

der bislang tatsächlich auch noch nicht genügend systematisch berücksichtigt worden ist: Die Arbeit von CBZ kann hier in jedem Fall eine recht wertvolle Grundlage für künftige — möglicherweise interdisziplinäre — (Team-?)Studien sein: There is much more to learn about the Roman army in both the New Testament and early Roman Palestine!

Eine Bibliographie (S. 145-163, bei der lobend die Vielsprachigkeit der rezipierten Forschungsbeiträge erwähnt sei, was heute nicht immer mehr Standard ist), ein Index der Namen und Sachen (S. 165-167), weiter ein Verzeichnis ausführlicher verarbeiteter, moderner Autoren (S. 169-172), vor allem aber der Bibelstellen-Index bzw. der Index antiker Literaturpassagen, Papyri und Inschriften (S. 173-183) runden das Buch ab und machen es in der oben charakterisierten Weise zum willkommenen — und freilich auch zur eigenen und bisweilen auch vertiefenden Weiterarbeit am Thema einladenden — Arbeitsinstrument.

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Hans C. Teitler, *The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian the Apostate and the War against Christianity*, Oxford University Press, 2017. 312 pp. ISBN: 9780190626501.

In 312, when the Roman emperor Constantine the Great converted to Christianity, the course of Christian history changed. The Christians, who were until then a persecuted minority, gradually became the ruling majority of the Empire. It took less than a century for Christianity to cease being the persecuted religion it had been for almost three centuries and become, instead, the official state religion of the Empire, as ordered by Theodosius I in his edict of 380. This process, however, was not a smooth one. At one point in the short time between Constantine's reign and that of Theodosius it seemed that the Christian triumph was at an end. Flavius Claudius Julianus Augustus came into power, conquered the imperial throne, and became the emperor who would later be remembered as Julian the Apostate. Ruling for less than two years (from November 361 to June 363), Julian promoted anti-Christian and pro-pagan policies in an attempt to weaken Christianity and strengthening the Roman religion. This process came to an end only with the sudden death of Julian during his expedition to Persia.

Julian's adherence to Roman religion and his attempts to revive it, his renouncement of the Christian faith, and his new policies were the reasons he was later remembered in historiography as 'the Apostate', an epithet used both by ancient authors and modern scholars. This title not only marks the conflict between the Christians and the Pagans in the fourth century, but it also points at the Christian-oriented historiographical perception of Julian's character and rule, which results in a tendency to portray him as a persecutor of Christians. It is precisely this perception which H.C. Teitler challenges in his recent book on the Last Pagan Emperor. In this book, Teitler gives a more complex depiction of Julian and his biography. He uses both Christian and non-Christian sources, showing that Julian did not attempt to persecute Christians, and even if he was responsible for some anti-Christian policies and legislation, they were certainly not as vast and extensive as those inflicted by previous non-Christian emperors, such as Diocletian or Decius.

Many biographies were written about Julian, and Teitler states at the beginning of the book that this is not going to be just another biography of the emperor. 'This book focuses on that aspect of the Apostate's reign which earned him his nickname: Julian's relationship with the Christians' (p. x). Indeed, Teitler uses Julian's biography as a means to explain his attitudes towards the Christians. The book encompasses Julian's entire life, from his childhood (Chapters 1

and 2) through his ascension to power (Chapters 3-15) to his sudden death and its aftermath (Chapters 16-18). By delving into Julian's course of life, Teitler explains the reasons for his religious conversion, his policies and the reforms he manifested as an emperor, and the anti-Christian statements found in his writings. This examination leads Teitler to the conclusion that Julian was not the horrible persecutor of Christians he has been remembered and depicted as for a very long time.

The book contains 18 short chapters (most of them are less than 10 pages long), and as mentioned above they are divided into three major parts: Julian's early life and coming into power; Julian's policies; and Julian's death and the historiographical aftermath. The shortness of the general introduction in the beginning of the book and the lack of a concrete concluding chapter at the end of it make it sometimes difficult to follow Teitler's narrative and line of arguments, and thus it is not always easy to understand the purpose of each chapter in the grand narrative of the book. Nevertheless, his main points are made clear as the reader proceeds through the book and puts together the pieces of the puzzle set by the author. Teitler uses various types of sources: Julian's own writings, epigraphs, contemporary Christian and non-Christian chronicles and several historiographical and hagiographical accounts that were written decades (and sometimes centuries) after Julian's death. It might have been useful to include a better methodological explanation (perhaps in the introduction) about how one uses these sources, especially those written decades after Julian's regime came to its end. Like many other scholars of early Christianity, and especially those working on Christian martyrdom in Late Antiquity, Teitler faced the problem of a lack of contemporary sources, and thus he sometimes must use later records in order to reconstruct the history of the period he studies. Being aware of the problem of the historicity of such sources and addressing it is crucial for the validity of some of the arguments he makes throughout the book. Moreover, since this book may also be read and used by students at different levels, having a better methodological explanation would have set an excellent example of how one finds and uses sources when there is not enough contemporary written evidence.

The first part of the book (Chapters 1-3) contextualizes Julian's life and later perception in Christian historiography and modern scholarship. Chapter 1 opens with a short biography of Julian's life, beginning with the massacre of his family after the death of Constantine the Great and continuing with the time Julian spent in his youth exploring and learning classic philosophy and literature which eventually lead him to renounce his Christian faith and convert to the old Roman religion (that is, paganism). Finally, it reaches Julian military and political career, and it ends with his ascension to the imperial throne. Chapter 2 then gives a brief description of the state of Christianity and Christians in the Roman Empire in the first three centuries, focusing on the persecutions against Christians, the conversion of Constantine the Great to Christianity, and some Christological controversies that occurred within Christianity and lead to a certain imperial intervention in the Church. Chapter 3 gives a glimpse into some of Julian's writings, in an attempt to explain the philosophical roots of his anti-Christian thought. The chapter ends with Julian's rise into power and leads to the second part of the book.

This part (Chapters 4-15) follows Julian's short imperial career, from his departure from Gaul in 361 until his death in mid-363. Chapters 4-8 explore and question Julian's policies against Christians. Julian re-opened the Roman temples and revived the pagan rituals, such as offering sacrifices and worshiping the gods (Chapters 4-5). Julian, however, did not force this religion on the people living in the Roman Empire, in contrast to previous emperors, such as Decius, who forced participation in pagan rituals (Chapters 6-7). Teitler demonstrates that some of Julian's decisions affected the Christians and aggravated the tension between them and the pagans. For

instance, a certain Syrian bishop, who had previously turned a pagan temple into a church, refused to turn it back into a pagan temple. This decision resulted in the bishop's execution by an angry mob (p. 53). This incident may seem as part of imperial persecution against Christians and as an actual case of martyrdom, but Teitler emphasizes that even though such incidents happened, they were not encouraged by Julian and this was not the purpose of his new pro-pagan policies. Teitler strengthens this argument in Chapter 8, in which he focuses on Julian's School Edict and shows that its aim was not to persecute Christians, certainly not in the violent way Christians were persecuted after previous emperors had legislated anti-Christians laws. Teitler explains that 'the School Edict did not ... exclude Christians altogether from classical education, but merely tried to prohibit Christians altogether from teaching the classics' (p. 67) because 'a Christian teacher who despised the pagan gods, he [Julian] argues, could never correctly explain to his pupils the works of Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes...' (p. 66). That is, Julian's legislation against Christians was driven by his under appreciation of their intellectual ability, but it was also driven by his wish to propagate Classical philosophy, literature and thought in the best way possible. In other words, the impact on the Christians was a by-product of a greater plan.

Chapters 9-13 examine stories about persecutions and martyrdoms of Christians that took place during the reign of Julian. Teitler discusses Basil of Ancyra (Chapter 9), Theodorus the Confessor (Chapter 10), Theodoretus of Antioch (Chapter 11), the martyrs of Caesarea and Gaza (Chapter 12), and Eugenius and Macarius of Antioch (Chapter 13). The results of these discussions are the same: while some Christians were executed during the time period of Julian's reign, their deaths were not caused by any imperial persecution or any attempt of Julian to go after Christians. The second part of the book concludes with two chapters that examine another policy of Julian's (Chapter 14) and some contemporary Christian responses to Julian, which also lay the grounds for the later negative depiction of Julian in history (Chapter 15). The last part of the book (Chapters 16-18) deals with this reception, and it delves further into Julian's reputation, showing that Julian's negative image is a result of biased Christian literature that emphasizes his apostasy and cruel persecution. Such an image, however, hardly had anything to do with Julian's actual behavior, as Teitler has shown throughout the book. By doing so, Teitler's *Last Pagan Emperor* succeeds in shedding new light on the image of the famous and well-studied Julian the Apostate.

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Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, Cinzia Grifoni, and Marianne Pollheimer-Mohaupt (eds.), *Transformations of Romanness: Early Medieval Regions and Identities*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018. xi + 586 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-059838-4.

It is now a truism that the recipients of institutional privilege are mostly blind to the workings of their privilege and therefore assume that it does not exist. In a sense, this is also true for Roman voices in Late Antiquity, which are nothing if not privileged when compared to competing views. This bias of perspective has made understanding Romanness such a challenge. For Roman authors and their audiences, Romanness was ingrained in reality and seldom required explanation. Of course, Romans had ways of talking about themselves: as a society regulated by Roman law, as consumers of classical culture and inheritors of imperial glory, or, later, as Christians. Romanness could also encompass a wide range of localized identities. Communities of the Empire were described using a large vocabulary of regional, religious, and ethnic terms. Roman society had the