

sity's history. It is unlikely to be of interest to general readers wishing to understand the nature of a medieval university, but as a meticulous chronicle it will be useful for specialists.

GAVIN I. LANGMUIR

Assistant Professor of History
Stanford University

H. H. SCULLARD. *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 B.C. to A.D. 68*. Pp. xi, 450. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959. \$6.00.

As the title indicates, this work by the well-known author of *A History of the Roman World from 753 to 146 B.C.* and *Scipio Africanus, Roman Politics: 220-150 B.C.*, covers a most critical period in Roman history in which the collapse of the Republic and the formation of the Principate or Empire took place. This is one of those historical epochs which evokes perennial interest, and consequently a fresh treatment of it is always welcome, particularly at this time, for many specialized studies written in recent years and some newly discovered source materials require evaluation or interpretation.

The author does not advance any one special cause for the breakdown of the Roman system of republican government. Rather, he wisely lets the sequence of events from the Gracchan attempts at reform to Caesar's victory in the civil war speak for itself. As a result, we see that the responsibility rests upon the human factors involved, not upon economic or social forces. The "fall" of the Republic was not inevitable; it was the result of conflicting class and individual interests which could have been resolved, at least in their early stages, by statesmanlike and patriotic courses of action taken at various crises by the parties involved. As it turned out, however, the major share of blame falls upon the dominant faction in the senatorial oligarchy which adopted an attitude of no compromise whenever their traditional position of power and privilege seemed threatened by proposals for reasonable and necessary reforms. But their opponents cannot be held guiltless, especially when their personal ambitions led them into actions ne-

cessitating the overthrow of constitutional authority. After Caesar, some form of monarchy was inevitable, and it is to the credit of Augustus that he created one which, in spite of its potential weaknesses, revealed already under his immediate successors, served the needs of the Empire so long and so well.

Anyone reading this book will be struck by the author's realistic and judicious appraisal of the leading characters of the period. The Gracchi, Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar, Antony, Augustus, and the Julio-Claudian emperors appear as intelligible human beings neither wholly evil nor wholly above criticism. Scholarly as it is, this work can be read with appreciation by all those interested in historical narratives and interpretations. Students of Roman history in particular will appreciate the Notes which offer useful discussions of the sources for each chapter and also select Bibliographies. There is a good Index and some useful maps.

A. E. R. BOAK

Professor of History, Emeritus
University of Michigan

ASIA AND AFRICA

DAVID S. NIVISON and ARTHUR F. WRIGHT (Eds.). *Confucianism in Action*. Pp. xiv, 390. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959. \$8.50.

Chinese and Japanese studies in the United States and Great Britain have come of age. A generation or so ago there were good monographs on the founders of Chinese thought in the classical period and on some of the principal spokesmen from the first to the seventeenth centuries, but there was little depth and no intimate picture of the chief institutions of government or of social life. Now, due to the awakened interest in our universities and to the support of foundations since World War II, there are a number of scholars, well trained in the languages and in their disciplines, working on neglected areas of eastern history, social, economic, intellectual, and other aspects.

Here we have a fine analysis of the rules