

REVIEW

HONORING FRANÇOIS PASCHOUD

Lavinia Galli Milić and Nicole Hecquet-Noti, edd., *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Genevense in honorem F. Paschoud septuagenarii. Les traditions historiographiques de l'Antiquité tardive: idéologie, propagande, fiction, réalité*. *Historiae Augustae colloquia*, Nova series 11. Bari: Edipuglia, 2010. Pp. 258. Hardback, €50.00. ISBN 978-88-7228-581-7.¹

For half a century—first annually at the University of Bonn, more recently triennially among a set of European universities—the *Historiae Augustae Colloquium* has brought together scholars from around the world with an interest in late antiquity in general, and specifically in the collection of biographies of Roman emperors and usurpers commonly referred to as the *Historia Augusta*. For much of its remarkable run, a mainstay of the colloquium has been the Swiss scholar François Paschoud, who is perhaps best known for his magisterial edition of the early Byzantine historian Zosimus. The University of Geneva, where Paschoud spent his career, hosted the 2008 colloquium in honor of the scholar's seventieth birthday, and this volume contains the papers delivered thereat.

Those familiar with the colloquium and its published proceedings are aware that a recurring cast of scholars populates the volumes, and frequent references are made to papers delivered at earlier colloquia at which many in the current audience were in attendance. The argumentation in the essays tends to gloss over issues in dispute that are well known to the colloquium participants—and with the *Historia Augusta*, which seems to be a unified, pseud-epigraphic text written ca. AD 400, a century after the purported dates of composition of its various biographies, there are many issues in dispute. There is not space in this review to point out every contested supposition in each of the volume's fifteen essays, but readers will be aided if they already have substantial acquaintance with previous scholarship.

Antonio Baldini, 'Varie su Zosimo, 2,29 e la *Vita Heliogabali* della *Historia Augusta*' (13–35), suggests that Zosimus' hostile portrayal of the emperor Constantine may have some connection to the *Historia Augusta*'s portrayal of Elagabalus, though such a connection depends on various speculative assumptions about the lost *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus senior.

¹ The *Histos* team apologises to the author and readers of this review for its late appearance, which was caused by unforeseen circumstances.

Anthony R. Birley, ‘Marcus Aurelius’ Northern Wars in the *Historia Augusta*’ (37–49), reviews the primary historical issues concerning the wars against the Quadi and Marcomanni. While the essay does not develop new arguments on the chronology, the Rain Miracle, and the goals of the war, it provides a useful summary of scholarship—including Birley’s own extensive work—over the past four decades.

Bruno Bleckmann, ‘Der Salmasische Johannes Antiochenus: ein Versuch zur Bestimmung seines Profils für die Geschichte der Spätantike’ (51–61), engages in some hardcore *Quellenforschung* in his investigation of the sources of particular fragments from the early seventh-century chronicle of John of Antioch.

Giorgio Bonamente, ‘*Optimi Principes—Divi* nell’*Historia Augusta*’ (63–82), reviews how Christian authors in the fourth and early fifth centuries handled the tradition of honoring a deceased emperor with the title *divus*, and their understanding of the concept of *relatio in numerum divorum*. Bonamente then examines the *Historia Augusta*’s presentation of ‘Good Emperors’ (*optimi principes*), a component of which was reckoning the emperor a *divus*.

Glen W. Bowersock’s essay on ‘Iatrosophists’ (83–91) is a masterful gem about rhetoricians who entertained with speeches on medical topics during the high and late empire. Bowersock points out that the term *iatrosophist* is late-antique, but that it connects to the subcategory of sophists centuries earlier whom Galen dismissively called *logiatroi*—rhetoricians who pronounced on medical topics but did not have real experience as practicing physicians.

Hartwin Brandt, ‘Hermann Dessau, Otto Hirschfeld, Otto Seeck, Theodor Mommsen und die *Historia Augusta*’ (93–103), uses Dessau’s letters to these other scholars (whose correspondence is preserved in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) to shed light on the development of Dessau’s theory—now nearly universally accepted—that the *Historia Augusta* was written by a single author.

Phillippe Bruggisser, ‘Un conflit de conscience dans le métier des armes: le plaidoyer des soldats thébains dans la *Passion des martyrs d’Agaune* selon Eucher de Lyon’ (105–16), examines textual and thematic issues in a chapter of Eucherius of Lyon’s *Passio Acaunensium martyrum*, a text written ca. 430 on the legend of Saint Maurice and the soldiers of the Theban Legion. Bruggisser’s discussion is in preparation for a new edition with translation and notes for the *Sources Chrétiennes* series.

Jean-Pierre Callu and Michel Festy, ‘Alternatives historiennes: de l’*Historia Alexandri* à l’*Historia Augusta*’ (117–33), draw parallels in purpose and style between two pairs of Latin texts: one pair dating to the mid fourth century and dealing with Alexander the Great, namely the *Itinerarium Alexandri* and the *Res Gestae Alexandri Macedonis*, Julius Valerius’ translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes’ Alexander romance; the second pair dating to the late fourth century and dealing with Roman history, namely the *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus senior,

and the *Historia Augusta*. Callu and Festy see the latter works in each pair (the *Res Gestae* and the *Historia Augusta*) as fictionalized and sensationalized treatments of a straightforward listing of details to have been found in the former works (the *Itinerarium* and the *Annales*). Although Nicomachus' *Annales* have not survived, and the assumption that the *Historia Augusta* came from the circle of Nicomachus is speculation rather than fact, nonetheless Callu and Festy have provided a thought-provoking essay, even if their thesis is unproved and unprovable.

Carole Fry's essay, 'Suetonianus quidam: l'auteur de l'*Histoire Auguste* en utilisateur du style suétonien' (135–51), is not what its title might suggest, as it is more an examination of some general thematic and stylistic elements of the *Historia Augusta* rather than just a listing of Suetonian parallels. Fry points out how verisimilitude could be reckoned more important than veracity in ancient historical writing, and that authorial intrusion of claimed personal family remembrances into the narrative of the Vopiscus lives—modeled on Suetonius' use of the same technique—serves to create the appearance of historical sensitivity.

Daniël den Hengst, 'Vir utriusque literaturae non vulgariter callens emunctaeque naris: sur Ghelen, éditeur d'Ammien Marcellin' (153–63), offers a glimpse into the world of the sixteenth-century Czech humanist Sigismund Gelenius. Gelenius spent most of his career editing classical texts for the Basel publishing house of Frobenius. Alacrity seems to have been the primary characteristic of his editions, which creates problems for modern editors trying to determine the sources of particular readings provided by Gelenius.

Stéphane Ratti, 'Un nouveau *terminus ante quem* pour l'*Histoire Auguste*' (165–73), returns to a suggestion of T. D. Barnes that possible parallels in language between the *Historia Augusta* and Sulpicius Severus' *Life of Martin* might indicate that Sulpicius had read the *Historia Augusta*. If so, then the *Historia Augusta* must have been composed before 397. The passages cited, however, are less than convincing as evidence of direct borrowing, so they are unable to assist in more securely fixing a composition date for the *Historia Augusta*.

Guy Sabbah, 'Ammien Marcellin et les idéologies dominantes au IV^e siècle' (175–93), looks at Ammianus' views on important political themes in the fourth century—such as the frontier, the conflict between Christianity and Roman tradition, the emperor as *rector*—as well as the historian's opinions of Constantine, Constantius, and Julian. The essay is primarily a summary introduction to Ammianus, and specialists may wish to refine some of the broad outlines Sabbah provides.

Jörg A. Schlumberger, 'Epitome, *Historia Augusta* und Marius Maximus?' (195–209), examines what in the *Historia Augusta* may have derived from the early third-century historian Marius Maximus. As Schlumberger recognizes,

there has been far too much ink spilled on this topic, which has served primarily to obfuscate rather than clarify. This addition to the bibliography is cautious in its support of Marius Maximus as a source for the *Historia Augusta*, though it can be added—from an argument not noted by Schlumberger—that, as there is no good evidence that the author of the *Historia Augusta* was aware of Cassius Dio, coupled with an understanding that Dio's contemporary history was primarily based on written sources only sparingly enhanced by autopsy, the parallels between episodes in Dio and the *Historia Augusta* likely reflect borrowing by both from a common source, who may well have been Marius Maximus.

Domenico Vera, 'La tradizione annonaria nella *Historia Augusta*' (211–27), surveys the development of the government's distribution of free food in Rome during the second and third centuries. The *Historia Augusta* is perhaps the most important literary source for this institution, though the information provided may be affected by perceptions of the *annona* in the later fourth century.

Giuseppe Zecchini, 'L'*Historia Augusta* da Memmio Simmaco a Paolo Diacono' (229–35), following in part an initial suggestion by Aldo A. Settia, proposes that two episodes in Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum* may have been patterned on similar episodes in the *Historia Augusta's* *Life of Aurelian*. Zecchini is cautiously optimistic about the parallels, though the connections are not overwhelmingly convincing.

The wide range of topics reflected in the published papers from this *Historiae Augustae Colloquium*, while characteristic of the series as a whole, is particularly appropriate to honor François Paschoud, whose encyclopedic knowledge of late antiquity is similarly widespread. Scholars of late antiquity, and of the history of the scholarship on late antiquity, may find useful suggestions within its various essays.

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