

recording and writing, the comprehensiveness of the written record and whether anything was (or would have been) deliberately omitted as well as appeals for alteration to the texts by senior authorities.

Part 4 turns to 'The Written Record'. The production and quality of the records – called in Greek τὰ ὑπομνήματα (*hypomnēmata*) – of many of the conciliar acts and related documents addressed thus far are evaluated, as well as the description and identification of documents in the redaction history of these texts, their running order, filing and placement etc. Other practical elements including the summary records and compilation of signatures are also assessed.

The final part, 'Files, Collections, Editions: Dossierization and Dissemination', brings the accumulated insights and findings together in a synthesis that addresses how the council acts were gathered and organised by assessing the minutes, case files and collected records. The 'bringing together of separate protocols from individual sessions into a coherent corpus of conciliar "acts"' – including their formal session records – that become part of the transmitted manuscript tradition, is best characterised as 'dossierization' (p. 277). This is immediately relevant as this is the form in which these acts are then prepared as editions for dissemination.

Thus, we come full circle to the reception and working of these texts into critical editions that, thankfully, are today being translated into English for the benefit of scholars, seminarians and undergraduate and postgraduate students. This would never have been the case without the work of the scribes and secretaries recording and compiling these conciliar acts. While their names are for the most part lost to history, G. should be warmly congratulated for shifting our attention to their efforts and for bringing these to the light of day.

St Mark's National Theological Centre, Canberra (CSU)

MARIO BAGHOS
mbaghos@csu.edu.au

ROME'S STATUS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

SALZMAN (M.R.) *The Falls of Rome. Crises, Resilience, and Resurgence in Late Antiquity*. Pp. xviii + 445, ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Cased, £29.99, US\$39.99. ISBN: 978-1-107-11142-4.

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Rome was more than an idea and the heart of an empire: it was also an ancient city. On this premise, S. begins her foray into the debates about the end of Roman rule in the Western Mediterranean. S.'s primary interlocutor here is Edward Gibbon. Through pointed re-uses of his motifs, she shows that even if we accept his vision of 'Germanic' barbarians, the events attributed to them did not cause irreparable damage to the city fabric. Likewise, even if the clergy and bishops had wanted young men to abandon martial pursuits, they could barely encourage Rome's senatorial youth to pursue an episcopal career, let alone pursue pacific vocations. In other words, Gibbon's continued allure does not arise from his overwhelming arguments. Instead, S. suggests historians are captivated by Gibbon's framing of late Roman historiography as a question about *what* caused the end of the

Roman empire. In so doing, they have come to treat the endless continuity of Rome and its empire as a given that must have been disturbed by *something*, rather than treating its existence as an ongoing cycle of destruction and recreation that, eventually, was not worth reconstituting.

To exorcise Gibbon's ghost, S. offers two avenues. First, the ancient city of Rome ended when its citizens stopped rebuilding it and pursued other forms of social organisation. Rather than searching for an end, it may be more fruitful to compare restorations. Second, if maintaining an ancient city was an active endeavour, it required actors. For her, 'the end of the Senate represents the final fall of Rome as an ancient city – that is, one in which the ideal of civic society inspired senatorial aristocrats and ambitious men new to senatorial status to serve the state' (p. 301). In consequence, S.'s Romans are primarily reactive, as the book traces senatorial responses to five crises.

In Chapter 2 S. addresses the aftermath of the Milvian Bridge affair and the instalment of Constantine. She argues that Constantinian reforms of the senate and system of offices were not driven by religious tensions between the new emperor and recalcitrant pagan senators, nor did they substantially weaken the existing senatorial elite: while more positions were opened to upwardly mobile families, expansion of the senate occurred gradually, and the reforms gave senators more control over local affairs. (One might also infer that senators were given more investment in stability, due to their increased liability when things go wrong.) Conversely, S. suggests Rome's bishops established themselves weakly, having divested themselves of obedience to imperial summons and thus their political reliability.

Chapter 3 jumps a century to the aftermath of the 410 CE sack. S. emphasises the limited ability of bishops to mobilise popular support for a liturgical response. In contrast, due to their wealth and their ability to extract wealth, Honorius made senators further liable for rebuilding the city and correspondingly awarded them significant control over the negotiations and its purpose. In subsequent decades the loss of most western imperial territories increased Rome's relative importance, but the uptake of trade and expansion in Italian and insular land exploitation meant Rome's senators were not ruined economically and, due to the codified divisions in senatorial ranks, had more opportunity to solidify and mobilise their civic power bases.

For Chapter 4, the sack of 455 CE only strengthened this hold, as senators were among the first powerful figures to return and again assumed control of restoration priorities and purpose. The city's dependency on the senate reminded senators, co-citizens and onlookers that it was an older institution than the emperorship (and could outlive it). Moreover, the range of career options encouraged ambitious, wealthy men to pursue secular careers over the church, further isolating the episcopate and clerical orders from political influence.

Chapter 5 covers the 470s and asserts S.'s stance that 476 CE was not a defining year for Rome. The civil war of 470–2 had a greater impact: by 476 CE, when Romulus Augustus was deposed, Rome's citizens were already comfortable operating without a western Roman emperor. Rather, the events allowed senators to cooperate directly with military elites and barbarian generals to secure Rome's recovery (and that of their landed estates).

Rome's fall comes, in Chapter 6, courtesy of Justinian. Despite the military losses and economic devastations of the reconquest, S. suggests that recovery was limited primarily by administrative policies and interdependencies that Justinian introduced. By bringing Rome's bishops under his patronage, he strengthened their financial and political power, gave them access to military modes of enforcement and made them his informants. Meanwhile, senatorial, secular office-holders were forced to collaborate with the military to administer resources, weakening the patronage benefits accrued, and a new tax system administered by provincial governors removed their direct financial incentives to seek

higher office for pecuniary benefit and tax relief. Wealthy ambitious men were thence inclined to adopt the new freedom to pursue careers in Constantinople and deputise their estates. Those that remained saw the episcopate as an increasingly enviable office from which to expand traditional patronage networks, as Chapter 7 explores. Thus, the ancient city of Rome fell because it was no longer a profitable enterprise for its wealthiest citizens.

Locating the book as a contribution to the 'Fall of the Roman Empire' debates and an argument about Rome's demise as a senator-led city limits the contextualisation in each respective debate. To simplify things, S. characterises the former field as split between proponents of external factors and transformation: it would have been interesting to see how her self-serving senators fitted among arguments that the empire was destroyed by internal factors (e.g. W. Goffart, M. Kulikowski.) Similarly, this reader would have appreciated a fuller introduction to the senate (including residency and land ownership requirements) and definitions of 'weak' and 'strong' power. (S. seemingly approaches power as a measure of actions taken and their accordance with stated objectives, mostly ignoring the power in [rhetorical] powerlessness and shaping discourses of acceptable behaviour.)

Further proofreading would have been beneficial. The lack of extant letters from Pope Leo I on the 455 CE sack is treated as his powerlessness to address the topic, but S.'s footnote evidences a different issue. Likewise, the Latin and English excerpts do not always fully match (e.g. p. 129 n. 166; p. 130 n. 173), and there are occasional typographical errors among the names of people and places. Reasserting the presence of women amid these events is important, yet sometimes the phrasing obscures the issues: the oddest is when we encounter 'the balance of power among Roman senators, imperial officials, the military and the bishops. The . . . interventions undertaken by these men and women' (p. 97), and one wonders where else S. considers that women had the agency to act and where they are merely a copy-editing product. These occasional issues do not significantly weaken S.'s argument, but create unfortunate distractions. When the book is reprinted (as it merits), these will hopefully be amended.

This book is an excellent thought experiment, and its success should be measured by the questions it provokes as well as the hypotheses provided. S. captures the crisis and opportunity faced by Rome's senators, often driven by urgent, immediate self-interest and self-preservation rather than calculated long-term strategies. Resultant flashes where unfollowed options emerge are exceptionally valuable, for example a Roman empire distinct from Rome's empire. Meanwhile, the 'resilience' of senators, whose power arose from their ability to extract wealth from other provinces via landholding (p. 110), left this reader wondering not only about the violence enacted to occupy Rome but also the violence enacted elsewhere to restore it.

Royal Holloway, University of London

BECCA GROSE
rebecca.grose@rhul.ac.uk