

that were demonstrably finished on site have struts. A third explanation has focused on balance and stability. Many marble sculptures required built-in supports, but some struts do not contribute to the work's stability and can even threaten it.

If struts were not purely functional, what were they for? There are no ancient writings about struts, so A. looks closely at individual sculptures. She stresses that there are no general rules; each sculpture has to be evaluated individually. Nonetheless, key ideas emerge. Struts were not meant to be invisible. They exist on otherwise highly finished sculptures; some are polished and even ornamented; struts were occasionally carved in obtrusive positions; numerous sculptures have unnecessary struts. All this points to the creation of deliberate visual effects, and A. explores these in ch. 6, to my mind the most original and interesting section of the book. She shows that struts could complement gestures, highlight movement and direct the viewer's gaze. For A., struts belong to what Peter Stewart has termed the 'statuesque', meaning all the ways a work calls attention to itself *as a sculpture*. Struts play with artifice and artfulness. As abstract complements, struts could frame a figure, highlight textures and contrasts, and call attention to the sculpture as a replica not of a living model but of an image. Struts also show off technical expertise, e.g. through deep and difficult undercutting, and attest to the conspicuous consumption of marble (ch. 7). A. further shows that struts vary enormously among replicas of the same model; she attractively suggests that, in this way, sculptors could simultaneously reproduce a form and creatively individualise it. This leads to an important broader observation: the cognitive process of recognition and comparison was a fundamental part of how originality and replication worked in Roman art (156).

The book's strengths will be evident by now. It is carefully researched and clearly written. The photographs are thoughtfully chosen (though not well reproduced). A.'s own drawings add visual support to her arguments. One measure of her success is the reader's surprise at encountering well-known statues whose struts one had never really *seen* before; a dramatic example is A.'s analysis of the Apoxyomenos in the Vatican (157–9). Her multi-faceted approach is productive and her individual analyses for the most part convincing. Her attention to changing contexts produces, along the way, a history of struts. Sculptural supports appeared in the sixth century B.C.E. and became important for leaning poses in the fourth century; by the late Hellenistic period, all the main forms of struts were already in use in Greek sculpture. In Roman sculpture, struts became common from the late Republic onward. The second century C.E. saw the peak availability of large blocks of marble as well as the floruit of struts between drapery folds or embellished with spiral grooves, all part of Antonine aesthetics. Struts remained popular into the fifth century, especially on miniatures.

I have only three criticisms. First, more quantitative precision would have been helpful. A.'s analysis is predominantly qualitative, and she does not explain how many sculptures are meant at key points, or what proportions of the total they represent. A small example: A. writes that the Large Herculaneum Woman type had a special association with neck struts (88), but by my count, only six replicas have these out of the more than 200 known. Second, A. does not consider labour flows and specialisation within workshops. However, the skilled sculptors responsible for the detailed carving of (e.g.) hands almost certainly did not do the unskilled drudgery of final polishing; the organisation of labour will also have affected the appearance of struts. Third, A.'s discussions are sometimes under-developed; I often wanted more interpretation and argumentation.

Ultimately, A.'s book changes the way we look at struts and at the sculptures to which they belong, with broader implications for questions of originality, replication and viewing in Roman visual culture.

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C. BALMELLE and J.-P. DARMON, *LA MOSAÏQUE DANS LES GAULES ROMAINES*. Paris: Picard, 2017. Pp. 359, illus. ISBN 9782708410312. €59.00.

This is the first monograph presenting ancient mosaics from the territory of Roman Gaul, corresponding to modern France, part of Germany, Luxembourg and part of modern Switzerland.

Balmelle and Darmon are known experts on Roman mosaics, especially those from the territory of France. Plans and fine illustrations take up 70 per cent of the book, the rest being devoted to text.

The volume is divided into five chapters. Chs 1 and 5 discuss mosaics in an architectural context, the mosaicists at work, the inscriptions with their names and the issue of the mobility of mosaic technicians, before focusing on those who commissioned mosaic floors. Chs 2, 3 and 4 present the evolution of mosaic floors in three successive chronological phases: from the fourth century B.C. to c. A.D. 100; from A.D. 100 to 250; and from A.D. 250 to c. 600. The architectural context consists of the domus, the villa and various public structures.

The authors see the development of the mosaic 'à la romaine' as the outcome of the 'Romanization' of local elites. The first mosaics were executed by Gaulish craftsmen working under the influence of Italian masters; Hellenistic mosaic centres such as Delos have also been observed to have had an impact on local production (64). Figural mosaics made their appearance inside houses, villas and baths: mythological and hunting scenes, chariot-racing, gladiators, philosophers, writers and poets. In Late Antiquity, the influence of craftsmen from North Africa and the Near East is observed.

The authors ultimately move to the question of decoration semantics (ch. 5), which deserves a broader discussion. However, the rationale that determined their interpretation of the mosaic images of local elites is not presented in the volume.

For example, the view that geometric motifs such as a meander must have a hidden meaning and refer to Classical mythology (in this instance, the labyrinth), even if the house and villa owners were not aware of it, is not entirely convincing (320). The motif had by this time become quite banal, and bore no meaning associated with mythology; it catered to the aesthetic sense and was simply a traditional motif.

The authors propose to consider mythological tableaux appearing on mosaic floors in a private context as a reference to known paintings, even forming a kind of *pinacotheca*, much as K. Scheffold interpreted Pompeian wall-painting (*Pompejanische Malerei* (1952); cf. Vitruvius 6.5). In their discussion, the authors state that the owner of even a relatively modest house (Nîmes) would have chosen the myth of Leda and the swan for his *triclinium* floor as a reference to a famous painting (320). Yet the ancient Romans were widely known to choose the erotic Leda and swan motif for their bedrooms (Pompeii), and when they placed it in *triclinia*, it was to create the proper mood for banquet conversation on 'love-stories', as S. Wyler (in D. Auger and Ch. Delattre (eds), *Mythe et fiction* (2010), 327–47) rightly suggests.

The authors would like to see in these mythological images the owner's act of affirmation as a *mousikos aner* ('man of culture'), according to the theory of H.-I. Marrou, *Mousikos anêr* (1938), and an act of 'autocélébration permanente' of the *dominus* (321), an idea popularised by H. von Hesberg and P. Zanker (eds), *Römische Gräberstrassen* (1987). However, J. Andreau, in M. Cébeillac-Gervasoni *et al.* (eds), *Autocélébration des élites locales dans le monde romain* (2004), 527–34, is right to say that the choice of subject is conscious, and not every act of this kind is an act of self-presentation. The authors' interpretation, linking every mythological picture with the *mousikos aner*, is not convincing with regard to all owners of richly decorated houses (e.g. Trimalchio).

Oceanus, present in a private context (248), is associated by the authors with fertility symbolism ('invocation à la fertilité', 323). But should not the image of Oceanus instead be linked to the phenomenon of 'imaginary water' and 'imaginary freshness' in those specific cases of bath-house *frigidaria* or dining-rooms and reception halls where the Romans sought coolness on days of sweltering heat? This 'imaginary freshness', linking mythical elements with water and coolness, is found in the decoration of the hot Mediterranean climate of the Roman Empire, especially in the reception halls of the Roman houses and villas with fountains in the peristyles.

The authors interpret the decoration of a few private dining-rooms as if they were discussing representations from the official/public sphere, connected with imperial propaganda. The mosaic with Aion from a private house in Arles (321–2) is associated with a cosmic sense ('Évocation cosmique'), and not with a wish to guarantee the continuity and uninterrupted prosperity and good fortune of the house and family. But the other picture with a Dionysian cortege from the same dining-hall is correctly attributed to the private sphere of the owner, symbolising banquets held in this hall; this interpretation is widely accepted, e.g. by P. Zanker and B. C. Ewald in *Living with Myths* (2012). The connection made by the authors between mosaics showing Orpheus among the animals and the *Pax Romana* does not find confirmation in the context of private art, especially as, according to H. Cornwell, *Pax and the Politics of Peace* (2017), *Pax*

Romana is a universal and political concept (Livy 36.29.11; Sen., *Prov.* 1.4.14; Plin., *HN* 27.1.3), and Orpheus is a figure of political concord in, for example, the advice that Marcus Cornelius Fronto gave to Marcus Aurelius.

It is a pity that the names of the authors of the most interesting interpretations of mosaics are not mentioned in the text (only in the footnotes), as does K. Dunbabin in *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (1999). The mosaic from Nîmes, initially interpreted as a Gigantomachy (Dionysus slaying the giant Eurytus), turned out to be a scene of the punishment of Pentheus, thanks to an identification made by P. Linant de Bellefonds (193). In the mosaic from Vinon, H. Lavagne emphasised the apotropaic aspect of the three mythological representations (Dionysus, Three Graces, he-goat eating off a grapevine), the Latin text (Mart., *Ep.* 1.40) and the play on words and images (260). I. Morand associated the mosaic from Trier depicting Leda, Zeus (eagle) and Agamemnon with the banquets that took place in the reception hall of the house (207).

The authors are of the opinion that the mosaic in the huge hall with an apse at Grand depicts a scene from Menander's comedy *Phasma* (147), similarly to the mosaic from Mitylene. Thanks to a recent identification of a sun-dial on the mosaic (M. T. Olszewski in A. Tomas (ed.), *Ad fines imperii Romani* (2015), 452), the scene is better linked to other comedies by Menander, which include a character, the so-called 'parasite', who tries to barge in on evening banquets without invitation. The scene suits a reception hall where symposia were held.

The authors propose that scenes from the so-called 'Calendrier rustique' from Vienne depict various agricultural activities and that some are actually attested through archaeological discoveries in the region (188). However, there is no olive cultivation in the region because of the climate (which is a Mediterranean climate with strong oceanic dominance). The mosaic presumably drew its iconographic repertoire from the territories of southern France, Italy or Spain.

In spite of the critical view of the iconology presented in this volume, the book is a very important contribution toward a systematic presentation of knowledge on the use, production and iconography of mosaics in an architectural context in Roman Gaul. This richly illustrated monograph will surely be a useful research tool for both students and researchers in the coming years.

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F. MITTHOF and G. SCHÖRNER (EDS), *COLUMNA TRAIANI: TRAIANSSÄULE – SIEGESMONUMENT UND KRIEGSBERICHT IN BILDERN: BEITRÄGE DER TAGUNG IN WIEN ANLÄSSLICH DES 1900. JAHRESTAGES DER EINWEIHUNG, 9.–12. MAI 2013* (Tyche Sonderband 9). Vienna: Holzhausen, 2017. Pp. xii + 384, illus. ISBN 9783902976536. €75.00.

Trajan's Column has already accumulated a mountain of print — 1,530 items at the last count — and this book adds another thirty to the pile, publishing a selection from some fifty papers that were delivered at a four-day conference held in Vienna to celebrate the 1900th anniversary of the dedication of the Column on 12 May A.D. 113. As the title proclaims, the focus is on the Column as a 'victory monument and war chronicle in pictures'. Accordingly, most of the contributions concern the reliefs on the shaft, revisiting the perennial problem of how they were intended to be 'read', as narrative or as metaphor, factual or ideological, as pictures or words. The fact that the 200 m-long frieze could never have been read by anyone (except the sculptors who carved it) in the sense that we are accustomed to do from casts and photographs, let alone interpreted, occasionally comes to the fore to be pushed aside, as is the issue of when it was carved and for whom. Here the Column and its reliefs are accepted without question as a single Trajanic monument, with all the contradictions that entails.

The papers are divided into seven sections, starting with two keynote lectures, one by Werner Eck discussing Trajan's imperial image as represented in Pliny the Younger's panegyric, and the other by Tonio Hölscher on the art-historical side, whose contorted title ('The ideology of reality – The reality of ideology: narrative structure, material culture and (in)visibility of a war environment in pictures')