

of political power and freedom (of the small senatorial elite) did not interest Suetonius and his readers as much as it worried Tacitus and other senatorial writers.

Mellor pays special attention to the rhetoric in Roman historiography and shows how Roman historians were deeply bound to the ancient literal and rhetorical tradition. All Roman historical writers were well educated in literature and rhetoric and they clearly display their training in their works, not only in speeches composed as part of the narration, but also in the structures of the histories and in methods of analysis and strands of narrative, digressions and parallels. Historians brought drama into their histories since the characters with their motives resemble the familiar ancient stereotypes learned in the rhetorical schools: there is a tyrant, a collaborator, a philosophical martyr, a noble barbarian, etc. As Mellor rightly points out, a Roman historian was above all a literary artist – in Cicero's words an 'embellisher of events' – a circumstance that is often forgotten or overlooked. Even the most scrupulous of Roman historians – in Mellor's opinion – Tacitus and Ammianus, did not avoid these literary techniques, and Livy's histories seem to be akin to a historical novel or 'a poem in prose' as Quintilian called history.

The moral dimension is linked to this conspicuous literary element in Roman historiography. The Roman historians used history as a medium to address the moral and political issues of their time, such as freedom versus tyranny, the corrupting effect of individual or civic power, the decline of political and social institutions. Tacitus particularly was a pessimistic moralist who related the loss of *virtus* to the loss of political freedom in Rome and also saw a connection between the private morality and the public actions of the emperors. Senatorial historians themselves were sometimes involved with various political factions which their works often quite clearly reflect. In Ch. 8, "Historical writing at Rome", Mellor treats the role of history and historians (e.g., public readings by historians and their audience) as well as the function of history in public life and the craft of writing history, and I find this discussion the most interesting contribution of his book. Throughout his book, Mellor problematizes the accuracy and credibility of Roman historiography, often comparing the ancient craft of history with modern research. An ancient historian used *inventio* to find appropriate material to illustrate his story which was made plausible, probable and credible. Mellor states that this is "different from the modern idea of historical truth as an absolute" (p. 27). One begins to wonder what this modern idea of historical truth might be which Mellor regards as uniform and absolute. However, in the theoretical discourse, history and its epistemology has been under constant lively discussion in modern times; one should rather speak of various modern ideas of 'historical truth'.

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GERHARD HORSMANN: *Die Wagenlenker der römischen Kaiserzeit*. Forschung zur antiken Sklaverei, Band XXIX. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1997. ISBN 3-515-07234-9. viii, 339 S. DEM 96.

Es fehlte bisher eine eingehende sozialhistorische Studie zu den römischen Wagenlenkern, die zu den wenigen Berufsgruppen der römischen Gesellschaft gehören,

von denen umfassende Quellen verschiedener Art vorhanden sind und die auch im allgemeinen Bewusstsein ausserhalb der Zunft der Altertumswissenschaft herausragen. Die vorliegende Monographie erfüllt die Lücke auf ausgezeichnete Weise. Ein zentrales Anliegen des Verfassers ist es, dem Widerspruch zwischen der niedrigen sozialen Stellung der römischen Wagenlenker und ihrer Rolle "als umjubelte Götter oder Könige der Rennbahn" nachzugehen. Durch eingehende Analyse aller zur Verfügung stehenden Quellen schildert er die soziale Lage dieser Berufsgruppe. Es wird hier nützlich sein, seiner Prosopographie der Wagenlenker einige Bemerkungen beizusteuern. Nr. 8: lies *CIL* X 8053, 10; ob aber diese Inschrift etwas mit dem Wagenlenker Anicetus zu tun hat, bleibt dahingestellt. – Nr. 53: *Erylus* ist ein falscher Name, zu ergänzen ist wahrscheinlich [*C*]erylus. – Nr. 112: *Koίρανος* ist doch wohl nicht Name des Wagenlenkers, sondern eines Kaisers; Guarducci, *Epigrafia greca* III 191ff (auf die H. nicht verweist) denkt an Commodus; ferner vgl. die Edition von Moretti, *IGUR* 1214. – Nicht alle vom Verf. vorgenommenen Identifizierungen sind dingfest. Und gelegentlich schliesst er etwas vorschnell auf libertinen Status, auch wenn dieser nicht eindeutig aus den Quellen hervorgeht, so vermutet H. in Avillius Teres (Nr. 204) einen Freigelassenen, da dies aber nicht mit Sicherheit hervorgeht, ist es vorzuziehen, ihn als *incertus* einzustufen.

Heikki Solin

*Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. Tome 2. Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne (313-604)* 1-2, sous la direction de CHARLES PIETRI (†) et LUCE PIETRI, par JANINE DESMULLIEZ, CHRISTIANE FRAISSE-COUÉ, ÉLISABETH PAOLI-LAFAYE, CHARLES PIETRI, LUCE PIETRI, CLAIRE SOTINEL. École française de Rome – CNRS, Rome 1999-2000. ISBN 2-7283-0538-2 (vol. 1), -0613-3 (vol. 2). xl, 2435 p. EUR 198, EUR 191.

Prosopographies are always difficult to review if you are unable to compile long lists of missing persons or misspelt names. This is the case here, either because the reviewer is not competent enough, or because the book is too carefully produced, and probably both. I limit myself to a few general remarks.

The late Roman world was initially divided in two prosopographies: the secular *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire I-III (PLRE)*, and the *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire (PCBE)*, which included people with a predominantly ecclesiastical background. While *PLRE* was divided chronologically (284-395, 396-527, 528-641), *PCBE* adopted a geographical division, beginning with Africa (1982) and continuing with the present two volumes on Italy. The chronological limits of the latter are 313 and 604, that is, the first officially recognized church council in Rome and the death of Gregory the Great, "dernier représentant, sur le siège de saint Pierre, du monde antique" (vii).

I have chosen to look at the letter M, to form an idea of the coverage of *PCBE* and of the possible overlap with *PLRE*. The African volume of *PCBE* presents on 113 pages 239 persons whose name began with M (2.1 / page), the Italian volume 402 persons on 187 pages (2.2 / p.). For a comparison, *PLRE* I gives 485 persons (5.3 / p.),