

ai nostri giorni). Cornelia, certo, divenne un mito (per i suoi scritti, la sua calma filosofica e la sua fertilità, ecc.), ma era anche una donna come tutte le altre. Molto utilmente infatti Dixon discute il rapporto tra mito e realtà. Il mito di una nobile donna icona, ovviamente poteva essere utilizzato per diversi scopi, tuttavia tale attività, la mitizzazione, doveva essere in un certo qual modo organizzata. Secondo l'autrice, sarebbe stata Sempronia, l'unica sopravvissuta dei dodici figli di Cornelia, a tener vivo il mito non solo della madre ma anche della famiglia. Gli argomenti di Dixon, sempre convincenti, sono espressi in uno stile chiaro e facilmente accessibile.

Mika Kajava

JASPER BURNS: *Great Women of Imperial Rome. Mothers and Wives of the Caesars*. Routledge, London – New York 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-40898-1 (pb). XXVII, 348 pp. GBP 27.50.

Questo simpatico volume, scritto in un modo attraente, offre una piacevole lettura, non solo per il grande pubblico, ma anche per gli studiosi. Le undici biografie (da Livia a Giulia Mamea) non presentano grandi novità ma sono capitoli concisi e ben documentati. Burns deriva le sue informazioni da studi anteriori ma anche direttamente dagli autori antichi; pertinente anche la documentazione numismatica. Il libro conclude con un breve epilogo su imperatrici tardoantiche nonché con un'appendice sulla cronologia dell'impero romano. Gli indici mi sembrano accurati. Buona lettura, dunque, per chiunque si interessi delle vicende delle donne delle case imperiali romane dei primi due secoli.

Mika Kajava

JASON KÖNIG: *Athletics and Literature in the Roman Empire*. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005. ISBN 978-0-521-83845-0 (hb). XIX, 398 p. GBP 55.

Athletics in antiquity, viewed from different angles, has aroused scholarly interest in the last decades. Jason König's (hereafter K.) book is a welcome contribution to this vast general theme. According to the title, the focus is on Imperial literature which might imply that other textual sources, especially inscriptions, are not systematically handled. The reader will soon realize, however, that even though literature is in the spotlight, other sources are not omitted: throughout the book it becomes evident that the author is well acquainted with inscriptions as well as pictorial sources for athletics. K. in fact states that literature and inscriptions have to be studied together if one wants to gain a complete picture of either (p. 8). K.'s discussion on pp. 51–55 of the Hellenistic Beroia inscription (gymnasiarchal law) serves as a good example of his careful way of using inscriptions as evidence for ancient practices. He concludes the Beroia passage with a remark on the importance of being cautious of taking the Beroia degree as presenting standard practices in "the Hellenistic, yet alone Imperial period" (p. 55). The versatile nature of K.'s study is shown in the impressive bibliography which presents different scholarly areas, from sociology to many specialist fields in ancient history. The author's comprehensive

familiarity with, e.g., the research tradition of individual ancient authors becomes evident throughout the book.

K. sets two main aims in the framework of "*texts of athletics*" (p. 8, italics original). The first is "to show how textual portrayals of athletics ... were often entangled with much broader debates about contemporary culture, and used as vehicles for powerful strategies of elite self-representation" (p. 8). The second aim is "to show how very different types of text often have striking overlaps in their performance of those functions" (p. 8). K. fulfils both aims in a very enjoyable way, where the reader is invited to explore the many-sided nature of athletics and its position(s) in the ancient societies in general and in the Imperial period in particular. The close reading of literary passages on athletics seen in the framework of the whole literary output of each discussed author and in the wider socio-cultural framework is extremely interesting and revealing in regard to the elite's self-representation as a whole. Athletics as well as other "performative activities" that involve public display of the body and especially in agonistic contexts – such as, e.g., acting or dancing – are of primary importance when we want to investigate matters of gender, body or the ideals of being a man or a woman. I was especially pleased to find several references to, e.g., Lada-Richards' excellent article on Lucian and pantomime dancing (2003) where these questions are discussed with male dancers in mind.

K. has chosen six authors as representatives of as many themes, each discussed in their own chapters. After the introduction (chapter 1) chapter 2 centres on Lucian and Anacharsis with the subtitle "*Gymnasion* education in the Greek city" (pp. 45–96). This may be slightly misleading since only 16 pages out of 50 deal explicitly with Lucian's *Anacharsis*, although Lucian's essay does run through the chapter. Chapter 3, entitled "Models for virtue", concentrates on Dio and his "Melankomas" orations (pp. 97–157). In this chapter, the pictorial representations are also discussed in the framework of viewing the athletic body. Chapter 4 is on Pausanias and the Olympics (pp. 158–204), chapter 5 on Silius Italicus – the only representative of an author writing in Latin in this book – and on Greek athletic activity spread to the west (pp. 205–253). Chapter 6 discusses athletes and doctors, especially through Galen (pp. 254–300), and, before the conclusions, chapter 7 takes up Philostratus' *Gymnasticus* and the rhetoric of the athletic body (pp. 301–344).

Some details drew my attention. In the introductory chapter (chapter 1), K. mentions that the functions of athletics in antiquity and in the modern world are somewhat different, e.g., in regard to the role of athletics in the political and educational spheres (p. 23). I would be more cautious in stating this kind of generalization, which, I think, reflects more the practices and manifestations of the contemporary western world than a general "fact". Athletics and sports may have important political and educational functions in some societies, functions that are quite compatible with those manifested in antiquity. On p. 27, K. mentions that the *gymnasion* became an important marker of Greek identity shown at the civic level in concrete ways and that this is demonstrable in Egypt where the membership of a *gymnasion* brought with it exemptions from tax. To be precise, members of the gymnasial class were not totally exempt from tax but enjoyed lower rates of poll-tax. The inclusion of a discussion of pictorial representations of athletics is an excellent choice and the discussion itself, once again, shows K.'s profound acquaintance with the subject matter and research literature and his awareness of the difficulties and pitfalls of the chronology of the objects (pp. 102–132). There are some moments, though, where the reader may be misled in expecting that some of the objects that

are provided as examples for a certain aspect, date from the Imperial period, such as on p. 115 where the centre paragraph begins with a phrase mentioning Imperial-period contexts, yet the examples date from the 4th century BC and 2nd/ 1st centuries BC.

In conclusion, K.'s book delivers even more than it promises in the title. It is not only about athletics and literature but about identities, ideals, (self-)representations in the Roman Empire approached with a careful and insightful analysis of the ancient sources on athletics. A final positive remark concerns the Greek: it is very considerate to provide both the English translation and the original text of the cited Greek passages and delightful to read the Greek terms in transliterations, i.e., *gymnasion* and not *gymnasium*, *stadion*, not *stadium*.

Marjaana Vesterinen

Religion and Law in Classical and Christian Rome. Edited by CLIFFORD ANDO and JÖRG RÜPKE. Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge 15. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2006. ISBN 3-515-08854-7. 176 pp. EUR 42.

The idea of this volume of the *Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge* is to examine the relationship between religion and state through developments in Roman law from the late Republic to late antiquity. A thematic book such as this one serves both novices and initiates in the field. For the novices, it provides an excellent introduction into some of the most important existing source material and ever-interesting questions concerning Roman legislation; for the initiates, it offers new perspectives on the very same questions.

Before going into a more detailed analysis of the chapters, I should, however, give credit to the excellent introduction written by the editors. In the introduction, the editors list some of the most interesting *loci* from ancient literary corpus (be it law or commentaries on law) that illuminate how and what the Romans thought about *sacra* in legal terms. The first impression is indeed how little the theme seemed to have bothered Roman jurists and how vague the formulations concerning religious matters were in comparison to the meticulousness in other fields of law. The state did not bother about *religiones* as long as the *religiones* did not bother the state.

The editors also introduce – almost nonchalantly – insights that should – no doubt inspire further studies about the cultural role of Roman legislation. They say (p. 7): "... the Romans themselves naturalized the dynamism and instability of their world by advocating adherence to an enormous cultural conservatism", law being one of the cornerstones of this attitude. Clifford Ando elaborates this point in his article 'Religion and *ius publicum*' (Chapter 8) when saying: "... the reliance of both late-antique codifications of the *edictum perpetuum* testifies the unwillingness or inability of their compilers and the authors of their contents alike to imagine a whole-scale restructuring of the legal basis for social order" (p. 133). Despite the fact that the world had changed from 'pagan' to 'Christian' (or so we think), Roman law reflected changes in social order with only minimal adjustments.

Karl Leo Noethlichs' article 'Revolution from the top? "Orthodoxy" and the persecution of heretics in imperial legislation from Constantine to Justinian' (Chapter 7) explains partly why Ando's point based on social theory makes so much sense. As long as religious strifes did not threaten to crumble the social basis for functional governance of the empire, emperors did