

I.M. Konstantakos traces the development of the comedic theme of the deflowered virgin who remains innocent of sex from the Aesopic corpus to a later Byzantine collection of fables, through the Ionian epic *Margites* and a Hittite apologue as well as the Attic mythological comedy *Callisto* by Amphis and a novella by Rustico. He draws a number of interesting connections, particularly between the Greek and the Near Eastern material, although considerations of gender, given that the deflowered virgin is not always a woman, and of rape would have been welcome. A. Papathomas and A. Koroli examine the role of sex in abusive marriages via two female-authored papyri (*P.Oxy.* VI 903 and *P.Oxy.* L 3581): they examine the uneven gendered power dynamics in these marriages and attempt to determine to what extent this abuse was sexualised, more persuasively with regard to the second papyrus. Additional explanation of the social contexts of these testimonies and consideration of the rhetorical practice of these female-authored texts also would have been welcome. R. Hatzilambrou attempts to determine why there is so little evidence for love letters in the corpus of Greek papyri in Egypt. She situates the few extant examples in their contexts and concludes that the lack of privacy for letters in antiquity, low literacy rates and concerns about shame thwarted the intimate purpose of the love letter. Most love letters, she persuasively argues, were likely delivered over short distances and destroyed after reading, while the few examples remaining were probably addressed to prostitutes or enslaved individuals; most lovers probably felt a magical spell would achieve their goals more readily than a letter. Lastly, S. Efthymiadis and C. Messis deftly trace the paradigm of Diotima from Plato's *Symposium* through early Christian texts (Methodius' *Symposium*, the *Pseudo-Clementines* and the martyrdoms of St Nereus and St Achilles); they argue that these authors adapt Diotima's role into new, 'female' mouthpieces to give voice to emerging sexual mores, namely virginity, and to denounce the spread of gendered violence.

The diverse subject matter of the volume makes it of interest to scholars studying not only sexual practices in antiquity, but also gender, the body, and the individual authors and phenomena discussed here. It sheds valuable light on specific sexual practices and other understudied topics: its contributions address questions not found discussed elsewhere in scholarship.

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VIEWS ON POVERTY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

CARLÀ-UHINK (F.), CECCHET (L.), MACHADO (C.) (edd.)
Poverty in Ancient Greece and Rome. Realities and Discourses. Pp. x + 305, fig., maps. London and New York: Routledge, 2023. Cased, £120, US\$160. ISBN: 978-0-367-22114-0.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23001658

After a series of groundbreaking studies in the 1970s, including the work of P. Veyne on euergetism and É. Patlagean on Byzantine poverty, the destitute, the subaltern, the oppressed and the disadvantaged have now returned to the stage of classical scholarship. (As with so many topics, arguably they have never really been away, e.g. M. Atkins

and R. Osborne [edd.], *Poverty in the Roman World* [2006].) The motley assortment of terms testifies to a widening of the analytical scope: where earlier works tended to focus on a specific group or dynamic such as euergetism or Christian charity, more recent studies recognise that large numbers of people and foundational structures of the ancient world risk falling between the cracks of our scholarship. At first glance, this volume follows this trend, describing poverty ‘as a dynamic condition that impacted ancient societies as a whole’ (p. 2) and bundling chapters on ancient Greece, Rome and late antiquity. Yet it does not have much to say directly about the destitute, the subaltern, the oppressed or the disadvantaged. Rather, what the wide net that it casts on poverty does – and does well – is to decouple poverty from the poor. This move frees the contributors to perform a fine-grained analysis of the discourse of poverty, which is first and foremost an elite discourse (although J.C. Magalhães de Oliveira has the poor in late antiquity using the novel discourse about them to further their own aims). Whereas a recent volume in the same series, with some overlap in contributors, foregrounds subalternity and *Ancient History from Below* (edd. C. Courier and Magalhães de Oliveira [2022]), this volume can be said to make an opposite move, teasing apart views on poverty from above.

What it sees from above are fewer differences between historical periods than in previous accounts. Especially the impactful reconstruction after Patlagean (*Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance* [1977]) and P. Brown (*Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* [2002]) of a transition from a civic society in ancient Greece and Rome – in which care extended only to the maintenance of a civic community, not to a concern with the poor – to an economic model of benefaction centred on need in late antiquity, is becoming less rigid, if not entirely debunked. I. Berti discusses how Greek sacrifice, although ‘not intended for the hungry’, could ‘function as a “safety valve” in the social fabric’ (pp. 88–9); and Magalhães de Oliveira demonstrates that the civic and the economic models were not mutually exclusive in the cities of late antique North Africa. Another common current throughout the volume and the texts, places and periods it discusses is the concern with sorting and categorising people. That the label of poverty can be a powerful tool of control is perhaps nowhere clearer than in late antiquity, as shown in the chapters by D. Caner (on the more or less deserving poor according to Christian authors) and Machado (on how the Church found and registered the poor in the city of Rome). But the act of categorisation, and the fluidity of and tensions between categories, surfaces throughout the volume, including in the chapters on ancient Greece and Rome. The phenomenon of poverty was debated even in philosophical treatises: É. Helmer shows how Socrates viewed it as a result of the philosophical quest for truth – a pragmatic consequence of not having time for household management; whereas for Diogenes and the cynics it was a precondition for truth-seeking, which demanded complete freedom, including from money. No wonder modern scholars get lost in definitions when studying poverty, since those definitions, labels and categories – what poverty was and what it does – were at the core of what poverty was in the ancient world itself.

The most striking constant between chapters and periods is the overwhelming elite anxiety about impoverishment. Cecchet traces this in the eroding association between socio-economic position and moral qualities, from Archaic Megara to classical Athens; L. Webb follows impoverished senatorial women in Rome and the fears for and consequences of their fall from wealth; Carlà-Uhink finds concerns about potential mismatches between social and economic capital among the Roman elite in Cicero; Caner reminds us that late antique Christian authorities ‘understood the acute personal shame that a loss of status entailed’ (p. 217). If relative poverty is the shame that springs from not being able to keep up with one’s neighbours, then the elites of the ancient world seem to have had plenty of experience on the subject. This does not teach us about those

who were unable to make ends meet or those unsure of whether they would have something to eat the next day, week or year, but it does provide an important piece of a large and complex puzzle on ancient poverty.

The volume centres discourse, a wise choice both to provide coherence and to maximise the potential of mostly written sources (with some exceptions e.g. in the chapters by C. Taylor and E. Rowan). Surveying the promise of sources that made poverty and the poor 'far from invisible in ancient society', from historical and philosophical texts to legal codes, the introduction somewhat awkwardly adds in 'survey techniques and stratigraphic methods' (p. 6), yet these remain absent in the remainder of the volume. The volume's subtitle is therefore a bit misleading: 'realities' are only touched upon insofar as they are performatively conjured by discourses. Debates regarding the macro-economic causes and conditions of poverty are sidestepped (e.g. W. Scheidel and S.J. Friesen, *JRS* 99 [2009]), and with reason, as these tend to inform mostly on absolute poverty – modelling how many people lived under certain thresholds of income or wealth – and less on poverty as a social relation. Yet arguably some of the broader social and economic realities of the periods discussed could have helped anchor the discourses retrieved in the different chapters and their changes over time. Brief nods to such historical context are made sporadically, for example when Cecchet points to the archaic growth of manufacture and trade (p. 24), but rarely substantiated or incorporated fully. When C. Rollinger, for example, charts the changing elite attitudes towards loans and debt between the Republican and Imperial Roman periods, one cannot but wonder if this evolving discourse was rooted in a changing socio-economic context. Put differently, was elite poverty newly frowned upon in Imperial times because this was now a world in which fortunes – literal and figurative – could no longer change quite so quickly?

An important part of the volume's thorough dissection of discourses of poverty is its attention to modern discourse. Taylor helpfully reminds readers that seeing poverty in the ancient world is not a mere exercise of filling the gaps, as this would risk reifying the assumptions that created those gaps in the first place. In tracing the strategies and techniques used in late antique Rome to make the poor visible, Machado in turn emphasises that seeing is never a neutral act: seeing the poor was as much about subordination and control as it was about care.

The volume excels at close reading of the source material. Its theoretical framework is basic but effective. The introductory chapter lists a few of the classic references on poverty, including P. Bourdieu and A. Sen, and it is a condensed form of the former's theory of the different forms of capital that is operationalised in many chapters. G. Bernardo discusses the economic sources needed to achieve (social) honour in Sparta; Webb emphasises the economic capital necessary to sustain social and symbolic capital among the Roman elite; Carlà-Uhink's reading of Cicero similarly asks whether impoverished senators continued to exercise symbolic capital (p. 178). Bourdieu's scheme helpfully points at the schisms and frictions in ancient discourse, but no attempt is made at further fine-tuning or adjusting the theoretical framework.

Sen's concept of capabilities – how means can be converted into freedoms – is used by Taylor to suggest that the dwellers of Bau Z in Athens attempted to make a home in a non-traditional context; by Rowan to emphasise the food choices available to many in the Roman world; and (implicitly) by C. Freu in a revealing discussion based on papyri of how the very poor only appealed to court in the case of physical violence. It is interesting to note that these chapters tend to be the ones using more archaeological and historical evidence and methodologies. Do different theoretical frameworks lend themselves differently to certain methodological and evidentiary traditions and constraints? While the overall coherence in the volume is strong – a testament to the editors' care and

the contributors' work –, a concluding chapter and/or a somewhat heftier introduction could have usefully explored some of these trends and parallels in greater depth.

This is a stimulating volume that shines light on the discourses of poverty in the ancient world writ large – and writ largely from above. It teaches us to embrace rather than resist the slippery nature of the category of poverty. It is recommended reading not only for literary scholars but also for macro-economic modellers, survey archaeologists, scholars of micro-history and anyone studying discourses or realities of poverty in the ancient world.

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GREEK AND ROMAN MILITARY UNIT COHESION

HALL (J.R.), RAWLINGS (L.), LEE (G.) (edd.) *Unit Cohesion and Warfare in the Ancient World. Military and Social Approaches*. Pp. viii + 186. London and New York: Routledge, 2023. Cased, £120, US\$160. ISBN: 978-1-138-04585-9.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X23002755

There has been a recent trend in ancient military scholarship to try and reconstruct the human face of ancient Greek and Roman warfare, from social bonds within armies to combat trauma and PTSD – albeit sometimes with mixed success. However, only infrequently have these issues been taken further to consider their impact on soldiers both collectively and individually on the battlefield, an area in which more research is sorely needed. This volume goes some way towards addressing this understudied area, exploring the specific issue of unit cohesion within armies of the ancient world, considering how it was created and supported within socio-military institutions, how it affected performance in battle – and what happened when it failed.

The book contains nine chapters addressing different aspects of the volume's theme, temporally spanning from the classical Greek world to the late Roman period, and presented broadly in chronological order. Some of the papers focus on elements of unit cohesion within a specific time period, others take a wider view and address a particular aspect of cohesion within a 'Greek', 'Roman' or 'ancient' scope. From the outset it is clear that the volume overall is not hesitant to incorporate modern theories of social and military cohesion, in a way that may appeal to scholars of modernity looking to the ancient world for validation of their theories.

An introduction by Hall sets up the general context of the individual chapters, discussing in brief ancient references to unit cohesion and providing a short overview of each paper. Hall also defines the terminology of unit cohesion as it will be used throughout the volume. Modern military terminology, particularly from the post-WW2 United States, is particularly referenced in terms of providing a basic theoretical framework. The volume then moves on to three papers themed around Greek warfare. R. Konijnendijk opens with considerations of unit cohesion in the context of the classical Athenian phalanx, addressing the issue of how it could be both fostered and maintained in what was essentially an amateur army, which underwent remarkably little training before being unleashed on the