interpretation of the messaging of these spectacles as exclusively imperially dispersed requires greater nuance, given how game-givers locally appropriated these events in creative ways, especially to show themselves to their best advantage within their communities. On the other hand, the emphasis on the interdependence between visual and literary genres is both novel and stimulating. B.-B.'s insights into how lofty Greek culture was continuously transformed through its entanglement with the messy, violent business of empire-building are fascinating. Indeed, as exhaustively documented here for the first time, Rome's reservoirs for fashioning new 'histories' and 'mythologies' of imperial mastery appear at once ceaselessly creative and staggeringly violent.

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APPROACHES TO HISTORY

BAUMANN (M.), LIOTSAKIS (V.) (edd.) *Reading History in the Roman Empire*. (Millennium Studies 98.) Pp. x + 266. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022. Cased, £93.50, €102.95, US$118.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-076378-2. Open access.
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Contemporary debates about the nature of ancient historiography are, fundamentally, about its readers. When Cicero argued that writing history was above all the task of an orator (*Leg*. 1.5), was he simply affirming what most of its readers would have assumed? Or did classical audiences share the modern expectation that any work calling itself history would tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? And if history was always already rhetorical, as the introduction to this volume suggests, that makes its audience matter even more because it implies that the historians would have been interested primarily in their works' effects rather than their fidelity to the past. But recovering these ancient readers of history is no easy task. The most suggestive evidence about how classical readers responded to written history comes in the form of anecdotes whose significance is difficult to generalise. Uncertainty and debate surround even the basic modalities by which ancient historiography was experienced. Should we imagine learned readers poring patiently over texts? Or large and diverse audiences attending public readings at festivals? And beyond such historical questions looms the theoretical challenge of distinguishing those readers that an ancient historian would have found – and whose actual responses range from the idolatry of the man from Cadiz, for whom just to gaze upon Livy was all Rome could offer, to the venom of Lenaeus' attacks on Sallust in defence of his patron, Pompey – from those they imagined and those they made through the training their works offered on how and why to read history.

Perhaps because of these challenges, the excellent articles that make up this volume demonstrate that the dialogue between approaches that ask what an ancient reader might have made of a specific text and those that ask how and why a text constructs its own readership can be especially productive. The ten studies are arranged chronologically by subject from Sallust to the *Historia Augusta*. Although the focus is strongly on Latin, the Empire's Greek half features in papers on the reception of Thucydides and on Arrian.

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Four of the first five articles take their cue from Cicero's accounts of history's popularity and the social diversity of its audience. This evidence, combined with the rapidly expanding population of Romans during the transition to empire and a concomitant increase in literacy, creates the image of historians setting out to appeal to new audiences with less knowledge of and less at stake in Rome's past above all through the pleasure their narratives provided. E. Shaw's Sallust, in this original and important reading, serves as the exception that proves the rule – a historian whose rejection of popularity and cultivation of a learned, elite audience make his work the site for contemplating the moral bases of Roman imperialism. M. Miquel evokes readers' interest in, and knowledge of, geography, to explain the notoriously cavalier treatment of such information in Caesar and a Sallust very different from Shaw's. D. Pausch imaginatively reverses the question asked in his 2011 monograph: in place of explaining narrative techniques through the eyes of an ancient reader, he here uses those techniques to try to recover what Livy's readers wanted from history. He accomplishes this through an analysis of Hannibal's crossing of the Alps where, he argues, his readers' pursuit of pleasure motivated Livy's emphasis on reader engagement rather than didactic value. P. Duchêne attempts to escape the methodological challenges of recovering history's readers from historians' constructions of them by turning to related prose genres that provide their own reflections of history's contemporary reception. She applies this approach to Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, treated as a parody not only of outlandish historiographical claims but also of the credulous, hedonistic readers who enabled them.

Before the story of historiography's 'Big Bang' during the early Empire becomes the new orthodoxy, let me suggest three avenues for qualifying some of these assumptions. All hinge on whether we think of texts as providing evidence for how historical readers 'out there' will evaluate them or view their representations of reading as elements of authorial strategies for defining distinctive literary aims. First, I hesitate to take Cicero's reports of history's broad appeal at face value. The much-discussed description of old men and artisans taking pleasure in historical knowledge for which they can have no use (*Fin*. 5.51–2) must be doubly contextualised (so Pausch, pp. 62–3). In addition to the philosophical work it does for the internal narrator Piso, these elderly, low-status readers enjoying the useless knowledge of history provide an important contrast to the young, elite friends of Cicero acquiring a knowledge of philosophy that will prove anything but useless in their careers.

The ways in which historians are imagined to cater to these pleasure-seeking readers can be re-examined on similar lines. Pausch gives an excellent analysis of how Livy enhances the suspense and excitement of Hannibal's crossing of the Alps. He also recognises that utility and pleasure can be interwoven throughout a text as long and varied as Livy's. Nevertheless, the distinction between pleasure and profit in his analysis of this passage, with 'dutiful' exemplarity on one side and thrills on the other, seems too sharply drawn. As D. Levene's account of the narrative dynamics of Livy's Third Decade suggests (*Livy on the Hannibalic War* [2010]), the historiographical importance of these scenes extends far beyond pragmatic or ethical examples: the exaggerations and dangers that stimulate the reader are not to be dismissed as rhetorical bombast, as they were in Polybius. Instead, they form part of the accumulating demonstration of a providential plan for Roman victory that challenges both the rationalising traditions of the genre and the presumed historical nonchalance of the pleasure-seeker. Here, as elsewhere, pleasure is not only an effect Livy's text produces but appears thematised within a programmatic strategy for differentiating the value of this text from other models of history writing.

Finally, the stakes of these programmatic manoeuvres are suggested by another look at the opening of Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. Duchêne (p. 122), who goes the farthest in

sketching an implicit compact by which historians and their readers agree to disregard history's conventional claims to truth and utility in favour of readerly enjoyment, takes the mocking dismissal by Seneca's narrator of a demand to identify his sources as further evidence that historiographical readers did not care much about truth (*quis coacturus est?*, 1.1). Yet the next sentence reminds us that the issue of historical standards possessed an important political aspect. The reason no one can compel the narrator is that he has been made free by Claudius' death. Obviously, this is satire, but the many ways in which 'truth was broken' after Actium (Tac. *Hist.* 1.1) – by compelling false testimony, by demanding credulity for the unbelievable or simply because imperial subjects cease to take an interest in the state – variously imperil the status of all participants in the historiographical contract, authors and their audiences. Similarly, Tacitus' references to bored or careless readers have less to do with how real audiences used his work than with asserting the political power of historiography as a vehicle by which its readers and writers preserve one another's *libertas*.

Another set of articles stands out for the new evidence or methodological contributions they bring to the task of reconstructing how and by whom historical texts were read. A. Pulice introduces a papyrus fragment (*P. Oxy*. 853), too little known (at least by me), containing an early imperial commentary on Thucydides, which, he shows, refashions the information of Hellenistic scholars to suit the primarily rhetorical interests of its audience. Like Duchêne, A. Zatlin turns to a kindred genre, epistolography, and asks what Pliny the Younger's definition of it against the model of historiography implies about the latter. Best of all in this vein is G. Baroud's mining of Quintilian to re-imagine how Tacitus' audience experienced his work. This provides one of the richest accounts yet of the effects of oral and written media on history's reception by imperial audiences. (C.G. Leidl's close readings of how internal spectators function in that author's *Histories*, though articulated through the more familiar tools of narratology, provide an ideal complement to Baroud's account of '*enargeia*'s power to mobilize emotion' [p. 170] as it was projected in contemporary performance.)

Treatments of two later, less canonical authors round out the collection. Liotsakis argues that Arrian's divergent priorities as a historian reflect the diverse interests of his audience. His article gives a full and fascinating picture of Arrian's varied allegiances as a writer, but the argument approaches circularity since the best evidence for the existence of these different priorities among Arrian's readers derives from the inconsistencies they are said to have caused. As with Miquel's article, I wondered whether 'reader expectations' had become just another way of describing conflicting generic conventions. Finally, A.M. Kemezis asks how the evidence modern scholars use to establish the *Historia Augusta* as a forgery might have been interpreted by a late antique audience, a brilliant application of reader-response theory.

Collected volumes earn their shelf-space when they show the potential of an under-explored topic or simply when they bring together papers likely to matter for scholarship on their respective subjects. This one does both. Its usefulness is enhanced by the decision to print individual bibliographies for each article and by an *index locorum*. By contrast, the *index nominum et rerum*, a mere mechanical compilation of ancient proper names, however obscure, without entries for general topics or modern scholars, is largely a waste of space.

Although most of the contributors make their careers in France or Germany, every paper appears in English. The larger implications of this trend for the field of Classics are beyond the scope of this review, but one of its practical consequences is not: the English in several of these pieces is filled with mistakes. Some are merely cosmetic, and only a few seriously affect comprehension. But repeated encounters with unidiomatic

usage and idiosyncratic forms take their toll on attention and will likely be more of an obstacle for readers who are themselves not native speakers. Lest drawing attention to these mistakes seems to add insult to the injuries of cultural imperialism, my point is the opposite. It is not reasonable to expect French and German speakers to be able to correct their own English grammar and spelling or to rely on colleagues to do so. If publishers believe that presenting scholarly volumes entirely in English means bigger audiences, then it is their responsibility to make sure they are professionally proofread.

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FACE-TO-FACE POLITICS IN REPUBLICAN ROME

ROSILLO-LÓPEZ (C.) *Political Conversations in Late Republican Rome*. Pp. xiv + 290, fig., ill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Cased, £75, US$100. ISBN: 978-0-19-285626-5.
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Partially overturning T. Mommsen's constitutional and legalistic approach to Roman politics, modern scholarship has recently concentrated on the extra-institutional dynamics of political life in late Republican Rome. Studies on the impact of social relationships on political competition and the language of *amicitia*, involving other important aspects of Roman society (such as the role of the people in decision-making), have contributed to a more flexible understanding of the working mechanism of politics in the last decades of the Roman Republic. Yet no one has paid due attention to orality and face-to-face communication as key components of the Roman political system. R.-L.'s in-depth and engaging study succeeds in filling this gap. As stated in the introduction, 'political support was secured through personal relationships', and 'sociability (face-to-face meetings and conversations) formed the means through which information circulated in Late Republican Rome' (p. 8). R.-L. goes beyond the formal institutional interpretation of politics and opens a window onto the fascinating world of oral communication, not limiting the analysis to conversations between senators and members of the elite, but also including non-senatorial actors, who played a crucial role in the transmission of information. Significantly, R.-L.'s research relies primarily on Cicero's correspondence, the impressive body of private letters that document real conversations and allow us to capture the richness and complexity of late Republican life and politics.

Following a concise introduction, the book is divided into eight chapters, each with several subchapters, and is rounded off by an appendix, which consists of a detailed prosopography of non-senatorial actors involved in face-to-face conversations (mentioned in Cicero's epistles). There follows an exhaustive bibliography, an index of people and a subject index. Chapters 1 and 2 illustrate the methodological framework of the study. By overcoming the traditional and schematic distinction between institutional and extra-institutional politics (*la politique* and *le politique*, to use French modern terminology), R.-L. inquires into political practices in Republican Rome from an enlarged perspective and sees conversations as intrinsic to the formation of a political culture, based on the harmonic interdependency of senatorial power and collective consensus: the result is a wider, and more reliable, definition of politics and political participation that takes into

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