

ANCESTORS

J. M. HØJTE (ed.): *Images of Ancestors*. (Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity 5.) Pp. 309, maps, ills. Aarhus, Oxford, and Oakville, CT: Aarhus University Press, 2002. Cased, DKr 238/€34/£19.95/US\$39.95. ISBN: 87-7288-948-9.

'Images of ancestors' involve time past, present and future, which explains why this subject was chosen for the international seminar held in 1999 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Department of Classical Archaeology at Aarhus University. Of the twelve papers given by invited scholars, eleven are published here (three in German and the rest in English). The editor expresses (pp. 7–8) the hope that 'each article can be read in its own right for the light it sheds on a particular aspect of images of ancestors in antiquity', and that together they may 'provide a broader understanding of the function and meaning of ancestors'.

By and large, the volume succeeds in this dual aim, but particularly as the sum of its parts. The articles cover a wide but comprehensive range of time and place, drawing (understandably) mainly on material sources of different kinds. Inevitably they vary in strength, and also quite considerably in length; but as a whole, the book is greatly enhanced by the variety of approaches which individual papers have taken, since the authors were left to interpret 'image' and 'ancestors' in their own way. (Several of them have defined their use of terms, which is helpful—not least because the term 'ancestors' can have specific connotations, as Flower, for instance, indicates by placing it in quotation marks when discussing it in relation to office-holders in the Roman Republic.) For the reader, this variation is often thought-provoking, stimulating connections across the different societies discussed. Yet it undoubtedly adds to the risk inherent in any such collection of papers of creating rather a piecemeal effect; and here readers would have been given a clearer perspective on some of the issues at stake had the introduction offered some general discussion, or pulled together ideas which had emerged (or failed to) across the papers. As it is, the introduction describes the context and content of the volume in a straightforward way and avoids entanglement in theoretical perspectives. But one simple, personal scenario which H. describes (p. 7)—of how it takes only a few generations to turn a relative individually remembered into a distant forebear and object of collective projections—hints at some of the subtle distinctions involved in the concept of ancestors.

A central theme of the articles is just how far 'ancestors' acquire their qualities from the needs of the living. In the opening paper, for instance, Antonaccio argues from the assumption that a better understanding of a society's ancestors can lead to better understanding of its more immediate interests. She demonstrates this for Iron Age Greece, showing how the interpretation of funerary buildings and of ancient grave goods at certain sites could suggest that these communities created certain people as 'ancestors' as a way of reinforcing links with the past and thereby claims on the future. More specific in their dynastic messages are the images of various rulers discussed in some other papers. Considering sculptural and written evidence, Jeppesen argues that ancestors probably were represented on the Maussolleion at Halikarnassos, while Fleischer examines how various Hellenistic rulers assimilated their portraits to images of their ancestors (including mythological characters), and vice versa, in order to consolidate their own position. On the other hand, religious concerns are argued for the ancestor monument erected by Antiochos I on Nemrud Dağı in a paper by Jacobs.

Another recurrent theme is how images were created or reshaped according to

whatever society currently needed ancestors to promote or legitimate. This was not confined to the political domain, but also involved private needs, as is shown in what for me were some of the most interesting articles. In the Athenian funerary monuments discussed by Schmalz, inscriptions played an important part in attaching new identities to existing, generalized representations of the dead; and in her wide-ranging paper on Etruscan tombs and burial practices, Nielsen shows their importance in constructing genealogies. The central rôle played by ancestors in developing a sense of family identity in Etruscan society is also stressed by Steingraber, writing on images in funerary sculpture and wall-painting. The interaction of private commemorative needs with more public social concerns is nicely illustrated in a trio of papers which show the value attached to ancestor representation in Roman society: Kragelund looks at commemorative portraits of successive generations of an aristocratic Roman family from late Republic to early Empire; D'Ambra explores ways in which the non-élite, by contrast, made up for their lack of imposing ancestors, and discusses how this was met through the appropriation of some aristocratic themes into their funerary art; and Fejfer discusses the relationship between private commemoration and public honours in statues erected in Italian and provincial towns, and changes in this over time.

If social status and manipulation are obvious themes of the book, gender emerges as another persistent concern of many essays as they show how women fitted into the picture. In a paper which directly asks 'Were Women ever "Ancestors" in Republican Rome?' Flower shows that from the second century B.C. certain women had been honoured as *exempla* of patrician behaviour, as 'ancestors'. A similar recognition of women's rôles (not least in ensuring social continuity) may be seen from the Roman empire (see Kragelund) right back, via the fourth century (Jeppesen on Artemisia), to Iron Age Lefkandi (Antonaccio).

The volume is neatly produced and adequately illustrated. Its rather unassuming presentation belies the richness of the subject, to which these papers make an important and readable contribution.

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ROMAN REFLECTIONS

A. K. BOWMAN, H. M. COTTON, M. GOODMAN, S. PRICE (edd.): *Representations of Empire. Rome and the Mediterranean World*. (Proceedings of the British Academy 114.) Pp. xii + 196, maps, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Cased, £19.95. ISBN: 0-19-726276-7.

A useful collection, this, of papers given at a 2000 conference in honour of the sixty-fifth birthday of Fergus Millar, and so serving as a Festschrift, but thankfully free of the sort of bruised and mushy fruit that often gathers at the bottom of honorific volumes. Three major pieces of interest to any ancient historian, accompanied by five narrower essays, gracefully celebrate the outgoing Camden professor.

Of the articles of general interest, Stephen Mitchell's 'In Search of the Pontic Community in Antiquity' offers a generous survey of what is known of the littoral of the Black Sea in ancient times—a region about which recent discoveries (enabled by the collapse of the Soviet Union) have enormously expanded our knowledge—

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