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**Călin Ioan Dușe, *Imperiul Roman și creștinismul în timpul Părinților Apostolici*. Cuvânt înainte Pr. Prof. dr. univ. Cristian Barta, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2019, 475 p.**

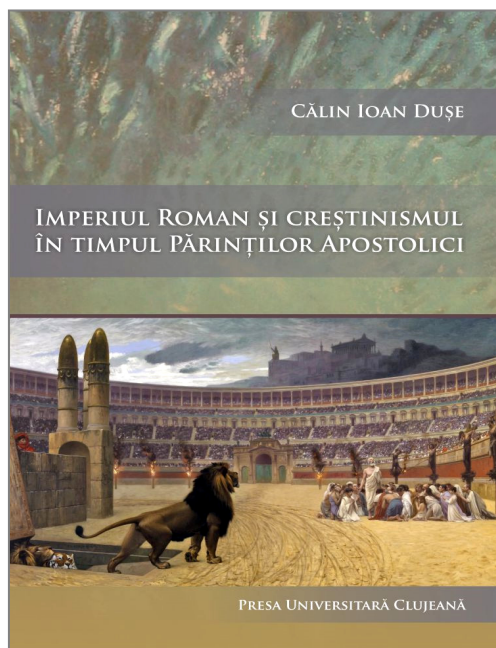
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Călin Ioan Dușe's work *The Roman Empire and Christianity During the Life of the Apostolic Fathers*, presents the most important aspects of the Roman state belonging to the Republican and Imperial periods, with a special reference to the 1st century AD, the century in which the Apostolic Fathers were present. The discussed work is a remarkable reconstruction of the context in which the Son of God was embodied and of the way in which His saving works were received and deepened in the Apostolic Age.

Being organized in five chapters, each one with its own bibliography, the work attempts to present the evolution of the Roman Empire from the beginning and the context in which the new religion – Christianity – emerges. At the same time, it successfully describes the Romans' mentalities, culture, philosophy and religion at the moment when Christianity appeared.

The first chapter, entitled *A short history of the Roman Empire*, presents the Etruscan period, the period of the Kingdom, Republic, Empire, with a special reference to the main Roman emperors of the 1st century. Here, the author focuses on the history of the Roman Empire and presents the way in which the Etruscans influenced its evolution.

The second chapter, bearing the title *The Roman institutions*, refers to the major institutions of the Roman state, including: the army, social institutions, the judicial ones, economy, demography, buildings and architecture. The author claims and supports the fact that the Romans were practical people, using relevant arguments, and thus, the Roman law had evolved throughout the centuries, concomitantly with the social, economic and political life.



The third chapter bears the title *The Roman culture, philosophy and religion*, being a synthesis of the age and presents the education in the Roman state, the great cultural figures of the era, the philosophy and the Greek-Roman religious system. In this chapter, the author goes beyond the historical writing, entering the daily schedule of a student who is interested in his education. This short overview is a remarkable example, as it reveals to the present generations the ways in which one of the greatest empires in human history used to train young people. Thus, the author gives the freedom of expression to the ancient writer Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, through whose voice we can be introduced to the knowledge, manner and expectations for each academic level.

The fourth chapter, entitled *The emergence and spread of Christianity*, analyses the state of the Jewish and Greek-Roman world at the beginning of the 1st century, John the Baptist and Our Saviour, Jesus Christ's activity, as well as the founding of the Church and the Apostles' missionary work..

The last chapter presents the Apostolic Fathers' activity, life, writings and theology in the 1st century, with a special reference to Saint Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna.

The given work is accompanied by several maps and illustrations, which help with visualising the elements which are described in the book, a fact that transforms it into an authentic handbook and guide for those who are passionate about the history of the Roman Empire or about the way in which Christianity had spread and the role which the Apostolic Fathers had had within this entire context. Having a very rich bibliography, Călin Ioan Dușe's given work is also a genuine research instrument for those who would like to deepen one of the major topics which the author suggested for analysis and discussion.

The element of novelty consists in the approach to the history of the Roman Empire at the level of a reader who would like to discover more about the institutions and the period of the Roman Empire. The work also presents the Apostolic Fathers' period and theology in a modern light, in agreement with the contemporary theologians' approaches.

Taking into consideration the contributions which were brought to the area of research and the logical and analytical thread of the approach, I highly recommend the book entitled *The Roman Empire and Christianity during the life of the Apostolic Fathers*, written by Călin Ioan Dușe.

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