

more fashionable subject for research and investigation, there will be many more books of this kind. Current scholarship on ancient Rome is only beginning to address how notions of the past manifested themselves as elements of mainstream culture and of collective (or social) memory as a cultural phenomenon. Therefore, any effort to touch upon such topics constitutes a welcome addition to a slowly increasing bibliography on the subject. This one is concerned with the representation of the Roman Republic in the culture of the imperial period.

Focusing largely on the close interrelationship between *memoria* and *historia* in Roman thought (a distinction which is treated at length in the first chapter, appropriately entitled "*Historia/memoria*", pp. 1–27), Alain Gowing offers a series of case-studies of the evidence provided by authors writing in the decades between the inception of the reign of Tiberius and the end of that of Trajan (AD 14–117). Studying how the Republic is remembered in the Empire, the author could have said something about the fact that the evolution of the Roman state from a republican form of government to the system which became (and is) known as the Principate is not altogether unproblematic, at least not with regard to its exact chronological demarcation. As is well known, Augustus did his best to disguise the fact that things were changing. However, Gowing does not need a very clear definition, as the Republic of his study is not an exact historical phenomenon, but rather a generic past which was used as a point of reference in thinking about the ever-changing present.

In the second chapter, examining the evidence for Tiberius' reign (*Res publica Tiberiana*, pp. 28–66), the author does consider some of the testimonials found in Tacitus and Suetonius, who provide the fullest account of the period, but, in a display of sound methodology, he bases most of his study on Velleius Paterculus and Valerius Maximus, two contemporary authors. The third chapter ("Caesar, now be still", pp. 67–101) takes us to the middle of the first century AD, to the time of Lucan (*Pharsalia*) and Seneca (*Epistulae* 14 and 86), writing under Nero. In the fourth chapter ("Rome's New Past", pp. 102–31), there is an examination of Tacitus (*Dialogus de oratoribus*) and of Pliny the Younger (*Panegyricus*). In the fifth and last chapter ("Remembering Rome", pp. 132–59), Gowing proceeds to examine how the Forum of Augustus and that of Trajan were designed to display the memory of men and events associated with the history of the Republic.

This slim volume, which concludes with a bibliography (pp. 160–9), an index of passages discussed (pp. 170–3) and a general index (174–8), constitutes an important addition to the study of historical memory, which is attracting ever more scholarly attention but is still an under-studied cultural phenomenon in classical scholarship. Well written, accessible and thought-provoking, it is warmly recommended to anyone with an interest in Roman history (whether republican or imperial) or the (Latin) literature of the Empire.

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EVE D'AMBRA: *Roman Women*. Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization. Cambridge University Press, New York 2007. ISBN 978-0-521-52158-1. XXI, 215 pp. GBP 13.55, USD 19.99.

Published as a part of the Cambridge Introduction to Roman Civilization series, this monograph by Eve D'Ambra is designed to give easily accessible information about Roman women's lives

for students who have no prior familiarity with the subject. D'Ambra discusses central themes in women's lives, such as religion, marriage, everyday work and relationships. She focuses on ordinary and everyday aspects of women's lives and states as her main interests "plebeian and anticlassical" – "women whose lives were considered marginal and went unnoticed by elites" (p. 40). This is a goal she laudably achieves, due to a great diversity of sources. There are some passages where leaning mainly on literary evidence excludes interpretations about the lower social orders' lives, but in most cases these sources are supported by a great deal of archaeological evidence which makes it possible for the author to offer fascinating glimpses of ordinary citizens' lives – and deaths.

At the beginning of the first chapter, the author describes her main sources and problems related to their analysis. This is rather basic information about the use of ancient evidence, but considering the target audience, the introduction to the baselines of research is certainly helpful. D'Ambra, for example, stresses motives behind different sources by pointing out that "neither the texts - - nor the gleaming statuary - - reflected reality in a truthful or comprehensive way – rather, they provided models of ideal behaviour for elite women to follow" (p. 6). Even though the differences between verbal and visual sources are laudably explained, I feel there could have been more discussion about the motives of different genres of Roman literature. On the other hand, the focus seems to be on archaeological and visual evidence and the deeper analysis of literature is given less attention throughout.

In the first chapter, "Gender and Status", D'Ambra discusses definitions that determined a woman's role in society. This is also a chapter where basic information is given about the society of the Republic and the early Empire. The author commendably describes the social surroundings in which women lived and the norms which dictated their actions. Even though this background information is certainly useful for students not familiar with the subject, it occasionally seems to conceal the viewpoint considering women and their role in the society. I also feel that the author's description of an honorary position available to Roman matrons is somewhat narrow, as she claims that "the trusted woman was defined as an honorary male", and that "esteemed matrons could be depicted with masculine characteristics - - to demonstrate that only exceptional women could acquire the dignity, discipline and high-mindedness of the male ideal" (p. 13). As convincing as this is, I think some attention should have been paid here to occasions where women were esteemed especially as representatives of their gender and honoured for qualities that were considered primarily female. Literary sources provide us with examples of women – for example, Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi – esteemed not only for their courage, determination and independence in the politically chaotic society, qualities usually considered primarily male, but also for their *castitas* and *fecunditas*, feminine virtues that secured some permanence and continuance.

In the second chapter, D'Ambra deals with familial relationships and the institution of marriage. This is the chapter in which the life and death of Roman women shows up as real, touching and relatable to a modern-day reader. The author uses a variety of different sources in order to reveal glimpses of ordinary women's lives, and succeeds laudably as she shares with the reader fascinating descriptions about little girls' playing with dolls, women's daily handwork, even pregnancy and birth control. Archaeological evidence and various illustrations support descriptions and make the everyday life of Roman women accessible to the reader. Only in the very beginning of the chapter, when the institution of marriage is discussed, does the domination of literary sources cause problems, when the author describes marriage as an issue

usually of little interest to men, an institution the only purpose of which was to recreate legal offspring. This is a mindset probably most typical of an elite male Roman in the late Republic. We should bear in mind that for lower-class men, marriage was often an extremely agreeable lifestyle, not only because of offspring, but also because of the companionship and help a wife offered in everyday work or in a family business.

In general, this chapter, however, is a balanced survey of Roman women's lives in different social orders. D'Ambra deals with women's learning and their cultural interests, using both literary and visual evidence, e.g., funerary reliefs. She offers interesting interpretations of the lives these women might have lived and makes a distant culture accessible and understandable to a modern-day reader. While discussing wedding ceremonies, along with the appearance of a bride, she brings alive the everyday life of the Romans, which evidently is one of the main goals of the book. In this context, a reader can even note some psychological sensitivity and deliberation usually so rare in historical research, as D'Ambra speculates on young brides' emotional preparedness for marriage. Another fresh and interesting topic is relationships between mothers and daughters, discussed at the end of the chapter. This theme is unfortunately examined only through visual evidence, excluding various descriptions of mother-daughter-relationships available in literature. However, considering the author's emphasis on non-elite women, this choice of evidence might be justified.

Despite its name, "Women's Work", the third chapter of the book does not only focus on work in the meaning we understand it today, but rather on various activities that filled a Roman woman's days. Along with household chores and childcare, this section includes beauty treatment as well as women's relationships and activities with their friends. I find beauty care as a part of Roman women's everyday work an interesting topos. D'Ambra explains her point of view very well by arguing the social importance connected with respectable matrons' looks. Even though literary sources are full of critical reactions to primping, in reality it was a Roman matron's duty to take care of her looks for the sake of her own and her family's social status. D'Ambra presents archaeological evidence of this reality in the form of beauty care equipment, and completes the picture with literary sources. I found this section of the book extremely interesting, and was left hoping that the author had broadened it with the closely linked subject of healthcare and home medication performed by women.

D'Ambra describes women's work at home vividly and in detail. She examines both childcare and household chores of lower-class women and the demanding business of running a *domus* expected from elite matrons. Rich illustrations and a great deal of archaeological evidence open interesting views into a Roman home. D'Ambra also utilizes funerary epitaphs and reliefs when she discusses lower-class women's work as saleswomen in family businesses. She nevertheless stresses that these sources only show the most public part of the women's work and hence do not offer a realistic representation of the nature of the work. The author admonishes her readers to bear in mind that details of Roman women's work often escape the gaze of modern-day scholars.

The last chapter of the book is devoted to women's public activity. While the author discusses both women's ways to public activity and the reactions it caused, I wish she had also given some thought to motives behind women's actions. In this chapter, D'Ambra naturally deals mostly with high-class women. At first, she offers examples of women who became involved in public life and even with political *potestas*. The republican women brought up here, Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi and Fulvia, wife of Mark Antony, are to my mind excel-

lent examples of two different ways of wielding power – discrete, behind-the-scenes activity connected with Cornelia, and a forthright, public role attributed to Fulvia. Their stories are also perfect examples of attitudes towards these different lifestyles. Even though these sporadic examples are very well chosen, I wish there had been deeper analysis on other ways for public role available for women in the republican system. Especially public demonstrations by elite women and women's roles in politically charged trials are occasions I find important to stress.

When it comes to the Empire, the author describes in detail the roles of female members of the imperial family from Livia to the Flavian women. Even though the book is focused on the late Republic and early Empire, I would have welcomed some discussion on the politically active Severan empresses as well. If their public role had been included, it would have offered a productive opportunity for examining a change in the role of the empress over time. In this section, D'Ambra's critical approach to sources is apparent throughout. She stresses the motives and purposes of both vilifying literary sources and embellished public statues of imperial women. These notices are certainly important to point out, considering the target audience without former familiarity with the sources.

In the end of the last chapter D'Ambra deals with religious cults as fora for social activity. She has picked some specific cults of Venus and Diana to be examined more thoroughly in this context, and descriptions of women's roles in these are both interesting and useful in understanding the religious activity of women. I wonder, however, why the author has not chosen any cult of Juno to be examined here, Juno being one of the most important *deae* in the Roman state religion, and especially prominent in esteemed matrons' religious activity. Nor is there any further discussion concerning foreign cults imported to Rome during the Republic – many of which are considered to have been especially connected with women's religious activity. Despite the lack of these topics, D'Ambra's description of women's role in religion is full of essential information. She stresses some ritual activities common to both higher and lower-class women, dispelling the usual idea of religious activity as a function reserved only for elite matrons. She also, once again, emphasizes the importance of a critical approach to sources by pointing out that the examination of any single cult cannot offer a complete picture of women's religious roles and that "we need to look across a wide spectrum of rites in order to get a picture of how Roman religion defined womanhood" (p. 180).

All in all, D'Ambra has succeeded in writing an accomplished guidebook full of interesting details and concrete examples that make aspects of a Roman woman's life easily understandable. The book is written in clear language, which makes it also accessible to readers not familiar with the use of academic jargon. A great number of related illustrations enliven the text. A reader can also find maps showing Italy in the third-second centuries BC and the Roman Empire in the late second century AD – these maps are often referred to while discussing examples from provinces. At the end of the book, there are a glossary of the terms related to the ancient world, a list of Roman authors, and a select bibliography for further reading. The greatest technical shortcoming seems to be the illogical way of using references. Sometimes, when literary evidence has been used, information about the author, oeuvre and passages used are given, but in most cases, one cannot find the literary references at all. This is suitable to the book's purpose to be more of a guidebook than scholarly research, but for a reader who wants to find the source of a certain piece of information or search ancient sources on subjects discussed, this might cause some problems.