

More than previous studies of slavery in early Christianity this work shows the early Church's entanglement in general Roman middle- and upper-class values and practices, an entanglement which eventually led to the development of a double morality, which enabled both slaves and slaveholders to be members of Christian communities. This double morality is more troubling for modern readers than the lack of an early Christian struggle for the liberation of slaves.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, the book is well-written and provides a good introduction to ancient slavery in general and Christian attitudes toward slaves in particular. It may also attract the non-specialist reader interested in ancient society and Christian origins.

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Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*. Translated with introduction and commentary by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. xvii + 395 pp. ISBN 0 19 814971 4 (hbk) 0 19 814924 7 (pbk).

The so-called *Vita Constantini*, attributed in the manuscripts to Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (d. 339), is one of the most important sources for the reign of Constantine the Great (d. 337) and his support of Christianity. Nevertheless, scholars are still divided on the way it should be treated. While some, such as Timothy Barnes and the authors of the book under review here, accept much of the evidence in the *Vita Constantini* as authentic, others are highly sceptical. This scepticism is nourished, first and foremost, by the personality of Eusebius himself. As the bishop of Caesarea, Eusebius was much influenced by the theology of Origen, whose library he inherited, and he was essentially pro-Arian in sympathy, until Arius was formally condemned by the Council of Nicaea in 325. 'His experience at Nicaea', write Cameron and Hall, 'led him to support Constantine's formula, but the ecclesiastical politics of the rest of the reign proved complex and Eusebius' own position continued to dictate the manner of his writing and his presentation of evidence' (3). Moreover, Eusebius, one must constantly bear in mind, did not know Constantine personally before the Council of Nicaea, and even after the council he had very few personal dealings with the emperor.

As Cameron and Hall state at the very beginning of their preface, their aim is '... to make the *Life [of Constantine]* accessible to students and scholars alike, and to make use of the large amount of recent works on Constantine's reign' (v). After a short and extremely informative introduction (which discusses Eusebius and his work, the authenticity of the *Vita Constantini*, the dates and circumstances of composition, Eusebius' sources, the plan and the literary character of the work, Eusebius' Constantine, and the historical value of the *Vita Constantini*), Cameron and Hall provide a fluent and accurate translation of the text. Given the fact that Eusebius' Greek is often obscure and pretentious, this is not an easy task. 'We have not tried to gild the Lily', they declare, 'but to stay close to the original in the hope of conveying its very characteristic tone' (v). They have succeeded in achieving this aim in an admirable way. The commentary which Cameron and Hall provide elucidates the content of the text, without being repetitive or replete with unnecessary details and references. No doubt, Cameron and Hall's new translation, introduction and commentary will shortly become an indispensable tool for anyone interested in late antique history and early Christian studies. We should all be grateful for the great service they have done in producing this volume.

It is indeed rather surprising that no monograph has been dedicated to the *Vita Constantini* thus far. I do hope that Cameron and Hall will join forces again in order to write that monograph, for none can do it better. I, for one, would have liked to know what they think of the so-called media revolution of early Christianity (see, for example, Doron Mendels' book *The Media Revolution of Early Christianity. An Essay on Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*, 1999), and how the

*Vita Constantini* fits this scheme; or how the *Vita Constantini*, which according to Cameron and Hall 'is clearly a work of apologetic' (12), compares with Eusebius' other writings, such as his works against the pagans (and see the pertinent analysis by Aryeh Kofsky in his *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism*, 2000).

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Philip Burton, *The Old Latin Gospels. A Study of their Texts and Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. xi + 232 pp. ISBN 0 19 826988 9.

There is plenty of evidence, although extremely fragmentary, that various versions of Latin translations of the Bible were already in circulation around Gaul and North Africa before the end of the second century. These versions, commonly known as the *Vetus Latina*, were later replaced by Jerome's Vulgate, which gradually became the standard authoritative Latin translation of the Bible throughout Christendom. Unfortunately, though, for large parts of the Bible no manuscript is extant, and knowledge of the Old Latin translations derives exclusively from quotations preserved in the writings of Church Fathers, such as Cyprian of Carthage, Novatian or Tertullian. Traditionally, the Old Latin translations are divided into two major 'traditions' — the so-called 'African tradition', represented by the *Codex Bobbiensis* and the *Codex Palatinus*; and the 'European tradition', which is further divided into the 'North Italian class', represented mainly by the *Codex Monacensis* and the *Codex Brixianus*, and the 'Mixed Texts'. Given the fragmentary nature of our evidence, this division is far from being neat and straightforward.

Some thirty manuscripts (several of which are very fragmentary) of the Old Latin translations of the four Gospels survive, and it is on these manuscript versions that Philip Burton concentrates in his admirable study. In the first part of his book, Burton surveys the various manuscripts and traditions, compares the different versions of the four Gospels, and concludes that a single version can be postulated for the three synoptic Gospels, since '... there are too many instances which without resorting to special pleading can only be explained as a result of a common heritage' (61). As far as the Gospel of John is concerned, Burton identifies two distinctive traditions.

In the second part of the book, after a short introduction on antique and modern theories of translation, Burton analyses various aspects of the Old Latin translations, and his conclusion rightly puts into question the traditional description of the *Vetus Latina* as 'hopelessly literal' and vulgar. The translators, argues Burton, '... are prepared to show flexibility in their renderings, and are able to distinguish various nuances implied by the same Greek word' (94). Moreover, 'while the translators do employ many vulgarisms and post-classical usages, ... they are also willing to ransack the lexicon in order to find exactly the right word; and while they often distort natural Latin idiom out of respect for the original, they are also prepared to use technical words and sets of expressions that are not literal renderings of the Greek' (111-12). These, according to Burton, suggest that the translators were educated native Latin speakers.

In the third part Burton examines the translations' Latinity, lexicon, morphology and syntax, and thus strengthens his conclusions from the previous chapter. The Old Latin Gospels, according to Burton, should not be regarded as an example of 'vulgar Latin', not the least because the concept of 'vulgar Latin' as a separate linguistic entity is untenable. Although the language of the Old Latin Gospels '... shows many constructions belonging to sub-literary registers, and is often heavily distorted by the Greek...', these texts '... are not the most vulgarised of Latin texts, nor are the translations wholly literal. Instead we find some obsolete or obsolescent constructions revived, either because they provide the nearest equivalent to the Greek or apparently out of a certain conservatism on the part of the translators. Moreover, the translators from time to time show a native speaker's command of Latin in choosing between several possible Latin constructions for a