

Citation style

Westall, Richard: review of: Jennifer Barry, *Bishops in Flight. Exile and Displacement in Late Antiquity*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2019, in: Plekos. Elektronische Zeitschrift für Rezensionen und Berichte zur Erforschung der Spätantike, 22 (2020), p. 255-263, DOI: 10.21245/rec.ant.235582903, downloaded from Website



copyright

This article may be downloaded and/or used within the private copying exemption. Any further use without permission of the rights owner shall be subject to legal licences (§§ 44a-63a UrhG / German Copyright Act).

Jennifer Barry: *Bishops in Flight. Exile and Displacement in Late Antiquity*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press 2019. XIX, 200 p. \$ 34.95/£ 29.00. ISBN 978-0-520-30037-8.

This promising monograph is dedicated to the theme of clerical exile in the later Roman empire, which is unquestionably an important one in view of the significance vested in clerics as figures of authority in the wake of the Constantinian revolution. Focussing upon a limited period, viz. the aftermath of the ecumenical councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381), Barry uses a handful of case-studies to investigate the construction of episcopal authority in response to the challenge offered by recourse to the instrument of exile as a means of eliminating dissent and encouraging consensus. Her principal focus is upon the figures of Athanasius of Alexandria (Chapters 1–2) and John Chrysostom (Chapters 3–4), which allows readers to compare and contrast the similarities and telling differences in the career trajectories and ultimate fates of these two protagonists of Patristic literature. Restricting her vision to the field of the Greek-speaking East, she also considers figures such as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Meletius of Antioch, but touches upon Hilary of Poitiers only in a tangential manner, on account of his presence at the eastern councils held in AD 359–360. There is an overall omission of the Latin-speaking West, where figures such as Liberius of Rome merit serious reconsideration. In short, this monograph is concerned with the construction of the orthodox bishop in the East in the wake of the conversion of the Empire to Christianity, with a particular focus upon the intersection of heresiological and juridical discourses in the realm of literature.

In a wide-ranging introduction (1–29), Barry lays the basis for her inquiry, which aims to describe and analyse the transition from Tertullian's characterisation of flight to that of Athanasius of Alexandria. She does so by describing both the situation of the Empire at the moment of the Constantinian revolution and the practice of exile and banishment in the Graeco-Roman world.¹ Having defined the limits and scope of her investigation, she

1 It is worth emphasising a crucial distinction that does not emerge with sufficient clarity from Barry's discussion: deposition and exile were two different phenomena. The apodeictic formulation of this truth is conveniently to be found at Van Nuffelen 2007, 139: "It is wrong to assume that a deposition was always followed by an imperial exile, or that an exile presupposed a deposition. Exile was an imperial punishment, deposition an ecclesiastical decision, and although both were very often tied

then begins in earnest with the case of Athanasius and his withdrawal to the desert in order to avoid arrest and banishment (31–55 = Chapter 1: Athanasius of Alexandria in Flight). Next she turns to Gregory of Nazianzus and discusses how the putative bishop of Constantinople described the rehabilitations of Basil of Caesarea and Athanasius of Alexandria, illustrating how these cases were relevant to Gregory's own situation as he sought to assert authority in the eastern imperial capital (56–75 = Chapter 2: How to Return from Flight). Subsequently, she explores John Chrysostom's experiences of displacement and the evolving ways in which this exiled bishop of Constantinople made sense of what had occurred to him (76–102 = Chapter 3: John Chrysostom in Flight). There follows an analysis of the Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom by Pseudo-Mactarius and Palladius's Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom, wherein Barry identifies the discursive mechanisms that made possible Chrysostom's re-integration with the community of Constantinople in spite of his death in exile (103–131 = Chapter 4: To Rehabilitate and Return a Bishop in Flight). Next, going back in time, she examines the case-study of Eusebius of Nicomedia and the paradoxical fate that befell a bishop who did return in triumph from exile and was to baptise Constantine as well as become bishop of Constantinople (132–153 = Chapter 5: To Condemn a Bishop in Flight). Barry concludes with the case-study of Meletius of Antioch, a bishop whose ambivalent status as a defender of orthodoxy eventually meant that he achieved acceptance only thanks to a sort of 'relegation' outside the walls of Antioch in the form of burial with St Babylas (154–172 = Chapter 6: Remembering Exile). A brief afterword sums up the results of this investigation, reiterating the need and utility for a critical approach to premodern texts of displacement and the orthodox construction of the exilic self (173–177 = Epilogue). Late antique narratives of displacement may make for entertaining reading and be good to think with, but they can hardly be treated as unproblematic, objective representations of historical reality. They were an integral part of the 'culture wars' (if the reviewer may be pardoned for the metaphor) that ineluctably followed from the Roman emperors' conversion to Christianity.

to each other, this was not a rule." (I am most grateful to Konstantin Klein for drawing my attention to this important contribution.) For further exploration of this matter, see Van Nuffelen 2008; Barnes 1993; Millar 1971. For complete bibliographic information, see the bibliography at the end of this review (pp. 261–263).

Yet, the logical progression is not always easy to follow, at least for this reader. The ordering of case-studies could arguably have been better. The relegation of the counter-examples of Eusebius of Nicomedia and Meletius of Antioch to the final portion of monograph (Chapters 5–6) does a certain violence to the subject and contributes to a false image of order that is contrary to what Barry quite rightly discerns. The construction of the orthodox bishop was a problem-fraught process, and it would have been entirely appropriate to commence with Eusebius of Nicomedia, who is earliest in time of the figures treated here and who had the signal distinction of being the bishop who baptised Rome's first Christian emperor.

A special word is required on the subject of the literary models for the works discussed in this monograph. The enthusiasm and ingenuity – not to mention the erudition – that Barry displays in seeking to draw links between Patristic texts and Classical mythology are laudable, but the undertaking is fraught with obstacles that appear well-nigh insuperable to the reviewer. In analysing the accounts of the two miscarriages and death of the empress Aelia Eudoxia that Pseudo-Martyrius provides in the Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom (§§ 66, 121), Barry affirms at some length that the author drew upon the myth of the Niobids (110) and the myth of Hercules' destruction of the Hydra (113–114) in fashioning his description of her misfortune and untimely end. Alas, there is nothing in the text whatsoever that might justify identifying any allusion to these classical myths.² Indeed, in view of the rigorous use of biblical texts by Pseudo-Martyrius, the claim that reference is being made – coded or not – to classical myths is intrinsically highly suspect.³ The clergy and ascetics who were in theory the foremost of the 'athletes' of Christ were fundamentally opposed to the traditional religions

2 Likewise, at p. 41 n. 29, Barry makes a grandiose claim for allusion to the myths of Oedipus, Tydeus, Peleus, and Telamon *inter alios*. In reality, when Constantius II describes Athanasius as a rootless wanderer (Athanasius, *ad Const.* 31), he is implicitly castigating the bishop as a brigand. A similar claim was reportedly made by Arbitio regarding the usurper Procopius a couple of decades later (Amm. 26.9.5: *publicum grassatorem*). To understand the social reality implied by the language of Constantius II (or rather his secretary), readers might wish to turn to the account of the misadventures of the gang of robbers described in the central books of the Golden Ass of Apuleius. The modern literature on that subject is immense, but one can still do no better than to commence with Millar 1981.

3 It is worth adding that no allusions to classical mythology are discerned in the extremely thorough and philologically discerning publication of this funeral oration: Barnes/Bevan 2013.

of the Graeco-Roman world and that opposition extended to their cultural manifestations. Moreover, there are no discernible, serious correspondences between historical narrative and pagan myth that might even justify the suspicion of an ecclesiastical author re-purposing the latter in the service of the former. Rather, the intertextual references that exist, in abundance it must be said, consistently refer readers to the Bible.⁴ We teach our students, and we encourage ourselves, to be constantly aware of the need to connect the various pieces of evidence so as to be able to restore some semblance of the overall picture, but there is also a need to recognise limits.

There are various cases that might have been fruitfully followed, so as to give consistency to the monograph. One particular instance is that of Paul of Constantinople. Notwithstanding four exiles and a reportedly atrocious death in exile under Constantius II, Paul would eventually be rehabilitated, with a biography produced to commemorate this martyr (BHG 1472a) and his relics re-introduced to the city of Constantinople. Barry does make a passing reference to Paul (61–62), but seems unaware of just how problematic – and promising for her venture – the evidence regarding his exiles is. The citation of Kosiński’s 2015 article is welcome (61 nn. 24–25), but overlooks the fundamental fact that that article itself does not offer a particularly critical discussion of the evidence. Kosiński, for instance, cites Barnes for his interpretation of Athan. hist. Arian. 7.3, and yet dates the fourth exile to AD 350–351.⁵ However, this is not what Barnes has argued. Rather, Barnes has made what is apparently a strong case for dating the fourth exile to AD 349–350.⁶ As Richard Flower has well observed, “the chronology of Paul’s

4 It is to be regretted that English-speaking renditions of Patristic works (such as those in Liverpool’s outstanding *Translated Texts for Historians* series) regularly omit an index of biblical citations. For best editorial practice, readers are referred to the volumes of *Sources Chrétiennes*. In general, English-speaking publications on Late Antiquity betray incredible insouciance as regards the use of biblical texts. That is a serious methodological failing. An author’s library is a window onto that individual’s soul.

5 Kosiński 2015, 232 n. 3 (dates of exile), 233 n. 10 (citation of Barnes); Barnes 1993.

6 Barnes 1993, 98, 214–217. It is worth specifying Barnes provides an appendix examining in some detail the whole of Paul’s tumultuous career at pp. 212–217. Lest the point be deemed abstruse, it is worth observing that it does make a significant difference whether one thinks that Paul and Athanasius were deposed anew before or after the death of Constans.

various exiles is opaque”.⁷ The reconstruction of the fourth exile of Paul depends upon the reconstruction of the career of Athanasius and the understanding that the praetorian prefect Flavius Philippus perished in captivity under Magnentius. The latter hypothesis has now been dramatically disproved by new inscriptions from Anatolia⁸, and the former is not cogent in spite of a well-argued case by Barnes. In view of the fact that Constantius II had relented and allowed for the re-entry of Athanasius and Paul as a consequence of threats made by Constans, it must be conceded that any move to expel them from their sees can only have been countenanced once the political situation had become more favourable to Constantius II. Nothing had changed as regards the war with Persia, which Constantius II was once more preparing to prosecute at the moment of receipt of the news of his brother’s death. Likewise, nothing had changed as regards the relationship of Constantius II to the West until the report of the death of Constans. Therefore, it very much looks as though it was that event which triggered the actions that were to result in new exiles for the bishops of Constantinople and Alexandria. In short, the condemnation of Paul by yet another council of bishops and his subsequent exile ought to be dated to the late winter or early spring of AD 350, with his death occurring at some point in the summer of that same year. Both this re-calibration of the chronology for the fourth and final exile of Paul and the existence of a new critical text of the pre-metaphrastic life of Paul ‘the Confessor’ would have justified ample treatment by Barry on a par with what she has done for Paul’s successor John Chrysostom.⁹

There is a troubling lack of reference to contemporary European scholarship. That is a great pity, as some of the most exciting and interesting things on this topic have been written and published in Europe in the last twenty years.¹⁰ There is also on occasion the relevant North American item dealing with fourth-century exile that is surprisingly omitted.¹¹ No less surprising, it

7 Flower 2016, 45 n. 29.

8 For discussion, see Moser 2018, 189–207.

9 Fusco 1996.

10 E.g. Blaudeau 2006; Blaudeau ed. 2008; Leemans 2004; Maraval 2013. Standard works of relevance on Athanasius and his contemporaries are also missing (e.g. Piepenbrink 2011, Pettersen 1984, and Tietze 1976).

11 E.g. Potter 2013; Stevenson 2014.

should be said, is the fact that a prominent colleague's name has been butchered, as Walter Scheidel has been transformed into Walter Schneider (33 n. 8; 191).¹² Last but not least, it is regrettable to find omitted classic works of scholarship that would have indubitably enriched Barry's handling of this topic.¹³ Indeed, in view of the extensive overlap between the subject of this monograph and that of an excellent review of the subject published earlier this past decade by Daniel Washburn, it is a pity that she did not make greater use of her predecessor's pathbreaking work.¹⁴ Had she done so, for instance, she would have been able to explore in an even more sophisticated manner the interplay between the Graeco-Roman tradition of the *adventus* and the triumphal re-entries of exiled bishops such as Athanasius of Alexandria, Liberius of Rome, and John Chrysostom.¹⁵

This slim, elegant volume constitutes a noteworthy and welcome contribution to our understanding of exilic discourse and the construction of the figure of the bishop in the fourth and fifth centuries. A stimulating read, it will provoke further, useful discussion.

12 This is on a par with items such as “Magnetius” (sic) and “Johanite” (sic). Unfortunately, typographical errors are far from infrequent.

13 E.g. Klein 1977; MacCormack 1981; Martin 1996.

14 Washburn 2013.

15 For the re-entry of the unjustly neglected Liberius (which is conceivably reflected to this day in the celebration of the creation of S Maria Maggiore), see Coll. Avell. 1.3 (nature); Lib. pontif. 37.5 (date); Barnes 1992; Washburn 2013, 156–158; Westall 2016, 305–306; Cohen 2018. That problem, however, is something to which we shall be returning.

Richard Westall, Rom
richard.westall@gmail.com

www.plekos.de

Empfohlene Zitierweise

Richard Westall: Rezension zu: Jennifer Barry: *Bishops in Flight. Exile and Displacement in Late Antiquity*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press 2019. In: *Plekos* 22, 2020, 255–263 (URL: <http://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2020/r-barry.pdf>).

Bibliography

Barnes 1992: Barnes, T.D.: The Capitulation of Liberius and Hilary of Poitiers. In: *Phoenix* 46, 1992, 256–265.

Barnes 1993: Barnes, T.D.: *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*. Cambridge, Mass. 1993.

Barnes/Bevan 2013: Barnes, T.D./Bevan, G.: *The Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom*. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary. Liverpool 2013 (*Translated Texts for Historians* 60).

Blaudeau 2006: Blaudeau, Ph.: *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451–491). De l'histoire à la géo-ecclesiologie*. Rome 2006 (*Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome* 327).

Blaudeau ed. 2008: Blaudeau, Ph. (ed.): *Exil et relégation. Les tribulations du sage et du saint durant l'antiquité romaine et chrétienne (Ier–VIe siècle ap. J.-C.)*. Actes du colloque organisé par le Centre Jean-Charles Picard, Université de Paris XII – Val-de-Marne, 17–18 juin 2005. Paris 2008.

Cohen 2018: Cohen, S.: Liberius and the Cemetery as a Space of Exile in Late Antiquity Rome. In: D. Rohmann/J. Ulrich/M. Vallejo Girvés (eds.): *Mobility and Exile at the End of Antiquity*. Berlin 2018 (*Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity* 19), 141–160.

Flower 2016: Flower, R.: *Imperial Invectives against Constantius II. Athanasius of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, and Lucifer of Cagliari*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary. Liverpool 2016 (*Translated Texts for Historians* 67).

Fusco 1996: Fusco, R.: *La Vita premetafrastica di Paolo il Confessore (BHG 1472a). Un vescovo di Costantinopoli tra storia e leggenda*. Roma 1996 (*Bollettino dei Classici. Supplemento* 16).

Klein 1977: Klein, R.: *Constantius II. und die christliche Kirche*. Darmstadt 1977 (*Impulse der Forschung* 26).

Kosiński 2015: Kosiński, R.: The Exiled Bishops of Constantinople from the Fourth to the Late Sixth Century. In: *Studia Ceranea* 5, 2015, 231–247.

Leemans 2004: Leemans, J.: The Idea of 'Flight for Persecution' in the Alexandrian Tradition from Clement to Athanasius. In: L. Perrone (ed.): *Origeniana Octava. Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition*. Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27–31 August 2001. Leuven 2004 (*Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium* 164), 901–910.

MacCormack 1981: MacCormack, S.G.: *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley, CA 1981 (*The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 1).

- Maraval 2013: Maraval, P.: Les fils de Constantin. Constantin II (337–340), Constance II (337–361), Constant (337–350). Paris 2013.
- Martin 1996: Martin, A.: Athanase d’Alexandrie et l’église d’Égypte au IV^e siècle (328–373). Rome 1996 (Collection de l’École française de Rome 216).
- Millar 1971: Millar, F.: Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian: The Church, Local Culture and Political Allegiance in Third-Century Syria. In: JRS 61, 1971, 1–17.
- Millar 1981: Millar, F.: The World of the Golden Ass. In: JRS 71, 1981, 63–75. Reprinted in: S.J. Harrison (ed.): Oxford Readings in the Roman Novel. Oxford 1999, 247–268.
- Moser 2018: Moser, M.: Emperor and Senators in the Reign of Constantius II. Maintaining Imperial Rule Between Rome and Constantinople in the Fourth Century AD. Cambridge 2018 (Cambridge Classical Studies).
- Pettersen 1984: Pettersen, A.: To Flee or Not to Flee: An Assessment of Athanasius’ *De fuga sua*. In: W.J. Sheils (ed.): Persecution and Toleration. Papers Read at the Twenty-Second Summer Meeting and the Twenty-Third Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society. London 1984 (Studies in Church History 21), 29–42.
- Piepenbrink 2011: Piepenbrink, K.: Apologia de fua sua. In: P. Gemeinhardt (ed.): Athanasius Handbuch. Tübingen 2011, 193–197.
- Potter 2013: Potter, D.S.: Constantine the Emperor. Oxford 2013.
- Stevenson 2014: Stevenson, W.: Exiling Bishops: The Policy of Constantius II. In: DOP 68, 2014, 7–27.
- Tietze 1976: Tietze, W.: Lucifer von Calaris und die Kirchenpolitik des Constantius II. Zum Konflikt zwischen dem Kaiser Constantius II. und der nikänisch-orthodoxen Opposition (Lucifer von Calaris, Athanasius von Alexandria, Hilarius von Poitiers, Ossius von Córdoba, Liberius von Rom und Eusebius von Vercelli). Diss. Tübingen 1976.
- Van Nuffelen 2007: Van Nuffelen, P.: The Career of Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 348–87): A Reassessment. In: JThS NS 58, 2007, 134–146.
- Van Nuffelen 2008: Van Nuffelen, P.: Arius, Athanase et les autres: enjeux juridiques et politiques du retour d’exil au IV^e siècle. In: Ph. Blaudeau (ed.): Exil et relégation. Les tribulations du sage et du saint durant l’antiquité romaine et chrétienne (Ier–VI^e siècle ap. J.-C.). Actes du colloque organisé par le Centre Jean-Charles Picard, Université de Paris XII-Val-de-Marne, 17–18 juin 2005. Paris 2008, 147–175.
- Washburn 2013: Washburn, D.: Banishment in the Later Roman Empire, 284–476 CE. London 2013.

Westall 2016: Westall, R.: Costanzo II e il Vaticano. In: T. Canella (ed.): *L'Impero costantiniano e i luoghi sacri*. Bologna 2016 (Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose. N.S. 54), 293–308.