

3) Hansen, Demography op. cit. 24 f., against Gomme, op. cit. 28-32 and against Jones, op. cit. 77 ff.


6) Gomme, op. cit. 18.

7) See Beloch, Griechische Geschichte op. cit. 405; Gomme, op. cit. 18 f. They give the important parallels with similar censuses on Rhodes (in 305, Diodorus 20, 84, 1-3) and Megalopolis (in 318, Diodorus 18, 70, 1) which were also aimed at establishing the available military manpower.


9) When speaking of the occupancy of the five hundred seats in the boulē during the fourth and third centuries B.C., P. J. Rhodes, The Athenian Boule (Oxford 1972), notes on p. 11: 'If there were general redistributions of seats based on up-to-date population figures, some tribes must have survived some redistributions without change (which is of course by no means unlikely); but some of the variations may represent more or less private arrangements made if a small deme was unable to fill all its seats: in particular the non-representation of various demes of Acamantis in P1 may have to be explained in this way. Recently discovered inscriptions have made it clear that a tribe might on occasion have fewer than fifty members, though DAA 167 and P 36, with Hesp. IX (1940) 78, are our only instances of a list with more than one vacancy.' Cp. p. 222. See also J. A. O. Larsen, Representative Government in Greek and Roman History (Univ. of California Pr. 1955), 8.


Among the rulers of the Roman empire Nero is one of the best known, if not the best known at all, to the wider public in the western world. His extravagancies and cruelty have stuck in the memory of many people and belong more or less to our basic historical tradition, and his name even developed into the generic name of a capricious, cruel and bloody tyrant. It is understandable
that many historians have been struck by the enigmatic personality of this emperor. Among them Miriam Griffin felt especially attracted by the historical problems connected with his reign. In the book under review she does not concentrate exclusively on the life and the deeds of Nero, nor on an account of the history of the whole of the Roman empire from 54 to 68 A.D., but on the causes of the breakdown of his reign, as, in her opinion, “for the historian, the most important event of Nero’s reign was its collapse” (16 f.). Therefore the first part of the book focusses upon Nero’s rule, upon his decisions, initiatives and preferences, whereas its second part is devoted to the particular character of the principate of Augustus and the weaknesses inherent in it, which may have been too great to cope with for a man of the temperament and character of Nero.

G. is certainly right when she considers the question of imperial succession as one of the most serious weaknesses of the principate, nor can it be contested that its financial and military organisation might offer temptations to an emperor with a weak personality which in the long run might prove to be disastrous to his reign. In Nero’s case not only his wavering and uncertain attitude, but especially his aspiration to magnificence and glory combined with his artistic ambitions and pretentions proved fatal to the stability of his position in the later years of his reign.

As for Nero’s philhellenism, to which G. rightly pays ample attention, she seems to be right in arguing that there was in Nero’s Greek tastes as well as in his favours to Greeks an element of opposition to the outspoken western bias of the Augustan order. But it should also be noted that the philhellenism of Nero is by no means a consistent whole, and that not everything deviating from the Augustan model should be attributed to Nero’s philhellenism; thus the new style of building and decorating of Nero’s time is essentially Roman (cp. 125 f.). Much of Nero’s Greek tastes and preferences may go back to the influence of the environment of the young emperor and to the current fashions of his time. And despite his outspoken preference for Hellenistic style and the absolute kingship of Hellenistic times, he shows in some respects a vague and romantic admiration for the world of classical Greece.

It should be noted here that the flaws of Nero’s personality should not be attributed exclusively to his character and his natural disposition, but also to his education: the nearly total absence of a notion of his human duties and his moral responsibilities as a ruler, despite the remonstrances Seneca made to him, points to serious flaws in his education.