

## BOOK REVIEW

*Roman Artists, Patrons, and Public Consumption: Familiar Works Reconsidered.* Edited by BRENDA LONGFELLOW AND ELLEN E. PERRY. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2018. Pp. xiv + 255. Hardback, \$75.00. ISBN: 978-0-472-13065-8.

These nine essays, dedicated to Elaine K. Gazda, cover fascinating subjects, some well known, others less familiar. Brenda Longfellow and Ellen E. Perry stress the importance of visual analysis and context in “Roman Art Reconsidered” (1-12); the authors challenge many assumptions.

Jennifer Trimble emphasizes style and technique in “Beyond Surprise: Looking Again at the Sleeping Hermaphrodite in the Palazzo Massimo” (13-37). The carving of the back is “flowing, curvaceous,” attracting the viewer, but the front, “choppy and angular” (17), repels. Are the other eight large-scale hermaphrodites carved in this way? Trimble does not see the sculpture as a direct reference to the myth of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, yet the combination of soft young woman and adolescent boy were provocative. The setting would have been a peristyle garden, part of a staged ensemble of architecture, frescoes, plants and water features.

“Dismembering a Sacred Cow: The Extispicium Relief in the Louvre” (38-62) is a painstaking analysis of the only known Roman illustration of extispicy. Melanie Grunow Sobocinski and Elizabeth Wolfram Thill consider two original fragments, post-antique restorations, 16<sup>th</sup>-century drawings of lost fragments and hypothetical sketches of missing parts. They discard the traditional early 2<sup>nd</sup>-century date, finding closer parallels in 3<sup>rd</sup>-century medallions. Better black-and-white illustrations are sorely needed.

Diana Y. Ng’s “The Salutaris Foundation: Monumentality through Periodic Rehearsal” (63-87) is about an inscription from the Great Theater at Ephesos recording a monetary gift to the city from C. Vibius Salutaris in 103/4 CE for 30 silver statuettes. They were to be paraded through the city periodically, starting and ending at the Artemision. Interest from the capital was also to be distributed, but

recipients had to be present. The point was “to build the monument of Salutaris in mental space” (84).

Lea M. Stirling, “From Mystery Masterpiece to Roman Artwork: The Journey of the Aspasia Statue Type in the Roman Empire” (88-116), catalogues 39 examples from public and private contexts, three with portrait heads and current hairstyles. She compares Aspasia with two popular male types, the Omphalos Apollo and the Discobolus, not with classicizing Roman female types which, like Aspasia, provided stock bodies for portraits. Stirling raises the red flag of “an assumed original bronze statue” (111).

Elise A. Friedland analyzes “The Sebaste Apollo: Form, Function, and Local Meaning” (117-141). The 1.5-m marble epebe with long hair, side-locks and bow and quiver probably came to the city ca. 200 CE. Friedland argues that it was carved in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century, “a Roman creation that draws on earlier works and styles” (131), and must have been imported to Sebaste in “this marble-bereft region” (138). Marble and struts suggest an origin in Asia Minor: the white marble was carved ingeniously to incorporate a large black vein down the back (pl. 5.1).

“At Face Value: Painted Ladies on Pompeian Walls” (142-165), augmented by eight color plates, addresses the vexed question of more than 100 painted female heads, most painted between 10 BCE and 79 CE, and rarely appearing alone. Bettina Bergmann finds that some have personalized features or represent mortals as goddesses, others are paired with deities or with mythological scenes, still others have attributes such as a stylus or jewelry. The last is “the sophisticated literate woman who ... is visually anchored in the historical moment by social signs of her community,” opposed to one bordering between goddess and human (160).

Molly Swetnam-Burland offers the possibility of opposing views in “Marriage Divine? Narratives of the Courtship of Mars and Venus in Roman Painting and Poetry” (166-190). Mars and Venus were apparently the ideal couple. Swetnam-Burland focuses on the House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto, considering the Latin literary tradition on this subject. The lovers are either committing adultery on Vulcan’s bed—where he will trap them—or this is their marriage bed. Amor stands by. Swetnam-Burland sees viewers applying their own views of marriage.

In “Beyond High and Low: The Beauty of Beasts at the House of the Citharist in Pompeii” (191-212), Barbara Kellum recounts delightful fables about these animals. Here they may be “thinly veiled commentaries on the inequities of the distribution of power and on the strategies of assertion and compromise

necessary to survive" (198), suitable dinner-table conversation "in this home of two wealthy former slaves" (200). One could see the animals as "live-action theater" (201), or boar and venison as meals, and most of the animals in "the amphitheater and in the aristocratic animal park" (202). Theirs is "a fluid interpretive universe in which the possibilities for comparing humans and animals were many and protean" (209).

In "The Votive Relief from House V.3.10 in Pompeii: A Sculpture and Its Context Reexamined" (213-240), worshippers and an attendant with a ram face a large, seated goddess, Aphrodite or Demeter. Previously identified as an Attic votive relief of the late 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, it is redated by Jessica Powers between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the early 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, and she sees it as "one of several components of an elegant and distinctive display encompassing much of the house" (232). Why does she suggest that the relief could be an heirloom? Powers mentions a bronze statuette from the atrium, but does not question its presence or its unusual size of 74 cm. She calls it a Hellenistic ruler, a mythological figure, a private individual of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, or a "Roman copy after a model of that period" (232), a casual interpretation for a largely abandoned belief, a subject that Gazda and others have addressed in, for example, *The Ancient Art of Emulation* (2002).

Considering that Gazda edited *The Ancient Art of Emulation*, readers might have expected the "assumed original bronze statue" (111) and the "Roman copy" (232) to have been the subject of an essay in this volume, if not the theme of the volume itself. As it stands, it is not clear what unites these essays, only four of which address Pompeian topics. Black and white illustrations are sparse and of poor quality; nine pages of color plates somewhat mitigate this problem.

CAROL C. MATTUSCH

George Mason University, mattusch@gmu.edu