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go. That gives cause for reflection now that researchers say they do not know which comes first, anxiety or obesity. The book ends 'Reading On The Way Home', a generously commented list of sources, further reading and authors whose work has fascinated, touched or inspired Gopnik.

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Marco Johannes Bartoldus: *Palladius Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus: Welt und Wert spätrömischer Landwirtschaft*: Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2012: 376 pp. paperback, € 29.80.

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Monographs on Palladius have been few but good. In 1935 came Josef Svennung's magisterial study of Palladius' late Latinity; in 1975, R.H. Rodgers' definitive analysis of the textual tradition. Now we have Bartoldus' engaging assessment of the farming practices found in Palladius' manual. Palladius, who presents himself as a practical farmer, keen to 'quicken the surface of a well-dug field' ('Poem on Grafting' 168), would have been pleased by Bartoldus' approach.

Chapter 1 tackles the vexed question of Palladius' date, which Bartoldus sets *c.* 400–470. Chapter 2 surveys the organization of the *Opus Agriculturae*, its *Nachleben*, its sources, and the history of modern Palladian scholarship. Then we reach the heart of the book, a series of discussions of selected passages from the *Opus* illustrating all its major subjects, viz. production of vegetables, trees, fruits, wine, olive oil, honey, fowl and livestock, and construction of farm buildings.

This selective strategy is a useful one, allowing Bartoldus to delve deeply into topics without producing the proverbial comprehensive mega-biblion. Since he is an unabashed enthusiast for Palladius, his selected passages tend to be those which show Palladius at his best and most original, though not exclusively so. His greatest merit is to discuss Palladius' advice not only vis-à-vis the other ancient *scriptores rei rusticae*, but also in the light of ancient farming practice as revealed by archeological and historical sources – and indeed in the light of modern farming practice. To this end he deploys a huge bibliography. Where other commentators sometimes make vague claims that such-and-such a technique 'is still practised today', Bartoldus properly gives chapter and verse.

A few examples will illustrate Bartoldus' approach. Palladius counsels, from his own experience, that quince trees need pruning, and that they can

be planted in the vicinity of Rome in February or early March (3.25.20–22); Bartoldus justifies both statements with reference to modern authorities (126–27). Palladius recounts the advice of a fellow farmer that birdlime will help grafts to take (3.17.6); Bartoldus cites modern experiments validating the advice (136). Palladius is the only ancient authority to recommend a gravity-fed system for distributing must from the pressing-floor directly into storage jars, a system partially paralleled in a villa excavated at Boscoreale (Bartoldus 159). Palladius notes that pigs can be used for weeding a vineyard, and that they 'equal the diligence of a human digger in attacking the grass' (3.26.5); Bartoldus has talked with an Apulian vine-grower who uses them for this purpose. (Sheep and geese are more widely used in organic vineyards today, but for a somewhat different purpose, viz. grazing down the grass and weeds, whereas pigs will root them out with their snouts, and aerate the soil in the process.)

Bartoldus' advocacy of Palladius also involves defending him against unjustified accusations of error. At 12.7.19 Palladius has been accused of misreporting his source, Gargilius Martialis, on the kind of soil suited to sweet-chestnut trees; Bartoldus shows convincingly (135) that the error was that of Cardinal Mai, Gargilius' editor, who mispunctuated the relevant sentence of Gargilius. Similarly Bartoldus follows Rodgers (*Introduction to Palladius* 96–97) in defending Palladius against charges that he miscalculated the size of a *juger*.

In his first chapter, on 'life and times', Bartoldus takes up a suggestion made by Caspar Barth, that our writer is none other than the Palladius described by Rutilius Namatianus in AD 417 as a young relative travelling to Rome to study law. He also argues for his identification with the Aemilianus who was *praefectus urbis* in 458, and with the Palladius who was Bishop of Bourges 462–*c.* 470. It will be interesting to see how experts in the prosopography of the late empire evaluate these very detailed arguments. Since Palladius, in referring to his farm in Sardinia, gives no hint of the Vandal occupation of that island from 455 on, Bartoldus argues that the *Opus Agriculturae* must have been written before that date – not, for example, as late as 460–80, as René Martin believed.

Does Palladius' book reflect the social and economic conditions of his day? As a farmer's farmer, he says very little about such matters. Consequently there is a tendency, in discussion of this question, to over-interpret what little he does say. Bartoldus flirts with this danger in his concluding chapter.

He argues that the late-imperial development of huge estates is reflected in Palladius' envisaging of three levels of farm administration, viz. *dominus* and *procurator* (1.36.1) and *agri praesul* (= *vilicus*, 1.6.18). But 1.36.1 envisages the presence of the *dominus* or (not 'and') procurator: if the *dominus* is absent, he may put in a procurator. And since both passages are based on Columella, they can hardly be claimed to reflect conditions peculiar to the late empire. Again, Bartolus argues that the late-imperial tendency to economic independence on large estates (*Autarkie*) is reflected in Palladius' advice to have blacksmiths, carpenters, potters and coopers on the farm, to avoid the need for farm-workers to visit the city to obtain such products (1.6.2). But the passage is based on Varro (1.161.4, via *Geoponika* 2.49), and therefore reflects conditions in the first century BC. as much as the late empire. Fortunately this kind of positivism is largely confined to Bartoldus' brief Conclusion, and does not colour the rest of his work.

Palladius' work was the main channel through which ancient agronomy passed into the Middle Ages and beyond, and Bartoldus recounts both familiar and unfamiliar details of this fascinating story. [It is a great pity that he does not know the ground-breaking work of Mauro Ambrosoli, which would have enabled him to say more about the reception of Palladius by people engaged in practical farming: English translation *The Wild and the Sown: Botany and Agriculture in Western Europe, 1350–1850,* Cambridge, 1997. He shows how Palladius became an important component in the German tradition of *Hausväterliteratur* in the seventeenth century, particularly through the writings of Johannes Coler. He also demonstrates that Augsburg was a hotbed of Palladius-reception in the sixteenth century, with several ancient MSS and early humanist editions or translations present there. There is a nice Augsburg patriotism visible here, since Bartoldus' work was an Augsburg dissertation in 2007, and is published (quite attractively) by Wißner-Verlag of Augsburg.

Bartoldus' combination of learning with enthusiasm is infectious. Elsewhere I have lamented the paucity of English scholarship on Palladius. I hope that my English translation of him, due to appear shortly, will serve to stimulate new work. Bartoldus demonstrates what might usefully be the goal of such research: to understand Palladius not only in relation to the other ancient *auctores*, but also in the context of the age-old and ever-new tradition of organic farming.

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