

of magic acts which could have accompanied the burial of the tablet in order to make the text efficacious (pp. 90–111). Two short appendices follow, exploring the use of *telos* as a term for marriage and Plato's condemnation of magic (pp. 112–27). So little is known about relationships between men and women in Macedonia, and even less about attitudes to sympathetic magic, that these chapters can do little more than suggest possible lines of approach. Future investigation of settlement evidence in the region, and detailed research on individual domestic units, will provide some guidance, while analysis of skeletal material and patterns of mortuary behaviour could tell us something more about approaches to the afterlife or the nether world, as well as enhancing the number of known lead tablets. V. deserves credit for presenting this unique document so clearly and crisply, for offering useful *comparanda* (individually translated), and for providing a well-defined starting point to any further discussion of this and similar texts.

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ZOFIA HALINA ARCHIBALD

### CHURCH PARADE

G. L. IRBY-MASSIE: *Military Religion in Roman Britain*. Pp. 387, maps, tables, pls, fig. Leiden, etc.: Brill, 1999. Cased, \$103. ISBN: 90-04-10848-3.

The religions attested within Roman Britain have not lacked attention in the past. Studies have ranged from overarching surveys to explorations of individual gods and cult sites, and indeed I.-M.'s twenty-five-page bibliography provides some indication of the scale of scholarly interest. What the present volume seeks to achieve is an examination in detail of the religious dimension of Rome's presence within Britain, but from the viewpoint of a specific typology of worshipper, especially army personnel. There are, of course, problems in any such approach. Cults may be included which have only passing relevance to the military; Isis is a case in point. Another, as I.-M. herself points out, is the scale and nature of the evidence. As the most garrisoned of provinces, Britain is not particularly short of religious representation in a military context, but even this must represent only a minuscule fraction of what once existed, and survival was doubtless all too often dependent on chance. Of what does survive there is much that is accompanied by inscription, giving us the status of the donor and perhaps the reason for the dedication. Equally there are many objects, ranging from sculpture to intaglios, which must speak to us simply through their motifs, with all the attendant danger of misinterpretation and the temptation to extract significance where none is justified. I.-M. is not blind to this; yet there are places where words like 'may' and 'probably' lie thick upon the page.

The book divides basically into two parts. In the first section six chapters are devoted to the various types of cult encountered. I.-M. opens, naturally enough, with state religion, topics such as the festal calendar, the imperial cult, the rôle of the imperial *genius* and *numen*, the cult of the standards, deified abstractions, and the gods of the state. A basic feature of the approach is to preface discussion of the British material with preliminary evidence from elsewhere in the empire—useful enough and even essential at times, as, for instance, in the case of the calendar—but it does on occasion leave one wondering where in the overall argument one is.

Chapter II deals with eastern gods like Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithras, both attracting devotees from the higher ranks and generally concentrated in the northern

frontier area. Then come two chapters devoted to Celtic gods, undoubtedly the most complex aspect of Romano-British religion since, unlike the Roman pantheon, there was no unifying structure; many were imported by the auxiliary units that manned the frontiers; some, like Antenociticus at Benwell or Cocidius, appealed to the upper sections of the military hierarchy, while others, like Veteris or Belatucadrus, are more usually associated with the lower ranks and suffer from a greater fragmentation of orthography (usefully tabulated). Another feature of Celtic gods is the seeming multiplicity of name and territorial distinctiveness of figures who otherwise share features in common, the horned warrior god being a case in point. From this the discussion turns to examine other Celtic divinities: Nodens, Maponus, the Matres, the Genii Cucullati, the Campestres and Coventina, many of them associated with healing shrines.

In Chapter V I.-M. deals with the interaction of classical and Celtic, *Interpretatio Romana* and its reverse form *Interpretatio Celtica* seen in the frequent linking of Roman gods such as Mercury and Mars with supposed Celtic equivalents, and the creation of distinctive Romano-Celtic temples. Of course, the most distinctive is Sulis-Minerva, with her magnificent site at Bath. In this chapter too I.-M. also deals with the cults favoured by specific dynasties: the oriental gods of the Severi, for instance.

The final chapter is given over to the evidence for late Romano-Celtic religion and the emergence of Christianity. Surprisingly, perhaps, and in contrast to developments on the continent, the Church in Britain seems to have failed signally to make much headway in proselytizing either the army or the countryside, apparently remaining essentially an urban and villa-based faith, so that, I.-M. claims, when such centres failed, the church failed too.

Overall in these chapters I.-M. sets out to establish a number of patterns within Romano-British religion: temporal, not only in the fact that most of our evidence comes from the second and third centuries, but also in the way that cults variously waxed and waned; geographical, in that many cults were specific to distinct military units and so cluster in the locations where those units were posted, even after the unit had ceased to be distinctive as its members were increasingly drawn from the local population; and hierarchical, in that many attracted devotees from specific ranks within both the army and society.

The second part of the book is given over for the most part to two very useful catalogues: a list of military units stationed in Britain (which also provides the source of information and a bibliography), and more importantly a catalogue of inscriptions relating to individual cults, arranged in much the same order as the earlier chapters. Each inscription is accompanied by its own brief bibliography and description, and provides an invaluable resource for future work and a compilation that by itself would deserve our gratitude.

In any work of this type there are bound to be features that individual readers will find irksome. Its origin as a doctoral dissertation, for instance, rises to the surface as I.-M. on occasion sows references with the sack, not with the hand. Were four references on p. 22 actually needed to establish that the podium of Claudius' temple at Colchester lies under the Norman castle? At other times the reverse is the case. Is reference to a single silver votive plaque from Hedderheim, cited on p. 64, enough to establish that the temples of Jupiter Dolichenus were richly decorated? Elsewhere, factors germane to Romano-British history in general show lapses of fact: Trajan succeeding Domitian (p. 42), the suggestion (p. 3) that the Antonine wall was built of stone, or that fresh units came to fight Boudicca. I.-M. might also have been kinder to

readers by translating some of her literary source material, especially when this is drawn from authors like Seneca and includes phrases in Greek.

Yet, despite these niggles, no review can encompass within a few hundred words the wealth of information that I.-M. has accumulated and analysed. She has brought together evidence from a whole range of sources—epigraphic, sculptural, architectural, numismatic, and decorative—into a well organized, scholarly, and lucidly argued account of a vastly complex mosaic of interaction.

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STANLEY IRELAND

## GOD AND GOLD

D. JANES: *God and Gold in Late Antiquity*. Pp. xii + 211, 13 figs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Cased, £37.50. ISBN: 0-521-59403-0.

In this book Dominic Janes surveys the material culture of the Church from the developed Tetrachy to just prior to the Carolingian Empire. As a self-confessed atheist, he finds great irony in the seeming disparity between the Christian message of poverty expressed in the Gospels and the Church's use of wealth to beautify buildings rather than to succour the poor. To explain the continuation of this tradition, previously used to express the power of secular nobility and pagan gods, J. uses modern and comparative approaches to the study of material display. He includes ideas from archaeology, anthropology, and art history, but unfortunately to extremes; at times the text appears to be a collection of extracts from other writers, and lengthy footnotes disrupt the continuity. Some references, although interesting, do not seem particularly relevant and only complicate the picture. Is it necessary to highlight the importance of medieval grave goods with a study of funerary ritual in Borneo and an examination of the funeral rates of the Mesakin and Moro of the Sudan (p. 39 ref. 148 and p. 140 ref. 149)? J. would have done better to concentrate on his Latin: he has *Comites Sacrorum Largitionem* (p. 36) and *Comites Sacrae Largitiones* (p. 38), *coronae aurea* (p. 126) and *corona aurea* (p. 27).

The disparity, as J. himself states several times, was not recognized as an issue during Late Antiquity; the most appropriate use of wealth was to honour God through the beautification of His agent on earth, the Church. Is it possible, then, that the main argument of this book merely states the obvious? Christianity had inherited a long tradition in the use of gold and other precious substances as symbols of divinity and power and, as J. points out, the Church had to find an accommodation with the 'treasure society' of which it was a part. There is a considerable amount of evidence in the Old Testament for the use of precious metals and gemstones to decorate the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle, and the Temple of Solomon that J. mentions in passing but does not examine in detail. There are also two direct requests from the Lord for offerings from the children of Israel (Exod. 25:1–7 and 30:11–16). Such passages deserve comment, and greater emphasis could have been placed on the gifts of the Magi, three of the most precious substances in the Ancient world.

Instead J. concentrates on biblical books which generated a considerable body of literary exegesis from Late Antiquity, the Song of Songs, and the Revelation of John the Divine, focusing on the latter possibly because the former has little mention of treasure items. Even though the Gospels direct individuals not to lay up treasure for themselves on earth, no rules were laid down to govern the appearance of places of