

The two teams, in the Römerstadt Augusta Raurica and in the Aquincumi Múzeum Budapest, have done a great job with the exhibition and the exhibition catalogue. The project took seven years to complete but the result is all the more excellent and very informative for all interested in Roman provincial studies. These two cities, Augusta Raurica and Aquincum, tell us a lot about life in Roman military camps and provincial cities. The results are interesting in showing the similarities as well as differences in the history and archaeological remains of these cities that once lay on the border of the Roman Empire.

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*The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume XIII. The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425.* Edited by Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey. Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN 0–521–30200–5. xvi, 889 p. USD 150.

The first edition of *The Cambridge Ancient History* closed with volume XII in A.D. 324. The new edition adds two further volumes to cover the period up to A.D. 600. This has undoubtedly been a very felicitous decision, and the first of the new volumes is an outstanding achievement. Why the boundary mark between it and the last volume has been set at A.D. 425 (rather than, say, the end of the Theodosian dynasty around 450) is nowhere justified, but it is probably as good as anything else. Naturally, the discussion in individual chapters often has to break the precise time limits, especially towards the third century, for which we do not yet have a new edition of volume XII. The balance between the chronological and thematical sections seems optimal to me. The views of individual writers have not been harmonized, again a lucky choice (and it might have been impossible anyway), as a deliberate attempt to create a solid consensus would have been highly misleading in view of the many uncertainties which remain.

A few details appear to have been misleadingly presented or at least should have been argued more convincingly. Here is a brief list of examples: the legend of Map 1 is rather unhelpful and seems to have been taken from some other map (18); the statement that Athens escaped devastation by Alaric is highly questionable in view of recent archaeological evidence (115); I also wonder if we can say that Alaric's sack of Rome was "a final act of rage and despair" (did he know that he would soon die?) (128); I am not convinced that the *Testamentum Porcelli* had anything to do with soldiers (230); the *solidi* and pounds of gold have been confused in Olympiodorus' account of medium-rich senators (300); the extent to which the church attracted to itself "men of the first rank" in the fourth century seems exaggerated: at least it is difficult to see what positive role such a sharp-tongued troublemaker as Jerome could have had in the secular administration (365); the name of A. Enmann, the discoverer of the *Kaisergeschichte*, is twice misspelt, in each case differently (684, 831). However, all these are just marginal points and in no way diminish the great value of the work as a whole.

This volume canonizes the new perception of late antiquity which has been developing over the past decades. The contemporary school of thought refuses to see the Later Roman Empire as a period of decadence and argues that the apparent decline is only an anachronistic teleological interpretation of the facts (because we know that the Empire finally fell). Instead, it maintains that the agricultural production did not diminish, cities

were thriving, the army fought as efficiently as ever, taxation was not immoderate, and cultural life experienced an unprecedented time of vigorous growth. The only significant trouble (apart from the barbarians) were rich landlords who could evade paying their taxes. Many phenomena which previous generations regarded as signs of degeneration, like shameless adulation of the emperor, all-pervasive corruption, or oppression of the farmers, now receive a rationalistic explanation.

The new positive view of late antiquity is certainly refreshing, and should be especially welcomed by many European countries which have lately been taught that an overgrown public sector is leading their economies to an inevitable doom. Whatever implications this may have for the Blair government or the Scandinavian Social Democratic Parties, personally I am puzzled by the notion that the new doctrine (without explicitly saying so) takes us very far from any structural explanations for the Fall of the Roman Empire. In practice we are left with the Assassination Theory. It almost appears that if Valens had not made a few stupid strategic mistakes at Adrianople, or if Theodosius the Great had not died prematurely leaving behind two ungifted sons with a crowd of incompetent advisers, we would still be living in the Roman Empire. As far as I can see there is nothing in the volume to refute this inference which tacitly emerges from the individual sections. Evidently, some of that will be clarified in the next volume, which is already in press. It will doubtless dispel my present uncomfortable feeling that I have been left alone amidst the melancholy ruins of a once powerful empire without being told how and why it all came to pass.

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ROBERT J. BUCK: *Thrasybulus and the Athenian Democracy. The Life of an Athenian Statesman*. Historia Einzelschriften 120. Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart 1998. ISBN 3-515-07221-7. 139 p. DEM 56.

This handy monograph has been written to fill a gap, to place Thrasybulus, son of Lycus, in relation to his social context. As the author reminds us, the problem is how to put any leader into his proper relationship to his community, since the facts are blurred by our own attitudes, our own culture, restricted sources etc. In spite of these problems historians try to write books about single persons, as Buck (B.) does. He usually faces with style all the problems which he states in chapter 1, Introduction: sources and scholarship.

Thrasybulus was one of the most important Athenians from 411 to 389 BC. when he was murdered in his tent by angry inhabitants of Aspendus in Pamphylia after some Athenian soldiers had made several acts of brigandage in their territory. In his laconic comment on Thrasybulus' death, Xenophon writes that Thrasybulus was μάλα δοκῶν ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς εἶναι (*Hell.* 4.8.31). This comment seems to be one of the main reasons for B. to write this book. It is a unique comment by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, and it reflects well B's own attitude towards Thrasybulus. He regards Thrasybulus as the ablest commander in all the campaigns in the Hellespont.

B. describes the primary political and military history of the highly discussed period. He does not give much new information or fresh interpretation, but as a concise