

expect from them. Designed to be accessible to students and the general reader alike this book is warmly recommended to anyone interested in a vital, formative period of Roman history.

*Kaj Sandberg*

KLAUS BRINGMANN: *Geschichte der römischen Republik. Von den Anfängen bis Augustus*. C. H. Beck, München 2002. ISBN 3-406-49292-4. 463 pp. EUR 34.90.

This book is a remarkably brave attempt by a single individual to provide a synopsis of the historical evolution of a long and extraordinarily dynamic period in Roman history. The half millennium covered by the volume did not only witness Rome's development from a small village to a Mediterranean empire, but also a host of structural changes as to the internal development of the Roman state and society. These include complex social and economic developments as well as the evolution of the republican system itself and, indeed, the eventual disintegration of this political system. The focus of the book is firmly placed on political and military history, and Bringmann addresses other aspects only insofar as these are capable of contributing "zum Verständnis des historischen Prozesses" (p. 6). This conception of the dynamics of history may well be open to debate, but, given the complexity and sheer volume of relevant material (primary sources as well as scholarly works), it is certainly to the benefit of the whole presentation that the author has chosen a clear and well-defined focus. As so often, less is more.

The book is organized in five major sections, the contents of which will be briefly summarized here. In section I, "Rom und Italien" (pp. 9–82), B. examines the period from the beginnings to the inception of the third century BC. Here he discusses the foundation of the city of Rome (including its social and political institutions), the growth of Roman power in Italy down to the conclusion of the Samnite Wars, the constitution of the Classical Republic as well as the emergence of the *nobilitas*. In section II, "Rom und die Mittelmeerwelt" (pp. 83–154), which is essentially an account of the military history of Rome from the Pyrrhic War down to the late second century BC, the author makes a contribution to the ongoing discussion of the nature of Roman imperialism. Refuting the view that Rome's expansion during this period was due to a desire for territorial conquest, B. contends that this expansion should be seen as the product of a defensive grand strategy, which required conquest in order to provide protection for new territories.

In section III, "Die Krise der Republik und ihre Ursachen" (pp. 155–278), which examines the period from the tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus to the domination of Sulla, B. turns to the profound changes Roman society underwent in the wake of the rapid expansion of the preceding period, changes deriving from the economic, social and political consequences of the expansion itself as well as from the increasing contacts with the Greek World. The author analyzes the Greek influences on Roman culture and religion, the impact of the adoption of a monetary economy, the transformation of agricultural production and landholding patterns and its consequences for the military recruitment system. He also deals with the reform attempts of the Gracchi, the struggle between Marius and Sulla and with the dictatorship of the latter.

In section IV, "Der Untergang der Republik" (pp. 279–394), B. provides an overview of the development between the domination of Sulla and the situation following the assassination of Caesar. In section V, "Augustus, Überwinder und Vollender der Republik", the author is concerned with the second triumvirate, the ascension of Octavian/Augustus and the political system (firmly rooted in republican institutions) established by the first emperor.

At the end of the book, there is an *Anhang*, a series of appendices including a chronological table, an index of places and names as well as a table of illustrations and maps. Most importantly, it also contains an appendix entitled "Hinweise zur Forschung und wissenschaftlichen Literatur" (pp. 435–448), which, in the form of an annotated bibliography, provides a very valuable overview of modern scholarship on the Republic. The book features throughout numerous excerpts from primary sources, which usually enhance the presentation, but it is very sparsely illustrated.

Bringmann's book certainly has much to commend it, providing as it does an accessible, well-informed and lucid single-volume analysis of an important period in Roman history. However, certain features greatly reduce its value, at least as an introduction to its subject. For instance, the lack of a systematic discussion of the evidentiary basis for republican history is highly regrettable; the occasional notes on primary sources in the abovementioned annotated bibliography (pp. 435 ff.) provide no remedy for this shortcoming. Altogether incomprehensible is the complete omission, in the body of the text, of references to works of modern scholarship. Again, the bibliography is by no means able to make up for the lack of a proper apparatus of notes, which would have been nothing short of essential. It is most important to stress that no modern account of the history of the Roman Republic can be conceived independently of the efforts of previous scholars, and that modern scholarship in this area is far from representing a uniform tradition. Nigh near every single statement that can be made with regard to the Early Republic is by necessity surrounded with controversy, and also the history of later periods abounds with hotly debated problems that divide scholars. It is clear from his account that B. is fully conversant with the scholarly literature on the Republic, but it would have been helpful for the reader if he had identified the main issues of contention and provided details as to the origin of the views he offers. The lack of references also frequently makes it unclear, at least for the general reader, whether the author is presenting original ideas or is merely recounting the findings of others.

Finally, I find it unfortunate that the author quite frequently presents highly contentious views as if they were well-established facts, without duly recognizing that they are in fact matters for debate. For instance, in the discussion of the founding of Rome and the date of the introduction of the Republic, where B. largely follows the revisionist chronology proposed long ago by Einar Gjerstad and Krister Hanell (whose names are not mentioned, even in the bibliography) it would have been appropriate to acknowledge that the traditional chronology still has its defenders (e.g. Timothy J. Cornell and Andrea Carandini, to name but a few). That the analysis of the primary sources entails severe difficulties, and that conflicting interpretations often co-exist, is, in my mind, one of the things that should be stressed in a modern account of Roman history.

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