
Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte

Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris

(Institut historique allemand)

Band 25/1 (1998)

DOI: 10.11588/fr.1998.1.61173

Rechtshinweis

Bitte beachten Sie, dass das Digitalisat urheberrechtlich geschützt ist. Erlaubt ist aber das Lesen, das Ausdrucken des Textes, das Herunterladen, das Speichern der Daten auf einem eigenen Datenträger soweit die vorgenannten Handlungen ausschließlich zu privaten und nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken erfolgen. Eine darüber hinausgehende unerlaubte Verwendung, Reproduktion oder Weitergabe einzelner Inhalte oder Bilder können sowohl zivil- als auch strafrechtlich verfolgt werden.

Dorothy PIKHAUS, Répertoire des inscriptions latines versifiées de l'Afrique romaine (I^{er}-VI^e siècle). I: Tripolitaine, Byzacène, Afrique Proconsulaire, Bruxelles (Epigraphica Bruxellensia) 1994, 161 p. (Epigraphica Bruxellensia, 2).

L'A. établit la liste des 346 inscriptions latines versifiées actuellement connues en Afrique. L'introduction fait l'historique des publications et indique comment les documents sont présentés dans le répertoire, afin de distinguer, en particulier, les documents entièrement rédigés en vers et les *commatica*, qui incluent des fragments de vers ou de citations dans un texte en prose. Elle rappelle qu'il est difficile de savoir si une inscription conservée dans un manuscrit fut réellement gravée mais que la question n'est pas insoluble.

Les sources sont classées par province et suivent un ordre géographique à l'intérieur de chacune d'entre elles. Le répertoire donne le premier vers des inscriptions, puis une liste exhaustive des éditions. Ensuite l'A. décrit l'emplacement et le contenu du texte en indiquant les diverses interprétations. Il est aisé, grâce aux *indices*, de retrouver les documents d'après leurs *initia*, leur métrique, les noms de personnes, leur typologie, leur numéro dans les grands recueils ou leur origine. Une carte aurait aidé ceux qui se perdent un peu au milieu des noms donnés dans l'Antiquité, durant l'époque coloniale et actuellement, aux villes et villages africains.

L'index chronologique est fort instructif. L'épigraphie versifiée constitue un indice de romanisation, car elle se développe progressivement à partir du I^{er} siècle et s'épanouit au II^e siècle. Elle n'a pas subi de baisse significative durant la «crise» du III^e siècle ou durant l'«occupation» vandale. L'incidence des vicissitudes politiques sur la vie sociale est faible, en Afrique comme ailleurs. Par contre, le nombre réduit des poèmes attribués au début du VIII^e siècle et leur apparente disparition après la conquête arabe ne reflètent peut-être pas la situation réelle. En effet, les couches supérieures sont les plus accessibles et l'abandon des édifices les a sans doute transformées en carrières. En outre, les inscriptions africaines tardives comportent rarement une formule de datation. Il aurait peut-être fallu noter, à côté des autres réserves très judicieuses, qu'«une chronologie basée sur le formulaire, l'onomastique et le support» (p. 21) mérite réflexion, car elle conduit parfois à négliger la longue vie des formes après leur première apparition.

Cette réserve ne doit pas masquer que le but fixé dans l'introduction est atteint: tous les travaux récents sont répertoriés; ils révèlent que le nombre de textes connus augmente rapidement et qu'ils sont riches d'informations dans les domaines les plus divers. Surtout l'A. montre, dans l'introduction, que l'étude globale de la documentation livre la clé de certaines questions insolubles à partir des seules sources africaines. La prise en compte des inscriptions grecques n'élargirait-elle la perspective en contribuant à combler le fossé entre les deux parties de l'empire romain qui ont vécu en symbiose plus longtemps qu'on ne l'imagine parfois?

Jean DURLIAT, Toulouse

Usurpationen in der Spätantike. Akten des Kolloquiums »Staatsstreich und Staatlichkeit«, 6.-10. März 1997, Solothurn/Bern, ed. by François PASCHOD, Joachim SZIDAT, Stuttgart (Steiner) 1997, 174 p. (Historia Einzelschrift, 111).

I have to say that I found this a rather disappointing collection of essays. Usurpation was an abiding characteristic of Roman imperial politics; and its relatively detailed reporting in the sources allows the modern historian precious insights into the working of the Roman state (so Szidat, 9). While in the third century rebellion produced »crisis«, by the fourth, though it had become more costly (there is no third-century equivalent of the battle of Mursa), it was less frequent and more orderly (with the advantage consistently held by the current incumbent, and with usurpers therefore pressing for acceptance into the imperial college). I looked forward with relish to the explanation and assessment of the causes and

consequences of this change by a select band of ancient historians (apart from the editors: T. D. Barnes, R. Delmaire, A. Demandt, N. Duval, E. Flaig, F. Kolb, J. Martin, and V. Neri), anticipating systematic consideration of such questions as: 1) What was likely to cause significant opposition to an emperor under the Late Empire, and how did such opposition usually manifest itself? 2) In what circumstances, and how, was such opposition likely to lead to violence, i.e. to usurpation by, or with the help of, army-officers? 3) What factors determined the initial success or failure of a usurpation? 4) How did successful usurpers attempt to justify and legitimise their position (given, for example, that in revolting they and their supporters will have broken an oath of allegiance to the ruling emperor)? 5) How should we explain the failure of fourth-century usurpations outside the imperial family? Sadly, however, systematic consideration is not what is offered here.

The book's main weakness is not, of course, any shortage of knowledge or ideas—every contributor gives the reader much to ponder. Rather, it appears to derive from lack of control in the organisation of the original colloquium and the publication of its proceedings. Thus, for example, we are told (Szidat, 11) that discussion is limited to the period 284–395. This is ill-advised, since it ignores what must be a major question for the historian of the western Empire: how did the imperial system come to support a ruler like Honorius, who in the third century would not long have outlived his father but who in the fifth managed to die peacefully in his bed? It is significant that a number of contributors (e.g. Delmaire, Demandt and Flaig) simply ignore this restriction. More serious, however, is the uncoordinated aim of these pieces. Three of the eleven concern themselves with the development of the ›legitimate‹ monarchy in the fourth century, touching on usurpation only in passing (thus: Barnes, a radical reinterpretation of the failure of the tetrarchic system, due to Galerius' hostility to Christianity; Kolb, on Diocletian's establishment of the first tetrarchy, and its legacy; and Martin, on the power of the imperial hierarchy, human and divine). Three others deal with—relative to the theme of ›usurpation‹—even more marginal topics (thus: Demandt, a brief and not wholly convincing attempt to catalogue the main causes of the fall of the western Empire; Duval (tediously long), on the problems of archaeological confirmation of non-metropolitan ›palace‹-complexes; and Paschoud, on the *HA*'s fictional treatment of third-century usurpers which, as he himself admits (p. 98), tells us little about fourth-century usurpation). Even Szidat's fascinating study of the rebellion of Julian (with its brilliant *aperçu* – p. 66 – as to why Constantius II was unwilling to promote him Augustus), by arguing that this was a *Sonderfall*, says more about the ›normal‹ operation of the collegial monarchy than about rebellion against it. What looks like a last-minute effort to give the work some cohesion and shape by means of a summary Introduction (by Szidat) and a closing paper (by a modern political scientist, E. Zimmermann) lacks conviction. I would add that I concluded that this gathering was too small and distinguished, with contributors referring to their own and their colleagues' work too frequently and too knowingly, giving the impression that they are members of an exclusive club.

However, despite such criticism the book contains valuable material and provokes serious thought. Delmaire, for example, provides a useful, if rather mechanical, list of the known supporters of fourth- and fifth-century rebellions. Usurpation is, strictly speaking, the unconstitutional replacement of a monarch, but Flaig subtly questions the monarchical basis of imperial office (see also below). I therefore found Neri's study of the problem Roman imperial writers had in dealing with the term *tyrannus* very interesting. As is now accepted, while this was earlier applied to legitimate emperors who were morally unsound, by the fourth century it came to be used as a matter of course of usurpers, good or bad. Neri, however, demonstrates (pp. 75 ff.) how long it took for the change of meaning to be completed and how to the end *tyrannus* never really lost its moral connotations.

This takes us to the heart of the issue in a way that other contributors hint at (e.g. Martin, 49, 61), but never fully bring out. The Romans never developed a precise term for ›usurper‹

(I find it odd that nowhere in this volume is there any discussion of the etymology of the modern word) because they never fully embraced the concept of a ›royal‹, dynastic ›emperor‹ (cf. Flaig, 28 ff.). Without this, and given the existence of Republican principles and prejudices (including the notion of the military as the citizenry under arms – cf. Martin, 52) and the early imperial concept of the ›election of the best man‹, how ›illegitimate‹ was a rival's challenging of the incumbent in the ›right‹ way and for the ›right‹ reasons (cf. Flaig, 10, 28 f.; and Kolb, 38, for the tetrarchic election)? Perhaps we should interpret the late imperial office less as medieval kingship in embryo and more as a modern third-world presidency, with incumbents able to be succeeded by sons (who simply had to strive to avoid losing office), but also as a matter of course facing armed challenge as the sole available means of dismissing them from office (cf. Flaig, 20). In which case, as Zimmermann implies, such challenges are perhaps better described as ›coups‹ rather than ›usurpations‹.

But this does not explain the mystery of Honorius' survival. Before reading this book I tended to accept that this is probably to a large degree attributable to the development of dynastic loyalty, especially among the troops, as a number of contributors (e.g. Martin, 48 f., Szidat, 63, and Demandt, 160) develop here. However, I now see that this cannot be a complete explanation, since rebellions occurred throughout the fourth and into the fifth century, led not infrequently by able and resolute individuals who often came close to success. As Flaig (28 f., 33) points out, in most cases the final outcome depended on the relative quality of rivals' generalship and troops. Thus was the ›triumph‹ of dynastic succession real, or fortuitous? A possible alternative solution also has its difficulties. If there is a *fil rouge* in this volume, it is that in the west, unlike the east, the major centres of power (Demandt's bureaucracy, landed estates, Church and army; cf. Flaig, 21 ff. and Martin, 50 ff., 60 ff.) moved beyond imperial control. It has been argued that as part of this process there came to power Germanic *magistri* who exercised imperial power but who, because of their birth, were ineligible for imperial office: they could not usurp. Such a phenomenon might explain Stilicho, but it did not help Valentinian II; Honorius himself considered that it did not protect him from Stilicho's son; and it does not entirely clarify the political restraint of (the Roman, not German) Constantius III and, later, Aëtius. We still have far to go before we can even begin to understand how the late Roman emperorship was won, held and lost.

John F. DRINKWATER, Nottingham

Rajko BRATOŽ (Hg.), Westillyricum und Nordostitalien in der spätrömischen Zeit. Zahodni Ilirik in severovzhodna Italia v poznorimski dobi, Ljubljana (Narodni muzej) 1996, 407 S. (Situla, 34).

Der Sammelband präsentiert Resultate eines Symposiums, das am 5. und 6. Sept. 1994 im Hof Zemono bei Vipava (Slowenien) stattfand. Anlaß der Tagung war die 1600-Jahr-Feier der Schlacht am Fluß Frigidus. Ausgetragen wurde sie am 7. Sept. 394 zwischen den Truppen Theodosius I. und denen des Gegenkaisers Eugenius. BRATOŽ informiert in seinem Vorwort (S. 9–12) ausführlich über das ursprüngliche Konzept der Tagung und die Änderungen für die Publikation, deren Beiträge deutsch, englisch oder französisch verfaßt sind. Jedem Aufsatz ist eine slowenische Zusammenfassung beigegeben. Bemerkenswert ist, daß es bei diesem Symposium zu keiner interdisziplinären Zusammenarbeit gekommen ist, die sich etwa bei den Themen spätrömisches Christentum, Militärgeographie oder Langobardenherrschaft angeboten hätte. So ist darauf hinzuweisen, daß die Ergebnisse des am 7. und 8. Sept. 1994 am gleichen Ort abgehaltenen archäologischen Symposiums im Band 47 (1996) der Zeitschrift *Arheološki Vestnik* veröffentlicht worden sind.

Zwei Schwerpunkte stehen im Mittelpunkt der Tagung: die Schlacht am Frigidus und ihre Bedeutung sowie die Anfänge des Christentums. Dazwischen finden sich Beiträge zu ausge-