



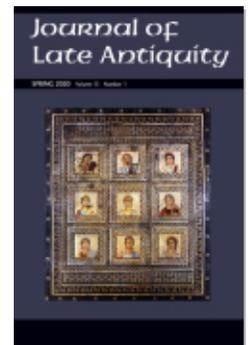
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*Emperor and Senators in the Reign of Constantius II:
Maintaining Imperial Rule Between Rome and Constantinople in
the Fourth Century AD* by Muriel Moser (review)

Robert M. Frakes

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(Review)

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Reviews

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Emperor and Senators in the Reign of Constantius II: Maintaining Imperial Rule Between Rome and Constantinople in the Fourth Century AD

MURIEL MOSER

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Pp. xvii + 420. ISBN: 978-1-108-48101-4

Reviewed by Robert M. Frakes
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After defeating Licinius in 324 AD, Constantine renamed Byzantium as Constantinople or “City of Constantine” (an elaborate inauguration ceremony would be held in 330). He may also have transformed what had been the city council of Byzantium, but the sources are sparse and murky. The late fourth-century *Origo Constantini* (also known as Anonymous Valesianus, *pars prior*) describes Constantine (6.30) founding a secondary Senate in Constantinople, but this source is late and unclear, and scholars have disputed the nature of this Senate for decades.

While allowing (1) that scholars are shifting from a “conflict paradigm” of religious tension between the emperor and Senate in favor of the question of

the possible neglect and marginalization of the old senatorial elite in the imperial administration, Muriel Moser sets out in this new book, a revision of her doctoral thesis completed at the University of Cambridge, to show that Constantine and Constantius II intentionally worked with the Senate in Rome. After a short Introduction sketching out the major organization of the book and the scholarly discourse on the political importance of an emperor developing an eastern senatorial constituency, the author turns to a chronological analysis of the interactions with the Senate of Constantine (13–82) and then, in more detail, Constantius II (85–332).

Part I treats the “Unified Roman Empire (AD 312–337).” In Chapter 1, she argues that Constantine continued to use Roman Senators in his administration after 326 (against the argument of Wolfgang Kuhoff who suggested in 1982 that Constantine staffed Eastern positions with senators from his new Eastern Senate in Constantinople). In Chapter 2 she suggests (46–57), based upon a close analysis of the vocabulary combined with numismatic and epigraphic evidence, that an important passage in Eusebius’s *Vita Constantini* (4.1.1–2) has been mistranslated by previous scholars and should instead be viewed as showing that Constantine awarded equestrian status and not senatorial status to Eastern elites (as opposed to recent suggestions by Peter Heather and Alexander Skinner). She then turns to the passage in the *Origo Constantini* and reminds the reader that

the use of the adjective “*claros*” for the members of the “Senate” in Constantinople was lesser than the “*clarissimus*” status of the senators in Rome, and examines some important epigraphic evidence from the period. It is possible that if Constantine did anything with this body, he may have reconfirmed their status as the Council of Constantinople and not a “Senate” *per se*.

In Part II, Moser turns to “Ruling the East (AD 337–350).” Passing quickly over the massacre after Constantine’s death, Chapter 3 examines Constantius II’s continual use of Senators in the administration of what was at that point his eastern Mediterranean empire, perhaps as a means of legitimizing his rule. In Chapter 4, Moser examines Constantius II’s policy toward Antioch and Constantinople. While the former was his working capital in his early reign, Moser plausibly suggests that his continued patronage to Constantinople was a means of legitimization by linking himself to his father; here, she uses numismatic evidence effectively, especially with regard to the coin legend of *aequitas*.

In Part III, the author examines Constantius II as the “Ruler of Rome and Constantinople (AD 350–361).” In Chapter 5, the author analyzes the impact of the usurpation of Magnentius, who had overthrown Constans in the West at the beginning of 350. Moser makes the intuitive argument that Magnentius’s usurpation cut Constantius II off from the Senate in Rome and so he had to elevate the municipal council in Constantinople to be a source of administrators as well as a tool to build support in the East in a difficult time. She uses prosopographic and epigraphic evidence well to support her argument, and it is even possible that

Magnentius’s marriage to Justina, if she was indeed a princess of the Constantinian dynasty, might have made Constantius’s move even more necessary. Moser makes effective use of an unpublished inscription honoring the Eastern Praetorian Prefect Philippus, which is currently being prepared for publication by Denis Feissel. She dates the inscription to shortly after Constantius’s initial victory over Magnentius at the Battle of Mursa in September 351 and makes the convincing argument (189–96) that Constantius elevated the Council of Constantinople to the status of Senate “sometime between mid-350 and mid-351.”

In Chapter 6, the author expands on the impact of creating a Senate in Constantinople with an examination of how Constantius created an Eastern *Cursus Honorum*, expanded the Eastern Senatorial order, and finally created the office of urban prefect for the city in 359 (mirroring the office in Rome). A final full chapter examines Constantius II’s famous triumph in Rome in 357. While this is well described by Ammianus (16.10), Moser also uses sources such as the Codex Calendar of 354, Julian’s speeches, and prosopography to show how Constantius continued to support Senators from Rome as well, and also apparently still selected the priests of the traditional “pagan” cults. A conclusion recapitulates the main arguments for the book and lays the groundwork for Julian’s support of the Senate of Constantinople, the city of his birth. She provides several appendices, primarily based on prosopography: Appendix A treats Roman Senators in Office in Asia and Syria from 275–305, B lists Senatorial Posts in the Eastern Administration under Constantine from 324–337, C presents higher-ranking senatorial

administrators from 337–349, D continues with higher-ranking Eastern administrators from 350–361, E lists expanded lower-ranking senatorial eastern administrators from 350–361, and F provides “Notes on the Praetorships of 361.”

The methodology the author employs in the book is refreshingly clear. She makes effective use of prosopography, both by distilling and carefully critiquing the important earlier scholarly work, but also by deploying evidence from inscriptions that were unavailable to earlier scholars. The author also makes several nuanced readings of primary sources that offer changes to the standard view of the careers of some officials. This analysis supports her arguments in the chapters, and is also conveniently listed in the appendices. The organization of the book is straightforward, with intentional introductions and summary conclusions to each section.

The lengthy bibliography is comprehensive, with only a few minor typographical errors. Perhaps she might have added John Dillon’s *The Justice of Constantine* (2012) and H. A. Drake’s *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (2000). Peter Crawford’s recent *Constantius II: Usurpers, Eunuchs and the Antichrist* (2016) is engaging for non-specialists.

Moser has written an impressive book that successfully recasts the view of not only the relations of Constantine and Constantius II with the Senate in Rome, but also offers a plausible outline for the growth in importance of the Senate in Constantinople. Deft in its handling of primary sources and scholarly arguments, her book will become a standard work for university libraries and for scholars in the field.

Vitae Antonii Versiones Latinae
(CCSL 170)

P. H. E. BERTRAND AND LOIS GANDT, EDs.
Turnhout: Brepols, 2018.
Pp. ccxlii + 363. ISBN: 978-2-503-57748-7

Reviewed by Scott G. Bruce
(Fordham University)

Although it was composed in Greek, the hagiographical portrait of Saint Anthony by Archbishop Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 299–373) exerted an influence on the imaginations of Latin readers far surpassing that of any other saint in the eastern tradition. The impact of Anthony’s exemplary life among Latin-reading audiences in North Africa and western Europe was only possible because of the industry of late antique translators who rendered Athanasius’s Greek into Latin for distant readers eager for information about the desert saints.

In the volume under review, P. H. E. Bertrand and Lois Gandt provide critical editions and expansive introductions to the two known Latin translations of Athanasius’ *Life of Blessed Abbot Anthony* (*Vita beati Antonii abbatis*). The organization of the book is not as intuitive as one may like. The first half of the volume (242 total) contains the modern scholarly material, including a shared bibliography (7*–38*), Bertrand’s long introduction (in German) to Evagrius’s well-known literary Latin translation of the *Vita Antonii* (41*–188*) and Gandt’s much shorter introduction (in English) to the so-called *versio vetustissima*, a little-known literal rendering of Athanasius’s text into Latin which was written in the fourth century and survives only in a single tenth-century manuscript (191*–242*). The second half of the book (360 total pages) reboots the pagination to