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REVIEW–DISCUSSION

PROGNOSTICATION, HISTORY, AND RHETORIC IN THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES

Michael P. Hanaghan, *Future Knowledge and Imperial Acceptance in Late Antique Historiography and Epideictic Rhetoric: From Constantine to Honorius*. Historiography of Rome and Its Empire 20. Leiden: Brill, 2025. Pp. xi + 286. Hardback, €116.00. ISBN 978-90-04-71478-6.

In late 362, the Christian sophist Prohaeresius, who taught rhetoric at Athens and weighed whether to align himself with the Emperor Julian, asked the reputedly prophetic hierophant of Eleusis if the emperor's new tax policy, which favoured supporters of traditional cult, would be permanent. In so doing, Prohaeresius discreetly and indirectly enquired into Julian's future, particularly his lifespan. The emperor's tax breaks will not be permanent, predicted the hierophant, and Prohaeresius took heart at this reply.[1] Similar instances of an individual seeking or claiming to possess future knowledge were a frequent component of late antique historiography, and they took on greater significance when that individual was the emperor. But passages such as the one above by the historian and rhetorician Eunapius of Sardis present an interpretative problem: how to evaluate and to understand Prohaeresius' request and the hierophant's reply? On an historical or a literary basis, or both? Should we believe that this exchange happened and/or that Eunapius conceived of it as aiding him in advancing his view on Prohaeresius? On its face, Prohaeresius' enquiry seems to cast doubt on his Christian identity, in that he sought out future knowledge from a devotee of traditional cult.[2] Perhaps his enquiry speaks to a religious *koinē* in the fourth-century

[1] Eunap. *VS* 10.85–86 (Goulet ed.), for Prohaeresius' enquiry to the hierophant after Julian issued his edict on teachers on 17 June 362 (*CTh* 13.3.5); on which, see Marcos (2019b) 414–17. Cf. Eunap. *VS* 7.34–6, for Julian enquiring into the future with the hierophant in 361. See also Jul. *Ep. ad Prohaer.* (31 Bidez, 14 Wright), for Julian's response in late 361/early 362 to Prohaeresius' enquiry into the motives behind Julian's return (Τῆς δὲ καθόδου τὰς αἰτίας) to Constantinople; cf. McLynn (2014) 131–3; De Vita (2022) 33 nn. 157–8; and Watts (2023).

[2] Cf. Goulet (2000), who argues that Prohaeresius was not a Christian based on this and other testimonies.

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empire.[3] Future knowledge occasionally also found a place in panegyrics on and before emperors, and Hanaghan (henceforth H.) considers its appearances in this genre and in historiography using literary analysis to argue for its role in a historical process, namely, how emperors acquired and maintained their positions and authority.

H's monograph consists of fourteen short chapters, each with notable vignettes, divided into four parts that are organised chronologically. After mentioning several studies that have inspired his approach, such as Potter's *Prophets and Emperors* (1994), Barnes' *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (1998), and two recently published edited volumes on emperors, emperorship, and their representation (Burgersdijk and Ross 2018; García Ruiz and Quiroga Puertas 2021), H. explains his monograph's *raison d'être*: 'Whereas most of these studies have focused on a single emperor or author or mode of knowledge, this book offers a systematic assessment of the political and literary significance of divinatory episodes to imperial representation across the fourth century, evident in a wide variety of authors and embracing all modes of divine, future knowledge, from a device similar to modern Ouija boards to Christian visions' (12). H. continues: 'This book argues that the literary and rhetorical possibilities of historiography and epideixis enabled authors to assert and emphasise that imperial future knowledge was proof of the emperor's divine acceptance', and that 'categorises the divine as an acceptance group'. It also sees 'acceptance as being relevant to both the present legitimacy of an emperor and their place in imperial memory' (16). Many different models have been posited for how we moderns can understand the emperor's relationships with his subjects and the very basis of the emperor's position (*statio*), such as constitutional authority, charisma, Weberian legitimacy, consensus, and acceptance. H. adopts and adapts the acceptance model of Egon Flaig:[4] 'Acceptance was more than simply legitimacy, as it required perpetual affirmation, since legitimacy offered no protection from usurpation … this made acceptance forward looking, since usurpation arose from the belief that a better future would be had if another emperor could be found' (15). H.'s adaptation lies in his inclusion of an emperor's claims to possess and to be able to obtain 'future knowledge' in the acceptance model.

In Chapter 1 (25–38), H. begins with Constantine's assumption of Augustan rank at York on 25 July 306 but fails to note that there has been some debate regarding the emperor's rank at this stage (25 and nn. 1–2), whether Constantius' army proclaimed him Augustus or Caesar, since our literary

[3] On which, see Salzman (2007).

[4] See Flaig (2015), for a step-by-step explanation of his model and how it differs from earlier models; and Sommer (2011), for the complexities of authority and a critique of Flaig's model.

sources provide both possibilities.[5] Two Constantinian panegyrics that H. examines in this chapter (*Pan. Lat.* 7(6) and 6(7)), which offer early testimonies from 307 and 310, are ambiguous on the matter, as is Eutropius much later in his *Breuiarium*.[6] To be sure, the title *imperator* usually indicated an Augustus.[7] But sometimes well-informed authors used *imperator* to refer to a Caesar. And so, *imperator* also could denote one who holds imperial rank generally, with the exact grade of that rank undefined without additional, illuminating titles.[8] In the case of Constantine, epigraphic evidence shows him holding the title of 'Imp(erator)' while only a Caesar in late 306/7, evident by the clarifying titulature of *nobilissimus Caesar*.[9] In 306, it is conceivable that Constantius preemptively promoted his son to imperial rank, to Caesar, in order to fill the vacancy that would be created by Severus' elevation to Augustus, who would be filling the vacancy created by Constantius' death. In other words, Constantius may have desired to deny Galerius or Severus the choice of who would be the second Caesar with Maximinus Daza. If so, Constantius likely wanted to grant his son greater protection through support of his army. Perhaps he also wished to fulfil his son's aspiration, for two literary sources testify to Constantine's ambition to be emperor.[10]

[5] See Kuhoff (2001) 796–802, esp. 796–9; Wienand (2012) 119–27; and Waldron (2022) 160, for Constantius' army having proclaimed Constantine *Caesar*. Wienand (2012) 120, 125 sees Constantine as a 'tetrarchic Caesar' whose position was consistent with 'tetrarchic regulations' in 306, but the degree to which *genus* and *virtus* were compatible in relation to the succession is still debatable.

[6] See Marcos (2023b) 119 and n. 93. Eutropius is clearer elsewhere when he notes the Senate of Rome's approvals of the elevations of Valerian, Claudius, and Quintillus as emperors by their armies (9.7, 9.11.1, 9.12.) and Julian's elevation to Augustan rank by his army (10.15.1). Aurelius Victor, who wrote under Constantius and Julian, also vaguely records that Constantine took hold of imperial power in 306 (*imperium capit*, 40.4), as does the *Epitome*, which echoes that Constantine *imperium capit* (41.3); cf. Stover and Woudhuysen (2023) 18–19, who have compellingly and painstakingly demonstrated that the *Liber de Caesaribus* (*Historiae Abbreuiatae*) and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (*Libellus breuiatus*) are both epitomes of a single, impressive, and largely lost work by Victor, a *Historia*. For a close but not exclusive connection between *imperium* and *imperator*, see Kuhoff (2001) 797.

[7] See *CIL* 3.6633 = *ILS* 657 for the clear inference that the *imperatores* Galerius and Severus were *Augusti* (late 306/7); Lactant. *DMP* 25.5; Barnes (1982) 25–6; Nixon and Rodgers (1994) 191 n. 2.

[8] See Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 41.10: … *ea tempestate imperatori nostro Constantio insigne Caesaris datum* (Constantius II); Fest. 25.2, who refers to the Caesar Galerius as *imperator*; and Amm. Marc. 15.8.21, 16.5.11, 16.5.12, 17.8.3, who presents the Caesar Julian as *imperator*. In one of these instances Ammianus has Julian refer to himself as *imperator* in direct speech (16.5.12).

[9] E.g., *CIL* 13.9130; *ILS* 682; *AÉ* 1957, 228; *AÉ* 2003, 1267. For additional Constantinian inscriptions, see Grünewald (1990) 181f; and Van Dam (forthcoming). For Severus and Constantine as Caesars bearing the *praenomen imperatoris*, see Wienand (2012) 126 n. 110.

[10] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.2; Zos. 2.8.2–3; Waldron (2022) 170.

This debate in no way detracts from H.'s argument for the political and literary significance of Constantine's supposed possession of future knowledge, that it is correlative with divine acceptance. On the contrary, if Constantius' army did indeed proclaim Constantine *Caesar*, then this would strengthen H's claim. It is in this light that we can read a relevant passage from the anonymous panegyric of 307:

> For your maturity is so great that although your father had left you imperial power, nevertheless you were content with the title of Caesar and preferred to wait for the same man to declare you Augustus who so declared him. Thus indeed you judged that this imperial power would be finer not if you had acquired it as an inheritance by right of succession, but if you had earned it from the supreme Emperor as due reward for your merits (*Pan. Lat.* 7(6).5.3, trans. Nixon and Rodgers).

This reading, of a Constantine who had been declared Caesar but refrained from claiming Augustan rank, enhances the importance of his marriage to Fausta in 307. More precisely, it enhances the value or potency of the fore-knowledge that he is said to have possessed in expecting this matrimony (28–9). Constantine can only seriously have gained from such a union if it offered him increased legitimacy and prestige, and the anonymous panegyrist artfully asserts that Maximian (*summus imperator*) made Constantine an Augustus, the grade Constantine had prudently and providentially waited for (*Pan. Lat.* 7(6).1.1, 2.1, 5.3, 8.1).

H. also asserts Constantine's divine acceptance in his famous and multivalent vision of Apollo, which has proven so contentious in modern scholarship and is likely to remain so. H. rightly underscores the power of the panegyrist's passage from 310 (*Pan. Lat.* 6(7).21.2–5), which connected Constantine to divinity broadly that in turn indicated divine acceptance of his position and predicted, rightly, a reign of three decades. That Constantine was a worthy military and political leader is an implication of this acceptance (30–4). This image, of a divinely sanctioned military and political leader, is underscored and developed in the third and final vignette of Chapter 1: Constantine's march on Rome that led to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge on 28 October 312. In 313, after the emperor's victory, an anonymous panegyrist singled out for praise Constantine's decision to invade Italy and liberate Rome from Maxentius against the advice of nearly all of his comrades and generals (*Pan. Lat.* 12(9).2.3–4). The panegyrist thus highlight's Constantine's exceptionalism, evident in his divine foreknowledge (35). Here H. might have said more. Interestingly, the panegyrist says 'nearly all' (*omnibus fere*) were silently murmuring and openly fearful of an adverse omen, which means that not all were. This raises the possibility that some(one) had offered advice in favour of an incursion into Italy, that there had been a minority report. If so, this

indicates that Constantine considered differing views, and he chose to follow the correct one, a reading that is not incompatible with the panegyrist's claim that the emperor enjoyed divine *providentia* and acceptance, although this reading requires the emperor to share his future knowledge and/or wisdom with a subordinate. The anonymous panegyric of 313 (12(9)) ends this chapter, which is misleadingly titled 'A Metamorphosis from *Panegyrici Latini* 7(6) to 4(10)', since *Pan. Lat.* 4(10) is mentioned but its representation of Constantine is not discussed (26).

The following three chapters (39–74), which complete the unit on 'Constantine and the Tetrarchy', highlight Lactantius and Eusebius as conveyors and expositors of this emperor's displays of future knowledge and so his displays of divine acceptance. Specifically, H. focuses on four critical and complementary texts that complete our sources' presentation of a predictive because divinely supported Constantine: Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum* and Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, *De laudibus Constantini*, and *Vita Constantini*. In these texts readers are shown a dichotomy between correct and incorrect oracular interpretation, between Christian and pagan divinatory knowledge of crucial outcomes. For example, Lactantius and Eusebius each present a pagan or paganish emperor who had misread and so misunderstood traditional means of divinatory knowledge in a final battle against Constantine. In Maxentius' case, Lactantius tells us that the Sibylline books declared that 'the enemy of the Romans would perish', and so, confident that Constantine was that enemy, Maxentius confronted his rival and soon after perished by drowning in the Tiber next to the Milvian Bridge (45). Later, Eusebius presents a Licinius who received and responded to a similar prophecy: his pagan prognosticators said that 'there would be a victor over his enemies' and that 'one would prevail in his war with Constantine' (72). As H. notes, the ruler who misunderstands an oracle is a *topos* that goes back to Herodotus (45 n. 23). But we can go further. The forecasts that both Maxentius and Licinius misread above are reminiscent of the *locus classicus* on monarchic misinterpretations of oracular pronouncements: the Delphic oracle that Croesus received and misunderstood before his conflict with Cyrus, that if Croesus attacked the Persians he would destroy a great empire (Hdt. 1.53, an oracle with modern relevance). In fact, Eusebius compares Constantine with Cyrus (*Vit. Const.* 1.7.1), and so implicitly compares Licinius with Croesus. While a historiographical *topos* (Ammianus would more aptly utilise it later for Julian's invasion of Persia: 23.5.8–9), the *exemplum* of Croesus sheds some light on Eusebius' motives and methods in fashioning his Constantine. H. explains Eusebius' 'encomiastic turn' from history to panegyric as 'commensurate with the abandonment of even cursory historiographical criticism of Constantine, the kind which might have maintained a veneer of historical objectivity' (59). In so doing, H. comes close to admitting that Eusebius' work is apologetic or

even ideological, at least partly. As for Lactantius, he became, according to H., 'one of the first authors to claim the fall of the tetrarchy could be understood as the failure of pagan divinatory knowledge. It remains unclear if Lactantius knew the Latin panegyrics in praise of Constantine directly, or if Eusebius knew of Lactantius' work' (49). What role, if any, had Constantine's court played in the formation of Lactantius' premise?

The second Part, 'Constantius II and Julian', consists of five chapters and is the largest unit in this monograph. In Chapter 5 (77–92), which centres on Julian's divine foreknowledge and acceptance as asserted by Libanius in his *Orations* 13, 12, and 15, H. well notes that Libanius makes two simultaneous and contradictory claims about Julian's proclamation at Paris in early 360: either his soldiers spontaneously acclaimed him Augustus or they sought divine assent before doing so (87).[11] H. rightly highlights these dual claims but stops short of exploring their possible implications. As I have briefly noted elsewhere, it seems that there were two distinct phases in the lead-up to Julian's acclamation as Augustus: (1) Julian's officers weighed their situation and decided to inspire or incite some of their troops, (2) who in turn decided to elevate Julian to the higher rank.[12] Both officers and soldiers were undoubtedly motivated out of a strong sense of loyalty and genuine feeling towards their Caesar and out of a desire for rewards which only an Augustus could provide. Libanius may be unwittingly describing these two phases, or groups: the first, officers who conspired to promote Julian and who consulted the gods beforehand, and the second, some of their soldiers, whom the first group subtly incited to act and who did indeed act spontaneously, from these soldiers' point of view. In short, Libanius may have combined these two groups in order to avoid describing a situation that in any way resembled a conspiracy by Julian and/or his soldiers. As H. observes, Libanius and Julian's literary relationship was a dynamic one, since the rhetorician crafted orations by 'blurring any meaningful temporal distinction between the 'presentism' of epideixis and the hindsight of historiography, at least for the claims made during Julian's reign' (81).

Chapter 6 (93–110) revolves around Gregory of Nazianzus' two invectives against Julian (*Orations* 4 and 5), which the future bishop wrote skilfully and immediately after the emperor's death on 26 June 363. We are shown how Gregory displayed his *paideia* in his first invective (*Or.* 4) and utilised it to invert an image of Julian as an epic hero who possessed divine knowledge and so acceptance, all the while revealing his historicising ambition as the first to set the terms in posthumous debates on the dead pagan emperor. In his second invective (*Or.* 5), Gregory showcased Julian's failed attempt to rebuild the

[11] See also Bouffartigue (2002) 181–2, regarding Libanius' options on how to understand and to present the motive force behind the proclamation.

[12] Marcos (2023b) 113 n. 54.

Jewish Temple at Jerusalem and framed it, according to H., as 'motivated by Julian's hatred of Christians, and his efforts to find support from the Jews in that regard, as the rebuilding of the temple would allow Jews to conduct animal sacrifices' (105). But we can go further. As H. has thus far shown, future knowledge formed a dynamic relationship with late antique historiography and epideictic rhetoric. Julian's action was likely also motivated by Jesus' well-known prediction as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels: in essence that the Jewish Temple would be destroyed and never rebuilt (Matthew 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2; Luke 21.5–6). Given his great familiarity with the New Testament, the emperor likely knew of this prophecy and saw it as an opportunity to strike against Christianity both intellectually and spiritually.[13] If so, we can see more clearly the place of future knowledge in a vibrant and ongoing dialogue: Jesus (is claimed to have) made a prophetic statement; Julian responds to the prophecy and seeks to invalidate it; and Gregory highlights Julian's failure to do so and uses it to deny this pagan emperor divine knowledge and acceptance in an effort to, in turn, deny Julian a place in imperial memory and in historiography. We are then shown Gregory throwing into relief Julian's ultimate failure: his inability to foretell his own death in Persia, which H. describes succinctly. In the concluding section of his chapter, H. explains Gregory's lines of attack as partly a response to how early supporters of Julian sought to remember him *post mortem*, such as in the epitaph that apparently graced his tomb in Tarsus (110). And yet, Julian's supposed epitaph is variously recorded by several different writers, the earliest of whom is Zosimus from the fifth century. No evidence, literary or material, from the fourth century exists for this epitaph, which has been viewed as suspect,[14] though it may genuinely reflect how some of Julian's supporters sought to memorialise him.

In Chapter 7 (111–21), H. focuses on Libanius' monumental, influential, and retrospective *Oration* 18 or *Epitaphios Logos* (Funeral Oration) on Julian, which has been dated to as early as 364 and as late as 368. H. favours 'ca. 365' (111) but considers 'ca. 368' as a possibility (113, 120); in any case, H. sees Libanius writing *Oration* 18 after Gregory wrote his *Orations* 4 and 5. H. well demonstrates how Libanius extensively revised his presentation of signs of the emperor's divine acceptance in *Orations* 13, 12, and 15, and the possibility that Libanius did so in order to respond to Gregory's criticisms of Julian in his two invectives, which sought to undermine if not eliminate Julian's place in imperial memory by highlighting instances of the pagan emperor's lack of divine, future knowledge. H. illustrates a pivoting and a nuancing of Julian's future knowledge in Libanius' retelling of this emperor's entry into Gaul as

[13] See Marcos (2019b) 376 and n. 17. For Julian's great familiarity with the New Testament, see his *Contra Galilaeos*. H. later notes Philostorgius and Theodoret's relevant comments about Julian's motivation in attempting to rebuild the Jewish Temple (152).

[14] See Paschoud (1979) 234–5.

Caesar, his acclamation as Augustus, his response to being informed of Constantius' death, his aim in invading Persia, and his related death there. Libanius was a fierce defender of Julian's imperial reputation, so much so, according to H., that he shifted 'from the legitimacy of Julian's acclamation to the strength of his endorsements once the acclamation was made, and so [his account] is a far more effective and far-reaching use of divine, future knowledge to assert Julian's imperial acceptance in perpetuity' (115). The later *Oration* 18 is dated the more likely Libanius read Gregory and used his own version to respond to him. Future remembrance and acceptance were mediated through retrospective and ongoing dialogue.

In one of the more interesting chapters (for this reviewer, anyway), H. sheds new light on Ammianus' presentation of Constantius II in his *Res Gestae*. It is well known that Ammianus found fault with Constantius as emperor and often crafted his narrative of events, actors, and their motives to the latter's detriment. In Chapter 8 (122–43), H. employs intra- and intertextuality to reveal and explain another layer of Ammianus' portrait of Constantius by reading the emperor's laws banning divination alongside passages in the historian's text that neatly present a foolish, anxious, and paranoid leader wary of the divinatory abilities of others. As H. demonstrates, Ammianus' Constantius was an emperor who lacked the ability to obtain or understand future knowledge and so lacked divine acceptance, especially in contrast to Julian as Caesar. Constantius issued several laws in 357 and 358 in a bid to restrict divinatory practices to all but himself, insecure as he was about his safety. He fixated on minor signs, such as the appearance and sounds of mice and weasels and the death of a former tribune, and misread them. On the other hand, Ammianus' Julian, as H. shows him, 'is confident and anticipates correctly and rationally the best course of action while on campaign … Julian's actions display the very acceptance that Constantius is in a seemingly endless (and fruitless) struggle to obtain' (133). This conclusion coheres well with recent scholarship on Ammianus' Constantius, whose legitimacy and suitability as emperor suffer in contrast to Julian's.[15] Moreover, H. connects Ammianus' portrait of Constantius to how the emperor was remembered in the 380s during the Altar of Victory controversy, in which Symmachus and Ambrose varyingly used Constantius as an (anti-)exemplum in arguments over the altar's restoration to Valentinian II, Theodosius, and Arcadius ca. 384. H. plausibly sees Ammianus' portrait as his contribution to contemporary debates regarding imperial restriction of traditional cult. How might an emperor who engaged in a crackdown on traditional cult be remembered? Constantius' complicated place in imperial memory in the 380s served as a cautionary tale, perhaps one intended for Theodosius (139–43).

[15] E.g., see Ross (2014); Marcos (2015); (2022); (2023b) Ch. 3; and Baker-Brian (2022) 84–90, esp. 86–7.

In Chapter 9 (144–63), which completes Part II on Constantius and Julian, H. considers how fifth-century ecclesiastical historiographers—Rufinus of Aquileia, Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, and Theodoret—innovatively recounted divinatory episodes during Julian's preparation to invade Persia and related to his death there in order to deny the emperor's claim to divine support and so deny his divine acceptance. We are shown how Rufinus, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret did so by 'embellishing and redacting or otherwise altering key elements of the original discourse' (144), particularly the fourth-century discourse against Julian, such as Gregory of Nazianzus' two invectives, John Chrysostom's homily *De S. Babyla*, and Ephrem the Syrian's *Hymns*. As this chapter makes clearer, H. takes the position that late antique historiography concerned itself with a rhetorical construction of reality and focused on creating a certain state of mind in readers (see p. 144 n. 4, cf. pp. 6–10). To be sure, fourth- and fifth-century literary culture was rhetorical culture. H. begins with the vignette of the relocation of the remains of Babylas—a third-century bishop who had been martyred in Antioch—as recounted by John Chrysostom. Julian had ordered this relocation because of his belief that the presence of Babylas' remains in Daphne, a suburb of Antioch, prevented oracles from the Temple of Apollo there. H. well notes how Theodoret reframed Julian's order in the context of his pending Persian invasion to show that the emperor sought to reinvigorate Apollo's oracular pronouncements in the interest of achieving a military victory with the god's blessing (148). But no such blessing came, which duly foreshadowed Julian's military and divine failure in Persia. H. then connects the destruction of the Temple of Apollo at Daphne with Sozomen's claim that the emperor replaced a prominent statue of Christ in Caesarea Philippi with a statue of himself, whose subsequent ruin foreshadowed his death. Other vignettes are Gallus and Julian's divergent efforts to build a shrine dedicated to another Christian martyr, S. Mammas, and Julian's attempt to rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Notably, H. also showcases and explains Ephrem the Syrian's (rhetorical) abuse of Julian's corpse and the significance of its placement in a wooden coffin. By mocking Julian's corpse and the quality of its receptacle, Christian writers seized on the opportunity that the emperor's cadaver presented to undermine his place in imperial memory. This process continued in descriptions of Julian's funerary procession, partly witnessed by Ephrem at Nisibis, whereby the emperor is presented as unaccepted by spectators (153–61).

Julian had died in Persia, but supposedly not before cursing Christ. According to Theodoret, Julian had exclaimed in despair: 'You have conquered, Galilean!' As I have argued elsewhere, Theodoret, with inspiration from Philostorgius, altered Julian's last words as first recorded by Eutychianus

of Cappadocia.[16] This editing has implications for how we might understand predictions and prophecies related by ecclesiastical and other historians, for if Theodoret could wilfully alter last words he would not have been above inventing predictions, all in the service of what he likely saw as the greater truth of his religion. Indeed, such is almost surely the case with Theodoret's more fantastical and less credible claim that Julian sacrificed a pregnant woman at Carrhae (Harran) prior to invading Persia.[17] H. rightly treats these remarks and representations as reflecting a rhetorical construction of reality, one intended to condemn Julian's memory for posterity (158–9, 162–3). But Theodoret and other Christian writers were not completely successful in their condemnation, for Julian received an official apotheosis or *consecratio* and his place in imperial memory became secure, as seen in imperial legislation issued by his successors.[18] Moreover, the emperor Jovian paid his respects to Julian at his tomb in Tarsus, while an unknown emperor, perhaps Theodosius I, ordered Julian's remains transferred to Constantinople where they were placed in a porphyry sarcophagus.[19] In the end, as H. has helped to underscore through several vignettes, 'the contest of imperial acceptance is not simply a political struggle in the present, but an intellectual and cultural contest waged across time' (163).[20] But how useful is H.'s acceptance model for the memory of a dead emperor such as Julian when his successors could and did display acceptance of him?

Chapters 10 and 11 (167–91) illuminate aspects of Valens' presentation in Ammianus' history, in the fifth-century ecclesiastical histories of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, and in Dalmatius' hagiographic life of the monk Isaac, who is said to have challenged Valens and prophesied his death. H. demonstrates how Ammianus depicts and rebukes Valens and his attitude and responses to future knowledge during two notable and impactful periods of the emperor's reign: his magic and treason trials at Antioch in 371/2 and his disastrous defeat and death in the Battle of Adrianople in 378. H. shows Ammianus using Valentinian's magic and treason trials at Rome under the infamous *uicarius urbis* Maximinus to foreshadow Valens' own trials at Antioch, which focused on the (mis)use of magic and divination to obtain knowledge of

[16] See Marcos (2023a).

[17] See Marcos (2019b) 375–7. Theodoret is the first known to have recorded this claim, and if he didn't invent it, he lacked a healthy amount of historical scepticism. His claim may have come from a legend that circulated at or near Antioch, or a misattribution; cf. Amm. 29.2.17, for the tribune Numerius, who was accused of cutting open the womb of a pregnant woman in order to divine the future but was ultimately spared by Valens.

[18] See Marcos (2019a) 525 n. 34; and *Cod. Iust.* 10.32.61.

[19] For Jovian having paid his respects to Julian at his tomb, see Amm. 25.10.5. For Julian's porphyry sarcophagus in Constantinople, see Mango (1962); Johnson (2008).

[20] E.g., see Elm (2012) 336–478; Marcos (2019b); and (2023a) 237–8, 248–9.

who would succeed Valens. This was the conspiracy of the *notarius* Theodorus, which Valens and his administrators responded to expeditiously, aggressively, and disproportionately (172–6, 183–4).[21] In his nervous anxiety over learning about the future—undoubtedly partly a result of assassination attempts—, Valens became superstitiously fixated on signs and predictions, which he misread or ignorantly rejected; thus he lacked future knowledge (176–80, 183, 184–9). According to Ammianus, fate intervened to spare Valens from assassination, only to let him die in battle against the Goths. Indeed, H. highlights a commonality in Ammianus, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret's histories and in Dalmatius' *Vita Isaaci* in that Valens was destined to fail and die in Thrace, that this emperor was deficient in divine acceptance, and this deficit correlated with Valens' lack of acceptance among the political elite as well. H. also sheds light on Ammianus' presentation of a remarkable antithesis between Valens and the Goths, between an inability to obtain future knowledge and an ability to anticipate what would come to pass, and a rare unanimity among Christian and non-Christian historiographers: the fate of Valens was foreseeable to all but himself.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 (195–233) form the monograph's final unit, which focuses on the Theodosian dynasty, on Theodosius and Honorius in particular. H. returns to the fourth- and fifth-century ecclesiastical historians, to Rufinus, Sozomen, and Theodoret, to consider how they recount the Battle of the Frigidus in 394, when Theodosius triumphed over the 'pagan' usurper Eugenius. Both sought victory and foreknowledge of it, one through prayer and prediction and the other through divination, but the latter's method brought vain hopes because it was flawed, that is, it cost him his head. H. then considers Claudian's poems and panegyrics, which comment on Theodosius and Honorius' divine acceptance, both directly and indirectly through censure of their (in)subordinates Rufinus, Gildo, and Eutropius and through praise of Stilicho, Honorius' guardian. In Rufinus' case, for example, Claudian accomplishes this by representing him as having been corrupted by Megaera, one of the three Furies (209–12), who had enticed Rufinus to embrace 'a range of illicit divinatory practices' (212). Here H. might have noted that Megaera had

[21] Cf. Swain (2021) 256–66, esp. 262–6, for Themistius' framing of Valens' response; and Langenfeld (2023), for a reevaluation of Valens' magic and treason trials at Antioch in 372. Langenfeld succeeds in showing how Ammianus' account is oversimplified, omits relevant details, and lacks critical nuance. However, one of Ammianus' central claims is that Valens' response to the conspiracy was disproportionate, and that claim remains intact. After suppressing Theodorus and his conspirators, Valens widened his dragnet to include many more in Antioch and elsewhere that were unconnected with the conspiracy, hence Ammianus' animus (29.2, cf. Soc. *Hist. eccl.* 4.19). Ammianus also asserts that torture produced false confessions or was intended to (29.1.36, 1.44, 2.11, 2.27). Historically, torture has been notoriously unreliable in obtaining truthful confessions and on a civic scale has produced terror that feeds on itself.

already appeared in Theodosian invective, for Pacatus had emasculated Marcellinus, Magnus Maximus' brother and top subordinate, by labelling him a Megaera in 389 (*Pan. Lat.* 2(12).35.1). Claudian notably censured Rufinus and Eutropius, using divinatory motifs in his invectives to rebuke any claim they might make to possess future knowledge and so divine acceptance, which suggests that these subordinates were would-be usurpers. These same motifs appear in Claudian's panegyrics on Stilicho and Honorius' consulships and on Stilicho's management of the Gothic War through correct interpretations of signs and so possession of future knowledge. The court poet and panegyrist also portrays Stilicho as successfully praying to Mars (210–13), the interpretation of which is connected with the question of audience (cf. 221–2 and n. 51). Claudian deploys gods and heroes metaphorically, such as by employing Mars to link Stilicho with traditional Roman valour, which Christian elites would have understood and accepted.[22] As H. observes, 'Mars' endorsement establishes Stilicho as the antithesis of Rufinus' (211). Indeed, whereas Mars' patronage emphasises Stilicho's manliness, Megaera's highlights Rufinus' femininity.

In his short 'Epilogue' (234–7; cf. 59), H. notes examples of fictitious imperial claims that have made their way into historiography and epideictic rhetoric, and the risks that emperors who claimed to know the future incurred. As preserved in literary sources, such claims, in my view, may ultimately reflect emperors' genuine expressions of self-confidence or hubris, depending on outcome.[23] H. considers the attribution of future knowledge to a given emperor as possibly historical, while also recognising the possibility of this attribution as posthumous propaganda/ideology: 'Given the inherently retrospective nature of these literary discussions about claims to legitimacy [the course of historiography and the narratives told about the past], it is perhaps unsurprising that future knowledge became embroiled in the delegitimisation of imperial enemies, given its capacity to draw clear antitheses between the divine acceptance of the emperor and the divine condemnation of their opponents' (234). Indeed, the imprecise contemporaneity of imperial claims to future knowledge invites suspicion. Just as Mark Antony inserted unpublished decrees and memoranda among the papers of Caesar the Dictator after the Ides of March but presented them as Caesar's,[24] so too imperial claims to the power to prognosticate may have been embedded in historical and rhetorical narratives on critical events, and as retrospective justifications (the anonymous panegyrist's claim in 310 that Constantine is a descendant of Claudius II also comes to mind: *Pan. Lat.* 6(7).2.2–4). Perhaps 'future knowledge' is categorised

[22] See Cameron (1970) 198–9, 228–9; Ware (2012) 48–50.

[23] Cf. Marcos (2023b) 8–9.

[24] Cic. *Phil.* 2.100; App. *B Civ.* 3.5; Plut. *Ant.* 15.2; Cass. Dio 44.53.2–4.

best as *ex post facto* explanation, or as a species of hindsight, so detrimental to a historian's efforts to understand the past. This would help to explain the teleological aspect that pervades ecclesiastical narratives on Julian, for example. That an adolescent Julian would later apostatise because he was secretly impious was foretold in his failed efforts at building a shrine to S. Mammas, or so Gregory, Sozomen, and Theodoret declared (cf. 97–9, 149–50). In this light, claims to future knowledge are better understood, not as historical claims, but as reflective of the cultural and intellectual milieu of the fourth and fifth centuries, when assertions of prognostication, which had been the unchallenged preserve of traditional cult or paganism, came under assault and ultimately yielded to Christianity and its seers. Claims to such knowledge were, as H. well demonstrates, part of a political struggle between pagans and Christians, the one through multifarious divination, the other through dreams and revelations connected with prayers. The prominent (but not exclusive) focus on an emperor's (lack of) future knowledge in literary sources suggests that it was a powerful instrument in the ideological competition that took place after his death, since ownership of the past was correlated with ownership of the present and the future. 'Future knowledge', then, was but another potent weapon in a long and contentious intellectual war.

After assessing portrayals of late antique Roman emperors and their top subordinates in historiography and epideixis, H. proposes that future knowledge has allowed him to sketch four types of leaders or character types, two negative and two positive: 'the hubristic and cruel tyrant', 'the misguided leader', 'the military expert', and 'the pious, devout, leader' (235–6). Because Ammianus' secular *Res Gestae* and fourth- and fifth-century ecclesiastical histories, among other texts, variously focus on (re)shaping imperial memory and the reception of related peoples and events, they are essentially political histories, and due caution must be practised when using them in the search for understanding.[25] H. concludes that 'An appreciation of the diverse use of future knowledge in these different texts offer a tantalising way of thinking through the shared challenges and opportunities that these authors encountered as they looked to celebrate or contest the perception of powerful figures in the political world of the Later Roman empire' (237). All the authors surveyed by H. focused, at least in part, on the multifarious acceptance or lack thereof of the subjects of their works. Classicists tend to read literary texts as realities created and/or *mentalités* communicated by authors, whereas historians tend to view them as social and political products reflective of authors' socio-economic status and networks (of course, their methodologies often overlap). H.'s analysis is largely literary, which includes consideration of the proleptic function of future knowledge in a text (xi, 159, 185). But he concludes

[25] E.g., see Weisweiler (2014); Kaldellis (2017); Corke-Webster (2022); and Marcos (2023a); (2023b) Ch. 3.

that claims to future knowledge figured prominently in how emperors managed to maintain their authority and power historically, what he sees as imperial acceptance on the part of various societal groups. Indeed, 'The ultimate goal of the struggle for imperial acceptance was not protecting the emperor from usurpation but the removal of political tension and intrigue, the very preconditions by which an usurpation might occur' (16). But it is difficult to see how the acceptance model could have removed political tension and intrigue when an emperor had to maintain 'perpetual' or 'continual affirmation' (cf. 15, 16). Whether we adopt constitutional authority, charisma, legitimacy, consensus, or acceptance as the model by which to understand the emperor's claim to power, public support was critical, and victories in the field, against a foreign foe or a rival, were one component of that support. Thus H. shows us panegyrists and historiographers who linked emperors' military and political victories (or failures) with their (lack of) future knowledge.

H.'s study surveys imperial prognostication and acceptance from Constantine to Honorius but with notable omissions. Libanius, Themistius, and Julian variously praised Constantius II in eight panegyrics between them, and not one of these commended the son of Constantine for displaying future knowledge (Lib. 59; Them. *Or.* 1–4; Julian. *Or.* 1–3).[26] To be sure, as H. notes, Claudius Mamertinus lauded Julian as sole Augustus for his display of *providentia* (84 n. 35), among other virtues; but the example he explicitly offers to highlight Julian's 'foresight' is not his great victory at Argentoratum (Strasbourg) in 357 or his acceptance of Augustan rank at Paris in 360 but his largess to the Dalmatians and to the overburdened Epirotes in 361.[27] Given H.'s focus on emperors' precognition in military conflicts and their outcomes, a more fitting example of Julian's possession of future knowledge, I would argue, is to be found in Mamertinus' implicit and multivalent claim that Julian found no issue with a grain shipment that sailed from Africa to Constantinople instead of Rome because the emperor foresaw that he would benefit from this grain when he reached Constantinople as Constantius' successor (*Pan. Lat.* 3(11).14.5–6).[28] Finally, Pacatus praised Theodosius in 389 after his suppression of Magnus Maximus but did so while refraining from making any claim of

[26] H. (78 n. 7) acknowledges Libanius' silence on Constantius' future knowledge and considers the emperor's Christianity as a possible reason behind this silence. On Themistius and Julian's orations on Constantius, see Marcos (2023b) Chs. 1 and 2. Julian's second oration is dedicated to the empress Eusebia but also commends Constantius and counts him as part of the intended audience.

[27] H. notes Julian's *providentia* at 5.4 and connects it with Mamertinus' example at 9.1–2 but overlooks 14.6. Nor does H. note the place of *prouidentia* as a core imperial virtue. On which, see Noreña (2011) 92–9; and Manders (2012) 162–5.

[28] 14.6: … *uenturae felicitatis euentum* … *praeuidebat*; cf. Nixon and Rodgers (1994) 415–16 nn. 96–8; García Ruiz (2006) 130–1; and Marcos (2023b) 161.

imperial prognostication on Theodosius' part. Another opportunity to claim future knowledge for the emperor would have been when Pacatus presents Theodosius' elevation from private citizen to Augustan rank, which was unsought and unwanted, although to have asserted divine foreknowledge here would have mitigated the value of his display of *recusatio imperii* (*Pan. Lat.* 2(12).11.1–12.2). Given these panegyrical silences, how significant were imperial claims of future knowledge to an emperor's acceptance during his lifetime? One wonders, moreover, if claims to future knowledge did not possess a 'pagan' taint, at least in the fourth century, when Christianity was first becoming ascendant in political life. This may partly explain the absence of such claims in panegyrics on Constantius II and Theodosius, who presented themselves as convinced Christians in other contexts (cf. 78 n. 7, for Constantius).

Several infelicities mar what is an otherwise well-written book. H. has erred in his calculations of Constantine's years in office. By our modern, exclusive dating method, Constantine ruled twenty-seven years from 310 but thirty years plus ten months overall; and not sixteen but twelve years and about seven months as sole Augustus since 19 September 324 (33). In 302/3, Galerius was not Diocletian's 'fellow Augustus' but his Caesar (42). Unless H. is attempting a pun on Gregory's position regarding the nature and relationship of God and Jesus' divine substance, 'one of Gregory Nazianzus'ousins' should be 'one of Gregory Nazianzus' cousins' (113). 'Constantine I' should be 'Constantine II' (124). 'Maximus' should be 'Magnentius' (125); and 'Maximinus' should be 'Magnentius' (125 n. 25). Constantius had the Altar of Victory removed from the senate house at Rome in 357, not 353 (139). The statement 'to martial an argument' should be 'to marshal an argument' (139). The 'removal of the Altar of Victory in 371' should read the 'removal of the Altar of Victory in 382' (142). Given that Theodosius accepted both responsibility and penance for eastern soldiers' slaughter of civilians at Thessalonica in 390 as outlined by Ambrose, is it fair or instructive to refer to the emperor's '*alleged* decision to massacre thousands of civilians in response to unrest' there? (184. Italics added). Perhaps H.'s objection is one of scale, that Theodosius had not intended to kill so many. 'Eutropius' usurpation' should read 'Eugenius' usurpation' (208 n. 9). When H. refers to 'Eusebius' portrayal of Maximian' (235) and 'the criminal motivations of a Maximian' (236), he clearly refers to Maximin Daza. Moreover, one will occasionally search the bibliography in vain for scholarship cited in the footnotes, which also betrays haste in writing and editing: 8 n. 46: 'Lunn-Rockliffe (2010: 333–335)'; 13 nn. 70, 72, 73, 14 n. 76, 15 nn. 81–84: 'Pfeilschifter'; 39 n. 3: 'Cook (2019: 385–6)'; 43 n. 13: 'Cook (2009: 289–403)'; 56 n. 28: 'Hillner (2017a); Hillner (2017b: 65)'; 95 n. 14: 'Célérier (2014: 210–214)'; 109 n. 60: 'Derrida and Melhman (1972: 92)'; 150 n. 30: 'Morgan (2020: 74)'; 150 n. 31: 'Assmann (2011: 35–36)'; 160 n. 64: 'Michalopoulos (2018: 467) and Reiser (2007: 475–6)'.

This stimulating and well-argued book will be of interest and benefit primarily to scholars and specialists. But graduate students will find the vignettes of imperial prognostication attractive as brief introductions to how momentous military and political occasions were represented and memorialised by panegyrists and historiographers. Because H. also considers the role of future knowledge in shaping imperial memory, his study will find a welcome place alongside other memory studies.[29] What H. has accomplished is to invite us to consider the role and value of imperial future knowledge in panegyrics and historiography more closely, and what that role and value can tell us about historical 'reality'. Even if not all will agree on the degree of importance of future knowledge to an imperial acceptance model (or even if this is the best model to attach it to), most will agree that future knowledge played a more significant role in diverse discourses about emperors in the fourth and early fifth centuries, that *providentia* was a highly contentious political value and tool that spoke to an emperor's divine quality during his lifetime and that dictated how he would (or should) be remembered afterwards. A pervasive feature of Roman political culture in the Later Empire, future knowledge formed a more prominent and dynamic relationship with rhetoric and history than has hitherto been appreciated.

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[29] Roman memory studies have blossomed in the last two decades; e.g., Gowing (2005); Flower (2006); Galinsky (2016); Latham (2016); and Kruse (2019).

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