Caroline Vout, ***Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome*****.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 285. ISBN 0-521-86739-8 (Hbk).

Caroline Vout's book begins with an anecdote about Caligula and closes with the marriage of Charles and Camilla; Cleopatra is atop Bill Clinton in the index, where two very different film stars, Claudette Colbert and Harvard's Kathy Coleman, also appear together. In the interval, the reader learns more than might be expected about Louis XIV (41 n. 28), Samuel Pepys' diary (106), the hybrid nature of Black music (110), Andy Warhol and US politics (169).[1] All serve to express and explore Vout's theme, the way Rome's subjects experienced the power of the emperor, "how imperial power, intimacy and transactions with the emperor were constructed and contested through the representation of sexual relations" (7). Given the distance, metaphorical and real, between ruler and ruled, speculation about the emperor's sex life offered a rare means of access to him and his authority, a realm of experience any resident of the empire shared or indeed might fantasize about sharing. Such reflections might in turn inspire consideration of other hierarchical pairs: active and passive, god and mortal, patron and poet, centre and periphery, Roman and Greek. Vout explores a wide range of texts, from the papyrus account of the prosecution of a Roman prefect who made a public spectacle of debauching an Alexandrian youth (140–151) to the polished poems of Martial and Statius and Suetonius' *Biographies*, supplying long quotations, careful translations and readings which display her philological gifts. (Note, for example, the argument that the usual ordering of Martial 9.12 and 13 should be reversed: 175–177.) But the emphasis falls on works of art — statuary above all, since it shows the emperor's physicality and allows him to be everywhere all at once, manifesting his power like a god. Art too provides more scope for interpretation, and so makes the viewer powerful in turn.

The argument proceeds through a series of case studies, focusing on the emperor's connections with "figures whose position is less predictable (uninhibited by marriage and the expectation to provide legitimate offspring), in particular those who inhabit the territory between Greek and Roman culture" (213). The first concerns Hadrian and Antinous — the longest chapter too, a testament to the extraordinary extent to which Hadrian chose to publicize his liaison with a Greek boy. We have more portrait statues of Antinous than of anyone else in antiquity except Augustus and Hadrian himself. Furthermore, coins, private dedications and the foundation of games in his honour long after Hadrian's death combine to suggest that the emperor's subjects themselves in the place of the absent emperor at his side — or to imagine themselves

[1] Typos afflict a few such famous names (Scarlett Johansson (225), S.J. Perelman (262) and others less well known (S.T. Newmyer (204 n. 3), M. Zahrnt (270). Most other slips occur in the accentuation of Greek words. Among exceptions: collectors may note the expansion of *PACA*, the site of an influential article on Catullus and Martial, as "*Proceedings of the American Catholic Association*" (250).)

as the object of Hadrian's gaze. More broadly: as a Greek boy who drowned (so it was said) in the· Nile, Antinous "summed-up the potential (both good and bad) of getting involved with the conqueror, Rome" (119); his worship — in both the west and the east and into the third century — raises questions about our understanding of the imperial cult. Vout next treats Nero and Sporus, a boy whom he had castrated, married and (as Hadrian would Antinous) flaunted in public. (Reversing chronology, the order presents Sporus as a bridge between Antinous and the eunuch Earinus.) Hadrian and Antinous, *erastes* and *eromenos*, fit into a recognized Greek pattern; but Nero outraged public opinion by representing Sporus as his spouse. This appropriation of an alien, Greek practice threatened the Roman institution of marriage. Even the legitimacy of the emperor was called into question, since it depended in part on the ability to produce an heir. And what does it mean if someone who is sexually passive wields power? The influence of Domitian's favourite Earinus similarly challenged the masculinity of the elite: now that intimacy with the emperor trumped the *cursus honorum* as a path to prestige, how did Romans succeed as men? For poets, the answer lay in writing verse which satisfies a sponsor. Earinus' wounded and impotent body is a metaphor for the poet's own position: he too must prostitute himself to please a powerful patron. In each case, however, closeness to the emperor is worth any sacrifice. And dependent Naples can at least claim to be more versed in Hellenic culture than Catullus, whose poem (63) on the castrate Attis underlies many of the lines he devotes to Earinus. From Latin poets to Greek prose, from men to a woman: Panthea, mistress of Lucius Verus, subject of two dialogues by Lucian of Samosata, and namesake of a Susanian queen who features in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. A creature of Lucian's text and its referents, Panthea is also an amalgam of the most beautiful portions of famous Greek portraits of women. Between art and text, the past and the present, she is a living museum, an exemplar of what it means to preserve the highlights of Greek culture under Roman rule — and Lucian himself uses his mastery of that culture merely to praise a Roman emperor's whore. But is he (a Semite who styles himself an Assyrian) or she (a resident of Antioch, in a region perilously near the hostile Parthians) any more Greek than Roman? In the end, only Eros can unite eveyone in so farflung and disparate an empire and compel them to consider such questions of identity.

Well-illustrated and witty (titles include "Romancing the Stone: the Story of Hadrian and Antinous," and "Springtime for Caesar," a play on both the etymology of Earinus and Mel Brooks' masterpiece), *Power and Eroticism* is nonetheless not an easy read. Vout is sometimes carried away by her sensitivity to overtones, ambiguities, cross-currents — intertexts, intersex, intersects — and not all readers will be able or willing to follow her. (For example, I doubt that Ἄρης / Ἄρης at Mart. 9.11.15 alludes to Earinus' castration "since it is, in effect, 'Earinus' cut short" (207 n. 43) and I might be more likely to accept that Lucian's Panthea refers to his own early career as a

sculptor if *pantheia*, a kind of plaster, was used in the context of art rather than of medicine (230).) But a summary (233–235) is helpful in "gluing things back together" and there is much to be pondered and enjoyed wherever readers get lost or choose to desert along the way.

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