ITALIAN EUERGETISM

K. Lomas, T. Cornell (edd.): '*Bread and Circuses.' Euergetism and Municipal Patronage in Roman Italy*. Pp. xii + 170. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-415-14689-5.

Kathryn Lomas and Tim Cornell have edited a set of essays on 'euergetism' and municipal patronage in Roman Italy. The papers were first presented in 1994 and are printed in revised form. They range widely in content and ambition. Interesting themes are pursued. However, much of the material is only vaguely related to the supposed topic, the coverage of that central theme is limited, and in the end the volume is unsatisfactory.

Only three of the essays focus on Italy. Thomas Wiedemann discusses the financial operations of the Roman élite, who were often the municipal patrons. His is a sophisticated essay that strikes a good balance between the primitivists and the modernists in that everlasting debate in Roman economic history. He acknowledges the limits of the Roman financial system, but also argues for a high level of pragmatic complexity in its operation. He stresses the intersection between the social and the economic, which allowed the Romans to operate financially at a high level of sophistication, but in ways very different from modern capitalistic societies.

The essay most municipally oriented is that of Kathryn Lomas on public building. She provides a good discussion of the history of public construction in the *municipia.* Very useful is her documentation of changing fashions in building types. The section on theaters is especially good. Lomas is right in stressing that the rôle of fashion and emulation is determining what structures would be built, but she does not pay enough attention the realities of building use. Most towns needed only one theater or amphitheater. They lasted a long time. Baths, in contrast, were high-use structures that required repair and replacement. The history of temple building is especially interesting. While temple foundations diminished during the early- to mid-empire, new constructions still exceeded that of any other type of building. That says a lot about religion in small town Italy. Lomas is sensitive to the problems of distinguishing between 'public' action and 'private' patronage in the world of fiercely competing élites. However, she neglects one important topic. The works of Franklin and Castren on the socio-political evolution of the ruling élites of Pompeii do not appear in her bibliography. Indeed all the essays largely ignore Pompeii. While there is always a danger that Pompeii, with its massive data pool, will dominate any discussion of municipal Italy, the Campanian town provides our best insight into Roman municipal life and its changing politics.

Paired with Lomas is the essay of John Patterson on the rôle of the emperor in Italy. He argues that Augustus in consolidating power in Italy made major investments in the towns, but later emperors only sporadically exercised local construction patronage. Imperial emphasis shifted to more general projects, especially roads that met larger strategic concerns and the needs of Rome or articulated the emperors' interest in promoting images of Italian unity. Most local building was left to town élites. Only with the 'crisis of the communities' starting in the second century did imperial officials again become concerned with the communities. More could have been said in this context about non-architectural patronage like the *alimenta.* That institution involved the marshalling of local resources more than direct imperial payment and provides unique insight into the relationship between the emperor and the municipal ruling class. A real opportunity was lost when Patterson dismissed the

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni338 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Arch at Benevento as concerned mainly with victory in Dacia, and did not explore its complex iconographic articulation of the emperor's concern with local interests. The chapter has many insights, but is too abbreviated for such a complex topic.

The remaining essays focus largely on Rome. They are better suited to a book on patronage in the capital. Claire Holleran considers public entertainment. Her essay opens with some interesting observations on places of entertainment in the *municipia*, but then shifts quickly to the theater and amphitheater at Rome. She discuss only briefly the rôle of the Circus Maximus, the oldest, largest, and most important Roman entertainment structure. Kathleen Coleman provides a companion piece focused almost entirely on specific issues of the amphitheater in early imperial Rome. The space would have been better devoted to municipal topics like the development of town amphitheaters in Italy or the social history of the amphitheater in Pompeii.

The final essays center on late imperial Italy and again almost exclusively on Rome. The major exception is Jill Harries's chapter on the continuing rôle of the populus and popular assemblies in legitimizing the position of patrons in late antique Italy. Her foci are a mid-fourth-century inscription from Paestum that records official thanks voted by the town's popular assembly for acts of private euergetism and the complex interaction between saint, patron, and populus in the Nola of Paulinus. The brief Paulinus section contrasts with the general neglect in this work of the impact that the new Christian world had on local patronage patterns.

The essays of E. D. Hunt and Rowland Smith, in contrast, return to the capital, concentrating on élite patronage and building programs in fourth/fifth-century Rome. Hunt is totally concerned with the Roman constructions of Constantine. Smith notes in passing that the élite of late imperial Rome had strong social and economic bases in the countryside, but concerns himself with patronage at Rome. Their observations are often interesting, but add little to our understanding of the late Roman Italian towns.

The book in the end says relatively provides limited coverage of its proclaimed topic. Geographic coverage is spotty. There is almost no discussion of the towns of northern Italy. Neither Verona nor Velleia appear in the index. They also fail to employ much in the way of historical comparisons or social science analysis. Some authors indicate that they intend to employ social historical or urban theory, but little of that is pursued. In the end, as with a parsimonious municipal festival, one wishes both for more wine and for that served in newer wine bottles.

University at Buffalo STEPHEN L. DYSON
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni338

BENEVENTUM

M. R. Torelli: *Benevento romana*. (Saggi di Storia Antica 18.) Pp. 555, maps, ill. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 88-8265-209-2.

Marina Torelli's account of Roman Beneventum belongs to a well-established tradition of local history whose characteristics will be particularly familiar to scholars of Roman Italy—T.'s book is in fact the second example of the genre published in the Saggi di Storia Antica series (cf. Grelle, *Canosa romana* [Rome, 1993]). T.'s book accordingly seeks to bring together all surviving literary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence relevant to a single community, with the aim of reconstructing as comprehensively as possible the political, institutional, social, and

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni338 Published online by Cambridge University Press