Giuliano a Cesarea. La politica ecclesiastica del principe Apostata. By Frederico Fatti

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Winn’s silence once again to add that Origen too should be reckoned among the mentors of Eusebius, as it was he who proposed the impossible experiment of melting iron in fire as an illustration of the absorption of Christ’s humanity into his Godhead (p. 217; Princ. 2.6.4). This proof of his indebtedness to Origen should be set against his refusal to endorse the latter’s analogy between the procession of light from the Sun and the generation of the Second Person from the First (p. 127: the simile was by no means peculiar to Origen, and, as Winn himself points out, there were other doctors of the fourth century who rejected this ante-Nicene commonplace on the grounds that it compromised the incorporeality of God).

In his pastoral role, as we learn from the final chapter (‘Martyrs and virgins’), Eusebius inculcates the practices of fasting, sexual continence and almsgiving as an anticipation of the angelic life which is laid up for the saints in heaven. Little in his teaching is exceptional, except perhaps his readiness to see even the modest virtue of refraining from perjury as a species of martyrdom for those who were free of external persecutions (p. 245). An appendix draws attention to the synonymity of nature and essence in Eusebius and to his use of Exodus iii.14 to demonstrate that, since the Son and the Father share one essence, it is the essence of both ‘to be’. Eusebius, we have said, was no great thinker, but in this study he receives his due.

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In his legislation and in the letters and other writings preserved from the period between his entry into Constantinople on 11 December 361 and his death in Mesopotamia in June 363, the emperor Julian frequently professed a profound and wholesale detestation of Christianity as a religion and of Christians in general. In 1988, however, Hans-Christof Brennecke demonstrated that in practice the Apostate directed his persecution of Christians mainly, indeed almost exclusively, against one specific group within the Christian Church, namely, the adherents of the homoean Reichskirche which the Council of Constantinople in January 360 created with the encouragement and at the instigation of the emperor Constantius. Frederico Fatti gives greater precision to Brennecke’s interpretation of Julian’s policies towards the Christian Church by analysing in detail the emperor’s actions in regard to Caesarea in Cappadocia. He begins from an important fact, which Ammianus Marcellinus omitted, and which was consequently missed by Otto Seeck in his classic reconstruction of Julian’s journeys and the chronology of his legislation and hence by most others who have written about Julian after Seeck (whom Fatti consistently calls ‘Seek’). When Julian travelled by road across Asia Minor from Constantinople to Antioch in the early summer of 362, he did not take the main and direct route from Ancyra to Tyana by way of
Archelais, but diverted in order to pass through Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he was present during a contested episcopal election. The episode was described in some detail by Gregory of Nazianzus in his panegyric of his dead father (Oratio 18.33–4, PG xxxv.1027–32). Fatti analyses the emperor’s actions, which included a threat to degrade the city of Caesarea to the legal status of a village, and integrates them into the historical perspective opened up by Brennecke. Future writers will need to take this case study of Caesarea into account when assessing Julian’s dealings with the Christian Church in general.


In the Middle Ages emperors and popes built a balanced dual system of power-sharing. On the basis of this assumption, Heike Mierau outlines her history of the relationship between empire and papacy from Constantine the Great to the Reformation. In her study the traditional, at least subliminal, view of a constant rivalry between the two universal powers is replaced by a model of cooperation: the medieval world was bound by a bipolar order. To substantiate her thesis, the author approaches her ambitious work in two steps. In the first part (pp. 15–161) she describes the common history of emperors and popes in chronological order, emphasising significant stages like the interaction of Constantine and Sylvester I, the investiture controversy, the deposition of Frederick II or the long-lasting conflict between Louis IV called ‘the Bavarian’ and the Avignon papacy. This short historical review is followed by a second part, systematically outlining the phenomenon of a bipolar world order (pp. 163–262). The legal framework of the respective authorities, the political theory of the offices, the symbolism of contemporary concepts of world order as well as the fleshing out of individual ranges of action are illustrated. The volume is completed by a rich appendix of references, a list of popes and emperors, a bibliography and an index of names. A closer proofreading might have prevented the odd orthographic mistake and incidental linguistic lapses.

The attempt to deal with 1,200 years of papal and imperial history in part I provokes detailed criticism. It is, for example, unlikely that in 1075 Gregory’s contemporaries did not venture to ‘go public’ with the Dictatus papae (p. 71) while labelling the document simultaneously as ‘a secret policy paper of the pope’ (p. 72). Canossa is deemed a reestablishment of a ‘twofold leadership’ (p. 73), the influence of the princes on the concordat of Worms in 1122 is ignored and the valuation of the election of Felix V by the Council of Basle in 1439 turns out to be problematic. In principle, the question arises whether the late antique and early medieval Roman episcopate can be equated with the high- and late medieval papacy, whose capacities to enter into dialogue or conflict with the emperors were completely different from those of its historical ancestors.

The actual rationale for this new concept is developed in part II of the book. Mierau indicates that canon law was not an exclusive rule for the clergy. It was the constitutional framework for a divided but cooperating world of laity and clergy.