The volume presented by Maijastina Kahlos (henceforth K.) is warmly to be welcomed: it adds a highly commendable, and provocative study to the field of religious studies and the history of late antiquity. A resourceful and densely written monograph, it will be of interest not only to classicists and ancient historians but also to theologians and sociologists, and, more generally, to anyone interested in the dynamics of social exclusion and the production of literature in highly competitive social contexts. Examining the power struggles between pagans and Christians in the first five centuries AD, K. not only discusses an impressive quantity of diverse material but also uses timely theoretical considerations to shed light on the rhetorical construction and refutation of plurality, tolerance and intolerance behind the surviving textual evidence. The biggest strength of K.’s study is perhaps that it tries to challenge the reductive contrast between tolerant (pagan) polytheism and intolerant (Christian) monotheism drawn in most other studies on the topic, allowing for what Polymnia Athanassiadi recently called ‘la polyphonie réactionnaire de la tolerance’ (P. Athanassiadi, Vers la pensée unique. La montée de l’intolérance dans l’Antiquité tardive, Paris: Les belles lettres 2010, S. 96). K.’s book demonstrates persuasively that some well-established ideas about religious tolerance and intolerance in Late Antiquity are in need of careful readjustment. She puts the relevant texts in their socio-historical context and maps them onto the larger diachronic perspective they helped to shape. At some instances K.’s interpretations of the textual sources are overly revisionist, but K. always sketches previous interpretations when presenting her own perspective. Rather disappointing, on the other hand, however, is the synthesis which concludes the book. But first things first.

K. mainly works along the lines of what Jeremy Schott called «Empire’s Palimpsest» (Jeremy M. Schott, Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity, Pennsylvania 2008. A study Kahlos seems not to be aware of). As Schott noted, not only questions of inclusivity and tolerance lie at the heart of the conflicts between pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity but also a highly complex interaction of political «demands for comprehensiveness and difference» (Schott 2008: 165). There is a notable disparity between Schott’s and K.’s approach, however. While Schott compares the conflicts between pagans and Christians to Rome’s political power over her provinces, K. contextualizes the rhetorical claims of pagan and Christian propaganda on a less macroscopic level, despite the fact that her study comprises a larger historical scope than Schott’s. K. starts with a general introduction into the rhetoric of ‘Tolerance, moderation, forbearance and acceptance’ (6–8) as well as ‘The monopoly of pluralism’ (9) allegedly held by Greco-Roman pagans. K.’s introductory remarks are accompanied by a useful if disputable chronological table, which lists ‘Emperors and imperial Policies’, ‘Lobbyists’ and ‘Resistance’ from 27 BC to 429 AD (xi–xii), while the discussion in the main part of the book focuses on the timespan between 250 and 500 AD. Underlying K.’s method is the assumption of a dialectic relationship between forbearance and compulsion - a dialectic she then discerns in the textual evidence. Almost a petitio principii or at least a confirmation bias, this could be a highly problematic approach but K. is perfectly aware that most
of the sources she discusses are extremely biased, which increases the adaptability of her method and allows for various shades in between the two poles of toleration and constraint. K. manages to identify a multitude of political and religious interests behind the «rhetorical weapons» (1) of tolerance and intolerance. Because of the highly charged history of the word 'tolerance', however, K. chooses to talk about forbearance rather than tolerance and compulsion rather than intolerance. Forbearance and non-forbearance (or: compulsion) directed towards «the religious other» (1) in the later Roman Empire was rooted in social groups as diverse as Christians, Jews, polytheist believers, Manichaens, and other minority groups. K. tries to consider them all but seems most interested in the policies of the Roman imperial government and the dynamics their implementation afforded. Underlying K.'s study is her observation that a certain degree of uniformity and diversity is required in any successful political rhetoric. The repressive toleration of Jews exercised by most Roman emperors, a hybrid form between tolerance and intolerance, is regrettably not given much space in the general line of K.'s argument.

K.'s book is divided into six chronological chapters. In each of them, she attempts to offer three perspectives on the theme of forbearance and compulsion, the perspective of the ruling classes, the perspective of «pressure groups» that insist on «unifying religious policies in the empire» (3), and the perspective of advocates of religious freedom. It is these three perspectives K. wishes to see represented in the headings of the chronological table mentioned above. However, despite their useful contribution to bringing more clarity into the complicated debates on religious freedom in late antiquity, the categories chosen by K. are in themselves problematic, as they subsume any politically active author under a group of proponents of 'imperial policies', call advocates of religious freedom 'the voice of resistance' and conservative-minded authors 'lobbyists'. This is both anachronistic and distorting. It presents a refreshing and most welcome change from the notorious notion of Christian 'apologists', however, and the discussion in the individual chapters is well-balanced and attests to K.'s perceptive choice of parameters.

There is no ch.1 sensu stricto, as the honour of the opening chapter is given to the short introduction (1–8), in which K. sketches the overall structure of the book and clarifies key terms of her main argument, such as pluralism, tolerance, forbearance, and the rhetoric of so-called TINA arguments which support religious oppression by claiming that 'There Is No Alternative'. In ch.2 (9–27), K. links the intolerance of large parts of the more traditional, polytheistic religion of the Roman Empire to their political embeddedness in Roman society before 250 BC. The chapter is especially good on the fate of the Jewish population and the acts of pagan martyrs during the period in question. In chapter 3 (28–53), K.'s longest chapter and exclusively dedicated to the third century, K. discusses the increasing tendency towards religious unity in the endeavours of the Roman Empire, which she parallels with the need of conformity in the political sphere of the time. In chapters 4 to 7, however, which treat the periods 'From Constantine to Constantius II' (ch.4, 56–74), 'From Julian to Valentinian I' (ch.5, 75–87), 'From Gratian to Theodosius I' (ch.6, 88–105) and 'After Theodosius I.' (ch.7, 106–134), K.'s argument is often less lucid and the organisation of her material
seems to lack focus, as K. here mostly presents the broader picture rather than more detailed discussions. In the fourth century, we learn, a sharp polarization in attitudes towards «the religious other» occurred, which made it necessary for Christian writers to stress the unity of the church. This presentation of the fourth century AD is not very illuminating, however, as it does not explain where the increasing polarization of attitudes came from. K.’s treatment of the time between Julian and Theodosius I., on the other hand, a dense yet lucidly written account of the years between 361 and 403, deserves respect.

When it comes to describing the historical context of the texts under discussion, there are some caveats. For instance, K. identifies the age of Constantine as an age of «religious liberty and concord» (56) which seems puzzling. After all, Constantine had to bridge an enormous gap between the pagan and the Christian population of his Empire. Concord did not come easily and motives for ‘toleration’ will not have been quite as liberal-minded and humane as K.’s line of argument suggests. In fact, a closer look at the relationship between Constantine and Lactantius, for instance, could have illuminated not only the complexity of mutual influence between different authors of the period and the ambiguity of Constantius himself, but also the rigidity of Constantine’s rule. Moreover, in K.’s organisation of the material one is led to assume that Lactantius belongs to a different period than Constantine – ‘Lactantius on exclusivism’ (34f) concludes ch.3 ‘The Third Century’, whereas her discussion of Constantine opens ch.4 ‘From Constantine to Constantius I’ and the section on ‘religious liberty and concord’ (56–8). While K. rightly stresses Constantine’s versatile Realpolitik, she seems to underestimate the political motives (and explicit intolerance) behind what seems to be a rhetoric of peace and toleration. Nor can Constantine be called a ‘reluctant forbearer’ (62) – the emperor’s rhetoric of unity rather resembles the rhetoric of the so-called Christian apologists, whose enormous success Constantine managed to imitate by giving them a central role in the rhetoric of his Realpolitik. Similarly, K. compares only in passing Constantine’s and Julian’s exertion of Realpolitik «in order to maintain public order and tranquillity in the empire» (77) but does not specify what differences there may have been between Julian’s and Constantine’s rule or to which degree, despite different agendas, they might be using similar forms of rhetoric (e.g. of tolerance and intolerance) to pursue their respective aims and careers. A more substantial discussion of the role of classical education – mentioned only briefly on p.78 – in each period would have been worthwhile in this context. Entirely inconceivable is K.’s claim that in the fourth century «there could not have been any uniform premeditated strategy against paganism because there was no such entity as paganism» (65). K.’s conclusion seems mistaken here. Especially toward the end of the fourth century the individuals affected most likely did not care much whether they were called pagans or otherwise by their opponents. That measures undertaken against non-Christians, and pagans especially, were decidedly unpleasant towards the end of the fourth century can be seen from many ancient sources, last not least from the epitomized account of degrees preserved in the Codex Theodosianus. Indeed, the very fact that the term paganism was coined «only in the course of the fourth century» could support the thesis that this was the century in which the exclusion of the pagans was perfected in order to con-
solidate the unity of Christianity. Slightly ingenuous and overly revisionist seems K. ’s claim that the prohibition of pagan sacrifices during the reign of Constantine’s sons was owed to an «age-old Roman convention against private practices» (66) rather than to an increasingly oppressive anti-pagan legislation. Equally, one is confused by the term «benign neglect» (65) used by K. to describe Constantine’s, and the term «reluctant forbearance» (75) used by K. to describe Julian’s religious politics. Julian serves K. as a particularly striking example of possible reactions to «the Christian construction of the Christian/pagan dichotomy» (75). In ch. 5, K. argues that «Julian contributed to the growing Hellenic self-awareness as a distinct group. His version of a universalizing Hellenism offered Christian polemicists exactly what they needed: an easily defined and identifiable target on which to concentrate their firepower.» (75), which seems a little at odds with the historical developments predating the fourth century as well as with her later claim that Julian’s religious policy was «guided by moderation, similar to the forbearance that was characteristic not only of the Roman authorities during the preceding centuries but also of Constantine.» (76) K.’s main evidence for the moderate attitude of emperors as diverse as Constantine, Julian and Maximinus Daia are Constantine’s and Julian’s letters, which to her mind «declared their contempt for the religions they nevertheless endured» (76). A problematic claim. Equally problematic seem conclusions from much later Christian sources, as K. offers them by quoting Gregory of Nazianzus, Sozomen and Socrates for the fact that Julian «practised Realpolitik similar to that of Constantine in order to maintain public order and tranquillity in the empire» (77).

Themistius is a key author for the question of religious tolerance and intolerance in Late Antiquity. K. devotes considerable space to a discussion of Themistius’ work (82–87), but she does not set his radical plea for plurality and genuine religious tolerance in relation to other key figures of the time, such as Symmachus or Libanius, who are discussed in a different chapter. Chapter 6, ‘From Gratian to Theodosius I’ is of particular value because of K.’s excellent discussion of the degree to which lenient politics are always dependent on the varying overall circumstances of a state, which makes Roman emperors’ inclination to negotiate with polytheists and heterodox Christians dependent on more than the arguments based on ideological grounds. However, the fact that «In the fourth century there is no record of the severe punishments decreed in imperial legislation actually being meted out.» (90) does not support K. ’s (highly irritating) claim that polytheists were not treated unjustly under Theodosius I and that «Libanius assures us at every turn that Theodosius has not taken action against the shrines of polytheists» (94) – a claim that should have been double-checked in close scrutiny against the evidence of the Codex Theodosianus and some fairly explicit letters and speeches by Libanius which serve as witnesses to the contrary, not least his famous speech on the need for more religious tolerance, the so-called Speech for the Temples (or.66), which K. tries to interpret as a pro-Theodosian document (92–95). A more detailed analysis of the way in which Themistius and Symmachus, as she notes herself (97) use monothetic language, for instance, would have been a welcome contribution to the debate about the questions surrounding pagan monotheism and tolerance. Equally, one would like

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to read more about Ambrosius’ distortion of Symmachus’ accounts, or rather, to see K.’s observation mapped onto the broader context of the struggles between pagans and Christians at the time. Unlike the treatment of other authors in ch.6, K.’s account of Prudentius’ argumentation against plurality is excellent and would have deserved a more prominent place within her own argument.

The chapter ‘After Theodosius I.’ (ch.7) concludes K.’s historical tour d’horizon through pagan and Christian perspectives of religious tolerance and intolerance. In it, K. sketches the development «towards unity» she sees accomplished in the reign of Honorius, Arcadius and Theodosius II. K. notes herself that «religious oppression was justified through universalism and the desire for the religious unity of the empire» (106), which makes it all the more frustrating that she does not discern the rhetoric of mostly Christian sources in the second and third century from later attempts to understand the social dynamics at the turn from the fourth to the fifth century. Did the Roman Empire really move towards unity, or is the rhetoric of unity simply more audible than divergent voices on the same subject? At what price came this unity, and how was it rhetorically made the more appealing of various possible options for Late Antique societies within the Roman Empire? Bound to trigger this sort of questions, ch.7 would have been more useful for the reader at the very beginning of K.’s study, as it is here that she discerns various sources of religious intolerance and violence against polytheists, which blame «bishops, monks and landowners» (110) for most of the cruelties exercised by the Christian authorities around 500 AD. Similarly, K.’s interesting observations regarding Augustine’s opinion on feigned conversion and on the prophetic character of history (113–117) would have been more transparent and accessible if the topics of political conversion and Christian concepts of history, the discussion of religious diversity visible in Maximus of Madauros’ response to Augustine, Augustine’s reaction to Nectarius and Longinianus and their respective employment of the metaphor of one vs. many paths, or Maximus’ use of anonyamia and polynymia had found a more systematic treatment earlier on.

On the whole it seems regrettable that important tools of the rhetoric behind the arguments used by pagans and Christians between 250 and 500 are only touched upon lightly in the individual chapters but never classified or analysed in more detail. For instance, the complex and effective strategy of putting ‘old’ against ‘new’ or ‘healthy’ and ‘cured’ against a metaphorical notion of illness to legitimate one’s claims or to oppress the claims voiced by others, would have deserved a more detailed treatment than merely two pages (34f). Despite the strong emphasis on rhetoric in the title of her book, K. discusses the historical ramifications of the terms ‘tolerance’ and ‘intolerance’ in various ancient authors rather than discerning the tropes used to create social exclusion and fortify the positions of forbearance and compulsion which were passed on from one author to the next. It would perhaps help to bring more clarity into K.’s own argument if the argumentative lines in the ancient texts, and the rhetorical tools used to construct them, were demonstrated systematically rather than chronologically. For instance, attacks on claims of universality and efforts to establish an ‘old tradition’ as a defense against the threat of the new turn up in every chapter, in pagan and Christian sources alike, but their different origin and application is
nowhere discussed. K.’s broad knowledge of relevant texts is impressive but what
she does not establish is a thorough examination of the details about how, and to
what end, specific arguments and rhetorical tricks are used by their respective
authors. Furthermore, it would be of interest to learn which audiences we ought
to imagine for the texts under discussion. A discussion of the use of Greek phi-
losophy and poetry by Christian authors, and their transformation of rhetorical
topi and arguments of pagan origin would have been especially illuminating in
this context.

The main question asked in ch. 8 (‘Towards a World of One Alternative?’, 134–
139), finally, sums up the threat K. seems to see behind the history of Christian-
ity in Late Antiquity. As a conclusive afterthought to her study this chapter is
disappointing, because it is not as nuanced as other passages of her book. The
argument of the «One Alternative», or rather the rhetoric of necessity, lies at the
heart of any unforgiving, or TINA («there-is-no-alternative») argument, be it
monotheistic, polytheistic or atheistic. K.’s overall diagnosis however runs:
«Simply put, the pluralistic world of the polytheistic religions was to give way to
a monolithic Christian culture.» (135). Such a statement is anachronistic for at
least two reasons. The work of Garth Fowden and Polymnia Athanassiadi (G.
Fowden, Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of monotheism in Late An-
tiquity, Princeton 1993; P. Athanassiadi, Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity,
Oxford 1999; ibid., La lutte pour l’orthodoxie dans le platonisme tardif, Paris
2006) as well as others (e.g. Alfons Fürst, Paganer und christlicher Monotheis-
mus. Zur Hermeneutik eines antiken Diskurses’, JbAC 51, 2008, 5–23) has
shown that the argument of «One Alternative» is not a specifically Christian
phenomenon. In addition to that, K. underestimates the versality of both Chris-
tianity and non-Christian religions (and their proponents) throughout the centu-
ries. On a more trivial note, it is irritating that K. seems unaware of Averil Cam-
eron’s book ‘Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of
Christian Discourse’ (Berkeley 1991), which is absent from her discussion as well
as the bibliography. In conclusion, it is rather anticlimatic that in the course of
her neatly conceptualized monograph K. does in the end not fully bring out what
the title appears to promise. This mars her otherwise truly fascinating line of
argument. One would perhaps have hoped for a similarly lucid and systematic
presentation of the material as in K.’s excellent study ‘Debate and Dialogue-

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La manipolazione ideologica della teologia apollinea permea larga parte della pro-
duzione poetica di età augustea. L’imprint augusto non determina, tuttavia, una
ricezione letteraria dell’immagine divina in ottica esclusivamente politica. Figura
prismatica e proteica, Apollo delfico è divinità permeabile, suscettibile di alterazio-
ni nella sapiente mano del poeta: la dimensione ideologica si fonde nel preesistente
tradizionale simbolismo apollineo, rimodellando le caratteristiche del dio omerico e