

since? This is the subject of a truly monumental book by Giorgia Proietti.¹³ The work is based on a deep engagement with cultural memory studies, and the relevant introductory chapter should be profitably read on its own; the emphasis on trauma as a significant aspect of memory processes is important. Proietti takes into account the full range of media employed by fifth-century Greeks to memorialize the events of the Persian Wars (poetry, inscriptions, paintings, buildings, cults). She reconstructs three phases in the construction of the Persian Wars memory: after Marathon, after Plataea, and in the context of the First Peloponnesian War. In all these contexts, the memorialization of the war was deeply linked to contemporary events and developments, and the issues and needs they brought to the fore, from the development of Athenian civic identity to the changing nature of Greek geopolitics. The First Peloponnesian War context seems to me a very important contribution of wider significance: if Thucydides' war has shaped how we conceptualize classical Greek history, the First War needs one day to be given its due. Readers of Herodotus will profit massively by re-examining his narrative in light of the conclusions of this book.

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Roman history

The figure of the Roman emperor – ubiquitous yet ever-elusive – remains the flame to which Roman historians are ever drawn. And Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World* remains the yardstick against which all subsequent efforts are judged, and with which they are all inevitably in dialogue.¹ That is true too of *Caesar Rules*, the major new offering from Olivier Hekster, a one-time doctoral student of Millar's, and now one of the leading contenders for his crown.² Hekster's core interest is what the emperor *was*; in particular, how this institution could survive and adapt to changing circumstances despite the fact that formally it did not exist, certainly was not defined, and practically existed in a society antithetical on principle to both monarchy and change. Hekster finds the key for this long-worried lock in 'the presentation and perception of power' (10), and in particular the expectations – from all sides, and at all times – that both consolidated and constrained emperors' authority. To demonstrate

¹³ *Prima di Erodoto. Aspetti della memoria delle Guerre persiane*. By Giorgia Proietti. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2021. Pp. xviii + 546. Hardback €96.00, ISBN: 978-3-515-12887-2.

¹ Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World 31 BC–AD 337* (London, Duckworth, 1977).

² *Caesar Rules. The Emperor in the Changing Roman World c. 50 BC–AD 565*. By Olivier Hekster. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. 400, 56 figures, 4 maps, 9 graphs. Hardback £30.00, ISBN: 978-10-09-22679-0.

this he conceives a largely unprecedented ambition in this context: to consider source material in all media from the late Republic to the reign of Justinian.

The book takes the form of four, long chapter-length meditations. Chapter 1 begins with the naming and depiction of emperors, starting from the tension at the core of the role that the emperor needed to appear superior to all, but without straying too close to those Hellenistic monarchs whose singular elevation was an anathema to Roman mores. How to appear as a king without appearing as a king? That Hekster starts with such a gnarled old chestnut is a sign of the book's ambition; that he finds fresh purchase is a sign of its quality. He demonstrates that the titulature and forms of address, images in portraits, reliefs, and statues, and symbology of dress, crown, and sceptre that slowly evolved helped safely position the emperor in relation to the Republican past but also immediately began constraining his sphere of action. Hekster showcases the messiness of these 'on the ground', complicating simple generalizations about either the geography or chronology of the empire: 'Expectations of how emperors ought to be described and portrayed continued to differ regionally, medially and between social groups' (105). Nevertheless he demonstrates that this variety was not infinite, but, though it widened over time, remained constrained by certain expectations present from the start, evolving via an ongoing dialogue between emperor and subject.

Chapter 2 turns to the key roles emperors played in the military, religious, and civic realms, each a manifestation of the traditional arenas in which a Roman man might excel. Emperors either needed victories in war, the appearance of them, or at the least depiction in a military guise; as each emperor strove to provide this, it built an ever stronger 'prospective memory' for his successors (121), one ultimately disconnected from its historical origins. Similarly, the relationship with the divine remained essential, bridging even the shift to a Christian empire, though its exact manifestation evolved. The emperor's civic role is that most familiar to us, as the imperial face most acceptable to those elites that dominate the literary record – but not, interestingly, the numismatic and monumental one. In fact, this fractal of the imperial image looms much smaller – and declines still further – than the other two.

Chapter 3 interrogates those around emperors, the motley crew of changing characters that made up the 'imperial court', a phenomenon intriguingly different from its comparators in other pre-modern societies (note, for example, the lack of a harem). Hekster surveys the dialectic between the stubbornly tenacious senators and their new episcopal peers in late antiquity, the low-status individuals deliberately – and constantly, though increasingly institutionalized – granted influence via proximity, the changing cabal of smart, salvific, or strong men, and the inevitable dynastic prominence of the imperial family (as well as the nexus of stories, positive and negative, that circulated about them from Augustus to Justinian, in part determined by an imperial centre more sceptical of female influence than were the provinces).

Chapter 4 turns to space, beginning by considering emperors on their own turf, in their capitals, especially Rome and the slow shift of influence to Constantinople. Public appearances – including the successful completion of the various rituals and acclamations they enabled – and public building never stopped being essential to emperors' success. Neither did the expectation that emperors be both benefactors and saviours for the provinces. The increasing cognitive dissonance in late antiquity when they ceased to (be able to) fulfil the latter role is thus a key reason for the failing of the western imperial enterprise. The varieties of the imperial cult also receive attention here. In all these

arenas, memory – whether literary or monumental – of past imperial action shaped current and future expectations. One key difference emerges here between eastern and western coinage, in particular, whereby the latter more closely echoed the issues – both numismatic and political – of the centre, while the east remained influenced by local traditions for longer, and so continued to issue its own coinage long after this had become largely redundant in the west. This chapter thus paints a multifarious picture of how provincials used a largely predictable set of imperial expectations to serve their own purposes.

From this mass of material a number of clear conclusions emerge. One is a sheer variety – even between distinct corpora such as coins or statues – which eludes simplistic characterizations. At the same time, that variety is limited. Hekster is ultimately pushing a picture of continuity. That is in part because much of what was conceived as radically new in the late empire – be it court ceremonial or the importance of eunuchs, for example – was either already present in the earliest days of the Principate, or part of broader changes to society. But because the role of emperor was fundamentally about the expectations of others, and because expectations are moulded by precedent, it could and did evolve. An emperor that stepped outside the boundaries would not be emperor for long, but their very indiscretion itself subtly shifted the imperial ‘Overton window’, making it more likely that similar behaviour by a successor would be accepted. What Hekster therefore exposes is the messiness by which this spectrum of acceptability was created, sustained, influenced, and changed, a process in which emperors, those around them, and the inhabitants of the provinces were equal partners.

The book eschews chronology, an important decision in service of the overall argument about the simultaneous variety and continuity of the expectations around the emperor. That can, predictably, make this an overwhelming read, since the sheer number of examples and weight of evidence – itself a nice nod to Millar’s project – can make it hard for the reader to orientate himself, but it is also one of this monograph’s great strengths. *Caesar Rules* is the sole-authored end product of a five-year, multi-person project, which has enabled the collection, analysis, and synthesis of a corpus of material beyond any individual. The book’s most important contributions are its longue durée analyses of, for example, numismatic or statuary relief that present, often in graphic form, the results of the project’s extensive data crunching. The chronological scope is also important here – by putting early, high, and late empire together, a raft of false divides created not by fundamental differences in source material, but by artificial separations of modern institutional resources, disappear.

Caesar Rules is dedicated to Millar and repeatedly pays due filial piety to him, down to the title, but it is also – in the most courteous way possible – as much challenge as homage. Millar famously concluded that the emperor was what the emperor did, and since the extant record shows him mainly doing paperwork, that defined his core identity. Hekster concludes instead that ‘the emperor was, also, what people expected him to be, and that was to a large extent dependent on what previous emperors were seen or said to have done’ (17). Later he goes further: ‘Because textual evidence still strongly influences modern ideas about the Roman world, the prejudices of the literary sources have strongly shaped modern ideas about emperorship. The emperor may well have spent most of his time on administrative affairs (and in that sense the emperor was what he did), but most of his subjects expected him to be doing something different’ (163). Ultimately, Hekster’s picture supersedes that of Millar because the latter offered

as the whole Roman emperor just one of his faces, that preferred by the Roman (0.)1 per cent – ultimately, a 2D emperor. But from the painstaking work of Hekster and his team, layering up countless images of the emperor, an ever-flickering but nevertheless clear portrait emerges – a 3D emperor, whole precisely because it recognizes that it was the very repetition and variety of external expectations that made him what he was.

The imperial court, focus of Hekster's third chapter, is the subject of two new volumes from Benjamin Kelly and Angela Hug. The first contains nineteen essays and an introduction that together aim to provide a comprehensive thematic coverage of the court.³ As the Introduction lays out, the court has traditionally been studied piecemeal, with studies for the most part either isolating particular roles, stakeholder groups, aspects, or personnel, or else focusing on the collective under a single emperor or period. Kelly and Hug instead attempt a holistic picture from Augustus to the end of the third century (excusing the absence of late antiquity on the basis that with the tetrarchs came a sea change – but see Hekster's arguments about continuity). Their approach is also distinguished by a focus on court culture, and in particular the inclusion of not just tangible elements – buildings, people, and actions – but the intangible – 'the web of discourse and thought that surrounded the court' (4). They define the court not via any particular ancient terminology – since the various linguistic possibilities, *domus Augusta*, *aula*, and *comitatus* all omit key aspects – but via social proximity. So 'we see the Roman imperial court as a circle of people who had reasonably regular verbal interaction with the emperor and/or who provided him with domestic or security services' (7). Those with the potential for such interaction or service but not actually engaged in it at a particular moment are termed 'courtiers'. A distinction between 'inner' and 'outer' courts allows for stratification of proximity. The volume aims not for narrative history, model building, or teleology, but rather the excavation of recurrent patterns, rather nicely dubbed 'a kind of mid-range knowledge that stands somewhere between the all-embracing "model" and the ebb and flow of transient events' (10).

The contents can be briefly sketched. Two opening essays consider earlier influences on the Roman court: Rolf Strootman on Hellenistic precedents not in formal characteristics but cohesive ritual and ideology, and Jaclyn Neel on Republican social practices, especially rituals, patronage, and methods of spatial gate-keeping. Five essays excavate court stratigraphy: Angela Hug on the imperial family, the relatively stable nature of its influence, and how that was recognized and controlled; Ryan Wei and Benjamin Kelly on the aristocracy, in particular the fluidity of the overlapping imperial *amici* and *consilium*, and their tussles for power with emperors and each other; Caillan Davenport and Benjamin Kelly on the complex and changing array of bureaucratic and financial administrators, and which should be considered court members; Dennis Jussen on foreign royals, how and via whom they interacted with the court, when they were themselves part of it, and the power dynamics and social networking both enabled; and Jonathan Edmondson on the iceberg of slaves and freedmen below the court's surface, and the organizational systems that facilitated their efficacy. Three essays take a geographic turn, with Jens Pflug and Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt on the evolution

³ *The Roman Emperor and His Court c. 30BC–c. AD300. Volume I: Historical Essays*. By Benjamin Kelly and Angela Hug. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 585, 15 black and white figures, 2 tables. Hardback £120.00, ISBN: 978-13-16-51321-7.

of the Palatine palaces and their connection to spaces for religion, entertainment, and *otium*; Michele George on the range of imperial preferences in their non-Roman villas; and Helmut Halfmann on the logistics, dynamics, and legacy of the mobile court. The remaining essays each tackle a different theme: Caillan Davenport on the evolution of mechanisms but consistencies of meaning in court ceremony; Matthew B. Roller on the conviviality and control enabled by dining, but not, apparently, hunting; E. del Chrol and Sarah H. Blake on sexuality, in particular the lack of any formal ‘harem’ but the access to power that sexual favourites were afforded; Benjamin Kelly on the potential for, and both actual and conceptual limits on, court violence; Fanny Dolansky on the public and private role of religion and divination; Sarah H. Blake on the presence and precarity of performers (though this considers performance more widely, it might have fitted more naturally with the earlier essays on personnel); Neil W. Bernstein on the court’s literary draw, support, and amplification; and Kelly Olson on appearance and its politicization. The volume ends with an epilogue by Olivier Hekster that returns to the themes of stability and transition elucidated in his monograph. He emphasizes here, as there, the overarching continuity in court life, in both its realities – because of the limited number of tolerated possibilities – and the moral discourse about it. Those shifts that did occur were, again, part of wider societal shifts. Here too he points to the variety of images of the court we have inherited, from a variety of agents with a whole spectrum of interactions with and expectations of it, and again he emphasizes mutual influence between emperor and court.

What is particularly commendable here is that the editors do the hard work of teasing out emerging patterns, in contrast to a common tendency to leave such work to the reader (and on occasion thus obscuring the absence of any such collective payoff). They point first to the incremental evolution of a court style between the poles of Republican simplicity and Hellenistic grandeur, which wavered not just via the alternate interests of emperors and court figures in both directions at different times, but also the need and ability for different presentations to be offered to different audiences. Second, they note the contests for agency between different stakeholders, the assorted means by which these occurred, and the variable success they met – ‘it would be wise to stress dysfunction as much as function’ (13). Third, the essays collectively insist on relentless hierarchy at court, and the ways it manifests. Fourth – and this is a result of their admirable insistence that the court remained such outside of Rome – the editors draw attention to its diverse role in the provinces, whether that be the direct contacts, the brokerage, the custody of foreign courts’ youngest members, or the cultural dissemination it facilitated.

This admirable attempt to draw out overall patterns is amplified in the second volume, a sourcebook that, rather than replicating the structure of the first volume, is instead split into six thematic sections.⁴ The first considers examples of the assorted Greek and Latin terms that equate to our ‘court’. The second exposes the ongoing imperial experimentation with the physical locations of court interactions, both at Rome and outside it, as well as its Hellenistic and Republican precedents. The third

⁴ *The Roman Emperor and His Court c. 30BC–c. AD300. Volume II: A Sourcebook*. By Benjamin Kelly and Angela Hug. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 585, 28 black and white and 21 colour figures. Hardback £89.99, ISBN: 978-13-16-51323-1.

gathers examples of the various interpersonal dynamics at court, be they ties of friends, patronage, family, service, sex, or foreign politics. The fourth covers rituals and ceremonials, covering state, domestic, diplomatic, and religious, and the gradual collective tinkering that gradually produced the evolution of their forms. The fifth is dedicated to how the court was pictured – how such images were constructed, were received, themselves constructed the court, and were, on occasion, destroyed. The sixth considers longer-form narratives of (inner) court crisis – concerning the sordid fates of Messalina, Agrippina Minor, Domitian, and Commodus – to access elite perceptions of the ever-changing, competitive, and emotional machinations surrounding emperors.

As will be apparent, these groupings in the second volume flesh out arguments made in the first. The editors clarify that their selection includes both the most famous pieces of evidence and representative samples of those types that exist in large numbers. A helpful introduction runs through the types of material included; a list familiar to all ancient historians, but here enhanced by comparison with the types of material available for the study of comparative courts in other periods but either never produced or no longer extant for the Roman world. So, for example, in terms of documentary material, while we have Roman inscriptions, papyri, and law codes, we have no archival material, household ordinances, or ceremonial manuals; in terms of autopsy, letters, philosophical treatises, and poetry, yes, but systematic, dedicated insider accounts of court life, no. A particularly nice touch is the inclusion, among material remains, of not just art and archaeology, but computer visualizations – ‘representations of architectural hypotheses’ (33). This second volume also contains, as well as the usual indices, lists of emperors, their most (in)famous courtiers, authors and their works most used, and key terms.

In many ways the imperial court represents a who’s who of those that ran the Roman world. But why did they act as they did? A new and rather surprising answer is offered by J. E. Lendon’s new book, *That Tyrant, Persuasion*.⁵ Rhetoric has not been an understudied topic over the last few decades; indeed, one could make a good case that, broadly understood, it has received more attention than any other, since the literary turn has catalysed an extraordinarily productive boom in appreciation for the rhetorical side of ancient literature. But Lendon is interested in not words but deeds. Specifically, he argues that Roman rhetorical education – in particular, its immersion in declamation, delivering and hearing speeches on set, imagined topics – directly influenced Roman decision-making. It might seem uncontroversial to posit that a shared education can have real world effects, but, put more provocatively, Lendon is suggesting that Roman actors behaved as if they were living in the imaginary city of ancient declamation – what has been dubbed ‘Sophistopolis’ – rather than Rome or its empire.

He does this in four sections. The first presents a survey of Roman education, offering a non-schematic sketch of the evolution and elements of rhetorical training, from Homer to Hadot, encompassing forensic, deliberative, and demonstrative oratory from the Greek world to the high empire. Lendon points to the surprising continuity and stability of the pedagogical offering: ‘the most successful form of education in the history of the West’ (13). A second chapter addresses rhetoric’s social and historical

⁵ *That Tyrant, Persuasion*. By J. E. Lendon. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2022. Pp. 302, 5 black and white figures. Hardback £25.00, ISBN: 978-06-91-22100-7.

significance, tracing scholars' wranglings over whether rhetoric was a means to reinforce or undermine the status quo. Lendon sees it as a tool of intra-elite rather than inter-class stratification, and he makes the case that such sociological readings are often the result of largely accidental intellectual lineages in the modern academy. He prefers to emphasize the depth with which such training wormed its way into the sub-conscious of its young, impressionable recipients.

Section II makes the case that the assassination of Julius Caesar was carried out in accordance with the script dictated by the removal of tyrants in ancient declamatory forensic rhetoric. Lendon traces the now (in)famous events of 44 BCE, emphasizing the oddities of the conspirators' behaviour: conducting the assassination themselves rather than utilizing Brutus' gladiators, their apparent desire to all stab Caesar, actually hindering their attempts; their decision to leave Mark Antony and Lepidus untouched; their surprise both that no other senators had remained in the Senate House, meaning Brutus had no audience for his intended speech, and that the *populus* was equally panicked; their retreat to the Capitoline; their preference for speeches over action the next day; and the lack of any plan for the aftermath of their deed. These choices have traditionally been chalked up to Brutus' legalism, Platonism, or family tradition. Lendon critiques each, and suggests instead that Brutus – known best as an orator – and his fellows were following the script of declamatory assassinations of the tyrant. The distinctive quirks of the latter – that the assassin merits a reward and that there might be dispute over its proper recipient, that the event involved a 'high citadel' from which the assassin would be escorted in celebration only to deliver a justificatory speech, and most of all that the killing would *in and of itself* return things to the rightful way of things – as well as its omissions – most noticeably, any soldiers or supporters of the tyrant – exactly fit, for Lendon, the otherwise inexplicable course of events. Lendon also works to argue that these similarities in plotting were historical parallels, rather than the result of our later accounts 'writing up' events in accordance with an established literary motif.

Section III turns to euergetism in the cities of the empire. It argues that the proliferation in certain types of building rather than others was the indirect result of the rules for epideictic speech. In particular, the construction of monumental *nymphaea* – on the face of it a ludicrous and wasteful conceit – from the Flavian period on, and in Asia Minor in particular, cannot be adequately explained by the evolution of water technology, earlier local architecture, or comparable urban planning elsewhere, but it makes sense when one realizes that praise of a city's water was a key element in speeches in their praise. This 'water-sodden formula of encomia on cities' (76) is best illustrated by Libanius' extraordinarily aquatic speech on his native Antioch, and can also be seen spilling out into the numismatic record. It is therefore entirely explicable that Roman provincial elites, steeped in a competitive rhetoric that highlighted water-provision, should choose the same arena for their real-life inter- and intra-metropolitan competition. A similar case can be made for colonnaded streets. City walls represent a more complex example, since the critique of walls in deliberative rhetoric – 'real men don't need them' – meant they arose much less frequently in panegyrics.

The final section turns to law, and argues that real Roman law bent to accommodate the imagined laws that governed declamation. So, for example, provincials who knew a rule that governed the rhetorical situations of the schools from their own education might, believing it to be real, test it in a provincial court. It would only take one magistrate, similarly familiar, to give it credit, and a snowball effect could follow

that might lead to it becoming an accepted principle in the late antique legal codes. The examples here – including laws concerning *stellionatus*, ravishment and adultery, gratitude, *talio*, manumission, the exposure of children, false accusation, the testamentary consequences of insanity and suicide, the reappearance of the *poena cullei*, dowry recovery, filicide, theatre seating...and bees – are impressive in their detective work, and make a suggestive case. This chapter makes an important contribution to the ongoing scholarly assault on the traditional desire – held by ‘the more moss-backed sort of scholar’ (147) – that Roman law stand pure and distinct from outside influence. Where others have attacked that position via theory or philology, Lendon offers concrete, historical examples. Most interesting, in my view, is the overall takeaway that the reason for rhetoric’s success in these cases is not just familiarity in a world where most judges had limited legal training, but that declamatory law better fit Roman social and moral sensibilities, and thus by ‘common sense’ ultimately supplanted it. It is no coincidence that most of these examples concern the family.

These three case studies – a political assassination, monumental building, and the law – are treated as a proxy for ‘the entire Roman world of public action’ (xiv). Moreover, the conclusion takes a wider lens to argue that the very competing tensions at differing scale levels by which the empire functioned – namely imperial rule, in Rome and ‘consultative republics’ (150) at the metropolitan level – were themselves the result of rhetorical training combining forensic scenarios set at the level of the imagined *polis*, and deliberative oratory pitched at the autocrat. In other words, ‘The ideological assumptions rhetorical education created in the heads of young men about how the political world would be structured at its different levels helped the curious superimposition of different regimes that was the Roman empire to subsist’ (152).

Lendon’s earlier publications have revealed to us the invisible strings that pulled the Roman world this way or that. Here he has undoubtedly shone a spotlight on yet another such neglected dynamic. The general hypothesis is plausible, even seductive. Some of the case studies are also persuasive, but despite the fact that Lendon is wary of overstating his case – in fact, in the case of city walls and law he is keen to emphasize what he considers ‘the fences around the influence of rhetoric’ (xv) – there are a few problems here. First, Lendon’s book is very much about men, and men alone; specifically, ‘the sons of the ruling class of the empire: those of Roman senators, equestrians, and the far more numerous sons of the prosperous class who made up the city councils, the *curiae* or *boulai*, that governed the cities of the empire’ (5). Women get barely a look in. One might reply that any study of the forces that ran a patriarchal society must be so focused, but that excuse will not quite cut it. While the aggression of Caesar’s murderers might be chalked up to their possession of a Y chromosome, it is well known that the civic euergetism of the eastern provinces was the preserve of both sexes. Moreover, some of the legal scenarios Lendon posits as ripe for rhetorical influence centre around female initiative; so Justinian, in attempt to resist apparent pressure for *raptus*, a rhetorical crime, to be treated as a real one, declares, ‘nor shall it be in the power of a *virgin*, or a widow, or indeed of any woman, to ask that the *raptor* shall become her husband’ (120).

It also has to be said that some chapters are less successful than others. Lendon’s insistence that the rhetorical script for Caesar’s assassination was one played out in real time rather than in the imaginations of its later chroniclers is intriguing. He argues: ‘Why assume that men’s education has a greater impact on what they write than on the

deeds they do? Is such thinking not anachronistic, a product of our own assumption that literature is an independent realm that primarily influences other literature?' (51). True, but the methodology of this chapter is to identify some obvious ways in which those later accounts did parrot rhetoric, and then to argue that 'since we can relatively easily guess at and discard from history details from declamation such as these that have found their way into the story of the killing of Caesar, our confidence in the rest is strengthened' (53). That need not follow at all; a more sceptical reader might well think that finding some literary dependencies simply makes it more likely that there are others. Lendon's logic is based on an unspoken and arbitrary assumption about which such parallels are more or less obvious, and thus more or less spurious. Moreover, he argues that, if these authors were parroting declamation, they would have made a better job of it and not missed some elements, but that is nonsensical, since the hypothesis would be that they were writing narrative accounts influenced by declamation, not writing declamation itself. Historians could not very well have totally rewritten the aftermath so that the tyrant was defeated, as Lendon seems to suggest: 'In declamation the happy consequences of killing the tyrant are not supposed to be reversed by the tyrant's surviving followers, but that is precisely what is allowed to happen in the story that survives to us' (55). Lendon has not necessarily missed the opportunity to make a better case that the parallels are historical rather than literary; I am not sure that could be written. Rather, I think some doubt must remain here, and thus a more moderate response to influence arising in both the historical and literary spheres would have been sensible. The chapter takes a still stranger turn when it then suggests that Caesar and Domitian were simultaneously resisting and acquiescing to the model of the declamatory tyrant, meaning that both behaviours that do and those that do not conform to that model become evidence of the putative rhetorical influence. A clearer case of having one's rhetorical cake and eating it there could not be. One feels that the argument has become hoisted by its own petard when its parting shot is that Caesar's own failure to heed warnings on the Ides of March was 'not that he consciously desired to be murdered, but such was the psychological power of the rhetorical model that it placed him under a psychological compulsion to follow it' (63).

Lendon's argument relies, as he says, on the fundamental continuity of Roman education through the centuries, but a series of new publications sets up a debate over that continuity in the late antique period. First, Lillian I. Larsen and Samuel Rubensen's collection of essays seeks to expose the continuities between monastic and classical education, in the face of an orthodoxy that has stressed the former's rejection of the latter.⁶ It emerges out of more recent work that has argued for the integration of monasticism into the wider world and its literate culture. It is particularly interested in the development of monasticism in the east, since traditional scholarship, though interested in the eastern origins of monasticism, has traced its later evolution predominantly in the western, Latin tradition. The monasteries that populated the Roman world from the fourth century on are instead seen here as playing a critical

⁶ *Monastic Education in Late Antiquity. The Transformation of Classical Paideia*. Edited by Lillian I. Larsen and Samuel Rubenson. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. 399, 34 figures. Hardback £90.00, ISBN: 978-11-07-19495-3.

role in the transmission and gradual transformation of classical pedagogical models via the production of ‘monastic “citizens”’ (9).

The volume is in five parts, each containing three essays. Part I, on the terminology and rhetoric of education in Greek, begins with Samuel Rubenson’s opening essay, which serves as a supplementary introduction, demonstrating the linguistic continuities between pertinent Hellenistic/classical and monastic sources. He argues that monasteries should be considered primarily instructional institutions, with more in common with schools than has been appreciated – not just the creation of time and space for learning, but the interest in progress and knowledge, the transmission of a particular tradition and the means and language for doing so, and their informality, mixed audience, and flexibility in use of space. Peter Gemeinhardt then focuses on education in the long reception history of the foundational *Life of Antony*, delineating the translation – both linguistic and cultural – from the original traditions into Greek, then Latin, and its later use, both enthusiastic and critical. Andreas Westergren offers a close reading of Socrates’ depiction of monks involved in the first Origenist controversy, excavating a complex pedagogical layering in riposte to the traditional picture of these actors as wilfully uneducated.

Parts II, III, and IV treat different levels of traditional education: elementary, grammatical and rhetorical, and philosophical. Part II starts with Roger Bagnall’s demonstration, via the format, handwriting, style, and content of monastic letters, of the non-elementary education of their authors. He aligns them with a putative ‘practical or business education’ (100) he thinks ran parallel to the traditional literary one in Egypt. Lillian Larsen exposes the hermeneutical hang-ups that have influenced scholars in their categorizations and thus readings of monastic pedagogical texts. By removing them, she demonstrates the overwhelming continuity in both form and content that produced ‘an exceptionally conventional range of literate pursuits’ (124). Anastasia Maravela searches for the presence of and engagement with texts commonly employed in classical education in monasteries, focusing on Homer and Menander.

Part III begins with two essays on the educative process of two well-known authors, Didymus the Blind and Evagrius Ponticus. Blossom Stefaniw transforms the former before our eyes into a classical grammarian, arguing that only the exempla he employs, rather than his pedagogy, are Christian. He was thus not producing a Christian education, but ‘by anchoring the cultural patrimony in Christian texts...validating Christian young people in participating in the mainstream of privileged society’ (178). Ellen Muehlberger demonstrates in parallel that Evagrius too simply slots biblical exempla into what is otherwise standard classical *ethopoeia*. The latter thus become a new element in our imagination of monastic life and exercise. The third essay, by Mark Sheridan, exposes the higher rhetorical training of the obscure and supposedly rude Coptic monk Rufus Shotep, thereby demonstrating the persistence of said education as late as the end of the sixth century, and deep into Upper Egypt.

Part IV begins with a nice essay by Henrik Rydell Johnsen demonstrating that monastic self-representation emphasizing virtue over education was in fact itself a trope inherited from classical philosophy, Cynicism in particular. Arthur Urbano presents Theodoret’s *Historia Religiosa* and Marinus’ *Life of Proclus* as representing different positions in a debate over Plato, one built on his assumed mutual importance. Daniele Pevarello traces the successive use of the *Sentences of Sextus* by ascetic authors, one important route by which classical philosophy, Pythagoreanism in particular, transitioned into monastic settings.

Part V concerns the manuscript transmission of monastic sources. Britt Dahlman uses the *Historia Lausiaca* and Cassian's writings to argue that manuscript variants might, as with their non-Christian equivalents, be evidence not for scribal error but authorial revision with an eye to diverse audiences. Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott argue that the colophons in the Nag Hammadi Codices are filled with language familiar from monastic settings, and that they thus offer an alternative route to education in the latter. Finally, Jason Zaborowski traces the continuing but creative use of the *Apothegmata Patrum* as a pedagogical text in the Arabic world.

One major advantage of this collection is its role in (further) breaking down boundaries between 'classical' and 'Christian'. The essays taken together argue for mutual exploration and dialogue over a common inheritance, rather than a binary competition between discrete, competing ideologies. That methodology is also a major driver behind Jan R. Stenger's closely related *Education in Late Antiquity*,⁷ but if Larsen and Rubsensen emphasize continuity, Stenger points instead to change. He chooses at once a broader and narrower canvas, in that he aims to cover education in all settings, rather than just the monastic, but is concerned not with pedagogical practicalities, like many of the papers above, but the theorization of education – what he dubs 'educational ideologies, that is, reflections on the conditions, contents, methods, objectives, outcomes, and paradigms of education, both formal and informal' (2). These, he argues, have been neglected in the study of late antique education, which has focused almost exclusively on the history of teachers, schools, curricula, and what modern universities now dub 'the student experience'. This alternate focus allows Stenger to amount a fully-fledged assault on an established orthodoxy – that late antique education was essentially an ossified relic of its classical predecessors, a picture of 'inertia, utter conservatism, and a failure to go with the times' (6). As he rightly notes, that is an unchallenged hangover of the discredited decline model of late antiquity; and it now appears fundamentally unlikely, given the vibrancy and transformation currently seen as typical of this period. What Stenger thus aims to do is to showcase how the changing world of late antiquity was refracted in a fierce and fulsome debate – 'a surge in normative theories' (10) – over the *point* of education.

The first chapter treats the relationship between education, identity, and community, a dynamic that became charged in late antiquity. It considers how Chrysostom, Augustine, Julian, and Sidonius each produced a definitive definition of education that marked out and elevated their own collective over and against perceived antagonists, be they 'Christians', 'pagans', or 'barbarians'. These definitions shared an emphasis on literature, exegesis, canon, hermeneutics (rather than any particular content), and expert tutors. The second chapter addresses how this link between education and identity produced a new discourse around 'religious education', whether for children, adolescents, or monks. Figures such as Basil, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Cassian produced fully worked out theories of pedagogy for learners and teachers alike, which required immersion in the long debate over the value of Christian engagement with the wider world. Chapter 3 considers the 'discovery' of women in late antique pedagogy, outsiders who posed a threat to male dominance in the educative sphere.

⁷ *Education in Late Antiquity. Challenges, Dynamism, & Reinterpretation*. By Jan R. Stenger. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 325. Hardback £75.00, ISBN: 978-01-98-86978-8.

Stenger demonstrates how, as ever, women served as tropes in male-authored texts, a means to critique traditional education precisely because they were unfamiliar. This was in service of an overall reorientation of education away from social reproduction and towards discovery and betterment of the self. That leads naturally in the next chapter to a consideration of the link between learning and life in late antiquity, which we find fully intertwined in the cascade of contemporary biographies of *literati*. This ideal was conceived in opposition to the idea of ‘vocational’ education, and in turn led to the transformation of *otium* as an itinerant state to a permanent – though social – goal. Chapter 5 considers how that ‘existential process of self-formation’ (235) could and should occur, and the transformation to the spaces and means of pedagogy it entailed. Here we see the concrete, highly varied, outward-looking subjects (dog-breeding, anyone?) that enabled students to better their inward lives. The final chapter considers how late antique education engaged with the past, and in particular how it separated the present from the classical.

What emerges is a coherent and surprising picture. In late antiquity a wider set of stakeholders, in private writings and public speeches, the pulpit, and the court, collectively moved to a consensus that education had a fundamentally humanistic purpose, in contrast to the classical focus on functionalist ‘deliverables’. Indeed, it was precisely the lack of interest in the latter that meant it had so little impact on the curriculum, producing that continuity of educative mechanics on which scholars have focused. Proper pedagogy in late antiquity was directed at the whole person, in line with contemporary subjectivities’ investment in personal fulfilment. This educative turn was, Stenger suggests, one dimension of the broader shift in late antique mentalities that renegotiated the relationship between present and classical, what Stenger calls ‘the sense of living in a postclassical age’ (283). There is, I think, an interesting contrast here with Lendon’s argument that a classical education somehow erased the distinction between scenarios of declamation and the reader’s present. There is also a message here for the current ‘culture wars’: ‘Learning...invited the students to take a stance on past and present, to make choices and, in the extreme, to disown certain segments of the past’ (283). Perhaps most important, though, is that Stenger in essence locates in its attitude to education a concrete way in which late antiquity was delineated as a discrete period for not just modern scholars but the ancients too.

Stenger begins his book by retelling the battle over whether the education of the Gothic king Athalaric in Ravenna in 526 should be entrusted to three traditional guardians of letters, or the cabal of his military peers. The latter position won out, to disastrous effect – predictably, for the author who recounted it, the sixth-century historian Procopius. Procopius’ own position as such a guardian has now received a boost in Geoffrey Greatrex’s new translation of his *Persian Wars*,⁸ with a full commentary in a simultaneously published second volume.⁹ This detailed account of

⁸ *Procopius of Caesarea: The Persian Wars. Translation, with Introduction and Notes.* By Geoffrey Greatrex, with acknowledgements to Averil Cameron. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 251, 30 black and white figures. Hardback £75.00, ISBN: 978-11-07-16570-0.

⁹ *Procopius of Caesarea: The Persian Wars. A Historical Commentary.* By Geoffrey Greatrex. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 851, 30 black and white figures. Hardback £140.00, ISBN: 978-11-07-05322-9.

Justinian's eastern campaigns between 527 and 549 represents one of our most important narrative sources for late antique history, and despite its military focus offers wider insights via its excursions on, for example, the Nika riots, plagues, the Persian court, or the plot against John the Cappadocian. Greatrex's translation is based on Averil Cameron's long out of print translation of extensive sections in 1967. An introduction offers a sketch of the historical and historiographical context, covering what we know of Procopius, the historical, political, military, geographical, theological, and cultural landscapes of both the sixth-century eastern Roman and the Persian empires (the former a rather fuller picture), and their love-hate relationship. It also points to the main structural and stylistic similarities to and differences from Procopius' Greek predecessors (in particular Thucydides, Herodotus, and Appian). This introduction and the notes on the translation in this volume are brief, given the existence of the commentary.

The commentary volume contains a much longer introduction fleshing out that found in the translation. It adds more in particular on Procopius' style (spanning his speeches, digressions, treatment of Christianity, historical analysis – both his aggressive judgements and their focus on individuals) and his lexical preferences (including his unusual prose rhythm, prepositional usage, and periphrasis). It also adds an extensive section on Procopius' sources, surveying the possible origins of his material in written texts, oral sources, military despatches, and autopsy, and another on his transmission in authors from Evagrius in the later sixth century to Nicephorus Gregoras in the fourteenth. The commentary itself breaks down discussion into history and historiography, discussing the events in question and then Procopius' treatment of them. It is firmly and deliberately historical; Greatrex recognizes scholars' increasing interest in literary matters, and does include some philological and stylistic points, but demurs from extensive treatment. Since the commentary stretches to over 800 pages, such focus would anyway likely have been necessitated by practical constraints, even if not by authorial interest, but this perhaps produces rather more willingness to accept Procopius' reliability than is reasonable after the linguistic turn. It is not, I think, sufficient to simply note increasing appreciation of an author's literary sophistication but conclude that 'this does not call into question the accuracy of his account' (10). Rather, what is required is an interrogation of our own expectations of and prejudices about historiography.

Among the extensive apparatus repeated in both volumes, a very useful table of names is particularly worthy of mention, triangulating transliterated Greek names, those used by Greatrex, and other versions perhaps more familiar to readers. Both volumes contain an appendix with a translation of Photius' ninth-century summary of Nonnosus' account of diplomatic embassies to southern Arabia and Ethiopia in the 530s and 540s, since it provides an alternative perspective on events Procopius covers. The commentary contains two further appendices with an overview of Perso-Arabic sources for the fifth and sixth centuries, and a gloss on the stade, Procopius' favoured unit of measurement (of which he considered seven equivalent to a Roman mile, in which terms Greatrex argues he was really thinking).

The intention is clearly that the two volumes be usable independently, and to that end all material discussed in the commentary is also translated again there. That practical independence is a sensible decision, but one that, of course, necessitates repetition. I suspect that the legacy of the two volumes will be similarly distinct. Greatrex's translation may not usurp the 2014 offering of Antony Kaldellis, since the

latter includes all eight books of Procopius' *Wars* (of which the Persian iterations only account for the first two),¹⁰ but the thoroughness and range of his commentary, the only substantial one on this text for well over a century, will ensure that it becomes an essential point of historical reference.

The late antique sphere has been blessed with a further important new translation in Simon Swain's rendition of seven of the thirty-three extant orations of Themistius, *Oration*s 6 to 13, those delivered between 317 and 388, and concerned with the emperor Valens, in the 'Translated Texts for Historians' series.¹¹ As Swain notes, these six have not been short of earlier translations – including more than one in this same series! – so the value is not in filling a lacuna but rather in how the presentation and study of this chronologically and politically defined corpus – what Swain calls 'arguably the largest surviving body of advocacy for any Roman emperor' (xi) – can reveal both the particular self-representation of an emperor and his dynasty, and the crucial role that a philosopher (or 'philosopher', for some commentators, ancient and modern) had to play in its formation and dissemination. This volume is thus not just an exercise in translation but a study in why Themistius was so successful under the Valentinians – the answer, Swain argues, a unique triangulation of message, medium, and circumstance.

The first half of the volume contains a long introductory essay. This begins with Themistius' own life and career, from the patronage networks that enabled his rapid rise – of which his gratitude to Saturninus is one of the only remaining traces – to his varying fortunes under Constantius, Julian, Jovian, Valens, and Theodosius. Swain places particular focus on Themistius' role in the expansion of the Constantinopolitan senate in 359, since it was the contacts and credit in the Greek east he thereby banked – what Swain nicely dubs 'sustainable authority' – that made him so useful to the Latin-speaking and relatively uncultured Valens when he was entrusted with that portion of the empire. Swain then delineates that skillset, in particular the facility and willingness to switch between Christian, pagan, and the (at this stage) religiously neutral Hellenic philosophical discourse of the age. Equally important was the idiosyncratic conception of practical philosophy that let him leverage his intellectual credentials in service of the current dynasty, in particular to justify his tendency to flex the conventions of panegyric. These two sections then combine to explain Themistius' fall from favour under Julian, since Julian had a very different conception of philosophy and the role of the philosopher, and had no need of Themistius as a gatekeeper in the east. Then comes closer attention to the Valentinians and the perceived deficiencies Themistius' rhetoric aimed to deflect, primarily their Pannonian origins and all the rustic stereotypes they prompted to the antique mind. As Swain says of *Oration* 8, 'It is doubtful that anyone had ever thought of saying anything so nice about a Pannonian before' (30). In this way Swain paints in few words a tightly argued portrait of Themistius' contextually dependent success.

The Introduction then turns to the orations themselves. Swain glosses the occasion, location (and thus audience), political occasion, and themes for each. *Oration* 6 is an introduction of the Valentinians to eastern aristocrats focused on *philadelphia*. *Oration* 7

¹⁰ Henry B. Dewing and Anthony Kaldellis (trans., rev.), *Prokopios. The Wars of Justinian* (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, 2014).

¹¹ *Themistius and Valens. Oration*s 6–13. By Simon Swain. Translated Texts for Historians 78. Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2021. Pp. 402, 4 black and white maps. Hardback £110.00, ISBN: 978-18-00-85677-6.

is an amelioration of the Valentinian response to the attempted usurpation of Procopius and the announcement of clemency going forward built around *philanthropia*. *Oration 8* is a fifth-anniversary speech focused on tax-relief and financial reform and *Oration 9* a dynastic celebration of the elevation of Valens' two-year old son Galates to the consulship – both aimed to distract from the lack of military progress on the northern frontier. In a similar vein, *Oration 10* sought to present Valens' treaty with the Goths in the best possible light, veiling the practical concessions as the product of Platonic principle. *Oration 11*, a tenth anniversary celebration, returns to *philanthropia*, which, as in *Oration 7*, was in part a response to the emperors' brutal response to an Antiochene plot. Finally, *Oration 13*, the only speech not addressed to Valens but to his nephew Gratian, was designed to bring to the young prince's attention the reverses on the northern frontier and catalyse his involvement, in part by philosophical flattery, in part by facilitation of closer ties between the senates of Rome and Constantinople. When viewed holistically, as Swain summarizes, 'The dominant theme of these seven speeches is Valens' role as a caring and merciful benefactor of the elites, their cities, and their territories, supported by God and thus a king for all humanity' (40). Swain draws out a number of elements, including the relationship between emperor and law, the focus on the emperor's willingness to listen, even to criticism, and the degree and nature of Themistius' later criticism of Valens (including a persuasive case that the unnamed, 'definitely not easy' emperor of *Or.* 34.13–14 must be Valens). Swain also offers here a blink-and-you'll-miss-it tour of pertinent other evidence, covering Ammianus Marcellinus, Eunapius, Zosimus, Eutropius, Festus, Libanius, Symmachus, the author of the *De rebus bellicis*, Synesius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Philostorgius, and the Theodosian Code.

The volume's second half presents substantially annotated translations of the orations. Each also comes with another introductory essay, focused specifically on date, audience, and historical and thematic content. The level of detail and precision here, as well as the cogency of the individual arguments over context, will, I suspect, make these scholars' go-to translations. And the picture of the lucidity and labour that drove Themistius' stellar career is an evocative one. The reader may note that the thesis requires the premise that Themistius' orations were products of a centralized imperial ideological programme – what Swain terms 'strategic communications' (25) – and indeed Swain makes this case indirectly by repeatedly pointing to those occasions when Themistius' role on the imperial *consistorium* seems to be referenced. That case is well-made, but I would have liked to see more musing on the simultaneous positionings that panegyric made possible, where their authors were balancing their official role with representation of the interests of both themselves and their stakeholder groups, on which there has been extensive recent work. Either way, we end here back where we started, with the media in which expectations about emperors were created, whether by them or those around them, and the dialectic between ruler and ruled that made the imperial world go round.

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