

subjective, non-factual speech ('mit feinen Gesichtszügen, die hellwache Intelligenz verraten', 110). Despite some unnecessary fillers (full quotes of all sources mentioning C. Caesar, 91–106), the authors of this well-researched book make the best of an ungrateful subject. The frieze of Limyra offers some limited insight into matters of style, such as depth, perspective, and the rendering of human bodies. But it does not provide what one would have hoped for, the expansion of our knowledge of Julio-Claudian iconography.

University of Nottingham

ANDREAS J. M. KROPP

K. E. WELCH, *THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE: FROM ITS ORIGINS TO THE COLOSSEUM*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xxii + 355, 16 pls, illus. ISBN 978-0-521-809443. £55.00/US\$85.00.

Katherine Welch's contributions to the study of Roman architecture, and especially to that of entertainment venues, are well known and now her long-awaited book on amphitheatre architecture has arrived. This text challenges traditional interpretations and offers new ones on the origins and place of amphitheatres in Roman society, and will force scholars to reconsider the suppositions upon which so much of our understanding of gladiatorial spectacles and their venues has been based.

The book's introduction is an historiographic examination of arena games and amphitheatres. W. cogently argues that there is no good evidence that arena games were more common in the imperial period, even if better attested by literary sources of that period, and that study of the Republican period is essential for understanding their development. Ch. 1, 'Arena Games during the Republic', begins with a synthesis and critique of the 'Osco-Samnite hypothesis' and the 'Etruscan hypothesis' on the origin of gladiatorial combat (11–18). W. observes that the Romans themselves had no clear understanding of where the games originated and that the search for an outside source may well have begun with the political agendas of nineteenth-century scholars (17–18). She then moves into a discussion of the nature of gladiatorial games during the Republic (18–22), criticizing the common view that gladiatorial combats became popular in the first century A.D. only after they started to be separated from their funerary associations and were exploited for political ends. In fact the games were popular in the city of Rome from at least the mid- to late third century B.C. Also in this chapter, W. begins to expound one of her underlying themes: arena games and amphitheatres grew out of a military context in the Republic. She associates the beginning of regular gladiatorial combat in Rome with a period of active military expansion and also makes a connection between animal spectacles, including *damnatio ad bestias*, and military activity.

In the second chapter, 'Origins of Amphitheatre Architecture', W. moves to the venues themselves. W. views the temporary wooden amphitheatres, regularly erected in the Forum Romanum, as the prototypical form upon which other wooden and stone Republican amphitheatres would be based. The literary and material evidence for these structures and the spectacles they hosted is evaluated in detail and some different reconstructions are suggested. W. contextualizes this structure within the militaristic Forum-topography of the middle to late Republic. The chapter also contains discussion of other attested wooden amphitheatres and theatres. The third chapter discusses 'Stone Amphitheatres in the Republican Period', relating their mundane appearance to the functional temporary structures. W. criticizes the view that stone amphitheatre architecture originated in Campania, which is based on the circular assumption that most Republican amphitheatres are located there and tomb paintings from hundreds of years before seem to show gladiatorial combats. Instead, W. sees a prevalence of permanent amphitheatres in Latin, maritime, and veteran colonies and *municipia* (88–91). Veterans would have been accustomed to arena spectacles and the amphitheatre became a way for them to assert Roman identity in areas otherwise inhabited by non-Romans. Similarly, towns that wished to curry favour with Rome might build this quintessentially Roman-style building. She notes the similarities between the architectural form of some Republican amphitheatres and military architecture, as demonstrated at Pompeii where the external staircases resemble the double *ascensus* in Roman military camps (94). The construction of this amphitheatre may well have been conducted under the supervision of military engineers. Taking a closer look at Pompeii, W. also discusses the palaestra and posits a date of construction roughly contemporaneous with the amphitheatre. She interprets it as a training- or exercise-ground of the sort commonly found in Republican military camps, built in conjunction with the amphitheatre.

Ch. 4, 'The Amphitheatre between Republic and Empire: Monumentalization of the Building Type', examines amphitheatre construction in the Augustan period. Here W. discusses the emergence of ornamentation on amphitheatres, which began with the use of the Tuscan order and rusticated masonry. She contextualizes the simple ornamentation of amphitheatres as befitting their role as Roman buildings for Roman-style entertainments, while venues for Greek tragedy or comedies, for example, were ornamented with Greek orders: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. W. theorizes that the amphitheatre of Statilius Taurus was of the Tuscan order and may have been a 'missing link', serving as a prototype for other Augustan and early imperial amphitheatres (126). In her lengthy discussion of Taurus' amphitheatre (108–26), she also characterizes it as a militaristically-themed building, constructed by Octavian's infantry commander who served him in the war against Sextus Pompey, in the Dalmatian wars, and at Actium.

The fifth chapter, 'The Colosseum: Canonization of the Amphitheatre Building Type', examines the highest point in the evolution of amphitheatre architecture. In the Flavian period, the amphitheatre was conceived of as something new and it included all of the Greek architectural orders. W. believes this signifies an elevation in the cultural status of the amphitheatre and associates this with extensive discussion of the amphitheatre in eclogues and epigrams. She reads this as a political response by the Flavians to Nero, who was criticized for not providing enough arena-style spectacles. W. then discusses the political significance of construction of the Colosseum on the site of Nero's Domus Aurea. A concern for tradition and also a military connection is made evident by the archaic formulation *ex manubiis* (financed from the spoils of war) in the dedicatory inscription of the Colosseum. A number of amphitheatres architecturally inspired by the Colosseum are also discussed.

Ch. 6, 'Reception of the Amphitheatre in the Greek World in the Early Imperial Period', is a case-study of spectacles in Athens, which used the Theatre of Dionysus for combats, and in Corinth, which both had an amphitheatre and used the town centre. W. examines the Greek taste and distaste for Roman-style entertainments in their cultural contexts and Greek attitudes regarding them, which necessitated or discouraged the construction of amphitheatres. The book's conclusion is followed by a useful appendix on 'Amphitheatres of Republican Date'.

One minor quibble is the unquestioned acceptance of the location of the imperial box in the Colosseum in the south-west platform on the minor axis. The notion that the emperor sat here is based on the problematic supposition that the 'Cryptoporticus of Commodus', which led to the platform, served as a secret entrance (see I. Iacopi, 'Il passaggio sotterraneo cosiddetto di Commodo', in A. La Regina (ed.), *Sangue e Arena* (2001), 79–87; N. T. Elkins, 'Locating the imperial box in the Flavian amphitheatre: the numismatic evidence', *NC* 164 (2004), 147–57). Further work on the Colosseum appeared while this book was in production. On the Colosseum *sestertii* see now N. T. Elkins, 'The Flavian Colosseum *sestertii*: currency or largess?', *NC* 166 (2006), 211–21; and on the date of Martial's *Liber de Spectaculis*, T. V. Buttrey, 'Domitian, the rhinoceros, and the date of Martial's *Liber de Spectaculis*', *JRS* 97 (2007), 101–12. W.'s thorough study has made an authoritative contribution to the study of arena spectacle and amphitheatre architecture. This well-illustrated book, with copious citations, will change the way we approach and understand gladiatorial spectacle and amphitheatre architecture.

The University of Missouri/Goethe Universität, Frankfurt

NATHAN T. ELKINS

C. GIAVARINI (ED.), *THE BASILICA OF MAXENTIUS. THE MONUMENT, ITS MATERIALS, CONSTRUCTION, AND STABILITY* (Studia Archaeologica 140). Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 2005. Pp. 260, illus. ISBN 88-8265-359-5. €140.00.

The three huge vaults of the Basilica of Maxentius, formerly long known as the Temple of Peace, are the largest and most striking remains of the modern archaeological area of the Roman Forum. Their dominating physical presence makes the absence until now of a monograph on this substantial structure all the more conspicuous. Nonetheless, it has hardly been neglected by architects: in the Renaissance, it was drawn in the *Conex Coner* of c. 1515 and re-used in 1547 with a terrace garden and belvedere laid out on the roof of the north aisle for the palace of Eurialo Silvestri da Cingoli built by Antonio Sangallo the Younger. Having lost its roof already well before then, the interior of the building was undeveloped and used successively as a cattle-yard, a riding school, and a military exercise-ground, until it was re-studied and later drawn by the French architects of the *École des Beaux Arts* (see Roberto Cassanelli *et al.*, *Ruins of Ancient Rome: the Drawings of French Architects who won the Prix de Rome, 1786–1924* (2002)) and the British architect