picture which the book presents, of an abrupt change from tolerant co-existence to hostility and suspicion resulting from the political needs of a few Roman leaders requiring a scapegoat, is a compelling one which goes far beyond anything Josephus would have admitted.

University of Wales Lampeter DAVID NOY

M. CORBIER, *DONNER À VOIR, DONNER À LIRE. MÉMOIRE ET COMMUNICATION DANS LA ROME ANCIENNE*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2006. Pp. 352. ISBN 9-782-27106-382-3. €45.00.

This book is so rich in ideas and fascinating examples that it is difficult to do it justice in a short review. The attractively presented volume updates and republishes several important articles originally published between 1977 and 2001. This is not merely a book of reprints, however. The inclusion of well over 100 illustrations contributes substantially to the force and clarity of the arguments. The footnotes have been extensively updated to incorporate more recent bibliographical references. A new section at the end of ch. 4 happily draws attention to a recently published diploma (*AE* 2002, 1770), which supports the author's contention that the *aerarium militare* was a separate building in its own right. In addition, the revised articles are now prefaced by an extensive introductory section, lending coherence to the whole.

The volume offers a multitude of insights into epigraphic culture in the Roman world. To give a taste of its flavour, I might mention the view of Roman literacy as being a widespread, though shallow, phenomenon, or the detailed discussion of the significance of topographical context both to imperial constitutions displayed on the Capitol, as revealed through *diplomata* (ch. 4), and to the inscribed honours decreed for Claudius' freedman Pallas (ch. 5). The book contains a great variety of tone and depth of analysis: some chapters circle widely around a theme, whilst others deal in great detail with a single inscription (e.g., ch. 10 on *ILS* 6987 relating to the grain-shippers of Arles). In the case of these latter chapters, the author presents texts and translations. The book also provides astute analysis of wider historical themes, including various economic activities, such as transhumance in Italy, protection of the *annona*, and the place of the *fiscus* in the Empire's finances. It is perhaps worth drawing attention to the useful analysis of the topography of Augustus' house on the Palatine that appears during the course of discussion of the inscribed honours for Germanicus, which readers may not otherwise anticipate finding (ch. 6). Close analysis of the language and historical context of Caracalla's edict inscribed upon the 'Banasa Tablet', in which the emperor offered remission of taxes in return for the delivery of *caelestia animalia* (which, according to Corbier, should be interpreted not as referring to a single species of animal — elephants or lions according to many — but rather as 'animals fit for the emperor'), throws doubt upon the common assumption that Caracalla is revealing his irrational love of amphitheatre pursuits in this edict. C. argues convincingly that the edict masks the real social and political relationships between emperor and Mauretanian provincials, and that Caracalla may have been forestalling possible unrest in the province likely to arise from the inappropriate fiscal demands being made upon it. It is her contention that, despite explicit claims to the contrary made in the edict, this tax remission is unlikely to have been a spontaneous gift from the emperor, and she traces how the language it uses may well echo the language used by the provincials in the first place in their appeal to the emperor for relief. In this way, detailed analysis of a single edict goes some way towards rehabilitating a 'mad' emperor and offers insights into the operation of provincial administration.

The volume is a stimulating read, with fascinating examples (my favourite being the 'talking ink-well' on p. 48, *AE* 1998, 1015), but occasionally themes could be developed at more length. For example, discussion of 'the inscription as monument' is overly brief (13), and could have fruitfully explored the parallel world of coins as monuments (cf. A. Meadows and J. Williams, *JRS* 91 (2001), 27–49). I would also question the assumption of a mass of instructions issuing from Rome relating to the publication of documents in inscribed form that underlies discussion of the role of 'official initiative' in ensuring the display of inscribed documents (27–9, especially the statement that 'une telle diffusion ne s'explique que par une injunction du pouvoir central'; cf. my chapter in K. Lomas, R. Whitehouse and J. Wilkins (eds), *Literacy and the State in the Ancient Mediterranean* (2007)). There is also a worrying tendency to take Suetonius at his word (for example, apparently accepting at face-value his description of Augustus writing down all his conversations in advance, even those with Livia (87)), which could take more account of recent literary studies questioning the source-value of the biographer (especially the chapter by

T. Barton in J. Elsner and J. Masters (eds), *Reflections of Nero* (1994)). Otherwise, it is not surprising that in such a richly developed book, one might disagree with interpretations of individual inscriptions (e.g., there seems no reason to believe that the marble copy of the *clipeus virtutis* was displayed in the *curia* at Arles (29 n. 53)), but there is almost nothing to fault in its presentation (apart from a reference to Gros 2000–2001 (39 n. 87) which perhaps corresponds to the entry in the bibliography for Gros 2001–2002).

What this book does really effectively is demonstrate that inscriptions have a crucial part to play, as texts and monuments, in contributing to our understanding of many aspects of Roman culture and society, and that inscriptions are not just of limited historical use, merely illuminating the world of a rich, literate élite. It also illustrates the necessity of 'reading' inscribed texts in a sophisticated manner, not assuming them to be objective documents.

University of Warwick ALISON E. COOLEY

H. I. FLOWER, *THE ART OF FORGETTING: DISGRACE & OBLIVION IN ROMAN POLITICAL CULTURE*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Pp. xxiv + 400. ISBN 0-8078-3063-1. US$59.95.

H. I. Flower's book is a study in the politics of memory in Rome, with a special emphasis on 'memory sanctions' imposed on those regarded by the powers-that-be as public enemies (whether or not officially defined as such). After an introductory discussion of the social and political functions of memory and officially-ordained oblivion, ch. 2 deals with a wide range of Greek practices in this field, including erasure of honorific inscriptions, removal of statutes, abolition of previously voted honours, razing of houses, and denial of proper burial — all applied to those who were branded as tyrants or enemies of the city. F. suggests that Greek examples — in particular, the decrees against Philip V and his predecessors' memory voted after his attack on Athens in 200 B.C. — had a strong influence on the later Roman tradition of memory sanctions, while the traditions on the application of such sanctions, by public authority, against suspected aspirants to *regnum* in the early Republic were, according to her, late Republican constructions. The latter suggestion is possible, though by no means certain. Of course, even if there was a kernel of truth in those traditions, this does not rule out later Greek influences. On the other hand, the brutal logic of civil strife and the extreme gravity with which tyranny was viewed in ancient city-states may have influenced Roman behaviour in this field no less than either ancient Roman precedents, real or imagined, or more or less contemporary Greek examples.

Although sceptical about the tradition regarding Spurius Cassius, Spurius Maelius, and Marcus Manlius Capitolinus as eventually shaped, F. suggests in ch. 3 that they reflect genuine cases of memory sanctions applied by family rather than by the state — as demonstrated by the ban on the *praenomen* Marcus maintained by the Manlii. This, she argues, was the original Roman way, reflecting the pivotal role of aristocratic clans in that society. Ch. 4 deals with official memory sanctions in the turbulent late Republic. Caius Gracchus is said to have been the first Roman to suffer officially-imposed memory sanctions (though it is an overstatement to say that his 'laws were annulled' (76); most of them, and the more important ones, were not). In the case of Saturninus in 100 B.C., the posthumous sanctions included, remarkably, the banning of his portrait. A discussion of the legal basis for this decision (and perhaps for other senatorial decisions in this field) would be useful here. What exactly was Sextus Titus found guilty of when he was exiled in 98 B.C., as Cicero tells us, for possessing a portrait of Saturninus in his house? If it was *maiestas*, this would be highly relevant to the history of this offence under the Republic; in any case, there is a sinister foretaste of imperial *maiestas* about this story. Sulla, with the extraordinary lengths to which he went by penalizing the descendants of his victims (a measure which perversely survived the dismantling of his 'constitution'), is the main (anti-)hero of ch. 5.

Ch. 6 deals with the politics of memory and oblivion under Augustus, Tiberius and Gaius. Regarding Augustus, F. rightly stresses the fact that he failed to suppress the memory of Antonius — a decision that, given the circumstances, was far from trivial. Claudius' delicate balancing act between his wish to distance himself from the memory of Gaius and considerations of regime and family continuity is examined in detail. Ch. 7 examines the 'Julio-Claudian innovation' of public sanctions against women — in a state that was now headed not just by a ruler but by a ruling family, with the resultant crucial political importance of the imperial 'princesses'. The changing fortunes of Nero's posthumous memory are examined in ch. 8. Here and elsewhere, F. rightly