

KLAUS BRINGMANN, *Kleine Kulturgeschichte der Antike*, München (Beck) 2011, pp. 272.

It would have been difficult to find a more suitable scholar to write a history of ancient culture than Klaus Bringmann, the author of many articles on a vast range of different fields of ancient history. All these interests and skills, in addition to the author's twofold training as a classical philologist and ancient historian, seem to be summed up here, not in a volume on history but on Greek, Roman and other cultures.

For the Greek pre-archaic and archaic period, by K. Bringmann I recall some works on Sparta (1980), a small biography on Lycurgus (1999) and the recently completed (2010) unfinished volume on Solonian law by E. Ruschenbusch. After works on Darius in Herodotus (1976) and on Isocrates (1965) in 1992/3 he began to deal with euergetism: the result is above all the volumes on the Hellenistic monarchs' donations (1995, then in 2000: "Geben und Nehmen"). To the Roman Republic he devoted a whole volume (2010, 2nd ed.), but he has also written more detailed works, translated into various languages, on its latter period (e.g. on the agrarian reform of Tiberius Gracchus, 1985; on the Gracchi, 2000; on the crisis of the Roman Republic 33-42 BC, 2003), including various essays and volumes on Cicero. Just as numerous are his works on the period immediately afterwards (e.g. on the Second Triumvirate, 1988), culminating in the great synthesis on Augustus (2002). He has written no lack of essays on problems of Jewish history (1980, 1983, 1992), culminating in the book on the history of the Jews (2005) covering the period from 538 BC to AD 640, various essays on Christianity and finally a volume on Julian the Apostate (2004) plus a short biography of Justinian (1997).

The history of ancient culture obviously starts with a definition of the concept of culture, further broken down into periods of high culture, "Hochkultur", and "dark" periods. An epoch of the highest level is that of the Cretan and Mycenaean palaces, on the first writing, interrupted by the age of the great migrations, followed by settling down, Homer and the period of the great temples and archaic statues.

In this first pre-classical part an aspect emerges that pleasantly characterises the book: it contains a large number of images, carefully chosen by Ursula Mandel with the criterion of providing a real back-up to the text. The same goes for the not few passages in Greek and Latin (with the German translation) which give this small book a certain breadth: the passages chosen from Homer, Solon, Archilochus, Xenophanes and others are many, and provide a good back-up to the preceding passages in order for a better understanding.

The famous classical period, the apex of Greek culture, the advent of democracy in the political field, the effect of rhetoric and philosophy, the discovery of history by Herodotus etc. are also illustrated by very well chosen examples from figurative art and written works.

The Hellenistic period – following Alexander's conquests – means the expansion of Greek culture to other continents, but no longer under the form of democracy. The cultural theme not only includes the great donations from royalty (amongst which the establishment of the first great libraries, often linked to the construction of gymnasia and other places of education and physical exercise), but also the extension of Greek civilisation to the whole East (including the Jewish diaspora which tried to find common ties with Sparta). In this

context K. Bringmann duly reveals the discovery, in 1964, of the Greek city of Ai Khanoum in northern Afghanistan which uncovered orientalizing decorations, a gymnasium and a theater, two temples, a library and a sundial, an epigraphical text of five (out of a total of 140) aphorisms from the temple of Delphi on education and the conduct requested of the citizens, and an inscription by the *agoranomoi* (the magistrats).

After 200 BC, all that remained standing of Alexander's kingdom was the Ptolemaic realm in Egypt, while the other territories passed to the Romans in the West and the Parthians in the East. The role of euergetism was assumed by rich private benefactors in single cities. So a new value began to be given to the role of the private sphere, especially the house, which was decorated with artistic objects; all this then began to be expressed not only in increasingly frenetic collecting, but also in art thefts, a field in which the Romans learnt from the Greeks. Hellenism was also the period of religious polytheism and the diversification of various scientific sectors: geography, botanics, medicine, etc. In some technical fields, according to K. Bringmann, an improvement in conditions would already have been possible as well as a saving in human forces. This concerned in particular the field of warfare, in which costs could have been reduced as well as the use of workforces. Nevertheless, lacking a class of entrepreneurs, the way towards possible technical innovations had only been glimpsed, and was not followed so as not to have to relinquish human work.

Regarding nascent Rome, heir of the Etruscans, K. Bringmann is obviously interested first of all in the cultural relationship with the Greek element which, as of the 7th century, was already firmly present in Magna Graecia and Sicily. But the small Rome, with its modest agriculture and equally modest cattle-farming, and its ever indebted citizens, had to expand its territory and increase its strength before coming into contact with Greece itself and only then would it become part of the Hellenistic world (this relationship would lead to the introduction of coins, the arrival of Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Plautus and others, but Rome certainly did not win over Greece with its repeated expulsions of philosophical delegations). The Roman Republic waned owing to the growing instrumentalisation of the people and the immorality of the ruling class: its territory had become too large to be ruled orderly, its troops – their sensitivity diminished owing to the unrestrained barbarian atrocities in the various civil wars – too determining. Rome had become a state that exploited unfree subjects, where corruption and lawlessness reigned, but also a state where a certain Terentius Varro and Tullius Cicero lived, following their duties as citizens, the latter taking the Latin language and philosophy to the highest levels. In many fields Augustus tried to rectify – he created an efficient professional army and pursued a grand building programme – but at the expense of taking away the people's political rights. The calibre of his poet friends was high, but together with the theatre and plays, they were instrumentalised to laud the monarchy and keep the masses calm.

The book ends with a mention of Christianity, the persecutions, the end of Paganism and the division of the Empire.

The epilogue consists of extremely useful references of the literature on the topic, starting with Jacob Burckhardt, with a selective bibliography for each sector. The volume is rounded off by a very useful chronological table covering almost three millennia, in which, alongside the chronological list of events, there is a list with the most important dates in cultural history. This book is an ex-

tremely engrossing read, and a great enrichment both for specialists and for those less expert, but eager for information on the subject.

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MAURO CRISTOFANI, *Contributi alla Rivista di epigrafia etrusca, 1963–1996*, Andrea Ciacci, Eleonora Bassi (a cura di). Fiesole (Firenze), Edizioni Cadmo, 2011, pp. 268, ill., ISBN 978-88-7923-405-4. € 20,00.

In occasione del trentennale degli Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell’Università di Siena, è stato edito un numero speciale, dedicato al fondatore della pubblicazione, Mauro Cristofani, archeologo romano che, nella sua lunga e proficua carriera scientifica, rivestì anche il ruolo di Preside di quella stessa Facoltà tra il 1978 e il 1981.

Proprio al 1981 risale la fondazione degli Annali, una rivista voluta dal Cristofani per la promozione dei lavori dei giovani laureati, dei ricercatori e per la pubblicazione di contributi scientifici dei docenti della Facoltà: il riconoscimento del valore scientifico degli Annali e dell’apporto che la loro pubblicazione ha dato al rafforzamento della divulgazione dell’attività della Facoltà di Lettere è ben leggibile nelle intenzioni dei promotori e dei curatori del volume.

Una fotografia a tutta pagina di M. Cristofani, ritratto in maniche di camicia durante gli scavi da lui condotti presso il cosiddetto quartiere industriale di Populonia (Piombino, Livorno, Italia), introduce il lettore nell’atmosfera di gratitudine umana e scientifica che è possibile rintracciare in tutto il volume e che, almeno nelle impressioni di chi scrive, riesce a dare al *corpus* di lavori di carattere strettamente epigrafico di Cristofani un interesse che travalica la ricerca epigrafica e linguistica per apportare un contributo significativo alla storia della recente archeologia italiana.

Il volume, curato da E. Bassi e A. Ciacci, riunisce i lavori di M. Cristofani editi nella *Rivista di Epigrafia Etrusca*, di seguito indicata REE, all’interno di Studi Etruschi, negli anni tra il 1963 e il 1996.

Alla *Presentazione* a cura di R. Venuti (p. 3), attuale Preside della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell’Università di Siena, segue il primo dei tre saggi introduttivi al volume (E. Bassi, A. Ciacci, *La nascita degli «Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia»*, pp. 5–10).

E’ ripercorsa la nascita degli Annali, dalle intenzioni che animarono M. Cristofani sulla loro istituzione alla presentazione del primo volume nell’aprile del 1981, attraversando gli inevitabili, e credo entusiasmanti, passaggi che videvo, tra le altre, la scelta della casa editrice, la nascita della redazione e l’assegnazione a M. Cristofani dell’intera organizzazione editoriale. Alle linee programmatiche degli Annali fa da sfondo il clima politico e culturale della Facoltà e della Toscana di fine anni ’70, che tanta eco ebbe nel programma culturale dell’archeologo.

Il breve contributo di B. Scardigli (*Mauro Cristofani*, p. 11) riesce efficacemente a tratteggiare, in semplici quanto vividi ricordi, l’animo di una personalità scientifica che ha saputo dare, con la fondazione gli Annali, uno stru-