

‘Handlungsakteure’, 320–418), focus on the evidence, its contexts and various actors, clearly showing the process of negotiation that framed the dialogue between Roman emperors and their various subject groups by the means of unofficial epitheta. B.-M. makes a crucial contribution to a field of research that took one of its starting points in Egon Flaig’s ‘system of acceptance’ (E. Flaig, *Den Kaiser herausfordern. Die Usurpation im Römischen Reich* (1992, 2019²)). Whereas Flaig restricted his analysis to groups relevant to the politics of becoming and remaining emperor, studies such as this new volume help to illuminate the wider integration of the Roman empire through the person of the emperor.

The estimable importance of B.-M.’s *Dialogangebote* might be highlighted by expressing the hope that her study might be followed by comparable works on imperial family members and usurpers in the future.

University of Tübingen
matthias.haake@uni-tuebingen.de
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MATTHIAS HAAKE 

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STEPHANIE PEARSON, *THE TRIUMPH AND TRADE OF EGYPTIAN OBJECTS IN ROME: COLLECTING ART IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN* (Image and context 20). Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021. Pp. viii + 264, illus. ISBN 9783110700404. £91.00.

In this monograph, Stephanie Pearson looks at Egyptian material in Rome through the lens of Roman connoisseurial collecting culture, arguing that ‘the Romans prized Egyptian art because it was art, and the Romans were art collectors’ (4). In making this argument, P. aims to 1) change how scholars approach Egyptian material in Rome; 2) broaden our notion of ‘Roman’ art beyond the Graeco-Roman horizon; and 3) contribute to the art-historical paradigm shift toward valuing and studying luxury and decorative items alongside the traditional genres of sculpture and painting.

The book consists of six parts: an introduction, four central chapters and a brief conclusion. Part I critiques traditional approaches to Egyptian art in Rome as over-iconographical, mired in prejudices against ‘copies’ and decorative items, and therefore insensitive to the artistic merit of the material. Where prior scholarship has interpreted Egyptian art in Rome as religious, political or merely fashionable, P. proposes to see it *as art*: ‘valuable cultural material, often of outstanding craftsmanship and beauty, and ... used accordingly’ (5). Part II showcases P.’s methodology by examining the depiction of Egyptian items in the frescoes of the Upper Cubiculum of the so-called House of Augustus and Cubiculum *b* of the Villa Farnesina. P. argues that Second-Style wall-paintings transform three-dimensional collector’s items in consistent ways and that Egyptian material, like golden jewellery with pharaonic crown motifs, was subject to the same transformations as non-Egyptian, i.e. Greek, material. The frescoes thus furnish evidence that Roman connoisseurs treasured Egyptian luxury objects just as they did Greek.

Part III notes that these Egyptian objects suddenly appear in the material record around 35–25 B.C.E. and proposes Octavian’s triple triumph of 29 B.C.E. as the reason. Once again the comparison with Rome’s treatment of Greek objects is central: much as earlier triumphs had introduced the Roman people to Greek artworks and luxury goods, so too did Octavian’s triumph whet the Roman appetite for Egyptian items, especially fine banqueting vessels and tables. Despite making this connection, however, P. insists that the Egyptian objects amassed in domestic contexts and showcased in frescoes did not carry triumphal or political significance. Part IV continues to investigate the historical mechanisms that made Egyptian material popular and available in Rome, turning to the trading networks that linked Rome to Alexandria and beyond. P. focuses on the textile trade, again using Roman wall-paintings as evidence for lost materials and for the Roman collector’s love of things Egyptian. She also includes a brief digression on Indian goods that arrived in Italy through Egypt, noting that despite the brisk trade in other luxury items, the Romans never acquired a taste for Indian artwork. Evidently there was something special about Egyptian art rather than foreign art in general, which P. suggests ‘may have [had] to do with a sense of well-being that the Romans associated with Egyptian art’ (154).

Part V develops this suggestion while arguing forcefully against knee-jerk religious interpretations of Egyptian sculptures in Rome. While acknowledging that some Egyptian statues surely had cultic functions and belonged in identifiable Iseae, P. contends that they were more often displayed in connoisseurial collections just like — and alongside — Greek sculptures. Case studies include the Gardens of Sallust, the Villa of Cassius at Tivoli, Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, and the Herculaneum palaestra: all outdoor spaces of leisure where the sacred aura of both Greek and Egyptian artworks would work in concert with greenery and water features to foster a pleasurable aesthetic experience. Part VI concludes the book by restating the central argument and its contribution; P. also gestures towards areas for future research, including Egyptian elements in the architecture of Roman Italy and under-studied materials like textiles.

The book is gorgeously produced, with nearly 100 full-colour images that vividly illustrate the craftsmanship and beauty of Egyptian material from the Roman world. P. also succeeds admirably in demonstrating that this material was even more ubiquitous than has been recognised, and that its significance was not limited to the strictly cultic or narrowly political. This is an important contribution in its own right, but the argument that the Romans instead prized Egyptian art *as art* takes for granted that 'art' is an appropriate concept to apply to the Roman world. A throwaway reference to Duchamp's *Fountain* confuses rather than clarifies the issue (5), since the 'artness' of that piece is bound up with wholly modern concepts of artist and art gallery. Also problematic is the repeated assertion that because the Romans collected and displayed Egyptian material just like Greek material, they must have regarded it as art. This oversimplifies a complex conversation on the significance of Greek artworks and objects in Rome, which has by no means concluded that the Romans thought of (what we call) Greek art as 'art' — especially if that means dissolving the link between connoisseurship and imperial subjectivity. A more robust engagement with this scholarship would have strengthened this book and made for a valuable contribution to the larger question of 'art' in the ancient world.

University of New Brunswick
carolyn.macdonald@unb.ca
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CAROLYN MACDONALD

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MAGGIE L. POPKIN, *SOUVENIRS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF EMPIRE IN ANCIENT ROME*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xvi + 325. ISBN 9781316517567. £75.00.

This clearly written, lavishly illustrated and theoretically grounded monograph examines souvenirs as a distinctive category of analysis in the study of Roman material and visual culture. It arrives in the midst of a 'souvenir boom' in scholarship — see also K. Cassibry, *Destinations in Mind. Portraying Places on the Roman Empire's Souvenirs* (2021) — and contributes to a productive turn towards closer inspection of the social and cultural worlds of (relatively) cheaply made, portable objects that too often have been side-lined or neglected in classical art and archaeology.

The book's introduction sets the stage by engaging with recent work on space, place, lived religion, sociologies of knowledge, memory studies and much else besides. What emerges is an effective framework for approaching souvenirs as mass-produced transmitters of memory and knowledge and as having a particular set of material affordances. The main text comes in two parts. Part I examines souvenirs associated with cult statues, cities and sites, such as Alexandria and Hadrian's Wall. Fundamental to understanding these souvenirs is the complex process of miniaturisation that allowed individuals to possess, touch, and display monuments otherwise out of their reach, for example, by reproducing an image of the Ephesian Artemis in terracotta. Part II then turns to souvenirs related to the cultural imaginaries of the circus, arena and the theatre. In images that seemingly pick from the world of the stage, Popkin notes that many figures are schematised and lacking any sense of movement, narrative or even reference to a performative space, which can make them difficult to place within fixed categories, such as mime and pantomime. While this may be surprising in some ways, it is an aspect of what Jocelyn Penny Small once called *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text* (2008) and certainly testament to the richness and variety of