

PREFACE

“Praise a tyrant,” says Dio Chrysostomus, “and he takes no pleasure in it. For he thinks that those who praise him feel otherwise” (*Orat.* 6.59). But my acquaintance with tyrants has been limited at best, and none has offered a shred of assistance with my writing—so I hope that the mentors and friends both professional and personal who helped me with this book will take my praise at face value (and, of course, without reading the chapters on praise and doublespeak).

This book owes a great deal to many people. My trio of advisers when it was first evolving—G. W. Bowersock, R. Starn, and my dissertation chair, C. E. Murgia—consistently offered me excellent advice and correction. Several good friends read and commented on portions of the manuscript in its different stages: Oliver Arnold and Tom Garrity heard an early version of Chapter 1 in the format of a talk, and I am especially grateful to Oliver, who on that occasion suggested “Actors in the Audience” as a possible title. This so appealed to me that I have adopted it for the work in its entirety. Andrew Riggsby and Christopher Gales read the manuscript when it was all but completed and offered excellent advice; my debt to Chris is particularly great, and not only for proofreading of a professional standard: eagle-eyed editor and stringent (if twinkling) critic, he helped me in ways that evade enumeration. The graduate students of a seminar on historical methodology at the University of California, Berkeley, led by R. Starn, for which I wrote the essay that developed into this book, also gave me valuable feedback.

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Throughout the notes I have used the standard abbreviations for periodicals, in conformity with *L'Année philologique*. For most primary sources to which I refer at some length, I have used the Oxford Classical Texts (hereafter OCT). However, for Tacitus' *Annals* and Suetonius' *Lives*, I have used the Teubner editions, and for Tacitus' *Histories* the edition of R. Till (Heidelberg, 1963). Pliny's *Panegyricus* is quoted from W. Kühn's edition (Darmstadt, 1985); Dio Cassius, from E. Cary's readily accessible Loeb edition of 1925. All the translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

I have not written an introduction for this book, preferring to let the reader travel through its twists and turns unequipped with the lamp of foreknowledge. All I will say at the outset is that it is a book about representation, not reality, although much of its content serves to undermine that distinction (a trait in which I follow the tendency of my ancient sources); a book about the ways in which antithetical categories such as spectator and spectacle, intention and interpretation, and praise and blame were variously conflated and exploited by writers and historians of the first century A.D. as a reaction to the transformation of Rome from republic to empire; a book about what happens to language's ability to *mean* when all communication is distorted by the pull of a centralized and autocratic authority.

November 1993

CONTENTS

1. THE EMPEROR'S AUDIENCE: NERO AND THE THEATRICAL PARADIGM	1
2. THE INVASION OF THE STAGE: NERO <i>TRAGOEDUS</i>	36
3. OPPOSITIONAL INNUENDO: PERFORMANCE, ALLUSION, AND THE AUDIENCE	63
4. PRAISE AND DOUBLESPEAK: TACITUS' <i>DIALOGUS</i> AND JUVENAL'S SEVENTH SATIRE	98
5. THE ART OF SINCERITY: PLINY'S <i>PANEGYRICUS</i>	148
EPILOGUE	189
APPENDIX 1. THE "CENA TRIMALCHIONIS" AS THEATER	197
APPENDIX 2. DID MATERNUS DESTROY VATINIUS THROUGH HIS PLAY?	200
APPENDIX 3. [LONGINUS'] <i>ON THE SUBLIME</i> §44 AND MATERNUS' EULOGY	203
NOTES	207
BIBLIOGRAPHY	289
INDEX	305

ACTORS IN THE AUDIENCE

THEATRICALITY AND DOUBLESPEAK

FROM NERO TO HADRIAN

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