

(pp. 171–2). This will ring a bell with many a contributor to sundry Handbooks, Companions and Encyclopedias. Another all too familiar challenge lies in locating an approach that promises to do justice to categories of thought both ancient and modern. Or, as A. Riggsby trenchantly puts it at the outset of his article on criminal law, ‘[i]t is not clear what this chapter is about’ (p. 310).

It follows that not all the sailing is perfectly smooth. In an essay dedicated to ‘Roman Law and Latin Literature’ M. Lowrie attempts to construct a sort of Möbius strip for the two, effectively (to double-down on metaphor) placing them on the same side of the same coin, in evident defiance of the editors’ assertion of legal autonomy in their introduction. Certain assertions regarding legal history (pp. 72–3) and substantive law (p. 75) might benefit from elucidation, at minimum. V. Vuolanto, writing about children and parents, runs into challenges with legal terminology (‘legislation’ is not always a synonym for ‘law’) and concepts (the notion of fictive sale might have been of some help). It is hard to know what to make of R. Knapp’s assignment of (all) women to the category of marginalised groups, even as one might wish to qualify his statement that ‘[women] suffer a lengthy series of disabilities because except in a few special cases they are not *sui iuris*; that is, they are in the legal power of some male and cannot operate independently at law, as a male can’ (p. 366). A bit of doctrine can go a long way.

Despite a few such bumps in the road, the editors must be congratulated in summoning forth solid evidence, and no small amount of it, that the traditional divide between law and society in modern scholarship is far from inevitable. The contemporary study of Roman law emerges from this collection as something vital, vibrant and even exciting. Whatever the differences in approach taken – an aspect that in my opinion they have done well to foster and are right to celebrate – this subject remains a work in progress in the most optimistic sense of the term.

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## THE ROLE OF FINANCES IN REPUBLICAN ROME

TAN (J.) *Power and Public Finance at Rome, 264–49 BCE*. Pp. xxx + 214, fig. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Cased, £55, US\$85. ISBN: 978-0-19-063957-0.

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T.’s monograph uses fiscal sociology to examine the relationship between power and money in the Middle and Late Republic. T. asks ‘How (and with what effect) did a relatively narrow elite succeed in annexing the spoils of so many people’s industry without sacrificing social supremacy?’ (p. xiii). While acknowledging recent work on ‘thought processes, communicative interactions, and visual media’ (p. xiv), T. argues that ‘too little attention has been paid to the role of economic resources’ (p. xvi). A central idea is that the suspension of *tributum* after 167 BCE allowed the state to pursue policies without the consent of its citizens (p. xxix).

The book is divided into two parts with the first part (comprising three chapters) focused on the extraction of revenue from Rome’s provinces. Chapter 1, ‘Rich Rome,

Poor State', shows how private wealth grew in the period between 200 and 150 BCE, but the state's resources failed to keep pace. T. argues that the Romans had a 'peculiarly parsimonious approach to empire' (p. 38). Chapter 2, 'The Use and Abuse of Tax Farming', seeks to explain Republican Rome's 'devotion to tax farming' (p. 42), a system that did not maximise potential revenue for the state. T. begins by comparing Roman tax farmers with others, including Mughal *zamindars* and Ottoman *malikane*, and showing that the *publicani* were 'respectably – though far from completely – constrained in their operations' (p. 54). He then argues that the Roman aristocracy favoured tax farming because it did not require any administrative expertise from Roman magistrates, 'ensured that state revenues were paid directly to the treasury without the risk that aristocratic rivals would mismanage or embezzle them' (p. 60) and capped gross taxation. In his discussion T. focuses on Gaius Gracchus' establishment of tax farming for Asia Minor in 123 BCE. Gracchus and others, he argues, wanted a tax system that safeguarded revenue from 'aristocratic incompetence and venality' (p. 63), but did not undermine the power of aristocrats. I am not, however, convinced by the argument (p. 64) that auctions would inoculate Roman elites 'from the charge of defrauding the Roman people, because the amount squeezed from the provincials was of no consequence to the treasury's receipts'. If the profits were substantial enough or the squeezing extreme, the Roman people would surely begin to wonder why the state was not benefiting sufficiently. Chapter 3, 'Profiteering in the Provinces', turns to some of the ways Roman elites were able to extract private revenue from Roman subjects and allies. One popular method was to take advantage of their need to borrow money (to pay Rome) by offering them loans at high interest rates. As T. notes, 'A one-off payment to the state became a perpetual source of income for private citizens' (p. 78) through debt payments and then confiscation of the collateral, typically land. The chapter also considers the ways a governor could profit from his province by manipulating, for example, his grain allowances or ability to billet troops in a city. The central dynamic is that private profit stemmed from the use of state power.

Part 2 consists of three case studies of the changing relationship between state revenue and political power. Chapter 4, 'The Power of Taxpayers in the First Punic War', looks at the funding of the Roman military in its first war against Carthage. T. argues that, because the state relied heavily on the *tributum* to finance military operations, taxpayers were 'empowered' and refused, after early naval disasters, to pay for new fleets. In his discussion of the Roman decision to aid the Mamertines, which triggered the war, T. states that the Romans 'cannot have been so daft that the prospect of a wider – and potentially naval – conflict never crossed their minds' (p. 102). I find this particular claim less than convincing since history provides many examples of voters making fairly daft decisions. A number of Athenian decisions in the latter stages of the Peloponnesian War spring to mind. Chapter 5, 'The Plight of Taxpayers in the Second Punic War', turns to the question of how Rome coped with the severe financial and manpower strains caused by the Hannibalic War. T. argues that 'the political elite did a remarkably good job of controlling politics' (p. 142) during the war despite the continued importance of the *tributum*. There are a number of interesting observations here concerning Roman politics, but it is surprising that T. does not devote more attention to the introduction of the *denarius* system (see p. 138). Furthermore, I am not convinced by his claim that the *tributum* (coupled with conscription of some farm labour) would force certain farmers to work less of the land they owned (p. 125). Certainly, the loss of labour would cause difficulties but farmers had a range of options available to them (e.g. shifting from intensive to more extensive cultivation practices) that strike me as a more plausible reaction than simply ceasing to cultivate some of their property. Chapter 6, 'The Death and Taxes of the Gracchi', rounds out Part 2 by exploring why the reforms of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus unleashed such a violent

reaction. T. argues that the Gracchi's legislation, by 'redistributing Roman resources through state instead of private networks', constituted a 'threat to the privileged identity of Roman aristocrats' (p. 168).

A concluding chapter reviews the book's arguments while putting them into a broader historical context. T. suggests we need to pay more attention to the economy 'when completing a portrait of Roman political life' (p. 179). T. also provides a brief but interesting comparison with the history of twentieth-century Saudi Arabia, another state transformed by a relatively sudden influx of great wealth. Overall, this is a clearly written and convincingly argued work that offers many insights into Republican politics.

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## THE ROLE OF THE LARES IN ROME

FLOWER (H.I.) *The Dancing Lares and the Serpent in the Garden. Religion at the Roman Street Corner*. Pp. xvi + 394, ills, maps, colour pls. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017. Cased, £37.95, US\$45. ISBN: 978-0-691-17500-3.  
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F.'s text is the first full-length English monograph devoted specifically to the cult of the Lares. It is a superb work of research, blending material and textual scholarship on these often-overlooked deities. The book can be divided into four sections: possible origins of the Lares cults, the domestic setting of the cult, rituals centred around civic street cults and the Augustan reforms to the street cults. The text includes three case studies, Rome, Pompeii and Delos, each of which illustrate a functional reason for the installation of the cult. The central goal of the book is to illustrate how the Lares cult was distinctly Roman and a means of reflecting one's Romanness abroad. As such, the Lares cult was not a cult of exclusivity meant only for the elite within Roman society; rather, they were a set of deities whose rites and celebrations were shared equally among all Romans.

F.'s text fills a gap in existing literature on the Lares by addressing the *Lares Compitales* in the bulk of her text. Unlike previous works, the book is not just a catalogue of Lares images found in Pompeii (such as G.K. Boyce, 'Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii', *MAAR* 14 [1937], 5–112) nor a simple overview of what these gods may be (as in D.G. Orr, 'Roman Domestic Religion: the Evidence of the Household Shrines', *ANRW* II.16.2 [1978], 1557–91). Nor is her text only concerned with the domestic form of the Lares cult, as previously found in T. Fröhlich (*Lararien- und Fassadenbilder in den Vesuvstädten* [1991]). Her text is a deep analysis of the social and religious significance of these gods in all dimensions of Roman life. The treatments of the civic aspect of the street cult and of the reforms Augustus implemented in 7 BCE, which merged the Lares into the *Lares Augusti*, are especially noteworthy. Whilst not intended for a layperson who is not versed in Roman religious culture and language, the book will be an important addition to the library of any scholar of Roman social history and religion.

The section on origins (pp. 18–31), makes an important advance on previous scholarship. Earlier studies have tended to take at face value statements about the Lares in ancient