

Part 4 takes the reader overseas. T. Figueira's chapter on elites and colonisation in Archaic Greece offers a quasi middle ground on the 'aristocracy' debate. While he argues that aristocracy in Archaic Greece seems anachronistic (p. 313), he does admit that for lack of a better term, 'aristocracy' is the closest term we can use to describe social elites of this period. His chapter goes on to explore how colonisation served as a means to gaining elite status. Ultimately, instead of focusing solely on aristocracy, Figueira convincingly argues that it is better to focus on how unique archaic elites were and on their 'mastery of resources, of techniques for economic exploitation, of physical force, and of systems of signification' (p. 336).

This volume clearly and cohesively demonstrates that ancient societies were too unstable for us to be able to say that stable elites existed (p. 41). There is simply insufficient evidence to support labelling Greek and Roman societies as 'aristocracies'. However, if it is utterly necessary for scholars and historians to find some semblance of aristocracy in the ancient world, then we might say that aristocracy in antiquity resembles more the American model of aristocracy rather than the European model. In any case, this is a surprisingly obscure topic that needs more exploration and more interpretation of the evidence. The structure of ancient societies is far too complex and deserves more careful study. This volume should serve as a catalyst for further studies on ancient aristocracies.

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ECONOMY, RESOURCES, POWER AND INEQUALITY IN ANTIQUITY

VON REDEN (S.) (ed.) *Economie et inégalité. Ressources, échanges et pouvoir dans l'Antiquité classique. Huit exposés suivis de discussions.* (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique 63.) Pp. x+404, colour pls. Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 2017. Cased, CHF75. ISBN: 978-2-600-00763-4.

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The 63rd instalment in the series of the Fondation Hardt publications hosts the proceedings of the colloquium held in Geneva in August 2016, on 'Economy and inequality: resources, exchange and power in classical antiquity'. Following the format adopted in previous volumes, the book includes a general introduction and contributions by eight scholars, in English, German and French, each followed by comments and discussion. Case studies range from Classical Athens to the Tetrarchs, with a major focus on the Roman imperial provinces. As explained in the introduction by the editor, the aim of this collection is to show how inequality was related to the nature of economic systems and especially to the accessibility of natural resources. Besides economic disparity as a result of social stratification, the main focus is on power relations between political entities, especially between centralised States and their political subjects.

The opening paper presents the earliest case study in the volume, which looks at the fragmented world of the Greek city-states. 'The Resources of the Borderlands: Control,

Inequality, and Exchange on the Attic-Boeotian Borders', by S. Fauchard, draws upon the results of field surveys to analyse the strategies of territorial control of the borderlands through fortifications and road networks, as well as land exploitation, from the sixth to the fourth century BC. Borders were not just marginally occupied and exploited areas, but micro-regions endowed with political significance, as shown for instance by the evidence of disputes between neighbouring States over control of shared resources situated in between, such as woodlands and pastures. Borderlands also became areas of cultural complexity whose control had to be regulated by 'international law' and whose integration into local and regional trade networks seems to recall Demosthenes' notion of 'border agoras'.

N. Purcell's paper, 'Mountain Margins: Power, Resources and Environmental Inequality in Antiquity', is the first of a series of contributions that consider environments lying at the edges of urban inhabited areas, to discuss whether they represented a margin zone and a barrier or a resource. In this respect the article has a broader scope than the others, not only because it embraces the whole Roman Mediterranean as its area of investigation, but also because it approaches the topic in a way that introduces the reader to the methodology adopted in most of the other contributions (pp. 81–2). The underlying principle is to challenge the idea that environments such as mountains, deserts and wetlands were borderlands exploited by the central power for their resources and used as boundaries that marginalised their inhabitants, generating political inequality. The key is to consider different ecosystems as parts of the same environment rather than as self-standing units. Rather than barriers, mountain zones could in fact serve as functional gateways linking two regions of the same territory, both equally integrated and interconnected (see the organisation of Gaul in *Cisalpina* and *Transalpina*), generating mobility and interdependence with plains as well as coastlands. Also, environmental disadvantages in the conditions of production could be turned into economic opportunities for mountain dwellers as Roman administrators usually involved them in the management of local resources and communications.

Purcell's case study finds a fitting complement in R. Veal's 'The Politics and Economics of Ancient Forests: Timber and Fuel as Levers of Greco-Roman Control', even though their papers are surprisingly 300 pages apart. Forests were a crucial economic resource intertwined with mountains as indispensable suppliers of timber for building materials (in warfare, large-scale constructions and everyday-living furniture and tools), and above all of wood and charcoal for fuel, powering a broad range of human activities from heating to metal-working and baking industries. This study partly exceeds the scope of the volume, for it provides a synopsis of the author's work on the subject, which is a comprehensive guide on the role of forests as a resource in Antiquity, chiefly focusing on Rome but also looking at Pharaonic Egypt as well as the Byzantine Empire. The analysis of how forests were used as levers of economic and political control is concentrated in the conclusions and in the final discussion. Inequality in the exploitation of these resources arose both between States of different magnitude (centralised Empires vs fragmented Greek city-states) and within each State, as imperial or royal monopoly on forests meant that, even though the locals remained in charge of direct access and management, taxes were exacted in kind on their revenues.

Another margin zone, the desert, is considered in the paper presented by G. Reger, 'Romans in the Egyptian Desert: from Desert Space to Roman Place'. By Reger's own admission, this contribution is not quite about how a desert environment, with all its natural asperities, generates economic inequality. It shows in fact that the literary rhetoric about desert zones being exceedingly wild and uninhabitable (or inhabited by fantastic headless creatures) must be reconsidered in the light of what the Romans achieved in the Eastern

desert in order to 'normalise' it. Four diverse factors of normalisation are discussed: water, women, food and deities. Unlike other less hostile environments reshaped by Rome's intervention, the aim here was not quite to integrate these territories into the Roman urban landscape but to make them more familiar and liveable for the soldiers who were entrusted with the defence of their borders. Notwithstanding its adverse living conditions, Roman intervention turned this desert from a source of inequality, favouring the indigenous inhabitants who could handle it, into a 'lived space' controlled by the Empire that turned local tribes into client peoples.

A number of contributions assess the impact of the introduction of the Roman administrative system into a newly occupied territory. In 'War, Destruction, and Degeneration in the Middle Ebro Valley (first century BCE): the Foundation of the *Colonia Caesar Augusta* and its Irrigation Programmes', F. Beltrán Lloris discusses the broad phenomenon of colonies in Roman Spain. In the first part he challenges orthodox scholarly views on the impact of colonial foundations on urban and rural landscapes, a process that has often been regarded either as the quintessential expression of Rome's civilising power or, conversely, as a catastrophic experience for the colonised peoples. The Spanish territory, the first to receive a Latin colony outside Italy (Carteia), is an ideal case study offering a wide range of examples, both negative and positive. Most of the paper is devoted to describing the regenerative effects brought about by the foundation of Caesaraugusta into a wide territory that had suffered lasting devastation and depopulation after the Civil Wars in the first century BC. However, the most remarkable case study concerns the ruinous experience of the Roman colony of Celsa, which declined and was completely abandoned within just one century of its foundation, an unparalleled example of failure that would deserve further investigation.

F. Hurllet's paper, 'Rejeter le contrôle de Rome: les formes de résistance aux structures fiscales et administratives de l'Empire romain', also looks at the Roman Empire, though approaching the theme from a different perspective. Rather than considering examples of economic inequality, Hurllet discusses episodes of rejection of Roman power in the provinces as a possible consequence of imperial administrative restraints generating inequality and dissent. Four instruments of Roman administration are considered as possible triggers for revolts against the Empire: census, taxation, land surveying and justice, all equally playing a substantial role. Other aspects had a minor impact. Military conscription to form auxiliary contingents, for instance, could instead represent a factor of social promotion for the provincials. Religion, which was hardly imposed by Rome and often served as a factor of integration, was more a pretext rather than an actual reason for starting a rebellion, with the exception of Judaea. The contraposition between western provinces such as Germany and Gaul, which were in constant turmoil in the first century AD, and eastern provinces, where such episodes are much rarer, interestingly reflects the cultural difference between regions where State control was imposed for the first time and those in which it rooted in the political background of civic administration.

P. Eich discusses the impact of reforms on the imperial provinces in 'Die Normierung imperialen Raums: zur Verfügbarkeit von Menschen und Gütern unter dem Einfluss der tetrarchischen Reformen'. Eich gives a broad outline of the measures taken by the Tetrarchs, chiefly in AD 301–303, in the matter of fiscal policy and provincial administration, to show how, on the one hand, they led to a standardisation ('Normierung') of political and social spaces across the Empire, while on the other they generated inequality both on a social level, by widening the gap between the administrative elites and the lower strata of the population, and on a political level, by empowering new provincial centres to the detriment of other ones.

Lastly, within a volume entirely devoted to economic and political dynamics in ancient societies, coinage deserves a dedicated chapter, which is covered by A. Bresson in 'Money Exchange and the Economics of Inequality in the Ancient Greek and Roman World'. Bresson's analysis hinges on the fundamental principle that making money was always a profitable business for ancient States. This profit resulted primarily from the State monopoly on the currency in use within its dominion, which meant that any foreign currencies had to be exchanged at a rate that was advantageous to the issuing State. A primary form of inequality stemmed from the imbalance between stronger political entities, monopolising vaster territories and larger resources, and weaker ones. A second form of profit for the State derived from the fee charged on any transfer of value from one lower level of coinage to a higher one, particularly from bronze denominations to silver and gold ones. Since the vast majority of the population used almost exclusively bronze coins, this contributed to widening the gap between different social strata. Some examples are discussed in detail, chiefly the evolution of the closed monetary system of Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Romans, and the mechanisms of money-changing and of imperial control on provincial fees in Roman Asia Minor.

This is an informative and thought-provoking volume, whose main merit is probably to tackle seemingly old research questions from an unusual perspective. The reader is left with the stimulating thought that, even though in ancient societies (especially the Roman Empire, 'an extraordinarily hierarchical space') inequality could be 'deliberately cultivated' (p. 191), it often represented only one facet, not necessarily negative, of the complex process of interaction between different political entities or social actors.

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TYPES OF VIOLENCE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

RIESS (W.), †FAGAN (G. G.) (edd.) *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*. Pp. vi + 416, ills. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016. Cased, US\$85. ISBN: 978-0-472-11982-0.
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The title of this book does not adequately convey the scope of its content. Co-editor R. explains in the introduction that 'topography is understood by us in a broad sense: not only the spatial but also the social, ethnical, gendered, political, and religious dimensions of violence will be considered' (p. 4). For Greece and Rome there are parallel chapters on assassinations, violence against women, violence against slaves, battlefield behaviour, and violence associated with drinking and dining. A chapter on hubris and another on the Spartan *krypteia* are further contributions on the Greek side, and for Rome readers will find chapters dealing with urban violence, the historiography of battle and the gladiatorial arena. Several of these articles can serve as admirably readable introductory surveys of their respective topics; the pieces with a narrower focus offer some compelling new arguments and perspectives.

It seems appropriate to begin with the two contributions by co-editor F., whose untimely passing has left the field of ancient social history bereft of one of its most gifted