From Valerius Flaccus to Apollodorus of Damascus

A digest of discussions from the workshop
'Writing in Rome (and beyond) under Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian'
St Andrews, 25th January, 2013

Speakers:
Emma Buckley: 'Tacitus as Flavian Epic Successor?'
Roger Rees: 'Buildings and Morals in some Trajanic-Hadrianic prose'
Jon Coulston: 'The Roman metropolis: centre of empire, centre of learning'
Myles Lavan: 'The emperor speaks'
Jason König: 'Reading Plutarch with Pliny the Younger'
Nicolas Wiater: 'Explaining Rome under the emperors: Appian and the tradition of Greek approaches to Roman rule'

Papers and discussion covered a huge range of topics (images of warfare, civil and foreign; images of empire, from centre to periphery; images of emperors, in texts, art and architecture; images of literary production and consumption and other intellectual activity, Latin and Greek; overlaps between literary and non-literary [bureaucratic, architectural, triumphal, epigraphic] discourse; and overlaps and transformations between literary genres), and centred around four recurring themes:

Flavian into Nervan/Trajanic/Hadrianic
For all the rhetoric of change (Tac, *Ag*. 1-3 and *Hist*. 1.1; Pliny, *Pan*. 2 and *Ep*. 10.97; Martial 10.72), it is not surprising to find Nervan, Trajanic and Hadrianic authors reaching back into Flavian texts to articulate their own ideas and agenda. When these interactions are put under the microscope, fascinating details emerge that help to develop our understanding of the many different (though often overlapping) strands of literary production in the period. For example, overlaps between the ways in which Valerius Flaccus and Tacitus handle the potentially troubling slippage between civil and foreign wars, imagine the edges of Rome's empire, and critique tendencies towards tyranny and dissimulation raise questions about: where Tacitus' (famously pessimistic) *Weltbild* might come from; the impact which early Flavian (ie pre-Domitianic) politics may have had upon post-Domitianic literature; the reception of Flavian texts in the post-Flavian world; the extent to which Tacitus might have expected his readers to approach his histories through epic (and other genres); and the generic (as well as political) messages which Tacitus' possible engagement with Valerius Flaccus might send out. Possible correspondences between Tacitus and Silius Italicus and Tacitus and Statius open up further areas for investigation, as do interactions between (e.g.) Juvenal and Valerius Flaccus, Juvenal and Statius, and Tacitus and Frontinus (*Strategemata*).

Building
The Trajanic and Hadrianic periods saw a great deal of building (both public and private) in Rome and in the provinces. Discussion of some of the buildings themselves highlighted (inter alia): some of the ways in which continuity between Flavian and post-Flavian projects was negotiated; interactions between Roman and non-Roman traditions/influence in the period; the complex nexus of relations between

emperors/patrons and architects/craftsmen, and questions about agency/authorship that they throw up; the changing face of military imagery, imperial rhetoric and Roman power in the period; and the impact which certain building projects may have had upon social, cultural and political life and thought. Discussion of the ways in which different audiences 'read' Trajanic and Hadrianic buildings (and the ways in which emperors/patrons designed and used them) also drew attention to their significance/use as an index of moral character and imperial identity/authority (e.g. Pliny's *Panegyricus* on Nervan and Trajanic approaches to building/buildings). And analogies between building and writing/speaking (in, e.g., Tacitus' *Dialogus* and Martial's *Epigrams*) proved revealing, both of contemporary ideas about monuments and their builders and of contemporary ideas about literary and intellectual activity.

Imperial Discourse
Buildings were only one of many ways in which emperors communicated with their subjects; other means included the publication of coins, edicts, speeches and letters. Examples of the ways in which Trajan and Hadrian 'spoke'/wrote about themselves and their principates reveal (inter alia): some of the virtues they were keen to associate themselves with (e.g. *providentia* – Trajan, and *pudicitia* – Hadrian); the relationships they were keen to establish between themselves and their predecessors (in particular, Domitian and Nerva); and the nature of their interactions with senators, provincials, and other subjects. Overlaps between this imperial discourse, other administrative texts (e.g. Frontinus' *De Aquis*, Pliny *Ep*. X), and more 'literary' works (e.g. Pliny's *Panegyricus*) underscore the impact which imperial 'speech' had on literary production, and also, perhaps, vice versa.

Rome and Greece
National and ethnic identities and the relationship between Rome and her empire were topics that interested both Roman and non-Roman authors in the Trajanic-Hadrianic period. Discussions examined Greek images of the Roman world (e.g. Appian), and Roman images of the provinces (e.g. Tacitus). Contributors also debated the nature and extent of Greek and Roman literary cross-fertilisation, including correspondences between Pliny and Plutarch and Frontinus and Aelianus Tacticus. Significant (real/ideological?) differences between Greek and Roman literary/intellectual habits and ideals were identified (e.g. Plutarch's emphasis on the festival culture of the Greek literary world, vs Pliny's emphasis on more exclusive literary gatherings/circles), as well as significant overlaps. The nature and extent of Greek-Roman engagement varied between individual authors, but evidence suggests that there may have been more (mutual) literary interaction than has long been thought.

This workshop brought historians, epicists, philosophers, satirists, orators, epigrammatists, epistolographers, military theorists, generals, architects, administrators, emperors, senators and provincials into dialogue with each other, and generated conversations about book formats, library use, orality, consumption contexts, language barriers/competence, laws, inscriptions, imperial secretaries, geography, and friendship, among other things. In so doing, it exposed a rich array of material and issues that the wider project might profitably explore.

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