

The next chapter, *Literatura przełomu IV i V wieku* [*The Literature of the Turn of the 4th and the 5th Century*, p. 69–110], contains an overview of the most prominent authors, their works, and the characteristic traits of literature in the late antiquity. While this part certainly serves as an important introduction to the later analysis and helps the reader understand the intellectual environment of the epoch in which Merobaudes wrote, the author takes a very broad approach, trying to condense two centuries of the history of literature in just a couple of pages and one might wonder if passages concerning Ammius Marcellinus or earlier Christian authors are relevant to the topic of the dissertation.

In the last chapter, *Twórczość Flawiusza Merobaudes* [*The Works of Flavius Merobaudes*, p. 111–197], the author proceeds to present Merobaudes' works and their characteristics. Quite surprisingly this chapter contains also a brief overview of the history of panegyrics, with special emphasis on the most prominent

writer in this genre, Claudian, which, while certainly important due to Merobaudes' activity in this field, belongs probably in the aforementioned introductory chapters. The author then proceeds with a thorough analysis of both Merobaudes' panegyrics, contemplating their meaning as well as historical background of their writing, and technical difficulties with their interpretation, due to their incompleteness. The following parts deal with Merobaudes' poetry, four *Carminæ* and the poem *De Christo*. The text is closed by the conclusion (p. 199–200).

In addition to that, the book also contains appendices with all of Merobaudes' works in Latin (p. 201–215) and also their translations into Polish (p. 217–232). The book is concluded with a bibliography (p. 233–240).

The author's effort to present a curious persona of Flavius Merobaudes, a soldier, politician, but also a poet, worthy of a praise. His task was not easy, as the sources are scarce and incomplete, yet the author managed to deliver a satisfactory narrative. Overall, it is a valuable study of a topic, that did not get almost any coverage in Polish literature up to this point, and it can be noted, that despite its problems, it is a valuable entry into the historiography of the late Roman Empire and it gives promise for the author's future works.

Lukasz Pigoński (Łódź)

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SZYMON OLSZANIEC, *Prefektura praetorio Italii, Illyrikum i Afryki (312–425 n.e.)* [*Pretorian Praefecture of Italy, Illyricum and Africa (312–425 A.D.)*], Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2014, pp. 323.

The presented book was written by Szymon Olszaniec, a renowned Polish researcher of the history of the of the late Roman Empire and early Byzantium from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. He is particularly interested in the social history and the administrative system of the Empire and

is already an author of numerous works in this field¹. The presented book follows that pat-

¹ SZYMON OLSZANIEC is the author of following books: *Julian Apostata jako reformator religijny*, Kraków 1999; *Comites consistoriani w wieku IV. Studium prozopograficzne elity dworskiej cesarstwa rzymskiego 320–395 n.e.*,

tern, describing the office of *praefectus praetorio* of Italy, Illyricum and Africa in the years 312–425 AD.

The book starts with the preface (p. 9–12) and its main body consists of two parts, first one, *Powstanie urzędu PPO Italii i jego struktura* [*The establishment of the office of PPO of Italy and its structure*, p. 13–103], dealing with the origin of *praefectus praetorio* and the structure of the office. It is thoughtfully divided into short chapters, each concentrating on a different aspect of the topic. First one presents the situation in the times of Diocletian, the second analyses the reforms of the office by Constantine. The third chapter presents the insignia of *praefectus praetorio* of Italy, while the fourth concentrates on the hierarchy of the offices in the Empire, and the place of the aforementioned in the Imperial system, while also exploring the social status of the people who held that post. The fifth characterizes the obligations and duties of *praefectus praetorio* of Italy, and also the benefits that came with this title. The sixth describes the territories of the prefecture, with the special emphasis on the case of Illyrian provinces, while the seventh analyses the problems of the prefects' residence and his relationship with the

emperor. The eighth, the last one, presents the internal structure of the office.

The second part of the book, *Kompetencje i zakres władzy prefekta praetorio Italii* [*The Prerogatives and Range of Competence of Praefectus Praetorio of Italy*, p. 105–273], concentrates on the authority of the prefect's office. The first chapter presents the role of the prefect in the legal system and in keeping the public order. The second explores the problem of taxation, tribute, and other civic obligations called *munera* that were under prefect's jurisdiction. The third deals with his relationship with local municipal structures such as *curiae* and *corporata*. This part of the book finishes with the conclusion (p. 275–279).

In addition to that, the book also contains an appendix with a list of legal acts directed to *praefectus praetorio* of Italy (p. 281–292), bibliography (p. 293–307), a summary in English (p. 309–314), and index of names (p. 315–323).

The book offers a detailed overview of the office of *praefectus praetorio* of Italy. The author approaches the topic from various perspectives, not only focusing on describing the position of *praefectus praetorio* of Italy in the administration of the Empire, but also analyzing its social and political aspects. The analysis is thorough and detailed, and the additional strength of the book is that the further problems, that don't directly fit into narrative are tackled in the extensive footnotes, so the book has much larger scope than it may seem at first glance, and no dilemma goes unaddressed.

Overall the book proves the author's highest expertise in the field and makes for an invaluable entry into Polish historiography of the late Roman Empire. We can only urge the author to consider publishing his findings in English as well, so they may reach broader, international audience.

Lukasz Pigoński (Łódź)

Toruń 2007; *Prosopographical Studies on the Court Elite in the Roman Empire (4th century AD)*, trans. J. WELNIAK, M. STACHOWSKA-WELNIAK, Toruń 2013; and articles: *Walentyńnian i senatorowie – procesy w Rzymie w latach 368–374*, [in:] *Crimina et mores. Prawo karne i obyczaje w starożytnym Rzymie*, ed. M. KURYŁOWICZ, Lublin 2001, p. 129–142; *Sopatros von Apamea – ein neuplatonischer Philosoph am Hofe von Konstantin*, [in:] *Society and Religious Studies in Greek and Roman History*, vol. I, ed. D. MUSIAŁ, Toruń 2005, p. 108–122; *Comes Orientis Zivil- oder Militärbeamter*, [in:] *Society and Religious Studies in Greek and Roman History*, vol. II, ed. D. MUSIAŁ, Toruń 2005, p. 108–122; *Eine Art Talleyrand – Gajusz Cejونیusz Rufiusz Woluzjan i meandry polityki personalnej rzymskich imperatorów przelomu III/IV w.*, [in:] *Byzantina Europaea. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Waldemarowi Ceranowi*, ed. M. KOKOSZKO, M.J. LESZKA, Łódź 2007, p. 457–468; coeditor: *Spółczesność i religia w świecie antycznym. Materiały z ogólnopolskiej konferencji naukowej (Toruń, 20–22 września 2007)*, ed. S. OLSZANIEC, P. WOJCIECHOWSKI, Toruń 2010.