

U. ROTH (ED.), *BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW. ROMAN SLAVERY IN ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING*. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2010. Pp. ix + 121, illus. ISBN 9781905670291. £21.00.

This volume contains seven of the papers from a 2007 conference in Edinburgh; unfortunately not all the papers given are included. The articles discuss a wide range of issues regarding ancient slavery; it seems as if the editor was uncertain how these could be connected to each other, since the preface simply leaves the reader to find out the connections for himself: 'Exploration of the volume's rationale ... shall be the readers' job'. An introduction or conclusion would have been welcome, since the papers are indeed diverse, and a clarification of how they shed new light onto the broader social and economic setting of Roman slavery would have made this volume into a more important contribution to scholarship. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to hear the editor's view on the subject, since she is one of the most important current scholars on Roman slavery. In what follows, then, I concentrate on the individual contributions.

Salway's paper is essentially a reconstruction of a disputed passage in Diocletian's Edict on maximum prices. It is argued that slaves were priced according to gender, age, and rôle; however, a discussion about Roman perceptions of age and gender would have been welcome: did the price range match general ideas about the rôle in society of different age groups and genders? Lo Cascio argues that the number of slaves was highest in the late Republic, but that the supply of slaves dwindled afterwards. Because the free population continued growing, wages were lowered; this favoured replacement of slaves by free labour. This idea has found support before, although less so recently; however, because Lo Cascio does not fully engage with arguments against it, his paper is not quite convincing. Schumacher discusses the status of private *actores*, *dispensatores*, and *vilici*. He argues that for these groups, their slave status was essential; manumission was a kind of retirement, after which they no longer acted as such. Having slave *actores* suited Roman masters, because slaves were legally entitled to act for their master, so that the master could deploy more activities with slaves than on his own.

Slaves could be part of a pledge (*pignus*), as Du Plessis argues. There were some exceptions, however; an intriguing one, about which it would have been interesting to hear more, were slaves with whom the owner had an affectionate bond — this acknowledgement of slaves' humanity does not always occur in Roman law and society.

Crawford compares slave prices in 415 B.C. Athens with the Price Edict of Diocletian. Strikingly, the internal price structure for slaves was roughly similar, with prices for male, female, and child slaves showing the same distribution in both periods; slave prices in relation to other goods were also in the same order of magnitude. This indicates that slavery enjoyed the same importance in both societies — why this was so is, however, not discussed. Another comparative contribution is Carlsen's, which discusses ancient Rome, the United States and Russia. Slave-owners continually complained about the difficulty of finding reliable *vilici*; however, their expectations of a well-organized running of estates did not match a hectic working farm, so that the complaints were caused more by unrealistic ideals than the failure of *vilici* to meet the standards. Roth argues that the requirement for informally freed Junian Latins to continue working for their patrons provided the latter with an ideal combination of retention of the slave's *peculium*, while not being responsible for the Latin's business. Only a new cycle of work and a formal manumission completely freed a Latin. It would have been interesting to hear more about the ideas behind this arrangement; if there was no real freedom, why did informal manumission exist?

The volume provides many fascinating insights into Roman slavery. Often the reader wishes that the socio-economic aspect of slavery had been brought out more; some of the discussions focus mostly on statistics or Roman law, without always fully relating this to the life of slaves and the rôles of slaves in society. The absence of an overall conclusion to connect the papers leaves the reader slightly confused as to whether these papers really contribute new ideas on slavery in its socio-economic setting. However, the individual papers are worth reading for anyone interested in Roman (or indeed Greek) slavery.

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