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THE ROMAN REPUBLIC IN POLITICAL THOUGHT*

Fergus Millar does not need any presentation. He is one of the greatest historians of Rome of all the times. For his production see Bibliography (pp. 181–188) and for a brief evaluation of his work “Preface” (pp. IX–X) in the volume *Representation of Empire. Rome and the Mediterranean World*. Edited by *A.K. Bowman, H.M. Cotton, M. Goodman, S. Price*. Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2002 [Proceedings of the British Academy 114].

The Foreword (pp. IX–XI) of the book that we are reviewing has been written by *J. Geiger*. For the theme Greeks, Romans and Jews, which is central in the historical thought of Fergus Millar, two works must be singled out: *E. Schürer*, *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ 175 BC–135 AC*. Edinburg 1973–1987, 4 vols. This is a standard work edited by *F. Millar, G. Vermes, M. Black and M. Goodman, and M. Stern*, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. Jerusalem, 1974–1984, 3 vols. Stern is one of the outstanding historians of the Second Temple Period.

The work of Millar that we are reviewing deals only with the Republican period in order to analyze Roman political thinking better, with a very fine distinction between Republican and Imperial political thought, and shows a continuity with his previous work *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic*. Ann Arbor, 1998. The excellent book by *A. Lintott*, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*. Oxford, 1999 is also to be borne in mind when studying these problems. In the book by Millar that we are reviewing he has chosen the authors very well.

The book has an introduction (pp. 1–11), in which the political form of Rome appears as guiding principle; he presents Rome as a democracy “In the Roman case, behind the right of the citizen to vote lay a broader concept, the requirement of publicity, namely, that a range of public acts should be performed ‘under the gaze of the *populus Romanus*’ ”. It is in this sense that whoever was present in the Forum at the relevant moment did “represent” the

* *Fergus Millar*, *The Roman Republic In Political Thought*. The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures sponsored by the Historical Society of Israel and published for Brandeis University Press by University Press of New England. Hannover and London 2002. 201 pp.

Roman people as a whole (p. 6). In 2: “Greek Observers: Aristotle, Polybius and After” (pp. 12–49) there is a good sketch of the evolution of the history of Rome and of how the Greeks saw it. Millar concentrates his reflections on Aristotle (pp. 15–23) and Polybius (pp. 23–26), but also on Dionysius of Halicarnassus (pp. 39–46) and Cassius Dio (pp. 46–49). In 3: “Looking Back on the Republic: the Empire, the Middle Ages, Machiavelli” (pp. 50–79) he emphasizes the value of Polybius as discoverer (pp. 50–54) of the medieval political thought (pp. 54–64) and of Machiavelli, Guicciardini and Florence (pp. 64–79). It is devoted to the reception of the ideas on the Roman Republic. In 4: “Three views of Seventeenth Century England” (pp. 80–99) Millar is very good when presenting the theory of the mixed constitution in Hobbes and when discussing other points of his *Leviathan* (pp. 80–84). Millar also deals with the projection of the political thought of the Roman Republic in Nedham (pp. 84–86), Harrington (pp. 86–96) and Milton (pp. 96–99). So, English political thought in the decisive XVII century changed historical evolution from Absolutism to Commonwealth (1640–1660), Restoration (1660–1688) and Glorious Revolution (1668) which has been duly emphasized by Millar. In 5: “From Restoration to Revolution: England, France, and America” appears as a unity of political thinking in the period which culminated in the American and French Revolutions (pp. 100–134). He summarizes the importance of Montesquieu, *De l’esprit des lois* (1748) and of Rousseau, *Le contrat social* (1762). He also points out that the contribution of the United States to political thinking was previous to the French Revolution. In 6: “Some Contemporary Approaches” (pp. 135–156) very fine distinctions concerning crowd and mob turn up. In 7: “Cicero’s Rome: What Aristotle might have thought” (pp. 157–182) shows the importance of Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities*, of Aristotle’s *Politics* and of Polybius. He emphasizes the importance of the people of Rome in the Forum for passing legislation (pp. 181–182).

The book by Fergus Millar is one of the best contributions to the History of Political Thought which can be read.

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