

3.502 for some evidence). Mus. Naz. Napoli inv. 9089 illustrates Anchises not with a gambling board, but with a dice-box (clearly visible, J.P. Cèbe, *Caricature et parodie* pl. 19.1; cf. his discussion, 369f.). What about the detailed portrait of the negress at work on a smallholding in early imperial Italy (*Moretum*), if the location is Italy (cf. *CM* 52 [2001], 303ff.)? D. is also curiously reluctant to engage with Horace's Italy (on which there seemed once a fair bit to be said); farming, hard work, the Sabine countryside, the virtuous *contadino* are all useful myths, a bit less mythical than the story of Aeneas, and of fundamental importance when you are writing *inter alia*, and some of the time at least, about moral and national renewal in *G*.

But we need to be very clear: D. is sometimes extremely amusing, she has a startlingly wide range, she makes the reasonably attentive reader think, a lot, she is highly intelligent (of course — 38 — she is right to remark on the Persian/Seleucid tradition behind *Res Gestae*; add Nemrud Dagħ, if you will), she is independent: Romanisation of Italy here altogether without its usual tedious teleological trappings ('Romanisation was good; therefore it was carried out; Mazzini and co. only realised anew what the Romans had brought about': see D., 168) and she has an excellent nose for the obscure and significant detail: the state as elephant with the sage (*prudens*) as mahout is Ciceronian (*Rep.* 2.67; D., 59) and deserves a wider immortality. Note (e.g.) tactical changes of dress by Roman citizens during the Mithridatic Wars (from Athen., D., 278f.) or (D., 291, after Phrynichus) the figurines in tradesmen's booths, to avert the evil eye.

There is unusual and welcome theory here too: what Roman writers perceive and record is, as it stands, good raw evidence for states of mind; to D.'s sort of approach, as evidence no less valuable than 'institutional structures': it is good to see Petr. *Cena* enshrined alongside Mommsen *StR*. No serious Hellenist or Latinist seems to have been asked to read D.'s text, slowly and with care, and no publisher today was going to do the small-scale work for her. The serious flaws of detail that I have indicated are signs, one very much hopes, of naiveté, flawed training or haste, rather than actual contempt for good technique. There is still hope: readers of D., who have struggled, often enraged, to page 368 actually deserve (and perhaps not from OUP next time, please) the very good book that they thought they were going to get (and nearly got) this time. So thoughtful and passionate a study of Roman tolerance and prejudice towards 'them' (and 'them' is, over the ages, a strange and multiform beast), on the principle *fabula de te / narratur*, has evident contemporary relevance and for that reason alone, flaws and all, lays claim to wide and thoughtful consideration among the public of *SCI*.

Nicholas Horsfall

Dalnacroich, Wester Ross

J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Change in Late Antiquity: Religion, Barbarians and their Historiography*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. xiv + 352 pages. ISBN 0-860-78990-X.

Despite retiring in 1992 from Nottingham University in England, Liebeschuetz continues to publish excellent work. A career total (to date) is five books (*Antioch; Continuity and Change in Roman Religion; Barbarians and Bishops; The Decline and Fall of the Roman City; Ambrose of Milan*) and an earlier Ashgate collection of articles, *From Diocletian to the Arab Conquests: Change in the Late Roman Empire* (1990). This volume contains a further 17 articles, divided into four sections, on Historiography, Religion, Barbarian Settlement, and Late Antiquity, covering areas of interest to L. As is usual with Ashgate volumes, there is an introduction and an index, but no attempt to create any coherence between the reprinted papers (all previously published). Original pagination is retained.

Reviewing such a volume is difficult, since its main value is in providing access to scattered materials in a single volume. The value of these reprints, indisputable a decade ago, is now under challenge from the rapid development of electronic access to periodical literature. This does not

make such volumes unnecessary yet, but I would be surprised to see reprints of published work a decade hence.

The two sections on Historiography and Religion have little coherence, but are nonetheless excellent examples of L.'s thorough work, based on literary sources and a deep understanding of modern (in particular non-English) literature. The section on Historiography opens with a paper, originally published in 1968, on Thucydides' account of the Sicilian Expedition; the paper's inclusion is justified on the grounds that Thucydides served as a model for later writers. Two other papers in this section are more generally concerned with ecclesiastical historians and with late antique historiography in general, two with particular writers, the anonymous author of the *de Rebus Bellicis* and Malalas. The section on Religion ranges from the first to the fourth centuries CE, including a survey section on Roman Religion from the *Cambridge Ancient History* (vol. 11), a discussion of the influence of Judaism in the Empire, on Mithraism in the second century, and on Praetextatus in fourth century Rome.

The section on Barbarian Settlement has the greatest cohesion of the four sections. It opens with broad reflections on what was happening to the Roman army in the Western Empire and how the habit of having Roman citizens fight had declined by the sixth century. The next three papers all touch on aspects of the creation of the medieval barbarian world out of the Roman Empire. These three derive from L.'s participation in the *Transformation of the Roman World* project. Placing the three together helps us appreciate the clarity of thought provided by L. The paper 'Cities, Taxes, and the Accommodation of the Barbarians' clarifies the contrasting arguments of Goffart and Durliat on the managed settlements of barbarians in the fifth century Western Empire; this should now be considered alongside Goffart's *Barbarian Tides*, 2006, which clarifies some of Goffart's earlier arguments.

The last section, on Late Antiquity, is composed of three papers dealing with more reflective issues on the nature and meaning of the period of late antiquity. As two had been published in obscure UK and Italian conference proceedings, having them in this volume is particularly useful. Although there is (inevitably) some repetition, these papers show L.'s view of the Anglo-American version of Late Antiquity. For L., this is something inspired by Jones' *Late Roman Empire*. L. places this work in a clear European historiographical context; awareness of Continental schools of thought has always been one of L.'s strengths, and here he argues for the importance for Jones of Rostovtzeff's *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, an observation easy to overlook given the general eclipse of Rostovtzeff's work. L. identifies three traditions of Late Antique thought, that of Peter Brown (paying much attention to Holy Men and Women and to anthropological themes), that of Averil Cameron (focussing on the role of texts), and that of John Matthews (seen as working in the tradition of Ronald Syme and focussing more on traditional history). Where does L. himself fit within this triad? He seems closest to the Matthews tradition. However, one should note in particular L.'s concern for the concept of decline, something also running through his recent book on the *Decline and Fall of the Ancient City*. L. suggests that one characteristic of much recent scholarship has been a refusal to accept that the Empire declined. I suspect that none of those cited by way of example (myself included) would disagree, though we would probably say that these studies suggest we should be looking to different reasons for the causes of the collapse of the Late Roman Empire. These arguments have recently been (indirectly) addressed in B. Ward-Perkins' *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (2006) with (unlike L.) a focus on archaeological evidence. P. Heather (a student of Matthews) in *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (2005) placed much responsibility on the role of the Goths in the collapse of the Western Empire. This return to previously unfashionable political and military narrative suggests a future direction that can include the rejection of decline identified by Liebeschuetz, but also help to explain what happened to the Empire.

Individual scholars interested in these themes will probably have copies of many of the articles anyway, but it is a useful book for a University library where it makes a handy collection to assign

students. The last two sections are particularly useful for both ancient and medieval historians who look at barbarian settlement, and for those teaching courses on historiography.

Hugh Elton

Trent University

Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003. xii + 210 pages. ISBN 0-415-28072-9.

The *Letter of Aristeas* is, as Sylvie Honigman reminds us at the beginning of her learned, dense and impressive work, neither a letter nor by Aristeas. Though it begins with an address to an addressee, and though its writer claims the name Aristeas, neither address nor name is genuine; each is part of a cover-up that has extended now for some 22 centuries. It is Honigman's task, with her predecessors since at least the seventeenth century, both to recognize that cover-up and, more innovatively and ambitiously, perhaps also to resolve the problems which it represents.

The *Letter* purports to offer an account of how the Pentateuch was translated into Greek in Alexandria by 72 elders of the Jews, trained and skilled in both Hebrew and Greek, who had been sent there from Jerusalem at the invitation of a Ptolemy, conventionally identified as Ptolemy II Philadelphus (regn. 285-247 BCE). That ruler, a lover of learning and founder of a great library, had been told by his librarian, Demetrius of Phalerum, that his collection lacked one important work, the law of the Jews. The invitation to the High Priest in Jerusalem was a logical consequence. The presence of Demetrius as Librarian for Ptolemy II has long been recognized as a difficulty in accepting the work as true and as transmitting an authentic historical record, and numerous other features of the text confirm Bentley's judgment of the work as 'a clumsy cheat'. But it took many centuries for this kind of view to emerge. Until the end of the Middle Ages, the text was accepted as genuine and true, and was seen as a very important witness for Christian claims.

The story of how the Greek text of the Pentateuch came into existence nearly three centuries before the birth of Jesus offered Christian apologists from an early date valuable evidence for what they claimed were references to him in the biblical text, references which had been removed, so they asserted, from the Hebrew original after the crucifixion. If those references were there so long before his birth, and fortuitously, even providentially, preserved in the Greek version, from a time when the Jews could not have known about him and hence removed them from the text, this constituted evidence in favour of the truth of his message and the claims made for him. Hence the importance and popularity of the *Letter*, which survived, principally because of this aspect of its contents, in the Christian tradition, the Jewish one having long lost any direct access to it or use for it. In recent centuries, however, authorship, genre, date, intended audience, purpose, and much in the contents have alike been the subject of much debate.

If it is impossible now to know who really wrote the text, which Honigman prefers to call the *Book of Aristeas*, it is not impossible to know something of the writer's aims in producing it. Past scholarship has seen in it a variety of literary types, using arguments of genre and content to characterize it as an apology for the Jews, support for Ptolemaic claims, propaganda for Judaism over against paganism, etc. In modern times, ever since Hody in the seventeenth century and others demolished its claims, few have accorded much credence either to the work's assertion of the king's involvement in the translation enterprise or to the link with the Library of Alexandria. Both are seen generally as elements in propaganda by the Jewish author designed to demonstrate the favour in which the Jews of Egypt were held by the ruler and to create the illusion of a special relationship between the Jews of Egypt and the Ptolemies. Anachronisms and awkwardnesses in the testimony proffered by the *Letter* led scholars to the conclusion that neither could be true.