

ROMAN DIRT AND HYGIENE

BRADLEY (M.) (ed.) *Rome, Pollution and Propriety. Dirt, Disease and Hygiene in the Eternal City from Antiquity to Modernity*. Pp. xx + 320, ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Cased, £60, US\$99. ISBN: 978-1-107-01443-5.

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This interdisciplinary volume brings together scholars from a range of disciplines in order to explore the central theme of pollution and propriety in the city of Rome from antiquity through the Renaissance to twentieth-century fascism. The aim is to provide a comprehensive study of the history of pollution in a single city across time, since it is argued that attitudes to pollution and propriety were guiding factors in the organisation of Rome's religion, politics, literature, art and architecture. Inevitably, it is difficult to be entirely comprehensive in a volume of this type, and there is a particular bias here towards antiquity, while the section on modernity jumps straight to the fifteenth century, although B. does provide a useful summary of scholarship on approaches to pollution and propriety in late antiquity and the medieval period (pp. 28–33).

The volume arises out of a conference held at the British School at Rome in June 2007, and is dedicated to the memory of Mary Douglas, who died shortly before the conference took place and whose influence on the volume is clear. Douglas famously defined dirt in her 1966 book *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* as 'matter out of place', and argued that responses to dirt are culturally constructed rather than biologically determined. Although the volume does not directly engage with debates about the cultural or biological origins of attitudes to pollution, the notion is implicit throughout that such attitudes are indicative of cultural identity and can therefore reveal something about the particular values and priorities of communities at Rome in different periods. The influence of the idea of 'matter out of place' can also be seen in the focus on the organisation of space and the development of boundaries. The notion that discourses of pollution and propriety can be used as a means of social control is another unifying theme, and in Rome this is particularly evident in the often overlapping spheres of religion and politics.

An introduction by B. and Stow sets out the main themes, and a further opening chapter by B. places the papers in context, providing a useful survey of the development of research and scholarly debate on ideas of pollution, dirt and cleanliness. The remainder of the papers are divided into two sections, 'Antiquity' and 'Modernity'. The section on antiquity opens with a chapter by Lennon exploring ideas of ritual purification in Rome, arguing that pollution was a wide-ranging concept that could appear in many contexts, although its dominant place was in religion and politics. Birth and death in particular were polluting events for individuals and families, as were sex and contact with blood, requiring specific purification rituals, while the *lustrum*, held every five years, and the Secular Games, held roughly once a century, indicate that it was also felt necessary ritually to purify the city as a whole. The theme of purification in Rome is taken up by Fantham in the following paper, which focuses particularly on purification by water.

Davies then explores the more practical side of pollution, such as street dirt, sewage, and air and water quality, focusing on the growth of the city in the Republic. She argues that while Republican Rome may have been a densely-packed city, lacking private gardens and public latrines, there was a move to manage pollution, with the provision of amenities such as drains, aqueducts, public gardens, green spaces and baths. Many of the developments in this area were, however, only possible with the changing political system of

the late Republic and the early empire, when individuals had more long-term power and were keen to portray themselves as benefactors of the city.

Hopkins's contribution highlights the sacred nature of the *cloaca maxima*, which was originally built to canalise a stream that ran through the forum, the Velabrum and the Forum Boarium; the winding route of the drain can be explained by the Romans' belief in the sacred nature of moving water and the need to preserve the original route of the stream. Hopkins links the numerous temples to Janus in the area to the role of the god in the mitigation of religious rites related to crossing water, and points to the Temple of Venus Cloacina, the monumental nature of the drain cover depicting the face of Oceanus (now known as the Bocca della Verità), and the triple-coursed archway marking the exit of the drain into the Tiber as further evidence of the sacred nature of the *cloaca maxima*.

B. then considers a somewhat different form of pollution in Rome, crime and the criminal, focusing in particular on the Capitoline Hill, the site of the city's execution chamber (the *Carcer Tullianum*), the Tarpeian rock and the final point of the triumph. In the final chapter on antiquity, Schultz returns to more familiar concerns of religious impurity with a fascinating discussion of the burial of unchaste Vestal Virgins, proposing that we should see this not as an act of sacrifice akin to the burial of pairs of Greek and Gauls, nor as a peculiar form of execution, but as ritual murder. She likens it to the drowning of hermaphrodites and also to the burial of defunct cult materials; she concludes that the burial of unchaste Vestals was a way of removing a polluting presence from Rome permanently and bloodlessly, while minimising the responsibility of the community for the death.

The section on modernity opens with a chapter by Assonitis on Fra Girolamo Savonarola, who portrayed fifteenth-century Rome as the polluted centre of the Church. The theme of Rome as the centre of a morally-depraved Church is also picked up by Rinne, who considers practical attempts to cleanse the city in the sixteenth century as reflecting a move morally to cleanse the Church. Following the sacking of the city in 1527, repeated floods (particularly that of 1530) and rapid urban growth, Rome was facing a water and sanitation crisis that the Papal authorities sought to address with the restoration and building of aqueducts, drains and fountains.

A particularly interesting contribution by Gentilcore discusses practical responses to plague in seventeenth-century Rome, focusing on two central themes. First, he considers the control of the movement of goods and especially of people believed to spread infection. Public gatherings were banned and boundaries enforced, with people cordoned off in the infected district of Trastevere, the Jewish ghetto closed off, victims isolated on Tiber Island and the houses of plague victims boarded up. Second, Gentilcore explores the position of medical charlatans and itinerant practitioners, who were expelled from the city, although those who were already established in Rome continued to sell remedies from their own homes or those of their customers.

Stow then highlights the gap between the reality and image of the Jewish ghetto in the sixteenth century, arguing that while the Jewish community followed the standards of urban cleanliness practised elsewhere in the city, the image of the ghetto as a filthy place remained. Syrjämaa picks up on the notion of how attitudes to dirt and decay can reflect cultural values in her engaging discussion of attitudes to late nineteenth-century Rome, where the same city is viewed by some as dirty, backward and morally corrupt, and by others as authentic, innocent, picturesque and unpolluted by modernity. The final two papers in this section, by Janes and Salvante respectively, explore the differing attitudes of Catholic and Protestant visitors to the Roman catacombs in the nineteenth century, and the ways in which Fascist propaganda connected homosexual acts to delinquency, 'corrupting' urbanism and 'abnormal' sexualities. The volume then concludes

with a brief piece by Goldstein considering the idea that the twenty-first century equivalent to the nineteenth-century notion of picturesque dirt might be accounts of crime and criminal organisation in Italy. This is a well-edited and coherent volume, which demonstrates that attitudes to pollution and propriety have been instrumental in shaping the city of Rome.

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US RECEPTION OF GREEK TRAGEDY

FOLEY (H. P.) *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage*. (Sather Classical Lectures 70.) Pp. xvi + 375, ills. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2012. Cased, £65, US\$95. ISBN: 978-0-520-27244-6.

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Studying the reception of Greek tragedy in the USA is a daunting task. The vast size of the country and the large number of theatres as well as performances put on by educational institutions offer a considerable challenge. This is of course not the first time that the topic has been tackled, but in the past only sections of the American reception of Greek drama have been examined, for instance K. Wetmore's *Black Dionysus: Greek Tragedy and African American Theatre* (2003), or the contributions by F. and others in *Dionysus Since 69* (E. Hall, F. Macintosh & A. Wrigley [edd.] [2004]), or F.'s 'The Millennium Project: *Agamemnon* in the United States' (in F. Macintosh, P. Michelakis, E. Hall & O. Taplin [edd.], *Agamemnon in Performance 458 BC to AD 2004* [2005], pp. 307–32).

With the present volume F. confirms her reputation as one of the foremost scholars working on the reception of Greek tragedy. She has expanded the scope of her Sather lectures given in 2007–8. The result is a book dense with factual information and incisive analysis. It is impossible to do justice within a short review to the scope and depth of the research that underlies this fascinating account and analysis of the performance, influence and adaptations of Greek tragedy in the United States from the nineteenth century to the present. F. has succeeded admirably in the formidable task of presenting the huge amount of material in a coherent form. She indicates that she regards her work as only a beginning: 'My goal is to leave behind a set of questions and projects for future exploration' (p. xiv).

Because of their overwhelming number, she excluded college and university productions as well as opera and did not devote much attention to translations. The sources she uses are wide-ranging: published and unpublished scripts of adaptations, video-recordings, interviews and reviews of performances. She has attended many productions herself. Her clear judgement, informed by her deep knowledge of the ancient texts and passionate interest in the theatre, results in a text packed with information, but also presenting a historical and aesthetic perspective on the American search for an artistic identity.

In the introduction, subtitled 'Americanizing Greek Tragedy', F. argues that because of the fatalism of plays like *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Greek tragedy was, until the late nineteenth century, seen as running counter to the defining American belief in human ability to refashion the world. With wider access to education, however, knowledge of Greek culture spread and Athenian democracy came to be regarded as a precursor to America's own.