

sustain the effort. And István Monok details how the lower clergy helped to create libraries in the early modern parishes of the Carpathian Basin, a development that is hinted at elsewhere as well.

The collection as a whole provides ample material that could at some point be used for a broader and more systematic synthesis. In its own right, it is an impressive display of the diverse approaches that are flourishing in the examination of late medieval parish life.

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ANDREI GANDILA, *Cultural Encounters on Byzantium's Northern Frontier, c. AD 500–700: Coins, Artifacts and History*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xix, 376; 15 black-and-white figures, 24 maps, and 1 table. \$125. ISBN: 978-1-108-47042-1.

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Andrei Gandila has delivered a meticulously researched and presented book on a highly relevant and controversial topic. He has identified coins as the most pertinent of the many sources on which he has drawn, and herein lies some of this book's originality: whereas numismatists are often prone to look into the historical potential of their data as an afterthought, Gandila has organized his evidence in service of the central thesis. Gandila is already known to scholarship through a number of studies on early Byzantine coins. By making his findings relevant in a particular context, the book will deservedly introduce his research to new audiences.

The book is a contribution to broader discussions of late Roman frontiers; it considers the importance of archaeological evidence toward a study of the periphery; and it negotiates the ongoing controversies regarding the ethnic and cultural makeup of the Lower Danube area, and its historical implications, by proposing a different paradigm from those exemplified to date by the respective Hungarian and Romanian historical schools.

Chapter 1 discusses existing studies on the Roman frontier. The author stresses the different components, beyond the purely military, which any analysis of the frontier should ideally address: geography, politics, demographics, culture, and economics. The Danube as a border has loomed large in Roman and Byzantine (and then Ottoman) imperial policy, and in contemporary perceptions thereof. In chapter 2, Gandila discusses the material culture of the areas adjacent to the river, particularly to the north (*barbaricum*). Local pottery, hand- or wheel-made, is difficult evidence to interpret. Imported ceramic and metallic goods have the potential to draw more conclusive pictures: amphorae, linked perhaps to the *annona* system of redirecting agricultural produce to the needs of the army, and lamps of different origins penetrate widely the area to the north of the Danube. The military dimension is reinforced by the evidence of metallic production in the same area. Different types of brooches and fibulae and buckles can additionally be considered significant hybrid social and cultural markers transcending the different populations.

Christianity was a key player in this environment (chapter 3). Gandila considers its spread primarily as the result of imperial policies, and of the choices made by various local communities. Christianity was often adopted as a culture rather than as a fully fledged worldview, and finds of small material objects with Christian connotations and devotional usages testify to this. Chapter 4 introduces some of the theoretical frameworks on frontiers, the interaction of systems, and of cores with peripheries. The northern frontier of early Byzantium can be defined as a peculiar construct that relied on the interaction of an underresourced empire with local populations.

At this point the evidence had reached its limitations, quantitatively and especially with regard to chronology. Chapter 5 begins by extolling the advantages of coins as historical evidence. It is here that Gandila gets to the meat of his book, some 1,200 single coins and many

more hoarded coins. The reference in note 2 allows the reader to download from the internet an eighty-page appendix on “early Byzantine coin finds in *barbaricum*,” consisting of a methodological introduction, single finds from 511 locations ranging from Poland and the Czech Republic to the Caucasus, 85 hoards, a distribution map, and 16 statistical tables. These represent a very considerable piece of work in their own right and a valuable primary resource, especially since each find has been checked for its reliability. For this reviewer, it is unfortunate that this appendix should have been omitted from the hard copy of the book. Such a move has resulted in a rather slight volume that does not do justice to the original and preparatory work that has gone into it, and which the reader now inconveniently needs to consult with the help of a printout or an electronic device. Furthermore, it skews the internal balance of the printed book toward the archaeological evidence.

For the remainder of chapter 5, and in chapter 6, the coin finds for three areas are addressed: the Lower Danube, Transcaucasia, and the Carpathian Basin, the latter two discussions serving the purpose of putting the main area of analysis into focus. Finds of bronze coins around the Danube fluctuate in line with the output of the main imperial mints and are also otherwise closely connected to imperial military and diplomatic designs. In the said regions to the east, the mechanism of coin “injection” by the state was very similar, even though these played out in different metals and at different times.

In the final chapter, Gandila addresses the charged topic of monetization and throws out the ideological baggage that has weighed down the discussion in the past. In trying to ascertain the usage put to any of the many coins found in the *barbaricum*, which in themselves are only a minute fraction of the coins originally present there in the period 500–700, the author builds up a model, based on the experience of other diversely monetized regions of the world, combined with some rare internal pieces of evidence: in this area most coins served purposes other than monetary most of the time. Even if some coins entered the area monetarily, and continued to be imbued with a monetary function, the latter would have been confined to certain payments and never extended to the full range of possible expressions. This is a discussion that needs to be continued, especially as ever more accurate archaeological and numismatic data become available in the future. No doubt, within Gandila’s overarching interpretation, any number of different permutations of monetary and nonmonetary coin usage will emerge.

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ROSAMUND GARRETT and MATTHEW REEVES, *Late Medieval and Renaissance Textiles*. London: Sam Fogg, 2018. Paper. Pp. 183; many color figures. \$45. ISBN: 978-1-9113-0048-9.  
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During the past three decades research on medieval and Renaissance textiles in general and on liturgical vestments in particular has increased remarkably—ending almost one hundred years of mostly latent scholarly interest. This turn is echoed in publications as well as in conferences and exhibition projects with various foci. One recent example for the latter was *Opus Anglicanum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery*, on show at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1 October 2016 to 5 February 2017, and flanked by a catalogue of 324 pages that pairs contextualizing essays by leading experts and entries on individual masterpieces (Clare Browne, Glyn Davies, and Michael A. Michael, eds., *Opus Anglicanum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery* [2016]). Only one year later the London-based Sam Fogg Gallery followed with its show *Late Medieval and Renaissance Textiles* (14 June to 13 July 2018). In the accompanying catalogue, *Late Medieval and Renaissance Textiles*, textile experts Rosamund Garrett and Matthew Reeves discuss thirty-six late medieval and Renaissance textiles

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