



Newsome, D.J. (2011) 'Björn C. Ewald and Carlos F. Noreña (eds.), *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010'.

Rosetta **10**: 80-85.

http://www.rosetta.bham.ac.uk/Issue_10/Newsome_Ewald.pdf

Björn C. Ewald and Carlos F. Noreña (eds.), *The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual*. Yale Classical Studies 35. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. 378. 128 b/w illustrations, 4 maps. £60. ISBN: 978-0521519533 (Hbk).

Reviewed by David J. Newsome
University of Birmingham

The Emperor and Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual opens with an English translation of Paul Zanker's 1997 work, *Der Kaiser baut fürs Volk*. This was translated into French four years later as *L'empereur construit pour le peuple*, and now we have an English version: 'By the Emperor, for the people: 'popular' architecture in Rome'. This is the latest in a long list of translations of Zanker, surely among the most translated of all scholars on ancient Rome.¹

What should we make of a collection whose first chapter, following the editors' introduction, is a translation of a work almost a decade and a half old? Why commission a translation for this new work? What is the added value of this exercise, either to this volume or to wider scholarship? These are questions one can ask without casting aspersions on the value of the original. It is not a question of whether or not such work warrants translation – if translation is read as an indication of importance – rather 'why here' and 'why now'? The editors place their explanation in the first footnote to Zanker's chapter:

Here Zanker explores the interplay between architecture, images, communications, the rhythms of daily life, collective experience, and political power, all with a view to elucidating the symbolic and ideologically charged relationship between the emperor and the urban plebs, as it is played out in the empire's capital city. Sitting at the intersection of most of the key themes developed in the chapters that follow, then,

¹ For example, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder* (1987) = *The Power of Images in Augustan Rome* (1988); *Augusto e il potere delle imagine* (1989); *Augusto y el poder de las imágenes* (1992).

The Notes on Contributors to the present volume reminds us that an English translation of *Mit Mythen leben: Die Bilderwelt der römischen Sarkophage* (2004) is forthcoming (Oxford University Press, July 2011).

Zanker's essay sets the agenda for the volume as a whole (p.45).

Zanker's *Mit Mythen leben* was written with one of the present editors, Björn Ewald, a fellow scholar of classical art who graduated from Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians University during the Zanker-professorship of the 1990s. Ewald's co-editor for the present volume is Carlos F. Noreña, a contributor to Lothar Haselberger's *Mapping Augustan Rome* project, as well as numerous articles on topography and the representation of early imperial monarchy (on which a monograph with Cambridge University Press is due this summer). It is not surprising that two scholars who completed PhDs around the turn of the millennium and who honed their craft in classical scholarship during the 1990s, particularly on themes of representation, should regard Zanker's work with importance. This importance is not quite singular; Paul Veyne is credited with some of the 'more fruitful, more fundamental, and more wide-reaching contributions to Roman art history of the last twenty years' (p.37).

While it is Zanker's essay which 'sets the agenda', it is this attitude to Veyne's work which more easily explains the tone of the introduction and the character adopted for the volume as a single body of work. To generalise, this volume is about the production of meaning in imperial Rome (p.43). This is examined through the changing relationships between – broadly speaking – the *plebs urbana*, the Senatorial aristocracy, and the emperor. To this, Flaig (p.280ff.) adds the half of the army made up of Roman citizens.

Zanker's chapter, arriving as early in the volume as it does, reminds us of some of the overlap between the keywords of the title: space, representation, and ritual. His examination of public buildings discusses not only architecture as a form of cultural patronage but illuminates the 'festive' character of the emperor's presence in urban space: imperial visits to the city's *thermae*, for instance, constitute an experience of 'community' (*Wir-Gefühl*, p.63) in which such public buildings represent 'mutual expressions of consent'. However, as Flaig reminds us, it is precisely in such venues that imperial acceptance could be most directly challenged (pp.281-2, following Veyne's earlier work on the

modalités d'obéissances). The only author to compare building programmes from the Late Republic with the first century AD is Packer. His study of the relationships between the Theatre of Pompey and the Temple of Concord, however, reads more as an architectural survey of each, rather than a convincing argument on the ways in which one influenced the other.

The emperor's patronage of buildings for community experience and 'new forms of publicity' (Zanker, p.63) neutered the abilities of the Senatorial aristocracy to participate in the dialogue of representation within Rome. Eck's chapter surveys the changes to Senatorial self-representation in the face of the imperial monopolisation of traditional forms (not only commanding the resources needed for building but also, for example, commanding the allocation of the *locus publicus* itself). Eck's chapter is, ultimately, about changing centralities: be it from the polycentric political system of the Republic to the mono-centric system of the emperor, or the shift in Senatorial houses from the central spaces (*domus foro imminens*) to the peripheral hills, or the centrality of the city of Rome itself replaced by self-representation in the cities of Italy and beyond, where competition with the emperor himself was absent. As the Senatorial families 'became satellites circling the sun' (p.91), new forms of self-representation were developed because earlier practices were closed off to them. Not that the Senate ceased to have an impact on the changing fabric of Rome: Boatwright's chapter, for instance, reveals the extents to which Antonine Rome was, at least in part, a 'Senatorial product' (pp.178-9).

The notion of propaganda is reviewed in Mayer's chapter, which looks at the 'economy of praise' (p.112) in Rome and the provinces. Mayer concludes that different audiences received different messages and thereby provided different responses. Focusing on imperial statuary, she concludes that such imagery should be read as a reaction *towards* and not a tool *of* imperial self-representation (p.112). But it could also work in the other direction, as Koortbojian demonstrates in his study of the *statua loricata*. The interest here is in what it means to be represented in certain images in Rome, and the differences between Caesar's appearance as dictator and Augustus'

appearance as *imperator* (based on the cuirassed statue from Prima Porta). Here we see an Augustan statue which reminds us that Augustus no longer needed to be represented in a manner that acknowledged the actual power of his position (p.266). Fittschen also examines the proliferation of imperial statues in an important methodological review of the study of portraiture. He concludes that imperial 'types' can be connected to important dates in the life of the emperor, and that changing portraiture is linked to events or precise occasions (pp.228-32); not that imperial statues could not themselves be influenced by existing trends. Imperial beards, short hair, and 'realism' all have antecedents in private portraiture. This puts imperial portraiture into a 'dialectical relationship' (pp.239-41) with other forms of non-imperial self-representation, deserving, as Fittschen rightly notes, of further examination.

Although the volume is not exclusively focused on the Augustan period and the transition from Republic to Principate, such interest in the dynamic relationships between these groups means that the focus of most chapters gravitates to this period of change. Important discussions beyond this period include those by Boatwright (late Hadrianic and Antonine Rome) and Marlowe (the early fourth century AD), both of whom contribute insightful surveys of architectural patronage in later centuries.

Marlowe's examination of early fourth century Rome examines the responses from one emperor to the next, and to the city itself. Marlowe helpfully surveys the recent flurry of identifications of previously unrecognised Constantinian appropriations of Maxentian buildings, reviewing Constantine's architectural impact on the city. Her interest is not in individual building histories but in the representation of the emperor's relationship to his predecessors, and to the city of Rome, which are thereby revealed. This chapter is a useful prelude to Marlowe's forthcoming work on Constantinian Rome, and highlights the complex relationships between Constantine and the legacy of Maxentius, both men bound together not only through the starting and finishing of particular monuments but through epithet: Maxentius as the *conservator urbis suae*, Constantine as *liberator urbis suae*, but both men for whom Rome is represented as 'his city'.

Boatwright reminds us that the early imperial building projects of Zanker's chapter, for example, were swallowed up by the development of urban space in later periods. She discusses the late Hadrianic and Antonine *Campus Martius* as a juxtaposition of the monumental and the functional (pp.187, 193, 197), in which the encroachment of the latter on the former eradicated the 'celebrated sylvan surroundings' of earlier imperial monuments. D'Ambra's chapter, too, suggests that the cityscape of imperial Rome was as much a space of 'ephemeral architecture' – the temporary structures erected in support of celebrations and events, in her case the imperial funeral pyre (*rogus*). The *rogus* is discussed again in the next, and final, chapter, in which Arce considers the representation of the emperor in the *funus imaginarium*. Here we review the image of the emperor as a substitute – a 'grand theatrical representation' (p.322). With its location on the *Rostra* or in the *Campus Martius*, its use of effigy to signify the already deceased emperor, and the associated movements of the *plebs urbana* around the ceremony, this chapter usefully draws on all elements of the volume as a whole: space, representation, and ritual. Even when dead, the emperor has exceptional status.

Unlike Zanker, whose work talks in broad sociological terms without using the opaque language which characterises explicitly theoretical disciplines, the editors' introduction is rather more eager to talk the talk. At times, this produces an unnecessarily complex articulation of relatively straightforward concepts. At others, it is a problem of relevance rather than exposition; a lengthy footnote in the introduction discusses Chomsky's theories of media propaganda before concluding that 'Quite obviously, none of this applies to the historical conditions of ancient Rome' (p.36, n.60). More broadly, some sections of the introduction are overwhelmed with scare quotes.

Still, some theoretical consideration is necessary because the title of the volume includes three words which are prone to debatable definitions –

space, representation, and ritual – and the editors do a good job of providing intellectual histories of such terms which are neither too brief to be useless nor too lengthy to be distracting from the focus on imperial Rome. The editors' introduction positions the chapters of the volume within theoretical frameworks which might not necessarily be the aim of the authors themselves – some of whom might be said to represent more 'traditional' art historical, architectural, or topographical approaches, and for whom the use of theory is at best implicit.² This usefully helps one to understand the relevance of the assembled essays for the ways in which their diverse approaches, questions, and evidence work together in contributing to our understanding of the relationship between the emperor and Rome.

² Regrettably, the volume has no consistent approach to the translation of either ancient or modern materials. Latin, for example, is either not translated (p.96; pp.131-33, ns. 35-8), is translated alongside the original (p.192, n.97), or is translated without the original (p.273, n.74-5).