additional essays which (for no reason given) the author has decided to append to an account of the constitution. The second relates to the intended readership. It is to be hoped that this book will be read, and indeed read through, by undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as being consulted by more advanced scholars. It is a pity, therefore, that it is full of passing allusions to events in Roman history and to pieces of legislation that will be clear only to someone who has read a great deal about the Roman Republic. I give, simply as one example, his remark that 'Cicero tells in passing of a *lex Maenia*, which removed the senate's veto on the results of elections, probably shortly after the controversy over the election of M'. Curius Dentatus to his first consulship' (p. 38). A footnote refers the reader to the passage in Cicero's *Brutus*, but who and when Curius Dentatus was, to say nothing of the nature of the controversy, is left to the reader to discover by other means. This is not an isolated example, and it is a shame that so valuable a book on so fascinating a topic should be made more difficult to use by a lack of attention to the likely preknowledge of the majority of its probable readership.

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PUBLICANS AND CENSORS

C. NICOLET: *Censeurs et publicains. Économie et fiscalité dans la Rome antique*. Pp. 500. Paris: Fayard, 2000. Paper, frs. 180. ISBN: 2-213-60296-4.

This volume consists of twenty-one of Professor Nicolet's articles which have appeared individually in various journals and other collections over the course of the last twenty-five years and which are here republished as an easily accessible, and reasonably priced, collection. The articles cover various aspects of the economy of the Roman state in the Republican and early Imperial periods, and reflect several of the main areas of interest and approaches to the evidence that have characterized N.'s impressive scholarly output of the past three decades.

The chapters have been grouped under four thematic headings, which progress from the general to the specific, and which reveal much about the way N. believes the public economy of the Roman world should be studied. The first group of articles is collected under the heading 'timocratie et impérialisme'. Included here are some of N.'s earlier studies of the timocratic structure of Roman society, the importance of the Roman census in establishing that structure, and the ways in which that structure formed the basis of the state economy. Together with these are chapters that outline developments in the financing of the Roman army through the period of imperial conquest under the Republic, and that highlight the fiscal inequality that existed originally between full Roman citizens on the one hand and everyone else in Italy on the other, and later between the administrative region of Italy and the rest of the Mediterranean empire.

The second grouping of chapters brings together a series of studies that focus on more specific aspects of the census itself. Among these are two articles on the rôle of coinage as the unit of common measure by which the tax-paying capacity of individuals registered in the census could be assessed; the well-known article, 'Le cens senatorial sous la République et sous Auguste' (published here for the third time),

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arguing that there did exist already under the Republic a minimum property qualification for membership of the senate; another on the figure for Roman citizens registered in the census of A.D. 14, as recorded in the *Fasti* from Ostia; and one on the implications for the Roman census of the transition from city-state to nation-state, looking at the often difficult evidence of the *Tabula Heracleensis*.

The third part of the book is dedicated to the grain supply of Rome and to the administrative mechanisms necessary to ensure the maintenance of that supply. The emphasis here is on the logistical details of state intervention in the supply of grain from the empire and on the amount of information that must have been available to those who administered the operation. The fourth and final group of chapters addresses the central rôle of the *publicani* in the collection of the majority of the public revenues of the Roman state. Here it is useful to have together three of N.'s close studies of the recently discovered inscription from Ephesus, the so-called *Monumentum Ephesenum*, which preserves a large part of a text containing the regulations for the collection of state revenues in the province of Asia for the period from the early first century B.C. to the mid-first century A.D. The decision not to include a fourth of his articles on this document ('Le *Monumentum Ephesenum*, la loi Terentia-Cassia et les dîmes d'Asie,' *MEFRA* [1999]), because it was 'un peu trop technique sans doute', is curious.

The majority of the articles collected in this volume are specialized studies of particular documents or of particular details relating to the logistics of Roman fiscal administration. As N. explains in the preface, the collection is not intended to provide an account of the Roman state economy in its totality; the various chapters are offered simply as 'des fragments, ou des jalons, pour une histoire économique du monde romain' (p. 7). Nevertheless, two general points about the study of the economy of the Roman world are present throughout. The first is that we must move beyond the misguided question of whether the nature of the economy was or was not determined by its socio-political context (the 'primitivist'–'modernist' debate). No economy, ancient or modern, has ever been completely 'free' of the social and political factors that surround it; so the question with which we must begin should not be whether or not, but rather to what degree, the economy was dependent on such factors. With this observation, most scholars of the ancient economy must surely by now be in agreement.

The second general point regards the rôle of statistical data in the study of the Roman economy, a subject of much debate. Though he avoids the anachronistic term 'statistic', N. speaks repeatedly of the importance of 'données chiffrées' and 'séries chiffrées' throughout the book. He has an optimistic view both of the reliability of the figures that have been transmitted to us by our sources and of our ability to develop some idea even of those figures and statistical documents that have not (the latter being the idea behind N.'s research group that produced the two volumes of *La Mémoire perdue*). Thus N. avoids the kind of model-based reconstructions developed by K. Hopkins (e.g. *Conquerors and Slaves* [Cambridge, 1978]) and employs an approach more similar to that, for example, of R. Duncan-Jones (e.g. *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* [Cambridge, 1990]) in its attempt at systematic quantification. Nevertheless, even those scholars who tend towards a more strictly theoretical or model-based approach to the economy of the Roman world will want to have this convenient collection of excellent studies on their shelf.

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