

Spouses in Roman Egypt', investigates the economic aspects of marriage in this particular province, via legal papyri – loan and sale agreements between spouses. We learn that women had leverage in marriage and very often supported their husbands economically. Although these documents cannot reveal the real nature of the relationship of the couples, they certainly provide information on the wife's pivotal position in the household. Yet, this is Egypt, where under the influence of the domicile population, women had the capacity to produce legal consequences on their own and were more emancipated in comparison with women of other regions.

The last essay, M. Parca's "'For I Have No Other Sun but You": Emotions and Married Life in Greek Papyri', covers the Ptolemaic period as well as the first three centuries under Roman rule in Egypt. Parca analyses the emotions expressed, or more often implied, between spouses in papyri evidence. The papyri she examines are marriage agreements, divorce documents and private letters. In her conclusion she presents another couple from Ptolemaic Egypt, Dryton and Apollonia, known from legal documents and a single literary text from their rich private archive. The point made is that this couple were no different from any other, and their ideal was no different from Modestinus' definition cited above. They all sought for, or maybe they already had, union and oneness in their relationship.

The volume is part of Routledge's *Monographs in Classical Studies* series. As the classical studies are, this book is interdisciplinary and will be useful for non-Classicists as well. Although there is no 'gender' in its title, it is a huge contribution to gender studies in classical antiquity, providing readers with information on the historical, social and cultural context.

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje DANIELA TOSHEVA-NIKOLOVSKA
toshevadaniela@gmail.com

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF MAIL ARMOUR

WIJNHOVEN (M.A.) *European Mail Armour. Ringed Battle Shirts from the Iron Age, Roman Period and Early Middle Ages.* (Amsterdam Archaeological Studies 29.) Pp. xii + 507, colour figs, b/w & colour ills, colour maps. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022. Cased, €161. ISBN: 978-94-6372-126-4.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X22001937

Mail armour proved one of the most important and enduring defensive technologies of the pre-modern world. This excellent monograph provides a thorough and multifaceted exploration of mail in Europe from its development in the Late Iron Age into the Early Middle Ages, roughly 300 BCE to 1000 CE. The introductory Chapter 1 lays out the ambitious goals of the study, considering both the archaeological and the visual records, and reconstructing the manufacturing process through careful examination of surviving remnants with reference to documented production techniques from later periods. W. also considers hybrid armour, where scales were attached onto the outside of a mail shirt. Chapter 2 considers the geographical and chronological origins of mail technology,

which emerged in the Celtic sphere. W. accepts the downdating of the Ciumești mail shirt from the late fourth to the mid-third century BCE, and argues that fragments from Horný Jatov in Slovakia, c. 300–250 BCE, represent the earliest surviving mail. The technology quickly spread across the La Tène koine and into Roman Italy. W. dates the adoption of mail by the Romans to the early second century BCE, although an S-shaped fastener discovered at Baecula strongly suggests mail was used by the Romans by the Second Punic War (J.P. Bellón Ruiz, 'La cultura de la guerra en la antigüedad. Investigar la memoria destruida: la batalla de Baecula', in: S. González Reyero [ed.], *Iberos: Sociedades y territorios del occidente mediterráneo* [2012], pp. 197–212, at p. 207).

Chapter 3 discusses archaeologically recovered mail specimens. While a few fragments have been discovered at battlefields such as Kalkriese and Harzhorn, Roman mail tends to survive from scrap piles deposited in imperial-era army bases or from weapons burials associated with auxiliary soldiers. Most mail from beyond the empire comes from funerary contexts, including small mail patches often included in non-warrior burials, seemingly for apotropaic purposes.

Chapter 4 provides a survey of mail in the visual record, which is the best evidence for the design and wear of the armour. Changes in style are apparent, as tunics acquired short sleeves in the first century CE, lost shoulder flaps and sometimes gained dagged hems in the second, and by the late empire often had long sleeves and hems. Dura Europos (c. 250 CE) provides the first evidence of mail coifs being worn in lieu of helmets.

Chapter 5 shifts to philology, noting that Latin lacked a stable word for mail. The evidence that mail was called *lorica hamata* ('hooked armour') is at best inconclusive, as the term was mostly used in poetry and may not have reflected contemporary military jargon. W. argues that mail may have simply been referred to as *lorica*, the blanket term for armour. This scepticism is not entirely convincing; the Romans had a variety of armour, and attested modifiers like *hamata*, *catena* or *Gallica* would have been useful to specifically denote mail, although it is likely that a good deal of *sermo militaris* eludes modern readers.

Chapter 6 explores decorative elements in mail armour, as rows of copper rings might be added to provide streaks of colour, especially around the hem, sleeves and neck. In some instances iron links could be fastened with a copper rivet, providing a subtle glitter. Chapter 7 considers the evidence for padded garments worn under mail shirts. Visual evidence for quilted tunics worn without armour and for *pteryges* extruding from beneath mail shirts suggests the existence of some sort of undergarment, similar to the under-armour (gambesons, padded jacks etc.) well attested during the Middle Ages.

Chapter 8 considers how the mail shirt was constructed. No literary descriptions or visual depictions of the craft process survive from antiquity, and the process must be deduced from later evidence. The process for manufacturing the riveted rings involved first forming metal wire either by drawing a small ingot through successively smaller holes on a draw plate or hammering a thin strip of sheet metal into a twisted wire. The wire was next tightly coiled around a mandrel and cut into rings. Each ring was then flattened at the overlap, pierced with an awl and connected with a rivet. The alternating solid rings could either be manufactured from wire that had been forge-welded into a ring, or punched from sheet metal; while both forms of manufacture may have been used, at least some solid rings from Roman-era armour show the deformations caused by the punch process. Early specimens at Ciumești and Tifenu are only made from butted rings (which offered far less protection than riveted rings), but W. concludes that these likely represented the imperfect diffusion of the technology rather than its initial stage; most early shirts (including the earliest at Horný Jatov) are riveted.

Chapter 9 examines how the mail rings were woven together. The dominant European pattern was the 4-in-1, in which each ring attached to four other rings, in alternating rows of solid and riveted rings; this pattern was established early (although the third-century BCE Tifenau shirt is exceptionally a more rigid 6-in-1) and endured due to its balance of flexibility, protection and weight. The ubiquity of the 4-in-1 pattern in Europe from antiquity to the Middle Ages stands in contrast to Japanese manufacture that saw a variety of intricate patterns, although usually on composite armour where the mail weave was partially decorative.

Chapter 10 explores how the mail ‘cloth’ was finally constructed into a shirt. An examination of the Vinmose mail shirt shows that it was constructed in the flat and then turned into a garment by joining the various edges of the mail fabric with riveted links. Mail construction tended to follow the civilian tailoring practices of the time, so that the construction of Roman mail closely resembled that of a tunic and was also similar in cut to the tube-and-yoke linen armour that had preceded it.

Chapter 11 examines the technical aspects of the ring manufacture, particularly the various differences in how the riveted rings were coiled on the mandrel, overlapped, flattened and riveted. Small differences in technique provide insights into the craft process and also the genealogy of the technology, with persistent regional variations hinting at a deeper craft tradition. Chapter 12 provides a brief summary and suggests that digital reconstructions of mail may provide a novel avenue of scholarship. The last pages feature a ring-by-ring digital reconstruction of the Vinmose shirt. An extended appendix provides an invaluable database of mail specimens, providing a short description, the current museum location and past publications for each.

The production values are superb, replete with numerous high-resolution photographs and illustrations in colour, offering a close-up look at mail scattered across international collections and not always on active display. This definitive book will prove a cornerstone for pre-modern armour studies for decades to come.

State University of New York at Albany

MICHAEL J. TAYLOR
mjtaylor@albany.edu

ON BEING GREEK

BEATON (R.) *The Greeks. A Global History*. Pp. xii + 588, maps. New York: Basic Books, 2021. Cased, US\$35. ISBN: 978-1-5416-1829-9.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X2200169X

What did and does it mean to be(come) Greek? B.’s exciting new book revolves around these questions and how the answers to them have evolved over time – a very long time. B. takes us through three and a half millennia of history concerning ‘the Greeks’ in fifteen compact, easy-to-read chapters, aimed at a general rather than an academic audience. The breadth of B.’s knowledge is enviable, and pretty much anyone who picks up this book stands to learn a great deal from it, as this reviewer certainly did. In spite of its scale the book is remarkably well balanced and coherent. The Peloponnesian