

essays that extend coverage to late antiquity, examining the impact of Christianization on urban topography and changes in agricultural practices.

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doi:10.1017/S0017383522000109

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### *Roman History*

Another bumper edition, again by way of apology for absenteeism in the spring issue (though this time due to paternity rather than plague). We begin with the latest Beard blockbuster.<sup>1</sup> In her *Twelve Caesars*, based on her 2011 A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, Mary Beard turns her trademark combination of penetrating gaze and jovial tongue to the reception of the famed group of elite first-century CE Roman men who span a key moment in the transformation of ancient politics. Belying their importance for ancient historians and archaeologists, they have been rather neglected by art historians of later periods. With an extraordinarily wide lens, spanning from Alexander the Great to the 2017 modern art of Alison Wilding, Beard corrects that omission, demonstrating their central place in the history of Western art, and exploring not just how those emperors have been represented, repackaged, and reused, but what that says about the identities, worlds, and priorities of those who so mobilized them. The result is a tour de force of art and intellectual history. Not only is the reader presented with gloriously arcane anecdotes on almost every page, but their sum amounts to a sustained inquiry into the role that past power has played, and continues to play, in our history, politics, art, and culture.

*Twelve Caesars* has twelve substantive chapters and an afterword. Chapter 1, ‘The Emperor on the Mall’, starts in the city where Beard’s original lectures were delivered. Beard opens with the odd tale of President Andrew Jackson’s outright rejection of the suggestion that he be buried in a Roman sarcophagus in which the remains of the emperor Alexander Severus supposedly once resided, which until recently stood incongruously on the Mall. Both because the sarcophagus almost certainly never contained anything of the sort, and because it demonstrates the continuing valency of Roman emperors and the objects associated with them, it introduces the book’s twin themes: the endless quirks of discovery, errors of identification, and problematizations of categories that characterize the afterlife of the Caesars, and their ongoing symbolic importance to contemporary generations. This chapter establishes some of the underlying principles, questions, and problems of the exercise – from the now often overlooked ubiquity of images of emperors in almost every medium (including the edible) in the

<sup>1</sup> *Twelve Caesars. Images of Power from the Ancient World to the Modern*. By Mary Beard. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2021. Pp. xi + 376. 242 colour and 18 b/w illustrations. Hardback £30, ISBN: 978-0-691-22236-3.

West over the last two thousand years, to the inescapable difficulties of differentiating cleanly between ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ (given constant re-carving, re-creation, reuse, restoration, reception, copying, forgery, adaptation, and imitation).

Chapter 2, ‘Who’s Who in the Twelve Caesars’, explores the historical origins of imperial representation, from Julius Caesar’s innovations in plastering his image across the empire, via the distinctive stylistic choices of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties, to the rather disappointing – but likely designed – difficulties of distinguishing between different despots. Via two busts of Caesar, one in the British Museum and one in the Turin Archaeological Museum, that have at different points in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries become the world’s go-to image of Julius Caesar, Beard explores the pitfalls of such identifications, and plumbs what is at stake in making them in the first place. Chapter 3, ‘Coins and Portraits, Ancient and Modern’, demonstrates the neglected importance of numismatic images of emperors – rather than those in sculpture – as the basis of almost all their later representations. Coins were for a long time the best available source of imperial imagery, and they find their way into all sorts of unexpected spots, not least the sixteenth-century Slovakian communion cup decorated with eighteen coins, including those of emperors who (supposedly) persecuted Christians, so the pious worshipper drank the blood of Christ eyeball to eyeball with Nero (88). More importantly, the style of imperial portraits on coins influenced not just the depiction of emperors but all portraiture from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Chapter 4, ‘The Twelve Caesars, More or Less’, explores the blurred edges of the eponymous canon at the book’s core, which apparently clean category has in fact over time both encompassed an ever-changing rostra of eclectic emperors and others, and also regularly amounted to both fewer and more than twelve. Beard demonstrates that this is not (always) a case of error or ignorance, but an ongoing dialogue with Suetonius’ initial, not-uncontroversial grouping, and one complicated by the twin dynamics of collection and transmission. Chapter 5, ‘The Most Famous Caesars of Them All’, zooms in on the history of arguably the most famous example of the book’s theme in art, Titian’s eleven (*sic*) Caesars (1536–9), whose commission, display, sale, European odyssey, restoration, replacement, and replication demonstrate well how the Caesars have been variously appropriated by European elites in their own interactive self-representations. Chapter 6, ‘Satire, Subversion and Assassination’, ranges from sixteenth-century Hampton Court to the nineteenth-century Paris ‘salon’ to further explore the odd ambiguities of rulers reusing images of Roman predecessors who for the most part both met tragic ends and left ambivalent legacies. Chapter 7, ‘Caesar’s Wife...Above Suspicion?’ returns to many of the themes of the previous chapters via the lens of the representation of the women of the first-century CE imperial families. Most interesting here is the long legacy of ancient authors’ obsession with issues of sex and succession, perhaps most gruesomely evidenced in the late medieval graphic images of Nero supervising the exposure of his murdered mother’s womb (265–9). The brief Chapter 8, ‘Afterword’, points forward to the story to be told once films emerged as a medium, as well as recapping some of the book’s themes most pertinent to contemporary discussions of memory and power, lightly touching in particular on their relevance to the current tempestuous culture wars.

The book is imbued throughout with Beard’s hallmark scepticism, often marked by gentle humour at the expense of her fellow scholars. Equally evident is that scepticism’s capacity to radically shift our perspectives. It enables corrections of misidentified

objects, as with Beard's realization that the example of the Aldobrandini Tazze in London's Victoria and Albert Museum has the wrong statue attached, so that Domitian peers down at scenes not of his own Suetonian life but of that of Tiberius (145–50). And it also drives transformative readings of well-known artefacts, best exemplified here by her demonstration that Henry VIII's famed set of Flemish Julius Caesar-themed tapestries, which influenced European tapestry production for generations to come, were actually based on Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which poem's ambiguities problematize much about the tapestries' meaning and role in Henry's self-identification (199–210). Appreciation of Beard's scholarship is facilitated here by the exquisite quality of production of 260 images, the vast majority in colour.

This book thus continues Beard's impressive trend of writing books simultaneously academically original and easily accessible. That is no mean feat, and its difficulty should not be underappreciated. It is also a powerful testament to the value of scholars daring to venture beyond their own specialisms. Doing so comes with obvious risks, but it also provides opportunities for insights that would be otherwise impossible. It is therefore to be encouraged, and I hope that this book's success will inspire comparable enterprises in future. Finally, I wouldn't bet against the book's success being marked in monumental form, if Beard's final plea that the Alexander Severus–Andrew Jackson sarcophagus be returned to the Mall is heard. Impact indeed.

If Beard's wide-angle lens represents an expansive engagement with emperors across time, space, and media, Caillan Davenport and Christopher Mallan's edited collection, *Emperors and Political Culture in Cassius Dio's Roman History*, offers a focused study at the other end of the spectrum – a deep dive into one author's engagement with emperors and politics in one historical moment (though with a closing Byzantine sojourn in the final essay on Dio's reception).<sup>2</sup> Born in a panel at the Classical Association in 2016 (which I in fact attended), this latest contribution to the near-constant stream of publications on Dio<sup>3</sup> starts from the premise that his historiographical project was an attempt 'to articulate what the imperial system actually was in both idea and practice' (1). But the idea set forth in the famous set piece of Books 52 and 53 seems to jar with the practice that follows, because in the latter the character of the individual emperor matters, despite the suggestion to the contrary in the former. It is this tension that the editors here interrogate in a multifaceted collective study of 'not only the centrality of emperors and the monarchical system of government to Dio, but also the historian's concern with the fundamental way emperors shaped individuals, groups, and communities' (4).

To this end they have commissioned thirteen essays (though they author four between them) arranged in four sections: Dio on political narratives, on individual emperors, on other political groups, and the aforementioned lone final paper on reception. Part I begins with two papers addressing the implications of Dio's famous fourth-wall collapsing comment on the need to write the history of the Imperial period differently (*Hist. Rom.* 53.19.1–3) – Adam Kemezis on the importance of public opinion, and Caillan Davenport of rumour, in Dio. Cesare Letta then brings fresh

<sup>2</sup> *Emperors and Political Culture in Cassius Dio's Roman History*. Edited by Caillan Davenport and Christopher Mallan. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xiv + 357. 1 b/w illustration. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-1-108-83100-0.

<sup>3</sup> See my last review, *G&R* 68.2 (2021), 324–5.

perspectives to traditional – indeed, out-of-fashion – questions of source criticism, while Rhiannon Ash considers Dio’s penchant for the ‘wondrous’, particularly as he comes to describe contemporary history. In Part II, Tiberius takes centre-stage. Christina Kuhn argues that his funeral speech for Augustus must be read in dialogue with the tone, themes, and structure of the *Res Gestae*. Christopher Mallan highlights Dio’s use of fear as the key thematic lens for Tiberius, while also noting that Dio tends to separate imperial character from imperial action (as opposed to Suetonius). Shushma Malik then turns to Nero, demonstrating Dio’s originality when depicting a figure for whom clear traditions of representation had already been established, as when he simply ignored that predilection for Greece and its culture with which his second-century predecessors had made hay. Davenport’s second contribution addresses the role that military command plays in Dio’s conception of imperial politics.

Part III turns outwards to the *populus*, citizenship, and emperors’ and Dio’s respective circles, and can be productively read in twin pairs. Monica Hellström shows how the Roman people stand for Rome’s body politic when Dio describes in visceral terms the abuse they suffered under bad emperors. Myles Lavan presents the first attempt to look at Dio’s – as it turns out, multivalent and slightly anticlimactic – attitude to citizenship overall (rather than just his famous dismissal of Caracalla’s edict of universal citizenship). Barbara Saylor Rodgers explores the vocabulary Dio mobilized in his portraits of advisers in both the Republican and Imperial portions of his narrative. Mallan observes that the final parts of Dio’s history blur the lines not just between history and biography but with autobiography too, as Dio paints an increasingly rich prosopographical landscape of his peers. The final essay, in Part IV, by Alicia Simpson, looks at Dio’s renaissance in tenth- to twelfth-century Byzantium. Christopher Pelling’s Epilogue surveys the last half-century of Dionian work since Fergus Millar’s dissertation-based book opened the floodgates, and – via a deluge of rhetorical questions – suggests avenues for future study, whether that be via the use of literary theory, intertextuality, Dio’s relationship with Greek authors, or post-Byzantine reception.

The ‘political culture’ of Davenport and Mallan’s title is a phrase in fashion, and forms the focus of two important works on the Republic and Empire respectively: Valentina Arena and Jonathan Prag’s *A Companion to the Political Culture of the Roman Republic*,<sup>4</sup> and Laurens Tacoma’s *Roman Political Culture*.<sup>5</sup> While both focus on the same phenomenon, they form a valuable methodological contrast. As each one outlines (in the editors’ Introduction and first stand-alone contribution, by Karl-J. Hölkesskamp, in the former, and in the latter’s Introduction), theories of ‘political culture’ are attempts to get beyond a traditional focus in political studies on institutions and actors, to the surrounding phenomena – values, traditions, and means of communication – that were equally important to concrete political practice.

<sup>4</sup> *A Companion to the Political Culture of the Roman Republic*. Edited by Valentina Arena and Jonathan Prag. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2022. Pp. xx + 595. 13 b/w photos, 7 b/w illustrations, 2 b/w maps. Hardback £135, ISBN: 978-1-4443-3965-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Roman Political Culture. Seven Studies of the Senate and City Councils of Italy from the First to the Sixth Century AD*. By Laurens E. Tacoma. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. xi + 320. Hardback £79, ISBN: 978-0-19-885080-9.

This approach is heavily influenced by what social scientists have dubbed the ‘new institutionalism’, which recognizes that institutions shape behaviour not just formally but in less tangible ways too.

For Arena and Prag, a focus on political culture is simply an acknowledgement that, as well as the traditional interests of scholarship – institutions and actors, which both find extensive treatment here – a holistic understanding of Republican politics must include those para-political phenomena that have historically received less attention. By incorporating in one place the legal system, social interactions, and ‘political grammar’, they thus claim to offer ‘the first integrated view of the political life of the Roman Republic’ (2). For Tacoma, on the other hand, ‘political culture’ is a tool to solve a problem, namely the role of those same institutions and actors – in particular, the Senate, local Italian city councils, and their respective members – once they were sidelined under the Principate. Tacoma begins from the premise that, though the Senate became simply a glorified city council, and that it and those councils had both lost the majority of any formal influence, they were nevertheless extant right through into late antiquity. Since they remained the prime space for elites to flex their status, but without their old concrete power, it was no doubt predictable that they turned inwards, and ‘became bodies that were self-referential and self-definitional’ (5). The traditional institutional view of politics has thus paid no attention to these political ‘shells’, but their persistence – for almost as long as they were in their ‘heyday’ (10)! – suggests we are missing something of their role in this changed political landscape. Since these were participatory bodies, their continued existence indicates that people continued to participate; that this remained the case as the landscape continually shifted around them speaks both to their importance and their adaptability. ‘Political culture’ – and the ‘hidden’ symbolic and performative behaviours it incorporates – therefore serves for Tacoma as a heuristic tool to explain these institutions’ survival after ‘the death of politics’ (11).

Particularly interesting, in my view, is the respective structural choices these two volumes make. We are all familiar with the often-standardized format of ‘companion’ and ‘handbook’ volumes, but Arena and Prag make some unusual choices. First, after Hölkeskamp’s aforementioned opening methodological gambit, Part I is dedicated to ‘Modern Reading’, which encompasses the early modern and modern political reception of the Republic, covering Machiavelli, seventeenth-century England, eighteenth-century France, the formation of the American state, Mommsen, and the post-Syme landscape. Part II turns to ‘Ancient Interpreters’, and from the obligatory starting point in Polybius ranges through Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Appian, and Cassius Dio – who are all loosely interested in formal structures – and Sallust, Livy, and Plutarch – who tell us more about wider political culture and dynamics (109). It is thus 189 pages before we get to the ‘political culture’ proper, a fascinating decision explained on the – entirely correct – basis that ‘the shifting interpretations of this political system are an integral part of the task of the historian’ (2; see also 21), since the way previous generations have interpreted the past necessarily impacts are own encounters with it.

Only after this long history of engagement do we find three thematic core sections. Part IV treats ‘Institutionalised *Locī*’ (the census, state political assemblies, armies, consuls, tribunes, priests, and other officials – note too the law courts, put in Part V; discussed at 109); Part V, ‘Political Actors’ (citizens, Italian allies, extra-Italian

foreigners, elites, *matronae*, and *libertini*); and Part VI, 'Values, Rituals and Political Discourse' (values and ideology, patronage, violence and bribery, plebeian culture, the legal world, oratory, religious rituals, myth and theatre, and imagery and space). The final section, 'Politics in Action: Case Studies', demonstrates the interaction of these diverse aspects of political culture in action, via five historical snapshots: 218–212, 169, 133, 88, and 52 BCE respectively. As such, *A Companion to the Political Culture of the Roman Republic* carefully builds from theory and historiography to thematic coverage, before demonstrating the explanatory power of what has gone before in a series of tightly focused historical experiments. Indeed, though its chapters were written in isolation, the final section can, as Prag provocatively suggests, be read as ('almost') a new 'stop motion' narrative of the Republic's fall (506–7). This does not just make for a more coherent reading experience than one expects in such a volume, but makes this book much more than the sum of its parts.

Tacoma's structural choices are equally innovative. Claiming on the one hand that specificities of circumstance would make any grand thematic study of Roman political culture 'bland, if not banal... a tepid and superficial book, and... unmanageable' (18), and on the other that similarities of dynamic over six centuries demand a wide scope, he proposes a middle-ground of seven contained case studies spanning this long period. That has the additional advantages, he notes, of allowing detailed treatment both of those cases studies, where the tensions and ambiguities of elite political life are exposed, and also of those texts central to Roman elite literary culture. This methodological experiment (albeit one not entirely unprecedented) produces an intriguing book, which takes in an eclectic range of material in its pursuit of the grey areas of Imperial politics. Each exposes a tension or ambiguity which Tacoma sees as the core of Roman political culture. The *Apocolocyntosis*, with its thematic overlay of apotheosis and the senatorial membership – for both of which issues Claudius proved a perfect foil – reveals the unresolved tension between elite free speech and imperial intervention in senatorial debates. Pompeian election graffiti demonstrate that, while patronage networks kicked in at election time, their inherent instability did not make elections foregone conclusions – ties of patronage were simultaneously pervasive but weak. Pliny's *Epistles* 4.26 and 3.20 expose differences of senatorial opinion around election humour, which reveal questions of elite self-representation. The supposed collective senatorial acclamations after Commodus' assassination seeking the abolition of his memory showcase the circumstances in and means by which these waning bodies could still (try to) wield real power. Constantine's rescript to Hispellum demonstrates the crystallization and confusion around the rules and mutual expectations regarding competition for honours, as all parties increasingly became bound by traditional rules of reciprocity. A dossier concerning the Decian draining of the Pontine marshes shows a similar muddying in the dynamic between elite and ruler concerning benefactions, since they were voluntary and yet expected. Finally, close readings of the Ravenna papyri demonstrate the disconnect between the claim that city councils remained the core of Italian society – and their resulting attempt to shut down other routes to influence – and the reality of sixth-century urban life.

One advantage of Tacoma's strategy is that it enables a kind of *longue durée* thesis that has become increasingly unfashionable, while retaining the close (literary) readings that have tended to replace it. This in turn usefully problematizes those periodizations – in particular, the transitions from Principate to Dominate to Ostrogothic rule – that

began as disciplinary conveniences but have become interpretative straitjackets. But, as Tacoma acknowledges, it also renders his thesis vulnerable to accusations that it is partial or unrepresentative. It is to his credit then that he ends with a lengthy Conclusion that does not simply summarize the preceding chapters. First, he works to tease out connections between the seven chapters, demonstrating that the tensions and ambiguities that each exemplifies recur in the others too. And second, he works to demonstrate why those can be seen as characteristic of Roman political culture over time (from the first to the sixth centuries) and space (across the empire, though the case studies all concern Italy). His argument is that, while the institutions changed significantly, the behaviours they enabled – by which he means the ambiguities and tensions that defined elite political interactions – did not (or at least, not at the same rate), producing continuity of political *culture* rather than politics. That in turn means that, while these institutions may have waned politically, in social terms they remained vital.

Amid the rich array of topics covered by these two wide-ranging works, conversation is arguably an important omission (though see 389 in the former, with a reference to Rosillo-López's earlier work, as well as Davenport's discussion of rumour in his first essay in *Emperors and Political Culture in Cassius Dio's Roman History*). That, as Cristina Rosillo-López delineates in her engagingly written new monograph, *Political Conversations in Late Republican Rome*, is characteristic of its almost total absence in scholarship on Roman politics more widely.<sup>6</sup> As she remarks in her Preface, the last few years of the COVID-19 pandemic have brought into renewed focus the importance – and irreplaceability – of face-to-face conversation (vii). She seeks to demonstrate in this book that by neglecting these extra-institutional exchanges scholars have missed not just a key facet of Roman political culture but the oral glue that made it function at all – something apparent, she suggests, from even a brief perusal of any of Cicero's letters, with their endless references to meetings and conversations past or anticipated (4). For Rosillo-López, these represent the invisible 'dark matter' to traditional rhetoric in oratory or letters – far dwarfing the latter in scope, but harder to access; subsequently ignored in traditional explanatory models, but arguably the missing piece for creating a new 'grand theory'.

After an Introduction that situates her study amid past scholarship on senatorial interactions and its arguments over *clientelae*, *patrocinium*, *fides*, and *amicitia*, the brief first chapter outlines that same landscape of theories of political culture we have already encountered. Rosillo-López labels her approach 'extra-institutional' and distances it from the *le/la politique* binary in French scholarship – since *le politique*, with its association with the *populus*, omits those outside that body; from the *Konsenssystem* in German-language scholarship – which does not properly distinguish between formal and informal speech; and from 'political culture' – which she considers only the 'ceremonial, symbolic and affective' side of politics (15). As we have seen, however, 'political culture' is capable of fairly broad interpretation; nevertheless, it is true that, as already observed, conversation has not yet been properly treated there. This chapter also argues for the need to extend our picture of political participation beyond elite men, something facilitated by considering political conversation, which by its nature

<sup>6</sup> *Political Conversations in Late Republican Rome*. By Cristina Rosillo-López. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xi + 290. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-285626-5.



includes freedmen and women. The second chapter zooms in on Cicero's letters, the book's prime focus, since they offer our best chance to get at such intimate conversations, being, Rosillo-López argues, contemporary and – though carefully selected and at times rearranged – not substantially rewritten or altered. She thus uses Cicero's depiction of political conversation to create a frame within which other more fragmentary material can be read. This chapter considers too the diverse array of later sources that contain or refer to such conversations, though they are less rich, not contemporary, and edited in service to various later literary and/or historical commitments.

On these foundations, Rosillo-López turns to her argument proper. Chapter 3 looks at another issue close to the post-pandemic zeitgeist: the necessity of presenteeism. No working at home for Roman senators; the need to remain reliably informed not just on the issues of the day but on other senators' views on them meant a heavy face-time toll, hence the daily visitation routines that were replicated by elites even when they made seasonal forays outside Rome. This is demonstrated through detailed case studies of the events of 56 and 49 BCE. The next chapter turns to conversational training, exploring how wannabe politicians – both the sons of senators and new men – learned their trade, which, for Rosillo-López, meant learning how to chat, with the complex customs and social norms it incorporated. Chapter 5 assesses what these conversations actually did. Rosillo-López uses conversational analysis to work through close readings of conversations that Cicero relayed directly, demonstrating both their construction of self-projections and relationships, and also how they served as a means of circulating information. The latter becomes the focus of Chapter 6, which looks at the layers of insider knowledge, reliable intel, public opinion, predictions, rumour, and speculation which were the intangible currency of late Republican politics, difficult both to obtain and to contain by turns.

The seventh chapter returns to the hypotheses of the first. Given the importance of conversation, the need to spread as wide a conversational net as possible allowed for genuine agency by non-traditional actors. Put another way, the role of elite women in politics has traditionally been 'limited' to informal conversations; arguing that the latter was 'the default mode in politics' (235) moves that female agency from the fringes of Republican politics to the centre. The final substantive chapter tries to show, via the case study of Atticus, the impact of these face-to-face interactions on traditional interactions in the Senate. Admirably avoiding overplaying her hand, Rosillo-López argues not that the former were more important than the latter, but that the two played equally important parts in Republican decision-making.

Roman political culture, alas, has not traditionally been a subject lending itself to gender inclusivity. One of Rosillo-López chief goals is to widen our appreciation of the participants in Roman politics, hence her appendix of a 'Proposography of Non-Senatorial Actors' with sixty-three entries (and see, too, Francesca Rohr Vio's chapter on *matronae* in *A Companion to the Political Culture of the Roman Republic*). Two important new publications on women in the Roman world also help correct the traditional deficit. The first, *New Directions in the Study of Women in the Greco-Roman World*,<sup>7</sup> finds its roots in a panel at the 2015 Society for Classical

<sup>7</sup> *New Directions in the Study of Women in the Greco-Roman World*. Edited by Ronnie Ancona and Georgia Tsouvala. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. xiv + 278. 20 illustrations. Hardback £64, ISBN: 978-0-19-093763-8.



Studies conference convened to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the publication of Sarah Pomeroy's field-creating *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*.<sup>8</sup> A Festschrift in all but name, its editors, Ronnie Ancona and Georgia Tsouvala, attempt to showcase 'the current stage of and new directions in the now well-established field of women's history in classical antiquity' (1).

After an Introduction that embeds the publication of Pomeroy's seminal book in her own struggles at that time with local law and policy regarding 'forced maternity leave' (!) – a tale which reminds us, as I'm sure it is intended to, that conditions for female academics have arguably not blossomed at the same rate as has scholarship on ancient women – the volume presents twelve essays which 'involve new methodological questions to be asked, new time periods to be explored, new objects of study, as well as new information to be uncovered' (2). Pomeroy herself considers interdisciplinarity her chief contribution to the field, and the essays here marshalled thus appropriately span archaeology, art history, economics, epigraphy, history, law, literary criticism, papyrology, philology, philosophy, and reception. Edith Hall's opener considers Phaedra's false accusations of rape in Euripides' *Hippolytus* as foundational to a long-standing and pernicious trope of female insincerity, made stronger by repeated and valorized performances of that play. H. Alan Shapiro explores the use of another fictional woman, Penelope, in Athenian foreign policy, focusing on the statue of her found in the ruins of the palace at Persepolis. Then come three essays spotlighting neglected historical women: Elizabeth Carney on Phila, the first woman called *basilissa*, and the reference point for the subsequent Hellenistic queens; Walter Penrose on Artemisia II and her role in the construction of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the 'Seven Ancient Wonders of the World'; and Barbara Levick on Apronia, and the possible lurking traces in her domestic murder of the hands of Livia and the shadowy Urgulania. Roger Bagnall then zooms out to review 'A Century of Women's History from the Papyri', outlining not just what has been achieved but what remains to be done. Then come three thematic offerings: Ann Ellis Hanson continuing the Egyptian focus by discussing the use of cosmetics there; Georgia Tsouvala on female athletes in late Hellenistic and early Imperial Greece; and Bruce Frier on the legal side of underage marriage. Two Augustan-focused pieces follow: Marilyn Skinner on the relationship between the economic dimension to Augustus' adultery legislation and women's contemporary capacity for wielding wealth; and Kristina Milnor's layered interrogation of Dio's claim, when discussing this legislation, that there were far more men than women in aristocratic circles, which she uses as a launchpad to raise epistemological issues about the writing of women's history. Amy Richlin's final chapter looks at public political activity by women in mid-Republican Rome, and thus helps to fill the lacuna in recent treatments of political culture with which we started.

The pedant (read: killjoy) in me feels honour-bound to point out that the 'new information to be uncovered' included in the breakdown of possible eponymous 'new directions' could encompass any piece of academic writing with a claim to originality. And it is true that some of the pieces here – Hall's, Bagnall's, or Milnor's

<sup>8</sup> S. B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves. Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York, 1976).

most obviously, though in strikingly different ways – embrace the ‘stock-taking’, Janus-faced ambitions of the volume more than others. But it is notoriously difficult to make a *Festschrift* cohere, and twelve high-quality essays on antique female experience and reception are never to be sniffed at. Indeed, it is arguably the greatest legacy of Pomeroy’s efforts – now continued apace by others, this volume’s editors chief among them – that the proliferation of work on the subject means that gender no longer serves as a focused topic for an edited collection.

A second publication, Emily Hemelrijk’s *Women and Society in the Roman World. A Sourcebook of Inscriptions from the Roman West*, adds a useful resource to such ambitions for future study.<sup>9</sup> Hemelrijk presents here for non-specialists a selection of epigraphic material pertaining to women from the West – though not all in Latin – of the first century BCE to the third century CE. It will ultimately have a companion volume for Eastern material, currently being compiled by Riet van Bremen. The goal is to use epigraphy to access women from across the social spectrum – upper- and middle-class women, freedwomen, and even some female slaves – in their daily life, loss, virtue, and vice. The sourcebook’s 602 inscriptions are split across seven thematic chapters: family life; legal status, citizenship, and ethnicity; occupations; social relations, travel, and migration; religion; public life; and imperial women. They are neither comprehensive nor representative (since the vast majority of inscriptions are short epitaphs that offer only the barest glimpse of individuals), but do cover all Western provinces for the period in question (but weighted, again, in accordance with Italy and Rome’s prominence and the epigraphic habit), and all pertinent materials (stone, bronze, lead, wood, pottery, and paint). Together this eclectic material paints a vivid picture of women in the home and workplace, in positions of subjugation and prominence (as priestesses, benefactresses, patronesses, landowners, landlords, and managers), and being by turns mistreated and adored – in short, of women living full outer and inner lives. And it is nice to think that if we read these inscriptions as they were meant to be read – out loud (9) – we are giving voice to those made voiceless by the patriarchy, and by time.

The volume is presented very clearly. Each section and subsection has a helpful thematic overview, and each inscription’s translation is preceded by a brief introduction that describes the object in question and its context. It is therefore highly usable. Given its deliberate limitations of geography, chronology, and medium, it is unlikely to dislodge other established examples of the genre for the study of ancient gender, as Hemelrijk notes.<sup>10</sup> But that narrower scope brings obvious advantages by showcasing a greater depth of material, and this volume will no doubt find a welcome place in relevant undergraduate and graduate courses. Its value there will be enhanced by the prescient decision to provide on the Press website a PDF with the texts of the inscriptions in the original language, complete with alternative readings and scholarly corrections, a good solution to the difficulty of catering to discrete audiences.

<sup>9</sup> *Women and Society in the Roman World. A Sourcebook of Inscriptions from the Roman West*. Emily A. Hemelrijk. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xxi + 345. 69 b/w photos, 2 b/w illustration, 3 b/w maps. Hardback £99.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-14245-9.

<sup>10</sup> M. R. Lefkowitz and M. B. Fant (eds.), *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome. A Source Book in Translation* (London, 1982).

Epigraphy is, as Hemelrijk observes, a phenomenon predominantly associated with cities, meaning that the picture it provides – whether of women or anyone else – will always have a distinctly urban tint (4). It is the subfield our modernist colleagues dub ‘urban history’ that provides the concluding focus of this review, one particularly welcome during the travel deficit many of us have been and are perhaps still experiencing. First to provide such vicarious pleasure is the finely produced *Veii*, edited by Jacopo Tabolli with Orlando Cerasuolo. Veii, the key node in the evolving Latin–Etruscan relationship, has undergone extensive new excavations over the past two decades thanks to the Veii Project of the Sapienza University of Rome.<sup>11</sup> This volume aims to curate in English the latest, often hitherto unpublished, archaeological research, with the perspectives of protohistorians, Etruscologists, and historians, on this most famous Etruscan city, and its almost thousand square kilometres of territories.

After an Introduction that sketches the history of the site – including a new chronological sequence – and the modern scholarly endeavours it has prompted, twenty-five substantive chapters follow, split into four unequal sections. The first, ‘Archaeology’, focuses on methods. It includes chapters on stratigraphy, by Valeria Acconcia, summarizing recent excavations, including the ninth-century BCE burial of a high-status thirty-year-old male subject to fairly consistent subsequent worship (...Veii’s founder...?); the south Etruria landscape survey by the British School of Rome in the 1950s and 1960s, by Roberta Cascino; and the geophysical magnetic survey of the so-called ‘Emptyscapes’ project, by Stefano Campana, which has revealed in particular the road system of the wider region. The second, largest (and slightly unwieldy), ‘History’, proceeds chronologically with thematic interludes, paying particular attention to the liminal periods between ‘protohistory’ and ‘history’. It treats by turns the Bronze Age, by Francesco di Gennaro; the transition from Bronze to Iron Age, by Folco Biagi; the eighth century BCE, by Alessandra Piergrossi; Veii’s developing links with its neighbours, by the volume’s editor Jacopo Tabolli; the orientaling period, by its editorial assistant, Orlando Cerasuolo; the seventh and sixth centuries BCE, with a particular focus on political structure and territorial organization, by Gilda Bartoloni and Anna De Santis; Veii’s relationships with the Greeks, by Francesca Boitani; and with the Near East, by Annette Rathje; the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, by Gilda Bartoloni (again) and Laura M. Michetti; Veii’s most important sub-urban sanctuary, Portonaccio, by Giovanni Colonna; cult evidence from urban sanctuaries more generally, by Ingrid Edlund-Berry; epigraphy, and Veii’s own scribal school; by Daniele Federico Maras; and defences, by Luca Pulcinelli. The third section, ‘Material Culture’, contains three chapters on the early Iron Age, orientaling, and late archaic and classical pottery, by Sara Neri, Silvia ten Kortenaar, and Maria Teresa Di Sarcina and Federica Pitzalis respectively; before further chapters on metals, by Matteo Milletti and Luciana Drago; wall painting (the earliest in the western Mediterranean), by Francesca Boitani; stone sculpture, by Iefke van Kampen; kilns and ceramics, by Barbara Belevi Marchesini; and architectural terracottas, by Nancy A. Winter and Claudia Carlucci. The fourth section, ‘Legacy’, contains a single chapter, on the

<sup>11</sup> *Veii*. Edited by Jacopo Tabolli with Orlando Cerasuolo. Cities and Communities of the Etruscans. Austin, TX, University of Texas Press, 2019. Pp. xviii + 238. 14 colour and 51 b/w photos, 56 b/w illustrations, 3 colour and 9 b/w maps. Paperback \$55, ISBN: 978-1-4773-1725-9.

Roman conquest of Veii in 396 BCE and Furius Camillus, by Christopher Smith; and a further chapter of ‘Conclusions’, by Tabolli and Cerasuolo, that both zooms out to consider Veii’s ‘three apogees’ – the eighth, the end of the seventh, and the end of the sixth centuries BCE – as well as its fall and Roman afterlife (as its imperial avatar, *Municipium Augustum Veiens*) and beyond. The volume represents an excellent resource, both because it offers a genuine *status quaestionis* and because of the extraordinary production quality, with numerous photographs, images, maps, and diagrams in full colour, often with whole pages dedicated to each. Both editors and press are to be commended.

New monographs on Naples and London offer deep dives into two of the Roman empire’s most well-known ports. Rabun Taylor’s *Ancient Naples* is the last volume of six to appear in the ‘A Documentary History of Naples’ series, which provides an (almost) continuous narrative history of the city from antiquity to the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> Taylor’s represents the first such overview on Naples for sixty years, an interval that has seen extensive changes in our understanding of the city, not least because of the opportunistic excavation enabled by the 1980 Irpina Earthquake and the early twenty-first-century construction of the Metropolitan subway line. In nine thorough chapters, Taylor walks through the city’s evolution from the prehistory of the early settlement Parthenope (with evidence of habitation going back to 700 BCE) to Constantine’s gifts to the city in the early fourth century, with interspersed thematic excursions on the physical setting, early coinage, the culture of water, and Greek culture. Throughout he brings a judicious and original eye to the fragmented ancient evidence, constructing a fresh story of the city’s development. An additional benefit – one characteristic of the best such works – is that we see developments elsewhere through a Neapolitan lens, and thus get a sense of how this city ‘fits’ into the wider antique world. Indeed, it is the combination of local circumstance and contextual trends that produce many of the city’s defining features, as for example its emergence in the Republican period as ‘one of the most intensive commercial enterprises in all antiquity’ (141) – the result, Taylor suggests, of the ‘unique marriage in Neapolis of the Greek genius for sea trade with Campanian networks of regional influence’, facilitated by ‘the blessing of Rome’. Thirty-one ‘commentaries’ at the close of chapters offer regular pauses for detailed discussion amid what is otherwise inevitably a fairly relentless tour through time and space.

Dominic Perring’s *London in the Roman World* is the most recent treatment of the Roman phase of the world’s most evocative city (well, I would think that), coming hot on the heels of Richard Hingley’s comparable volume (and whose approach to site referencing Perring follows).<sup>13</sup> Like Taylor, he takes a chronological approach, from the Roman invasion of 43 CE to the end of the fourth century (though with a useful closing treatment of the fifth-century hinterland that demonstrates the afterlife of the countryside after the city was abandoned), with one central thematic excursus on ‘The Working City’. Perring’s treatment is made distinctive by a (knowingly

<sup>12</sup> *Ancient Naples. A Documentary History. Origins to c. 350 CE*. By Rabun M. Taylor. New York and Bristol, Italcia Press, 2021. Pp. xxiii + 445. 113 b/w figures. Hardback \$55, ISBN: 978-1-59910-221-4; paperback \$30, ISBN: 978-1-59910-222-1.

<sup>13</sup> *London in the Roman World*. By Dominic Perring. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xvi + 573. 90 b/w images. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-0-19-878900-0. Cf. R. Hingley, *Londinium. A Biography. Roman London from its Origins to the Fifth Century* (London, 2018), reviewed in *G&R* 66.1 (2019), 138–9.

unfashionable) willingness to give greater interpretative credence to literary accounts (4) – as he notes, ‘some may shudder at the precision of the dating proposed here’ – but one which gives a dynamic sense of a city in constant motion, then as now. That goes hand in hand with some theses that also run counter to recent scholarship: for example, Perring’s insistence on prioritizing military and imperial strategy and activity – both direct and indirect – as the key driver of the city’s development and management. Thanks to this, as well as meticulous research that has kept on top of the constant stream of new archaeology in London (the result of the modern City, with its rapid turnover of real estate, sitting on the site of its Roman predecessor) – witness the nigh-on seventy-page bibliography, not to mention extensive unpublished material – this book also presents an exhaustive, up-to-date, and provocative introduction to another key ancient city. Some may not even feel ancient London to be so very different from its modern iteration: ‘For those in command this brought many opportunities, but wealth was unevenly distributed and the benefits of city-living remained largely inaccessible to the surrounding countryside’ (404).

If *Ancient Naples* and *London in the Roman World* represent traditional, chronological, ‘top-down’ urban biography, Jennifer Baird’s *Dura-Europos* offers an appropriately unusual approach to one of antiquity’s most unusual cities. Founded under the Seleucid dynasty, Dura saw Arsacid, Parthian, and Roman control before being preserved – following its abandonment at the time of Persian invasion in the mid-third century – as a Pompeii-like time capsule of the Roman Near East.<sup>14</sup> Baird begins by walking through the tale of its modern rediscovery (from the European perspective, at least), from the scattered visits of such icons of the period as Gertrude Bell, via the post-First World War excavations of James Breasted and – among others – Franz Cumont and Michael Rostovtzeff, to its recent fate in the hands of ISIS. She skilfully weaves the story of the site against not just the backdrop of Anglo-French-Syrian politics, but also the political and cultural battles in France, the UK, and the US which determined the state of the expedition’s funding and the uses to which its discoveries were put. She is not shy of drawing out the consequence:

Dura’s excavation is a good example of how archaeology was never an independent science despite the way it characterizes itself... Archaeology at Dura-Europos was born out of militarized Western intervention in the Middle East, was funded by oil money, and was an instrument of ‘soft’ cultural power, and this has an important legacy both for the interpretation of archaeology’s historiography and for future archaeological engagements in the region. (16)

Baird also shows how these early encounters created a frame story that was part adventure tale, part orientalist supercessionism, which has cast a long shadow over scholarship on this city and the wider region.

Chapter 2 turns to the site itself. Baird presents the city’s historical development from its Hellenistic foundation as the Seleucid colony ‘Europos’ in the late fourth or

<sup>14</sup> *Dura-Europos*. By Jennifer A. Baird. Archaeological Histories. London, Bloomsbury, 2018. Pp. xvi + 221. 56 b/w illustrations. Hardback £80, ISBN: 978-1-4725-2211-5; paperback £23.99, ISBN: 978-1-4725-3087-5.

early third century BCE (though there is evidence of a much earlier Assyrian habitation called *Da-wa-ra*) through its Arsacid (Parthian) and Roman periods, although she repeatedly warns against being too comfortable with the traditional clear boundaries between these phases. Well-taken too is the reminder that, though the site's final, Roman, phase dominates its archaeology, it was actually the shortest. Chapter 3 turns to the archive – not (yet) that of actual material from Dura, but of the archaeology itself: that is, 'the field notebooks, the photographs, the architectural plans, and the vast amount of material production that results from fieldwork' (39) which reveal the process by which we came to know the ancient material. In making these records, now stored at Yale, the subject of a chapter – one that precedes those considering traditional 'finds' – Baird insists structurally that 'the narratives of archaeology emerge not from the ground but from a complex web of ancient remains, archaeological methods, and historical contexts' (39). She covers here the identity of the workers, the nature of the work in practice, archaeological drawing and photography, the production of the archive itself, and its legacy (including digitization initiatives).

Chapters 4–6 are more conventional, covering Dura's texts, buildings, and material culture and art respectively. The first – which, like its subject matter, is rather fragmented – covers inscriptions and papyri (the latter including the extraordinary Roman military archive), and the linguistic, familial, civic, religious, and military interactions they reveal. The second looks at the nature, materials, and construction of houses (private, secure, and interconnected), tombs, religious buildings, fortifications, and public buildings – including the famous synagogue and church, both afforded only proportional treatment. The third covers ceramics, coins, textiles, jewellery, lamps, metals objects, coins, paintings, and sculpture. Here too, Baird brings her distinctive perspective; in all three chapters she traces how early excavators used this material to affirm pre-existing biases, producing explanatory framing stories not of intercultural richness, hybridity, and exchange, but of cultural binaries where civilized Greece trumped oriental barbarism, in turn justifying their own paternalistic interactions on the site (e.g. at 84). In concluding, Chapter 7 highlights current orthodoxy in considering Dura neither Near Eastern nor classical, but a site of cultural cosmopolitanism and dynamism, though acknowledging that such an approach is itself prompted by current global politics and cultural priorities (156). It also highlights the long history of foreign interventions at the site, and situates its occupation by ISIS within that trajectory.

Both in its unusual structural and in its emphatic choices, Baird's book pleasantly confounds expectations. What really makes *Dura-Europos* stand out is its persistent interest not just in the historical Dura, but in the history of its excavations, and in particular Baird's attempt to return to their rightful place those neglected actors who contributed so much and have been credited so little. From the book's earliest pages, she seeks to add these figures back into the story; it is telling for what would follow that the head of a local soldier helping with excavation was painted out of one of the earliest photos of the site, to leave James Breasted alone with the ruins 'he' had discovered (6). Baird's mission here is beautifully illustrated – literally – by the cover image itself, a photo of excavations of the Dura market in 1932–3, in which the site supervisors and even the ruins take a back seat to the blurred energy of the local Syrian workers ferrying excavated earth along the specially constructed light-gauge Decauville mining railway in the foreground. In intersectional terms, it is no doubt those workers who most merit our attention, but I was equally struck by the extraordinary

contributions of Susan Hopkins, wife of one of the most important site directors, Clark Hopkins (41–2). As well as caring for their young daughter, and organizing and catering for the entire camp, she transcribed inscriptions, cleaned coins, and produced the only catalogue of the site's small finds. That means that this extraordinary woman not only looked after her own family, acted as quartermaster for an entire foreign expedition, and contributed as an expert interpreter, but was also solely responsible for what proved the only material of real archaeological use! All unpaid and – by scholarship at least – unappreciated. The mind boggles.

Baird's book is thus informative, surprising, and powerful. Though its intellectual condemnation of her predecessors at times feels a little harsh, *Dura-Europos'* postcolonial bent is no mere virtue-signalling but integral to its structure and argument, since Baird demonstrates that colonial attitudes are not just incidental to the history of Dura, but have helped create the overarching narratives that have long characterized its scholarship. As such, she offers not just an introduction to one city, but a tacit mission statement on the nature of ancient archaeology as a discipline.

Dura's fall to Sasanian invasion in 256 CE (ish?) meant that it never became a late antique city. It therefore plays no part in what has been a growth industry in scholarship over the last few decades, as Mark Humphries outlines in the most recent essay in the Brill Research Perspectives series.<sup>15</sup> Research on cities has proven a key locus for scholarly resistance to the overall tendency of Peter Brown-inspired late antique studies to emphasize 'positive transformation' over 'negative decline'. Equally, the explosion of archaeological publications on sites across the empire is more than any one scholar can reasonably cover. This in turn has encouraged scholarly territory-marking, and an aversion to overarching theses. It is therefore a well-chosen topic for an essay in this series (something I have queried for its other publications).<sup>16</sup>

After an initial section laying out these wider interpretative issues, Humphries produces in Section 2 a summary of scholarship over the last fifty years, which has moved from an almost exclusive interest in monumental (especially religious) architecture to a broader interest in the urban environment. This has been facilitated by developments in archaeology – the decline of approaches that dismissed late antique stratigraphic layers in the pursuit of the 'classical', exciting new excavations exclusively focused on late antique sites, our improved understanding of late antique ceramics, technological developments (particularly non-intrusive techniques that are especially useful in built-up areas) – and new scholarly questions and interests (e.g. sensory experience, minority groups, use of space, and urban ecologies). In Section 3 Humphries problematizes the definition of the 'city' in late antiquity on the basis of both the diversity of urban environments in the empire, and the ideological commitments implicit to many past associations between cities and 'civilization'. He looks first at the late antique literary sources, which make clear that 'cities' were thought of not just in topographical terms but as spaces in which individual and collective identities developed, then traces continuities of definition with the classical world and innovations in new (particularly Christian) views of the city. This all demonstrates clearly

<sup>15</sup> *Cities and the Meanings of Late Antiquity*. By Mark Humphries. Brill Research Perspectives in Ancient History. Leiden and Boston, MA, Brill, 2019. Pp. 112. Paperback €70, ISBN: 978-90-04-42260-5.

<sup>16</sup> *G&R* 67.1 (2020), 95–6; *G&R* 68.1 (2021), 141.



that late antiquity saw a change in what a city *was* (which has connotations for the underlying questions here of whether changes in the urban landscape should be considered decline or transformation).

Sections 4–6 looks at political, economic, and religious urban change. All three demonstrate that the changes of late antiquity – for example, the rise in the importance of frontier cities, the creation and burgeoning of Constantinople, the attitude of the successor kings to Imperial cities, the reduction in long-distance trade, the change in building styles, the increased importance of Christianity and Islam (and the continuing importance of Judaism) – are often neither inherently ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ but just that: *changes* – which had a range of complex and conflicting ripple effects capable of varying interpretation. Section 7, in line with the recent influence of the spatial turn in ancient history, aims to get past traditional approaches which simply delineate topographies, and treat cities as stages (an approach also key to the flourishing of studies of ancient political culture). Humphries considers hierarchies, habits, and senses, in all of which recurs the twinned refrain of continuity and change.

The concluding Section 8 returns to the question of opposing explanatory models, rejecting the search for any single overarching narrative as ‘increasingly sterile’ (89) in favour of a ‘multiplicity of diverse and often overlapping micronarratives’ (86) which embrace complexity, local difference, and differential experience. Chiming with Baird’s comparable thoughts on Dura-Europos, Humphries ends by highlighting how past narratives of urban change have not escaped the pall of colonialism. Narratives of decline assume a ‘better’ Western, classical norm which became ‘worse’ under the influence of outside, non-classical influence, to which the inherent value judgement there implied, the sheer variety of the changes involved, and the fact that classical cities were already inherently multicultural tell the lie. This is a simultaneously useful and thoughtful overview for students and scholars alike. But I’m not clear who will actually buy it: even by the standards of academic presses, €70 for a 112-page pamphlet – over 50p per page – is pushing it.

Last up is Carlos Machado’s long-awaited *Urban Space and Aristocratic Power in Late Antique Rome AD 270–535*.<sup>17</sup> Based on his 2006 dissertation, this important book responds to that same discourse of late antique urban decline – specifically that of Rome, whose supposed fall from grace has long served as a symbol for the fate of the empire. Machado demonstrates, however, that, between the third-century Aurelian and the sixth-century Byzantine invasion of Italy, Rome was ‘thoroughly transformed in all its aspects’ (1; my emphasis). In particular, he shows how, as emperors increasingly based themselves further afield, ‘the senatorial aristocracy appropriated the city’s urban space – by building, regulating, and using it – into their social and political strategies for acquiring, exercising, and displaying power’ (22). This book is therefore in truth about a senatorial renaissance. Aiming to integrate the physical and social histories of the city, Machado combines careful textual readings with painstaking engagement with archaeological material. By showing how the manifold social and political strategic efforts of the senatorial elite were intimately bound with physical space, *Urban Space and Aristocratic Power* is an example of the spatial turn-infused

<sup>17</sup> *Urban Space and Aristocratic Power in Late Antique Rome AD 270–535*. By Carlos Machado. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. xix + 317. 23 b/w illustrations, 2 b/w maps. Hardback £79, ISBN: 978-0-19-883507-3.

new scholarship with which Humphries concluded his survey. As Machado insists, this is not just about recognizing that the city served as a stage for history, but about realizing that it played a key role in that history, since ‘Rather than a mere setting where daily life unfolds, space is a fundamental dimension of human experience’ (20).

After introducing city, Senate, and sources, the more traditional ‘Part I: The Definition of Urban Space’ begins with a chapter considering how the administration of the city changed in late antiquity and how that was exploited by the senatorial aristocracy. In particular, they mobilized the increasing reform and practical prominence of the urban prefecture and the ‘privatization’ of the late antique food supply to their own advantage. A second chapter explores their role and ideological motivations in building, restoring, and destroying the city’s topography. With public building now under the control of the urban prefect, the physical appearance of the city ‘took on a decidedly more open senatorial character’ (74), in the service not just of utility but of prestige, pride, power, and profit.

‘Part II: The Uses of Space’, in three chapters, takes the innovative plunge into how topography shaped activity. Chapter 3 looks at how the Forum shifted in this period – both materially and symbolically – so that after its imperial heyday it became once more a space celebrating and furthering the goals of the senatorial elite. Since the Forum had always been the key – if idealized – ‘face’ of Rome to insiders and outsiders alike, this shift in its image made an important statement about the balance of power. Chapter 4 shows how the senatorial elite wrote themselves into the public spaces of the city via their increasing appropriation of (even imperial) festivals, ceremonies, and commemorations (both baptisms and funerals). That from the mid-fourth century more statues were erected in Rome for aristocrats than emperors and their families is only one facet of this takeover (143). Chapter 5 demonstrates how the much-discussed religious changes of late antiquity also came to serve that same demographic’s interests, whether Christian or pagan (in this Machado seeks to put religion back into Alan Cameron’s reactionary secular portrait of the late antique senatorial aristocracy).<sup>18</sup>

‘Part III: Domestic Spaces and the Privatization of Power’ considers how aristocratic *domus* increasingly took over the city’s landscape, and what that meant for the relationship between private and public power. Chapter 6 traces the process by which, through late antiquity, Rome’s aristocratic houses incrementally regained the prominent role in public life they had had in the Republic. Chapter 7 demonstrates how, as a result, the houses themselves grew to incorporate more of the city’s physical space, as they swallowed up not just older buildings and public spaces but also the functional and symbolic capital implicit to those locales (though this seems to have been only a fourth-century phenomenon). Particularly interesting here is Machado’s use of comparative historiography to explain obscure features in late antique archaeology (at e.g. 253–4). In these last three chapters, the most striking theme to emerge is the increasing investment by the senatorial aristocracy in Rome’s Christian topography. This furthered their own prospects simultaneously in the city and (so they believed) in heaven, but by incrementally bolstering the superior authority of bishops, it ultimately curtailed their descendants’ social capital (an example of either very short- or very long-term thinking, depending on your perspective).

<sup>18</sup> Most famously in A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2010).

Machado has here marshalled a (sometimes overwhelmingly) large amount of diverse evidence to paint a persuasive picture of a neglected window in the history of Rome's elite. Though many of its conclusions may not seem individually surprising, the overall picture is striking. With emperors away, the senators once again came out to play. Nor was this a short period; Machado's two-and-a-half-century span equals the preceding period when the imperial presence curtailed senatorial influence. In the senators' return to the spotlight, we thus get one of those micro-narratives – albeit one of macro-consequence – whose importance Humphries urged. This is not just because it shows us one unseen perspective, but because it reveals the partiality of that perspective we have hitherto privileged (in this case, that of the court, which saw only Rome's sidelining). Not only that, but Machado's book can be productively read in dialogue with Tacoma's *Roman Political Culture*, since it again demonstrates not just the persistent importance but the adaptability of the senatorial elite and their penchant for self-preservation.

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doi:10.1017/S0017383522000110

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### *Art and Archaeology*

In preparation for my first review, I have had the pleasure to read books that showcase the current breadth of contemporary study of ancient visual and material cultures, from subjects as diverse as canine skeletons in Athens, Egyptian papyri, and medieval mosques, and approaches ranging from the close analysis of pigment on Roman marble sculpture to the exploration of 'viewsheds' on the acropolis.

We start on what might seem very familiar territory, *From Kallias to Kritias. Art in Athens in the Second Half of the Fifth Century B.C.*<sup>1</sup> Curated by Jenifer Neils and Olga Palagia, who provide the introduction, this book features short chapters that re-examine the period in a range of ways, from careful reassessment of sculptural identification, often through the exploration of fragments in the storerooms of the Athens National Museum, to the application of new approaches. Inevitably, in covering a half-century dominated by the completion of the Parthenon and the building of the Erechtheion, much of the volume centres on the Acropolis. Olga Palagia's chapter, 'The Wedding of Perithous: South Metopes 13–21 of the Parthenon', offers a plausible interpretation of the fragmentary central metopes as the wedding ceremonies and rituals that precede the Centauromachy, while Jenifer Neils's chapter, 'Kekrops or Erechtheus? Re-reading the West Pediment of the Parthenon', uses as a starting point the proposition that the male figure accompanied by a snake in the corner of that pediment is Erechtheus to

<sup>1</sup> *From Kallias to Kritias. Art in Athens in the Second Half of the Fifth Century B.C.* Edited by Jenifer Neils and Olga Palagia. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2022. Pp. ix + 380. 199 b/w and colour illustrations. Hardback £109, ISBN: 978-3-11-068092-8.