

'Art and Empire' is the title of the final chapter (143-172). The first two sections discuss the issue of the identity of Roman art, a topic that was already referred to in Chapter One. In Chapter Five, S. relates to the circumstances that introduced the Greek heritage into Roman society and the resulting stylistic pluralism of Roman art. The *Sebasteion* in Aphrodisias is taken as a paradigm for a 'sophisticated provincial homage to Roman power' (150). Sophisticated it is, yet perhaps more than already recognized. Aphrodisias's privileged status as a Roman ally is especially demonstrated in the mythological themes that are depicted, which address both the Greek and Roman viewer. These can be interpreted as an implicit manifestation of equality that stressed the common origin (with reference to Aphrodite, Anchises and Aeneas — the ancestors of the founders of Rome and of the Julians) of gods and heroes.

Contrary to classical Greek traditions, the non-classical traits in provincial (with Roman Britain taken as an example), 'plebeian' (of the 'ordinary people') and late Roman art, are expounded in the remaining sections of this chapter.

The book is well written and there is ample reference to literary and epigraphic sources. The descriptions of the works of art are brief, yet provide the reader with sufficient information to understand the discussion in each chapter. It is a pity though that there are so few illustrations. All in all, S. manages to combine the issues in question within the five chapters in a fascinating way, demonstrating that social history of art may mean very different things.

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Margaret Atkins and Robin Osborne (eds.), *Poverty in the Roman World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xiii + 226 pp. ISBN: 0-521-86211-6.

Contemporary explanations for poverty do not stand on common ground. Analysts scrutinize economic, political, environmental, cultural factors, etc., in order to measure, debate, and assess poverty on a global scale. If contemporary methods for conceptualizing poverty are so complex, how do historians tackle the issues for the ancient world? Some answers are found in Atkins' and Osborne's thought-provoking volume, which attempts to flesh out the nature of poverty in the first 400 years CE of the Roman empire. Inspired by the seminal work of Peter Garnsey, ten former students contribute comprehensive and insightful pieces that were originally delivered as part of a conference in the Garnsey's honor in 2003. An overview of the contributions follows.

As the title suggests, R. Osborne's 'Introduction: Roman Poverty in Context' (Chapter 1) provides a comprehensive summary of past scholarship related to the topic. Osborne exposes one major lacuna in the secondary literature: the failure to consider chronological issues as well as empirical data. Scholars, for example, need to reflect upon the difficulties inherent in the conceptualization of poverty, the paucity of economic data to define poverty, and the rhetorical biases of the literary sources configured around the wealthy elite.

To provide a sense of how the Romans, or better yet, modern scholars have construed representations of poverty in the late Republic and early Empire, the next two contributions consider the role of social stratification. N. Morely's, 'The Poor in Ancient Rome', (Chapter 2) takes readers through an analysis of 18th and 19th century political economists and their equation of the poor with the plebs or the *populus*. Morely convincingly demonstrates the difficulties inherent in defining precisely who the poor really were. For him, they should be envisaged as a socio-cultural entity 'who, in unknown numbers, failed to make a mark in the historical record' (31). Morely advocates looking at themes such as 'vulnerability', 'exclusion', and 'shame' to acquire a more nuanced understanding of these individuals.

W. Scheidel's 'Stratification, Deprivation, and Quality of Life' (Chapter 3) delves into the problematic rhetorical trope found in the ancient literary sources. In simple terms, the Roman

social stratification system was two-tiered with the *honestiores* at the top and the *humiliores* at the bottom. This two-tiered system has been at the heart of theoretical analyses and has essentially done away with the concept of a middle class. Scheidel's statistical analyses of families from approximately 400 Italian cities and their environs suggest the opposite: a middle class did indeed exist. Moreover, Scheidel proposes that rather than focusing specifically on poverty and its relationship to patronage and landholdings, we should redefine poverty as a form of deprivation. Furthermore, according to Scheidel, the ancient Roman standard by which deprivation had been measured was quality of life.

A. Parkin in her "'You Do Him No Service': An Exploration of Pagan Almsgiving' (Chapter 4) maintains that we have essentially failed to nuance the roles of the non-elite in charity. This is primarily due to the sharp dichotomy painted between the elites and non-elites in the literary sources. She reveals that the Greeks and Romans, prior to the advent of Christianity, took part in almsgiving to the poor whether to pity, stave off, or make a spectacle of them. Parkin's work therefore departs from the popular misconception that almsgiving was predominately a Christian ritual.

G. Woolf's provocative 'Writing Poverty in Rome' (Chapter 5) captures how literary sources in the early imperial period have created an unsatisfactory representation of the poor. He emphasizes that the rhetorical biases presented in the literature in no way reflect an experiential and realistic portrayal of the lives of these individuals. As Woolf eloquently maintains, 'Members of the Roman property-owning classes moved through their city as if sealed in protective bubbles. The poor were certainly visible ... but they remained at the edge of the wealthy's field of vision ...' (85). Literary representations found in satire, *controversiae* and epigram, essentially have stereotyped the poor as a means for the wealthy to justify their own existence.

In 'Poverty and Population in Roman Egypt' (Chapter 6), D. Rathbone directs the discussion of poverty from Rome to the provinces. Roman Egypt has traditionally been seen in the secondary scholarship as a hub for poverty, especially with the Christianization of the province in the fourth century. But how did poverty manifest itself during the first three centuries of the Common Era? For Rathbone, 'Roman Egypt had a prosperous economy, it was highly monetised and urbanized ... and even the small man and woman enjoyed a reasonable level of state protection of their rights' (113). Christian sources do not provide a "realistic" empirical narrative on the lives of the poor, but rather use poverty as a convenient rhetorical trope.

The next five chapters present an ideological and chronological shift, as the essays focus on Christian attitudes in late Antiquity. In S. Lunn-Rockliffe's 'A Pragmatic Approach to Poverty and Riches: Ambrosiaster's *Quaestio* 12.4' (Chapter 7), Ambrosiaster (the name assigned to an enigmatic commentator of Paul's *Epistles*) should not be categorized as a writer who foresees clear-cut, monolithic representations such as "the rich" and "the poor". Lunn-Rockliffe's aim, furthermore, is to define Ambrosiaster's categories within his *quaestiones*. Using Luke, Clement of Alexandria, and select Roman legal texts, Lunn-Rockliffe posits that Ambrosiaster's treatises can be categorized as lectures for defending the wealthy.

R. Finn in 'Portraying the Poor: Descriptions of Poverty in Christian Texts from the Late Roman Empire' (Chapter 8), takes a similar stance to Lunn-Rockliffe. In this instance, the author analyses select Christian texts from late Antiquity (e.g., Augustine, Mark the Deacon, and Callinicus). These texts, rhetorical in nature, tap into biblical exegesis, ecclesiastical duties, and theological ideals that in effect blurred the boundaries of what Roman poverty actually constituted.

L. Grig's 'Throwing Parties for the Poor: Poverty and Splendour in the Late Antique Church' (Chapter 9), explores 'the questions of aesthetics and representations, through examining discourses regarding church decoration and its relationship to poverty and charity' (145). She emphasizes the texts of Paulinus of Nola and Ambrose to demonstrate that the poor are simply used as metaphors to help the church bolster material and spiritual support from the elite.

A somewhat different viewpoint features in C. Grey's 'Salvian, the Ideal Christian Community and the Fate of the Poor in Fifth-Century Gaul' (Chapter 10). Grey focuses on Salvian, a presbyter in Marseilles, who wrote a reproachful account against the Christian community. Versed in Roman law, this late Antique author attempted to reconstruct an idealistic socialistic community in which all individuals were responsible for one another. Grey warns that these ideals do not necessarily reflect realities of the poor, but they are suggestive '... that some of the "poor", at least, were still able to choose the types of relationships in which they became involved at this period' (182).

The last contribution 'Poverty and Roman Law' (Chapter 11) by C. Humfress draws parallels between the so-called visibility of 'the poor' and their legal position within Roman society. In particular Humfress nuances and contextualizes Marcian's *Novel 4* to illustrate that the goal of legislators in late antiquity was not to conceptualize poverty. From the standpoint of Roman law, her article underscores the necessity of treating poverty or the poor on a case-by-case basis.

My closing remarks are not meant to detract from the overall presentation of this thought-provoking and well-conceived work. Rather, they are meant as food for thought and hopefully will spur further and much needed work in this area. A common theme prevalent in this entire work is the role that Christianity has played in formulating our ideas of poverty. While the authors have effectively demonstrated how we need to move away from this notion, one wonders how other external cultural and religious phenomena have contributed to our overall understanding of poverty in the ancient world. One might be interested in, for example, how Judaism and Islam have helped to formulate certain conceptual ideals — a point briefly touched upon by Woolf (84). The tenets of Christianity, after all, did not develop in a vacuum (see M.R. Cohen, *Poverty and Charity in the Jewish Community of Medieval Europe*, Princeton 2005). The evidence presented in Atkins and Osborne (e.g. the last five chapters) is heavily weighted towards late antique Christian rhetorical treatises. The disparate nature of the first four papers definitively shows the need for further exploration of poverty in the early empire. One also wonders how the material record would help to corroborate or dispel some of the stimulating and challenging hypotheses presented in the work.

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Duane W. Roller, *Through the Pillars of Herakles: Greco-Roman Exploration of the Atlantic*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006. xxi + 163 pp. ISBN-10: 0-415-37287-9; ISBN-13: 9-78-0-415-37287-9.

For more than fifty years, no other book has treated comprehensively the exploration of the Atlantic by classical civilisations. This fact alone makes this book rewarding and guarantees that it deserves a welcome. The book is also readable. Duane W. Roller (hence R.) is refreshingly open-minded. A Professor of Greek and Latin at the Ohio State University, he has previously published books about different client kings of Augustus. These include: *The Building Program of Herod the Great* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); *The World of Juba II and Kleopatra Selene* (London: Routledge, 2003); and *Scholarly Kings: The Fragments of Juba II of Mauretania, Archelaos of Kappadokia, Herod the Great and the Emperor Claudius* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 2004).

R. explains that the book under review here evolved from his previous research on Juba II of Mauretania and his wife, Cleopatra Selene (the only surviving child of Antonius and Cleopatra VII). While R. briefly discusses Juba II (25, 112-114), who made an important, albeit mostly lost contribution to geography, the principal focus of this book is on Greek, Roman, Carthaginian and Numidian understanding of the outskirts of the known world. As an essential