

*James Bowen: A History of Western Education.* Volume I. The Ancient World: Orient and Mediterranean 2000 B.C. - A.D. 1054. University Paperbacks 552. Methuen & Co Ltd, London 1975. 395 p. £ 3.-.

This is the first part of a three-volume enterprise which is to cover the history of western education from the dawn of history down to the present age. The author is not a classical scholar. Nevertheless, he has made use of the original sources, usually in translations. The chief merit of the book is in its presentation of the general outline of the history of education in the Mediterranean. For people with little knowledge of Antiquity, it may render considerable service. A classical specialist, however, cannot fail to notice inaccuracies and even misrepresentations of evidence, for example p. 177 that the Romans considered Varro their greatest writer, p. 193 that a handbook was called *introductio* in Latin, p. 196 that a *libertinus* could attain senatorial rank (his source, Suet. Claud. 24 says *libertini filius*, which is a different thing). These and others of a similar nature are perhaps minor blemishes. More seriously, his discussion of the social prestige of teachers during the Empire is confused and confusing. I am not competent to judge his possible shortcomings in the chapters on oriental and Greek education. Moreover, the author often dwells on irrelevant issues, especially in the Christian section. Instead of a brief outline of the history of Christianity and of Christian thought, a more detailed analysis of the Christian attitude to schooling would have been welcome.

*Iiro Kajanto*

*Alan Cameron: Circus Factions.* Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press 1976. 364 p. £ 16.50.

Prof. Cameron's new book is a welcome contribution to our knowledge of the religious, social, military and ceremonial role played by the "circus factions" during the Late Roman and Byzantine Empires. We have indeed no reason to doubt his interpretations of the institutional terminology and the comprehensive primary material concerning the heyday of the factions he deals with. He is also quite convincing in correcting the traditional view that the changes which took place during the five first centuries of the Empire would have been a sign of growth of popular sovereignty.

One might perhaps have expected that the origin of the "factions" and their role during the Republic and Early Empire would have been treated in as great depth as the later stages. Unfortunately this is not the case. There is no complete list of early documents (quite a few new relevant inscriptions have been discovered lately, for example, the interesting one published in *Acta Inst. Rom. Finlandiae* VI (1973) No. 81). And perhaps on too many occasions the author has based his comments on secondary sources such as Balsdon's "Life and Leisure at Rome".

"The story of the circus factions is long and complex, from