

svolto nell'aprile del 2001). L'argomento di studio del IX congresso, storiograficamente orientato come quelli degli eventi precedenti (la Sicilia dei Sicani e dei Siculi, dei tiranni, ecc.), s'intitola "Ruolo mediterraneo della Sicilia nella tarda antichità" e quindi, finalmente, l'attenzione viene posta sull'età romana. Era già ora, visto che la Sicilia romana, e in particolare quella tardoantica, si presenta in grado di aprire ampie prospettive di ricerca su fenomeni culturali, economici, religiosi, sociali e altri, finora (o almeno fino agli anni 80' e 90') in parte trascurate ma ormai da tempo in continua fioritura. Nei lavori del congresso hanno trovato spazio una serie di relazioni importanti, come quelle dedicate ai rapporti tra Sicilia e alcune altre regioni mediterranee (Africa, Germania, Oriente, ecc.), ma si è parlato anche della storiografia della Sicilia greca e romana, di personaggi notissimi come Melania la Giovane o il siciliano Firmico Materno, o ancora di opere letterarie come il *Pervigilium Veneris* (che mostra un legame con la Sicilia centro-orientale). Oltre alle relazioni principali, gli Atti contengono numerosi aggiornamenti in forma di rassegne critiche dirette a segnalare il progresso degli studi siciliani in vari campi di ricerca (storia, archeologia, epigrafia, numismatica, linguistica, ecc.). Altamente utili risultano anche gli aggiornamenti che riguardano gli scavi condotti in Sicilia nel quadriennio precedente al Congresso. I risultati di un evento di queste dimensioni rimarrebbero difficilmente raggiungibili se non fossero accompagnati da indici. Sotto questo punto di vista i presenti Atti non deluderanno le attese dei più esigenti, in quanto gli indici alla fine del tomo II,2 non solo sono abbondanti, ma anche accurati e facilmente consultabili.

*Mika Kajava*

FERGUS MILLAR: *Government, Society, & Culture in the Roman Empire. Rome, the Greek World, and the East*. Vol. 2. Edited by HANNAH M. COTTON and GUY M. ROGERS. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London 2004. ISBN 0-8078-5520-0. XXIX, 470 pp. GBP 43.95.

Many laudatory words have been expressed about the *erga kai hemerai* of Fergus Millar [FM] in the last years following his retirement from the chair of the Camden Professor of Ancient History at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 2002. This book is a second volume in the welcomed series 'Rome, the Greek World, and the East' that collects in the total of three volumes more than fifty of FM's selected articles from numerous (and also less accessible) publications from the early 1960's to the turn of the 21st century. The twenty articles in this volume are bound together by aspects of administrative, social, and cultural history of the Roman Empire. FM himself defines the subject of this volume as 'the communal culture and civil government of the Graeco-Roman world' (p. viii referring to the 'Author's Prologue' in Vol. 1, p. 11).

The majority of the articles reprinted here have been originally published in the *Journal of Roman Studies*. Articles now made more easily accessible, to mention a few, are: 'Cash Distribution in Rome and Imperial Minting' (1991), 'Emperors, Frontiers, and Foreign Relations 31 B.C. to A.D. 378' (1982), 'Emperors, Kings, and Subjects: The Politics of Two-Level Sovereignty' (1996), and 'The Imperial Cult and the Persecutions' (1973). The book has a concise index. In the Introduction, Hannah M. Cotton has done a

good job in clarifying how some articles of this volume relate to FM's *opera magna*, e.g., *Emperor in the Roman World* (1977/1992).

I feel that it would be quite unnecessary (and also uninformative) to repeat the kinds of remarks on FM's thoroughness, keenness for minuscule details and his vast command of ancient source material, languages, and societal structures noted on many occasions before. Instead, I would like to emphasise FM's less often mentioned but maybe more far-reaching contributions to the generations of researchers who read his studies on ancient history. These contributions are especially highlighted through article collections like this one which cover the span of a lifetime of academic work.

What draws the reader's immediate attention in FM's articles is their refreshing timelessness. This is not a statement about FM's method – he, if anyone, knows how to date or, even better, how to decline to date historical sources – but about his style. It is unfortunately frequent that a reader takes up an academic publication from the 1960's or 1970's only to realise s/he is reading some out-dated, though at the time, fashionable theoretical jargon. There is no danger of this when reading FM. His research questions are delightfully concrete, e.g., on page 102: 'Here too, as regards the distribution of coin, we have to try to envisage the physical processes involved.' These 'physical processes' prove to be 'physical' indeed, referring to thousands of oxen drawing hundreds of heavy-loaded wagons from mines to mints and from mints to towns or military camps. There is nothing nonsensical in FM's approach; the reader feels safely guided, with her/his feet solidly on the (Roman!) ground.

Another aspect of FM's way of doing research is also worth noting: its transparency. Unlike many researchers, FM makes it explicit again and again what he knows (or what can be known) and what he does not know (or what cannot be known), and on what grounds (cf. p. xi). It follows that the readers can also deliberate the usefulness of the information gathered from FM's work for their own research without gnawing uncertainties about the writer's epistemology. FM's method makes the evolvment of his argumentation both well-documented and (thus) well-grounded. It is also surely efficient and absolutely commonsensical.

It would be impossible not to recommend this book for historians: in addition to its subject-specific value, it is also an excellent guidebook on (to quote Hannah M. Cotton's words, p. xi) 'how did it work and what did it feel like' in ancient times.

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CHRISTOPHER S. MACKAY: *Ancient Rome. A Military and Political History*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005. ISBN 0-521-80918-5. XVI, 395 pp. GBP 25.

Yet another history of Ancient Rome. As such works virtually flood the book market in every major language, it would be helpful if each new contributor to this vast and ever increasing literature would clarify in more explicit terms how his or her particular enterprise is intended to add to the body of previous efforts. The pronounced intention of Mackay is to provide a general introduction to "the public affairs of the Roman People" for a readership possessing no prior knowledge of the subject (p. 1). Recognizing the