

despite the sound production and impeccable proofreading, the individual chapters, which in themselves are very good, do not quite succeed in forming a complete whole. However, despite its shortcomings Phang's book is a welcome contribution to our understanding of the important subject of discipline in the Roman army.

Joonas Sipilä

CARLOS F. NOREÑA: *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West. Representation, Circulation, Power*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2011. ISBN 978-1-107-00508-2. XXII, 456 pp. GBP 65, USD 105.

The Roman empire and Roman imperialism are complex phenomena; this is reflected in the great number of publications aiming to analyse and understand the essential nature of Roman imperial ideology. Carlos F. Noreña has chosen to approach this fascinating topic by focusing on the figure of the Roman emperor as the only symbol of empire-wide scope who "could affect the distribution of social power in the Roman empire" (p. 24). Basing his study on two main sources of evidence, the coins and inscriptions that were produced in the western provinces of the Roman empire between 69 and 235 CE, the author discusses a restricted range of imperial ideals that defined the emperor as a moral *exemplum*, the focus being "on the mechanisms by which these ideals came to be diffused throughout the empire; and on the reasons why the circulation of these particular ideals helped to underpin the empire's steep social and political hierarchy" (pp. 1–2).

The book consists of an Introduction which outlines the scope of the book and the methods used, and of three main parts, which analyse respectively the three concepts listed in the subtitle: representation, circulation, and power.

In Part I ("Representation"), Noreña deals with the imperial ideals that were most widely used on coins as a means of building an official image of the emperor. Through a quantitative analysis of a sample of 185,561 coins, the author shows that the most frequently represented virtues associated with the emperor were *aequitas*, *pietas*, *virtus*, *liberalitas*, and *providentia*, which all contributed to create an ethical profile of a good Roman emperor (Chapter 2). These virtues were also advertised in practice through the representation of a number of concrete benefits that the emperor offered to the inhabitants of the whole empire, e. g., *victoria*, *felicitas*, *pax*, *concordia*, *fortuna*, and *salus* (Chapter 3).

Part II ("Circulation") contains a discussion of the diffusion of these imperial ideals in the Roman West. In Chapter 4, Noreña examines the mechanisms by which the ideals were disseminated, that is, through the use of coins which circulated and the erection of inscribed monuments which were of course immovable, both coins and inscriptions including honorific terminology associated with the emperor (a corpus of 575 Latin inscriptions has been assembled for this purpose). Chapter 5 discusses how local communities responded to the dissemination of imperial ideology. The quantitative comparison between coinage and epigraphic evidence shows a high degree of lexical and ideological correspondence between centre and periphery in the public representation of the Roman emperor.

Finally, the shorter Part III ("Power"), including Chapter 6, offers a summary of the main points discussed in the previous chapters as a support to the main argument of the book.

The representation and idealisation of the figure of the Roman emperor in terms and iconography that were shared by both the central state and local aristocracies served two main functions: a high degree of ideological unification of the western empire and a long-term reproduction of social power.

The book ends with a Bibliography preceded by a list of fifteen appendices, explaining the calculations behind the sets of coin percentages and cataloguing coins and inscriptions used as a source of evidence in the chapters.

As a whole, Noreña's work develops coherent arguments with the support of appropriate evidence and offers interesting insights into the nature and workings of slippery concepts such as ideology, power, propaganda, and the symbolism of social power. Although this monograph is dedicated to the Roman West of the first three centuries CE, Noreña's work provides the readership with ample material for further discussion of the same topic in the East and in Late Antiquity.

Margherita Carucci

ALAN CAMERON: *The Last Pagans of Rome*. Oxford University Press, Oxford – New York 2011. ISBN 978-0-19-974727-6. XII, 878 pp. GBP 55.

Alan Cameron's *The Last Pagans of Rome* is the synthesis of more than forty years' scholarly work on late antique history, literature and religion, especially on the last phases of official Roman paganism and of Roman aristocrats in the fourth century. The central notion in the book is that this official Roman paganism, meaning "the formal apparatus of the state cults as administered by the various priestly colleges" (p. 3), did not continue after the fourth century. Nor did the Roman aristocrats form a passionate pagan stand against the prevailing Christianity.

Cameron's work is part of a long-lasting scholarly debate on the end of Roman paganism. According to the 'traditional' view explicated especially by Andreas Alföldi and Herbert Bloch after World War II, pagan aristocrats were united into a heroic and cultured resistance to the rising Christianity and even rose up in a final battle near the Frigidus River in AD 394.

Cameron is the foremost representative and one of the introducers of the 'new radical' view that refutes the idea of the last pagan resistance as a romantic myth. There neither was a pagan reaction in the military sense nor a pagan revival in the cultural sense.

The responses to *The Last Pagans* have for the most part been positive and complimentary. Peter Brown (*The New York Review of Books*, April 7, 2011) praises the book with vivacious words: "One puts down his book with gratitude and draws a deep breath. For it has enabled us to fill our lungs with an atmosphere rendered clean, at last, through the ruthless pruning of so many false certitudes". Dennis Trout (*CJ* 108, 2012) calls it "encyclopedic in its learning and relentless in its argument" and "a far more sober assessment" (than the traditional view), whereas Ulrich Lambrecht (*HistLit* 2011-2-208 in *H-Soz-u-Kult*, June, 2011, www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=33533) welcomes *The Last Pagans* as a work that questions the *communis opinio* set by Alföldi and others and brings forth more realistic notions of the relationship between paganism and Christianity. Aude Busine (*BMCR* 2011.12.35 bmc.brynmawr.edu/2011/2011-12-35.html) regards the book as "a masterpiece" and "a sharp and stimulating reassessment".