Henry Blundell's Ash Chests' by Glenys Davies) discusses a group of ten inscriptions in Henry Blundell's collection of sculpture which, according to Davies, were all added to ash chests during the eighteenth century and by the same workshop of restorers. These additions seem to be essentially aesthetic, because ash chests looked more attractive and more marketable.

Chapter 10 ('Images of Death: Inscribed Funerary Monuments from Fourth-century Athens to Neo-classical England' by Graham Oliver) highlights the wider context in which funerary inscriptions must be seen. This context refers not only to the monument on which they were found but also to the physical space wherein they were set up. Moreover, Oliver elucidates the relevance of inscribed Athenian funerary monuments in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which are considered as a period of the Greek revival.

Chapter 11 ('The Rise of Typography and the Decline of Epigraphy? Architectural Inscriptions in the Nineteenth Century' by Colin Cunningham) seeks to single out possible reasons for the paradoxical death of architectural inscriptions found in major public spaces in Britain during the nineteenth century, when one might have expected extensive imitation of classical models.

Chapter 12 ('Epigraphy and Fascism' by Tim Benton) is devoted to the unusual interest which Italian Fascist architectural inscriptions present, and discusses their form, placement, and meaning in architecture within debates in modernism and politics. This discloses changes in Italian perceptions of modernity, history, and tradition.

Throughout this collective volume, the contributors display a profound erudition of ancient, medieval, and modern epigraphy. Their clear and accurate papers make for an exceptional contribution to every scholar or reader of inscriptions. The extraordinary quality of this volume is highly recommended for its usefulness: it highlights the historical evidence of inscriptions and points out the modification or creation of 'ancient' inscriptions, as well as their use for a particular interpretation of the past.

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MODERN MEDEAS

E. HALL, F. MACINTOSH, O. TAPLIN (edd.): *Medea in Performance 1500–2000*. Pp. xiv + 304, ills. Oxford: Legenda, European Humanities Research Centre, 2000. Paper. ISBN: 1-900755-35-1.

The risk in publishing conference proceedings is that, however sparkling the individual gems, the whole may turn out to be strangely less than the sum of its parts. This collection overcomes that danger, partly because of the shared focus on Medea but mainly because of Fiona Macintosh's substantial and unifying introduction. This succeeds in grounding the discussion in Euripides and Seneca, reviewing aspects of the reception of Medea in antiquity, establishing a chronological and geographical framework, and identifying the main (and, significantly, sometimes mutually exclusive) categories of interpretation—the Witch, the Infanticide, the Abandoned Wife, the Proto-Feminist (and sometimes Hero), the Outsider, and the modern Amalgam. To these are added exploration of the demands of different performance genres—dance, opera, film, and stage—and of their national and international contexts.

Ten further essays follow, rounded off by a list of productions of the play from the

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1540s to 2000. Since the individual essays differ widely in scope and conceptual approach, they interact with one another via Macintosh's introduction rather than directly. They do, however, have key features in common. As well as adding extra dimensions to the richness of Medea as a performance figure, they also undercut cherished approaches or challenge conventional wisdoms.

The first three essays focus on Medea in the English theatre. Diane Purkiss's emphasis on the plasticity of the Medea myth is used to question traditional views on the lack of Greek infrastructure in English Renaissance classicism. Her explorations of Jessica and (less convincingly) Desdemona as variations on the Medea theme culminate in focus on Lady Macbeth as a voice which is not quite that of either Euripides or Seneca but is Shakespeare's Medea. Edith Hall also challenges the perceived emphasis on Roman models in English theatre and probes the reasons for the eighteenth-century need for adaptation rather than translation of *Medea*. According to Hall, this 'plastic surgery' marginalized the part of Medea's story which was unacceptable and its influence persisted into the next century. She argues that not until the twentieth century could the full force of the killing of the children be stomached (which, if true, would in turn raise questions about the late twentieth century's marginalization of the themes of divinity and sorcery in the play). Macintosh's essay examines representation of Medea on the nineteenth-century burlesque stage, showing how this performance tradition functioned as a relatively radical forum for serious debates, including those on the nature of motherhood and infanticide. In this respect Medea became a prototype for the 'new woman' of the 1890s.

The next group of essays examines the rôle of other genres and media in constructing Medea. Margaret Reynolds discusses the gendering of images of Medea in painting, lithographs, photography, and performance. Marianne McDonald relates operatic representations of Medea to broader political and social discourses, but also argues that in the twentieth century representation is shaped by developments in opera itself. This essay can be profitably read alongside that of Ian Christie. He suggests that the reason Medea was avoided in film was because the theme was too shocking for melodrama and not easily accommodated by filmic conventions of representing violence. The study of genre is complemented by two essays focusing on national traditions in theatre. Platon Mavromoustakos shows how the evolution of Greek theatre practice was influenced by debate on purist and demotic forms of modern Greek, and also provided a battle ground in the struggle for dominance between the star actor and the dominant director. Eva Stehlíková examines the specific context of modern Czech theatre, seeing its rôle as one of replacement for a missing political structure. She raises vital issues about the way in which revivals and translations create new concepts of classical theatre, and about how audiences identify with the performance text and relate it to their own concerns.

Different kinds of cultural comparisons are made in the essays by Mae Smethurst and Olga Taxidou. In her discussion of how Ninagawa made Greek tragedy popular in Japan, Smethurst discusses the contribution of kabuki and bunraku conventions, emphasizes the importance of cultural difference and exchange within Asia as well as between Japan and the West, and points out that some 'western' aspects of Greek drama have been long assimilated into Japanese culture. Taxidou brings out the resonance of the themes of home and homelessness, colonization, and empire for the history of the Black Sea area, and discusses the affinities between the Greek and Georgian traditions of lament. The volume as a whole is well illustrated, although fuller captions could usefully have discussed problems about the interpretation of

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visual evidence. The book also lacks an essay examining in detail the textual relationship between the ancient plays and modern realizations in performance.

This is an important collection, not only as a document in the history of scholarship but also because it touches on themes which demand further exploration. These include cross-cultural performance as a challenge to previous appropriations, the relationship between the spoken and visual languages of performance, and the potential for dialogue between academics and theatre practitioners. In 2001 subsequent conferences (*Agamemnon* in Oxford, *Electra* in Cambridge) began to address some of these issues, while the special Theatralia issue of *Eirene* (XXXVII) has published additional material on Greek drama in Eastern Europe and continued the debate about the rôle of the audience. Fuller socio-economic analysis of the modern conditions of commissioning, production, and performance of ancient plays and adaptations is now needed; who is going to grasp that nettle?

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THE ASS IN PICTURES

M. ACOCELLA: L'Asino d'oro *nel Rinascimento. Dai volgarizzamenti alle raffigurazioni pittoriche*. Pp. 232, pls. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2001. Paper, L. 60,000,€30.99. ISBN: 88-8063-286-8.

'Depictam in tabula fugae praesentis imaginem meae domus atrio dedicabo. uisetur et in fabulis audietur doctorumque stilis rudis perpetuabitur historia: "Asino uectore uirgo fugiens captiuitatem" ' (Apul. *Met*. 6.29.2–3). Whether Charite had time to fulfil her promise before her tragic death we are not told. At all events, some fourteen centuries later, that scene, together with sixteen others selected from Lucius' adventures as an ass, was depicted by an artist now identified as one Vincenzo Tamagni in a hall at Rocca di San Secondo near Parma (pp. 140–2 and n. 278). (The 2001 *Blue Guide to Northern Italy* merely says of San Secondo 'frescoes by the Campi'.) This book tells the story of how those images came into being.

It is a long and complicated one. A.'s densely argued and richly informative monograph documents in detail the reception by writers and artists in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy of the ass-story as told both by Apuleius in the *Metamorphoses* and in the Λούκιος ἢ Ὄνος ascribed to Lucian. The first part of her book traces the interlocking authorial, textual, and editorial history of the vernacular versions of Apuleius by Matteo Maria Boiardo (*Apulegio*) and of ps.-Lucian by (it is argued) Niccolo Leoniceno (*Lucio*), this latter influenced by a (not wholly accurate) Latin version by Poggio (pp. 21–35). A. goes to some pains to document the life and activities of Leoniceno, who receives only two passing mentions from Sandys and none from Pökel (but see Erasmus, *Epp*. 541.55 and Allen ad loc.), and provides a critical edition of the *Lucio* in an appendix. Of particular interest is the total suppression by Boiardo of Book 11 of the *Metamorphoses*; evidently the wider public at whom his translation was aimed could not be expected to stomach Isis. In contrast, the learned readership for whom Beroaldus (on whom more below) composed his commentary were not expected to have problems with the thesis that many features of Christianity might derive from her cult (pp. 75–6).

In the second part of her book A. turns to the treatment of the ass-story by artists, in particular to the complex history, in which Raphael and Giulio Romano both play a part, of the genesis of the San Secondo frescoes. This is art-historical territory, on

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