to Theodosius' own usurpation, and his rhetorical appropriation of the respective usurpations of Magnus Maximus and Eugenius to shore up his position, all seen through Ausonius' *gratiarum actio*, Themistius' *Or.* 14, 15, and 18, and Pacatus' *Pan. Lat.* 2. The concluding chapter looks at the way in which the imperial office evolved in the fifth century, and why that marks the end for this book. A brief epilogue summarizes the whole: a century-long picture of how an apparently mono-dimensional and rather dull oratorical genre was in fact the key mechanism by which successive emperors argued for their own legitimacy, and thereby successfully fought for their own place in, and version of, history.

This is an excellent first book. Omissi is deeply immersed in the source material and a sure guide to the scholarly landscape. And though this is a book built on the back of the boom in work on panegyric over the last twenty years, it more than justifies its place among those works. First, where many of the latter studies considered individual panegyrics, the panegyrics of a single author, or a particular collection in one language (most often the *Panegyrici Latini*), Omissi's study is distinctive for its consideration of the panegyrics of the fourth century, in both Greek and Latin, and as a whole. Second, his careful and sensible ability to read between the lines means that at a number of points he offers important correctives to traditional readings (as in the insight that Nazarius' discussion of Constantine's attempts to secure a treaty with Maxentius really has in mind the former's later relationship with Licinius; 149–51) that affect our picture of fourth-century history (for example, that Vetranio never betrayed Constantius; 181–90). And third, he demonstrates for the few panegyrics that have survived such an influence on late antique historiography (including Aurelius Victor, Ammianus, Orosius, and Zosimus, among others) that he (and we) can legitimately ask 'Had time not destroyed so much panegyric and so much history, how many more such connections might begin to emerge?' (208). A thesis rooted in a bilingual corpus of evidence that influences our picture of an entire century and problematizes our relationship with multiple ancient genres of writing – this is great history, and a fitting note on which to close.

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Art and Archaeology

Attributes are fundamental to the study of classical archaeology, just as they are to the discipline of art history at large. When it comes to identifying figures on an Attic vase – or for that matter the subject of a medieval fresco, Renaissance canvas, or Neoclassical statue – scholars regularly rely on the associative value of objects. Consider the ease with which we recognize 'Heracles' on the grounds of a club or lionskin; observe, too, how often a spiked wheel is understood to signal 'St Catherine', or a golden key to betoken 'St Peter'. In all these scenarios, viewers have learned to 'read' certain objects in certain culturally conditioned sorts of ways. Despite their non-verbal medium, attributes come to function almost like textual labels: inserted within the field of visual representation, they inscribe an identity, narrative backdrop, or semantic

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context; they anchor the project of critical interpretation – and in doing so take on a significatory logic of their own.

If attributes are critical to the actual act of viewing, they have come to play a wholly more marginal role in visual cultural criticism, at least over the last fifty years. For all that art historians rely on attributes, the attribute – as art historical and visual cultural phenomenon – has attracted remarkably little attention. What, for example, distinguishes the attribute from other sorts of visually represented object? Do attributes work in the same ways within the frame of two-dimensional painting as they do in three-dimensional sculpture? Should they be understood – by etymology, if not by definition – as extrinsic 'additions' to the representational field? Indeed, given that the term stretches back only to the eighteenth century, can we even speak of 'attributes' in the context of earlier imagery? Or does the concept risk anachronism (not to mention Eurocentric critical bias), imposing modern Western allegorical modes upon a longer and wider history of visual response?

These are just some of the questions that lie behind Nikolaus Dietrich's provocative new monograph.[1] The express objective of the book is to re-examine the attributes of ancient Greek visual culture, focusing on archaic and classical materials in particular. At the same time, Dietrich tackles the transhistorical stakes, exploring not only the attributes of pictures but also learned cultural modes of responding to them. Dietrich is upfront about not having all the answers: to translate a line in his preface, the concern lies 'less with clarification than problematization' (xi); in the words of the title, this 'bildwissenschaftliche Untersuchung' aims first and foremost at a 'problematization of the concept' (4). Still, what sets the book apart is the intellectual energy with which it revisits so many familiar case studies: the result is one of the most exciting recent works in Germanophone 'Klassische Archäologie' – and a volume that deserves the widest possible readership, both within the disciplinary confines of Classics and beyond.

In structural terms, Dietrich divides his subject into three self-contained parts, each comprising four chapters. The first section begins with the challenge of defining the attribute, while also surveying the historiography of previous definitions (with particular reference to Winckelmann, Lessing, and Herder in the eighteenth century). Enlightenment thinkers were quick to critique the use of visual attributes, Dietrich demonstrates: think, for example, of Lessing's comments in his *Laokoon* essay of 1766 – which characterized the attribute as an invasive, text-derived element that is alien to the realm of pictures. Lessing duly chastised contemporary eighteenth-century painters for their allegorizing recourse to attributes, which confused the proper 'boundaries' between 'poetic' and 'pictorial' media. However artists responded to Lessing's criticisms, though, the emerging field of art history seems to have paid little attention. Ironically, as Dietrich argues, it was precisely when German aesthetics made a theoretical problem of the attribute that art historians transformed it into an essential disciplinary tool, not least through the proliferation of 'Attributlexica' ('With the academization of art history, the attribute was thus transformed into a black hole of

[1] *Das Attribut als Problem. Eine bildwissentschaftliche Untersuchung zur griechischen Kunst*. By Nikolaus Dietrich. Image & Context 17. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2018. Pp. xiv + 384. B/w illustrations. Hardback £91, ISBN: 978-3-11-049100-5.

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theory', 253). The ensuing discussion takes careful aim at some of the more positivistic assumptions that have since come to underpin 'research into classical Greek sculpture in Germany' (including scholarly projects such as the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*: 27; see also e.g. 151, 234). Importantly, this first section also tackles the assumption, derived from Herder, that attributes are necessarily extrinsic to the visual representation of the body (28–48) – the thinking, as Dietrich later explains, that they therefore play a 'parergonal' role (for the Kantian framework, see 120–4).

The second and third sections of the book proceed from theoretical introduction to applied historical critique, focused on archaic and classical Greek materials in particular: Part 2 examines the temporality of attributes ('Attribute in der Zeit der Bilder', 51), while Part 3 turns to their use as identificatory markers ('Attribute und das Erkennen der Figuren', 141). In the Greek world, Dietrich argues, attributes operated within the representational timeframe of the image that contained them. One way of approaching the history of Greek art, it follows, is to study the changing ways in which 'present' attributes were integrated within shifting modes of poly- and synchronic visual narrative (62–4). The second part of the book argues against the modern assumption that Greek attributes brought with them temporalities external to the scene represented. By extension, the third section suggests that scholars are mistaken in thinking that they served any straightforward identificatory purpose. In stark contrast to the role that such objects have played in more recent Western visual culture, signalling the identity of an individual or group (141–51), the attributes of archaic and classical Greek imagery were primarily oriented around the 'characterization of the figure' (150): 'that attributes open up more interpretive paths than they shut down thus becomes their specific strength' (221). Once again, Dietrich zooms out from Greek antiquity in order to home back in on its visual cultural specifics: the general differentiation between 'ancient' and 'modern' practices allows him to concentrate on the changing role of attributes in archaic and classical imagery – to tell a history of their development, in free-standing statues (especially archaic *kouroi* and *korai*), relief sculpture, and vase-painting. As with the second part of the book, the third section concentrates on the period between the sixth and fourth centuries BC. Importantly, though, Dietrich also introduces Hellenistic and Roman materials to flag issues of 'Rezeption' (e.g. 227–47; see also 114–37).

This is no standard monograph, as the author is quick to admit ('Es ist nicht üblich, Attribute in monographischer Form zu behandeln', xi). Unlike so much work in German classical archaeology, the book takes a refreshingly broad-brush approach, selecting materials around a series of intellectual questions rather than a predefined corpus. This allows Dietrich to discuss a range of related phenomena, from vase-inscriptions (e.g. 151–4) to honorific monuments (e.g. 91–100: 'Das Fallbeispiel der Athletenbilder'). Most impressively of all, the remit allows him to slip and slide – with combined inductive and deductive ease – between individual case studies and transferable argument: for all its disciplinary roots in 'classical archaeology', this volume simultaneously harks back to those traditions of German Enlightenment aesthetics that evidently inspired it.

But at least one question remains. As the comments above make clear, Dietrich's historical interest in Greek attributes harbours an unabashedly transhistorical aspiration: while focused on the objects of Greek art, the book explores ('problematizes')

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the essential role of attributes within the *longue durée* of Western visual culture. To be sure, Dietrich taps into longer critical traditions of theorizing visual response: one might think especially of Panofksy's tripartite model for approaching what he labelled 'pre-iconographic', 'iconographic', and 'iconological' visual interpretation, for example.[2] Fundamentally, though, Dietrich posits a key difference between 'ancient' and 'modern' habits of both making and responding to images, themselves bound up with different ideologies of the attribute. The greatest insights of this book derive from this comparative approach – the mutually illuminative ways in which ancient imagery is used to shed light on the specificity of modern cultural habits, just as modern parallels point to the cultural remove of ancient Greek practice.

Still, the issue that remains must be about how to explain this supposed shift from ancient to modern modes. Dietrich is surely right to problematize the terms along the way: already in the Roman world, he argues, we witness the beginnings of a critical 'Wandel' – a gradual dissociation between attributes and visual contexts, so that they came to signify less about 'what' than about 'who' was represented (246). While the book's focus is on material culture, a range of literary and philosophical texts might likewise come into play: remember, for example, the role that attributes play in identifying the personifications of the *Tabula Cebetis* (probably composed in the first century AD); already by around 400 BC, moreover, the author of the *Dissoi logoi* advised speakers to remember names and concepts through makeshift visual emblems – whether 'Chrysippus' by placing gold (*chrysos*) on a horse (*hippos*), or 'courage' through the figures of Mars and Achilles.[3] One response to Dietrich's 'problematizing' of this 'ancient' and 'modern' history of attributes, then, might be to problematize the distinction in turn. If the broad thrust of Dietrich's account is accepted, however, another response must be to ask when, how, and why this transformation came about. The ultimate quandary I found myself pondering in all this is how ancient Greek attitudes towards the attribute relate to those of earlier and later times and places: there is a question, from an art historical perspective, of how to situate Dietrich's argument within a grander cultural, intellectual, and (one might add) theological story of visual form.

Understandably enough, that history lies beyond the scope of Dietrich's project. But it does lead neatly to another recent title. For, whatever story is told of 'ancient' attributes and the rise of 'modern' ways of viewing them, I suspect that late antique visual culture – in turn bound up with the rise of Christianity, and new text-centred modes of Christian semiotics – has a key role to play. Thanks to the editorial efforts of Robin M. Jensen and Mark D. Elison, we now have a single-volume 'handbook of early

[2] For the best known version of the argument, see E. Panofsky, 'Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art', in E. Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts. Papers in and on Art History* (New York, 1955), 26–54; see also M. A. Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundation of Art History* (Ithaca, NY, 1984), esp. 40–2, 158–93; K. Lorenz, *Ancient Mythological Images and Their Interpretation. An Introduction to Iconology, Semiotics and Image Studies in Classical Art History* (Cambridge, 2016), 17–100.

[3] See H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin, 1922), ii.345. For discussion, see e.g. F. A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (second edition, London, 1984); M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge, 1990), 28; C. Baroin, *Se souvenir à Rome. Formes, représentations et pratiques de la mémoire* (Paris, 2010), 204–5.

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Christian art' to serve as introductory guide.[4] Given the profusion of such handbooks in recent years, it's perhaps surprising that this should be the first on the subject (with 'early Christian' defined in relation to the period between the second and sixth centuries); indeed, reading Jensen's overview of the field (16–17), I was struck by the dearth of high-calibre introductory textbooks more generally. This volume certainly plugs a gap in the market. But it also does much more besides: it will be the first point of call not only for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, but also for specialists seeking up-to-date surveys and bibliographic overviews.

The editors divide their project into two parts: the first section treats 'media' (in fifteen chapters, addressing everything from floor mosaics to textiles), while the second examines 'themes' (seven chapters, exploring e.g. ritual practices, so-called 'secular' portraiture, and material from Ravenna). Some chapters are written by established experts (witness, for instance, Spier's chapter on gems and amulets, or Leader-Newby's chapter on late antique silver). Others are written by younger scholars, whose work looks set to have a major impact in the future: the chapter by Niamh Bhalla stands out in particular, not least for its discussion of framing strategies in Byzantine ivory diptychs (208–13). Strikingly, a number of contributions are written by authors whose work has mostly been published in languages other than English (such as Zimmermann, Dresken-Weiland, and Koch): these chapters consequently provide student-friendly overviews to topics that have attracted wholly more polyglot bibliographies. Less successful, in my view, was the decision to leave issues of scholarly historiography to the end of the book (a final chapter on '"Early" "Christian" "Art"' by Robert Couzin). Even here, moreover, there are some notable blind spots: how could it be, for example, that neither this final chapter, nor any of the ones preceding it, makes reference to Riegl and his *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie*?[5]

This oversight struck me as symptomatic of others, above all when it comes to defining the 'early Christian', and conceptualizing it in relation to still earlier classical traditions. On the basis of this handbook, for example, it would seem that some art historians are still content to talk about 'the Christian religion' (e.g. 21) – as though it were a single, monolithic cultural or theological entity in the first centuries AD. Consider, too, how many contributions fall back on a dichotomy between the 'Christian' and the 'pagan' (e.g. 185, 221), projecting back onto 'early' materials a range of later cultural distinctions (cf. Leader-Newby's counter-argument, discussing the Projecta casket at 248–9). For all its manifold strengths, this handbook ends up raising pressing questions about scholarly categories and disciplinary boundaries: to my mind, it demonstrates the need for a rather more radical rethink of how 'early Christian art' is defined, researched, and taught.

From one edited collection to another: I turn now to a different anthology of essays, this time dedicated to 'the miniature, broken, or otherwise incomplete objects in the ancient world', edited by S. Rebecca Martin and Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper.[6]

[4] *The Routledge Handbook of Early Christian Art*. Edited by Robin Margaret Jensen and Mark D. Ellison. London and New York, Routledge, 2018. Pp. xxiv + 398. 236 b/w illustrations. Hardback £175, ISBN: 978-1-138-85722-3.

[5] A. Riegl, *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (Vienna, 1901), trans. R. Winkes as *Late Roman Art Industry* (Rome, 1985).

[6] *The Tiny and the Fragmented. Miniature, Broken, or Otherwise Incomplete Objects in the Ancient World*. Edited by S. Rebecca Martin and Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper. New York, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xi + 227. B/w illustrations. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-19-061481-2.

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A chief virtue of the book, derived from a panel at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the College Art Association, is its range of perspectives: 'the volume does not discriminate between East and West, the Old and New Worlds, or art history, anthropology, and archaeology' (11), to quote the editors. A weakness, though, is that this breadth quickly results in a lack of focus – and in a collection almost as 'fragmentary' or 'incomplete' as the subject that it treats. The volume certainly brings together a range of specialists – discussing, among other things, Assyrian friezes (Marian H. Feldman), Iberian Iron-Age figurines (Mireia López-Bertran and Jaime Vives-Ferrándiz) and Neolithic pit-houses (Doug Bailey); for Classicists, the chapters by Jessica Hughes, Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper, and S. Rebecca Martin are perhaps the most relevant, dedicated to 'tiny and fragmented votive offerings', 'Hellenistic Babylonian miniatures', and 'representations of Tanit in texts and art'. Yet for all the best editorial efforts to tie themes together (11–19), points of contact remain slim. The purported 'response' – a final essay, by Margaret Cool Root – only exacerbates the problem: rather than provide a 'complementary afterword to all the provocative chapters in this volume', as promised, the chapter indulges in a 'brief exploration of scale and activated agencies of the Persepolis imagined experience' (189).

The meeting between 'East' and 'West' also takes us to *The World Between Empires* – a lavishly produced catalogue that accompanied an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (18 March–23 June 2019).[7] At the time of writing, the present reviewer has yet to have seen the show. But if this volume is anything to go by, it looks set to make quite the splash, probing the religious, political, and above all visual cultures of the ancient Middle East between the early first century BC and the mid-second century AD (vii). In one sense, the book makes for a traditional catalogue, with introductions to the 183 objects displayed (loaned from Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, the UK, and eight US museums). At the same time, it also does something else, combining object-led commentary with a broader cultural historical overview (complete with handy chronological chart and colour maps; xvi–xxi). A general introduction to the 'Middle East Between Rome and Parthia' sets the scene. Nine geographically structured chapters then follow, surveying materials from 'Southwestern Arabia', 'Nabataea', 'Judaea', 'Tyre and Sidon', 'Heliopolis-Baalbek', 'Palmyra', 'Dura-Europas', 'Hatra, Ashur, and Northern Mesopotamia', and 'Babylon to Ctesiphon'. A penultimate essay takes things to the later third century ('Changing Times: The Rise of the Sasanians'). To round things off, the last chapter 'summarizes some of the damage that has occurred' from recent conflicts – above all, in Yemen, Iraq, and Syria (260). In this final analysis, the ancient history of the Middle East ends up looking not all that different from that of the modern-day region: 'a constellation of local communities negotiating their distinctive identities in a world of great imperial powers' (4).

One object that will *not* greet visitors to the Met is the so-called 'Sarpedon Vase' – a supersized red-figure mixing bowl of the late sixth century BC, signed by an Athenian potter named Euxitheos and the 'Pioneer' painter Euphronios. True, the vase was

[7] *The World Between Empires. Art and Identity in the Ancient Middle East*. By Blair Fowlkes-Childs and Michael Seymour. New York, Metropolitan Museum of New York (distributed by Yale University Press), 2019. Pp. xxii + 310. 344 colour illustrations. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-1-588-39683-9.

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previously on show in New York: following its purchase by the museum in 1972 – for (what was then) an eye-watering million dollars – the pot was once a highlight of its antiquity galleries. Almost no sooner did this prize exhibit go on show, however, than questions began to be asked about provenance. Suffice it to say that, in 2008, the vase was finally returned to Italy: it was displayed first in the Villa Giulia in Rome, and then (since December 2014) in the archaeological museum of Cerveteri. Encased in its glass cabinet, the vase is today exhibited just a few hundred yards from the Greppe Sant'Angelo necropolis where, just a half-century ago, it was most likely uncovered.

The 'life and afterlife' of this 'Sarpedon Vase' provides the subject of a compelling new biography by Nigel Spivey.[8] Few Classicists, as readers of this journal will appreciate, can rival the verve of Spivey's prose – his turns of phrase, prosodic rhythms, or wry asides to the reader. Here the author finds a story as gripping as his written style. Spivey proceeds to do two things: first, he uses the vase, and its return trip from Italy to the States, as bait to reel in his readers; second, he exploits our investment in this object to interrogate larger issues about 'value'. The result is a tale not just about a vase, but also about its imagery. On the one hand, this is a book about the archaeology, literal and metaphorical, of a single artefact. On the other, Spivey mounts an impassioned defence as to why that object amounts to 'art': 'an eminent and influential achievement within world culture' (10), emblazoned with 'an image of traumatic glory that would far exceed its original limits of purpose, time and place' (236). Fundamental to this argument is the iconographic schema that gives the pot its name: the image of a prostrate Sarpedon, gently raised and removed from battle by the framing figures of Death and Sleep. Spivey is concerned with the derivation of this motif. But he is also interested in its emotional power – and its resonance within the longer history of Western image-making.

That final turn to issues of reception comes to occupy the latter part of the book. Spivey begins, after a short preface, with a series of self-contained thematic chapters: about the contest for repatriation ('battle for custody'), the *oeuvre* of Euphronios, the context of the Athenian symposium, Homer's literary and cultural reception, and the funerary use of the vase in Etruria ('It has survived because some Etruscan – or certain members of an unknown Etruscan family – decided that it was appropriate to be placed in a tomb, hoping, presumably, that it would stay there for eternity'; 136). Only in the final two chapters does discussion turn to 'the afterlife of an image' (160–227), with a view first to 'the motif of "the beautiful corpse" in antiquity', and second to the 'pagan prototype in Christian service'. The thesis is staked on the 'potentially universal' (168) significance of this iconography, already recycled in antiquity to portray (*inter alia*) the dying Hector and Meleager. Resorting to Warburg and his idea of the '*Pathosformel*' (192–8, 227), Spivey demonstrates how the iconographic motif, effectively invented by Euphronios, was subsequently transformed into 'an emblem of supreme self-sacrifice in Christian iconography' (236): even as Euphronios' vase lay buried in its tomb, 'the Sarpedon fossil has exerted its remote formulaic force' (220) – in celebrated

[8] *The Sarpedon Krater. The Life and Afterlife of a Greek Vase*. By Nigel Spivey. London, Head of Zeus, 2018. Pp. 256. 77 colour and b/w illustrations. Hardback £18.99, ISBN: 978-1-786-69161-3.

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Renaissance scenes of Christ's disposition (by Donatello, Raphael, and Signorelli), for example, as well as in Neoclassical paintings such as Jacques-Louis David's *Death of Marat*.

For Spivey, this mini-history of 'visual habitation' (192) points to an essential aesthetic truth: the transhistorical popularity of the iconography, we are told, is a fact of 'basic biology' (227) – 'we see someone suffering – or an *image* of some someone suffering – and this activates "mirror neurons" within our brain to stimulate a response, as if that suffering were ours' (226). Readers may or may not agree. Some (the present reviewer included) may be sceptical about this 'neuroscientific' twist. Others might take issue with the brusque review of German philosophical aesthetics – not least the dismissal of Lessing's *Laokoon* as 'peevish and pedantic' (222). Still, none of those quibbles need detract. This is a wonderful read, complete with powerful argument for viewing an archaeological object as 'art'; Spivey's considerable achievement is to have written a book that speaks to a general audience while simultaneously advancing a larger scholarly agenda.

Before proceeding, some news in brief – and passing mention of five books that arrived shortly before the deadline. First is Barbara Barletta's much-awaited archaeological account of the Sanctuary of Athena at Sounion, discussing the topography of the sanctuary and the architecture of its fifth-century Ionic temple.[9] Second, a monograph on the role of textiles in the material culture of Greek religion, with chapters on everything from 'priestly garments' to the 'iconographic evidence for the dressing of cult statues'.[10] Third, a new interpretation of the eponymous frieze in the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii, centred around its supposed nuptial context and association with bridal paintings or tapestries (so-called *Pastoi*):[11] Paul Veyne's short monograph offers a German translation of a still little-known French volume of 2016, and is notable for its colour photographs of the frieze following its restoration in 2015.[12] Sticking with Pompeii, fourth, I should mention a hugely important anthology of essays dedicated to the so-called 'Casa del Chirurgo' (and Insula VI.1 in general) – the result of a sustained excavation campaign by the Anglo-American Project in Pompeii between 1994 and 2006.[13] Fifth and finally, a monograph on 'eye and art in ancient Greece', purporting to investigate the 'dynamic inter-relationship of vision and perception' (1):[14] the catchy

[9] *The Sanctuary of Athena Sounion*. By Barbara Barletta, with architectural analysis by William B. Dinsmoor Jr and observations by Homer A. Thompson. Princeton, NJ, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2017. Pp. xviii + 342. 247 b/w illustrations. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-0-87661-967-4.

[10] *Gods and Garments. Textiles in Greek Sanctuaries in the 7th to 1st Centuries* BC. By Cecilie Brøns. Ancient Textiles Series 28. Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2017. Pp.xii + 452. B/w and 128 colour illustrations. Hardback £40, ISBN: 978-1-785-70355-3.

[11] *Das Geheimnis der Fresken. Die Mysterienvilla in Pompeji*. By Paul Veyne. Translated by Anne Leube und Wolf Heinrich Leube. Darmstadt, Philipp von Zabern, 2018. 37 colour illustrations. Hardback €49.95, ISBN: 978-3-805-35176-8.

[12] P. Veyne, *La Villa des Mystères à Pompéi* (Paris, 2016).

[13] *House of the Surgeon, Pompeii. Excavations in the Casa del Chirurgo (VI 1, 9–10.23)*. Edited by Michael A. Anderson and Damian Robinson. Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2018. Pp. xv + 647. Colour and b/w illustrations. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-1-78570-728-5.

[14] *Eye and Art in Ancient Greece. A Study in Archaeoaesthetics*. By Christopher L. C. E. Witcome. London/Turnhout, Harvey Miller Publishers/Brepols, 2018. Pp. 266. 61 colour and 4 b/w illustrations. Hardback €95, ISBN: 978-1-909-40003-0.

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'archeoaesthetics' of the subtitle is appealing, but the book is seriously let down by its piecemeal structure, factual errors and oversights, and outdated bibliography.

Allow me to end this round-up by returning to Rome – and to a pair of books focused respectively on the history of Republican and of Imperial monuments. First comes *Architecture and Politics in Republican Rome*, by Penelope J. E. Davies.[15] It's the unassuming 'and' of this title that signals the book's decisive argument: namely, 'that the Republican city and its component buildings were inextricably intertwined with Republican government, which they helped at times to perpetuate and challenge' (1). 'As the city expanded,' Davies explains, 'its buildings grew out of, expressed, and exacerbated the political tensions of the time' (145). By the period known as the 'Late' Republic, the urban fabric of Rome had monumentalized a political paradox at the heart of the political system. Consider the monumental ambitions – both metaphorical and literal – of Julius Caesar in the 50s and 40s BC: 'the greater his excellence in service to the *res publica*, in buildings as in other things, the greater would be his personal glory'; 'inasmuch as his extraordinary office allowed him to conceive a grand vision of the city, which in turn justified and perpetuated his extraordinary office, he challenged the very notion of Republicanism' (272).

Davies constructs her argument around seven chronologically arranged chapters, proceeding from the late sixth century (an 'age of individualism') to the world of 'Caesar, Pompey, and rivals'. Each of these chapters shares the same internal structure, centred around 'political framework', 'religious buildings', 'spoils and the city', 'civic development', and 'conclusions'. Particularly impressive – especially, dare one say it, within the Cambridge list – are the colour images, which include maps, photographs, and reconstructions: consider, for example, the 'maps of Rome' that open every chapter, identifying 'existing monuments', 'renovated or rededicated monuments', 'new monuments with known plan', 'new monuments in approximate location', and 'extant remains of new monuments with plan unknown'. All this makes for an unparalleled resource for teaching: quite apart from Davies' subtle argument about the 'propagandistic' monuments of the Roman Republic ('often branded, albeit implicitly, as the primitive prolog to an art that grew instantly sophisticated with the dawn of Empire'; 1), the book will be essential reading for advanced undergraduate and graduate courses in Roman topography.

Davies' discussion of Roman Republican monuments also provides a rich backdrop for Maryl B. Gensheimer's *Decoration and Display in Rome's Imperial Thermae*, focused first and foremost upon the Imperial Baths of Caracalla.[16] At the heart of the book, adapted from a doctoral dissertation at NYU's Institute of Fine Arts, is an argument about a third-century monumental bathing complex, as well as its underlying political agenda: the Baths of Caracalla, Gensheimer argues, formed 'part of a carefully strategized program, meant to impart a particular message to a diverse Roman audience of

[15] *Architecture and Politics in Republican Rome*. By Penelope J. E. Davis. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017. 200 colour and 45 b/w illustrations, 18 maps. Hardback £44.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-09431-4.

[16] *Decoration and Display in Rome's Imperial Thermae. Messages of Power and Their Popular Reception at the Baths of Caracalla*. By Maryl B. Gensheimer. New York, Oxford University Press, 2018. Pp. xii + 430. B/w illustrations. Hardback £64, ISBN: 978-0-19-061478-2.

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both genders and all ages and social classes' (14). As the author is quick to admit, the work builds upon that of others, especially monographs by Janet Delaine and Gunhild Jenewein (28–30).[17] Her chief innovation, though, lies in the quest 'to reconstruct the decoration's ancient display context, its impact on the viewer, and its popular reception in phenomenological terms' (30).

This is a book with something for everyone, 'integrating evidence for individual media with fresh interpretations about the entire decorative program' (30). Some readers will no doubt privilege the appendices, which include an inventory of the seventy-five free-standing statues from the Baths of Caracalla (271–388). Others will use the book as a digestible – and meticulously footnoted – introduction to the complex as a whole, including a useful summary of all evidence for visual adornment (see 39–78). But to my eyes, the greatest contribution lies in its third and longest chapter, discussing the 'role of iconographical programs'. Take Gensheimer's discussion of images relating to the 'Weary Hercules' type. The so-called 'Farnese Heracles' is one of the most celebrated finds from the Baths. Here, though, Gensheimer champions the significance not only of the statue's intercolumnar location at the end of the frigidarium, but also its relationship with another juxtaposed version of the same sculptural subject; even more salient is the visual quotation of this imagery in the capitals of the room – so that 'architectural and freestanding sculpture form a united decorative program' (111). 'Imperial innuendo' is what Gensheimer labels such carefully orchestrated visual display: while allowing for a range of visual responses, the book leaves little doubt about the use of 'decorative media as part of a larger and more carefully strategized program' (246). If I had a question in all this, it would be about the process and mechanisms whereby such programmes were 'carefully strategized'. The language is becoming endemic to the study of Roman art and archaeology. It strikes me, though, that we still lack a historical framework for explaining – or indeed defending – such strategization.

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Philosophy

Maria Michela Sassi's masterful 2009 volume on the origins and nature of early Greek philosophy is now available in an updated English translation.[1] Sassi's aim is not to provide a primer of the views of individual thinkers. Rather, she seeks to scrutinize what sense we can make of attempts to unravel the 'origins' of philosophy. Her work is useful not only for its wide-ranging assessment of the evidence, including that from beyond

[17] J. Delaine, *The Baths of Caracalla. A Study in the Design, Construction, and Economics of Large-Scale Building Projects in Imperial Rome* (Portsmouth, RI, 1999); G. Jenewein, *Die Architecturdekoration der Caracallathermen*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 2008).

[1] *The Beginnings of Philosophy in Greece*. By Maria Michela Sassi. Translated by Michele Asuni. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2018. Pp. xxii + 210. Hardback £24, ISBN: 978-0-691-18050-2.

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