



Valorizing the Barbarians: Enemy Speeches in Roman Historiography (Ashley and Peter Larkin Series in Greek and Roman Culture)

Eric Adler

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With the growth of postcolonial theory in recent decades, scholarly views of Roman imperialism and colonialism have been evolving and shifting. Much recent discussion of the topic has centered on the ways in which ancient Roman historians consciously or unconsciously denigrated non-Romans. Similarly, contemporary scholars have downplayed Roman elite anxiety about their empire's expansion.

In this groundbreaking new work, Eric Adler explores the degree to which ancient historians of Rome were capable of valorizing foreigners and presenting criticisms of their own society. By examining speeches put into the mouths of barbarian leaders by a variety of writers, he investigates how critical of the empire these historians could be.

Adler examines pairs of speeches purportedly delivered by non-Roman leaders so that the contrast between them might elucidate each writer's sense of imperialism. Analyses of Sallust's and Trogus's treatments of the Eastern ruler Mithradates, Polybius's and Livy's speeches from Carthage's Hannibal, and Tacitus's and Cassius Dio's accounts of the oratory of the Celtic warrior queen Boudica form the core of this study. Adler supplements these with examinations of speeches from other characters, as well as contextual narrative from the historians. Throughout, Adler wrestles with broader issues of Roman imperialism and historiography, including administrative greed and corruption in the provinces, the treatment of gender and sexuality, and ethnic stereotyping.

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