

Thus, to highlight her point that justice was not worse in Late Antiquity, H. might even more effectively have stressed the shortcomings of early imperial justice. That would perhaps have reduced the need for a slightly apologetic tone when discussing the later developments. At any rate, I would not go so far as to suggest that Late Antiquity was more humane in the area of torture and punishment (135). At least, I would not consider burning alive a more humane punishment than crucifixion, although the Christians naturally shunned the latter. Moreover, the impact of possible Christian insistence on greater humanity remains unclear, while H. also points out that the Christians did not, in principle, object to the judicial infliction of pain (129-34, 146-50). Later world history does not support the idea that Christianity as such (at least not without other factors) would tend to create more lenient judicial systems.

H. observes that Roman citizens often could choose whether to invoke laws or not, and that the state tacitly accepted the fact, not even demanding universal compliance (80-2). In this context, H. might have discussed some laws which vehemently forbade people from settling their quarrels in private or from disposing of their goods as they saw fit, threatening them with the gravest penalties if they broke the law (see e.g. laws on *raptus*, adultery, illegitimate children, women's sexual relations with slaves), not to speak of the emotional law of Diocletian and Galerius against incestuous marriages (Coll. 6.4.1), which seems to imply that divine favour for the Empire was at risk if Roman law was not universally embraced by the populace.

A few minor points: even if there is no direct proof that the texts of Republican and Augustan *leges* had survived in Late Antiquity (13-4), I would find it rather odd if they did not. The phrase 'according to the law of the Romans', appearing in the papyri up to the fourth century, no longer necessarily implies the 'otherness' of Roman law (32): apart from the fact that the expression was entirely formulaic, it could, at that time, equally well be perceived as referring to 'our' law, in the same way that the legal writers and emperors used phrases like '*Romanis legibus cautum est*'. I was not convinced that the court charges were 'modest' for the poor (100). The very last items of the Bibliography seem to be missing, at least Voss and Watson (226).

H. joins the current tendency to see late ancient society in a favourable light and to dismiss Gibbon's D-word altogether. Irrespective of the possibility that a new generation may sooner or later re-challenge this overall doctrine, the main reasoning of her book cannot be easily refuted. It is both a refreshingly thought-provoking study and a lucid introduction to the workings of late Roman law. It should be read by everyone interested in the law, administration, and social relations in the Roman Empire.

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*Die Stempelsiegel im Vorderasiatischen Museum*, von Liane Jakob-Rost mit einem Beitrag von Iris Gerlach. 2. Auflage. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rh. 1997. 118 S. mit 23 Abb., 7 Tafeln. ISBN 3-8053-2029-9. DEM 35.00.

*Mit Sieben Siegeln versehen*. Das Siegel in Wirtschaft und Kunst des Alten Orients. Hrsg. von Evelyn Klengel-Brandt. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum.

Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rh. 1997. 192 S. mit 169 Abb., 33 Farbabbildungen, 1 Karte. ISBN 3-8053-2032-9. DEM 68.00.

The second edition of "Stempelsiegel" was motivated by the accumulation, since the publication of the first catalogue in 1975, of a great deal of new knowledge on the dating and the manufacture of the seals. The new evidence is inserted in the introductory chapter, while the catalogue itself is reprinted with only some corrections to the earlier text. The catalogue is also preceded by a new, brief introduction to seal stamps with some more recent bibliography.

The volume "Mit Sieben Siegeln versehen" was published on the occasion of a homonymous exhibition held in the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin in 1997. The ten contributions present the results of recent research on the seals and their significance in the ancient Near East.

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MARCELLO SPANU: *Keramos di Caria. Storia e monumenti*. Studia archaeologica 89. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 1997. 222 p., 28 tav., ill. ISBN 88-7062-979-1. ITL 250.000.

It is with delight that scholars will welcome this book, since the history and the important archaeological remains of Ceramus have attracted considerably less attention than those of many other Carian cities (Aphrodisias, Caunus, Cnidus, Halicarnassus, Iasos). The edition of the inscriptions of Ceramus by E. Varinlioglu (1986) was a major step in Carian studies, but before Spanu's work there was no comprehensive survey of the historical, archaeological and topographical sources relating to this city. After a survey of literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence on Ceramus (Ch. 2), the author discusses in detail the development of the urban plan which appears to have been renewed in the fourth century B.C., and he observes that not only Ceramus but also some other Carian cities had an astronomical orientation. The Hellenistic and Roman periods were characterized by extensive construction, new building techniques, and manifestations of local benefactions. The reader is pleased to find an index of names and places at the end of the volume. This is anything but typical of Italian (and other) publications of an archaeological character.

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JOHN BOARDMAN: *Griechische Plastik. Die spätklassische Zeit und die Plastik in Kolonien und Sammlungen*. Ein Handbuch übersetzt von Ute Winter und Sabine Albersmeier. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1998. ISBN 3-8053-2446-4. 319 S. DEM 58.00.

The original book, written in English, appeared in 1995. It completed the series on Greek sculpture of different periods by Sir John Boardman, the first volume of which – the archaic period – was published in 1978. All three volumes have been most pleasant reading, and the things one might have wished to see included in the earlier volumes, such as art in the colonies, are now treated here. Of course, it would have been ideal to include the colonial