some new evidence, some new authors to consider, and a new "line" ' (p. 96). A new and fertile line of investigation is certainly indicated here. Furthermore, one does not need to be a Roman historian (p. 8) to write a history of Rome, as H. has shown us well enough in the past, and will probably do so again in the future. Oral history and the largely oral transmission of a *corpus* of a nation 'carry a unique attraction'. The argument here is for a 'rich popular culture', yet with the caveat that the concrete evidence to support what must surely be a correct contention is lacking. Finally, the political chiefs of a state are seldom also its intellectual leaders; therefore, after all, the popular culture of the Roman plebs really was the culture of the *populus Romanus*.

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ART FOR THE MASSES

J. R. Clarke: *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans. Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 315*. Pp. xii + 383, ills, colour pls. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003. Cased, US$65, £42.95. ISBN: 0-520-21976-7.

The study of Roman art has traditionally focused upon the visual culture of the aristocratic élite. We teach the history of Roman sculpture through key imperial monuments, from the *Ara Pacis* to the Arch of Constantine; we date objects according to their imperially defined period—an 'Augustan' cameo, a 'Trajanic' portrait. In doing so, we marginalize a mass of artworks produced by and for a far broader cross-section of Roman society, including freeborn workers, freedmen, slaves, and foreigners. When the subject-matter and stylistic features of non-élite art have been addressed in earlier scholarship, individual details and contexts have been subordinated to grand theories of stylistic change, or subjected to a simplistic 'trickle-down' model. When studied in any detail, the art of the non-élite has been categorized in the hold-all category of 'freedman' art: too often the paintings in the House of the Vettii in Pompeii, or the funerary reliefs of 'ordinary' Romans, have been dismissed as the products of vulgar Trimalchios, trumpeting their wealth and status via an aristocratic visual language which they do not properly understand.

However, just as we might actually view Petronius' Trimalchio as a sophisticated master of illusion, so John Clarke, in this lively and stimulating book, seeks to demonstrate the originality and sophistication of a vast and varied group of objects, which are 'fresh, improvised, and anything but standard' (p. 94). Writing for a broad audience, C. places his chosen case studies firmly within their physical and social contexts, in order to explore the ways in which the non-élite constructed and communicated their identities through the commission, display, and consumption of works of art. In doing so, he provides an important corrective to 'the only viewer that modern scholarly literature has given us: an upper-class male who knows everything' (p. 12). Ancient modes of viewing were, he argues, inherently pluralistic; his use of the terms 'ordinary' and 'non-elite' is shorthand for a diverse, dynamic set of social groups who 'tend to esteem activities that the élites of the upper strata do not and . . . express this difference in their art' (p. 7).

In Part One, C. addresses the ways in which four major imperial monuments in the

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city of Rome may have communicated their message to various non-élite viewers. The vignettes from the natural world within the vegetal frieze of the *Ara Pacis* would have reminded the working poor of the rural life they had been forced to abandon during the unrest of the civil wars; the detailed representation of Dacian society and ethnically differentiated groups of Roman auxiliaries on Trajan's Column would have demonstrated the Roman system of conquest, colonization, and Romanization to slaves, immigrants, and other outsiders, together with the 'self-improving' steps one might take to become part of this system. While it is important for C. to address the ways in which 'ordinary' Romans constituted part of the viewing public for which imperial monuments were constructed (and his efforts present a refreshing shift of scholarly focus), this is perhaps the book's least convincing section. His readings necessarily rely on much conjecture, and Chapter 2 (on the Column of Marcus Aurelius and the Arch of Constantine) constitutes a rather cursory attempt to explain the 'ordinary' viewer's engagement with shifts in style and composition characteristic of late antiquity. As the majority of examples C. includes come from first-century A.D. Pompeii or second-century A.D. Ostia, his attempts to grapple with the aesthetic and sociological complexities of the later empire are an unnecessary component of his (already Herculean) task. A more relevant category of imperial monuments, which include the 'ordinary' viewer more overtly in their sculptural programmes, would have been scenes of *congiarium*, as exhibited on the Arch of Trajan at Benevento and the *Anaglypha Traiani/Hadriani* in Rome, which C. does not address. He does, however, raise important questions about the diversities of viewing in imperial Rome, which will no doubt provide much stimulation for further study. As C. himself concedes, his method is 'purposely speculative', and he open-mindedly invites his readers to develop their own interpretations and viewer profiles (p. 12).

In Sections Two and Three, C. moves to art commissioned by ordinary Romans themselves, focusing upon wall-paintings and sculptures related to the public spheres of religion, the workplace, entertainment, taverns, and tombs, and the private spaces of the home. Many of C.'s case studies will be familiar to readers, such as the frieze of 'Cupids at Work' from the House of the Vettii, the relief of a female vegetable-seller from Ostia, or the Pompeian painting of the 'Riot in the Amphitheatre'. But such images are woven into a broader analysis, which includes much less familiar material from shops, homes, and tombs, all accompanied by high-quality photographs. Chapter 6, on 'Laughter and Subversion in the Tavern', is an incisive reading of the ways in which seemingly unsophisticated images in insalubrious contexts both appeal directly to the experiences of their 'ordinary' viewers (as images of drinking, gambling, and brawling in the Pompeian 'Caupona of Salvius' demonstrate) and subvert the cultural interests of the élite. Such subversion is memorably illustrated by the 'Caupona of the Seven Sages' in Ostia, in which a painting of each wise man's statue is accompanied by his advice on bowel movements (e.g. 'To shit well, Solon stroked his belly'). In each example, image and text work together to explore the disempowerment of the non-élite through sophisticated strategies of carnivalesque parody and reversal, which assert the power of the 'ordinary' man. C. pays great attention to the visual and textual details of each case study, ever conscious of the ways in which successful humour relies on the context and experience of its intended audience. Such nuanced interpretation is not, however, a uniform quality of the book, and some readers may find Chapter 5, on entertainment, a rather insubstantial exploration of the influence of theatre and the games on non-élite art, given the volume of recent scholarship on the Roman spectacle. A section on the rôle of the *scaenae frons* in expensive interior decorative schemes here does not seem entirely relevant, and, indeed, turns out to be a reworking of an article

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C. has published elsewhere (J. Clarke, 'Living figures within the *Scaenae Frons*: figuring the Viewer in Liminal Space', in D. Scagliarini Corlàita, *I temi figurative nella pittura parietale antica [IV sec. a.C.–IV sec. d.C], Atti del VI Convegno Internazionale sulla Pittura Parietale Antica* [Bologna, 1997], pp. 43–5).

Throughout, C.'s methods follow the emphasis on detailed visual analysis and physical context which he employed in *Looking at Lovemaking* (Berkeley, 1998). His reluctance to engage with more theoretically informed approaches to the complexities of Roman society, or to draw more penetrating conclusions from his wealth of material, may frustrate some readers; scholars must remind themselves that he is writing for a broad audience. Yet while C.'s refusal to make grand statements about the nature of 'popular' art is commendable, his individual analyses might have gained greater depth and relevance if set within a broader sociological context. How do images within the workplace, for example, relate to Roman cultures of commercialism? How do religious images relate to broader patterns of worship and belief? Despite these quibbles, the scope and originality of *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans* make it a welcome addition to Roman art history, and a much-needed corrective to the élite bias of more traditional scholarship.

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FOURTH-CENTURY GREEK INSCRIPTIONS

P. J. Rhodes, R. Osborne: *Greek Historical Inscriptions 404–323 BC*. Edited with Introduction, Translations, and Commentaries. Pp. xxxii + 594, maps, ill, pls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Cased, £95. ISBN: 0-19-815313-9.

M. N. Tod's *Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, Volumes I (Oxford, 1933, 1946^2) and II (Oxford, 1948), was an invaluable collection of fifth- and fourth-century epigraphical material, with a detailed analysis of each text and a thoughtful commentary. Volume I (fifth century) contained ninety-six inscriptions and Volume II (404–324) contained 205. Since then, many new inscriptions have been found, and Tod's first volume was superseded by R. Meiggs, D. M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1969; revised edn 1988). They included ninety-five inscriptions in their collection, of which seventy-six came from Tod. There have also been collections of thematic epigraphical material, such as A. J. Heisserer, *Alexander the Great and the Greeks* (Norman, 1980) or C. J. Schwenk, *Athens in the Age of Alexander* (Chicago, 1985), many with different readings from Tod's texts.

Now we have Rhodes and Osborne, whose collection does to Tod's second volume what Meiggs and Lewis did to the first. R. & O.'s collection has 102 inscriptions, of which seventy-one came from Tod. It is made clear in the preface (p. v) that both editors were much swayed by D. M. Lewis in what to include, for he had planned to produce a volume to supersede Tod II and had drawn up a list of inscriptions to put into it. Nevertheless, R. & O.'s volume, which is dedicated to Lewis's memory, is very much their own.

A brief introduction (pp. xiii–xxvii) sets the scene for the collection of inscriptions. It discusses, for example, the sorts of things inscribed on stone, the problems of restoration, the formula and style of decrees, and it has a brief survey of the

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