

EDUCATION

BELLANDI (F.), FERRI (R.) (edd.) *Aspetti della scuola nel mondo romano. Atti del Convegno (Pisa, 5–6 dicembre 2006)*. (Supplementi di Lexis 51.) Pp. ii + 343. Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 2008. Paper, €76. ISBN: 978-90-256-1233-7.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X10002763

As the Editors note in their introduction, the ten papers collected here cannot be described as making up an ‘organic’ whole (p. 7). They have refrained from forcing a disparate group of conference papers into a single over-arching argument, although the roughly chronological arrangement, from F. Lechi’s ‘Greco e latino nelle scuole di retorica’ to A. Aragosti’s ‘Frammenti plautini nella tradizione di Calcidio’, serves as a general historical guide from the classical to early medieval periods. The scope of the essays themselves is also variable, from detailed analyses of individual works, for example Bellandi’s reading of Juvenal’s seventh satire, to essays on broad topics, such as K. Vössing’s attempt to define an ancient ‘university’. This volume is likely to be approached, then, in one of two ways: either as a repository of individually useful essays, some of which will be of interest to some scholars, and others to others, or as a portrait of the state of research on Roman education. The essays are in general strong, and the portrait is one of a relatively healthy subfield. Yet there is more coherence to this volume than the Editors’ opening remarks suggest, and an energetic reader will find a number of compelling themes that can profitably be set in dialogue with each other.

The first major theme, found primarily in the first three essays on classical education, is the representation of education as linguistic and cultural assimilation. Lechi begins the collection well, focussing on Greek and Latin bilingualism primarily as depicted in the elder Seneca’s *Controversiae*. Lechi considers the instances of bilingualism in the text through the lens of ancient cultural encounter and suggests that they represent Romanisation in educational culture, tying the rhetors’ appropriation of different cultural roles to the appropriation of different rhetorical roles in the *Controversiae*. Along similar lines, A. Cotrozzi offers a reading of *Satyricon* 1–5, on the decline of oratory, and 46, on education, in which the question of education is obviously tied to social mobility. In counterpoint to these essays, which focus primarily on the status of educators, Bellandi’s analysis of Juvenal’s seventh satire places rhetors and grammarians within the larger, and thoroughly corrupt, Roman system of literary patronage. According to Bellandi, Juvenal finds fault primarily with literary patrons, and less with educational practitioners themselves. In many respects this opening group of essays is the most coherent set of papers in the volume, using similar styles of literary analysis to address overlapping questions of cultural legitimacy in imperial education. At the same time, the set is weakened by a lack of engagement with broader literature on the ideologies of status or ‘Romanness’ in the first two centuries of imperial history, so that questions of cultural and social identity are usefully raised but not pursued in detail.

The next three essays can be grouped together under the general theme of teaching practices and their effects, or pedagogical ideology. This is the most stimulating group of essays in the volume, although it too would have been improved by greater use of the extensive existing literature on ideologies of education, linguistic performance and social status in the Roman empire. It begins

with B. Rochette's extremely helpful reconstruction of the social context of the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana*, a bilingual handbook for Greek learners of Latin. Expanding on the more focussed material in Lechi's chapter, he suggests that the learning of Latin was not only a matter of practicality within the later Empire, but a matter of growing ideological conformity of Greek-speakers to broader Roman culture. R. Ferri continues themes found in Rochette and Lechi, with discussion of the *Colloquia scholica*, focussing on five manuscripts of bilingual instruction (*Monacense, Harleianum, Montepessulanum, Vindobonense* and *Leidense*), this time with the emphasis primarily on Latin-speakers' learning of Greek, and in a less formal, more colloquial setting than the schoolroom. Unlike Rochette, but in nice balance with him, Ferri focusses not on social context but on linguistic analysis of the texts, gauging the relative formality of the primarily spoken language that the *Colloquia* represent. The essay ends very abruptly with a short discussion of *fortasse*: there is no conclusion, and this is unfortunate, since at 67 pages this is by far the longest essay in the volume. It would have benefited not only from a concluding summary but also from a stronger editorial hand throughout. The theme is rounded out with G. Bonnet's short, smart article arguing against a great deal of historical linguistics that differences in form in the *artes grammaticae* are based primarily on pedagogical rather than ideological differences. The article thus helpfully imagines grammars as texts in live pedagogical contexts, rather than as more abstract meditations on Latinity. The strength of this group of essays lies in their attention to the details of cultural interaction as manifested in technical literature; these are attentive analyses of social and ideological nuances in literature that do not always receive such careful reading.

The last four essays in the volume are less coherent than the previous groupings, but generally deal with the *Nachleben* of educational texts in various guises, beginning with M. Rossellini's short essay in the history of linguistics, which traces the variable classification of the future perfect as indicative or subjunctive in Varro, Palaemon and Priscian. This is followed by C.O. Tommasi Moreschini's persuasive argument for the 'esoteric' (p. 211) character of the *Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, based on Neoplatonic and theurgic notions of the ascent of souls. What is new here is not the idea of ascent itself, but the idea that this ascent is not achieved through the mere gaining of encyclopaedic knowledge. Instead, such knowledge is preparation for philosophy, where the ascent truly begins; thus the text is not intended primarily to be the encyclopaedia it later became, but a Neoplatonic protreptic. Shifting focus from textual to institutional traditions, K. Vössing argues that ancient institutions that meet the criteria necessary to be called true 'universities' developed in the fifth century in Constantinople and Alexandria, which suggests an increasing institutionalisation of education sponsored by city governing structures, supplementing the less organised individual instruction of teachers in both cities. The section and the volume end with what might be seen as A. Aragosti's response to Tommasi Moreschini: an analysis of the fragments of Plautus (dependent on the dictionary of Festus) that appear in *cod. Bambergensis Bibliothecae publicae M.V.15*, a tenth- or eleventh-century manuscript of Calcidius' *Timaeus*. The context of the fragments is a brief letter of sarcastic thanks from a reader who was sent a text of Plato when he had asked for a text of Plautus. It is a nice concluding demonstration of the ways in which the afterlife of educational texts could go awry.

Overall, the collection is a useful one for scholars of Roman literary education, and makes clear that the history of Roman pedagogy is a field in no danger of

disappearing. It does suggest, however, that this field is currently only variably engaged in broader conversations about ideologies of identity and status in the ancient world; it is to be hoped that these conversations can be nurtured in future collections.

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THE AGRARIAN ECONOMY

KEHOE (D.P.) *Law and the Rural Economy in the Roman Empire*. Pp. xiv + 265. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007. Cased, £36, US\$70. ISBN: 978-0-472-11582-2.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X10002775

K. attempts to illuminate our understanding of the relationship between the state and the agrarian economy in the Roman world with the tools of the so-called New Institutional Economics. This body of theory, developed by, among others, Ronald Coase and Douglass North, holds that political, social and cultural institutions decisively shape both the structure and the performance of economic life. Institutions determine what people consider desirable, their goals, and define the rules, the structure of incentives, that regulate and frame the activities of economic actors. A key variable, and one that ancient economic historians can actually study, is law and juridical regulations laid down by the state. K., whose mastery of Roman agricultural history is well known, now fruitfully and innovatively examines the economic effects of Roman law on agricultural production in the Empire in general, and on the imperial estates in Anatolia and Africa in particular.

It is a great merit of this study that K. does not simply succumb to the temptation to paint a glossy image of the Roman state as providing law and defining property rights that then generated economic growth. A key insight of the New Institutional Economics is that institutions rarely produce ideal conditions, but normally involve a give and take; imperfections are the order of the day, and economically inefficient arrangements are often too costly to change. Such considerations are crucial in an agrarian economy with, as K. observes, a relatively weak commercial sector and a small-scale state apparatus. Many transactions and arrangements would have taken place outside the purview of formal state law or only been marginally touched by it. In such circumstances, the best thing the Roman government could often hope to achieve was to uphold the customary order, irrespective of any economic inefficiencies.

The book consists of 5 chapters plus an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction and Chapter 1 explain in some detail the approach advocated by K. to law and neo-institutional economics. The work of Coase and Herbert Simon in particular are treated as instructive; the former for his insistence that property rights have many different dimensions which all need to be included in the analysis of their economic effects; the latter for the notion of bounded rationality and satisfying economic strategies. Then follow three chapters dealing with 'The Creation of Rights in the Countryside', 'Roman Legal Policy and Private Farm Tenancy' and 'Legal Order in the Rural Economy'. A key theme to emerge is the growing