

attention than as a document of the humanistic reception of the classics, and in particular the part played in it by Ovid.

The text for the most part reproduces the copyist's orthography, not always to happy effect. It would, of course, have been quite wrong to correct the unclassical spelling of proper names (at 416 *laodomia*, the received medieval spelling, should have been kept). I am not sure that it was a good idea to retain purely arbitrary scribal variation between *a*, *e*, and *e*, or graphic conventions that to the modern eye look grotesque, such as *petijt* or *Jouj* (!). (I note that *sotii*, on the other hand, seems to have stuck in the editors' craw.) Fatus was a slapdash copyist, and the editors correct numerous errors, for the most part trivial and obvious, though at 323 *ropus* for (it would seem) *manus* is distinctly odd. A few more emendations suggest themselves. 133 *Hic nos emissi*: surely *Hinc*? 167 *Hei mihi, qualis erat iactatis puppibus uda! qualis* cannot, even in this author, stand for *quam*, and *uda*, picking up *classis* in the preceding verse, is very feeble. Read *unda* and repunctuate. 174 *Liparj* [*sic*] cannot be the ablative of *Lipare* (cf. 143n.); read *Lipare*. 295–9 The problems with which the editors make no less heavy weather than that described in the text are simply disposed of by reading *Qua* for *Que* at 296 and repunctuating.

The documentation in the commentary of the poet's sources and *modus operandi* is admirably full; an uncharacteristic lapse at 200n. '*petijt rura aliena seges*: Dies Detail ist in den antiken Zauberkatalogen nicht belegt'. The practice was forbidden in the Twelve Tables and is well attested by the poets: Virg. *E.* 8.98, Tib. 1.8.19, Ov. *Rem.* 255. A few miscellaneous points. 12 *Lictera sed saeuo reddita cara mari*; 'ich . . . habe deinen lieben Brief von dem tosenden Meer erhalten'. In a bottle? Surely 'auf See' (cf. 14 *fluctibus in mediis*)? 216 *Laertiade*: this was indeed what the poet would have found in his text of the *Metamorphoses* (12.625), but it was not, as the note implies, what Ovid wrote; see *CR* 34 (1984), 34. 245 *Acheloïades*: the plural is indeed attested only at *Met.* 14.87, but the form is not hapax (Sil. 12.34). 312 The dactylic scansion of *Nereus* ought to have been noted, as spondaic *Nereis* is at 347; cf. *Aetölia* overlooked. 417 The reference is not to the episode of the snakes sent to attack Hercules in his cradle, but to the Labours; the relevant passage is Ov. *AA* 2.217.

These and other inadvertencies do not seriously detract from the substantial merits of this interesting contribution to our better understanding of the Revival of Learning.

Peterhouse, Cambridge

E. J. KENNEY

ROME IN POPULAR CULTURE

S. R. JOSHEL, M. MALAMUD, D. T. MCGUIRE (edd.): *Imperial Projections. Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture*. Pp. viii + 299, ills. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. Cased, £31. ISBN: 0-8018-6742-8.

Scholarly interest in popular culture's re-imagining of the ancient world has grown rapidly over the past decade as a number of classicists have turned to the Ancient Greece and Rome presented in sources such as the sword and sandal film, popular novels, theatre, and television. The interrelationship between representations of Rome and their ideological context has been a prominent concern of such scholars. As the title suggests, *Imperial Projections* reads the Romes of popular culture as

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expressions of, or responses to, more recent imperialisms. The volume provides an excellent snapshot of the state of play in this expanding field.

Greatest attention is given to the Hollywood epic films of the 1950s and 1960s. Three of the nine essays are devoted to this genre. Building upon previous work by Wyke, Sobchack, and others (see M. Wyke, *Projecting Rome* [London and New York, 1997]; V. Sobchack, "'Surge and Splendor": a Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic', in B. K. Grant [ed.], *Film Genre Reader* [Austin, 1986], pp. 280–307; M. M. Winkler [ed.], *Classics and the Cinema* [Lewisburg, 1991], revised and reprinted as M. M. Winkler [ed.], *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema* [New York, 2001]; M. M. Winkler, 'Cinema and the Fall of Rome', *TAPhA* 125 [1995], 135–54; G. E. Forshey, *American Religious and Biblical Spectaculars* [Westport and London, 1992]; and B. Babington and P. Williams Evans, *Biblical Epics: Sacred Narrative in the Hollywood Cinema* [Manchester and New York, 1993]), the essays by William Fitzgerald, Martin Winkler, and Alison Futrell examine respectively the ambiguous possibilities for audience identification offered by cinematic Romes, Hollywood's Imperial Rome as a double for the Nazi Reich, and the domestication of the ideologically charged figure of Spartacus in the 1960 film. All three authors are interested primarily in the reception of the films by American audiences. This is justified by the origins of the material in Hollywood (itself an imperium of sorts), the locations and backgrounds of the scholars, and, one might guess, the primary market for the book. The American focus is rewarded by insights into ancient Rome's facility as a metaphor for social structures and political concerns in the USA during the third quarter of the last century.

The only essay in the volume devoted entirely to television, Sandra R. Joshel's analysis of *I, Claudius*, also focuses on the American reception of this British mini-series through the frame of the Masterpiece Theatre presentation of 1977. Joshel deploys the findings and methodologies of televisual studies to elucidate the multiple 'imperialities' of *I, Claudius*'s Rome in the context of 1970s America ('another imperial society in crisis', p. 127). Margaret Malamud's discussion of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* examines a distinctly Jewish-American rendering of Rome. *Funny Thing*'s reworking of Plautine comedy through the filter of vaudeville and the Catskills comedy circuit suggests one way in which the supposedly dominant Romes of Hollywood can be exploited and subverted to create a very different vision. Nicholas Cull's essay on *Carry On Cleo* and other British Camp comedies of Ancient Rome suggests another. It is one of only two essays in the volume to focus on the reception of pop culture Romes outside the USA. But even here, it seems, Hollywood's toga film is the inescapable paradigm for any re-imagining of Ancient Rome, however subversive or irreverent it may be. Satire and camp are used to question the cinematic epic, and thus also America's cultural hegemony and values. But as well as the obvious parody of Hollywood films, the 'camping' of Rome targeted the class system, political landscape, and established gender rôles of 1960s/1970s Britain. As several of the other essays in this volume suggest, Rome provided a powerful vehicle for social critique in the thirty or so years following the Second World War.

In the opulent theme park environment of Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, however, all trace of critique is absent. As Margaret Malamud and Donald McGuire Jr demonstrate, here the excess and indulgence so often associated with the moral failure of Imperial Rome is offered uncritically for the enjoyment of the paying customer. Whereas in Hollywood's versions the audience's vicarious pleasure in Roman excess is only allowed behind a screen of moral admonishment, at Caesars Palace Rome is undisguised consumable. Las Vegas exposes the hidden economy of Hollywood's and

America's Rome: a construction born of post-war boom and political ascendancy. Yet it also suppresses Rome's traditional power to question and challenge contemporary society. At Caesars Palace the Cold War anxieties and ambiguities suggested by Fitzgerald, Futrell, Joshel, and others seem very far away.

At first, Maria Wyke's analysis of Derek Jarman's 'high culture . . . art house film' *Sebastiane* seems a little out of place in a volume which for the most part deals with the (largely American) reception of blockbusters, bestsellers, sell-out shows, and popular pleasure palaces. But in fact Wyke's focus on the film's exploration of contemporary sexuality—in this case homosexuality in 1970s Britain and the erotics of the male body—through a re-imagining of Ancient Rome picks up a theme which unites many of the essays in *Imperial Projections*. It is a theme shared, for example, by the only piece to address directly the influential genre of the historical novel, Martha Malamud's discussion of Colleen McCullough's *The First Man in Rome* series. McCullough, as Malamud reveals, redirects the model of family saga she established with her earlier bestseller, *The Thorn Birds*, to present a Rome of infantilized leading men and excessive, sensualized, and monstrous women. Malamud is particularly interesting on McCullough's depiction of Rome as a site of bestial and repulsive female sexuality. As other essays in this volume demonstrate, the negative portrayal of female sexuality has been a strong and disturbing element of many re-imaginings of Rome.

Imperial Projections is the perfect starting point for anyone interested in the meanings and uses of Ancient Rome in the middle-late twentieth century, and makes for extremely entertaining reading. Inevitably there is a limit to the ground which can be covered by nine mid-length essays. With the exception of Martha Malamud's piece on McCullough, the contributions tend to focus on the thirty year period from c. 1950 to c. 1977, with some glances back to the 1940s, the 1930s, and earlier for context and comparanda. Even Margaret Malamud and Donald T. McGuire Jr's piece on Caesars Palace works to reconstruct the 'original' resort of the 1960s. While the inevitable collections of essays on Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* (2000) can now be only months away, it would be interesting to know more about popular perceptions of Ancient Rome in the last decade or so. The benefits of a more contemporary focus become even more apparent when one of the central premises of *Imperial Projections* is considered: that the USA is the 'Rome' of today. The USA = Rome equation seems to have become a sort of orthodoxy of late as recent events have elicited more and more overt comparisons of this kind. As a result, the need for scholars to engage with what Rome is being made to mean at this particular point in time would seem intellectually and politically pressing.

The centrality of the USA, and to a lesser extent Britain, is a conscious decision on the part of the editors. Yet the volume's emphasis on echoes of 'British–American colonial history' in American versions of Rome raises interesting implications for how such versions might be received elsewhere. How were Hollywood's Romes received by audiences in India, Ireland, South Africa or any number of other regions with their own, often very different, experiences of western Imperialisms? Even more interestingly, how was Rome imagined within these colonial/post-colonial cultures? At times the contributors to *Imperial Projections* hint at other receptions of the Anglo-US Romes. Nicholas Cull writes of *Carry On Cleo*: 'The film also did excellent business in Australia, which had its own interest in escaping from the burden of British and American imperialism' (p. 178). The thematic parameters of the collection prevent Cull or the other contributors from pursuing such hints any further. While it may at times

work to critique American imperialism, the privileging of the USA as the referent of pop culture Romes could in itself be seen as an imperialist gesture.

The cultural and chronological focus of the volume is also an effect of a hierarchy of genres apparent in much recent work on Rome in popular culture. The big Hollywood epics of the 1950s and 1960s, so suggestive both in diegesis and production values of the excess popularly associated with Rome, have reaped the most scholarly attention. There is some justification for this in the massive influence which these projections of Rome have had worldwide. But this has led to neglect of some genres which have re-worked Rome in ways equally influential. The re-modelling of Rome in pervasive genres such as cartoons, comics, science-fiction, video/computer games, and television serials remains under-examined. Perhaps especially, the brands of 'authentic' Rome offered by the recent spate of TV documentaries about aspects of Roman history and culture would benefit from scholarly attention in proportion to their influence on the popular imagination. I suspect that in the English-speaking world today most non-classicists' conceptions of Ancient Rome would be more likely to be formed from a mixture of sci-fi fantasies, school textbooks, computer game scenarios, the odd trip to the museum, and TV documentaries than from *Ben-Hur* or *Spartacus*. This would be particularly true for a younger audience. The Romes of popular culture at the turn of the twenty-first century are more diverse, fragmentary, and ideologically potent than ever.

If the areas I have outlined above provide avenues for future studies into the meanings of Ancient Rome in contemporary popular culture, *Imperial Projections* provides a welcome staging-post along the way. It is both a fine example of current work in the field and an incitement to new departures.

University of Melbourne

PARSHIA LEE-STECUM