

Greek literature, F. situates the style of magical recipes within their larger contexts (comparing, for example, those which mention divinities from different cultures with third-century C.E. prose hymns, 13). F. regularly argues against himself in order to illustrate the complexity of his subject matter. And with a deep appreciation of poetic structure, he models aesthetic enjoyment for readers.

F. divides his study into three main sections. In the first section, entitled 'Archaeology', he surveys examples of amulets dating from the late archaic period onward, and from the entire Greek-speaking world, including votives from Cyprus and other objects from beyond Athens. In this section, he explores eclectic examples of amulet shapes, such as the Gorgon's head and phallus. He also contextualizes the various materials of existing objects including gold and hematite, as well as perishable ones like plants and animal parts that are mentioned in literary sources. In the second section, 'Images', F. explains the gods and heroes of the Hellenistic period, the so-called action figures triumphing over evil opponents (such as an equestrian hero stabbing a female demon), and the domestic guardians of pre-Roman protective statuettes. He ends this section with a discussion of the chronology of pre-Hellenistic pharaonic gods and Ptolemaic gods of the Roman period. In his third section, 'Texts', F. examines prayers, including the use of divine names, and goes on to explore incantations of famous singers like David, Orpheus, and Empedocles. F.'s argument culminates with a chapter on speech acts in exorcisms and *historiolae* of miracles and cures. Though the chapter is already replete with examples and contexts, it would be exciting to see further development of theoretical models for understanding speech acts.

Acknowledging the collaborative aspect of all complex scholarship, F. presents his arguments as the beginning or continuation of on-going scholarly questions. He indicates the limits of his own and others' arguments, and consistently suggests to the readers further questions and contexts for study, concluding the book with a chapter on future trajectories.

F. wields a wide range of primary sources, from the purely textual through to thousands of uninscribed amulets. He mines recipes for protective or healing amulets from papyrus handbooks, ostraca and copper plates, and from the extensive Greek *Testament of Solomon*. He brings together magic recipes in Hellenistic lapidaries such as Sotacus, medical treatises, and encyclopedias such as Pliny, along with third-party ancient citations of lost and usually pseudepigraphic 'learned magicians'. As further sources of information, F. draws on descriptions of amulets by philosophers, comic poets and satirists, medical and pharmaceutical writers (such as Soranus of Ephesus, Galen, Theophrastus, and Alexander of Tralles), and public officials (including Roman jurists, Talmudic rabbis, and Christian bishops). Aware of the fact that each source comes with its own set of distortions and limitations, F. reconciles these by providing in-depth social, ideological, geographic, and economic contexts for them. He is humane in his respect toward the users of amulets by meeting historical practices and documents on their own terms and seeking contexts in which they make sense.

The arguments are accompanied throughout by high resolution black and white photographs, ten colour plates, and highly legible drawings. The back matter will facilitate further studies, with its nine appendices that summarize protective and curative recipes, extensive bibliography, handy glossaries of authors, texts, and terms, and indices of ancient words and citations of ancient texts.

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JOHN W. BRADLEY, *THE HYPOGEUM OF THE AURELII: A NEW INTERPRETATION AS THE COLLEGIATE TOMB OF PROFESSIONAL SCRIBAE*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018. Pp. xiv + 192, illus. ISBN 9781789690477. £38.00.

BARBARA E. BORG, *ROMAN TOMBS AND THE ART OF COMMEMORATION: CONTEXTUAL APPROACHES TO FUNERARY CUSTOMS IN THE SECOND CENTURY CE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Pp. xxviii + 341, illus. ISBN 9781108472838. £90.00.

Any study on funerary culture in the ancient city of Rome inevitably faces a contradictory situation. On the one hand, many funerary monuments have been discovered due to the

expanding modern city and some of these are impeccably preserved; on the other, the picture is lacunose and the vast majority of monuments tell us very little. In the past, scholars have addressed this difficulty in one of two ways. One approach homes in on a particularly significant case study and exploits all of the available evidence to reconstruct a monument, place it in the development of funerary culture and draw out implications that this case might have for similar scenarios. The other approach starts at the opposite end, taking on broad developments, often by tracing a particular type, genre, or phenomenon over time to reconstruct changing tastes and habits. The two publications under review represent those two approaches, but they also have more in common than meets the eye.

John W. Bradley zeroes in on the famous Hypogeum of the Aurelii, but the argument is also couched as a correction of previous scholarship. Based on the author's dissertation, the re-examination is roughly split into two halves: the first five chapters (1–82) provide a detailed description of the monument (10–17), especially the painted decoration of the subterranean chambers (33–82), and an evaluation of its historical context (18–32). The linchpin of the argument is the reinterpretation of the mosaic inscription mentioning four Aurelii. Bradley rejects the reading *fratri(bu)s* because there are no known parallels for this abbreviation (but cf. *AE* 1976, 604) and proposes *fratr<e>i>s* instead. The switch from dative to nominative is crucial because it also reassigns the subsequent reference to fellow freedmen (*FRATRIS ET COLIBERT*) from the named Aurelii in the inscription to an unnamed group of *fratres et co(n)libert(i)* who now constitute the commissioners of the entire monument. As a consequence, Bradley rejects the interpretation of the tomb as a family mausoleum and instead proposes that it was used by a collegium.

This new reading is the precondition for the reinterpretation of the tomb's imagery in the second half of the book (83–172). Bradley rejects the various explanations that have been given for the iconography and reads the images in light of the tomb's new attribution: thus, the rods carried by various 'floating figures' (100) are identified with the *festuca* used during manumissions (ch. 7); the dining scene is a 'collegiate convivium' (108, ch. 8); the 'Homeric scene' references the virtues of a freedwoman (ch. 9); the *adventus* scene envisions the lost future of a child buried in the diminutive arcosolium below (ch. 10); the seated figures in the upper burial chamber represent the Aurelii in their professional capacity as *scribae* (ch. 11); and, finally, the scene apparently featuring Prometheus celebrates the (hypothetical) patron of the collegium (ch. 12). The detailed and critical analysis of the iconography is the strength of the book. Bradley demonstrates that previous interpretations have sometimes taken on a life of their own that is quite disconnected from the evidence on site, allowing the assumption that they represent religious symbolism to go largely unquestioned. Instead, the images are treated here 'in the light of prior or contemporary funerary practice' (166), a claim that is sustained through an analysis that invariably uses numerous comparanda to identify inconsistencies in previous reconstructions or to establish the plausibility of counterproposals.

Nevertheless, the historical interpretation of the hypogeum as 'the collegiate tomb of professional *scribae*' is not entirely convincing. This is because it is built on a string of assumptions and generalisations, which are not implausible but also not as compelling as the author suggests. The reference to freedmen in the aforementioned inscription does not necessarily mean that the tomb occupants 'were all *liberti*' (122), that their union necessarily entailed the organisational structure of a formal collegium, and that 'all collegia and *liberti* were in need of a patronus' (168). In the end, the argument narrowly concentrates on the iconography and 'does not attempt to provide a history of the hypogeum' (1). This is what is sorely missing, since the undifferentiated references to the 'freedmen class' (115), the collegium, or its alleged patron often raise more questions than they answer.

Barbara E. Borg's monograph follows the approach of her previous work to trace broad developments over the centuries of Roman imperial rule. It focuses on the second century C.E. and consists of four stand-alone essays that derive from a lecture series at Harvard University. In each of these, the argument primarily engages the scholarship on specific and typically controversial questions. It is thus not so much a history of funerary art and architecture in the second century, but rather a critical review and rectification of previous interpretations. This agenda has some consequences for the structure of the argument, which does not pursue chronological or topographical associations, but sets out to demonstrate broad trends. Typically, the argument starts with particularly well known sites and proceeds to list other examples, in order of declining knowledge or applicability, in order to demonstrate the wider impact of the phenomena under

consideration. This method has the advantage of paying close attention to the archaeological and historical context of specific scenarios, but it also faces the methodological conundrum of how to extrapolate from specific cases.

After a preface that explains the need for and organisation of the study, the opening chapter argues that senators maintained a distinctive funerary culture that served as ‘markers and memorials of elite achievement and status’ (76). This is an important corrective to the common generalisation that Roman tombs had become ‘internalised’ by the second century C.E. Ch. 2 maintains that the switch to inhumation does not reflect ‘religious beliefs’ (80) nor an ‘influence from the East’ (82), but a return to ‘Roman tradition’ (xxi). The chapter does this by demonstrating the persistence of this burial custom among both the ‘lower classes’ (84) and the ‘social elite’ (86). The third chapter affirms that ancestry remained central in funerary commemoration, arguing against ‘certain scholars’ (122) who have highlighted the importance of the nuclear family and individualistic commemoration. The argument shows that ‘multi-generational mausolea’ (xxi) reflect the ‘widespread desire to establish a family line’ (188). In the final chapter, the author claims that theomorphic iconography and temple tombs might reflect real references to the afterlife. The chapter argues against a purely rhetorical understanding of this imagery and instead highlights the ‘relational character of divine status’ (227) that expressed differences in class and status.

The comprehensive integration of scholarship and the meticulous treatment of individual contexts are the two biggest strengths of the book. All the major publications, academic trends and theories about funerary monuments in Rome are constantly rehearsed in the footnotes, which provides a welcome synthesis of the literature. Moreover, the aim of correcting previous narratives provides refreshing and sometimes long overdue re-examinations of often-repeated assertions. Secondly, Borg provides rich and detailed descriptions of individual sites, which anchors the argument in the material and provides a wide-ranging overview of Roman funerary culture during the second century. The argument really shines in those sections and offers many perceptive insights, such as the probable reception of the *Templum Gentis Flaviae* in temple tombs.

When the argument extrapolates from these insightful discussions to entire segments of the population, like the ‘senatorial class’ (126) or ‘members of the sub-elite’ (75), it sometimes loses the nuance that makes the reconstructions of specific monuments so rewarding. The author, to be sure, is very aware of this problem and invariably treats the limitations of the evidence in the footnotes. However, this caution usually disappears in the summarising passages at the end of chapters and subsections, where possibilities (e.g. that Hadrian inhumed a family member in the Mausoleum of Augustus, 117) turn into fact without an intervening argument (119).

Overall, both books under review have much in common despite the difference in scope: they provide detailed analyses of funerary imagery, capitalise on especially well preserved contexts and boldly challenge the scholarly consensus. They also both attribute certain customs, behaviours and preferences to broad social classes. This is especially clear when it comes to freedmen who are envisioned as an undifferentiated ‘class’ (Bradley 115) or ‘milieu’ (Borg 156). This oversimplification conflates legal condition with social status, privileges a single factor over all others and assumes an improbable continuity in commemorative habits. It is not clear how much we can learn from sweeping generalisations that gloss over many exceptions in order to attribute normative behaviour to whole populations. The authors might be in line with widely held views on ‘freedman art’, but they also cite critical voices, only to dismiss them afterwards (Bradley 32, n.24; Borg 151, n.108). This choice to revert to formulaic social models sits ill with the overall claim to revise underexamined assertions and to be more concerned with contextual readings than others (Bradley vii, 4; Borg xvii–xviii). However, this critique is not meant to tarnish the authors’ achievements, but to serve as a reminder of the work that is yet to be done in the field of Roman funerary studies.

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