

BOOK REVIEW

The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual. Edited by Björn C. EWALD and Carlos F. NOREÑA. Yale Classical Studies 35. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xviii + 365. Hardcover, £60.00/\$99.00. ISBN 978-0-521-51953-3.

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In September 2005, I had the pleasure of attending a conference in New Haven on “the Emperor and Rome.” It stood out for excellence in two categories: the high quality of the papers and the frequency with which Yale’s caterers brought out meals, snacks and coffee—perfect *panem et circenses* for a grad student. Over the years I have frequently consulted my notes from the conference for both research and teaching. I was pleased to see that those excellent papers have not only now been published, but also supplemented by two additional essays. The result is a thought-provoking collection that will benefit readers in a number of disciplines.

The essays examine “the relationship between ... the Roman imperial monarchy, as a particular configuration of power, and the nexus of actors, practices, images, and spaces” of the city of Rome (xxi). Imperial presentation and the interconnection of place and politics in Rome are trendy topics, but this book goes beyond the normal focus on monuments to include factors like the urban plebs, public rituals and “ephemeral” structures, and private commemorations. The essays examine a city beyond concrete and marble, one that was not just built by emperors, but grew together with them. They also weave together different disciplines and methodologies, mixing theoretical approaches with the more positivist style of traditional topographic studies. Some of the ideas expressed here are not new, but several are presented in English for the first time, either as a new translation of an article or a revisiting of work previously published in German, French, or Spanish, a welcome development on both counts.

In their introduction, Ewald and Noreña connect the dots between the diverse topics and approaches of the volume and contextualize it in current scholarship. Their nuanced, rapid discussion may leave non-specialists a bit confused,

but there are rewards here for anyone interested in the Principate's public guise. In particular, their argument that the term "propaganda" "should ideally be given up altogether" (33) is cogent and ought to be read by anyone considering using it in the context of the emperors' public representation.

Although the introduction deals individually with the themes of the subtitle (space, representation, and ritual), the volume is not similarly subdivided, and each essay combines the themes. The first is the only one not written for the volume; instead, Zanker's *Der Kaiser baut fürs Volk* (1997) is offered in English as "By the Emperor, For the People" with updated bibliography. His examination of leisure, *liberalitas*, and urban space remains pertinent after 15 years, and his discussion of amusement parks complements recent scholarship, for instance, Spencer 2005¹ on Nero's "Disneyfication" of Rome, but with a more positive, less condemning conclusion.

Similarly, although written for this volume, Flaig's essay on Nero presents in English arguments he has previously published in French and German. Although his treatment of the plebs tends to create a political monolith of a group that must have been fragmented and inconsistent, his reading of Tacitus offers a convincing case for his model of the Principate as an "acceptance" system with no real legitimacy. Arce's examination of imperial funerals *in effigie* also revisits a topic from his previous work in Spanish, but its presentation here in English allows him to respond to recent work on the imperial cult, notably Gradel.² Fittschen's essay on portraits focuses on the issue of *Kopienkritik* and offers Anglophone readers a snapshot of his four decades of publication in German on the subject. I found his chapter an engaging introduction to the subject.

The other essays feature original work on smaller areas of research. Eck focuses on the ways in which the elite adapted to new rules of public display under the Caesars, and his discussion of small equestrian statues and *trapezophora* was particularly fascinating. Mayer emphasizes that social roles limited the choices Romans had in praising the emperor and offers an alternative to viewing the uniformity of praise as centrally determined propaganda. Both chapters valuably give other Roman actors more of a voice in the representation of the emperor.

The next essays shift the focus from the people back to the buildings. Packer links Pompey's theater with the Temple of Concord, as restored by Tiberius,

¹ D. Spencer, "Lucan's Follies: Memory and Ruin in a Civil-War Landscape," *G&R* 52 (2005) 46-69.

² I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford, 2002).

showing how Pompey offered the Julio-Claudians a model for imperial behavior; this chapter is notable for beautiful illustrations, particularly the digital models of the theater. Boatwright's title puns on "homeland security" to argue that Antonine monuments reflect a mood of anxiety, but her focus is mainly on the period's temples, columns, and funerary monuments. Marlowe argues that Constantine usurped not only Maxentius' throne, but also his building program, which had emphasized the conservation of Rome after a period of neglect. These chapters masterfully illustrate how *exemplum*-minded emperors exploited the palimpsest of the Roman cityscape.

The concluding chapters, including Fittschen, Flaig, and Arce, focus on the emperor himself. Koortbojian examines statues depicting Caesar and Augustus as *imperatores*, as opposed to traditional *triumphator* statues, and argues for anti-triumphal imagery in these innovative public portraits. D'Ambra, like Arce, focuses on imperial funerals, particularly the pyre and the sensory stimulation provided by the cremation, including the running colors of encaustic paintings, the burning of incense and other fragrant offerings as a buffer from the smell of the burning corpse, and the loud snaps and hisses as the massive wooden pyre collapsed. She marshals evidence from both literature and material sources to provide vivid testimony to how memorable these ephemeral monuments would have been to witnesses.

In sum, *The Emperor and Rome* brings together an impressive roster of experts from different fields, resulting in a well-rounded exploration of the complex relationships between Rome and its residents. The book contains many high-quality illustrations and is generally free from errors. I enjoyed reading it very much and find it a fitting monument to the equally enjoyable, albeit ephemeral gathering of seven years ago.

JENNIFERE E. THOMAS

Hamilton College, jet.felix@gmail.com

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