

## MONEY AND POWER

ARMSTRONG (J.), POMEROY (A.J.), ROSENBLOOM (D.) (edd.) *Money, Warfare and Power in the Ancient World. Studies in Honour of Matthew Freeman Trundle*. Pp. xviii + 282, figs, ills, maps. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. Cased, £85, US\$115. ISBN: 978-1-350-28376-3.

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‘Money is power’. This collection of essays by thirteen contributing scholars holds an adage up to scrutiny. Its unifying aim is to show that the relationship between money, warfare and empire has never been clear-cut; that power is not always achieved by monetary means nor justified by monetary ends; and that wealth expenditure does not always have a simple military explanation. The volume supports the work of its dedicand, the late M.F. Trundle, who argued *inter alia* that money and power had a complex relationship, that warfare was not just about wealth accumulation and that social nexus, rather than money, defined mercenaries.

The editors open with a chapter, ‘Money, Power and the Legacy of Matthew Trundle in Ancient Mediterranean Studies’, outlining the volume’s aims. A. Spalinger, in ‘The Upkeep of Empire: Costs and Rations’, calculates the cost in foodstuffs to the Egyptian state in funding the Battle of Megiddo (c. 1457 BCE) under Thutmose III. In a posthumously published essay, ‘Piety, Money and Coinage in Greek Religion’, Trundle connects temple treasuries with the democratisation of religion, arguing that coinage opened the door to rotational priesthoods and shared temple administration. Rosenbloom, in ‘Naval Service and Political Power in Classical Athens: an Inverse Relation’, argues that paid service in the navy was a hindrance to democracy. E. Millender, in ‘The Perils of Victory: Sparta’s Uneasy Relationship with the Profits of War’, pointing to Pausanias, Brasidas, Gylippus, Lysander and Agesilaus, maintains that wealth acquisition could enervate power. L.L. Brice, in ‘Pegasi and War: Patterns of Minting at Corinth in the Later Fourth Century’, concludes that, because fourth-century Corinth, except for Timoleon’s expedition to Sicily in 344 BCE, did not fund major campaigns, the concurrence of minted coin in large supply cannot be explained by military pressures. C. Matthew, in ‘The Wage Cost of Alexander’s Pike-Phalanx’, calculates the economic impact of the Persian campaign. C. de Lisle, in ‘Sicily in the Mediterranean c. 540–31 BCE: Evidence from Coin Circulation’, infers from the drop of minted silver entering Sicily from the East after c. 300 BCE, and from the fact that in Roman times surplus grain production in Sicily was not matched by an influx of denarii, that Sicilian wealth did not depend on coinage. K.A. Sheedy, in ‘RRC 1/1: the First Struck Coin for the Romans’, analyses the significance of a quarter unit struck at Neapolis, embossed ΠΩΜΑΙΩΝ. Armstrong and M.K. Termeer, in ‘The Military History of Early Roman Coinage’, contend that Rome’s first minted coinage cemented ties with her monetarised neighbours. J. Rich, in ‘Corruption, Power and an Oracle in the Late Roman Republic: the Restoration of Ptolemy Auletes’, argues that senatorial backing of client rulers was driven less by military than by financial interest. Pomeroy, in ‘Money and Wealth in Tacitus’, argues that the financial crisis of 33 CE was exacerbated by monetarist solutions. Finally, D.K. Knox, in ‘Gothic Mercenaries’, explores the careers of Theodoric Strabo and Theodoric the Amal.

Money and power, two of the keywords in the volume’s title, require careful definition. As de Lisle (p. 163) states, ‘[c]oinage was only one type of wealth in the ancient world and coin circulation only one type of interaction’, a point also made by Armstrong and Termeer

(p. 200). Millender prioritises moral decline as an unintended consequence of wealth influx. As S. Hodkinson showed (*Property and Wealth* [2000], Chapter 13), economic disparities widened in the fourth century, but the reasons were multifarious. Millender claims that unprecedented wealth was the prime culprit: the moralist Xenophon (*Lac.* 14.1–3) contrasts homegrown austerity with the decadence of harmosts but does not view ‘the attitude toward wealth at the top of the list of societal changes . . . as responsible for Sparta’s decline’ (p. 93); Xenophon’s point is that abuse of wealth abroad resulted in Sparta’s loss of political credibility in Greece. Brice doubts that Corinthian coinage production had a military purpose. Power, however, is not always a military construct, and Corinth’s power historically came from colonisation and trade. Rosenbloom substitutes one avenue of finance (paid naval service) with another (paid judicial attendance). Either way, the *thetes* were being financed; money was democracy’s vital fuel.

Some essays link coinage to the emergence of democracy. Trundle, for example, holds that ‘coins facilitated the participation of greater numbers of people through payment and exchange of an item of common media more readily available to poorer people’ (p. 35); that ‘coinage strengthened the civic group ideology, while undercutting the power of the elites in many other aspects of communal life’ (p. 34). These claims find common theoretical ground with L. Kurke’s analysis (*Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold* [1999]) of the rise of coinage in the sixth century as a counterstroke to elite power monopoly. As J. Kroll (*CJ* 96 [2000], p. 86) objected, ‘[n]either in the remains of lyric poetry nor in Herodotus does one find a single concrete statement of aristocratic hostility to money or coinage’, since coinage was ‘an essentially apolitical monetary instrument that Greek states, regardless of their political orientation, adopted for its efficiency in discharging financial obligations’ (p. 88). Trundle makes much of the symbolic importance of minted coin, but again, to quote Kroll (p. 90), ‘[n]o one would want to deny that as stamped, representative products of the governments that designed and manufactured them, coins had an unquestioned symbolic and political dimension’, but, that notwithstanding, ‘this was a secondary, if not accidental effect’. Trundle (p. 35) states that ‘Sparta did not mint any coinage until the third century and thus remained aristocratic, exclusive, and highly traditional’. There are assumptions at play here. The fact that Spartans did not mint does not mean that they did not use coinage: Xenophon’s account of the Cinadon affair indicates that there was an iron market at Sparta (*HG* 3.3.8), and field surveys indicate a convergence of road networks at Geronthrai (G.A. Pikoulas, *Tò óδικό δίκτυο τῆς Λακωνικῆς* [2012]), which, in turn, shows that the money flow into Laconia was complex.

Pomeroy calls the financial crisis of 33 CE ‘artificial’ (p. 253) in that it affected a small elite. Tacitus indicates (*Ann.* 6.17) that what began as a localised problem had consequences for the supply of money. Power and money are reciprocally connected: the abuse of one led to a crisis in the other. Stressing money’s symbolic value, Armstrong and Termeer argue that ‘coinage was not a new or foreign concept in Rome c. 300’ and ‘[o]nce the Roman state was required to mint coinage . . . it showed an amazing flexibility within this realm, producing a range of different issues for different purposes’ (pp. 200–1). Though coinage undoubtedly had an ideological dimension, the chief cause behind minted coin was increased wealth, which in turn was a consequence of Rome’s growing power. De Lisle’s survey of Sicilian coinage is thorough and well researched; I would only add that silver importation is attested at Aegina, Corinth, Cyprus and Ptolemaic Egypt. Sheedy argues that the first known coin bearing Rome’s name was minted at Neapolis and ‘a singularly unlikely vehicle by which to advertise solidarity with the Romans’ (p. 189). The comparative data upon which he bases his arguments are, however, inconclusive and controversial.

Supporting evidence for Rosenbloom's claim that those who belonged to the bottom census class (*thetes*) flooded into the urban centre and Piraeus in the period leading up to the Peloponnesian War (pp. 53–4) is late and unreliable (see E.M. Harris, in A. Markantonatos and E. Volonaki [edd.], *Poet and Orator* [2019], pp. 389–419). Rosenbloom states (p. 55) that Athenian naval power increasingly depended on foreign mercenaries and slaves: A.J. Graham (*TAPhA* 122 [1992]) established that the *therapontes* at Thuc. 7.13.2 were servicemen, not slaves of servicemen, in the navy, and established from *IG I<sup>3</sup> 1032* that the fleet employed citizens, metics and slaves; scholars have postulated ratios, but estimates are at best tentative, and the data are too fragmentary to monitor shifting patterns. The 'wage-drawing (*misthophoroi*) triremes' at *Ar. Eq.* 554–5 is often understood to refer to mercenary fleets, but *sensu stricto* it signifies that the naval personnel were paid in coin (on *misthophoros*, see Knox's essay).

Spalinger shows that even in non-monetarist systems warfare was economically costly: Egypt needed to maintain armies, and the economic cost incurred by the campaigns in the Near East may well have outweighed the gains. Likewise, Matthew demonstrates that warfare's cost to the Macedonian treasury was exorbitant: in the case of Macedon and Persia there was an inverse relationship between wealth and military success, but the outcome of Gaugamela (331 BCE) was that the state no longer needed to maintain the army. If, as Rich suggests, Pompey's interest in Ptolemy XII was about money, not military command, the events of 57–55 BCE show that proxy power had monetary explanations. Building on Trundle's publications, Knox states that '[m]ercenaries provide military service for remuneration', that 'unlike regular soldiers, mercenaries do not have a full stake in the state and the period of their service is always temporary', and that '[t]he occupational identity of mercenaries is contingent on the employment agreement that binds all these criteria together' (p. 266). Knox acknowledges that mercenary warfare was a feature of late antiquity but insists that payment in coin, though a *sine qua non*, was not sufficiently defining.

The old argument of C. Kraay (*JHS* 84 [1964]) that coinage arose for state rather than private use has met increased scepticism over the last few decades. These essays are to be commended for arguing the possibility that the emergence of coinage in Greece, which spread later to Italy and Rome, had a more complex and multifaceted explanation than warfare. At times, however, the issues are put starkly. In the opening chapter the editors cite *Arist. Pol.* 1256a–58b to disprove 'fallacious equations of money and wealth' and claim that Athens fell victim to a 'catastrophic misprision of money as power' (p. 5). When Thucydides (1.10.2) famously predicted that physical remnants of Athens and Sparta might delude future generations into overestimating the power of the former and underestimating that of the latter, he did not dissociate money from power but argued that outward appearances can deceive. Likewise, the proverbial folly of the Sicilian campaign (415–413 BCE) was down less to mistaken associations of money and power than to the fact that the Athenians had failed to grasp the magnitude of their undertaking (6.30–2). All the wealth of Asia could not guarantee Xerxes' victory in 480–479 BCE, which means not that money and power are unrelated, but that money alone cannot secure power. Wealth is a necessary, not sufficient, condition of power, a point that applies to the monetarised systems of later times and to the pre-monetarised society of Pharaonic Egypt. Money does not guarantee power, but without it power is unattainable.

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