

back and forth as (s)he tries to read the text, view the plates at the end, and also follow the notes. The structure of the book seems to be better designed for a superficial reader, who can directly go to the plates, see the images and get an overview of the discussion there as well.

Chapter 2 ("Man, King, Hero and God: Alexander's Changing Portraits") presents a typology of different portraits representing Alexander. Alexander was presented in the guise of Herakles, wearing a lion's skin headdress, by cities that claimed Alexander as their founder. A short-lived type of Alexander wearing an elephant headdress was limited to Egypt. Another type of Egyptian motif was Alexander with ram's horn, connecting him with Zeus Ammon. This type was still used in Roman times. The most widespread image was the diademed Alexander. A few other, more rare types also existed.

Chapter 3 ("Making Good Use of a Legend") discusses what aspects of Alexander's legend were used in different connections. For example, the Diadochi, the kings ruling over lands that Alexander conquered, used Alexander's image to prove their legitimacy over the lands and strengthen their own position. Another emphasis was made on the grounds of Alexander's Macedonian origin. A very prominent and long-lived aspect was to present Alexander as the alleged founder of a large number of cities and communities. This was especially popular in the time of Caracalla, who admired Alexander. Many towns found a convenient way to show their loyalty to the emperor via using Alexander as their founder figure.

The short Chapter 4 ("Excursus: Alexander in Disguise"), mentions still further uses of Alexander's legend, where he is presented as a conqueror, explorer, even as a Christian knight or Muslim warrior.

In the conclusion, D. sums up the facts and notes that only in a few cases can there be found connections with other works of art as models for images of Alexander on coins. However, coins do give us important information on the different kinds of image types that present Alexander and for what purposes the image of this conqueror, who became a legend, was used.

A very important part of this work is the section of plates, covering c. 50 pages at the end. It collects the most important image types presenting Alexander on coins in good-quality black and white photographs. The book ends with technical descriptions of the coins illustrated, and the bibliography and index.

*Marja Vierros*

*The Monetary Systems of the Greeks and Romans.* Edited by WILLIAM V. HARRIS. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2008. ISBN 978-0-19-923335-9. XIV, 330 pp. GBP 55.

It is always difficult to review books of this quality, since most of the contributions in the book would merit a review of their own. The contributions are based on the papers given at a conference at Columbia in 2005, except for the paper by J. Manning, which was included later. The conference gathered together many of the central figures working with money and economy of the Classical times, and the aim of the book is to bring forth recent research in the field, without aiming at a unitary explanation. As Harris in the Preface notes, "scholarly, as distinct from personal, harmony was nowhere to be seen".

In the Introduction, Harris does try to bring together the main themes of the conference, however, by briefly reviewing the contributions and providing his own comments. In addition, he ponders upon one major theme that he himself thinks might, and perhaps even should have been included, namely fiduciary money, but notes that the theme does appear in many of the contributions.

In his "Weighed Bullion in Archaic Greece", John H. Kroll investigates the transition from weighed bullion to coinage in Archaic Greece, including Asia Minor, Magna Graecia and Sicily. He traces the survival of the use of bullion beside the newly introduced coins, and also draws attention to the different usage contexts as explanatory factors when considering the use of different forms of money; for example, in religious contexts, the bullion seems to have been used longer, which Kroll sees as resulting from the general conservatism of religious practices. His overall conclusion is, however, that the introduction of coinage was not a prerequisite for exchange and trade, as bullion already performed these functions perfectly well, but its importance was in making exchange more efficient by removing the need of weighing, and also in emphasizing the role of the state in the provision of money. Kroll's paper is interesting especially to the extent it concentrates on the practical and cultural aspects of both bullion and coinage without seeing one as an obviously better choice than the other.

David M. Schaps' "What Was Money in Ancient Greece?" continues Kroll's discussion thematically, but does not deepen it in any meaningful way. Schaps' point, that the Greeks' concept of money was still more concrete than ours, and that this hindered both the operations of credit and banking, as well as being the reason for the rarity of token currency, is interesting, but would have needed a somewhat more thorough presentation. Schaps is not very successful in winning the reader over to his side and his ideas remain on the speculative level.

Richard Seaford, on the other hand, continues his work on the monetization of Greek society by studying the links between coinage, tyranny and tragedy as a form. He tells a story, in which the monetization of the society allowed for the emergence of tyranny in the first place. These tyrants were able to transform the old communal religious rituals into something more supportive of their own power, and in the end, the form and content of late tragedy became an expression of this "communal horror at the abusive control of ritual", that was typical of these historical tyrants. Seaford's argument is complex, and not always easy to follow, but his insights into the monetization of the ritual practices and their cultural implications are illuminating.

Edward E. Cohen's contribution takes the reader back to the hard core of economics in a concise and well-written refutation of the Finleyan thesis of the inelasticity of money-supply at Classical Athens. He starts by refuting the half-century-old misconception, that in Athenian law, a transaction was valid only when both the item and the payment were exchanged simultaneously. Cohen cites various sources to support his own thesis that a mere consensual agreement was also legally binding in Athenian law and thus, the creation of credit money through delayed or anticipated payments were possible. In addition to this, Cohen also demonstrates how the Athenian "banks" were also involved in funding commercial operations with money deposited in them. Cohen's paper is seminal, and makes its subject easily accessible to readers not too knowledgeable about modern day economic theory.

It is not immediately obvious what J. G. Manning is trying to demonstrate in his contribution on the importance of cash and coinage as a Ptolemaic institution. He does analyse the way in which the Ptolemaic administration tried to commoditize and standardize through the use of cash and coinage; however, immediately after this, he describes how cash had already been a known and utilized measure of value in pre-Ptolemaic Egypt. In addition, he has to admit that barter did remain an important form of exchange in the rural areas, and after this, he is only able to conclude that there was temporal, geographical and social variability in the use of cash – "private use of coinage appears to have been ... a matter of degree as well as a matter of taste, and was highly variable in time and space". One can hardly argue against this conclusion, but the desire remains that Manning had taken this rather unsurprising fact as a starting point of his investigation.

In his contribution, David Hollander analyses the demand for money. He includes in his analysis both cultural factors, dictating the needs people in different social positions had for money, as well as models of monetary theory in order to estimate the possibilities of economic growth during the late Roman Republic. As a reader well versed in these kinds of discussions might suspect in advance, Hollander is able to present potential scenarios, but cannot draw any solid conclusions: "Without much better data on coin circulation and economic conditions...", but he quite rightly asserts that coinage is not the only asset available, and the amounts of coinage may not reflect directly changes in economic prosperity.

David Kessler and Peter Temin embark on a challenging mission: they want to show that the economy of the Roman Empire was integrated, i.e., changes in one area had effect elsewhere, fluctuations in prices in one part of the realm affected people elsewhere. Based on the meagre price data available, they endeavour to show that there was a relation between the grain price and the distance from Rome, and when this proves to be the case, they conclude that the Empire in fact did form an integrated economic system, as people in all parts used the same monetary values to assess the prices of products. This is perhaps not as surprising as it might seem considering the extent of grain trade in the Empire, and one might ask whether the existence of an integrated grain trade actually meant an integrated economy on a larger scale.

Elio Lo Cascio traces the development of gold coinage from the time of Caesar to the late Empire, especially the contexts of its usage. Lo Cascio argues that the social status given to gold by some researchers is not justifiable. Gold coinage was not limited to the upper classes of the society, but was, for most of the period, received and used by all the populace, such as the urban plebs receiving it as part of the corn dole. Furthermore, Lo Cascio emphasizes the thorough monetarization of the early Imperial society, of which the extensive use of gold coinage is one example.

Perhaps the most general and summarizing account is fittingly that by the editor, W. V. Harris. He draws together recent research on the nature and meaning of money in the Roman world, by this meaning not only coinage and cash but also the money-creating institutions of lending and banking. Harris' main intention, as he himself writes, is "to demonstrate ... that shortage of money was not to any important extent a brake on growth", and in this he manages well.

Jean Andreau deepens then our understanding of the practicalities of property owning by analysing how and in what form valuable property was held, according to the Pompeian

evidence. His answer is threefold: property could be held as valuable items, as coinage or in bank accounts, and the selection between these different methods seems to have been a function of personal preference as well as for practical reasons of safety and security.

That the monetary practices were indeed very complex, and often functioned on an abstract level, is also very evident from Peter van Minnen's contribution on Late Antique Egypt, where we find numerous transactions on paper, and a fascinating interplay among inflation, grain prices and the changing value of money. In contrast to the Egyptian situation, where the monetization seems to affect all levels of society, Constantina Katsari concludes in her contribution that, in the North-Eastern parts of the Empire, it was mainly the civic administration and urbanization and to a lesser extent the military, that brought along the monetization of the local economy.

The book concludes with Walter Scheidel's comparison of the development of coinage within the Mediterranean region and China. Scheidel's intentions seem quite universalizing, as he tries through this comparison to develop an understanding of the birth of coinage in general. One can always criticize this kind of approach, but it cannot be denied that this makes an interesting read, and analogies do have the effect of widening the reader's mental horizons by introducing factors that one perhaps had not thought about before.

What is very evident in this book are two things: the thorough monetization of the Roman society, and the existence of abstract monetary institutions. This should not be taken to mean that the economy of the Roman world was anything like the current day world economy, but to remind us that it is not the institutions that make the modern Economy. Most of the Romans calculated prices in money, handled cash, bought and sold using money. If they had any extra, they could save it with a banker, and if they needed a loan, it might be available from the same source. The high level of sophistication of their financial institutions can hardly be doubted by someone who has read this book, and economic historians will have to look elsewhere when trying to explain the success of the modern Economy as compared to the Classical one. Moreover, the classical scholar reading this book might start to realize that money is more than just coins.

*Harri Kiiskinen*

ROSS BURNS: *Damascus: a History*. Routledge, Abingdon 2007. ISBN 978-0-415-41317-6. XX, 386 pp. EUR 27.

In his *Monuments of Syria: An Historical Guide* (I. B. Tauris, London 1993) Ross Burns gave a definitive and useful listing of the great variety of historical and archaeological sites in Syria, providing something of a cross between a travel guide and a reference work. Now the author revisits the land of his expertise, this time presenting a narrative of the millennia-spanning history of Damascus. The book in question has several aspects to recommend it even to a classical scholar in Finland – especially as the Finnish Institute in Damascus has opened in its renovated building in the south-eastern quarter of timeless Old Damascus.

The writing of urban history on a chronological scale demanded by a subject like this is a laborious undertaking, especially when there exists as convoluted a physical record of the past urban phases such as in Damascus, and it would be unreasonable to expect a historian to be a specialist on every era. These points considered, Burns has succeeded outstandingly in