witnesses to the imperial chronology of the lost *Kaisergeschichte:* Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Jerome, the *Historia Augusta*, and the *Epitome de caesaribus*. Postulation of a single source underlying all of them is put to the test by the numerous and confounding variations in their numbers. The third appendix contains a new critical edition and English translation of the *Breviarium,* based on a fresh reading of the three surviving manuscripts. In the final appendix, Burgess examines at some length verbal parallels between the *Breviarium* and parallel Greek and Latin histories. While allowing for the possibility of indirect influences from Greek historical sources, he concludes that the proximate sources of the work were in all likelihood Latin. But because the *Breviarium* was, in Burgess's words, a "sub-literary" work whose influence on literary sources from Antiquity and the Middle Ages was negligible, he acknowledges that all conclusions about its sources are at best provisional.

Burgess's initial plan was to assess the accuracy of the *Breviarium* and publish his conclusions as an appendix to volume one of *Mosaics of Time* (Turnhout, 2013). We are grateful that he elected to publish the results of his investigation under separate cover. A single appendix would do scant justice to his fine-grained study of this curious text. Burgess obviously has a real aptitude and patience for painstaking statistical and source critical analysis. His findings should set future study of the chronology of the *Breviarium* on a much sounder foundation. Towards the end of his study, he invites others to "apply the epigraphic, numismatic and papyrological evidence and break these literary figures down into more accurate year and month figures" (118). We can only second that appeal.

The Final Pagan Generation

Edward J. Watts
University of California Press, 2015. Pp. 327. ISBN 9780520283701.

Reviewed by Sarah Veale
(**University of Toronto**)

While much scholarship has been devoted to the Christianization of Rome in the fourth century CE, the lives and experiences of those who were not swept up in religious changes are often overlooked. Watts seeks to correct this imbalance with *The Final Pagan Generation*. A natural development from his previous work on social interaction in the Roman academy and the roots of religious dissent which culminated in riots in fifth century Alexandria, *The Final Pagan Generation* captures the religious timbre of the late Roman Empire, filtering historical and religious change through the eyes of those born in the early fourth century, when Roman institutions seemed unshakeable and Christianity was a marginal force in Roman life. Watts problematizes the view that the triumph of Christianity was inevitable, arguing instead that the changes of the fourth century, although writ large in hindsight, were incomprehensible to those living through them. Instead, he suggests a generational divide existed which isolated the final pagan generation from a younger cohort which sought new social and religious possibilities in a changing empire.

The Final Pagan Generation investigates these changes through the case studies of four Roman elites: Libanius, a pagan rhetorician; Themistius, a pagan political advisor and philosopher; Ausonius, a Christian rhetorician; and Praetextatus, a Roman official and high-ranking pagan. Their lives are contextualized within the wider historical and social landscape of

JLA 9.1 1st pages.indd 296 3/9/2016 1:17:38 PM

the Roman Empire. Watts chronologically surveys a period beginning around 310 CE, when these men were born, and ending in 394 CE, a time when the final pagan generation passed away literally and metaphorically, making way for the younger Christian generation and new Christian institutions. Watts builds his case through literary evidence such as letters, orations, poems, and contemporary historical accounts. What emerges is a vivid account of the final pagan generation and a detailed view of their social and professional environment.

The first three chapters consider the early world of the final pagan generation, one which "contained a vast sacred infrastructure that had been built up over the past three millennia" (35). It was a place where pagan religion dominated the landscape through architecture, festivals, familial observances, and educational texts, all of which normalized traditional Roman theology and rituals. The ubiquity of Roman religion created an environment where a world without paganism was difficult, if not impossible, to imagine, and the final pagan generation was oblivious to the fact that they were coming of age in a changing empire. The conversion of Constantine and his subsequent religious policies were obscured by the public endurance of the pagan gods and private obligations of academic life, where pagan teachings prevailed and social bonds mattered more than religious identity (40–57). Watts argues in chapter three that the final pagan generation entered a public life where Roman structures, already long in existence, persisted as these men began their careers. These elite systems of success demanded a complex balance between social favours and professional advancement, and lucrative careers were based on judicious social negotiations, one's social status, and well-placed acquaintances (70–79). The system these men entered in their early careers would have been relatively untouched by imperial religious changes, and political stability further created the illusion of continuity for the final pagan generation (59–65).

Chapters four, five, and six follow the final pagan generation as they negotiated careers amidst rapid change. The death of Constantine was followed by civil unrest and administrative uncertainty. As imperial instability reverberated through the professional ranks, the final pagan generation tempered their ambitions with calculated measures which preserved their positions in the face of religious and administrative change. After Constantius II successfully managed civil disputes and decisively handled threats to his rule from the formidable, yet religiously moderate, Magnentius, he initiated a number of intemperate laws in 355 which curtailed pagan practices and strengthened Christianity. Roman elites, cowed by the threat of professional reprimand, were content to play the system they believed they knew so well and offered no significant resistance to these changes (86–96). Moreover, professional advancement, the death of family members, and the management of estates demanded more attention from the final pagan generation than the ineffective, pro-Christian religious edicts of Constantius II (96–101). Instead, Watts alleges that it was the pagan emperor Julian who most severely altered the religious landscape of the empire, stoking the flames of religious difference by introducing unprecedented measures which codified Roman religion into law (106–144). The final pagan generation uneasily negotiated this shifting political landscape. Themistius, an ally

of Constantius II, lost his influence under Julian, while Libanius, who kept his political affiliations quiet, thrived under the new emperor. Elite fortunes turned on imperial whim, and professional survival was predicated on the careful maintenance of social networks which provided refuge in times of difficulty.

The co-emperors Valentinian and Valens in 364 inherited an empire which groaned under previous imperial excesses and was plagued by civil discontent (chapter six). In response, they enacted sweeping administrative changes which preserved existing social systems of advancement, but reinvigorated them with new blood from the provinces. Here, Watts returns to a well-established motif: the variable professional fortunes of the final pagan generation during imperial turnover and administrative change (136–144). But the measures of Valentinian and Valens irreversibly altered not only the administrative, but also the religious landscape. This shift reflected the growing influence between 360 and 370 of a new generation, one which utilized their social networks to scale the ranks of Christian, rather than traditional Roman, institutions (chapters seven and eight). As the "Christian youth culture" came of age, young elites relied on Christian contacts to facilitate their ability to attain lucrative religious careers which burgeoned in the wake of imperial investment in the church (154–161). When imperial measures removed traditional Roman religion from the public eye, the emperors favoured heavy-handed Christian leaders to mediate disputes over their more experienced—and elder—counterparts; what these upstarts lacked in political finesse was made up for by the increasing influence of the Christian institutions they represented (such as the Nicene church). The final pagan generation, with their outmoded views and diminished authority, was no match for the Christian youth culture, and Watt's final two chapters consider the fading impact of these men as they exited public life and ceded their roles to a younger generation.

The men who comprised the final pagan generation are vividly drawn in Watt's book. Their educational and professional lives are sharply situated against the changing times in which they lived, giving voice to the lives and experiences of those who were unknowingly on the edge of a religious revolution. By anchoring the fourth century in the lives of these men, Watts surreptitiously creates a social-history of Roman society which illustrates the public roles available to the Roman elite and clarifies how the shift to Christianity developed in the midst of, and without significant opposition from, a pagan populace. Supplemented by copious notes, illustrations, and numismatic iconography, Watts provides a solid rethink of the inevitability of Christianity by fashioning a Roman Empire where professional prestige was more important than religious identity.

Despite its strengths, *The Final Pagan Generation*'s focus on elite Roman males does not offer a view of how religious matters affected those who were not busy advancing prominent careers. Nor do we get a clear sense of how early imperial measures (such as those which curbed public pagan rituals or funneled imperial capital into Christian institutions) might have contributed to the rise of Christianity and the future influence of Christian institutions. Although Watts maintains that the pagan religious landscape remained unchanged, his evidence (for example, the destruction of pagan

JLA 9.1 1st pages.indd 298 3/9/2016 1:17:38 PM

temples and sacred spaces, the militancy of Christians who blocked pagan sacrifices, and the growing importance of domestic rituals) suggests otherwise. More could be done to show how pagan religious expression was, if not silenced, at the very least stifled by the reduction of private religious funding, the diminishing importance of state-supported pagan religious offices, and the open hostility of local Christians. Watt's intriguing study would benefit from more integration on this front, and a more cohesive view of religious changes during this period would have been welcomed by readers seeking to understand the pagan landscape in the late-antique Roman Empire.

The Final Pagan Generation envisions the fourth century as an era when the more things changed, the more they remained the same. The stability of elite Roman institutions allowed the men who lived through historical changes to see their world as essentially constant and to view religious disruptions as anomalies. The rise of the Christian youth culture puzzled these men, who were unable to come to terms with the priorities of a generation of people who did not value the beliefs and institutions into which they were born and which they assumed would continue long after their death. In many respects, *The Final Pagan Generation* is not only about Themistius, Libanius, and the other elite Romans who walk onto the imperial stage, it is also about the first Christian generation and their emergence into public life. This changeover may have been imperceptible to those who saw Christianity as a fringe practice, but it was one which ultimately changed not only the Roman Empire in the fourth century, but continued to impact world affairs long after the Roman Empire's demise.

Educating Early Christians through the Rhetoric of Hell: "Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth" as Paideia in Matthew and the Early Church

Meghan Henning

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. Pp. xiii+294. ISBN 978–3-16–152963–4

Reviewed by Jonathan L. Zecher (The University of Houston)

Hell has always been more interesting than Heaven. With the notable exceptions of John's *Revelation* and Dante's *Paradiso*, hardly ever does eternal beatitude receive as much calibrated description as Hell. Odysseus sees tormented Titans, but not the Elysian fields. Aeneas watches an array of tortures applied to Titans and transgressors alike, while the "Blessed Groves" receive only a few lines. Hell, that is, is full of wildly varied punishments while Heaven is seldom finely differentiated. One explanation for this graphic asymmetry is that humans more naturally imagine suffering than happiness. In *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetoric of Hell*, Henning reframes this notion by arguing that the vividness of Hell provided ancient writers with a uniquely potent pedagogical tool. To put it differently, Henning shows how early Christian authors utilized the voyeuristic urge to define group membership and establish ethical guidelines for nascent Christian communities.

Henning is a biblical scholar by training, but in this dissertation-turned-monograph, she crosses traditional scholarly boundaries to take in Greco-Roman literature, Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, and early Christian Apocalypses. With such different literatures come a range of presentations of death and the afterlife, from the rather vague Sheol and Homeric Hades to the finely