

Revell presents a modern, well-justified approach to a contemporary topic, with bibliography to match the scope of the subject. She herself points out the added value of her approach: "What it was to be Roman was talked about in the textual sources, but it was also something worked through in the everyday activities of the people of the provinces. The archaeological record is the remains of the material which was caught up in such activities: it is the medium and the product of human action." (p. 3). She argues her context in a clear and concise way, recognizing the theoretical basis of her approach in structuration theory and its application in archaeology. This broad discourse of Roman-ness moves the question of an ethnic identity beyond the model of the traditional elite-driven Romanization and the problematic non-elite emulation. She demonstrates the power the public architecture had in negotiating identities and allows also, though perhaps not as deeply as could be hoped for, for the presence of other social groups than the male elite. Somewhat regrettably, many of the inherent problems concerning context and methodology are referred to, but still remain unsolved, although given the complexity of the issue, in all honesty cannot be expected to be tackled by one single work. Ultimately, Revell produces a convincing argument of how the shared ideology of being Roman is there, how it gets local responses and how it can be studied through the material world.

Pirjo Hamari

MARK BRADLEY: *Colour and Meaning in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-11042-6. XIII, 267 pp. GBP 55, USD 90.

Think of a rainbow in all its brilliant colours. Is it really possible to understand that in another culture the colours of the rainbow might be perceived in a completely different way? The western world perceives its colours following the principles set by Isaac Newton's *Opticks* (1704), but many other cultures have very different views. Mark Bradley's book bravely tackles difficult and contested topics: what did ancient Romans think about colour? How did they perceive colour? The rainbow is the same for us and the Romans, but as Bradley's chapter on the rainbow shows, its colours were seen in a very different way by the Romans – not a neatly defined spectrum of seven colours, but something much more ambiguous and enigmatic. The rainbow was also related to ancient theories on light and sensory perception.

The slim volume is – perhaps intentionally? – devoid of colour as the text discusses the philosophical and scientific theories concerning visual perception and colours. The book is divided into seven chapters which after the rainbow discuss colour in philosophy (Chapter 2), natural history (Chapter 3) and rhetoric (Chapter 4) to create a theoretical background for examining colour in other contexts. The next two chapters (5 and 6) explore the body and colour, both natural and unnatural. The last chapter (7) concentrates on the colour purple, one of the most prestigious in antiquity. In some articles, Bradley has treated the topic in more concrete contexts concerning marble and sculpture (*Cambridge Classical Journal* 52 [2006] and *Art History* 32:3 [2009]) and these would probably interest the readers of this book.

The introduction discusses the meaning of the Latin words for colours which have for a long time been translated according to modern colour definitions; but can *flavus* really be translated as "yellow" and *caeruleus* "sky-blue"? Many of the Latin terms used for colour are also

associated with other qualities of the objects they describe: *flavus* could be "blond", "golden" and it could also evoke the image of movement of hair, water or corn. Modern colours covered by *flavus* range from blue to yellow to red (Fig. 1). The same applies to *viridis* which is "green" as well as "verdant" and "vigorous". *Caeruleus* evoked rather the appearance of deep sea or copious waters than sky-blue (but *caeruleus* comes from **caelu-leus*). These problems are the subject of the chapter on philosophical thought on colour. For example, for Lucretius, colour was a secondary quality for any sensed object, a by-product of the shape, size, arrangement and movement of atoms. It is consequently open to interpretation and could be transitory, like the colour of the sea. Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* uses colour extensively to classify various materials and to describe natural phenomena. For Pliny, the colours associate with other qualities, particularly with regard to how colour could be artificially produced in his times and how this created "fake" colours compared to the earlier, natural and undeceiving colours.

The rhetorical concept of colour was often connected with the physical appearance of the body, for example, the blush of embarrassment. It was related to moral and ethical qualities as well as expressing emotion. It also had much in common with the authentic/fake discourse encountered in Pliny – colour could be artificial and thus deceitful. This leads to the discussion of the body, how its colours could be perceived as natural or unnatural, altered by using, for example, cosmetic products. The natural colours of a person could be used to indicate his/her ethnic origin as well as analyse his/her character and values. The body's natural colours could be altered with dyes and other cosmetic substances and this concerned especially the female body. The deception and trickery associated with use of make-up and wigs was also applied to women and their character. Yet, the unadorned woman also was a target of ridicule.

Bradley's book is a fascinating and thought-provoking read. It gives us tools to analyse and understand the use of colour in various Roman contexts and perhaps also to understand the differences between our tastes and the Romans'. When a *triclinium* with cinnabar-based wall paintings was recreated for an exhibition presenting one Pompeian house ("Domus Pompeiana" at the Amos Anderson Art Museum in Helsinki in 2008), the room was perceived by many visitors as garish, vulgar and far too bright. Our modern perceptions of colours suitable for decoration are clearly different from the Romans: the rainbow is different for us and the Romans.

Eeva-Maria Viitanen

CLAUDIA BARACCHI: *Aristotle's Ethics as First Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2008. ISBN 978-0-521-86658-3 (hb). IX, 342 pp. GBP 50, USD 94.99.

Claudia Baracchi has written an ambitious book in which she gives a re-interpretation of Aristotle's ethics. As the title of her book suggests, she argues that ethics was first philosophy for Aristotle. This argument is striking because it is strongly against the traditional view according to which Aristotle considered theoretical study of the first causes and principles to be first philosophy.

Baracchi does not want to argue that the priority of wisdom (*sophia*), contemplation (*theoria*), understanding (*nous*) and knowledge (*episteme*) over prudence (*phronesis*) and action (*praxis*) should be overturned. Rather, her argument is that "the theoretical is always in-