

the others are presented to us as having been made of precious metals, gold and more seldom silver. There is however a series of facts which determine us, in contrast with the author, to express doubts as for accepting the information that all decorations, with the exception of the two mentioned above, would have had an inner value. First, we should remind that Polybius speaks only of *corona muralis* as being made of gold, and not of *hastae* or *phalerac*⁴. Much more significant is that both Josephus Flavius and four inscriptions (see p. 83, footnote 52) mention *ocilla* of silver awarded as decorations. But as it is clear in this case, it wasn't but the tissue that was embroidered with silver thread; we thus believe that for the other decorations as well, the indication that they were made of gold or silver, simply refers to their exterior appearance and not to the material they were made of. To the same conclusion leads the fact that the single set of *phalerac* we know, the one from Lauerfort, is made of bronze pieces only plated with silver, while the backing plates of the *phalerac* from Newstead, the only parts of the *phalerac* to be preserved, are also made of bronze. Then, in the two lists of soldiers indicating the decorated ones, their number varies from 7 to 13% from the total effective (pp. 136-137). As it is hard, even impossible, to believe that the Roman emperors could award such a big number of decorations made of precious metals, we consider our hypothesis is true not only for the *phalerac*, but at least for the *torques* and the *armillae* as well, the other decorations awarded to men of the rank and to noncommissioned officers. As a conclusion, we consider that for the period of the Principate, at least part of the decorations, among which at any rate the inferior ones, had just a token value, a fact that certainly has highly important implications for their significance.

Though the complex problem of the triumphs is outside the scope of the book, as the author underlines herself, their concise survey couldn't miss from a work on Roman military decorations. Defined as "the means of rewarding the highest military commanders, the generals who were themselves responsible for awarding *dona militaria* to their subordinate officers and men", the triumphs were thus the highest military honours. During the Principate the right to celebrate triumphs was allowed only to the Emperor and to the members of his family, the only ones who were leading the armies *auspiciis suis*, while the honours received by the generals who led Rome's armies would diminish quickly from triumph to the external trappings of this, *ornamenta triumphalia*, and starting with the middle of the second century even these would completely disappear.

Further the author clarifies the principal aspects of awarding decorations. Thus, it is shown that in opposition with triumphs, *dona militaria* could be obtained anywhere the Roman armies were engaged in battle, even in civil or servile wars. Unlike modern medals, the decorations were never awarded posthumously, nor were they granted in order to mark the mere participation in a campaign, but only for the deeds of valour performed during the expedition.

Then the author deals with the problem of the authorities who awarded decorations and with the necessary status to get them. To the first point the answer is simple: it was the victorious general commanding the armies and who held *imperium*, that presented military decorations to the troops; during the Principate, it was the Emperor himself or a member of his family.

The answer to the second question is more complicated. If it has been proved that senators, equestrians and simple Roman citizens serving in legions, the praetorian guard and urban cohorts, were eligible to receive decorations, there is still little light shed on the situation of the auxiliaries. As there are just four examples, quite sure, of soldiers from the auxiliary units who received *dona militaria*, and among them only one is for certain *peregrinus*, we can draw the conclusion that non-citizens weren't considered eligible for military decorations. Then, as among the three other owners of decorations, two were decurions and the third one, Tibe-

rius Claudius Maximus, had been transferred from a legion to an *ala* as *duplicarius*, we consider credible the author's hypothesis that junior officers from the auxiliary units could be eligible either because they were Roman citizens or due to the rank they had.

However, as V.A.M. remarks, the explanation based on the ineligibility of auxiliary-men because of their peregrine status leaves one unexplained blank. It refers to the fact that although the sons of army *veterani* having received the Roman citizenship, more and more numerous in the second century and providing, in the conditions of the localized recruitment, a high percentage of the effective of auxiliary units, yet none of them is mentioned among the owners of *dona militaria*. So, starting from the dating of the inscriptions of decorated auxiliaries, save for the inscription of Tiberius Claudius Maximus, up to and including the Flavian period, the author suggests that the further exclusion of auxiliaries from the *dona militaria* is probably due to the setting up of the practice of awarding Roman citizenship *civium Romanorum* en bloc, to entire auxiliary units. Taking into account all that was shown above, we rather believe that the conclusion to be imposed is that whether at the beginning of the Principate the lack of citizenship could bring about the ineligibility, gradually, irrespective of their juridic personal status, the very belonging to an auxiliary unit, consisting theoretically of *peregrini*, determined the exclusion from the awarding of *dona militaria*.

The part dedicated to the analysis of the imperial scales of award is divided into four chapters, each of them accounting for one career: senators; equestrians; centurions and *primipilares*; soldiers, *evocati* included. In this extremely dense sequence of the book, the author's contributions are the most numerous. Starting from the analysis of all the inscriptions where decorations are recorded, V.A.M. gets, by the inner criticism of these inscriptions and by comparing them to the rest of the evidence, to reject both some incorrect readings and some so-called *lapicidus* mistakes as well. Thus, after clearing up some apparent anomalies and proposing new fillings in, the author succeeds in obtaining an increased coherence of the epigraphic material which allows her in some cases to unbind the total awarding of decorations into successive grants and even to assign them to certain scales of the career.

As the space does not permit us to insist on each career separately, nor to dwell on the main conclusions, which, as a matter of fact, are summarized in extremely useful tables, we shall limit ourselves just to mention some of the general landmarks of the imperial system of awarding decorations, as it results from the author's analysis. First of all, we must point out the fact that the schemes of awarding decorations for senators, equestrians as well as for centurions, reach a definite shape in the middle of the Flavian period, and this emphasizes once again the importance of this dynasty to the achievement of the complex military organization of the Roman Empire. Then the author manages to prove that the importance of the decoration was linked to the rank of the recipient at the moment he was awarded it, and not to the rank he held when he had performed the deed for which he was rewarded; thus the decoration could be more important than it would seem possible at first view. By establishing a strict chronology of the decorations awarded by each emperor, the author notices some of their peculiar features, such as the parsimony of awarding decorations to senators and equestrians during the reign of Hadrian. All these results enable the author to reach more shaded conclusions and not to accept, en bloc, the previous schemes for awarding decorations to equestrians, too rigid and thus too simplifying put forth by Steiner, Domaszewski or T. Nagy⁵.

Passing on to the presentation of battle honours, V.A.M. underlines that, unlike military decorations, these ones could be won by auxiliary units, too. One category consists of the

⁴ Polybius, VI, 39.

⁵ Acta Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 16 (1968), pp. 280-295.

imperial and descriptive titles such as *pia fidelis* or *victrix*, common to both legions and auxiliary units, and which do not give birth to any special problems.

More important are the battle honours awarded to auxiliary units solely and which were in fact the only form of rewarding the acts of bravery of non-Roman citizens. Among them, the honorary titles of *torquata* and *armillata* were probably materially marked on the military standards of the unit. As many figurative representations show various types of crown and of *phalerae* on military standards, the author, suggests that even if we don't possess any epigraphic proof, some units could have borne the title of *coronata et phalerata*. Then, by analyzing each of the 11 units bearing the title of *torquata* and one of *torquata et armillata*, V.A.M. establishes that these titles have been acquired starting with the Flavian period, and were out of common use in the mid-second century.

The title of *civium Romanorum* granted to whole units *virtutis causa*, was even more important as it had not just a symbolic value. This title involved the grant of Roman citizenship to the *peregrini* soldiers from *alae, cohortes, numeri*, still during their military service. The author's statistics show that 15% from the entire number of auxiliary units bore this title. If this honorary title is also considered to have appeared during the Flavian period, the date of its disappearance is not debated upon any more. Sure enough, as V.A.M. likely considers herself, after A.D. 212 when most of the Empire's inhabitants were granted Roman citizenship by *Constitutio Antoniniana*, the honorary title of *civium Romanorum* loses its actual significance. However, we should remind that the inscriptions laid by auxiliary units continue to mention this title, thus still considered impressive, at least till the mid-third century⁶.

The final sequence of the book deals with the significance of the decorations and their end.

The chapter programmatically entitled "Decoration, promotion and prestige", based on a thorough statistic analysis, reaches the conclusion that the military decorations represented not only an element of prestige but, especially for the equestrians and the men in the ranks, a recommendation for an enhanced status.

As the last awardings of decorations in the imperial tradition date back from the reign of Septimius Severus and as

we have got records of Caracalla rewarding soldiers by money payment and by promotion, the system of awarding *dona militaria* came to an end during the reign of the latter. Less clear is the reason of this fact, especially if we think that Caracalla, who by his *Constitutio Antoniniana* had granted the Roman citizenship to almost all the free-born inhabitants of the Empire, should have, theoretically, extended the grant of decorations to the auxiliary units as well. Thus the author advances the hypothesis that the abandon of decorations and their replacement by practical rewards would be due to the impossibility, in the economic conditions of the third century, of doubling the number of those eligible to decorations made from precious metals. It seems unsatisfactory to us the explanation through purely economic causes of the disappearance of a traditional institution, such as the *dona* was, especially as in the same period other revolutionary changes had taken place in the Roman society.

Moreover, as it had been shown above, the very fact that the decorations, at least the inferior ones, must have been made from common metals, makes us believe that the real causes should be looked for in the evolution of political ideology, in the sense of Domaszewski's remarks⁷. So, we consider that the solution to this problem lies in the fact that the generalization of Roman citizenship by Caracalla, did not lead to the rise of the auxiliary units to the level of legions, but on the contrary, it deprived the latter ones of their special status. Thus, even the giving up of symbolic decorations, linked to the Roman civic traditions and their replacement by material rewardings, represent a normal evolution in an ever more autocratic empire.

In the final part of this outstanding book, a series of appendices are grouped together, among which we should remark, for its extreme usefulness, the list of all the recipients of military decorations with the respective bibliography.

We cannot bring our short presentation to an end without emphasizing once more that we are sure that due to the remarkable competence of the author and to the complex dealing with all the bearings of the subject, the first book on Roman military decorations will represent for a long time from now on a standard work.

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⁶ Among the units from Dacia designated in inscriptions with the title *civium Romanorum* after 212, we mention first of all *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium*, whose first and unique attestation with this honorary title dates from 250 (AE, 1944, 56).

⁷ *Die Religion des römischen Heeres*, in Westd. Zeitschr. XIV, 1895, 43 f.