

and death pollution in ancient Rome). Indeed, K. deserves thanks for providing an up-to-date and accessible account of a neglected aspect of a well worn subject.

Rutgers University

JOHN BODEL

ORGANIZED CRIME

K. HOPWOOD (ed.): *Organised Crime in Antiquity*. Pp. xvi + 278. London: Duckworth/The Classical Press of Wales, 1999. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-7156-2905-0.

This volume collects papers presented at the 1996 Lampeter conference on organized crime in the ancient world. Its scope is broad, ranging not only from Homeric Greece to early Byzantium, but also traversing the Atlantic to consider criminality among the Aztecs. After the editor's introduction (on which more anon) comes 'The Mafia of Early Greece' (pp. 1–51), in which Hans van Wees examines the use of force against poor farmers and debtors by ruling élites in archaic Greece. Some intriguing parallels are drawn between their behaviour and that of Mafiosi in nineteenth-century Sicily. Such analogies prompt van Wees to take a different perspective on the outcome of the phenomenon in the Greek world: the rise of tyrants, who emerge as Mafiosi of a populist bent. Nick Fisher follows with 'Workshops of Villains' (pp. 53–96), the subtitle of which explicitly asks 'was there much organised crime in classical Athens?' Fisher exploits a rich seam of forensic oratory to give a comprehensive overview of such activities as theft, criminal violence, and rural banditry, as well as corruption in the law courts. He concludes that classical Athens was a relatively peaceful society, and that if there was a fear of crime, this had less to do with the scale of criminal activity than with low rates of detection. After this, the focus of the volume turns Roman. Louis Rawlings's fine 'Condottieri and Clansmen' (pp. 97–127) follows a similar path to that trodden by van Wees. By comparing wars waged between archaic Rome and its neighbours with those conducted by the military adventurers of late medieval Italy, Rawlings suggests that much early Italian warfare was conducted on behalf of the state by noble clans. Such privatized wars, it is argued, became increasingly incompatible with the spirit of the emerging structures of the nascent Roman state. In the face of continuing aristocratic raiding, Roman authorities were forced to take stringent measures to control the practice of war, and it is in this context that Rawlings locates the emergence of fetial procedure in Roman diplomacy. From archaic Italy we move without stopping to Egypt in the second century A.D. with Richard Alston's study of 'The Revolt of the Boukoloï' (pp. 129–53). Dio's colourful account of these rebels as transvestite cannibals is rejected as mythologizing characterization. Excavating beneath these surface features, Alston uncovers a Nile Delta which, thanks to the insensitive demands of Roman taxation, was inhabited by oppressed and disaffected farmers and pastoralists. Their violent reactions against imperial demands were then stigmatized by the state as banditry, an association which, Alston suggests, may even have been welcomed by the insurgents themselves. There follow two papers on banditry in late antique Asia Minor: Stephen Mitchell's 'Native Rebellion in the Pisidian Taurus' (pp. 155–75) and Keith Hopwood's 'Bandits between Grandees and the State' (pp. 177–206). In Mitchell's paper, an outbreak of banditry in the late third century is seen not as symptomatic of the stock rivalry between the populations of mountain and plain, but as reflecting the pro-Roman spin put on a native rebellion provoked by an

increased imperial military presence in the region. Hopwood builds on his previous studies of rural order in Rough Cilicia, and argues (against what he calls Brent Shaw's 'monolith of Roman political discourse about banditry', p. 189) that the categorization of people as bandits was subject to subtle and ongoing redefinition throughout the Roman and late-Roman periods. Categorizing an activity as criminal is the theme also of Susan R. Holman's chapter on usury in Christian thought, particularly of Basil of Caesarea, but also of Gregory of Nyssa and Ambrose of Milan (pp. 207–28). Although some aspects of Basil's approach to the problem of accumulated debt show a man working within the cultural horizons of the urban élite of the late Roman world, Holman argues that his radical solution—its replacement with the most selfless form of charity—threatened 'completely [to] undercut the existing dynamics of power' (p. 220). In 'The Violence of the Circus Factions' (pp. 229–53), Michael Whitby argues against the view that the Blues and Greens were little more than Byzantium's answer to football hooligans. By setting factional activities in the broader context of acclamations and outbreaks of ecclesiastical violence, Whitby presents the factions as important forces in urban social dynamics and power relations. Finally, Frances F. Berdan's 'Crime and Control in Aztec Society' (pp. 255–69) provides interesting comparative material: as Berdan shows, problems of evidence (and particularly the extreme shortage of literary material) make the identification of organized crime a difficult business.

A dazzling range of material then, but at the end I was left feeling that there was something missing from the volume as a whole. This has nothing to do with the quality of the chapters: the individual contributions are of a universally high standard, and it is very good to have them. Rather, I was left wondering in what sense the activities described really counted as 'organised crime'. This question is posed by some of the contributors. For Rawlings, the problem can be one of perspective: 'One community's bandit/raider problem may be another's nobles engaging in status and wealth acquisition' (p. 104). More bluntly, Mitchell remarks that the Anatolia of his study 'was an arena not of organised crime in the modern sense but certainly of continuous or recurring organised violence' (p. 157). Whitby notes that the violence of the circus factions, while certainly criminal, could hardly be considered their *raison d'être* (p. 245), while Berdan admits 'it would be extremely difficult to find support for a model of large-scale corporate criminal organizations in the Aztec data' (p. 264). To my mind, the volume does not seem to have presented a cogent definition of organized crime. In Keith Hopwood's introduction, much is made of modern criminology's views on the labelling of deviants and 'the close links between organised crime and state structures' (p. ix). In support, St Augustine is cited: 'For what are states but large bandit bands, and what are bandit bands but small states?' (*De civ. Dei* 4.4). But Augustine's view was not so arbitrarily relativist as that would seem to imply. The quotation is truncated in fact, and so obscures Augustine's real argument: for him the boundaries between criminality and legality only collapse when the moral absolute of justice (for Augustine, of course, this meant God's justice) is removed. What I missed, therefore, was more thoroughgoing analysis of the construction of those absolutes and the formulation of laws to counteract the sorts of activities described in this book. In this direction, I suspect, lies a clearer understanding of how the ancients constructed their concepts of organized crime.

National University of Ireland, Maynooth

MARK HUMPHRIES