as struggles for the consulship and praetorship show; Principate was superimposed on *res publica*.

To be sure, the metaphor of family was useful to the Princeps, subjects embracing it as a way of making their relationship to the autocrat acceptable (p. 114), as the Tsar was 'Little Father' to some Russians. It is a merit of the book to deploy the family metaphor in various ways. One of the clearest and most acceptable is S.'s presentation of it as a model to encourage Roman citizens to resume *mores* that Augustus, reassuringly for fearful society, wanted to inculcate. Perhaps the metaphor works in these ways, though not overall. There are neat points too: attempts to bring women back to the private sphere only politicized them further (p. 44); in defending the Roman family, Augustus undercut the prerogatives of real heads of households (p. 154).

Unease about the way the family metaphor is deployed overall corresponds with minor difficulties, some over use of words: reserving the public realm for free males is not quite 'gendering' (p. 7); Agrippa Postumus was not 'trained in the military', and 'border defense' was not what going on in Africa (p. 81); nor did L. Caesar die in the east (p. 94). Ovid, *Fasti* 3.427 and Festus 284 are slightly mistranslated (pp. 102, 194); certainly Tacitus meant more than 'serious' in calling Livia 'gravis' (p. 149), and the idea that Julia's return was voted on in assembly is implausible (p. 183). Generally, clarity would have been served if 'due to' and 'as such' had not been misused.

But S. has performed great service in attuning our ears to the family metaphor, even if we shrink from taking it for the main theme rather than as an introduction and accompaniment to that of future *principes*.

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## IMPERIAL SPIN

G. WEBER, M. ZIMMERMANN (edd.): *Propaganda—Selbstdarstellung—Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreich des 1 Jhs. n. Chr.* (*Historia* Einzelschriften 164.) Pp. 355, ills. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003. Paper, €92. ISBN: 3-515-08251-4.

The way that Roman emperors were presented and presented themselves to the empire at large is a fashionable topic of research. The definition of terms like 'representation' and especially 'propaganda' in such research is often problematic. Indeed, many recent works have simply decided to dodge definitions altogether. It is, then, refreshing to encounter a volume that tackles the question head on. The result of an interdisciplinary colloquium at Tübingen in 2000, *Propaganda—Selbstdarstellung—Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreich* consists of thirteen contributions, including an extensive introductionary article by the editors, in which the guiding principles of the volume are set out. This is followed by a large and heavily annotated paper by Armin Eich on 'Die Idealtypen "Propaganda" und "Repräsentation" ' (pp. 41–84), and two comparative studies by Ludger Körntgen and Michael Hochgeschwender, focusing attention on, respectively, the early Middle Ages (pp. 85–102) and nineteenth-century USA (pp. 103–24).

After thus setting out a theoretical framework, the remaining contributions focus on 'Wege und Medien'. This section incorporates general papers on 'Wege der

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Übermittlung politischer Inhalte im Alltag Roms' (Anne Kolb, pp. 127–43), inscriptions (Heike Niquet, pp. 145–73), coins (Reinhard Wolters, pp. 175–204), and poetry (Ulrich Schmitzer, pp. 205–25), followed by articles on biography and autobiography of Roman emperors (Jürgen Malitz, pp. 227–42), the reception of insignias (Thomas Schäfer, pp. 243–73), and image and reality of the sacred in Augustan architecture (Joachim Ganzert, pp. 275–96). The book ends with two papers by the editors, first 'Augustus und die Träume' (Gregor Weber, pp. 297–316) and then a somewhat speculative piece by Martin Zimmermann on continuity and discontinuity of representation through the case study of 'Der Kaiser als Nil' (pp. 317–48). An *index locorum* and a rather minimal index of Roman emperors conclude the volume. The book is well produced, although occasionally the quality of images leaves much to be desired (e.g. p. 254 fig. 6, p. 262 figs 11–12). There is also some unintentional repetition; for example, the root and meaning of *propagare* are explained twice (p. 12 n. 5 and pp. 148–9).

But these are minor quibbles. Much more than is customary for proceedings of this sort, there is some real cohesion to a substantial part of the volume. In particular, a combination of the first section with the more general papers in the second section, discussing the different types of sources, creates challenging notions as to whether and when the terms 'propaganda' and 'representation' can be usefully employed. In general, the volume argues against 'propaganda' as a functional notion to describe the dissemination of information and values in the Roman Empire. The introduction sets out the debate, and usefully stresses the importance of looking at expectation and acceptance of central messages by various layers of society. It also, again rightly, points at the importance of using different 'filters' for different types of sources (p. 39). This is doubtlessly true, but the final argument, that 'representation' is a more useful notion to apply to the Roman world than 'propaganda', seems to depend on an interpretation of 'representation' which is far from universal. Also, since Ellul's *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York, 1973), 'propaganda' is commonly divided into agitation propaganda—aimed at changing attitudes—and integration propaganda—aimed at reinforcing them. The latter is much more applicable to the Roman world. Weber and Zimmermann seem to effectively disagree with the former, but then conclude to ban the concept as a whole. In any case, it must be questionable to what extent using alternative words solves the undoubted problems connected to 'propaganda' as a concept.

Eich, in an extremely interesting and provocative contribution encounters similar difficulties. From a discussion on how ancient and modern 'media' work in transmitting 'ideas/ideologies', he concludes that since the ancient 'media' (i.e. texts, monuments, images, or coins) are not 'adäquat' for a 'gesteuerten Sinnstiftung' (p. 81), they are not systematically putting forward ideology. In fact, Eich argues, there is no separation between the 'image' and the 'reality' of power: 'Die Monarchie besteht in ihrem öffentlichen Sosein oder gar nicht' (p. 84). This may well be true. But such an argument fits in rather well with the notion of 'integration propaganda'. Is not reinforcing a reality by making it ubiquitously visible a form of 'propaganda' in itself? Körntgen emphasizes how representations of rulers in the early Middle Ages were a form of social and political communication, coming to the same conclusions as the introduction in trying to disband 'propaganda' from medieval studies because of potentially misleading connotations. Hochgeschwender, however, shows how it can be worthwhile to apply the term 'propaganda' and the theories connected to it outside of the proper context in which they were developed. He emphasizes that one can recognize 'propaganda' not just in totalitarian societies but also in the

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nineteenth-century USA. It is especially the different ways in which 'propaganda' functions and is disseminated that interests him, illustrating possible positive ways of employing propaganda theories in an alien context, be it a very different one from the Roman world.

Overall, though, the theoretical part of the book clearly dismisses 'Propaganda', replacing it by 'Selbstdarstellung' and especially 'Repräsentation'. The contributions by Niquet and Wolters (on inscriptions and coins) could be used perfectly to test such an approach, creating the types of 'filters' for different materials that the editors recommended in their introduction. Interestingly, Niquet focuses much more on the content of the concepts and less on the terminology. In doing so, she allows for different methodological cadres even within epigraphic studies. Imperial inscriptions often fulfil propagandistic functions, whereas for different groups, such as the *ordines*, gladiators, or soldiers, the self-representation through inscriptions, without an expected reception, seems to have been more important. Wolters emphasizes especially the dialogue between presentation and expectation of power through the images of coins. He rightly points at the 'normality' of most types, and thus makes the point that only coin types that broke away from expectation would be publicly noticed. This is a fair observation, which could have been strengthened by noticing how especially in periods of crisis such 'abnormal' coins are minted. Thus, for instance, Galba's gold and silver coinage explicitly refers to his provincial support. Clearly, then, concepts linked to 'propaganda' can and will to some extent be employed in analysing the Roman Empire. Whether it is clearer to replace the word by a less value-laden, but also less recognizable, other term will remain a matter of debate. In that debate, this volume plays a thought-provoking and important rôle.

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## A RATIONAL NERO

E. CHAMPLIN: *Nero.* Pp. xii + 346, maps, ills. Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. Cased, £19.95. ISBN: 0-674-01192-9.

A deliberately upside-down book which produces downright sense. Not a biography, but a series of studies of Nero in which Champlin, operating on the premise that Nero was rational, and that the ancient historical tradition is pervasively biased against him, shows how those actions of Nero which in the sources have won him the greatest notoriety could have resonated far more harmoniously with the contemporary audiences to which he directed them: Nero the creative player and moulder of opinion, rather than hapless victim, is C.'s central thesis.

C. begins by examining how Nero came to have a unique afterlife—an emperor, whose death was received rapturously by all classes at Rome and whose reputation was assailed by his immediate successor, the Flavians and centuries of Christians, nonetheless lived on, attracting imitators and securing an affectionate memory till the fourth century at least. This leads him to attempt to recover the image of the Nero who was loved and missed (p. 10). Nero was no Caligula or a conventional Roman villain.

But that is not the image of Nero we receive in the extant historical and biographical

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