

labour or between ‘slave societies’ and societies with slaves’ – a dichotomy employed by many of the contributors, though the editors themselves seem sceptical of its value (1–2, 244). For better or worse, readers are left to come to their own conclusions about the long-term trajectory of slavery in the Mediterranean and the historical problems it raises.

One minor regret is the uneven geographical coverage. The aspiration to cover the ‘Ancient Mediterranean world’ rather than just ‘the Greco-Roman world’ is admirable and the volume is much enriched by the chapters on the Near East (Snell, who has to pack a lot into a single chapter) and Jewish communities (Heszer). But it is a pity that there is only a page and a half on Egypt before Alexander (and only scattered discussion of later periods) and nothing on the Western Mediterranean before the Roman conquest, beyond a very brief discussion at pp. 266–7. It will come as no surprise that most of the chapters on ‘Greek’ or ‘Roman’ slavery are in fact focused on Athens or Italy respectively. The exceptions on the Greek side are Cartledge on Sparta (ch. 4) and Thompson (ch. 10), whose chapter on the Hellenistic world concentrates on the Near East. On the Roman side, all the chapters (with the notable exception of Heszer on Jewish slavery) nominally cover the whole Empire but in practice focus on Italy, with only sporadic discussion of the provinces. There is thus no systematic analysis of the scale and character of slavery in the various provinces (the most significant exceptions being Morley’s remarks on the diffusion of slavery to Gaul, Spain and Britain (266–74) and Scheidel’s attempt to quantify slave-holding in the provinces (289–92)). A disproportionate focus on Athens and Italy is of course inevitable given the sources at our disposal. But the scale of this volume offered an opportunity to shine more light on the rest of the Mediterranean world. One or two chapters specifically addressing the provinces might have rounded out the volume nicely. On the subject of geographical scope, there is also the broader question (not addressed in either introduction) of why the series editors chose to restrict this first volume of a world history of slavery to the Mediterranean world – without even a glance at China, South Asia or Iran.

In any case, this substantial volume is certainly the new authority on Greco-Roman slavery. It is an invaluable resource for students and scholars alike.

University of St Andrews
mpl2@st-andrews.ac.uk

MYLES LAVAN

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W. SCHEIDEL (ED.), *THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO THE ROMAN ECONOMY*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 443, map. ISBN 9780521898225 (bound); 9780521726887 (paper). £60.00/US\$99.00 (bound); £23.99/US\$39.99 (paper).

This volume, intended to be read alongside *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World (CEHGRW)*, focuses on the Roman imperial economy from the second century B.C. onwards. The approach is thematic, and several chapters take an explicitly comparative approach, placing Rome in a wider context by measuring it against other economies. The Roman world offers an excellent opportunity to explore the possibilities of economic development within an agrarian empire, and one of the key themes here is the performance of the Roman economy. As Walter Scheidel states in his introduction, the issue is not so much one of evidence, but of interpretation. Nowhere is this clearer than in the forum on trade, where five leading scholars of the Roman economy (Wilson, Silver, Bang, Erdkamp and Morley) discuss the scale, structure, and perhaps most crucially, the main drivers of trade and the movement of goods in the Roman world. While the debate between the ‘primitivists’ and ‘modernists’ may no longer dominate studies of the Roman economy, it remains an open question whether trade and economic development were driven largely by the market or by predation and the interests of the imperial state, although these explanations are by no means mutually exclusive.

The companion is divided into five parts, covering theory, labour, production, distribution and outcomes. In the theory section, Vicenza discusses Roman economic thought, arguing that while the Romans lacked a systematic view of economics, they ‘thought economically’, as demonstrated by a study of practices, drawn from literature, agricultural treatises and legal texts. Temin then provides an overview of the applicability of modern economic theory, classifying the Roman Empire as a market economy. Saller’s chapter on the rather neglected issue of human capital is particularly welcome, given the relationship between the education, training and health of the

labour force and economic growth. He argues that the level of education in the Roman Empire, as exemplified by literacy, was higher than at any time before or for centuries afterwards, but not as high as in the most advanced societies of early modern Europe.

The next section explores the two main forms of labour engagement in the Roman world, slavery (Scheidel) and contract labour (Kehoe), and is followed by three chapters on production. Wilson focuses on the trade in raw materials, discussing the state interest in the extraction and supply of certain types of metals and stone, and reviewing the organization of trade in other essential materials, such as minerals, clay, timber and raw glass. He also considers energy sources, including the sun, human and animal muscle power, water and wind. Kron explores food production, taking a very positive view of the Roman world in general, and arguing that farming was both sophisticated and productive (an extended version of this chapter, and that of Temin, as well as additional data to support Scheidel's introduction, are available on an accompanying website). Hawkins then considers industrial organization, contending that manufacturers coped with fluctuating demand by organizing themselves into subcontracting networks rather than vertically-integrated businesses, and by relying on private-order enforcement mechanisms (namely *collegia*) to reduce transaction costs.

The largest section focuses on distribution, opening with Bang's discussion of predation, which characterizes the Roman Empire as a network of 'rent-seeking elites'. Adams then successfully disputes the orthodoxy that transport restricted economic growth in the Roman world, arguing for an integrated network combining land, river and sea transport. Erdkamp explores the economic rôle of urbanism, demonstrating that urban growth can be explained in different but interlocking ways: it could be due to increased productivity in the food-producing sector enabling more people to be supported in the non-food-producing sector; changes in land ownership increasing rural rents which were then spent by rural land-owning élites in towns; or a transfer of activities from the countryside to the city, such as rural under-employment being transferred into urban employment. Von Reden considers money and finance, discussing the creation of a monetary network based on the denarius, the development of mechanisms of cashless payment, and the widespread availability of credit in the Roman world. She concludes that the level of monetization and the sophistication of financial intermediation were such that these should not be seen as constituting a barrier to economic growth, although she emphasizes that the degree of monetary consolidation in the Roman Empire did not necessarily result in an integrated market economy. The section ends with a forum on trade, an innovative format that is very helpful in setting out the main parameters of the debate.

Two chapters make up the final section on outcomes. Scheidel discusses the relationship between the Roman economy and the physical well-being of the population, focusing in particular on the skeletal data. In contrast to Kron (and Jongman in the *CEHGRW*), he argues that the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, particularly in the core regions, were actually shorter than those that came immediately before and after them. He also demonstrates the difficulties of extrapolating from height to economic performance. While scholars such as Kron and Jongman contend that taller Romans are indicative of economic growth, Scheidel argues that the same could be said about shorter Romans, as economic growth may have encouraged population growth, which in turn may have led to rising inequality, exacerbated density-dependent diseases or depressed real wages. Finally, Lasenby concludes the volume with a discussion of 'post-Roman economies', painting a picture of regional variation in economic change from the fifth century onwards, based primarily on the ceramic evidence.

The thematic approach taken by the companion, and the very useful guide to further reading, makes this an excellent teaching resource. There is also much here for researchers of the Roman economy, with the different viewpoints and approaches taken by the numerous authors encouraging further debate on the interpretation of data, and on the issue of economic performance in the Roman world.

The University of Exeter
C.Holleran@exeter.ac.uk

CLAIRE HOLLERAN

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