obvious consequence of these trends is a persistent obsession with the purity and conviction of his religious beliefs. A comparison with other contemporary emperors quickly exposes the limitation of this approach. According to Lactantius, Diocletian had consulted an oracle of Apollo before initiating persecution of Christians, Maxentius had consulted the Sibylline books before his battle against Constantine, and Licinius had had a dream of an «angel of God» before his victory over Maximinus. Yet modern scholarship does not obsess about the sincerity of these emperors’ religiosity. Only Constantine’s motives seem to raise questions regarding his religion or his politics.¹

Girardet’s ideas are consistently learned and provocative. In the first half of the book, however, that provocation is largely a consequence of numerous conjectures. In proposing Constantine’s shift to Christianity already in 311, Girardet relies too often on assumptions that quickly become statements of fact. «Dagegen spricht nichts» (p. 72): therefore, in this case, Girardet concludes (quite implausibly) that Constantine had informed Lactantius about the appearance of the cross in the sky perhaps in 311. In the second half of the book the stimulation is a consequence of an unforgiving perspective on the rigidity of the emperor’s Christianity. According to Girardet, all along Constantine’s «political intention» had been to «erase the religious pluralism of the empire» (p. 162). For the early years of Constantine’s reign Girardet relies on dubious speculation, and for the later years he highlights a brittle intolerance toward traditional cults. The end result is a severely constricted perspective on Constantine and his gods.

Ann Arbor
Raymond Van Dam


‘The Roman Government of Britain’ [RGB] is «a completely new version» of Birley’s classic and indispensable ‘The Fasti of Roman Britain’ (1981) [FRB], which maintains the same very high standard and is still indispensable for Roman historians in general as well as archaeologists and students of Roman Britain. Like FRB, it lists «all known Roman high officials who served in Britain», quoting exhaustively the primary evidence, literary and epigraphic, and analysing fully their origins, family connections and careers. (Not one of them, incidentally, originated from Britain itself, not until the usurper Gratianus in 407.) The Introduction incorporates the invaluable «senatorial career in the principate» from FRB, but without the tabulation of illustrative careers, and concludes with summary treatment of topics such as the governors of Britain and their staff, the provincial ‘capital’, and local government. Other summary treatments, which comprised the third and final section of FRB, have been revised and moved into the four-part chronological sequence which follows the Introduction. Part I (43–c.213) amounts to more than two-thirds of RGB, and ends with the division of

¹ For non-religious aspects of Constantine’s reign, see R. Van Dam, The Roman Revolution of Constantine (Cambridge, 2007).
Britain into two provinces; Birley’s discussion of the date is definitive, and justly concludes that “the most likely solution seems to be that Herodian was simply wrong” in dating it to c.197. Part II covers most of the third century (c.213–285), III the usurpation of Carausius and Allectus (286–96), and IV the last century of Roman rule, from 296 until Roman officials were expelled in 409.

The sequence begins with the long series of senatorial governors (legati Augusti pro praetore), continues with senior members (comites Augusti) of the imperial entourage which accompanied Claudius, Hadrian and Septimius Severus, when they visited Britain, and rounds off the officials of senatorial rank with the legionary commanders (legati legionum), their deputies the tribuni laticlavii, and the few attested deputy-governors with judicial responsibility (legati iuridici). Then high officials of equestrian rank: the imperial procurators (procuratores Augusti), the commanders of the fleet (praefecti classis), and a few attested census-officials and junior procurators; a few equestrian governors (praesides) attested from the later third century onward; and in the fourth century, generals and senior officers mentioned by literary sources such as Ammianus Marcellinus, and some new-style governors-general (vicarii).

Not included are lower-ranking officers and officials, many of them equestrians, such as the legionary tribuni angusticlavii, the tribunes or prefects in command of auxiliary units, the praefectus castrorum and centurions in each legion, and the occasional centurio regionarius. But much incidental information is given about them. Birley could undoubtedly have written the definitive Prosopography of Roman Britain (witness the two editions of his ‘The People of Roman Britain’), but he envisaged and has achieved something larger, which he understates as being “a kind of handbook or narrative history of Britain under Roman rule”. Inevitably it is source-led: “[m]ost of the evidence concerns military activity, particularly in the northern frontier region.” But no fair-minded reader will resist his defence of prosopography, the technique of which he is a consummate master without ever using the word, that “[f]uller attention to the men who served here can contribute to a better understanding of how Rome ruled its empire.”

Collating RGB with FRB, we may miss the full comment on Sex. Iulius Severus that “[h]e is credited – if that is the right word – with the destruction of fifty of the Jews’ most important outposts and 985 of their most famous villages”; in RGB he only “destroyed fifty of the Jews’ most important outposts and 985 of their most famous villages.” Birley previously wrote of the legionary legate Mamilianus that “Pliny describes him as ‘vir gravissimus, eruditissimus ac super ista verissimus’ – but then he had been praising Pliny’s verses.” In RGB “Pliny calls him ‘very learned and serious, and above all very sincere’ (he had praised Pliny’s verses).” This however reflects an important change: all quoted texts in Latin, whether literary or epigraphic, are now accompanied by an accurate translation; Greek texts (and one in Ethiopian) appear only in translation. This was a wise decision, not only because translation is the duty of any editor of papyri and inscriptions, but to enable every reader, even an archaeologist, to estimate the written evidence.
Much new evidence has been incorporated in RGB, for example the military diplomas which add another Hadrianic governor, Trebius Germanus in 127, and confirm what most scholars doubted, that Ulpius Marcellus was governor from 178 until 184. The most remarkable addition is due to Alföldy’s identification of CIL vi 1574 as the historian Tacitus’ funerary monument: Birley convincingly suggests that he was also *tribunus latiiclavius* under his father-in-law, perhaps from 77 to 79, which means that the *Agricola* was informed by first-hand knowledge of Britain and the early campaigns of Agricola.

Since RGB was published, another diploma has revealed that A. Vicirius Proculus (*cos.* 89) was governor in 93. This raises the intriguing possibility that he was the «Lord Proculus» addressed in the draft petition from Vindolanda which Birley suggests was intended for Hadrian, but in which the editors now consider that the reading [do]mine Proc(u)le is almost certain. Fragments republished in the new *RIB* III suggest that a contemporary governor was called [...nius M[...], and may even have been T. Junius Montanus (*cos.* 81); that in third-century Lower Britain the governor [...]us Aem[ilian]us bore the nomen *Pompeius*, and Octavius Sabinus the praenomen *Gaius*. The Alchester tombstone (*RIB* III, 3121), published just too late for RGB, entails revision of «The legions and their bases», since Alchester was a very early legionary fortress, almost certainly that of Legion II Augusta.

RGB is thus definitive, but like painting the Forth Bridge, it will never be quite finished. The mass of primary evidence is presented with great clarity and precision, and Birley’s knowledge of the secondary literature is quite extraordinary, but he always indicates the degree of certainty. Thus *Tamphium*, from which Claudius Paulinus wrote his famous letter in 220, ‘perhaps’ took its name from the *ala Tampiana*; but others might object that this unit had left Britain by 135/8, that no other such derivation is known in Britain, and that in any case they would expect *Tampianis*. At Cirencester, the reign of Julian «seems most likely» for the Jupiter Column (*RIB* 103) which Eric Birley dated to the reign of Diocletian, a judgement endorsed by FRB. Others might object that Jupiter played little part in Julian’s pagan revival, but was the prime god with whom Diocletian identified as *Iovius*; that the emphasis on «restoration» and «the ancient religion»

2 Tab. Vindol. II, 344 with III, App. 344 (the reading first suggested by Birley), found in Period IV (c.105 – c.120), but perhaps it was residual. For Tab. Vindol. II, 354, Birley makes the attractive suggestion that the legate ‘Ferox’ was acting–governor in c.87, and was even Pliny’s correspondent of that name. For Tab. Vindol. II, 326, he reads another senator’s cognomen as Paulini[], and is probably right, but the previous traces look too slight for Caristani, even if he dots every letter.
3 Respectively RIB III, 3122 (Alchester), 3212 (Bowes), and 3196 (York).
4 As Mark Hassall has noted in his ‘Footnotes to the Fasti’, in H.M. Schellenberg, V.E. Hirschmann, A. Kierkhaus (eds), A Roman Miscellany: Essays in Honour of Anthony R. Birley on his Seventieth Birthday (Gdansk 2008), 31–41, a tribute which is full of interesting observations about RGB.
(prisca religione) accords with his own belief that «the old religion should not be opposed by any new one».

These are matters of opinion, but for the convenience of proof-readers a few small corrections may be noted:

- 100, n. 2. In identifying 'P. Met [...] (cos. 5 Nov. 91 in the Acta Arvalium) with L. Metilius Nep[os] (cos. 1 Sept. 91 in the Fasti Potentini), Birley comments: «L and P are easily confused in cursive script.» This should be 'C and P', as he knows himself (at 178, and in his Garrison Life at Vindolanda, 28).

- 119. The inscription of Q. Neratius Proximus (now RIB III, 3180) was found at Nettleham (Lincs.), not «the colony of Lincoln».

- 233. For «Cyrene» read 'Cyrena'.

- 249. 'Maximus' has dropped out of the name «C. Julius Pisib anus Aemilius Papus», which is correctly given at 151, n. 65, and in FRB.

- 256. In discussing Q. Numiusius Junior (cos. 161), the date of whose tribunate in the Ninth Legion is a terminus post quem for the legion's disappearance, Birley comments (as he did in FRB) that «[a] consul of 161 with children and a favoured start cannot have been born later than c.125.» He surely means 'before c.125' (cf. Eck, Chron 2 (1971), 461).

- 284. The heading for M. Pontius Laelianus is repeated from FRB, and describes him as «(cos. 144)». The correct date is 145, as explained on the next page.

- 308, n. 27. For «Sabinus» read 'Sabinus'.

- 320. For «Carausus» read ‘Carausius’.

- 337. For «ota» read 'of'.

- 355, n. 81. The page-reference to Loriot should be 85, not 855, and the photograph published by Medini is at Diodora 9 (1980), 442, not 365ff.²

RGB concludes with a Select Bibliography, a Glossary of Latin Terms, and a scrupulous Index of (1) Persons, (2) Geographical, (3) Sources quoted in extenso, (4) Miscellaneous [mostly military units, gods and Roman tribes]. Many other inscriptions and works of modern scholarship are conveniently cited by abbreviated title in the footnotes. The Glossary is comprehensive and very useful, although it omits frumentarii, elsewhere variously «secret agents» or «secret police», and dioecesis, elsewhere variously «diocese» or «dioecese», but enters vicesima hereditatium twice. Looking at Index (3), it is hardly surprising to find that the British evidence largely derives from RIB I with 113 inscribed stones, to which RIB III adds only ten. RIB II contributes about thirteen items of instrumentum, five of them military diplomas.

RGB confirms its author’s rank among the great figures of Roman epigraphy and prosopography, the scholars whom he repeatedly cites such as Ronald Syme, Eric Birley, Geza Alföldy and Werner Eck. In discussing possible kinsmen of Trebius Germanus, he refers to «the earliest recorded Trebius of the better sort», a turn of phrase which pays homage to Syme. But everywhere he is generous in

¹ neque reprehendi a nova vetus religio deberet, from his edict against the Manichees (FIRA II, p. 380).

² This is the epitaph of L. Artorius Castus, who commanded British troops adversus Armi[n]os, and it shows what may hang on a single letter. His opponents have been conventionally restored as ‘Armicans’ (in Brittany), but Birley accepts Loriot’s reading of adversus Armi[n]os (‘Armenians’). The stone is broken immediately after M, and it is not really clear from Medini’s photograph whether an E is ligatured to M or the upper serif has simply broken away. Medini only read the letters ARM[...].

