

The volume offers a great deal of information and insight into very many aspects of cities in the Roman West. It combines old data with the authors' interpretation of the development, but sometimes the relationship to what other scholars think about the subject remains obscure. Some of the elements in the text, such as explanations and translations of commonly used Latin names of buildings (for example *curia* and *comitium* on p. 20), seem to indicate that the book is intended to be read by non-experts, but many other parts would require in-depth knowledge of the topic (such as Romanization). Despite some of its shortcomings, the book is also thought-provoking and encourages further study into Roman cities.

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HENRIK MOURITSEN: *The Freedman in the Roman World*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2011. ISBN 978-0-521-85613-3. VI, 344 pp. GBP 60, USD 99

In *The Freedman in the Roman World* Henrik Mouritsen summarizes the results of his own and others' research over the last few decades on the position of freedmen in Roman society. As Mouritsen himself notes, the freedman has not been a popular subject, especially on the level of monograph-sized syntheses, and in this book, Mouritsen strives to fill this *lacuna* in the research tradition.

Mouritsen discusses the matter thematically. The thematic divisions obviously reflect the importance given to these particular themes in understanding the phenomenon within Roman society: the social position of the freedman and the stain of servitude; the relation of the freedman to his/her patron; the individual power and status of the freedman; the practice of manumission; the economic role of the freedmen; the role of the freedmen in public life, with a special emphasis on the freedmen's sons; and finally, an overview and interpretation of the identity of freedmen in society.

On the whole, the book succeeds commendably, offering a many-sided view on the cultural, social and economic practices connected with the phenomenon. In the introduction, Mouritsen downplays his own achievement by emphasizing how the chosen approach to investigate the position of freedmen from many different viewpoints has resulted in many of the themes being slightly superficial in their treatment. This might be a potential flaw with some works, but I personally found that Mouritsen's approach resulted in far more interesting results than a detailed study of a single theme might have produced. Mouritsen uses different types of evidence in constructing his interpretation, ranging from inscriptions to various types of literary evidence; the nature of the subject naturally emphasizes the importance of legal and literary sources, while archaeological evidence is rarely connectable to Roman social categories; in fact, Mouritsen heavily criticizes some of the attempts to do so, like in the case of the owners of the House of the Vettii in Pompeii. Mouritsen also draws in comparative material from other 'slave societies' in order to highlight the particularities of the Roman system. This is an excellent choice, since it is not always clear how different the other well-known slaving systems were, and especially, how the Roman system was a world of its own with very few parallels in other 'slave societies'. Even so, these comparisons offer important insights into the Roman system and are particularly useful for readers not already familiar with the Roman system.

In this kind of study, where the purpose is not to provide a grand narrative of Roman history but to describe and understand a phenomenon, it is common to adopt a diachronic approach. The limited amount of evidence allowing one to (re)construct chronological patterns is an obvious reason for this choice. To Mouritsen's credit it must be said that he acknowledges the problem in the introduction by claiming that he has not found any "compelling evidence to suggest any major changes to the practice of manumission or to the attitudes towards it" (p. 9). However, a reading of this book may raise the question whether this really is the case. In most of the chapters, there is a clear division of the phenomenon in four different temporal phases, which are in each case awarded their own particular properties. The phases, in general, are Early Rome, The Republic, Early Empire, and Late Rome. These phases have a definite role to play in Mouritsen's argument. "Early Rome" is the mythical origin of values and traditions; The Republic and Early Empire are the periods where most of the evidence is from, and therefore figure most in the analyses, with the dividing line at the Augustan period; the possible changes in the Late Roman period are outside the focus of the book but often hinted at. The main problem with this diachronic approach is the line between the Republic and the Empire, i.e. the Augustan period. In most chapters, Mouritsen hints at definite changes in society at this point, but then sadly discards all change in the actual interpretations based on the sources.

Finally, the sources are used uncritically, which means that there is little discussion about how the different genres of literature should be used as evidence. This results in legal texts, Ciceronian letters, Plautus' plays and inscriptions all having the same truth value in the argumentation. A great deal more could have been achieved if Mouritsen had tried to understand, for example, the comedies as comedies, not as accurate depictions of reality. Better use is made of the Roman historians, but even then, Mouritsen's critical eye is directed towards the emperors and their actions, as well as towards other modern researchers, instead of the authors of the sources themselves.

Despite these critical words, the book is an excellent discussion of the phenomenon of manumission and freedmen in the Roman society, and serves its function well. Minor typographical errors can be found, as on p. 222, where Mouritsen discusses Pompeian house I.1.5/25, which looks more like house I.4.5/25.

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CAMILLA CAMPEDELLI: *L'amministrazione municipale delle strade romane in Italia*. Dr. Rudolf Habelt, Bonn 2014. ISBN 978-3-7749-3858-8. XII, 346 pp. EUR 75.

Un ottimo libro, nato da una tesi di dottorato zurighese del 2012, che offre un chiaro e sistematico studio sull'amministrazione municipale delle strade nell'Italia romana, soprattutto in base alla documentazione epigrafica. Finora l'attenzione degli studiosi è stata rivolta più all'attività dell'amministrazione imperiale e dei *curatores viarum*, e così il libro della Campedelli colma una vera lacuna.

Nelle considerazioni introduttive l'a. si concentra, sempre in base alla documentazione disponibile, sulla tipologia di strade, sugli aspetti giuridici relativi alla gestione municipale del sistema stradale e sulle modalità pratiche riguardo alle competenze dei magistrati municipali. Concludono osservazioni sul finanziamento delle costruzioni stradali.