

## BOOK REVIEW

*Death and Dynasty in Early Imperial Rome: Key Sources, with Text, Translation, and Commentary.* By J. BERT LOTT. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. xiv + 368. 32 figs. Hardcover, \$90.00/£55.00. ISBN 978-0-521-86044-4. Paper, \$34.99/£19.99. ISBN 978-0-521-67778-3.

The author answers the vital question, for whom is this book intended? Primarily for advanced undergraduate and graduate students. It is to inform them of an important period of Roman History, to afford entry to Latin inscriptions, and to expose them to documents as a type of Latin distinct from the literary. Lott is expounding eight texts, some long known, one emerging from Spain only in the nineties of the last century. They prescribe mourning and commemoration at Rome, Italy, and elsewhere in the Empire, for imperial princes, Gaius and Lucius Caesars, AD 2 and 4, Germanicus and Drusus Caesars (19–20 and 23), and, in the case of Germanicus, prescribing the punishment of those who acted against him and against the majesty of the imperial house (20). They are of the highest importance; it is to be hoped that the sensational title (accurate for all that) catches students' attention.

Lott rightly begins by offering a historical background, including stemmata of the imperial family, but rounds off this introduction with two vital sections on epigraphy and the present inscriptions. Then come the texts, some with uncertainties engendered by passing from original drafts through the offices of governors into copies for public display in minor towns. Lott provides not only edited transcriptions illustrated with a number of photographs, but "diplomatic texts," transcriptions of what is on the bronze or stone, as is common, and done by W. Eck *et al.* in *Das Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* (*Vestigia* 48; Munich, 1996), which Lott takes for his text. Whether this "diplomatic text" is necessary or helpful to young students when there is an adequate commentary, is doubtful. In third place comes Lott's commentary on his texts, full and conscientious and making frequent reference to previous commentators and editors, notably to M. Crawford, to A. Sánchez-Ostiz, to Eck and his colleagues, and to a score of papers by W. Lebek.

In keeping with his wish to put the texts into their historical place, indeed to juxtapose them with the relevant stretch of historical writing, the author prints excerpts from Tacitus' *Annals*, Books 2 and 3; the deaths of the older princes which hardly figure, and that of Drusus, are not included. Alas, Lott uses the translation of A. J. Woodman (Indianapolis, 2004), scholarly, but painful to read. It would have been worth doing the job himself (see *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 February 2005, 28). Finally, Lott adds biographies of the deceased princes, necessarily involving repetition. Over-generosity might be considered a fault in the book. It has wide margins, and even the paperback version is weighty (though the price is modest). Something handier might have been welcome. It is surprising, then, to find the commentaries running from one document to the next without even a doubled dividing space. That does not help navigation, especially as Lott has logically designated his material by acronyms (thus DPG for the "*Decretum Pisanum de augendis honoribus Gaii Caesaris*").

We may now return to the original question and the author's answers. In one sense Lott is too modest in his aims: there are few scholars, let alone graduate students, who would not learn something from his edition. As to expanding their knowledge of an important period of Roman history, one which, as Lott rightly says, established the position of Augustus as heritable, that depends largely on the introduction and the biographies. The product is plain and adequate with a useful section on "Death and Commemoration." As to the function of the work as a friendly point of entry to Latin inscriptions, "friendly" has to be a relative term; the author rightly refers to the importance of the *Res Gestae* as a companion piece, and it is friendlier than these documents. For familiarizing readers with "documentary" Latin, their value is incontestable; a valuable page is devoted to the relationship between document and inscription. Largely, then, the author meets the demands of his task, and I shall end by noting points which, in a second edition, he might wish to reconsider. They concern largely questions of language, tending to the conclusion that this helpful work could have done with even more sharpening up than Lott's honest scholarship has given it.

The word "provincial" does not apply to Pisa (p. 1). P. 7 reads as if the Senate designated Octavian *princeps iuventutis*. Gaius did not ask to retire to Italy but to Syria (Dio 55.10a.8). There is a conflict between two dates given for Tiberius' adoption, received and (apparently) Velleian (13f.) which needs explaining. Lott is over-free with the words "treason" (21 and 23), *maiestas*, and "*damnatio memoriae*," explained as a modern term only at 284. The translation of *Ilvir* as "joint executive" is bizarre, and if "amictos" they are not necessarily

“veiled,” 64f. More than “legally” is required for “*per legem coloniae*” (75). “*Fraudulenta clade*,” never a satisfactory phrase (88f.), is exposed by “dishonest defeat”; “*caede*” might be considered. “*Destinarent*” should not be translated “designate” (122f). Punctuation and tense sequence in “Piso’s Guilt/Crimes” (143) are not perfect. More help could be given to readers of the translation of *Ilicitana*. Not everyone believes that on Caesar’s death the Pontificate Maximus was declared hereditary in his family (178, on Dio 44.5.3). “*Dissimulatio*” does not mean pretending to have feelings (231). “Senatorial” provinces should be “public” (234). The paragraph on Germanicus’ death (252; not 8 October) is confusing.

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