculiar: the stakes were high, and there was a special conflict between inclusive aims (the sick needed the doctor) and rigorous doctrinal demands, while the eucharist provided another boundary. After explaining her elucidation of the identity-defining capacity of social relationships, the author notes the inadequacy of space as a criterion; Christians had no dedicated public spaces until the third century. In Chapters 2 (sophists) and 3 (Christians), *idiotae* and patrons (sometimes gatekeepers and reduced by the developing episcopate) make their appearance. Relations between sophists return as the focus of Chapter 4, and then the quasi-heresiologist Philostratus' self-legitimating strategy, for which the author offers an alternative. Succession (sophistic and Christian) occupies the last two chapters, with apostolic-episcopal the most potent. Eshleman has done a good job in presenting ways of discriminating, when hardly a word uttered in evidence is not interested.

Multum in parvo fits Thomas R. Martin's *Ancient Rome from Romulus to Justinian.*[13] Before his narrative, the author sensibly begins with a survey of Roman habits and

[11] *Paul the Apostle. His Life and Legacy in Their Roman Context.* By J. Albert Harrill. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xvi + 207. 1 b/w illustration, 3 maps. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-0-521-76764-4; paperback £16.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-75780-5.

[12] *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire. Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians.* By Kendra Eshleman. Greek Culture in the Roman World. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. x + 293. 2 b/w illustrations. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-02638-4.

[13] *Ancient Rome. From Romulus to Justinian.* By Thomas R. Martin. New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 237. 30 illustrations, 13 maps. Hardback £20, ISBN: 978-0-300-16004-8.

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outlook (patronage figures largely throughout). Another aim is to get his readers (general readers and students, presumably) to go to the ancient sources, so he embeds references to them in his text. This might be a pious hope. The ideal might have been a cheap companion volume. Martin's Republican history is brisk, and while he is refreshingly severe on Augustus, some successors, notably Tiberius and Claudius, are rather feebly treated. In a volume of this size, developments that belong to the large scale tend to be ascribed to one individual or another, and there are occasional anachronisms: Martin has no trouble with the 'third-century crisis' or with translating Latin moral terms such as *pietas* into English derivatives. With the coming of Christianity the work takes on pace and interest, and the author ends cheerfully with the admirable John Philoponus of Alexandria, philosopher and theologian, who anticipated some of the ideas of Galileo. Writing and maps are clear. Martin has done his work well.

Scholars treat the trial and death of Scribonius Libo Drusus in AD 16 as attacks on a silly, indebted young man. Only two, according to Andrew Pettinger in *The Republic in Danger*,[14] treat it (briefly) as response to a conspiracy linked with the imposter Clemens. Now Pettinger rightly takes the affair seriously, but this carries a reinterpretation of Tiberius' accession and early years. First, Tiberius was not held back from acceptance by principle or by hypocrisy; he was affected by the mutiny on the Rhine. Then, the conspirators aimed at restoring the Republic. The two parts of the book, especially combined, have a strong claim to originality, the second less convincing. It is thorough and scholarly, with much attention to legal questions. Here, though, one feels reservations. Ending his discussion of the 'abdication' of Agrippa Postumus, an alien concept, Pettinger has to ask whether 'Augustus put together a defective will knowing that no one would dare challenge' (73 n. 41). And on the question of the charge against Libo, it was 'intent to cause revolution as interpreted under the *lex maiestatis*' (26–7). Fine, without the last six words. (Someone will have to put *maiestas* in its place.) Pettinger has made a valuable and thought-provoking contribution to imperial history.

The slimmest volume this time is *Studying Roman Law* by Paul J. du Plessis.[15] Its title differs from others in an extensive series in implying a focus on method. The text bears this out: occasionally the reader is addressed in the imperative; passages are wrung for what can be learned about Roman legal thinking and society (mainly in the classical period; the author also explicitly avoids legal *minutiae*); and translations are often cited as from 'Handouts'. This seems a practical address to the subject, and after his introductory chapter the author follows Gaius' scheme: sections on 'Persons', 'Things', and 'Actions', each with suggested further reading (timeline, bibliography, and index are proportionate to the book's size). Du Plessis leads his non-specialist pupils in a clear and practised way to a basic introduction to Roman private law in the first three centuries of our era. There are flaws: for example, the author has the form *comitiae*; he writes that the end of the Second Punic War 'brought Rome into contact with...hostile forces...such as Alexander' (18); he dates the Gracchi 133–132, and *Lex Papia Poppaea* to AD 4; he puts the discovery of the *Lex Irnitana*

[14] *The Republic in Danger. Drusus Libo and the Succession of Tiberius.* By Andrew Pettinger. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. x + 265. Hardback £58, ISBN: 978-0-19-960174-5.

[15] *Studying Roman Law*. By Paul J. du Plessis. Classical World Series. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2012. Pp. 125. Paperback £12.99, ISBN: 978-1-78093-026-8.

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later than the publication of M. H. Crawford's *Roman Statutes*; and he states that two years of strife over the succession to Constantine was resolved by the election of Theodosius I.

As a stouter companion we have *A Casebook on Roman Property Law*, by Richard Hausmaninger and Richard Gamauf, translated by George E. Sheets.[16] This rich volume offers 185 cases, 5 from pre-Justinianic sources (4 from Gaius), the rest from Justinianic, each in the original Latin, followed by an English translation, notes on the text, discussion questions, model answers to start with (but not often enough for me), comparisons from modern civil codes, and literature; towards the end, as complexity increases, diagrams are provided. You do not need the authors' names to know that this is a translation from the German. The modern codes cited are Austrian, German, and Swiss (not the less pertinent for that), and the literature is largely in German, but the translator has added an introduction, with further reading in English, additional notes, and glossary. The authors divided the material into 'Means of Acquisition', 'Keeping and Losing Possession', 'Acquiring and Losing Ownership', 'Protection and Limitations of Ownership', 'Servitudes', and 'Secured Interests', each elaborately subdivided. This makes for an excellent work of reference. It is also friendly, with occasional delicious comparative examples, such as that of *Pierson v. Post*, Supreme Court of New York, 1805, a dispute between two men determined to kill a fox, overturned on appeal with a forthright dissenting judgment. The production is almost immaculate.

I would close this section of shorter books by drawing attention to a particularly attractive one, Claire Holleran's *Shopping in Ancient Rome*.[17] First there is the unpretentious candour of the title ('retail' occurs only in the subtitle), which confronts anyone who may have scouted the subject even in modern studies. There is candour too in the restriction of the scope to Rome, though the author often visits Pompeii and elsewhere. And she justifies precisely the word 'shopping' as applicable to an agreeable pastime in her specified period as well as our own. Second, and more important, are the clarity of her admirably documented presentation and the sobriety of her conclusions. She starts with the big picture, the economy, and how retail fitted wholesale trade. Then comes a vital chapter on *tabernae*, and how carefully the word needs to be translated. 'Markets and Fairs' takes us into some splendid public buildings, frequented by the highest, and it is only in the next chapter, on street traders, hawkers, and pedlars (carefully differentiated), that we reach the depths. A final chapter returns to the brilliance of elite consumption, and there is a concise conclusion. Throughout Holleran provides apposite illustrations. This book should be available to all students of 'shopping', modern as well as ancient, and to all who aspire to see behind the counters of *tabernae*.

[16] *A Casebook on Roman Property Law*. By Richard Hausmaninger and Richard Gamauf. Translated with introduction, supplementary notes, and glossary by George E. Sheets. American Philological Association Classical Resources Series. New York, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xxviii + 342. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-0-19-979111-8; paperback £22.50, ISBN: 978-0-19-979113-2.

[17] *Shopping in Ancient Rome. The Retail Trade in the Late Republic and the Principate*. By Claire Holleran. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xvi + 304. 26 illustrations, 3 maps. Hardback £68, ISBN: 978-0-19-969821-9.

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However, the claims of the later Empire to the final spot prove irresistible. In his ponderously named *Politics and Tradition between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople*,[18] M. Shane Bjornlie provides a new and persuasive perspective on Cassiodorus' *Variae*. It turns out to be a 'tessellated historical narrative' (184), a very purposeful piece of work, undertaken in the aftermath (540s) of Justinian's conquest of the Amal regime (in which Cassiodorus functioned) and illustrative of the tensions between services. Cassiodorus aimed to rehabilitate the Italian elite who had worked for a 'barbarian' regime. Bjornlie divides his work into three parts. First come the *Variae* as 'windows onto painted curtains', poignantly illustrated by the cover depiction of the mosaic of Theoderic's palace in S. Apollinare Nuovo. Much longer are Parts II and III: 'Cassiodorus and the Circumstances of Political Survival', putting the work and its author into their context, and 'Reading the *Variae* as Political Apologetic', which has interesting passages on *antiquitas* and *novitas* in government. Throughout, the author tackles or touches on topics and issues of the age, such as Neoplatonism, the death of Boethius, and the Nika revolt. Readers may find an occasional difficulty ('the lives of Roman emperors were imprinted on the performed text of the natural world', 261) and there are mishaps with 'as such', but this is a rich and durable contribution to Cassiodorus studies.

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Art and Archaeology

'And verily so excellent he was in this perspective, that a man would say, his even, plaine, and flat picture were embossed and raised work.' Philemon Holland's endearing 1601 translation of Pliny's *Natural History* (35.50) is one of the earliest documented references in English to 'perspective', understood as 'the art of delineating solid objects upon a plane surface so that the drawing produces the same impression of apparent relative positions and magnitudes, or of distance, as do the actual objects when viewed from a particular point' (*OED*). The passage relates to a Sicyonian painter called Pausias, whose penchant for representing oxen front-on, and yet conveying all their bulk and size, clearly impresses Pliny. But in a sour footnote, the Loeb edition comments: 'there is no proof that perspective is meant'.[1] It is true that the established text of Pliny does not support Holland's claim that Pausias 'had a singular gift to work by perspective'. With the benefit of Renaissance expositions, Holland presumably knew what perspective was. But did Pliny know – or indeed did any other ancient writer or artist understand the basic principle of a vanishing point? Modern scholarship has

[18] *Politics and Tradition between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople. A Study of Cassiodorus and the 'Variae', 527–554*. By M. Shane Bjornlie. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Fourth Series 89. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013. Pp. xiv + 370. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-107-02840-1.

[1] H. Rackam, ed. and trans., *Pliny. Natural History Books XXXIII–XXXV* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 352.

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