Aula Caesaris. Studien zur Institutionalisierung des römischen Kaiserhofes in der Zeit von Augustus bis Commodus (31 V. Chr.–192 N. Chr.) by A. Winterling

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politico-administrative system in which provincial governors exercised their powers by spending a substantial period of their tenure of office in touring their province. Indeed the term caput provinciae is scarcely ever found in our sources, especially those of an official character. H. instead tries to identify the main residence of provincial governors via a series of evidentiary indicators whose relative significance is carefully evaluated (37–64). The heart of the book (65–360) is constituted by discussion of the evidence for sets of provinces, classified by geographic region, during the period 27 B.C. to A.D. 284. A very clear and helpful chapter (‘Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede der Statthaltersitze’, 361–89) furnishes a conspectus of his conclusions. The second half of the book (‘Dokumentation’, 393–704) provides a systematic repertorium of the ancient testimony on which the first half is based. This documentation is again classified on a province-by-province basis and, in turn, is very carefully ordered into twenty-eight categories which either directly or indirectly indicate the certain or possible presence of a governor and his staff in a city. This repertorium will of itself provide future scholars with an invaluable research tool. Finally, the book is rounded off by ten appendices and a systematic bibliography.

Throughout the book H. writes with meticulous care and scrupulously distinguishes certain and possible inferences. Besides his main conclusions on the identification of provincial cities which functioned as the main seats of provincial governors, H. offers many other important insights. His discussion of the assize-system and his demonstration that the cities which functioned as the centres of fiscal administration (as indicated by the presence of fiscal procurators and their staff) were sometimes different from the governor’s main residence are especially noteworthy. In short, this important volume will need to be consulted by any scholar interested in the administrative personnel and practices which constituted the infrastructural foundations of the imperial state’s rule over its provinces.

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Aloys Winterling has published widely on the court in ancient and early modern society, and he has now assembled his knowledge on the subject in an illuminating monograph. From the very beginning W. states his purpose, which is to show the importance of a Roman imperial court in the first two centuries a.d. for our understanding of Roman politics and society (3). He does so admirably, focusing first on some methodological and historiographical issues (1–39) (with much attention to Mommsen and Friedländer, but without sufficiently incorporating A. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘The imperial court’, CAH 10 (1996), 283–308), and then on the physical palaces (47–82). Unfortunately M. Royo, Domus Imperatoriae: topographie, formation et imaginaire des palais impériaux du Palatin (1999) and LTUR 4 (1999), with important entries on the Palatine area, appeared too late to be considered in the present volume.

W. is at his best in the ensuing chapters, in which he systematically analyses the several aspects which according to him constituted court-life, such as the imperial salutatio, guest-meals at the palace, and of course the emperors’ amici. W. chooses to look at the development of each of these features over a longer period of time, rather than focusing on the development of the court within particular reigns, and is thus able to trace discernible patterns. For instance, when discussing imperial ‘friends’, W. shows a continuing institutionalization of the position at court of the aristocracy, who took over the role of imperial familiares. At the same time, however, those who for whatever reasons were personally close to individual emperors could equally gain systematic influence (192–4).

The strict emphasis on the larger historical development of the court sometimes leads to unfortunate choices. Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli is, like the imperial gardens, dismissed as not relevant to ‘eine stetige kaiserliche Hofhaltung’ (47 n. 1). Yet the emperor’s move away from Rome surely had its impact on the dynamics of the court (and society as a whole), while there are few passages more illustrative of life at court than Philo’s description of Gaius’ reception of the Jews in the gardens of Maecenas and Lamia (Philo, Leg. 351–67). Yet though W.’s search for the court as an institution sometimes takes attention away from the court as a place in which people lived and functioned, this book nevertheless forms a welcome contribution to our understanding of politics and society in the first two centuries a.d.

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