

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.

*Erja Salmenkivi*

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*