and ii) accept that they are, as women, inferior to men, goes some way to bridging the seemingly disparate opinions of Plutarch. It does however, have the feel of an explanation deliberately left somewhat vague.

Ambiguity is also a feature of Tim Duff’s article ‘Moral Ambiguity in Plutarch’s Lysander-Sulla.’ In this instance, the ambiguity is rather more deliberate. Duff desires to take ‘... the renewed recognition that the Lives are, above all, moral tracts, and that Plutarch often shapes his narrative to privilege the moral import’ (169) and develop it by arguing that, in the case of Lysander-Sulla, Plutarch deliberately ‘problematicized’ his moral message. Duff’s contention that Plutarch did not write his Lysander-Sulla biography with simple one-dimensional ‘good’ or ‘bad’ moral classifications in mind is well presented. Indeed, the tendency to view ancient biographies as strictly one-dimensional does perhaps need to be reviewed.

Space does not allow discussion of all thirteen articles. A cursory glance at but a few is an enforced evil. The book as a whole, however, does provide for interests in a diverse range of fields.

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Wilfried Nippel’s compact book deals with a fundamental
topic in a manner designed to appeal to a general audience as well as to specialists in a variety of fields, such as historians, anthropologists, sociologists, legal analysts and political scientists. The solid narrative, dealing mainly with the Republic but extending to c. AD 400, distils the results of N’s previous work on the theme of public order in Rome, especially his *Aufruhr und 'Polizei' in der römischen Republik* (Stuttgart, 1988). Rome emerges as a state which rarely laid down rules or applied regulatory force against the violent individuals who composed it. Indeed, it is misleading to think in terms of ‘calling the police’ because due process of law was upheld not by a police force but by various mechanisms of family- and self-regulation which operated as stabilising forces within Roman society. Public order had more to do with a tacit agreement between the heads of the great families that collective power-sharing was preferable to anarchy. The great families dealt with questions of civil order and violence in a way which maintained their collective dominance. This situation broke down in spectacular fashion during the late Republic because some families felt strongly that they were not receiving their due. The result was civil war and the Principate, under which system many of the old regulatory forces were reactivated for the purpose (once again) of ensuring power-sharing by the leading families. The Emperor served as guarantor—at least until such time as his preferences were called into question.

The absence of a professional police force does seem odd to a modern mind. Indeed, some scholars have identified it as a major cause of the collapse of the Republic, citing the gang violence of Cicero’s age and the career of a figure like Clodius (whose name is virtually synonymous with gang violence, political intimidation, and so on). But this alleged ‘structural weakness’ was not removed by Augustus, nor by any of his successors (a point stressed in the synopsis on page i). Moreover, it is a trait shared with other pre-modern states. One needs reminding that the specialised police force is a modern invention of the late 18th and 19th centuries in Britain (‘Introduction’, 1-3).
In Chapter 1, 'Republican principles of policing' (4-46), N argues that a certain amount of violence was considered legitimate, or was at least tolerated, in Roman political life. Furthermore, it is surprising, to my mind at least, to learn that most of the violence was perpetrated by representatives of the great families in pursuit of their interests. It did not come predominantly from the bottom up. The state, in the sense of some impersonal entity like 'The Constitution' or 'The Law', i.e. something transcending the authority of the great families, did not operate in a reflex manner demanding intervention. This was not the job of the Senate either, at least in normal circumstances. In fact, there was a certain inducement to violence, which was, for example, one way to overcome a political impasse so that collective concerns might once again be considered. Rome was a very personal world. The weak relied on help from the strong. Thus, violence in politics could have been seen as an extension of the duty felt by all citizens to protect and defend other, weaker citizens. When reform arose, it was generally embraced by the aristocrats in these terms. For example (12),

'All in all, coercitio appears to have been more an instrument for controlling members of the ruling class than a means of disciplining the man in the Roman street. This reflects the Roman aristocracy's willingness to submit itself to rules which demonstrated its commitment to the public interest on the assumption that the docility of the lower classes would follow.'

Accordingly, N's conclusion is that 'it was the crises of the political system that led to violence, not violence that created the crises' (46).

This is both stimulating and rather persuasive as presented, although in Chapters 2 ('Late Republican political violence', 47-69) and 3 ('The collapse of the Republican order', 70-84) it is hard to relinquish altogether the view that violence begets violence. The escalation of violence in the 50s BC, for instance, seems
reasonably explicable as a series of increasingly violent responses to increasingly violent responses. N rightly points out in Chapter 3 that Clodius built up a following through his provision of free grain and sponsorship of the *collegia* which exceeded the ties formed with the Roman people by earlier demagogic figures (esp. 70-8). This produced violence in his name even after his death and left the Senatorial leaders with no resort other than to military force, viz. the militarization of political strife, which in turn undermined the legitimacy and viability of the political process at Rome. Yet there does appear to be an opportunity to argue here that the changing pattern and scale of violence that is associated with Clodius during his lifetime (and with Sestius, Milo, Domitius Ahenobarbus and others) brought on the crisis, even though troops had been employed in not entirely dissimilar circumstances in (e.g.) 100 and 88 BC. There is a ‘chicken and egg’ quality to the situation which is not quite reflected in N’s conclusion. Better to say that there were intimate, evolving links between violence and the developing political crisis or crises.

In similar vein, as N shows in Chapter 4 (‘Features of the new Imperial order’, 85-112), Augustus undertook a thorough reform of the city administration and opened avenues of opportunity to elements (such as freedmen) previously excluded from power; but he also introduced various military units into the city. N affirms that it was the former rather than the latter which acted primarily in the interests of public order. The mix, however, stands out for me, and it would have been nice to see the two treated as being complementary.

In an ‘Epilogue’ (‘Law and order in comparative perspective’, 113-19) N shows how the modern concept of a police force is really a product of competing theories about how to ensure public order conceived in the light of British political and social conditions during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. A ‘Bibliographical Essay’ (120-5) and a comprehensive ‘Bibliography’ (126-57) follow, the latter concentrating mainly upon more modern works. The ‘Index’ (158-63) is very helpful for a relatively short book.
In summation, with the few reservations noted above, this is a persuasive and helpful book. One feature which continues to appeal is the way in which N takes seriously the idea that popular justice served to reinforce official sanctions in both Republican and Imperial times. For a different view, that popular justice was a kind of unpredictable and frowned-upon survival from an archaic, pre-state period, see Andrew Lintott's *Violence in Republican Rome* (Oxford, 1968, esp. 6-21) and *Violence, Civil Strife, and Revolution in the Classical City* (London, 1982, esp. 24-31).

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Both these collections of essays (the first by the editor/author, the second with an introduction by the editors and papers by others) celebrate 2500 years of democracy since the democratic reforms of the government of Athens at the end of the sixth century. The focus is on internal government, not on the empire which the democracy subsequently created, though the relations between democracy and empire are sometimes touched on.