

Walter Stevenson: *The Origins of Roman Christian Diplomacy. Constantius II and John Chrysostom as Innovators*. London/New York: Routledge 2021. XII, 203 p. £ 90.00/\$ 120.00. ISBN: 978-1-138-21946-5.

The names of Constantius II and John Chrysostom are well known to all students of Late Antiquity, the actual figures arguably less so. Historical reality tends to be obfuscated by temporal and geographical distance, and rapidly enveloped in myth like the gauze bandages applied to the ‘English patient’ as people re-invent the ‘other’ to suit their own goals and understanding of history. The difference between the representations of John Chrysostom offered by Theodoret of Cyrillus on the one hand and Socrates and Sozomen on the other – nicely pointed out by Walter Stevenson (p. 105) – is a case in point. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine a more paradoxical juxtaposition than that proposed by the title and content of this stimulating monograph. According to received tradition, there could hardly be two more antithetical characters from the whole of Late Antiquity. Yet, as Stevenson plausibly argues in the course of nine chapters, they seem to have shared a common vision as regards not only the centrality of Christianity and the Roman empire, but also the need for and the desirability of undertaking proselytising missions to peoples lying outside the boundaries of the Empire. In short, missionary activity seems to have united the saint and the sinner.

Chapter 1 (“Approaching Roman Christian diplomacy in context”, pp. 1–19)<sup>1</sup> is dedicated to establishing the terms of the discussion to follow. After making a convincing, brief case for continuity in diplomatic *habitus* from Augustus to Diocletian, Stevenson then makes the case for eventual change occurring as a result of the Constantinian revolution. The Roman emperor’s conversion to a new religion that defined itself in existential opposition to that of his predecessors had a knock-on effect as regards the conduct of Roman foreign policy. Accordingly, key terms for analysis (e.g. church and state) are subjected to scrutiny, and the historiographical challenges to be overcome (e.g. exiguity of sources and anachronism) are brought into focus. The consideration of the consequences of Constantine’s conversion as regards domestic policy and concord amongst the churches of the Roman empire is followed by a consideration of that emperor’s foreign policy *vis-à-vis*

1 For the detailed Table of Contents, readers are referred to the end of this review.

the Goths and Persians. Doubt is raised regarding claims advanced concerning Constantine's missionary activity. Meandering between Augustus and Khomeini with a certain facility as he clears the ground of existing obstacles, Stevenson concludes this introductory chapter by outlining an extended essay that examines forgotten episodes of ancient history and aims to highlight the potential contributions of Constantius II and John Chrysostom.

Chapter 2 ("Mission to Himyar and Aksum in context", pp. 20–40) is the first of three chapters dedicated to the Christian diplomacy attempted by Constantius II during his time as an Augustus (CE 337–361). Stevenson identifies and discusses the evidence for the diplomatic initiatives of Constantius as regards the kingdoms of Himyar in the Arabian Peninsula and Aksum on the Horn of Africa. The testimony of Philostorgius relates the activity of Theophilus the Indian in both kingdoms, whereas that of Rufinus concerns the activity of Frumentius in Aksum and the letter of Constantius cited by Athanasius of Alexandria in the *Apologia ad Constantium* addresses the two rulers of the Aksumites. As a whole, this material reveals an intense interest in the kingdoms lying between Egypt and India and suggests that there was a lively competition between Romans and Persians for geopolitical domination of the sea route linking those two regions. Stevenson argues that Theophilus performed his mission in 356–357. Be that as it may, the evidence is quite clear that in the 340s and 350s Constantius undertook diplomatic overtures in which Christianity figured large, as he sought not only to convert foreign rulers to Christianity, but to win them over to that version to which he adhered.

Chapter 3 ("Constantius' bishop management program", pp. 41–71) is dedicated to the theme of episcopal exile and flight, looking at how Constantius II dealt with the deposition of bishops from their sees over the course of his long, turbulent reign. Stevenson, in short, examines the evidence for the imperial removal or control of bishops. He begins by outlining general principles and defining basic terms and reviews the template furnished by Constantine during the preceding quarter-century (CE 312–337). There follow case-studies of individuals or groups. Coming first in time, the case of Paul of Constantinople (CE 337) is followed by that of Paulinus of Trier (CE 353). Next comes discussion of the "western purge" (p. 51) involving Dionysius of Milan, Eusebius of Vercelli, and Lucifer of Cagliari. This is followed by a consideration of the "new approaches" (p. 53) adopted as regards Liberius of Rome, Hilary of Poitiers, and Hosius of Corduba. Then, after a brief

discussion of the “staged deposition” (p. 57) of Athanasius of Alexandria, Stevenson concludes with observations regarding the non-Nicene exiles Eudoxius, Basil of Ancyra, and Eustathius. The overall thesis is that Constantius innovated, picking and choosing among conciliar decisions those congenial to his temperament and policy objectives.

Devoted to the theme of special agents and ‘espionage’, Chapter 4 (“Constantius’ bureaucracy abroad”, pp. 72–97) wraps up the treatment of Constantius and Christian diplomacy by exploring the significance of Cod. Theod. 12.12.2. Dating to 15 January 357 (as cogently emended over a century ago by Otto Seeck),<sup>2</sup> this edict expressly forbade imperial agents dispatched to the Aksumites and Himyarites from delaying in their transit between Alexandria and those kingdoms (with yet another emendation, this time supplied by Theodor Mommsen). Starting with the official to whom this edict was addressed, Strategius Musonianus, Stevenson illustrates the fashioning of a special corps of bureaucrats as a response to the usurpations and civil wars (real or feared) of CE 350–354. This cultivation of the *agentes in rebus* emerges as parallel to the care that Constantius showed for the *cursus publicus*. Interested in reforming the channels of information so as to render his government more secure, Constantius seems to have been closely monitoring operations such as Theophilus’ mission to the Horn of Africa and Gulf of Aden. On such a reading, timely and effective work on evangelisation with dividends for Roman foreign policy was sought. Conceivably, the temptation of lucre had resulted in intolerable delays.

Chapter 5 (“John Chrysostom’s mission to Gothia”, pp. 98–119) is the first of three chapters concerned with John Chrysostom and the proselytising activity that he initiated during his time as the bishop of Constantinople (CE 397–404). After prefatory remarks on the semantic fields of ‘Arian’ and ‘Orthodox’, Stevenson goes straight to the heart of the matter by presenting the full, exceptional testimony of Theodoret regarding Chrysostom’s missionary activity (Theod. hist. eccl. 5.30–31). This leads to discussions of the church used by the Goths – in effect, a Gothic parish – in the city of Constantinople

2 O. Seeck: *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr. Vorarbeit zu einer Prosopographie der christlichen Kaiserzeit*. Stuttgart 1919, pp. 21, 203. Inexplicably Stevenson fails to cite this fundamental work of reference in his discussion, even though reference is made to it by T. D. Barnes: *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*. Cambridge, MA 1993, p. 277 n. 66 (via conventional use of the superscript S).

and the fate of the Gothic mission on the Danube after the pogrom of mid-summer 400. The testimony of Chrysostom's letters to Olympias (dating to the period after his exile in 404) and the funeral oration composed in 407 together demonstrate Chrysostom's strong, abiding interest in the creation of an orthodox church amongst the Goths. While this project is the product of his time as the bishop of Constantinople, both the cosmopolitan tradition of the early Church and the linguistic backdrop of the Antiochene and Jerusalem churches are plausibly cited as influences on Chrysostom's thought. Last but not least, the creation of a Gothic monastery on the estate of the former general Promotus is well adduced as evidence for the likely involvement of the empress Eudoxia as a patron of Chrysostom's missionary outreach to the Goths.

Chapter 6 ("Marouta of Maiferqat and the mission to Persia", pp. 120–139) next turns the reader's attention eastwards, so as to explore the course and consequences of Chrysostom's other missionary project. Perforce, given the relative lack of sources, attention is focussed more upon the figure of Marouta and events in the Sasanian empire in CE 410–424. However, Stevenson begins by quoting from a tantalising letter (9) of Chrysostom to Olympias written in late November 404,<sup>3</sup> wherein he asked for information from Marouta regarding the situation in Persia. Next, no less striking and tantalising, comes a citation from the Acts of the Council of Seleucia (CE 410), in which Mar Marouta is mentioned alongside Mar Isaac (who was the metropolitan of Seleucia-Ctesiphon). Further, meagre light is shed by the testimony of Socrates and Theodoret regarding Marouta's diplomatic activity. Context for this missionary project conceived by Chrysostom and executed by Marouta is provided by a consideration of things such as the Sasanian innovation in promoting Mazdaism, the fifth-century *Acts of Pusai*, and Chrysostom's Antiochene experience in evangelising Syriac speakers in the countryside. In spite of the evident success enjoyed by Marouta in Persia after Chrysostom was definitively sent into exile in CE 404, the historical context of renewed Roman-Persian hostility explains the lack of follow-up on the part of Chrysostom's successors in Constantinople.

3 For the date, which Stevenson omits to specify, see: R. Delmaire: *Les 'lettres d'exil' de Jean Chrysostome. Études de chronologie et de prosopographie*. In: *RecAug* 25, 1991, pp. 71–180, here pp. 146–148, 176 (table); T. D. Barnes/G. Bevan: *The Funeral Speech for John Chrysostom*. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary. Liverpool 2013 (*Translated Texts for Historians* 60), p. 173, App. F.

Chapter 7 (“John’s attention to evolving collective religious identities”, pp. 140–159) concludes the triptych dedicated to Chrysostom by reflecting upon the contemporary evidence for cultural identity as a dynamic phenomenon. In spite of appearances, religion is far from static. Stevenson briefly discusses in turn the three cases of Edessa, Armenia, and the Goths, highlighting various aspects of identity-building to be discerned in their acceptance of Christianity in the fourth century. Documents such as the *Teaching of Addai* show that language, cult, and social organisation were clearly being negotiated in those groups situated along the frontiers of the Roman and Persian empires. Moreover, as can be seen from the testimony of Aphrahat, the *Acts of Pusaï*, and Cyril of Scythopolis, the members of these and similar groups might be perceived as fifth-columnists, thanks to the putative identification of Christianity with the Roman empire. So, for instance, the Arabian tribal leader Aspebetos is reported as having transferred his allegiance to the Romans as a result of the Persian authorities’ identifying him with the Christians whom they were persecuting. When understood against such a backdrop, and with due attention given to the Antiochene matrix, Chrysostom (and Constantius II) can persuasively be seen to have “sensed a new diplomatic force” (p. 154) in Christianity and missions aimed at peoples outside the Roman world.

Chapter 8 (“First steps toward a new Christian diplomacy”, pp. 160–179) draws together the various threads of this study of the initiatives of Constantius II and Chrysostom, highlighting the ways in which they were innovative and marked a break with the past. Arguing for a strong contrast between the practice of Augustus and that of Constantius II, Stevenson posits a rupture with prior Roman practice. Writing of the change that he discerns in CE 356–357, he claims that the embassy of Prosper, Spectatus, and Eustathius that was dispatched to Shapur II “ushered in the age of what modern Westerners would call ‘diplomacy’” (p. 161). According to seven criteria (e.g. personnel choices and linguistic ability) governing what we might term the grammar of diplomacy, the diplomatic initiatives discussed in this monograph were different from what went before. So, for instance, ambassadors were usually high-ranking state officials, negotiations were ordinarily conducted in Greek or Latin, and the phenomenon of proselytism was unprecedented prior to the Constantinian revolution. In view of both the novel aspects identified and the lack of follow-up, Stevenson concludes that the time

was not yet ripe for the success of the innovative initiatives of Constantius II and Chrysostom.

Chapter 9 (“Byzantine trajectories”, pp. 180–200) serves as an *envoi* or epilogue of sorts, plotting out the subsequent course of the use of religion in diplomacy in the Byzantine world from the fifth to the fifteenth century. The “Byzantine ‘commonwealth’” (pp. 14, 17 n. 65) once posited by Dmitri Obolensky<sup>4</sup> as a hermeneutic model is suggestively depicted by Stevenson, who argues that Justinian and his successors were unaware of the precedents furnished by Constantius II and Chrysostom (p. 189: “unknowingly repeated”). Five examples scattered over time and geography are offered for readers’ consideration. The first concerns the Vandalic kingdom in North Africa in the fifth and sixth centuries, where the Vandals’ adherence to Arian theology and celebration of the liturgy in their vernacular reinforced their separatist identity. The second concerns the Himyarite kingdom in the sixth century and the efforts made to bring its ruler and population into the Christian fold. The third is focussed on the Black Sea region and Justinian’s various efforts to convert the Huns, Heruls, and Lazi to Christianity. The fourth involves Nubia and the conversion of its rulers and population, where reused temples and a change in funerary customs evocatively highlight a policy that one source intriguingly attributes to the empress Theodora. The fifth and final example concerns the conversion of the Rus’ in the ninth to tenth centuries and its heritage in the form of a failed embassy of the Kakheti to Moscow in 1492. Set against such a backdrop, Constantius II and Chrysostom effectively emerge as the *antesignani* of a phenomenon that was realised with a relative degree of success from Justinian onwards.

This monograph does make a useful contribution to the ongoing debate regarding the southern route from the Mediterranean Sea to India. It highlights three episodes normally relegated to oblivion in modern discussions, inviting us to reflect upon their significance. The mission of Theophilus the ‘Indian’, Chrysostom’s mission aimed at the Goths, and Chrysostom’s mission aimed at the Persian empire did not succeed in their intent. However, these projects of Constantius II and Chrysostom do prefigure the successful ventures of

4 D. Obolensky: *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500–1454*. New York 1971 (*History of Civilizations* 14). In passing, it is to be observed that only the most cursory of references is made to another stimulating contribution: G. Fowden: *Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*. Princeton, NJ 1993.

this sort that would be undertaken by Justinian and his successors. It is important that history embrace the complexity of the past and be concerned with dead ends as well as proximate causes, if it is to be other than merely a triumphalist discourse of self-justification for the present dispensation. Therefore, the parallel with the invention of the computer in Victorian Britain (p. 172) is particularly apt and fitting. By calling our attention to these ‘forgotten’ episodes, which seem underappreciated, Stevenson has performed a salutary and welcome service for colleagues. Moreover, in a world where the focus seems to be upon ‘hard’ power, the attention devoted to ‘soft’ power is particularly timely.

One noteworthy way in which the historian distinguishes herself or himself is in the use and due acknowledgement of colleagues’ work. Therefore, while the notes and bibliographies at the close of each chapter are extremely welcome (as they make the reader’s life far easier), it is disconcerting to find that Stevenson is not immune to what seems to be a growing trend in scholarship in the humanities: ignorance of basic publications coupled with a sort of subdolous *damnatio memoriae* that condemns colleagues to oblivion and (in the age of hiring and tenure committees relying upon citation statistics as though they were divine algorithms) professional death. Ignorance of recent items available on the internet (e.g. further reflections on emperors and bishops by Timothy D. Barnes)<sup>5</sup> is regrettable, especially when the contribution offers what is the clearest analysis to date. Worse, however, is the inability to deploy basic scholarship for the purposes of orientation regarding the religious topography of Constantinople (e.g. Raymond Janin, Gilbert Dagron, Wolfgang Müller-Wiener),<sup>6</sup> the prosopography of Chrysostom’s letters and his activity as the bishop of Constantinople (Roland Delmaire,

5 T. D. Barnes: *Emperors and Bishops of Constantinople (324–431)*. In: G. E. Demacopoulos/A. Papanikolaou (eds.): *Christianity, Democracy, and the Shadow of Constantine*. New York, NY 2017 (*Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought*), pp. 175–201.

6 R. Janin: *La géographie ecclésiastique de l’Empire byzantin. Première partie. Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat œcuménique. T. 3: Les églises et les monastères*. Paris 1953; G. Dagron: *Naissance d’une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*. Paris 1974 (*Bibliothèque byzantine. Études 7*); W. Müller-Wiener: *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls. Byzantion – Konstantinupolis – Istanbul bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Unter Mitarbeit von R. und W. Schiele. Mit einem Beitrag von N. Firatli. Tübingen 1977.

Claudia Tiersch),<sup>7</sup> or the related topic of geo-ecclesiology/geopolitics (Philippe Blaudeau, Glen W. Bowersock, Roger C. Blockley).<sup>8</sup> Equally shocking, it must be said, is the regularity with which the names of non-Anglophone colleagues are butchered (e.g. Philippe Blaudeau, Pierre Maraval, Eckhard Wirbelauer).<sup>9</sup> Worst of all, of course, is what seems explicable only in terms of malevolent intent, when colleagues working on the theme of episcopal exile in Late Antiquity (Richard Flower, Julia Hillner, Jörg Ulrich, Jakob Engberg, Jennifer Barry),<sup>10</sup> the reign of Constantius II (Richard Klein, Pedro Barceló, Pierre Maraval),<sup>11</sup> the missionary activity of Theophilus the ‘Indian’ and the associated geopolitical aims of Constantius II (Gonzalo Fernández, W. H. C. Frend, Gianfranco Fiaccadori, Jean-Marc Prieur),<sup>12</sup> or the ecclesi-

- 7 Delmaire (note 3); C. Tiersch: *Johannes Chrysostomus in Konstantinopel (398–404). Weltsicht und Wirken eines Bischofs in der Hauptstadt des Oströmischen Reiches*. Tübingen 2002 (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 6).
- 8 P. Blaudeau: *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451–491). De l’histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie*. Rome 2006 (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 327); G. W. Bowersock: *The Throne of Adulis. Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam*. Oxford 2013; R. C. Blockley: *East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius*. Leeds 1992 (Arca 30).
- 9 E.g. Blaudeau at p. 61 n. 10 and p. 69; Maraval at p. 136 n. 68 and p. 139; Wirbelauer at p. 61 nn. 1 and 12 and p. 71.
- 10 R. Flower: *Emperors and Bishops in Late Roman Invective*. Cambridge 2013; R. Flower: *Imperial Invectives against Constantius II. Athanasius of Alexandria, History of the Arians, Hilary of Poitiers, Against Constantius and Lucifer of Cagliari, The Necessity of Dying for the Son of God*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary. Liverpool 2016 (Translated Texts for Historians 67); J. Hillner: *Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge 2015; J. Hillner/J. Ulrich/J. Engberg (eds.): *Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity*. Frankfurt am Main u. a. 2016 (Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 17); J. Barry: *Bishops in Flight. Exile and Displacement in Late Antiquity*. Oakland, CA 2019.
- 11 R. Klein: *Constantius II. und die christliche Kirche*. Darmstadt 1977 (Impulse der Forschung 26); P. Barceló: *Constantius II. und seine Zeit. Die Anfänge des Staatskirchentums*. Stuttgart 2004; P. Maraval: *Les fils de Constantin. Constantin II (337–340), Constance II (337–361), Constant (337–350)*. Paris 2013.
- 12 G. Fernández: *The Evangelizing Mission of Theophilus ‘the Indian’ and the Ecclesiastical Policy of Constantius II*. In: *Klio* 71, 1989, pp. 361–366; W. H. C. Frend: *The Church in the Reign of Constantius II (337–361). Mission, Monasticism, Worship*. In: A. Dihle (ed.): *L’Église et l’empire au IVe siècle*. Vandœuvres-Genève 31 août – 3 septembre 1987. Genève 1989 (Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique 34), pp. 73–111; G. Fiaccadori: *Teofilo indiano*. Ravenna 1992 (Biblioteca di «Felix Ravenna» 7); J.-M. Prieur: *Les voyages de Theophile l’indien selon l’Histoire ecclésiastique de Philostorge*. In: B. Caseau/J.-Cl. Cheynet/V. Déroche (eds.): *Pèlerinages et lieux*



astical policies and architectural projects of Constantius II (Nick Henck, W. Eugene Kleinbauer, Alessandro Taddei, Richard Westall)<sup>13</sup> are passed over in silence. To err once is a sin, to persist diabolical.

Another way in which the historian distinguishes himself or herself is the care taken in searching out the relevant evidence. Again, this monograph is found wanting. In 2013 Timothy D. Barnes and George Bevan produced an English translation of the *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* written by a contemporary soon after receipt of the news of Chrysostom's death on 14 September 407.<sup>14</sup> Neither of the attributions to be found in the manuscript tradition – Martyrius of Antioch nor Symeon the Logothete – is acceptable, given the fact that these authors flourished in the mid-fifth and mid-tenth century respectively. Rather, the Constantinopolitan cleric Cosmas, whose name appears in a late tenth-century list of those Byzantine authors who had dealt with the subject of Chrysostom's life, is almost certainly the unknown author of this invaluable historical document.<sup>15</sup> Stevenson does cite the *Funerary Speech* (p. 105), but only at a relatively late (and non-essential) point in his discussion and then blithely perpetuating modern scholarship's attribution of this work to "Pseudo-Martyrius" (p. 104), which is misleading given the fact that the author never attempts to pass himself off as the man who served as bishop of Antioch more than half a century after the death of Chrysostom.<sup>16</sup> But there is more than that slender passage (§ 25) to be found in the scholarly volume produced by Barnes and Bevan for use by historians:

saints dans l'Antiquité et le Moyen Âge. Mélanges offerts à Pierre Maraval. Paris 2006 (Centre de recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance. Monographies 23), pp. 417–427.

- 13 N. Henck: Constantius II and the Cities. In: J. Drinkwater (ed.): *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected. Essays Presented by Colleagues, Friends, and Pupils*. London 2007 (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London. Supplementary Papers 91), pp. 147–156; W. E. Kleinbauer: Antioch, Jerusalem, and Rome: The Patronage of Emperor Constantius II and Architectural Invention. In: *Gesta* 45, 2006, pp. 125–145; A. Taddei: *Hagia Sophia before Hagia Sophia. A Study of the Great Church of Constantinople from its Origins to the Nika Revolt of 532*. Roma 2017 (Saggi di storia dell'arte 52); R. Westall: Constantius II and the Great Church of Constantinople. In: *Nea Rhome* 8, 2011[2012], pp. 21–50; R. Westall: Constantius II and the Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican. In: *Historia* 64, 2015, pp. 205–242.
- 14 Barnes/Bevan (note 3).
- 15 Barnes/Bevan (note 3), pp. 6–12.
- 16 Barnes/Bevan (note 3), p. 14.

Appendix B presents Theodoret's lost orations on John as they survive in excerpted form in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius (CPG 6225: Phot. bibl. 507b–509a Bekker).<sup>17</sup> A passage towards the end is of particular relevance to the topic under discussion, and the reviewer accordingly cites in full this part of the translation of Theodoret's text:<sup>18</sup>

You have also another kinship with the apostles. You were the first to plant altars among the Scythians who live in wagons; and scarcely had the barbarian dismounted from his horse than he learned to bend the knee <in worship> and prostrate himself on the floor <in prayer>. He who could not be bent by the tears of captured prisoners learned to weep tears over his own sins. Moreover, you transfixed the Persian archer with <the arrow of> the Gospel message, and those famous iron-clad warriors worship the crucified one. Your tongue has vanquished the magic tricks of the Chaldeans and magi, and the dry land of Persia has sprouted houses of prayer. The region of Babylon is no longer alien to pious <Christian> worship. These <achievements> have joined you to the apostles.

Pronounced in Constantinople in conjunction with the deposition of the relics of Chrysostom within the church of the Holy Apostles on 27 January 438, this statement affirming the missionary activity of Chrysostom shows that this activity was an integral part of his memory. Chrysostom's example did not die with him (or his "loyal followers", as affirmed by Stevenson at p. 164), but rather lived on like a seed to take root in the sixth and following centuries, when the environment would prove more propitious to the projects that he had attempted to realise. That Socrates and Sozomen say nothing about this aspect of Chrysostom's episcopate is not particularly striking: historians select and choose what to remember as they weave their narratives to suit their own purposes. For us what is of particular interest is the fact that Theodoret did emphasise Chrysostom's missionary activity within the context of the bishop's restoration willed by the empress Pulcheria.

The most telling way in which the historian defines herself or himself is in the handling of sources. What care does the historian display in their interpretation and deployment? Here we find ourselves faced with multiple problems. The recycling of a paper originally published in the "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" may be legitimate procedure (and is certainly a practice to be found

17 Barnes/Bevan (note 3), pp. 160–163.

18 Barnes/Bevan (note 3), p. 162.

quite often), but it only aggravates the situation. The original title of that paper was: “Exiling Bishops: The Policy of Constantius II”.<sup>19</sup> That admirably sums up the theme of the paper. In this volume, by contrast, it has been transformed into the more mellifluous sounding “Constantius’ bishop management program”. That, quite frankly, is Orwellian. The original paper’s 126 footnotes have survived intact and unchanged as the 126 endnotes of the ‘revised’ chapter. Indeed, except for the addition of a brief new introductory paragraph, the language of the chapter is more or less the same. There are slight changes of expression, but they are rarely an improvement upon the original. A brief sample may illustrate the situation:

Stevenson 2014, p. 21:

The discussion resulted in an ultimatum for Liberius: sign his assent to the condemnation of Athanasius or go into exile. Interestingly, Theodoret has Constantius allow Liberius to choose his place of exile (though this seems very unlikely), and Liberius ends up in Thracian Beroea. Also, the eastern historian has both Constantius and his wife separately offer Liberius 500 gold pieces for “expenses”.

Stevenson 2021, p. 54:

The discussion resulted in an ultimatum for Liberius to sign his assent to the condemnation of Athanasius or go into exile. Interestingly, Theodoret has Constantius give Liberius a choice of his place of exile, though this seems very unlikely, and Liberius ends up in Thracian Beroea. Also the eastern historian has both Constantius and his wife separately offer Liberius 500 gold pieces as a per diem.

In this sample, which is typical, the changes are niggling, with one exception. The princely sum offered to the bishop of Rome for the duration of his exile has now been transformed into a daily sum! Comparable errors, it bears noting, lurk in the original publication and remain unchanged in the monograph. So, for instance, Agrippa Postumus has been transformed into the “nephew” of Augustus (p. 42), and the Constantinopolitan church at whose dedication Constantius II assisted on 15 February 360 is reported to have been that of the Holy Apostles (p. 44). These errors, of course, are amusing. More serious are those that touch upon the heart of the matter. Stevenson devotes three chapters to arguing that Theophilus the ‘Indian’ carried out his mission to Himyar and Aksum in CE 356–357. Unfortunately for such a reconstruction, Philostorgius is quite clear about the fact that Theophilus was sent into exile

19 W. Stevenson: Exiling Bishops: The Policy of Constantius II. In: DOP 68, 2014, pp. 7–27.

in CE 354, as a consequence of his attachment to the Caesar Gallus (Philostorg. hist. eccl. 4.1.3–5), and only recalled from exile at a later moment (quite likely on the occasion of an imperial anniversary in CE 357) in order to heal the empress Eusebia of a gynecological ailment (Philostorg. hist. eccl. 4.7). No one would be more pleased than the reviewer to find that Constantius II's missionary project got underway in 356/357, but there is the testimony of a credible witness to the contrary. Moreover, other evidence points to Theophilus' activity occurring in CE 340–342, which scenario in fact makes perfect sense in view of Constantius' Persian policy and the military campaign of the Sasanian emperor Shapur II as far as Himyar in 325/326.<sup>20</sup> Last but not least, it must be observed that the language of Philostorgius is extremely clear (Philostorg. hist. eccl. 3.4.3): “There figured amongst the leaders of this embassy also Theophilus the Indian” (Ταύτης τῆς πρεσβείας ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις ἦν καὶ Θεόφιλος ὁ Ἰνδός).<sup>21</sup> To write of Theophilus as *the* leader (pp. 20, 165) is therefore fundamentally misleading. As for Stevenson's discussion of the missionary activity of John Chrysostom, it is regrettable that he fails to make proper use of the *Leitmotiv* of Pentecost. The relevant passage of the *Acts of the Apostles* (2.9–11) offers a tableau that is clearly at the root of geographical catalogues of peoples in Christian writings (e.g. Eus. vita Const. 3.7–8), and this passage will be one that was well known to Chrysostom, who was himself the author of a commentary on *Acts*. Overall, as regards diplomacy, it is regrettable that no use seems to have been made of the work of Peter the Patrician, in spite of its being readily available from Routledge in an English translation accompanied by a useful commentary.<sup>22</sup>

20 For the activities of Shapur II, see Klein (note 11), pp. 186–188; I. Shahid: *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*. Washington, DC 1984, pp. 34, 61–67; Blockley (note 8), p. 10.

21 Cf. Philostorgios: *Kirchengeschichte*. Ediert, übersetzt und kommentiert von B. Bleckmann und M. Stein. Vol. 1: Einleitung, Text und Übersetzung. Vol. 2: Kommentar. Paderborn 2015 (Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike E 7); Philostorge: *Histoire ecclésiastique*. Texte critique: J. Bidez (GCS). Traduction: É. Des Places, SJ. Introduction, révision de la traduction, notes et index: B. Bleckmann, D. Meyer, J.-M. Prieur. Paris 2013 (Sources chrétiennes 564); Philostorgius: *Church History*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by P. R. Amidon, SJ. Atlanta, GA 2007 (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 23). These three excellent translations are nowhere cited and seem not to have been consulted by Stevenson.

22 T. M. Banchich: *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician. An Account of Rome's Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*. London/New York 2015 (Routledge Classical Translations).

Last but not least, basic grammatical and lexical errors in the translation of texts from Greek and Latin into English do little to instil trust in the basic building-blocks for the thesis being advanced.<sup>23</sup>

The book is what it is. An essay meant to provoke debate (pp. x–xi), it is likely to stimulate colleagues to focus upon episodes that are in fact deserving of more critical assessment. It also recovers overlooked, or underappreciated, aspects of the history of the later Roman empire. However, the author’s use of modern scholarship and the ancient or medieval sources is highly problematic. No less so, unfortunately, is the author’s style. The reviewer suspects that few if any of “the many intelligent people” (p. x) for whom the author affirms his work is meant will find this book easy to read or readily comprehensible. Redundant, otiose, or obscure phrases such as “to summarize the kernel of our three sources from the perspective of Constantius” (p. 26), “in the fecund mind of John Chrysostom” (p. 98), and “to present a face” (p. 189) may work well in the classroom, but they seem antithetical to successful popularisation. Moreover, the complete absence of any maps to help those who do not have long-standing, personal acquaintance with the geography of the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula makes following the line of argument all the more difficult.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, while this monograph does indubitably perform a useful service and is for that reason most welcome, specialists will wish to use it with caution and carefully verify its various affirmations. The ideas are invigorating, but the execution less so.

By way of conclusion, the reviewer would like to draw attention to an issue fleetingly raised and not fully addressed by Stevenson: the perception of Manichaeans within the Roman empire as fifth-columnists. By good fortune

23 Examples of these errors, which ought not to be found in the work of anyone who has completed the first year of undergraduate study of these languages at university, include the following: translating the construction  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$  with the accusative as though it were  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$  with the genitive (p. 68 n. 122) and mistaking a fear clause for a jussive noun clause (p. 183).

24 For maps offered to help the reader, cf. G. Fisher: *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*. Oxford 2011 (Oxford Classical Monographs); G. K. Young: *Rome’s Eastern Trade. International Commerce and Imperial Policy, 31 BC – AD 305*. London/New York 2001. Similarly, for maps of the world of the Goths, see H. Wolfram: *History of the Goths*. Translated by T. J. Dunlap. Berkeley/Los Angeles 1988; J. den Boeft/J. W. Drijvers/D. den Hengst/H. C. Teitler: *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII*. Groningen 1995.

we possess not only Eusebius of Caesarea's account of the origins of Manichaeism, but also a rescript addressed by the emperor Diocletian to Julianus the proconsul of Africa expressing the Roman authorities' perspective. Dating to 31 January 302, Diocletian's rescript reads in part (Coll. Mos. 15.3):<sup>25</sup>

Excessive idleness, my dear Julianus, sometimes drives people to join with others in devising certain superstitious doctrines of the most worthless and depraved kind. [...] We take note that those men concerning whom Your Sagacity has reported to Our Serenity, namely the Manichaeans, have set up new and unheard-of sects in opposition to the older creeds, with the intent of driving out to the benefit of their depraved doctrine what was formerly granted to us by divine favour. We have heard that these men have but recently sprung up and advanced, like strange and unexpected portents, from the Persian people, our enemy [...]. And it is to be feared that peradventure, as usually happens, they may try, with the accursed customs and perverse laws of the Persians, to infect men of a more innocent nature, namely the temperate and tranquil Roman people, as well as our entire Empire with what one might call their malevolent poisons. [...]

Writing a little over a decade later (or so it would seem), Eusebius of Caesarea describes Manichaeism thus (Eus. hist. eccl. 7.31):<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, the maniac whose name reflected his demon-inspired heresy was arming himself with mental derangement, since the demon, God's adversary Satan himself, had put him forward for the ruin of many. A barbarian in mode of life, as his speech and manners showed, and by nature demonic and manic, he acted accordingly, and tried to pose as Christ [...]. Bringing together false and blasphemous doctrines from the innumerable long-extinct blasphemous heresies, he made a patchwork of them, and brought from Persia a deadly poison with which he infected our own world. [...]

It is a rare and remarkable moment of complete concord of views. Indeed, the fact that both a Roman emperor who was a supporter of traditional cults (i.e. paganism) and a bishop who is distinguished as the first historian of Christianity use the same metaphor of "poison" to describe the perceived threat posed by Manichaeans suggests that they draw upon a common set of

25 N. Lewis/M. Reinhold (eds.): *Roman Civilization. Selected Readings*. 2 vols. 3. ed. New York, NY 1990, vol. 2, pp. 548–549.

26 Eusebius: *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*. Translated by G. A. Williamson. Revised and Edited with a New Introduction by A. Louth. London 1989 (Penguin Classics).

ideas and reflect beliefs that were widely shared in Late Antiquity.<sup>27</sup> That Eusebius consciously made the emperor's language his own is conceivable, but quite unlikely. Rather, we seem to see here a common physiological response to a perceived threat from outside the community. This *mentalité* and its accompanying behaviour are decidedly worth keeping in mind as we follow up the felicitous intuition of Stevenson and reflect further upon the Christian diplomacy attempted by two figures as seemingly different as Constantius II and John Chrysostom.

27 Cf. P. Brown: The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire. In: JRS 59, 1969, pp. 92–103, here pp. 97–98.

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