

nire meglio alcuni aspetti della politica cesariana e come egli si sia rivelato un collaboratore valido e fedele, riconosciuto da altri come *exemplum* concreto dell'ideologia cesariana; l'ultimo paragrafo offre un suggestivo spaccato dei tre cortei noti nella storia di Ventidio, il primo come *captivus*, il secondo come trionfatore sui Parti, il terzo nelle vesti di defunto illustre per il quale viene decretato un funerale pubblico.

Le conclusioni sono seguite da un elenco delle sigle e delle abbreviazioni contenute nel testo, dalle referenze bibliografiche, da un indice dei nomi e dalle tavole.

L'opera si configura come un saggio storico condotto con grande capacità critica; contiene una dettagliata analisi delle testimonianze storiche e non trascurava, nell'eventualità, di riflettere sul significato delle assenze di talune di esse.

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JOSIAH OSGOOD: *Claudius Caesar: Image and Power in the Early Roman Empire*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2011. ISBN 978-0-521-88181-4. XVI, 357 pp. GBP 59.99.

Osgood will probably be familiar to many as the author of *Caesar's Legacy: Civil War and the Emergence of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge 2006), a history of the period from the death of Caesar in 44 BC until the aftermath of the battle of Actium in 31 BC. He began that work (p. 1) with a reference to the difficulties faced by the future emperor Claudius when he sought to compose his history of Rome beginning with the death of Caesar, and his stated aim therein was to discover "what Claudius left out and why". It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have turned from that work of empathy to a study of the reign of Claudius as emperor. Osgood has three aims in the present volume (pp. 27–8): first, "to retell the story of Claudius' principate itself"; second, "to think about the role of the emperor more generally", and, in particular, to challenge "the model of an essentially passive ruler"; third, to use the principate of Claudius as a vantage point from which to study "the development of the early imperial government as a whole". He succeeds admirably in all three.

Osgood begins with a prologue, a brief description of the social and political situation within the Roman empire in AD 41, followed by an introduction wherein he surveys the modern treatment of Claudius from Edward Gibbon to Robert Graves before outlining his own aims and methods. He then divides the main body of his work into twelve chapters. His approach is essentially chronological, beginning with Claudius' accession in his first chapter and ending with his death in his final chapter, but some events serve as hooks for larger thematic discussions within this basic framework. Unfortunately, the chapter-titles can be somewhat opaque and tend to conceal this basic structure. The first chapter, "Claudius Caesar", discusses events from the accession of Claudius to the revolt in Dalmatia in AD 42. The second chapter, "A Statue in Silver", taking its title from Claudius' acceptance of a statue in silver rather than in gold from the Senate, deals with his initial representation throughout the empire in the form of statues in particular, but also on the coinage, while the third chapter, "Imperial Favours", deals with the despatch of embassies from throughout the empire to the new emperor, investigating who sent them and why they did so. The fourth chapter, "Subduing the Ocean", explains why Claudius felt the need to invade Britain in AD 43, how he celebrated this event subsequently,

and how it was received throughout the empire, while the fifth chapter, "List of Peoples and Places", discusses his pacification of Mauretania and annexation of Lycia, Judea, and Thrace in continuation of this imperial theme. The sixth chapter, "Caesar-Lovers", discusses what impact, if any, the emperor can really have had on the daily lives of his provincial subjects. The seventh chapter, "The Eight-Hundredth Year of Rome", discusses the main events of AD 47, the forced suicide of Valerius Asiaticus, the staging of the games in celebration of the eight-hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Rome, and the performance of Claudius as censor. The eighth chapter, "Practical Pyramids", discusses Claudius' building program, his two new aqueducts at Rome, the harbour at Ostia, the attempted draining of the Fucine Lake, and the new roads within Italy in particular. The ninth chapter, "The Burden of Government", seeks to explain how Claudius governed the empire, why he came to rely on freedmen in the way that he did, and how this affected his relationship with the Senate and subsequent reputation, while the tenth chapter, "The Judgment of Pallas", analyses the fall of Messallina and the rise of Agrippina. The eleventh chapter, "Signalling Retreat", discusses Claudius' planning for the succession after his death, the promotion of Nero as his successor, and the measures that he took in order to leave a suitable reserve of funds to his successor, while the final chapter, "The Golden Predicament", deals with his death itself and his subsequent portrayal, not least by Seneca in his *Apocolocyntosis*. There then follow about sixty pages of notes, almost thirty pages of bibliography, and a short index.

This work is well-written, easy to read, and serves as an excellent introduction to the reign of Claudius. Given the poverty of the literary sources for the early reign of Claudius, Osgood makes a virtue out of necessity as he seeks to integrate the full range of non-literary sources, whether epigraphic, numismatic, papyrological or monumental, into his account, and the result is not only a fascinating read, but a timely reminder also of just how much these other categories of sources have to contribute to our understanding of the ancient world. He is assisted in his utilisation of this wide range of sources by sixty-two high-quality black-and-white figures, five maps and four tables. If one may make two minor criticisms, it is that the legends of the coins are always presented in English translation alone, and that the relevance of a few images seems tangential at best (e.g. Figs 3–4, 33).

Finally, one may sound one quite note of disagreement. While I am convinced overall of Osgood's thesis that Claudius was not the passive victim of his wives and freedmen, I am far less persuaded than him (pp. 16–7) that the epigraphic and papyrological evidence can in itself contribute much to this debate. It remains unclear whether Claudius actually wrote any of these documents himself, and it is entirely possible that he did not. At the end of the day, therefore, the greatest arguments against the traditional literary depiction of Claudius as the plaything of his wives and freedmen must be that this depiction is obviously grossly exaggerated and conforms too well to the clear social and cultural prejudices of the various authors.

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