

the poor quality of the material – the shops and workshops are even more poorly documented and studied than the dwellings – forces Van Andringa to use mostly anecdotal evidence, well-known images and structures. After the brief chapter on religious associations, where the discussion is concentrated on identifying spaces they might possibly have used, the last chapter treats the tombs and cult activity after burials.

Despite the slight problems in the third part, the whole volume is a delightful read. The pervasiveness of religion throughout Roman daily life is amply demonstrated and the problems merely highlight the gaps in our knowledge and the need to study the households and workshops better.

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SITTA VON REDEN: *Money in Ptolemaic Egypt. From the Macedonian Conquest to the End of the Third Century BC*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2007. ISBN 978-0-521-85264-7 (hb). XXI, 354 pp. GBP 55, USD 110.

Sitta von Reden's book deals with a well defined topic and combines numismatic and papyrological evidence in an interesting and illuminating way. After a general introduction which includes the presentation of "Questions and issues" and "The historical background", the book is divided into four parts which consist of two to four chapters each. Each part and each chapter has an introduction of its own and a short conclusion of topics discussed in the chapter in question.

It is stated in the general introduction that papyrological evidence can be supplemented by a massive body of coins from the period when Ptolemy was satrap, and from the third century. Furthermore, recent finds and research on early Ptolemaic bronze coinage have provided important new insights into the development of local currencies, and this means that numismatic research on Ptolemaic coinage is in a state of rapid progress. Thus, the author has adopted a cautious approach regarding what numismatic evidence can and cannot tell us. Despite this cautious approach, the first part ("Money and coinage"), relying mostly on numismatic evidence, is a solid and illuminating whole on the topics discussed in the first two chapters, that is, chapter 1, "Money of the king", and chapter 2, "Monetising the countryside".

In chapter 1, von Reden discusses monetisation in general and the introduction of coinage in Egypt. Even though there had been coins in Egypt before the Macedonian conquest, it was the Macedonians who introduced a state coinage into Egypt. The opening of a mint in Memphis is dated to 326/5, that is, several years into Macedonian rule. A few years later, as Alexandria was established as the capital and Ptolemy son of Lagos established a cult at Alexander's grave, the mint was transferred from Memphis, and a new coinage was issued. After discussing the Ptolemaic and regal coinage in more detail, the author proceeds to discuss the closed-currency system, which was the direct consequence of the manipulation of the weigh standard of the Ptolemaic coinage. Interestingly, the early evidence for this closed-currency system is purely numismatic, whereas the papyrological evidence (*PCZ I 59022*) refers to a later decree. Chapter 1 further discusses the relation of gold coinage to both Greek and Egyptian religious ideologies (p. 48ff. "Gold coinage, reciprocity and ritual"), which was highly

interesting and fun to read. Overall, the first chapter included just the right number of illustrations of coins for a reader not fully dedicated to numismatics, and the argument was easy to both follow and to agree with.

Chapter 2, "Monetising the countryside", presents the importance of the material used in mints, that is, that there were both silver and bronze coins circulating in Egypt. For a reader who is used to sometimes blurry papyrological evidence, it is refreshing to take a concrete approach to coinage, that is, to the material and size of the coins, for example, and to topics such as "the bronze coinage in use" (p. 60ff.), "the development of the bronze coinage" (p. 62ff.), and "monetary disintegration" (p. 70ff.). The author points out, for example, that the nominal value of bronze and silver coins was based on their weight relationship (1:60), and this information is very concretely based on the physical coins that have been preserved to us. Furthermore, the author points out that there happen to be 60 obols to 10 drachms in the Greek monetary system which helped the conversion of coins, and again, we are dealing with concrete material helping us to understand a system which sometimes may seem quite complicated. The author concludes the second chapter with "Coin supply and inflation" with a final remark that the increase in prices reckoned in bronze was in the late third century, and even more so in the second, most probably the result of a re-evaluation of the bronze currency in relation to silver rather than of inflation.

Part II, "Cash and kind", includes chapters 3, "Taxes", 4, "Bronze and silver", 5, "Rents", and 6, "Wages". Chapter 3 builds largely on the work done by W. Clarysse and D. Thompson in separate articles and the two-volume publication of *Counting the people in Hellenistic Egypt* volumes I and II (published in 2006). Chapter 4 discusses similar issues as the monograph with the same title in German by K. Maresch (*Bronze und Silber*, 1996). Chapters 5 and 6, for their part, build on the discussion of the first two chapters of the second part of the book, and thus, I find it well justified that all these issues are included and discussed together in this second part.

Part III, "Debt and credit", includes chapters 7, "Formal loans", 8, "Extending the credit economy", 9, "Leases and labour contracts", and 10, "Credit in a social context". As the author states in the introduction to this third part of the book, "The role of credit has been a major issue in the debate on the ancient economy. Who were the lenders and the borrowers, what kind of transactions were supported by credit, and what economic impact did lending and borrowing have?" In chapter 7, the author points out that the parties of most extant formal loan contracts were acquaintances or friends, and that the contracts written in Demotic Egyptian did not follow the same kind of six clause pattern as the Greek formal *sungraphê*. Besides "Loans based on a written contract", the author discusses "Loans based on pledge" and "Loans based on a mortgage". Chapter 8 continues to discuss similar topics as chapter 7, and chapters 9 and 10 broaden the discussion of credit to pre-payments in labour contracts, for example, and other issues dealing with the social aspects of credit such as "*Skepê*, patronage and reciprocity" (p. 228ff.).

The final Part IV, "Banking" (chapters 11 and 12), is a comprehensive summation of the role and importance of royal banks in the nome economy. In "A network of banks" (p. 258ff.) the author comes to the conclusion that it was the administrative structure, rather than the amount of cash revenue, that determined the number of banks in different parts of Egypt. She then discusses the ways the taxes were collected, and concludes by noting that officials were personally liable for the revenue and expenditure, and that this elides the distinction between

official and private accounts that has been applied to Ptolemaic banking. In chapter 12, "Banking and business", the author proceeds to discuss "personal clients" (p. 282ff.), "bankers' loans" (p. 286ff.) and "managing payments" (p. 290ff.). All these subjects draw from the abundant material preserved to us from, mostly, the archive of Zenon which this discussion brought to life from yet another perspective in a well-defined and illuminating way. This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in the economy of third century BC Ptolemaic Egypt.

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ANDREW M. RIGGSBY: *Roman Law and the Legal World of the Romans*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2010. ISBN 978-0-521-86751-1 (hb), 978-0-521-68711-9 (pb). VIII, 283 pp. GBP 55, USD 85 (hb), GBP 16.99, USD 27.99 (pb).

It would be easy to dismiss a book which is marketed with a blurb saying "The text is also free of technical language and Latin terminology". It is an introduction to, as the title, for once, accurately states, Roman law and the legal world of the Romans, offering an easy and accessible survey of the content and context of the law. In contrast to the traditional introductory texts, which usually are little more than abridged versions of the textbooks (think Kaser, Borkowski) that have, for a few centuries now, approached Roman law as a set of institutions best tackled with textual exegesis, Riggsby gives us the more of the law in action than the law in books. The book is divided into twenty chapters starting from the sources of and for Roman law, the social surroundings and impact of the law and finally, chapters on substantive law. At the end, as an appendix, there is a selection of legal documents in translation with explanations, mainly from the Sulpicii archives.

The text is aimed at an undergraduate audience, hence no footnotes and little in the way of indicating sources. The upside is that the book tackles issues seldom, or rather never, dealt with in the normal textbooks, such as the cost of trials. To help undergraduates to understand the relative otherness of the Roman world, comparisons are constantly made to contemporary America. While at times helpful, this gradually becomes more and more irritating, for example, in the statement that there was no separation of church and state in Rome. It is a fair guess that the book is the fruit of a long career in teaching and explaining the subject matter to audiences with little previous knowledge of the Roman world.

The best bits of the book are without doubt the parts where the author actually thinks things through in layman's terms, explaining things like *maiestas* in a way that is interesting and thought-provoking even for someone who has read a number of textbooks on Roman law. This juxtaposition of doctrine and actual practice is done far too seldom in scholarly works on law; it is reminiscent of the "Law 101" textbooks explaining legal thinking to first year students. The book is recommended reading for anyone who would like to know what Roman legal terms and practices actually meant in real life, though it does not fully live up to the promise of no technicalities or Latin, or else *damnum iniuria datum* is now a colloquialism.

*Kaius Tuori*