

the title of *pontifex maximus* in the late fourth century, as has so often been confidently asserted. What happened was that the epithet which accompanied both the noun *pontifex* and an emperor's victory titles was changed from *maximus* to *inclitus*, a word previously used only in high literary style. Cameron plausibly suggests that the innovator was Magnus Maximus and that he made the change because Maximus was part of his name, so that repetition of *maximus* among his titles might cause confusion. It is deeply to be regretted that P. has allowed bad advice from a historian of normally impeccable accuracy to persuade him to conceal this important fact from users of his translation.

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SHENOUTE

SCHROEDER (C.T.) *Monastic Bodies. Discipline and Salvation in Shenoute of Atripe*. Pp. viii + 237, ills. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. Cased, £52, US\$79.95. ISBN: 978-0-8122-3990-4.

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Shenoute of Atripe (d. 465) was the leader of the 'White Monastery', a large Egyptian foundation that contained thousands of men and women. Although he was the author of an immense Coptic corpus of rules, theological works and sermons, Shenoute has been largely passed over by historians of late antiquity and early monasticism. When he is discussed, it is typically in terms of his violent, anti-pagan activities, or his opposition to Archbishop Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus in 431. Caroline Schroeder has taken on a difficult subject and produced a first-rate monograph that focusses on the importance of the body in Shenoute's ascetic ideology.

Shenoute began his ascetic career in the White Monastery, but eventually left the monastery and moved into the nearby desert where he began a campaign of letters against the leaders he had rejected. Chapter 1 examines Shenoute's critique of his fellow monks. On the basis of the two earliest letters from Shenoute's Canon 1, S. isolates theft, sexual sins and rebellion as the primary targets of Shenoute's condemnation. Here, argues S., we find the earliest development of Shenoute's ideas on sin as a pollution that threatens purity and the salvation of the community. His citation of the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible, coupled with his self-presentation as a prophet, recalls the Hebraic emphasis on purity in order to maintain the community's right standing with God. The monastery, like Israel, has failed in this duty, playing the harlot and pursuing false gods. This is partly due to the leader of the monastery, who has neglected to enforce purity within his flock. In this critique of the abbot, Shenoute implicitly makes a case for his own suitability to lead, although he wraps this self-promotion in a conventional disavowal of a desire to take on this role.

In Chapter 2, S. picks up the story after Shenoute had been made the third abbot of the monastery. This chapter examines the monastic rules Shenoute developed in his Canons, with a particular emphasis on how these rules would serve to form the individual monks into a single, spiritual body. According to Shenoute, the spiritual

status of that body had implications for the eventual salvation of all the monks. Drawing on the work of such cultural theorists as Foucault, Butler, Bourdieu and Bell, S. examines the way ritual produced an ascetic subjectivity in Shenoute's community, and highlights Shenoute's unique contribution through a comparison with the rules crafted for the Pachomian monks, Egyptian contemporaries of Shenoute. Whereas the Pachomian rules are focussed on achieving harmony within the community, Shenoute emphasises ascetic disciplines as a means to overcome the desires of the flesh. Pachomian monks favoured the rehabilitation of erring brothers, whereas Shenoute decreed the expulsion of sinners in order to maintain the purity of the collective monastic body. Shenoute does not claim to be the source of his rules, but rather traces them back to God, the Fathers or monastic tradition. Consequently, the monks in his community do not bow to his authority, but to a transcendent standard. This binds the community into a single body which, through the ritualisation produced by obedience to the rules, submits itself to God.

The remains of Shenoute's monastery and basilica, commissioned and constructed during his lifetime, offer S. an opportunity to explore the way in which physical space and architecture were woven into Shenoute's ascetic ideology. In Chapter 3, S. reads the physical church building as a third body (in addition to the individual monk and corporate monastic body) in which a struggle for purity occurs. In a series of sermons found in his Canon 7, Shenoute discussed the monastic architecture in terms of Paul's ideology of the Christian body. The monastery, the house or temple of God, is a physical space inhabited by the monks, their new buildings and God. Throughout the sermons found in Canon 7, Shenoute uses the church buildings as a metaphor for the body and person of the monk: both are to be maintained as holy dwelling places for God. Just as the purity of the individual monk contributes to the purity of the communal monastic body, it also ensures that the church remains a holy place. Moreover, both the monk's body and the physical church are places where the monk worships God. Pollution, whether of the individual or corporate body, drives God out of his temple.

During Shenoute's lifetime, theological debate surrounding the body and its afterlife raged in the Christian East. In Chapter 4, S. examines Shenoute's contribution to these debates, teasing out three key positions. The first is that the body must not be devalued; Jesus had taken on human flesh and had risen in a material form from the dead. This contention is closely connected with Shenoute's attack on the incarnational theology of Nestorius, the archbishop of Constantinople. Against Nestorius' position, Shenoute argued that the Logos had literally become flesh. This led to his second major premise, that Christ's embodiment proved the Christian expectation of a resurrection from death. Since the resurrected body will be the same body inhabited during a person's lifetime, it is important to keep that body free from polluting sin. Moreover, Jesus' physical resurrection points to a spiritual resurrection from sin, by which Christians can break free of sin and live in a way that prefigures their eventual risen life. Those who do not seek this spiritual resurrection are the living dead, lost in their sins.

S. has offered a stimulating and well-argued treatment of a neglected subject. Her thesis, that Shenoute had placed the body at the centre of his ascetic ideology, is compelling and convincing. This book is a welcome addition to the study of late antique asceticism.

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