

been satisfied with treating Luther's *opera omnia* as a coherent and homogeneous monument to the great man, and Luther himself as a saintly person.

Denifle's starting point as a Catholic scholar was to show that Luther was deeply influenced by tradition and that his writings changed from being reform Catholic into eventually becoming harmful and heretical. In this he was almost like a mirror image of a contemporary Protestant historian, Paul Sabatier, whose *La Vie de Saint François d'Assise* (1894) was a similar endeavour to challenge the hagiographic image of Saint Francis.

While, not unexpectedly, Protestant scholars were not particularly happy with the outcome, they nevertheless gave credit to Denifle's sound historical-critical analysis and acknowledged a number of his conclusions. One could say that Denifle's work served as the beginning of a new paradigm for Luther and Reformation studies on both sides of the confessional line. Saccenti's merit is that he provides readers with a comprehensive analysis of Denifle's contemporary context and influences, as well as his continuing importance for Luther scholarship.

Both volumes also have a reasonably large number of pages given over to book reviews. They are written in a number of languages and cover a wide variety of literature that has some connection with the Dominican order.

Jussi Hanska
Tampere University

TIZIANA CARBONI: *La parola scritta al servizio dell'imperatore e dell'impero: lab epistulis e la libellis nel II secolo d.c.* Antiquitas I 70. Dr. Rudolf Habelt, Bonn 2017. ISBN 978-3-7749-4078-9. 289 pp. EUR 73.

One of the peculiarities of the administrative operation of the Roman Empire, and of the emperor at its centre, was its reliance on letters as a method of communication and governance. The emperor wrote to and received letters from officials around the empire, from cities and communities and even from individuals, to an extent unprecedented in the ancient world. This correspondence was at the core of not only the governance of the empire but also the spread of Roman law. The two imperial functionaries who were tasked with writing on behalf of the emperor were titled *ab epistulis* and *a libellis*, the individuals who handled letters written to the emperor and petitions presented to the emperor, respectively. They were equestrian officials whose activities and backgrounds, especially their capabilities in the field of law, have recently been the subject of considerable speculation and interest.

Tiziana Carboni's book is an ambitious attempt at analysing these officials and their activities from the reign of Hadrian to the Severans, compiling a prosopographic picture of the people and their works. It is, in both the good and bad, a doctoral thesis that has been turned into a book, meaning that it is well researched and exhaustively documented, but at the same time it remains very careful in its conclusions.

As is typical in prosopographical studies, the work is divided into clear categories; firstly that of persons and documents (chapters 2 and 3, respectively), which are then further divided into subchapters by emperor. This categorization is neat, although less than compelling as a way of writing history. The chapters are based mainly on the source materials, as is the timeframe chosen, considering that the period under investigation is the same that has given us the most sources on these officials.

The great service and the most notable achievement of the book is that it provides comprehensive lists of the people who served as imperial secretaries and, most importantly, lists of the associated documents that have been preserved, both from epigraphic and from literary sources. Thus we have a good overview of, for example, the 121 letters sent by Hadrian, with linkages where available to the secretaries who wrote them based on the dating of the letters. There are also corresponding lists of rescripts, linked with the secretaries *a libellis* with the same method. In many cases these categories are mixed; for example, the famous rescript of Hadrian to Iulius Tarentinus, preserved in the Digest of Justinian (D. 42,1,33), is found in both lists.

There are, however, a number of limitations that this approach leads to. The first is that the author does not engage with the many important and long-standing controversies that she outlines in the beginning of the work (pp. 9–17), heated debates whose participants are a veritable who's who of the big names in the field. Thus, we are left with little to go on, for instance, regarding the question of how independently such secretaries worked in relation to the emperor or what level of legal expertise the secretaries were required to have (p. 210–3). Among them were, of course, some of the greatest names in Roman law, such as Domitius Ulpianus, from whose pen comes no less than 40% of the Digest. Thus, by not engaging with this issue the author has denied us some potentially very interesting conclusions.

This is not to say that the book does not contain creative and novel ideas. The author presents a hypothesis (p. 214 for *ab epistulis*, p. 219 for *a libellis*) of how the interaction between the emperor and the secretaries could have operated. While the reconstruction itself is by no means unlikely, what is surprising is that it is presented without documentation or references to sources. Such hypotheses about the developments and the possible mechanisms of operations are laudable, but the reader does have some concerns regarding the fact that issues such as the existence and use of an archival service that would have preserved all imperial letters and rescripts is assumed rather than discussed.

In conclusion, Carboni's work is enormously interesting, and grounded on solid basic research that will be useful for all who work in the field. As a reader, I would wish that she would have followed this with a monograph wherein she would draw more fully the conclusions tentatively now outlined, accompanied by a proper engagement with the relevant discussions.

Kaius Tuori
University of Helsinki

Antike Wirtschaft und ihre kulturelle Prägung / The Cultural Shaping of the Ancient Economy. Herausgegeben von / Edited by KERSTIN DROSS-KRÜPE – SABINE FÖLLINGER – KAI RUFFING. Philippika 98. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2016. ISBN 978-3-447-10674-0; ISBN (e-book) 978-3-447-19565-2. XVI, 320 pp. EUR 69.

This collection gathers together presentations given at “The Cultural Shaping of the Ancient Economy” workshop. This workshop, and consequently the contributions in this collection, investigate the interconnectedness of culture and economy in the ancient world. The theoretical framework for this work is New Institutional Economics (NIE) theory, and the purpose of the collection is to provide examples of how this theoretical tool can be used to analyse economic practices.

In the beginning of the book, Jeffrey Korn presents the main arguments of NIE, its theoretical basis and its uses. Kai Ruffing continues this discussion by showing how NIE could be used as a tool to bridge the traditional primitivism–modernism divide in discussions of ancient economies. The other fourteen contributions discuss different aspects of economic history over a wide time span and geographical area, roughly covering the ancient empires of the Middle East, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Contributions relating to land ownership rights show how different the solutions to similar problems can be. Two papers discuss land ownership institutions and their relationship to both state power and regional power. Evelyn Korn and Jürgen Lorenz explore the role of state power in the gradual disappearance of private ownership rights, while Giulia Torris investigates regional power in her study of owning and renting in the Hittite state. Jesper Carlsen considers similar questions related to the changes in institutional position of small tenants in imperial legislation in the early Roman Empire.

Contributions on the role of institutions in practice show how particular culturally and socially defined institutions guided different economic practices and their development. Laetitia Graslin-Thomé's article studies economic institutions and organizations as promoters and inhibitors of development in Mesopotamia, Wim Brokaert investigates how shared mental models created institutions, especially agency, associations and munificence in the Roman context, and Eivind