

which cannot be considered to be a mere continuation of classical ideas (esp. regarding capital punishment). The commentators cite many parallel sources for what Ammianus has to say, but the interdependency of these sources could be taken more into account: e.g. at p. 142 it does not have much sense to quote both Socrates and Sozomen as the latter does not do much more than rewrite the former. Only rarely there is too much information: that the Greek ἀναβουλευς is the equivalent of the Latin *strator*, “groom”, does not add anything to our understanding of Ammianus (p. 138). There is repetition of the material of the burial of Valentinian I (p. 148, 196).

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Matthias GERTH, *Bildungsvorstellungen im 5. Jahrhundert n. Chr.: Macrobius, Martianus Capella und Sidonius Apollinaris*. Berlin – Boston, De Gruyter, 2013. 1 vol. VIII-269 p. (UNTERSUCHUNGEN ZUR ANTIKEN LITERATUR UND GESCHICHTE, 111). Prix : 119,95 €. ISBN 978-3-11-030197-7.

In this slightly revised version of his doctoral dissertation (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 2011), Matthias Gerth sets out to analyse Late Antique views on “learning” or “education” – civil or intellectual education, designated more comprehensively by the German term *Bildung*. As such, the study can in a way be considered a supplement to and refinement of the authoritative *Das lateinische Christentum und die antike pagane Bildung* (Tübingen, 2007) by the author’s doctoral supervisor Peter Gemeinhardt. Limiting the historical scope of his analysis to the 5th century AD, the author selects three literary works, viz. Macrobius’ symposiastic dialogue *Saturnalia*, Martianus Capella’s allegorically framed encyclopaedia of the liberal arts *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, and Sidonius Apollinaris’ collection of literary letters. An important common feature of these three works (prominent in the cases of Macrobius and Martianus Capella) is that the authors style themselves as fathers addressing their sons with educational advice. Although Gerth duly motivates his choice not to include technical texts on specialist issues (*Spezialschriften*) nor Augustine’s (allegedly) specifically Christian reflections on *Bildung*, it might have been rewarding to include the other works composed by Macrobius and Sidonius Apollinaris, as well as other authors who wrote on the subject during the 5th century AD. This would have resulted in a more complete outlook on the differences and possible “interactions” between Christian and pagan authors, as well as between “specialist” and more “vulgarizing” writings. In general, one can say that Gerth builds his study on a thorough, carefully contextualized and philologically informed close-reading of his source texts. In the course of the study, he raises and (tentatively) answers interesting questions relating to (1) the philological or textual nature of ancient learning in general, and the importance of etymology within learning (the author should have taken into account Mark Amsler’s *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1989); (2) the presence and relevance of bilingual competence in Late Antiquity and the continuing transfer of “Greek learning” to a Latin context; (3) the backward orientation or *Rückwärtsgewandtheit* (cf. Thorsten Fögen in *Listy filologické* 121 [1998], p. 206) prevailing in the intellectual climate of Late Antiquity, manifesting itself clearly in the

central importance given to Vergil's works in this period (the author pays extensive attention to the question whether Vergil's oeuvre can be considered a "pagan Bible"); (4) the connection between eloquence and linguistic correctness on the one hand, and the societal and intellectual concern of "being taken seriously" on the other; (5) the social role played by (the public display of) learning in the construction and identification of elite intellectual in-groups (in this respect, it might have been useful to establish a more explicit theoretical framework); (6) the structure and organization of heterogeneous fields and topics of knowledge in the homogenizing context of encyclopaedic or miscellaneous works. Although Gerth's methodology is sound in principle, it could have been improved upon in a number of ways. Most importantly, it might have been better to formulate a systematic set of research questions at the outset of the study, serving as the structural frame for the investigation. As they stand now, the three main chapters are rather unlike in form. In the chapter on Macrobius' *Saturnalia* the author chooses to discuss the respective interlocutors individually, almost prosopographically. This approach is useful in reconstructing the interlocutors' mutual positioning in their intellectual network, but the drawback is that the author at times seems to be concerned primarily with distilling factual information from his source texts. The chapter on Martianus Capella nearly exclusively consists in a general discussion of *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* as a literary work, and breaks off where the actual analysis with regard to *Bildung* should begin. In my opinion, the best chapter is definitely that on Sidonius Apollinaris. There, the author proceeds from Sidonius' views regarding the education of his son Apollinaris (I), over the socio-intellectual connections between Sidonius, Claudianus Mamertus and Sapaudus (II), to Sidonius' discourse of overall intellectual decay vs. exceptional "bulwarks of learning" (III), and, lastly, Sidonius' complicated attitude towards Christianity and towards barbarians (IV). Of particular interest are Sidonius' explicit statements regarding the sociocultural value of *Bildung*, in close connection with his attitude towards a correct usage of Latin as well as towards foreign, "barbarian" languages. Many of these "language" or "speaker's attitudes" in Sidonius' works can be explained with reference to the "social connotations hypothesis", as I have argued in *Vigiliae Christianae* 69 (2015), p. 393-421. This involves that Sidonius' evaluations of languages or language varieties are in fact strongly biased by the sociocultural stereotypes he holds about the *speakers* of these languages or language varieties. On the whole, Gerth's study would have profited from the integration of more extensive synthetic and comparative components. Now it is only in the (short) global conclusion that Gerth actually compares the respective authors and works involved. The volume closes with a bibliography of primary and secondary sources and useful indices of names, subjects, and *loci citati*. Readers less acquainted with the Late Antique source texts at issue will appreciate the highly readable German translations provided by the author. The volume is carefully edited, although it is not devoid of typographical mistakes. One can conclude that this study is a valuable contribution to a fascinating field, but that it would have profited from a more substantial revision, extending the scope of the original doctoral dissertation.

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