

N. Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xx, 471. ISBN: 978-1-107-60110-9. \$39.99 paperback.

This is the second edition of a book originally published in 2006. However, as the editor admits in his preface (p. xvi), 'The text is basically the same, although several mistakes and infelicities have been corrected'. He proceeds to add that 'Two maps have been redrawn, the bibliography has been updated, and references to important breakthroughs have been signalled in the notes'. In other words, very little has really changed. Some simple maths confirms this. The first edition contained xviii pages of introductory material, whereas this contains xx, the difference consisting of the new, two-page 'Preface to the Revised Edition'. The first edition also contained 469 pages in its main body, whereas this contains 471. Hence changes to the substance of the volume have added a maximum of two pages to its length.

So what has actually changed, and why? The editor singles out the comments offered by Timothy Barnes in a lengthy review article (*IJCT* 14 [2007]) as of particular importance (p. xvi), and duly adds this item to the secondary bibliography (p. 421). One may start, therefore, by examining what else has been added to this bibliography. Subject to minor corrections, I count an extra 67 items, 4 of which date to 2011 (Barnes' own biography of Constantine, Cameron on the last pagans of Rome, Van Dam's book on the reception of the story of Constantine's victory at the Milvian bridge, and a forthcoming article by Ramskold and Lenski on some Constantinian medallions). If nothing else, the addition of so many extra items proves the continuing strength of interest in the reign of Constantine. In fact, this bibliography is two pages longer than that in the first edition, and this explains the extra two pages to the main body of the volume.

Before Barnes began his more systematic review of the first edition, he explained at length why it was incorrect to refer to the Edict of Milan as such, and why, if one feels obliged to use this term, one should do so with the appropriate qualification or inverted commas. Among other complaints, he took the editor himself to task for sloppy phrasing (p. 72 in both editions) that could possibly lead someone to believe that there had been an Edict of Milan, and was irked also that a section of Drake's chapter was entitled 'The Edict of Milan' (p. 121 in both editions) without inverted commas at least. One either congratulates the editor on his bravery in refusing to make these most minor of changes or commiserates with him on the tyranny of press that refuses to understand his perilous position.

Let us turn next to the substance of Barnes' comments. The main part of Barnes' review followed the structure of the book itself. He provided a detailed commentary on the two introductory essays to the book by Lenski and Bleckmann, followed by similar commentaries on each of its five main sections. Since we have been told that the text of the revised edition remains basically the same, one must look to the notes to each chapter. In the case of the notes to Lenski's introduction, there are two small changes to

notes 1 and 21, the addition of a short extra reference to a work by Opitz (misspelled 'Optiz') in the first case, and the correction of the date of publication by a work by Calderone in the second. The main issue raised by Barnes, the failure to distinguish between problems that have been solved and those that remain intractable, is not touched upon or dealt with in any way. In the case of Bleckmann's chapter, there are changes to notes 9 and 58, in the first case correcting a misreporting of Corcoran's dating of the Edict on Accusations, in the second acknowledging that there is an English translation of Philostorgius. Lenski (one presumes) goes beyond mechanically reproducing Barnes' corrections in each case to refer to publications unknown to Barnes because not yet published. But the changes remain minimal. At the conclusion to Corcoran's chapter, there are some additions to the section on further reading, and one brief extra bibliographical reference in each of notes 5 and 41. At the conclusion to Lenski's survey chapter on the reign of Constantine, there are again some additions (and a deletion) to the section on further reading and brief extra bibliographical references are added again also to notes 26, 43, 65, 69, and 111. At the conclusion to Frakes' chapter on the successors of Constantine, the editor (one presumes) removes a reference to the website *De Imperatoribus Romanis*, whose lack of timely revision had provoked the attention of Barnes, in order to add two new bibliographical items. New bibliographical items are cited in notes 3 and 15, while several new references to primary sources are added to note 52. And so the pattern continues.

One would like to think at this point that all genuine factual errors or other serious infelicities have been removed from this volume. However, there remain a few problems that seem to have escaped even Barnes' eagle eyes. Here one notes that the coin illustrations are described twice, briefly on pp. xi-xi and with more detail on the pages facing the illustrations themselves. In both cases, the description of coin no. 20 records the reverse legend as CONSTANTIANA DAPHNE when it actually reads CONSTANTINIANA DAFNE. Furthermore, Victory is described as standing on a *cippus* when she is clearly seated on the *cippus*. In the case of the descriptions opposite the illustrations themselves, one also notes that the RIC references have been omitted from the descriptions of coins nos. 4 (add RIC 6 Ticinum 111) and 18, although supplied in every other case. Furthermore, the description of the bust on coin no. 18 differs between p. xii ('rosette diademed') and the page facing the illustration itself ('pearl diademed'), being correct in the latter case.

The treatment of the coinage within the text requires some occasional correction also. Hence Frakes (p. 104 in both editions) claims that 'Under the legend *Gloria Exercitus* a series of coins was introduced in 330 that displayed a variety of images honouring the success of the army in establishing peace following the war against Licinius and various successes against the barbarians'. Far from there being a variety of images, all introduced in 330, there were only two reverse designs used successively, where the first depicted two soldiers holding spears with two standards between them and the second, introduced in 335, depicted two soldiers holding spears with only a single standard between them. Elton claimed (p. 339 in both editions) of the coins of this period that the

reverses often ‘showed defeated barbarians, military camps, and triumphant emperors, accompanied by a legend like GLORIA EXERCITUS’. He then refers to coin no. 24, an example of the first type above, so giving the impression that it depicts two triumphant emperors. It does not. It is a wonderful example of Constantinian visual ambiguity. On the one hand, these could just be two soldiers symbolic of the army as a whole (the significance of the legend being that its soldiers are the glory of the army, or that the army is glorious), or pagans could choose to interpret them as the Dioscuri, said by some to have assisted Constantine at the battle of Adrianople in 324 (p. 4 in both editions). However, the introduction of the new type in 335, where two standards are replaced by one, marks a subtle Christianization of the type, where the changed imagery suggests that it is this standard that is the glory of the army (and not the two soldiers, Dioscuri or not), where this is best interpreted in reference to Constantine’s new Christian standard, the labarum. Finally, Elton also claims (p. 335 in both editions) that new military recruits at this period ‘swore an oath to the emperor and were given dog tags (*bullae*)’. The reference to ‘dog tags’ represents a common misinterpretation of the evidence of the *Acta Maximiliani*, which, regardless of one’s opinion of them otherwise, neither use the term *bullae* nor identify the purpose of the lead *signaculum* described there as a means of identification.

In conclusion, while this second edition is very welcome, the additions and corrections are relatively minor. There is certainly no need to rush out to buy a copy for fear that one is missing something important by only having the first edition. From a teaching perspective, however, this may be no bad thing: one can still set one’s students to read chapter 5 or pp. 111–36 and be sure that they will all have read the same thing regardless of which edition they happen to have.

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