

infrastructure for communication, travel, and specific transport measures (see my *Transport und Nachrichtentransfer im Römischen Reich* [Berlin, 2000], pp. 49–226). In seven chapters D. concentrates on late antiquity. Only at the beginning (Chapter I) and the end (Chapter VII) is the early Empire briefly considered.

Chapter I describes Augustus' creation of the system, the terminology for which is not as clear as D. claims; of the five sources adduced, only two date from the early Empire, and one—Suet. *Aug.* 49.3—does not give the stated terms at all. (Unfortunately it is not only here that the use of sources and literature lacks careful consideration.) With good reason, D. points out the relation between the two main sources (Suet. *Aug.* 49.3, *SEG* 26.1392) which both show a system of *vehicula* provided along the roads. The problems which arise from this view, especially with regard to the inscription, are not mentioned; only the discussion in the excellent epigraphic edition by Mitchell (*JRS* 66 [1976], 106–31) gives adequate reasons for this thesis and could lead to further conclusions. Chapter II provides the relevant sources for the use of the *cursus publicus* by clerics, who were often, especially for their ecclesiastical synods, entitled to use it. D. concludes that the emperor wished to treat them and officials equally. But the bare right to use the *cursus publicus* hardly proves such an evolution, although D. correctly points out that this right was a privilege. Yet it was granted not only to officials (who were of course the largest group of users of this state institution), but also to private persons. Only the emperor could entitle a person to use it. Chapter III aims at illustrating the organization of the *cursus publicus*. Legal texts prescribe the duties of the population (*munera*) in maintaining the system during the fourth and fifth centuries, e.g. service as head of station for rest and change of animals (*praepositus mansionis*), provision of horses (*veredi*), and of additionally required horses (*paraveredi*). It follows that the population bore the brunt of the system. D. mainly agrees with the current state of research, but further questions arise: for example, are there really 'stazioni postali' during the late republic and the principate (D. [p. 44] seems to misunderstand P. Stoffel, *Über die Staatspost, die Ochsenespanne und die requirierten Ochsenespanne* [Bern, 1994], p. 18, who adduces sources for *manceps* in road building)? Do we have to believe Procopius' claim that there were forty horses per station? Is it useful to calculate the need for animals from this? What about the other animals of the *cursus publicus*? Do they count in addition? Chapter IV deals with aspects of the authorization of the use of the *cursus publicus*. The topics mentioned—the contents of an *evectio*, the right to issue the warrants for the *cursus publicus*, the travellers—represent the standard results of research. Chapter V collects sources for the *cursus publicus* in Sicily and Africa, and shows up interesting points of the economic situation, but the sporadic sources cannot produce an overall picture. Chapter VI lists the references to the *cursus publicus* in Philostratus, Libanius, and Cassiodorus. D.'s account of the latter shows the survival of the *cursus publicus* in the Gothic kingdom, and provides very useful information (although questions of organization are left unanswered). Chapter VII presents coins with general links to transport (only the well-known edition of Nerva referring to the *cursus publicus*), and assumes a privileged state of logistical aspects, as well as the political and economic relevance of some imperial measures shown in the coins.

D. points up relevant issues of the *cursus publicus*; however, some aspects need further discussion.

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P. SALMON: *La limitation des naissances dans la société romaine*. (Collection Latomus 250.) Pp. 101. Brussels: Latomus, Revue d'Études Latines, 1999. Paper, frs 100. ISBN: 2-87031-191-5.

Salmon's unstated aim is apparently to provide French-speaking readers with an introduction to the issues of contraception, abortion, infanticide, infant exposure, and voluntary continence in the Roman world; these topics form the themes of the chapters. As a leading scholar on Roman population, he is eminently qualified, and the basic problems and the main sources are set out clearly. However, the progress made in ancient demographic and gender studies over the last 20 years will not be immediately obvious to readers who are introduced to Roman family planning here.

S. accepts that medically induced sterility was widespread, but says little about why. J. M. Riddle's *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA, 1992) appears in the bibliography, but in only one footnote. There is a brief reference to earlier work on the same theme by M.-Th. Fontanille, but no indication that the effectiveness of

ancient contraceptive and abortifacient recipes has been one of the main topics of debate since Riddle's book appeared.

S. finds it unlikely that Solon and Lycurgus would have legislated against abortion when they did not oppose the exposure of newborn babies. This overlooks the fundamental ideological difference between the two forms of family limitation: exposure was always a man's decision, whereas abortion was more likely to be a woman's initiative. Roman law, as S. notes, was interested in the father's rights over the embryo or baby, not in the embryo or baby itself. S.'s heavy reliance in the abortion chapter on E. Nardi's *Procurato aborto nel mondo greco-romano* (Milan, 1971) might have been modified by more consideration of subsequent advances in gender studies. He reproduces uncritically Nardi's list of motivations for abortion found in the ancient sources, and even follows Nardi in claiming that in the third century extra-marital pregnancy was its main cause. Such a sweeping statement is potentially misleading when it is made without discussing the difficulty of reconstructing a largely female decision from tendentious male-authored texts. It is likely that abortion was in reality more often motivated by medical or personal problems than by the woman's desire to keep her figure or cover up her adultery. Juvenal may claim that abortion is murder, but Martial says that masturbation is murder; did he expect to be taken seriously? The real agenda of most writers was not that abortion was objectionable in itself, but that abortion outside male control was the problem.

In discussing infant exposure, S. accepts J. Boswell's claim that abandoned babies were the main source of slaves, without considering more recent debate on where slaves came from; the work of K. Bradley has stressed how the Roman slave-supply depended on a variety of sources. He also overlooks a basic demographic point: in a society with very high infant mortality, many exposed babies would be those who were particularly likely to die anyway.

There are a few points of doubtful accuracy. A statement by a character in Petronius' fictional *Satyricon* cannot be used to show that Augustus' pro-marriage legislation did not work (p. 8). The famous statement about having mistresses for pleasure, concubines for daily living, and wives for procreation does not belong to Athenaeus in the third century A.D. (p. 44) but originally to the fourth-century B.C. speech (Demosthenes) *Against Neaera* 59.122. The different attitude taken to abortion in various parts of the Hippocratic writings is not particularly problematic (p. 52) unless someone tries to maintain that Hippocrates himself really wrote all of them.

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**N. MORLEY:** *Ancient History: Key Themes and Approaches*. Pp. xi + 241. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Paper, £11.99. ISBN: 0-415-16509-1.

This book is a collection of extracts from the work of modern historians of the ancient world. It is organized, first, according to 'key' themes and debates—administration, agriculture, Alexander, and so on—and then by the 'key' ancient historians themselves, concentrating on their remarks on historical methodology. Here we may find Burckhardt, Foucault, Gibbon, Marx, and Nietzsche, jostling for place alongside Averil Cameron and Keith Hopkins. This collection of extracts is justified and introduced by a three-page preface.

M. makes as good a fist of this task as anyone could. His is a 'personal selection', with an emphasis on economic and social history (and only occasional matey references to former Cambridge teachers or to Monty Python), but then whose selection would not be slanted? A skim-read of the extracts taught me some things I did not know, and was sometimes amusing.

The only error with which M. could fairly be charged is his agreeing to such a project in the first place. In fairness, he goes some way to acknowledging this. A sad end to the editorial preface admits that lecturers will be 'far less convinced' of the book's merits than students; he commends the book to his fellow teachers as, if nothing else, a source of exam essay questions. He offers sensible cautions to his student readers: that they should always acknowledge their sources ('failure to do so is plagiarism'), and that they should remark on the problems of quotations, using them as a way of giving context to their 'critical reading'. But the fact remains that this book, as it stands (i.e. with no contextualization of extracts, no sketches of the work of individual historians, or of the shape of scholarship on a given 'key theme'), can only encourage an uncritical approach to secondary literature. Many of the extracts contained here take for granted knowledge of complex modern debates (and of some difficult terminology). Anyone able to understand and contextualize such extracts is unlikely to look at this book in the first place.

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