Rome' (347). It is a pity that there are no references to help readers, only short bibliographies of secondary literature at the end of each chapter, because this is definitely a book to recommend to students and all those with an interest in the ever-fascinating and ongoing history of the city of Rome.

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Art and Archaeology

Visitors to modern Istanbul struggle to imagine how the city as created by Constantine appeared. But the elongated promenade now usually indicated as Sultan Ahmet Parki, but also known as the At-meidam ('Horse-Square'), is vaguely conceivable as the ancient Hippodrome, the centre of public life in imperial Constantinople; and of the numerous monuments that once adorned this area, a trio persists along the site of the 'spine' of the ancient racetrack. Two obelisks are still conspicuous; between them lurks the 'Serpent Column', which was already a piece of antiquity when Constantine had it removed from Delphi. Of all bronzes to survive from the classical world it is perhaps the most deserving of its own 'cultural biography'. This is what Paul Stephenson offers with *The Serpent Column*.[1] He starts in the broadest possible terms – mankind's general phobia of snakes – and then guides the reader through two and a half millennia of the vicissitudes endured by a sacred object wrenched from its 'pagan' purpose and somehow accorded special status within first Christian and then Muslim theocracies. Several times damaged, but never destroyed, the structure originally erected to mark the Greek victory over the Persians at Plataia in 479 BC now serves as a sort of talisman against snakebites. Stephenson calls upon some esoteric sources to inform its symbolic genesis – though disappointingly attempts no reconstruction of how it originally supported a tripod with cauldron – and shows how that symbolism could be adapted in biblical terms. Constantine's motives for relocating the monument remain obscure; nonetheless, we can surely dismiss Gibbon's conclusion that the emperor reveals merely 'the rapacious vanity of a despot'. Recall the tradition that in his new forum he buried, beneath a pillar, an ensemble of relics comprising the Trojan-Roman Palladium, Noah's axe, Mary Magdalene's ointment jar, the crosses of the two thieves, and twelve baskets used by the apostles at the feeding of the five thousand. Superstitious he may have been; yet, by his choice of objects, Constantine also shows a fine sense of cumulative tradition at the juncture of Europe and Asia.

The lower reptilian coils of the Serpent Column were inscribed with the names of thirty-one Greek city-states (more precisely, their citizen-bodies) 'which fought in the war' (to specify 'against the Medes', while epigraphically possible, is not historically necessary). As Lilian Jeffrey showed, the inscription was added by authorities at Delphi, and may not have been part of the original dedication by the Spartan general

[1] *The Serpent Column. A Cultural Biography*. By Paul Stephenson. Onassis Studies in Hellenic Culture. New York, Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xxii + 275. 92 half-tones, 8 line drawings. Hardback £47.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-020906-3.

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Pausanias; so, while 'Lakedaimonians' head the list, the monument was perhaps studiously 'panhellenized'. In any case, it seems to be a harbinger of the phenomenon of 'Periclean Athens' – if the various dedications (*anathêmata*) comprising that phenomenon are understood as united by a single intent: to transmit to posterity the glory achieved by those who fought at Salamis and Plataia, and at Marathon a decade earlier. Passages of Demosthenes suggest as much, which may be enough to justify the title of Leslie Shear's substantial study, *Trophies of Victory*.[2] However (as Shear is well aware), further evidence for such programmatic unity is remarkably thin: it appears that, as early as the fourth century, an 'Oath of Plataia' had to be concocted to explain why, for example, a 'Temple of Athena Nike' was not initiated until *c.*435 BC (Shear's dating is early, yet that still makes a commemorative delay of some two generations). Plutarch, for his part, saw only the glory of Pericles as presiding statesman. Where on the Acropolis was any inscription to match, explicitly, that of the Serpent Column? Shear picks his way with seasoned expertise through not only the Odeion, Propylaia, and temples in Athens as *polis*, but also fifth-century elaboration of sanctuaries elsewhere in Attica (including the Telesterion at Eleusis and the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion), accredited by default as 'Periclean'. His guiding logic is that a team of highly skilled workers moved from one commission to another, bringing with them not only a particular style of execution but also a consistent iconographic repertoire: so consistent, indeed, that, although the surviving frieze-slabs from Sounion are hardly legible, we can be sure that the frieze showed a Centauromachy, a Gigantomachy, and the adventures of Theseus. It suits Shear's overall case to see these themes as symbolic analogues of victory over the Persians – though, again, ancient testimony for such an interpretation is very scant; and he tends to be dismissive of efforts to produce more recondite readings of classical Attic imagery, such as Joan Connelly's theory about Erechtheus on the Parthenon frieze. But how were all these commissions paid for? Shear extracts what he can from the epigraphic records of building expenses ('Paying for the Parthenon', 48ff.). Yet it remains debatable to what extent (if any) spoils from the Persian Wars contributed to the funding; and, notoriously, the civic inscriptions name all sorts of Athenian officials as responsible – but not Pericles. So, while this book has the heft and the authority of its author's lifetime devotion to the archaeology of classical Athens, the fragility of our concept of an anti-Persian 'Periclean' programme cannot be concealed.

The 'Peplos Scene' on the east side of the Parthenon frieze is one more locus of scholarly dispute. But no-one queries the importance of producing a sacred *peplos* for the statue of Athena Polias in preparation for the Great Panathenaia. The art of the weavers (*ergastinai*) selected to produce this garment is all but lost: insofar as we can gain any idea of their methods, and the end result, we are now served with an admirable new attempt to recover *Textile Production in Classical Athens*.[3] Written by the current Director

[2] *Trophies of Victory. Public Building in Periklean Athens*. By T. Leslie Shear, Jr. Princeton, NJ, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, in association with Princeton University Press, 2016. Pp. xxiii + 475. 123 illustrations. Paperback £54.95, ISBN: 978-0-691-17057-2.

[3] *Textile Production in Classical Athens*. By Stella Spantidaki. Ancient Textiles 27. Oxford and Philadelphia, PA, Oxbow Books, 2016. Pp. xxvii + 228. Illustrated. Hardback £38, ISBN: 978-1-78570-252-5.

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of the Hellenic Centre for Research and Conservation of Archaeological Textiles in Athens, this is a blessing for anyone (like myself) who can recognize a spindle whorl when it turns up in an excavation, but has only a vague notion of how the object was actually used. With diagrams and clear explanations, the processes of making threads and then combining them are laid out. The use of images from painted vases is adroit, and the collation of textual sources effective; most striking, however, is the multiplicity of close-up photographs of scraps of conserved fabric (such as the embroidered fragments found within a funerary vase at Koropi). Watercolours made of the painted draperies apparent on some of the Acropolis *korai* at the time of excavation prime us to appreciate the chromatic *kosmos* of Athenians in their finery. These microscopic views of twills, wefts, and fibres draw us marvellously to the manual intricacies of creating such garments.

Students of Greek literature know that qualities of textile production, such as *poikilia* ('embroidered patterns'), proved transferable to the poet's craft. There are reasons to suppose that one criterion for assessing painted pottery lay likewise with its 'variety' of decoration. But what does it take to 'delight the eye'? I remember how my old mentor Robert Cook liked to declare that he would happily shatter any amount of South Italian red-figure – if given the chance. He did not say as much in print, but one line in his 'classic' *Greek Painted Pottery* (third edition, London, 1997) came to my mind when reading *Dangerous Perfection*.[4] Since (in Cook's view) the painters of Apulian red-figure vases were 'tiresomely clumsy' when it came to composition, the 'more ambitious pieces' of Apulian ware tended to 'look better in fragments than when complete' (186). So he would surely have scorned this handsome and purificatory exercise in ceramic conservation: for *Dangerous Perfection* tells how several large Apulian vases, originally decorated in the mid-fourth century BC, found in fragments, and then artfully 'brought back to life' in the early nineteenth century, have recently been taken apart, cleaned, and reassembled. A collaboration between Berlin's Antikensammlung and the Getty Museum, the project may not persuade everyone to admire Apulian style, whether 'ornate' or 'plain'; yet it probingly illuminates an obscure area of modern antiquarianism. The Neapolitan Raffaele Gargiulo operated a lucrative business purveying souvenirs to Grand Tourists: from a gallery strategically located in Via Santa Lucia, he not only sold genuinely ancient artefacts but also created such convincingly intact 'impostures' that in 1818 Bourbon authorities were obliged to issue legislation. Their decree did not outlaw forgeries, but required restorations to be left conspicuous as such. Gargiulo – whose treatise on the techniques of making Greek vases is translated here – knew too much: his was the 'dangerous perfection' that could mislead not only passing tourists but also scholarly connoisseurs. Emile Braun was one who (in 1836) called for the 'complete removal of everything that comes from a modern hand'. That was more easily demanded than done: as the Getty analysts confirm, Gargiulo invented a shellac-based glue that was extremely strong and remarkably invisible. Nonetheless, the episode contributes to mark a 'paradigm shift' in modern antiquarian values.

[4] *Dangerous Perfection. Ancient Funerary Vases from Southern Italy*. Edited by Ursula Kästner and David Saunders. Los Angeles, CA, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2016. Pp. 212. Illustrated Hardback £40. ISBN: 978-1-60606-476-4.

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Gargiulo was to vases what Canova and Thorvaldsen were to sculpture; his art of 'perfecting' the past, like theirs, fell out of favour.

And we must not be too harsh on South Italian ware. It was, after all, a medium synchronized in time and place with the efflorescence of Greek theatrical drama, tragic and comic; and if one follows Oliver Taplin's argument that theatre was the main conduit for knowledge of mythology throughout the Greek world after the fifth century, and furthermore that vases were not only synchronic but also iconographically integrated with theatre in Magna Graecia, then much may be forgiven in terms of style. Taplin and others have done much to substantiate the process.[5] But has it registered with Roman art specialists? Zahra Newby, reassessing *Greek Myths in Roman Art and Culture*,[6] summarizes the Roman 'appropriation' of Greek myth as essentially a by-product of military conquest: so 'mythological images develop from objects of booty' (347). Surely, however, the diffusion of stories and motifs was more subtle and gradual than that. The theatres at Syracuse, Tarentum, and elsewhere were active before and after Roman annexation of their cities, with Latin versions of Greek classics on the bill by the mid-third century (and, of course, Greek artists had been busy in Rome and Etruria since the late seventh century). What Newby does by way of subsequent analysis will be a valuable addition to undergraduate bibliographies, as she moves between statues, statue-groups, wall-paintings, and funerary monuments, including sarcophagi. It seems a little unfair to present 'Arthur Derby [*sic*] Nock' as spokesman of the view that Romans displayed images of Greek myth merely as status symbols. Rhetorically, however, this lays the ground for stimulating discussions of the various and multi-layered modes in which such images served as 'more than simply decoration' (319). How 'decoration' relates to visual 'decorum' is left for us to figure out.

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Philosophy

As A. K. Cotton acknowledges at the beginning of her monograph *Platonic Dialogue and the Education of the Reader*,[1] 'the idea that a reader's relationship with Plato's text is analogous to that of the respondent with the discussion leader' within the dialogue, and 'that we engage in a dialogue with the text almost parallel to theirs', 'is almost a commonplace of Platonic criticism' (4). But Cotton has the merit of articulating this commonplace much more clearly and precisely than is often done, and of asking

[5] See, e.g. G. Bordignon (ed.), *Scene dal mito. Iconologia del dramma antico* (Rimini, 2015), containing a series of valuable case studies.

[6] *Greek Myths in Roman Art and Culture. Imagery, Values and Identity in Italy, 50 BC–AD 250*. By Zahra Newby. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xx + 387. 114 b/w illustrations, 15 colour plates. Hardback £74.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-0722-4.

[1] *Platonic Dialogue and the Education of the Reader*. By A. K. Cotton. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. ix + 330. Hardback £73, ISBN: 978-0-19-968405-2.

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