

together a literary biography of Jerome, tracing chronologically the development of his scholarly projects within the context of his ascetic aspirations. It culminates in chapter iii, a study of Jerome's commentaries on the Old Testament prophets, or his *opus prophetale*, as he calls it. These commentaries are based on much Jewish and Christian learning, the latter derived primarily from Greek works. This reliance on tradition, in Williams's view, is what allowed Jerome to portray his scholarly endeavour as fitting the humility of a monk (p. 131). The second half of the book, perhaps the more intriguing, treats the 'infrastructure' of Jerome's scholarship. This consisted in the first place of books, which Williams contends must have amounted to many hundreds and perhaps over one thousand codices. It also involved secretaries and copyists and learned Hebrew consultants from among the Jews. This infrastructure, for its part, was dependent on the support of Jerome's wealthy patrons and readers. It took not a little ingenuity on his part, as Williams details, to represent this infrastructure and interact with its benefactors in a way that was in tune with the monastic ideal.

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Marriage, celibacy, and heresy in ancient Christianity. The Jovinianist controversy. By David G. Hunter. (Oxford Early Christian Studies.) Pp. xix + 316. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. £55. 978 0 19 927978 4
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The title and subtitle here would be better reversed: this is a book in the first place about Jovinian and Jovinianism, and is all the better for it. That initial tight focus allows Hunter to place Jovinian and his 'resistance to the ascetic ideal' (p. 2) in the context of contemporary Christianity, orthodox and otherwise, and also to bring in a whole range of other material that might have become overwhelming if it were not so convincingly related to this single figure and the controversy he inspired. Following an illuminating excursus covering Jovinian's contested status in the Reformation and since, Hunter describes in turn Jovinian's particular beliefs and his social circle; the historical development of the ideas about celibacy and marriage which would come to a head in the Jovinianist controversy; and the rhetorical construction of heresy in late antiquity, both by Jovinian in his own polemics and, in the end successfully, by his doctrinal opponents. Hunter is particularly good on the attractions of asceticism for the aristocratic Christians of Rome, and on the persistent fear – articulated in accusations of Manichaeism and encratism – that the Church might find itself promoting a separate ascetic elite. For me, however, the most fascinating aspect of the book is the account in the final two chapters of the various responses to Jovinian's views, by which Siricius, Ambrose and Jerome – powerful enemies but unlikely allies – came to be united in their condemnation of the *scriptura horrifca* which denied any special place to ascetic discipline; and which led Augustine to attempt to steer between the two extremes in assigning a value both to celibacy and to 'good' Christian marriage. All these responses are handled with a welcome sensitivity: so that where it might seem at first sight that the Church had simply closed ranks against 'Jovinianism', Hunter instead brings out the different interests

of Siricius (in church discipline) and Ambrose (in defending his own doctrine of Mary's 'virginibus in partu'), and notes that the violence of Jerome's reply and the exaggerated care of Augustine's later comments reflect the extent to which Jovinian had identified a real weakness in the Christianity of his time. In the end it is impossible not to be convinced by Hunter's central contention, that Jovinian is to be understood not as a 'laxist' advocate of unrestrained immorality but as a sincere and serious thinker. These same questions would be asked and answered again, from Pelagius to Martin Luther and beyond; and Hunter is right to restore them to a central place in the history of Christian ideas.

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Expectations of justice in the age of Augustine. By Kevin Uhalde. Pp. viii + 233. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. £36 (\$55). 13 978 0 8122 3987 1; 10 0 8122 3987 3
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Well, whose expectations? The emperors', of whom the first Christian example, Constantine, had made the bishops judges competent in non-criminal litigation which bypassed the civil courts? Of the aggrieved and the contentious who sought episcopal verdicts with various degrees of eventual satisfaction? Of the bishops themselves who hoped to moderate accurate assessment of responsibility with Christian mercy? These are tricky questions, for what answers could be returned about equivalent expectations of the variety of courts, tribunals, judicial committees and the like currently in operation in the United Kingdom? Moreover, even though Kevin Uhalde draws upon evidence from Latin-speaking Christianity in a wide sweep which transcends the bounds of his title the amount is slender: mostly accounts of cases, canon laws and articulate bishops caught reflecting on their roles. However, though the task the author set himself was impossibly difficult it was worth a try. With seventy-nine pages of notes and bibliography as against 137 of text the reader is amply apprised of the present state of scholarship and also its limitations. The first chapter deals with the legal concept of *calumnia*, the false accusation that damaged the fabric of social life and which it was hoped, often vainly, that bishops with their imparted spiritual authority and expertise could discern. Whether they were any better at discernment than others and whether they claimed to be is the subject of the next chapter. Chapter iii looks at the problem of oaths as a practical necessity for discernment in a wicked world and so tolerated by Christian judges. The final chapter deals with penance as the Christian's internal application of standards of guilt and recompense in view of the Last Judgement. Interesting and of some importance is the rebuttal of the simplistic assertion by the subject's best known expert, Cyril Vogel, that for this period the idea and the practice of penitence had no significance: maybe not, it seems, in its liturgical manifestation but with sufficient prominence in personal devotion publicly acknowledged. The cases are predictably the most interesting bits of the book and not only because they are usually about sexual misconduct: e.g. Ambrose and Indicia (a proven false accusation in which Ambrose's suffragan, Syagrius of Verona, had made a wrong decision which