SOME RECENT BOOKS

Tractates) we hear least. Nonetheless, four papers attack other aspects of this, Dr Crabbe, on Anamnesis and Mythology, with especial ingenuity. Others deal with Boethius’s Neoplatonic and Greek heritage. Theodoric’s Italy saw a striking revival of interest in the Greek and Latin traditions of Platonism and Neoplatonism. Both early and late antique Greek sources fired it, and Boethius’s involvement in this revival is carefully demonstrated (Dr Moreschini, Dr de Vogel, Dr de Rijk). Greek and Latin linguistic problems clearly claimed a large share of Boethius’s intellectual energies and dominate the Contra Eutychen (Dr Micaelli). The Mathematike Syntaxis of Ptolemy may have stood (Dr Lucidi) behind both Boethius’s lost treatise on astronomy and small sections of the De Consolatione Philosophiae I, ii, (though Chadwick, op.cit., p.102, suggests that Proclus’s summary was the true medium). Dr Della Corte directs welcome attention to the delicate political position in which Boethius’s early mechanical interests placed him and, in particular, to his access to Archimedes. From all these papers it becomes clear how necessary is a knowledge of Greek to a full understanding of Boethius’s concerns and, indeed, to an entry into the problems of those who drew upon him.

As befits its subject, this collection provides material for a wide range of interests and, again appropriately, makes no concessions to the uninitiated. It is one which universities and institutions of scholarship should be careful to acquire.

Valerie I.J. Flint


The title of this little work might lead one to suppose that the attacks on the family in the ancient world were prompted by or in the interests of the rhetorical schools. This is not so, however: it was first the philosophers promoting the superior claims of their school, then the religious sects (especially the Christians) promoting similar claims and the superior merits of virginity, who attacked the values enshrined in the Classical (Graeco-Roman) family; rhetoric was merely the tool with which they pushed their claims against the age-old instincts of society. This point Professor Lambert in fact establishes, but the title of his work misleads.

Professor Lambert does not pose more fundamental questions, however; he takes for granted that Xenophon in Memorabilia really represents the
classical tradition when he argues that the Greek family was bound together by mutual obligations between parents and children, the latter owing the former respect, obedience, and care in old age in return for their existence and nurture as infants. Such sentiments are, of course, naturally present in a society in which the family represented all the social security there was. But more fundamental for family solidarity—or so it seems to me—is the fact that Greek and Romans saw themselves as links in a chain which originated in a founding ancestor and would go on—provided that they provided children and children's children—to the infinitely distant future.

The tombs on the ancestral lands were the evidence of the past; people held annual commemorations of the ancestors to encourage them to help to guard the crops in the present; for the future there was an obligation to provide the descendants who alone would promise what measure of immortality the pagan world could hope for—remembrance.

A traditionalist Roman's very name was witness to the unchanging nature of the family to which he belonged, an Athenian of the Classical era held his citizenship in the deme in which his ancestor had lived in Cleisthenes' day. These were deep and potent. True, the mobile urban populations of the larger cities of the Roman Empire lacked such roots; that is why Christianity swept the towns. It was the pagani, the country people with their roots deep in the family soil who proved so resistant to the Gospel that they became the by-word for resistance. There the family remained impervious to the forces Professor Lambert traces (though families doubtless unloaded some superfluous manpower onto the monasteries); peasants never sought to rationalize their reasons for attachment to their family, and the Church met their demands for honour to their traditions by canonizing the ancient country deities as saints or visitations of the Virgin.

So I very much doubt if the family was notoriously vulnerable; it was attacked, but it won through; as I argued in my own book, *The Family in Classical Greece*, the family is still deeply entrenched in the 1946 Hellenic Law Code. But Professor Lambert has apparently not read my book, nor the earlier (major) studies of Glotz, Wilamowitz or Fustel de Coulanges.

*W.K. Lacey*