

Bosman, P.R. (ed.) 2019. *Intellectual and Empire in Greco-Roman Antiquity*. London and New York: Routledge. Pp. xx + 221. ISBN 978-1-13-850509-4. £115.00.

This edited volume, arising from a conference held in Pretoria in 2014, brings together a wide range of classical scholars to think about the interactions between public intellectuals and political power, represented predominantly by Hellenistic monarchs and Roman emperors. The resulting collection provides useful insights not only into the real role of philosophers and thinkers in the imperial courts of the ancient Mediterranean, but also into the reformulation of those roles in literature.

Broadly, the articles in this collection come at the question from three angles. In the first, anecdotes, brief comments, and anomalies in literature about public intellectuals are pressed for information about their real-world roles. Thus Francesca Schironi, ‘Enlightened kings or pragmatic rulers? Ptolemaic patronage of scholarship and the sciences in context’ (pp. 1–29), identifies patterns in the anecdotes transmitted about intellectuals at Hellenistic courts and suggests that scientific research for the sake of knowledge alone was one method of legitimation for Alexander’s successors and their dynasties, a marker of Greek identity which could be dropped once power was secure. This allows her to propose that the absence of such patronage of theoretical enquiry by Roman emperors reflects the security of Roman power, though it may also be important that this activity has been defined as Greek. Livia Capponi, ‘A disillusioned intellectual: Timagenes of Alexandria’ (pp. 43–62), sifts portrayals of the historian Timagenes and his works to understand his status as the sole Alexandrian intellectual hostile to Augustus, and discovers a disillusioned historian forced to burn his own books because of an irreverent joke. Clive Chandler, ‘How (not?) to talk to monarchs: the case of the Epicurean Diogenes of Seleucia’ (pp. 30–42), analyses a single anecdote about the Epicurean Diogenes, and finds, underneath a Stoic-influenced hostile picture, reasonable (if risky) Epicurean behaviour. Richard Evans, ‘The misleading representation of Dion as philosopher-general in Plutarch’s *Life*’ (pp. 102–15), unpicks the myth of Dion’s military and philosophical genius as preserved and embraced by Plutarch, revealing both elements to be inflated based on Dion’s connection with Plato and his utility as the example *par excellence* of the philosopher-instructed political figure. In these different ways, close analysis of representations of intellectuals interacting with powerful people reveals the operations of

possible real-world relationships. Perhaps significantly, these articles all deal with the Hellenistic and early Roman periods.

The second group includes those articles which explore the depiction of these relationships not to understand the real-world position of intellectuals, but their rhetorical role within the writer's literary world. Under this heading, we have John Hilton's article, 'Speaking truth to power: Julian, the Cynics, and the Ethiopian gymnosophists of Heliodorus' (pp. 202–15), which reveals a complex interplay of mutual criticism between the emperor and his Cynic critics, using Indian gymnosophists as proxies. As Mallory Monaco Catherine shows, 'Entangled imperial identities: citizen, subject, and mentor in Plutarch's *Aratus*' (pp. 89–101), Plutarch's *Aratus* evaluates the double role of the Greek intellectual in the Macedonian court, as Greek citizen and Philip's subject, a role which Plutarch acknowledges as still operative in relationships with Romans in his own day, and for his audience: *Aratus*' descendants. Balbina Bähler, 'How to flatter an imperial mistress: the image of Pantheia in Lucian's *Imagines*' (pp. 189–201), finds in the supposed praise of Lucius Verus' mistress, Pantheia, a subtle skewering of the artifices of the world of art criticism, rather than any commentary on the emperor's relationship, and a transformation of what looks like a text about art into a text about art critics. Katarzyna Jazdzewska, 'Entertainers, persuaders, adversaries: interactions of sophists and rulers in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*' (pp. 160–77), identifies three patterns of interaction in the portrayals by Philostratus of sophists meeting emperors, as entertainers, persuaders, and, most dangerously, as opponents, revealing that opposition should only be enacted through figured speech. Her careful distinction between these roles reveals Philostratus' ideal of sophistic political influence, particularly as the examples of sophists as persuaders are limited: Jazdzewska correctly observes that it is Philostratus himself who emphasises this role (p. 166), revealing his own (seldom realised) ideal. Ewen Bowie, 'Marcus Aurelius, Greek poets, and Greek sophists: Friends or foes?' (pp. 142–59), explores the interactions of the emperor Marcus Aurelius with poets and sophists, demonstrating that our picture depends very much on whether we read Philostratus or the *Meditations*. Philostratus portrays amicable interactions and several supported sophistic careers, perhaps revealing that part of the imperial job was the support of intellectuals in the empire: the *Meditations* occludes this as part of the construction of a philosopher's image. Taken together, these articles reveal that depictions of interactions between emperor and intellectual operate as a rhetorical tool of self-fashioning for authors operating in Greek within the high Roman Empire.

The final angle is taken by those who view the relationship from the perspective of the intellectual: here, writings by intellectuals with compli-

cated relationships to power are explored for their depictions of those relationships. Sanjaya Thakur, 'Reassessing Ovid's image of Tiberius and his principate' (pp. 63–88), sees in Ovid's depictions of Tiberius as emperor evidence of a Tiberian ideology of Augustan continuity unclouded by Tacitean hindsight, though how this relates to Ovid's own position as an intellectual is never made clear. Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, 'Lucian on Roman officials' (pp. 178–88), asks whether Lucian's criticisms of Roman officials are ever related to their governmental positions, and notes that Romans, even those acting in official capacity, are criticised for character flaws in the same way as anyone else on the receiving end of Lucian's hostile wit. The specificity of the question asked allows for a precise conclusion, but also makes it hard to make any broader suggestions about the implications for our understanding of Lucian's relationship with Rome. The only direct relationship between intellectual and emperor is examined by Noelle Zeiner-Carmichael, '*Magister Domino*: intellectual and pedagogical power in Fronto's correspondence' (pp. 116–41), who hones in on the epistolarity of the correspondence between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto, showing that the rhetorician crafts their relationship first as one of *amicitia*, and then as father-son, with the emperor's eloquence transformed into a likeness of his rhetorical parent. With varying levels of success, these articles consider the position and self-fashioning of intellectuals writing about (and to) imperial power.

This is a useful collection, which explores some understudied material, though there is a surprising absence of any studies on Jewish Greek material despite the obvious relevance of texts such as the *Letter of Aristeas* or Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*. No collection can cover every angle on a topic, but the omission leaves the reader with the impression that an 'intellectual' in the ancient Mediterranean was necessarily Greek or, rarely, Roman – perhaps revealing the success of Greek intellectuals of the imperial period at presenting themselves as the highest form of culture. Nevertheless, this volume, with its strong methodological bias towards careful close readings of specific details in the sources, provides a valuable resource to anyone interested in the behaviours of intellectuals in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

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