Ammianus on Valentinian

AMMIANUS ON VALENTINIAN. S. Bocci *Ammiano Marcellino XXVIII e XXIX. Problemi storici e storiografici*. (Il Potere e il Consenso 3.) Pp. 271. Rome: Aracne, 2013. Paper, €16. ISBN: 978-88-548-5349-2.

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of his work. She ignores the original aspects of the dedication, and finds it unlikely that Ausonius privileged the response of his readers, as suggested by 'Nugent 2000' (p. lxxvi, where she means Nugent 1990). Needless to say, C. does not find it interesting that Ausonius compares Pacatus to the scholars Aristarchus and Zenodotus.

Anyone using Ausonius' text will thank C. for a detailed commentary. The notes are at their strongest when she is describing the context of earlier literature, philosophy, and the culture of Greece and Rome. For example, long notes are dedicated to what we know about each of the seven sages. In general, C. views Ausonius through the lens of Classical Antiquity, as is clear from the opening words of the introduction, 'At the end of the 4th century, when the theatrical genre of Latin literature had already, a long time ago, exhausted its own productivity' (p. lxv). Elsewhere, the movement from Classical to Medieval is viewed as a loss (p. xcv). Unsurprisingly, C. does not have much to say about the poetry of Ausonius. At one point she says that the expression *sententiam peragere* (found in line 134) is 'absent in poetry' (p. 76). For the literary qualities of Ausonius' work, she twice cites a single page from R. Green's introduction to *The Works of Ausonius* (pp. lxv and lxxii). Otherwise she seems to distrust literary analysis. Parallel passages and sources are often cited in the commentary without explanation (for example in the notes to lines 1, 3–4, 5, 6, 7 and 9–10). In any case, C.'s work may facilitate further study of Ausonius' drama, to set it more fully within his literary and social context and to lay out what is original and even imaginative in his lines. For that we can thank C., and for the scholarly labour involved.

On pp. cliii–cliv, C. lists her departures from Green's 1999 OCT edition. Green is not given to reckless conjectures, but C.'s text is considerably more conservative. Of 31 differences, C. reverts from a modern conjecture to the manuscript reading 23 times. C. proposes one change of her own, a lacuna before *and* after line 108 (Green had enclosed the line within daggers and proposed a lacuna only after it). In 9 of these 31 passages, C. admits hiatus where earlier editors had amended the text. In emphasising that Ausonius modelled his iambic senarii on Plautus and Terence, C. depends on earlier work résuméd in M. Deufert, *Textgeschichte und Rezeption der plautinischen Kömodien in Altertum* (2002). C. is probably right that Ausonius allowed hiatus occasionally (pp. cxiv–cxviii), but not in all nine of these cases. In line 123, C. prints *laudat Solonem, Croesŭm || ĭn ămicis habet*, with hiatus after the first short of an already uncommon tribrach, where Peiper had conjectured *inde in amicis*. Odder is the unnecessary hiatus marked in line 213, *tempus me || abire, ne sim molestus: plaudite* (p. cxviii). In line 53, C. admits an unmetrical trochee in the first foot without explaining why she rejects Green's easy transposition. To summarise, individual passages could reward further attention, but C.'s book can now be consulted alongside Green's judicious text and commentary.

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This book is the publication of B.'s second Ph.D. thesis (Università Roma Tre, 2012), some 25 years after his first. The title is misleading. Having started with the intention

of writing a *commento storico* on Ammianus Marcellinus' 28th and 29th books (p. 10), B. decided instead to write on themes arising from Ammianus' final six books, 26 to 31, which cover the reigns of Valentinian and Valens. An extensive introduction and substantial conclusion frame chapters on (1) Ammianus' satirical digression on the senate and people of Rome, 28.4, along with the similar digression at 14.6; (2) the frontier policy of the western emperor Valentinian (364–75); (3) the characterisation of Valentinian. It is hard to agree with B.'s claim in the title and elsewhere that a particular focus remains on the two books that first caught his interest: fewer than half of the twelve chapters in those two books receive any detailed attention and there is plenty of worthwhile discussion of elements from Books 26, 27, 30 and 31. The book's main contribution is on Ammianus' portrait of Valentinian and his government of the west.

Presumably one of the deterrents to a focus specifically on Books 28 and 29 was the fact that the Dutch commentary team of Den Boeft, Drijvers, Den Hengst and Teitler has been efficiently working through Ammianus' latter books, reaching Book 28 in 2011 and Book 29 in 2013, and perhaps B.'s work was originally intended for earlier completion and publication. There is certainly a lack of reference to more recent works suggestive of a book whose publication has somehow been unfortunately delayed. One or two works from 2007, including Den Boeft et al.'s edited volume *Ammianus after Julian* (2007), are cited plentifully; but the only later item in B.'s bibliography, sporadically cited in the text, is their 2011 commentary on Book 28. Among books important for the theme that are entirely absent from the bibliography or notes are D. Brodka's *Ammianus Marcellinus: Studien zum Geschichtsdenken im vierten Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (2009), J. Drinkwater's *The Alamanni and Rome* (2007), my own *Ammianus Marcellinus: the Allusive Historian* (2008) and R. Lizzi Testa's *Senatori, popolo, papi* (2004). The absence of the most important Italian book on the reign of Valentinian, and plentiful reference to English, French and German scholarship, make clear that the problem is not with works being in foreign languages. Still, in a book that tends to start arguing not so much from the text as from judicious and sometimes overly courteous consideration of the opinions of earlier scholars, these are striking gaps. There are also plenty of less striking gaps throughout the work; in general B. is better with works on Ammianus than those on other authors or on the history of the period. The worst effects of his bibliographical shortcomings are to be seen in the introduction. It treats various long-standing assumptions about Ammianus' life as undoubted fact (see now Chapter 3 of my *Ammianus*); the idea, originating with Seeck in 1894, that the last six books are an addition to the original publication, is left all but unchallenged. But there is plentiful scholarship that undermines this claim, including both the uncited Lizzi Testa and various items that *are* cited, and B.'s own plausible belief that Ammianus was inspired to write by Valens' defeat at Adrianople should itself be seen as an argument in favour of unitary publication in *c.* 390.

The chapters proper merit greater attention. In Chapter 1, 'Ammiano e Roma', the digression at 28.4 on the senate and people of Rome is rightly considered alongside its twin at 14.6: these are treated as essentially serious pieces of moral analysis, for all their satirical tone. The conclusion, that Ammianus' audience should be sought in the administrative classes outside Rome, has been well argued already by D. Rohrbacher in Marincola's *Blackwell Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (2007, not cited). Chapter 2, 'La *securitas* dell' impero: la frontiera settentrionale', argues against Drinkwater's view (as expressed in articles of the 1990s, rather than in his uncited 2007 book) that the Alamanni were not a serious foe, and for the importance and efficacy of Valentinian's frontier policy, which is placed in its historical context. Chapter 3, 'Ammiano e Valentinano', turns to Ammianus'

portrayal of Valentinian in the round, which embraces both damning accounts of his cruelty and admiring accounts of his military prowess, and takes on those such as Paschoud who have overplayed its negativity and denied the possibility that Valentinian might be seen as in some ways exemplary. To the suggestion that Ammianus' starkly mixed judgement might reflect now lost sources, B. admits the possibility of influence but argues for the essential autonomy of Ammianus' judgement. He reflects thoughtfully on how Ammianus might relate to senatorial retrospection on Valentinian at the time of writing (in his interesting discussing of engagement with Symmachus, he could also have cited Den Boeft et al. on 26.2.2 and 6, where there is unquestionably allusion to the *Orationes*). The conclusion, 'Ammiano e l'impero al fine del IV secolo', reiterates the argument that Valentinian could rightly be treated as an exemplary military emperor in the world after Adrianople (Brodka's book, mentioned above, would have helped the argument here). The chapter on Valentinian and the thoughtful conclusion are likely to be the parts of B.'s work most valued by scholars.

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AUGUSTINE AND VIRGIL

PUCCI (J.) *Augustine's Virgilian Retreat: Reading the Auctores at Cassiciacum*. (Studies and Texts 187.) Pp. xvi + 192. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2014. Cased, CAD$80. ISBN: 978-0-88844-187-4.

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P.'s volume is the latest contribution to a new generation of scholarship on St Augustine of Hippo's first four writings as a Christian believer, writings that, because of their setting at a villa north of Milan, are commonly known as the Cassiciacum dialogues. Whereas most twentieth-century Augustinian studies more or less strip-mined these early works for evidence of Augustine's alleged neo-Platonic beliefs at the time of his conversion to Christianity, P. and others have shown greater respect for the delicate ecology, so to speak, of Augustine's compositional art, attending to his dexterous use of the dialogue genre, his pedagogical intent and his often subtle engagement of the great authors of classical antiquity.

P.'s specific contribution to the conversation on Cassiciacum is his thesis that Augustine's engagement of pagan literature is best described as a process of 'recuperation', in which classical texts are studied carefully by the Christian believer and then put to good use, despite their often questionable content. Lifting his terminology from the dialogues themselves, P. identifies three prongs to Augustine's method of recuperation: *recensere* or 'reviewing' the text with an eye to those passages that might reasonably be applied to the philosophical debates at Cassiciacum or even to Christian truths (p. 17); *tractare* or 'pondering' the value of those passages (pp. 23–4); and *congruere* or 'applying' or 'fitting' the passages to other matters outside the original narrative, such as Ciceronian scepticism or Christian doctrine (p. 25). With respect to the *auctores* of these texts, Virgil occupies a privileged position at Cassiciacum, followed by Terence. Indeed, in P.'s view, the main object of Augustine's teaching at Cassiciacum is to school his pupils in the Christian transformation of Virgil.

P. contends that recuperation is far from being a rhetorical ornament, a mere apologetical tactic, or a historical necessity (given that at the time, all education meant pagan