ROMAN COPIES?

E. K. Gazda (ed.): *The Ancient Art of Emulation. Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity.* (Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, Supplementary Volume 1.) Pp. xiv + 300, ills. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002. Cased, US$65, £46. ISBN: 0-472-11189-2.

More or less since the days of Winckelmann, and especially in the last century or so, many strongly Hellenizing works of Roman art have been regarded as copies of lost Greek originals. In museum collections, Roman sculptures that convincingly reproduce classical styles are still routinely labelled as copies. They are most likely to appear as illustrations in books about Greek art rather than Roman. To an extent, the pitfalls in using such 'copies' as sources for classical originals have always been acknowledged. The method of copy-criticism (*Kopienkritik*), which is somewhat analogous to textual criticism, has been applied in an effort to evaluate series of supposed copies, determining which appear to preserve the original features of the Greek masterpieces and which are distorted by the differing knowledge, tastes, or ability of the copyists.

But in the last three decades a more sceptical attitude has emerged and grown, and it may be becoming a new orthodoxy. Copies are increasingly marginalized as sources for Greek art. The frequently very dubious grounds for their attributions have been challenged. At the same time some have asked whether any of these works ought to be considered as copies at all, in the modern sense. Instead they have begun to explain more seriously why the 'copies' were made in the first place and how they were really understood in a specifically Roman context. The Ancient Art of Emulation belongs to this school of thought. Based on an NEH-sponsored seminar in Rome in 1994, it offers a series of critical and informative discussions on different aspects of copying and imitation in Roman art and the changing attitudes to them since the Renaissance.

Among the most important papers are those that question the underpinnings of traditional copy research in a general way. Carol Mattusch presents a sensitive analysis of the relation between copies and the frequently evoked 'bronze originals', reminding us that classical bronzes (like the Riace Bronzes) may often have been produced as series of multiple variants on a model. This means that (at least in theory) the single lost masterpiece becomes an elusive fiction: replication is built into artistic methods from the outset. Mary Hollinshead's survey of struts and supports in Roman marble statues carefully reassesses their significance and at last lays to rest the ubiquitous misapprehension that they are indicative of copies after bronzes.

Ellen Perry's discussion of the Roman rhetoric of imitation and emulation advances the case for Roman originality. Relying on ancient rhetorical literature, as one must, she makes a plausible case for Roman patrons' desire for creative adaptations of Greek artistic prototypes that respond to Roman circumstances. (A plausible argument, though in her single case study I am not sure, especially in the light of Mattusch's observations, that one can so simply identify departures from 'prototypes' or ascribe these specifically to Roman aesthetic preferences.) In one of the longest papers, Michael Koortbojian offers a perceptive analysis of many of the problems surrounding the Roman display of classical sculptures. In particular, he collapses the distinction between copies and classicizing *Idealplastik*, display of famous works versus general

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thematic ambience, arguing that sculptures in both categories could have been construed on different levels (and demand different forms of attention).

The effects of this sort of revisionist challenge are elaborated in particular (largely convincing) case studies that attempt to pull the rug from under conventional interpretations: Miranda Marvin on the greater and lesser Attalid dedications (examples of Roman creative emulation at best); Jennifer Trimble on the paintings of Achilles in the House of the Dioscuri at Pompeii (inventive and sophisticated Roman self-representation, more than copying); Elizabeth Bartman on 'sexy' Praxitelean boys (figures of circumscribed homeroticism, rather than sources for late classical art); and Linda Roccos on the Apollo Citharoedus type (a versatile Roman invention). No doubt many more works deserve and will receive this treatment.

Other chapters consider more or less modern attitudes to originality and emulation in classical and other art: the effects of academic classification and labelling (Alice Taylor), the modern rhetoric of originality and emulation (Ruth Weisberg on contemporary thought; Richard Spear on the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries); and the problems of restoration. Nancy Ramage offers a helpful survey of the bewildering eighteenth-century world of antique restorations, copies, forgeries, and pastiches, the full implications of which for the study of classical sculpture are only beginning to be appreciated. She advocates the recognition of these works as creative appropriations in their own right—collaborations between ancient and modern—rather than resorting to the controversial practice of de-restoration.

Altogether this is an excellent, useful, and carefully constructed volume which will no doubt become a landmark in the development of the subject. However, some aspects of the approach adopted do raise questions.

A key issue is the fate of *Kopienkritik*. There is probably no consensus on this among the authors. Some present their arguments as modifications of the traditional approach, while others, especially G. herself, are much more determinedly critical of any notion that Roman 'copies' reproduce lost masterpieces or can be used to study them. Perhaps what is needed now is further, more positive reassessment of those works that do in some sense (in what sense?) still seem to be 'real' copies (and indeed some of the contributors seem to touch on this). Without it, the attack on *Kopienkritik* can seem merely dogmatic. G. is dismissive of a reasoned defence of copy-criticism by Chris Hallett (p. 17) and at one point provocatively declares (p. 6 n. 16) that 'It should go without saying that distinguishing true from free copies is an impossible exercise in the absence of the original model'. But, in fact, it does not quite go without saying, and a strong argument can be made for identifiably close copying in particular cases—a phenomenon rendered all the more interesting by the counter-examples explored in this book.

Secondly, how helpful is the insistence on rehabilitating Roman art from a 'postmodernist' perspective? The term is used and pursued a lot in the introduction and an adjacent paper by the (postmodernist) artist Ruth Weisberg. The cluster of critical theories that come under this umbrella may indeed offer 'a challenging intellectual matrix' for innovative thinking, and it is plausible that the shifting attitude to Roman copies already owes something to vaguely postmodern sensibilities. But there is a risk of unnecessary anachronism once the ideas are applied to specific ancient material. (G. does acknowledge some of the problems and just about shies away from considering the Roman artists as postmodernists *avant la lettre*.)

Perhaps in employing the postmodern label there is also a risk of unintentionally devaluing the insights offered by the contributors to this and similar projects. Insofar as their work represents a change of outlook or intellectual fashion in favour of

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Roman art, it belongs to a gradual transformation over the last century. But the revisionists surely offer something more concrete than this. Some of them are contributing to an enduring new comprehension of the subject—a genuinely better understanding of how Roman art worked, on anyone's terms—just as Furtwängler did in his day. This extends beyond the attempt merely to 'dignify the production of repetitious imagery of the Roman era' (p. 9). For my part, I do not really mind whether Roman art is good or bad, creative or stale and derivative; as long as we try to understand better what it is.

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SALVAGED VASES

V. Smallwood, S. Woodford: *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Great Britain Fascicule 20, The British Museum Fascicule 10. Fragments from Sir William Hamilton's Second Collection of Vases Recovered from the Wreck of H.M.S.* Colossus. With a contribution by J. C. Quinton. Pp. 141, maps. London: The British Museum Press, 2003. Cased, £85. ISBN: 0-7141-2236-X.

This *CVA* fascicle publishes that which remains fit and useful to print of the recovered fragments of part of Sir William Hamilton's second collection of Greek and South Italian vases. They were being shipped from his ambassadorial posting in Naples to avoid the advancing army of Napoleon, and went down with the *Colossus* off the Isles of Scilly in December 1798. Between 1975 and 1979 the surviving fragments were recovered from the seabed, and acquired by the British Museum. The authors of this fascicle and their colleagues, to whom they pay a warm tribute, have since been engaged in a project of conservation and interpretation of nearly 31,000 sherds. This volume features 115 which can be reconciled usefully in print with the plates in Hamilton and Tischbein's publication of the collection in 1791–5 (or perhaps 1793–1803).

The fascicle is a substantial one, not least because its introduction reports on the recoverable and complex history of Hamilton's acquisition of the second collection, and the *raison d'être* of its publication with Tischbein's plates, as well as the decision to translate it back to England, and the relationship between what was shipped and what survived intact, was sold elsewhere, and is traceable back to the collection via Tischbein and other records. There is also an account of the recovery exercise, and of the extensive conservation undertaken by the British Museum conservation department. This is impressive in itself, but it is when we reach the plates and catalogue we see something of the size of what has been achieved, even with the tiny fraction of the total which responded to the *CVA* treatment.

Tischbein's plates, in keeping with the fashion of the time, illustrate the scenes on the vases as flat art—it was intended that the plates could be removed by connoisseurs from the volume and hung on the wall. At least part of the originators' expressed intention was that they could be used as exemplars for artists learning to draw. That said, the plates as published have considerable fidelity, particularly in their details, to the original vase-scenes, despite their origins on a three-dimensional object with a surface curved in two directions, which is not itself usually recorded on the plate. This,

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