

tion and this book is certainly not intended for beginners. But for those already familiar with the main topics will find relatively little new data or ideas. Personally, the most interesting part was the last section on the standard of living and particularly the chapter by Allen whose comparison of wages and prices in Diocletian's Price Edict to early modern cities around the world is thought-provoking. It is hopefully also indicative of the kind of cross-cultural comparisons that Bowman and Wilson call for in their introduction and which will be the final results of the project.

The progress of the project can be followed on their website (<http://oxrep.classics.ox.ac.uk/new/index.php>). One of the aims of the project is to collect data and try and encourage other scholars to contribute to these collections with their own work. The beginnings of three databases on Roman mines, wine and olive presses and Karanis tax records can be browsed online. The fourth database on Roman shipwrecks is not yet public. The problems of data collection and representation are apparent – a lot of work hours and preferably professionals to do the job are necessary for the end result to be understandable and reliable. In addition, creating a working database structure is not easy. It is to be hoped that the embryos available now will grow into functioning entities that would persuade other scholars to submit their data in order to create the data collections envisioned by the project directors.

Eeva-Maria Viitanen

ALFRED MICHAEL HIRT: *Imperial Mines and Quarries in the Roman World. Organizational Aspects 27 BC–AD 235*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010. ISBN 978-0-19-957287-8. XIV, 551 pp. GBP 80, USD 120.

Mining and quarrying metals and stone were important activities in the Roman world and we know amazingly little of them. Plenty of extraction sites are known archaeologically from all over the Roman Empire. Extraction processes, trade and use of the raw materials have also been explored to a certain extent. The ownership and administration of the mines and quarries are, however, not so well known. They are usually discussed regionally regarding particular geographical areas, but a synthetic view of the whole empire has not been attempted. One of the reasons for this lack of synthetic work is probably the staggering amount of material and the huge geographical range, which makes handling the whole very challenging. Hirt has admirably attacked the topic in the doctoral dissertation from which this book has been developed.

The rather thick volume is organized into seven main chapters. After the brief introduction, Chapter 2 gives a short overview of the imperial quarries and mines, and their geological and geographical peculiarities. Then Hirt turns to outlining the extent and ownership of various regional, imperial mining/quarrying districts. The fourth and fifth chapters respectively discuss the evidence for the imperial officials responsible for extractive operations and the involvement of the Roman army in them. Chapter 6 delves deeper into the responsibilities and tasks of all officials involved. Before concluding the book with the discussion of the role of the emperor and possible imperial bureaus governing extractive operations, Hirt takes a look at the role and activities of private partners in imperial mines and quarries. The book ends in a long appendix listing 1283 quarry inscriptions. Hirt has managed to write most of the chapters in such a way

that the discussion remains interesting and vibrant – however, some of the chapters in the central part do suffer from long lists of evidence thinly disguised as academic prose.

Hirt's results accentuate the problems related to the lacunose evidence as well as the unreliability of the Roman epigraphic habit – hardly anything was ever recorded in inscriptions in a systematic manner. And even if such documents would have been produced, only a small part of them would have survived for us to study. Another very important aspect is the local and regional nature of the Roman administration: little evidence for centralized administration or even imperial policies regarding public extractive operations could be found. The general administrative organization of each province, the geographical and geological realities of each quarry and mine resulted in varying solutions in different areas. The revenue produced by the extractive operations was important for the emperor as shown by the many officials and the resources allocated to them, but the high number of private entrepreneurs involved shows that the imperial involvement was intended to be kept at a minimum whenever possible. In addition, it becomes clear that for example quarrying most marbles was not done for revenue, but rather as a display of imperial wealth and power.

Studying administration and bureaucracy might seem a boring topic to many, but Hirt also manages to showcase the practical problems which needed to be solved by individual officials – for instance, who had to deal with acquiring all the donkeys needed in the Egyptian marble quarries. The overall view of the various levels of administration from the day-to-day work in the quarries all the way to the corridors of imperial power in Rome is fascinating.

Eeva-Maria Viitanen

ANN C. GUNTER: *Greek Art and the Orient*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-83257-1 (hb). XIV, 257 pp. GBP 50, USD 85.

Ann C. Gunter's *Greek Art and the Orient* is an ambitious take on the somewhat exhausted topic of the "Orientalising" period in Greek art. The monograph insists on offering no easy answers, and instead draws on a range of theories and scholarship to show what a multifaceted and complicated issue the transfer of art can be. Although material is drawn from different parts of the greater Mediterranean, the focus is on Assyria, the most powerful empire in the area during the 8th century BC.

Gunter starts off – and in fact concludes – by deconstructing oppositions such as "East" and "West" or "Greek" and "Oriental" as well as the homogeneity that existed within Assyria itself. "Art and 'Assyrianization' along the Imperial Frontiers" provides examples of both the standardization of art - for example Syrian and Lebanese ceramics in the 7th century BC – and deviations from set standards – "provincial" style seals as serving local needs rather than being mere poor imitations. "Conceptual Geographies and Frameworks" points out the flaws of using Homer to extrapolate ancient divisions and oppositions, or perhaps rather how he has been misinterpreted and simplified, and suggests the "Orientalising" period is a product of drawing parallels between 19th-century interactions between Europe and the Far East, and antiquity. While the aforementioned chapter debunks the existence of Eastern versus Western, "Defining and Interpreting Styles" does the same in terms of art, emphasizing how difficult it is to correlate style and ethnicity. After that, the focus returns to interactions within the Assyrian empire: