

Greece, while the senate in Rome was treated to a letter composed by Seneca that suggested that Agrippina had got what she deserved.

As to posterity, the initial ingredients that went into the creation of this 'folk-hero' are obvious from the Greek intellectual writers, the *Sibylline Oracles* and early Christian sources: a premature death witnessed only by a few minions; matricide; elaborate games and musical performances; the punishment of the Christians; the Jewish war; the attempt to cut the isthmus of Corinth; the personal attention to the Greeks of the eastern empire. The particular identification of Nero with all of these activities (except the Jewish war) was consolidated by the policies and ideology of the Flavians, formed in deliberate opposition to their predecessor. Nero's own contribution may be not so much the creation of myths as the beauty of his coins, his portraits and, initially and again after their rediscovery in the Renaissance, the remnants of his palace. It is a pity that Champlin does not illustrate the over-lifesize gilded bronze bust of Nero in the Sammlung Axel Guttman, the subject of a monograph by Born and Semmler that appears in the bibliography. It shows the full power and splendour of the late portraits better than their appearance in profile on his coins. For the literary perpetuators of Nero's fame, the powerful depiction by Suetonius of his death scene and the expanding tableaux of Tacitus' Neronian narrative must have been the principal source of inspiration. Perhaps *Nero* should encourage us to see these as tributes from one artist to another.

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A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik, *Flavian Rome. Culture, Image, Text*. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2003. xvii + 754 pp. ISBN 9004111883.

This is a big book, dealing with a large topic. Twenty-five articles by internationally established scholars, in seven hundred pages of text and illustrations, followed by seventy pages of bibliography and indices, the latter in a small font. If only in terms of sheer organisation, this is a massive work. *Flavian Rome* is a collection of specially commissioned papers, all analysing specific aspects of ancient Rome in the period 69-96 CE. The 'potentially misleading character of such temporal demarcations' (p. 1) is emphasised from the very beginning. Still, as is perhaps inevitable, the centrality of the object of research occasionally gains momentum of its own. Mellor, in a splendid piece on the Flavians' creation of a 'new aristocracy of power' (pp. 69-101), may well be right to see that new aristocracy as the principal 'contribution of the Flavian era' (p. 101), but must be overstating when that contribution is deemed to have 'determined the shape and direction of political life until the death of Commodus' (p. 69).

Within the scope of this review, it is obviously impossible to do justice to all the contributions. One of the qualities of the volume that the title announces is its emphasis on dealing with subjects from different disciplines, both large and small. That said, the balance of attention swings firmly towards textual analysis. Twelve pieces focus specifically on individual authors or texts (Plutarch and the Archaic, Statius' *Silvae* 1.6, epic performance in Statius, two papers on Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, two papers on Flavius Josephus, *Romanitas* in Silius Italicus' *Punica* 1 and 2, the *Octavia*, patronage in Martial, Martial's *Epigrams* 10, and a final paper on spectacle in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*). Several of these pieces look at the particular author and/or text in different contexts. Thus, for instance, Beard's paper on 'The Triumph of Flavius Josephus' (pp. 543-58) is as much on the triumph as it is on Josephus, and should, in fact, be read in tandem with her recent contribution to Edwards/Woolf eds., *Rome the Cosmopolis*. Likewise, Gold's 'Poetry, Mendicancy and Patronage in Martial' (pp. 591-612) tells much that goes beyond Martial, explaining the economics of patronage in Flavian Rome. Then again, literature does take a front seat in Hardie's paper on 'Poetry and Politics at the Games of Domitian' (pp. 125-48), Evans' 'Containment and Corruption: The Discourse of Flavian Empire' (pp. 255-76), Penwill's

'Expelling the Mind: Politics and Philosophy in Flavian Rome' (pp. 345-68), and Wilson's 'After the Silence: Tacitus, Suetonius and Juvenal' (pp. 523-42).

The emphasis on literature comes at a cost. Only Henderson's '*Par Operi Sedes: Mrs Arthur Strong and Flavian Style, the Arch of Titus and the Cancelleria Reliefs*' (pp. 229-54) focuses explicitly on developments in Flavian art, though Pollini's 'Slave Boys for Sexual and Religious Service: Images of Pleasure and Devotion' (pp. 149-66) makes some use of imagery. Roman architecture is slightly better catered for, with Fredrick's 'Architecture and Surveillance in Flavian Rome' (pp. 199-227) and, importantly, Packer's '*Plurima et Amplissima Opera: Parsing Flavian Rome*' (pp. 167-98). Packer's contribution nicely sets out the important Flavian monuments in Rome, emphasising how these buildings recollect, 'while visibly surpassing, the great architecture of the past' (p. 198). His general analysis illustrates how important individual entries on monuments would have been. More than almost anything else, the tangible buildings defined Flavian Rome – and were truly 'Flavian'.

Important as attention to literature of the period is, one could easily challenge the editors' decision to include two pieces on Josephus, Martial, Statius and Pliny's *Natural Histories* instead of devoting proper attention to e.g. the *Templum Pacis* (in the index under both 'Forum of Peace' and 'Temple of Peace'), or the temples of Claudius or the Flavian Gens. The near-absence of Darwall-Smith's seminal *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome* (1996) (though cited by Packer, 167 n. 1, 174 n. 49, 198 n. 93) speaks volumes. Similarly, coinage is apparently not seen as an important medium for understanding Flavian Rome. The place of some Flavian coin types in relation to Republican and Augustan precedents is wonderfully set out by Cody's 'Conquerors and Conquered on Flavian Coins' (pp. 103-23), but her contribution (by its very nature) only aims to look at a limited number of coin types. More worryingly, coinage is almost entirely ignored as a potential form of evidence in other contributions, apart from some remarks in passing in Boyle's introduction and in the articles by Beard and Fearnley.

Indeed, the aim of the collection seems to be, at least to a certain extent, to return literature to a position of primacy over other types of source. Thus, Jones' balanced biography *The Emperor Domitian* (1992) is accused of being overly revisionist in Boyle's introduction: 'It is clear, however, as even the revisionist historian Brian Jones has to concede...' (p. 36). Indeed, the distaste for the attempt to go beyond the 'bias of the literary sources' (p. 524) is made explicit by Wilson's attempt to return to 'the consistent and coherent story told by these witnesses [Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal and Pliny]' (p. 542). Though, of course, revisionism of the 'bad' emperors has occasionally led to extremes, it seems unfair simply to reject attempts to go beyond biased literature by dismissing 'the new whitewashed Domitian' (p. 541 n. 44). Similarly, the notion of 'Stoic opposition' is brought back to the fore. Wilson, after a sensible discussion of modern literature on the topic (pp. 535-7), notes how the 'record of Roman Stoicism made the philosophers vulnerable to political opportunists' (p. 538). This may well be true. But that is substantially different from talking, as does Boyle in his introduction, of 'the political criticism inherent in the philosophical schools' (p. 44). Boyle, in doing so, refers to Penwill's 'Expelling the Mind' (pp. 345-68), which, though discussing Stoicism at some length, does not use the important studies by Brunt ('Stoicism and the Principate', *PBSR* 43, 1975, 7-35) and Shaw ('The Divine Economy: Stoicism as Ideology', *Latomus* 44, 1985, 16-54), which formed the starting point of Wilson's argument. Cross-referencing between the two would have been very welcome. Finally, the primacy of literature is exemplified by Boyle's unqualified acceptance of Domitian's use of the address *dominus et deus* (p. 17, with n. 67: 'the absence of this "title" from inscriptions and coins does nothing ... to suggest its fiction'), or indeed of Suetonius' claim (*Titus* 2) that Britannicus was Titus' 'childhood friend' (p. 11 n. 43). In the latter case, again, cross-referencing might have helped, since Smith, in his 'Flavian Drama: Looking back with Octavia' (pp. 391-430), rightly recognises how, 'as the Flavian propaganda began to pattern the pages of history, [Titus became] a virtual doublet of Britannicus' (p. 428, with n. 76).

Though *Flavian Rome* supplies a wealth of information and incorporates some stimulating papers, the volume does not, in effect, create an 'image' of what Flavian Rome was like. Economy, legions and the law defined Flavian Rome as much as the literature of the time. All are only rarely mentioned. Religion, of course, was an important aspect of daily life throughout the Roman world. But Ando's 'A Religion for the Empire' (pp. 323-44), exciting as it is, does not actually deal with Flavian Rome, perhaps because 'Flavian Religion' is an erroneous concept to begin with. When reading the book, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's words about the Colosseum – an obvious presence in many of the articles assembled here – came to mind: 'When one looks at it all else seems little; the edifice is so vast, that one cannot hold the image ...'. *Flavian Rome* is a vast accomplishment. In the end, however, there *is* no general image to be held. The book will, and should, be used in discussing many aspects of Flavian Rome; but it is far from the definitive book on the subject.

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Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius: An Antonine Scholar and his Achievement*, revised edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. xxiii + 436 pp. ISBN 0-19-926319-1.

H-S's immensely erudite *Aulus Gellius* (1988) immediately established itself as the leading general book on Gellius. Its three sections cover (1) the external circumstances of Gellius' life, the aims, style, and language of his book, and the question of source criticism, (2) the various personages that appear in it (orators, rhetoricians, and philosophers, most notably Favorinus), and (3) the views and information contained in it, organized by topic: Gellius' scholarly sources, his views on language and literature (both Latin and Greek), history, philosophy, religion, and 'weak spots' (names, foreigners, and other arts and sciences). Two remarkable and interrelated features of the book are the astounding erudition casually displayed in its English vocabulary and in the footnotes, and the uncanny fit between the modern scholar and his ancient author. H-S's English is studded with recondite or nonce words, indeed many of them in describing Gellius' 'mannerist' style, and thereby imitating it as well (one thinks of the laconic and sardonic Tacitean style of Syme's *Tacitus*). Words such as 'floscules', 'etymologisms', 'pretiosity', 'a fardel of facts', 'rodomontaded', '*verschlim[m]bessert*', 'formantia', and 'our apparatus' (355, 360, 358, 286, 358, 55, 49, 57) all exemplify aspects of Gellius' own style (cf. 54-5 on neologisms, Graecisms, and archaisms). The suggestion on the difficulty of imitating eighteenth-century English (360) is realized in a delightful and highly convincing 'Elizabethanizing' translation of elegiacs in praise of Gellius that are found in one of the manuscripts (170). The footnotes are studded with such jewels of scholarship as the historical shifts in the meaning of *Schwärmer* (146) or how the etymology of 'jennet' parallels a corruption in Ennius (87); the occasional Arabic, Hebrew and Russian characters that grace the notes give a hint of the author's formidable polyglot expertise.

More importantly, the book is informed by an infectious passion about words, languages, books, and ideas similar to that of Gellius himself. And although H-S clearly aims at 'unfracturing' Gellius' dispersed comments into organized topics, the passion to collect, compare, and display the abundant intellectual treasures creates a somewhat miscellaneous (or perhaps encyclopedic) organization. The chapters on language are especially outstanding, being well suited to this approach; the discussion of calques and misunderstandings of Greek is one of many jewel-studded passages (228-31). On the other hand, the omission of topics such as Gellius' narrative technique weights the book in the direction of factual and lexical accumulations, though the numerous fine discussions of individual passages show that this regrettable omission (xiv) is most certainly not due to a lack of comprehension of a literary work as a whole such as H-S attributes to Gellius (213).