

scattered throughout the book. To the references already cited others can be added that suggest further reasons for coining. For example, we are told that such-and-such an issue was made before a war, and was 'a special edition coinage for the festival' (p. 164), or that another issue (of gold staters) 'had a commemorative purpose' and the coins 'were intended for broad circulation within the empire' (p. 67). Elsewhere it is suggested that gold coinage in general was used 'for very large transactions or for interstate trade, primarily with India' (p. 13). There is much food for further thought here, and again, rather than referring to these points piecemeal, it would have been better to tackle the questions raised in a dedicated section in the Introduction.

Finally, I am all too well aware of the problems involved in illustrating numismatic discussions. Coins are small objects, and decisions on a particular problem frequently depend on the interpretation of details, such as whether or not a particular individual is or is not wearing trousers or sandals. Clarity is particularly important – as is also the number- of images chosen. It is difficult for a reader to compare an illustrated image with one that is not.

All that said, the book will certainly be informative to those who are relatively unfamiliar with the handling of numismatic evidence, and of the Seleucid evidence in particular. It fills a gap by providing valuable insights into the nature and development of the iconography on Seleucid coins that are not readily available elsewhere, together with much of the information that will enable many of the questions raised to be pursued further.

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Roman to Late Roman

Enora Le Quéré, *Les Cyclades sous l'Empire romain: Histoire d'une renaissance*. pp. 456, b/w ill. 2015. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes (Collection: Histoire). ISBN 978-2-7535-4045-3, paperback €23.

This is the fourth book dedicated to the Cyclades during the Roman period, after P. Nigdelis' Πολίτευμα και Κοινωνία των Κυκλάδων κατά την Ελληνιστική και Αυτοκρατορική Περίοδο, Thessaloniki (University of Thessaloniki) 1990, L. Mendoni's and S. Zoumbaki's *Roman Names in the Cyclades. Part I*, Athens (National Hellenic Research Foundation) 2008, and S. Raptopoulos', Κυκλάδες Νήσοι: Συμβολή στην Οικονομική τους Ιστορία κατά την Ελληνιστική και Αυτοκρατορική Εποχή, Tripolis (Archaeological Institute of Peloponnesian Studies) 2014. Le Quéré's book essentially updates that of Nigdelis. Mendoni's and Zoumbaki's study is a catalogue of Roman names, while Raptopoulos' work has clearly a more archaeological perspective.

In this book, Le Quéré basically challenges the view of decline that the ancient authors attest (e.g., Cicero, *Ad Familiares*, 4.5.4; Strabo 10.5.4), and argues that after a period of crisis in the 1st century BC, the Cycladic islands experienced a 'renaissance' – as the striking subtitle of the book informs us at the outset. This central idea is built with mastery. Indeed, this is a well written study which leaves to the reader the impression that the author controlled her tools, which, admittedly, were many: literary sources, inscriptions, coins, material culture and other archaeological data; not all of them though have been exploited to the same level, and not all of them have been equally successful in their use.

The book is divided in four parts and 16 chapters. In the first part the author presents the political and administrative framework of the islands during the Roman period. She also analyses in detail the fiscal and monetary system, as well as the introduction of the imperial cult in the Cyclades. In the second part she discusses building activity in the Cycladic cities. The author focuses on monumentality, trying to identify cases of new erections or restorations, and she does not care too much about matters of urban development and layout. What she is mostly interested in, is to challenge the notion of ruins, to shed light on the socioeconomic aspect of building activity (highlighting thus the phenomenon of

evergetism), as well as to identify signs of (the ill-defined concepts of) *acculturation* or *romanisation* in the construction of the period. The third part of the book is dedicated to the social aspect of the Cyclades. After a helpful outline on demography, the author examines the social structure of the communities, focusing (inevitably) on the elites. She also discusses the phenomenon of the Italians and other newcomers living or having business in the Cyclades, and her analysis on the 'oligarchisation' that the islands underwent in the Roman era is equally detailed. Finally, the last part of the book focuses on the economy. Only two islands, however, are sufficiently examined, namely Paros and Melos, supplemented by some comments on Amorgos (basically on its glass workshops), and a general discussion on the ports and anchorages.

The book is complemented by three appendices: the first includes a selection of inscriptions (both ancient text and translations are provided), the second catalogues the Cycladic coin emissions, and the third presents *stemmata* of some elite families. Eleven black-and-white plates are also inserted in the book: two general maps of the islands under discussion, and depictions of the coins that the islands struck. In the main text the figures are very few, but there is an abundance of aggregated tables, concerning several themes (e.g., catalogues of the imperial priests, lists of the statues dedicated to the emperors, catalogue of the Roman citizens, catalogues of the coins that the islands struck from the 1st to the 3rd centuries CE). Strikingly lacking are maps and plans of the cities under discussion (just the plan of the agora of Thera is presented in p. 145 fig. 3). This is indicative of the little attention that has been paid to this matter. Clearly, the author has primarily relied on inscriptions for her interpretations, which, admittedly, she used in an exemplary manner.

However, the matter is not exhausted here, especially when one wants to compile an overall synthesis. Le Quéré does not touch at all on the changes in the settlement patterns that the islands underwent from Hellenistic to Roman times. She leaves uncommented, for example, the fact that from the four cities that Keos had in Classical-early Hellenistic times, only two remained in the Roman period. The same phenomenon occurred in Mykonos. What were the demographic and economic implications of these developments? The author dedicates just three pages (173-175) for the discussion of the urban development of the Cyclades from the 2nd century BCE to the 6th century CE.

The Cycladic cities continued, of course, to exist in the Roman period, and their institutions remained

active. The economy and society have been transformed in the way Le Quéré illuminatingly described: privatization and 'oligarchisation' basically occurred. But in these times the Cyclades became a marginal part of the Mediterranean and did not enjoy the prosperity of the earlier periods (see Mendoni's and Zoumbaki's introduction in their 2008 book). It is perhaps telling that athletic and artistic festivals are lacking in the Cyclades during the Roman period, as Le Quéré attests (272). In fact, the author admits that while in Hellenistic times every island had at least one theatre, in the Roman period the available data indicate that only Melos, Thera and Naxos renovated them (160-161). Not surprisingly, these islands were among those that indeed thrived, but it would be risky to think that this applied to all of the islands; the Cyclades were not a homogeneous unit.

It is true that the archaeological evidence is not sufficient to permit a full understanding of what happened in these islands during the Roman period. Most of the ancient cities are unexcavated, while several others lie below the modern towns. Equally meager is the evidence for the countryside, with the exception of the intensively surveyed islands (i.e., Melos, Keos), where the situation is relatively better. In the absence of sufficient data, absolute terms like 'renaissance' would be better avoided. The 2nd century AD undoubtedly was a period of recovery for the whole of Greece, but the available evidence cannot support such bold characterisations. The epigraphic data might attest a certain recovery, but most of all they manifest the level of privatisation that the Cyclades experienced in the Roman period.

In the last section of the book, Le Quéré bases her discussion on the economy of Paros on the marble quarries of the island, which were intensively exploited by the Romans. In this period though, the quarries were under imperial control, so the emperor basically took profit of them. Based on that, the author reasonably wonders if the marble exploitation permits us to speak of 'economic prosperity of Paros, or of economic prosperity of Rome in Paros' (291-292). Similarly, I wonder if the characterisation that the author presented in this book permits us to speak of a 'renaissance' of the Cyclades during the Roman period, or of a 'renaissance' of the elites in the Cyclades during the Roman period.

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