

arbitrary event-based epochs of African history such as Punic, Roman, Late Roman, Vandal and Byzantine.

That being said, S. has made an important contribution to our understanding of Late Roman African urbanism, and in so doing has contributed, albeit indirectly, to larger questions and debates about the future direction of Roman African studies.

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L. HALL (ED.), *CONFRONTATION IN LATE ANTIQUITY: IMPERIAL PRESENTATION AND REGIONAL ADAPTATION*. Cambridge: Orchard Academic, 2003. Pp. iv + 181. ISBN 1-9032-8307-8. £25.00/US\$40.00.

This volume is a collection of eleven papers originally presented at the second 'Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity' conference (University of South Carolina, 1997) but not collected in the main volume of conference proceedings edited by R. W. Mathisen as *Law, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity* (2001). Notwithstanding the title of the volume, the papers here, as with the earlier volume, deal with aspects of the law in late antique societies, largely with a view to the function of law in defining the authority of imperial, royal, or ecclesiastic powers. The papers as presented are not grouped into themes but most fall into one of four general topics: the mechanics of the Roman legal system, the developing support of Roman law for the Christian Church, law and familial relations, and law in the post-imperial western kingdoms.

Two papers examine aspects of the mechanics of the Roman legal system: Linda Jones Hall on the teaching of Roman law at Beirut, which she sees as affected by a conscious tradition there of Phoenician ethnic identity, and Rochelle Altman on the role of roughly standardized sizes of legal documents on papyri for indicating the status and importance of their contents, a historical survey beginning in the third millennium B.C. but offering interesting observations on the close similarity in size between late antique Roman imperial letters and both Hebrew and Christian texts. The Christian Church naturally bulks large in a volume on Late Antiquity. Béatrice Caseau's discussion of the legal status of church property, as a community rather than strictly private or public possession, and of the transfer of rights of asylum from pre-Christian temples to churches, is one of the strongest contributions to the volume. John Shean's examination of attitudes of the post-Constantinian Church to the military profession of members (under-scoring the lack of ecclesiastical, pacifist condemnation of military duties) and Mary Sommar's study of Church legislation on the translation of bishops from one see to the other (students of the fifth-century Church histories will know how often prohibitions on the practice were honoured in the breach) both focus on canon law and ecclesiastical self-regulation, rather than imperial legislation.

Two papers concerning family law both discuss late antique practices in much longer temporal perspectives. Charles Pazdernick's discussion of attempts by Justinian to modify the law of succession in accordance with both Christian and jurisprudential concepts, tracing the development of Roman law of succession and intestate inheritance from the ancient Twelve Tables, is one of the most substantial discussions in the collection. Linda Ellis and Marius Alexianu, by contrast, discuss the co-existence in the Balkans, down to modern times, of late Roman/Byzantine written law with *lex non scripta* and customary practices establishing pseudo-familial ties ('collateral adoption', such as blood-brotherhood) between individuals, seeing the late antique period as formative to medieval and early modern practices. Law in the post-imperial western kingdoms is discussed as a function of royal authority by Dmitri Starostine, examining the role of the legal guarantor in the Burgundian kingdom as a politically flexible intermediary between the king and aristocratic families, and by Lisi Oliver, examining the exiguous evidence for the legal category of *laet* in Anglo-Saxon England. Two papers are outliers: Karen Carr's discussion of political identification in the Visigothic kingdom, across three centuries, only raises law as one of a range of instruments for expressing political ideologies; likewise Joanne Noel's examination of Diocletian's architectural programmes pays only nominal attention to his legislation and is not closely integrated with the rest of the volume.

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