Painter's cup showing Achilles tending the wounded Patroclus is a well-known piece does not weaken Junker's approach: his knack throughout the book is to make us look again, and consider questions of interpretation not in the light of textual references but of visual comparanda. A consideration of 'Method' does not come until Chapter 5: by then, I suspect, he will already have converted some sceptics by the succession of eloquent examples. Eloquent, that is, so long as we buy the idea that one work of art derives primarily from another; and that ancient viewers shared our capacity for imaginative cross-referencing. Did the original owner of the Barberini Faun (third century BC) know about a visual tradition on Athenian painted pottery (fifth century BC) for representing satyrs approaching sleeping Maenads? If so, that would help interpretation – but it cannot be assumed…. Students of Greek art may feel that life is too short to worry whether, in their effort of interpretation, they get caught in the 'hermeneutic spiral' (good) or the 'hermeneutic circle' (bad). But, even at the introductory level, it now seems obligatory to be initiated in such theoretical issues – to judge from Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell's *Looking at Greek Art*.[80] Billed as a 'practical guide to the methods for approaching, analysing, and contextualizing an unfamiliar piece of Greek art' (blurb), it assumes readers will experience monuments and artefacts in various media at first-hand – the first chapter is devoted to thoughts about modern display and presentation – and then adjourn to academia for seminars, not so much about the objects *per se* but rather about how we can begin to understand them. A glance at the index is significant enough – 'Eagleton, T. …Eco, U. …ekphrasis… emic…emulation…ethnocentrism…', etc. – while a glossary covers very few Graeco-Latin terms, and many polysyllabic neologisms ('commodity candidacy', 'syntagmatic functions'). Initiates of the International Baccalaureate system may recognize here the 'theory of knowledge' (TOK) element deemed germane to secondary education; a part of me supposes that Socrates would give his blessing to this intellectual discipline. Whether it is right to approach an 'unfamiliar' work of art with such priming is more open to question: some teachers, I suspect, will prefer their protégés to know how an Athenian black-figure vase was made and used, before analysing its capacity for 'symbolic subjugation'. If nothing else, however, the spirit of Karl Marx might find it droll that, whereas his manifesto for political revolution is currently more or less moribund, his influence upon art historians and archaeologists is rather lively.

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General

One of the best things about blogs (we have always assumed) is that one reads them when they are still fresh and topical. The idea of publishing a book of 'blogging highlights' seems to defeat the object of the exercise: who wants to read an old blog, when one hasn't even caught up with the most recent instalment? It was therefore

[80] *Looking at Greek Art*. By Mark D. Stansbury-O'Donnell. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv + 251. 82 b/w illustrations. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-0-521-11038-9; paperback £19.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-12557-4.

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with some anxiety that we picked up *All in a Don's Day. A Further Selection from Her Classic Blog* by Mary Beard[81] – never having read her 'live' blog (now over six years old), nor seen the first volume of collected blogs: *It's a Don's Life*. However, dipping in to short instalments on topics such as 'Do We Need Bad Teachers?', 'Ten Latin Quotes for the Underground', and 'Why Bother to Visit the Colosseum', it quickly becomes obvious why Mary Beard's blog has been such a great success: here is copy that is both witty and intellectually engaging. The strength of the blog/book lies in the fact that this is not some self-congratulatory 'pedant's corner' for Classicists (although some of those who have added comments clearly come from this neck of the woods) but an entertaining – and, truth be told, highly addictive – meditation on why Classics still matters in the twenty-first century. This book might not necessarily make one into a convert to the blogosphere, but it ought to remove any lingering suspicions that Classics and modern technology do not mix. As Beard herself says, 'what really matters is not the medium of the writing – but whether the writer has got anything to say' (266). So much for the medium of writing; what about the medium of drawing? Or comics, to be more precise, such as 'Action Philosophers', 'Age of Bronze', 'Apollo's Song', '300', and 'The Sandman'? *Classics and Comics* (edited by George Kovacs and C. W. Marshall) assesses the interaction between the 'low culture' genre of comic books and the classical world.[82] The premise of this volume of collected essays is that 'in terms of the history of reception of the ancient world, comics represent an important and under-explored corpus of material that reflects popular conceptions of antiquity' (vii). The book covers a wide range of comic-book sources from Europe, North America, and Japan ('manga'), which takes us from P.Oxy.XXII 2331 (mid-third century CE) right up to the present day. It is divided into four parts: 'Seeing the Past through Sequential Art'; 'Gods and Superheroes'; 'Drawing (on) History'; and 'The Desires of Troy'. It is hard not to be intrigued by this latest contribution to the ever-expanding field of Classical Reception studies. We are, after all, dealing with a literary genre with an astonishing worldwide audience. Individual chapters provide stimulating discussions, including, for example, 'Sequential Narrative in the Shield of Achilles' (Kyle. P. Johnson), which approaches Homeric ecphrasis through comic narrative techniques, and 'A Dream of Augustus: Neil Gaiman's Sandman and Comic Mythology' (Anise K. Strong). But the one chapter that really stole the show was 'Twenty-first Century Troy or How Do You Solve a Problem Like Iphigenia and Other Matters of Grave Import' by Eric Shanower – a discussion in (gloriously self-referential) comic-book form about the making of his ongoing graphic novel series *Age of Bronze* (including the only cartoon illustration of a Loeb volume that we have seen, and a glorious characterization of Classical pedantry: 'It's senseless to use the Greek "K" with the Roman "us" in Patroklus' [206]). If you are struggling to appreciate the sophisticated intersection between comics and Classics, or have limited time, just read this 'chapter'. Although the flow of companions, guides, and handbooks has begun to slacken, the excellent series of Oxford Handbooks has not quite run its course.

[81] *All in a Don's Day. A Further Selection from Her Classic Blog*. By Mary Beard. London, Profile Books, 2012. Pp. ix + 268. Paperback £8.99, ISBN: 978-1-846-68536-1.

[82] *Classics and Comics*. Edited by George Kovacs and C. W. Marshall. Classical Presences. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xiii + 265. Paperback £18.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-973418-4.

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The latest volume to be launched is *Greek and Roman Coinage*, edited by William E. Metcalf.[83] This book is designed to fill a gap in the market for a reference work on numismatics that is written by experts, but is easily accessible to the wider academic community and the interested lay reader. Its introduction and thirty-three following chapters cover everything you ever wanted to know about ancient coins and more – with a chronological span of over 1,500 years that takes us from the Archaic Greek electrum in the seventh century BCE to the pennies of King Offa in the late eighth century CE. In its presentation it is strictly chronological: Part I: 'Archaic and Classical Greek Coinage'; Part II: 'The Hellenistic World'; Part III: 'The Roman World'; 'Appendix 1. Marks of Value'; 'Appendix 2. Earliest Christian Symbols on Roman Coins'. Unusually for a volume of this kind, no attempt is made to introduce a thematic element on key themes such as portraiture, trade, economics, textual representations, the 'meaning' of money, and so forth. As one might expect, the book is well illustrated (with nearly 900 illustrations). However, given the fact that this is designed primarily as a reference work, the indices are rather disappointing. References are divided somewhat inconveniently into 'Persons', 'Mints and Places', 'Hoards and Finds', and 'General'. To find references to Knossos, for example, one has to flick through three of the four indices; at the same time, one will look in vain for any reference to the humble denarius or even Offa and his penny. The centrality of slavery to the ancient world continues to fascinate and disturb. *The Slave in Greece and Rome* by Jean Andreau and Raymond Descat, originally published in French in 2006, has now been released (manumitted?) in translation for the Anglophone market.[84] It is organized around two main themes: the 'real-life' experience of slavery and the prominent place occupied by slaves within economic and social structures. Its seven chapters take us from definitions of slavery (Chapter 1) to a discussion of the reactions of Constantine and the Church (Chapter 7). A distinctive feature of the book is the comparative approach taken to Greek and Roman material. Although clear distinctions are drawn between the practice of slavery in archaic Greece and early Rome (Chapter 2), it is continuity (the early influence of Greek culture on Rome, followed by the integration of the Hellenistic world into the *Imperium Romanum*) that is emphasized throughout. This is an accessible book, which offers a very good (and commendably concise) introduction to one of the most disturbing aspects of the civilizations of Greece and Rome. But, lest we think that slavery is simply an issue of historical relevance, as we are reminded in the introduction, 'it is widely estimated that worldwide some twenty million adults are still subjected to forms of statutory and "traditional" slavery' (3). As its title suggests, *The Cambridge World History of Slavery* is an altogether more ambitious affair.[85] Volume 1, edited by Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge covers 'The Ancient Mediterannean World' and is the first of four volumes that will bring the story of

[83] *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*. Edited by William E. Metcalf. Oxford Handbooks in Classics and Ancient History. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xviii + 688. 900 b/w photographs. Hardback £95, ISBN: 978-0-19-530574-6.

[84] *The Slave in Greece and Rome*. By Jean Andreau and Raymond Descat. Translated by Marion Leopold. Wisconsin Studies in Classics. Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. Pp. 198. Paperback £23.95, ISBN: 978-0-299-28374-2.

[85] *The Cambridge World History of Slavery. Volume 1. The Ancient Mediterranean World*. Edited by Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 620. 12 b/w illustrations. Hardback £110, ISBN: 978-0-521-84066-8.

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slavery up to the year 2000. The approach adopted is inevitably diachronic, taking us, in the course of twenty-two separate chapters, from the earliest evidence for slavery in the ancient Near East, through Helots and Roman slave revolts (including Spartacus, of course), to slavery in the late Roman world. At the same time, thematic elements are woven into the narrative, including chapters on slaves in Greek and Roman literary culture (by Peter Hunt and Sandra R. Joshell respectively). Ian Morris' chapter on 'Archaeology and Greek Slavery' argues that, although evidence for slavery is slender ('Slavery was a legal category, driven by notions of property; and despite considerable ingenuity, archaeologists cannot dig up property rights' [176]), a coalition of archaeological and written evidence can help us to move some way towards an 'archaeology of ancient slavery' (193). Michele George's chapter on 'Slavery and Roman Material Culture' offers a parallel account of the challenges of uncovering slavery in the light of 'relatively scant direct evidence' (385). This is an excellent volume offering in-depth coverage, and will be of great use to the specialist and non-specialist alike.

Thames and Hudson excel in the presentation of their books on the classical world to a wider audience. Unlike the claims of many titles to appeal to the 'interested general reader', one feels that this is a target audience that this publishing house takes very seriously. Illustrations tend to be copious and of a consistently high quality (no murky or grainy shots of something dark but significant in the distance, but high-resolution black-and-white and colour images and plans); the texts tend to be similarly crisp – intelligent and informative but without the tottering piles of footnotes. Hugh Bowden's *Mystery Cults in the Ancient World* is, in this respect, a model T&H publication.[86] The topic has a broad general appeal, it is well illustrated, and written in a clear and engaging style. The book is divided into ten chapters and provides coverage of 'all the major mystery cults of the ancient world, cult by cult' (inside-cover blurb) from the Eleusinian Mysteries to the cults of Isis and Mithras, via the Magna Mater and Dionysus. One of the appealing aspects is the way in which the book draws on examples from the modern world in order to illustrate both the continuities and the differences in the nature of ritual practice through time. Particularly striking is the image of the Virgin Mary being carried in procession through the streets of Seville during Holy Week (8) and the account (and photographs) of snake-handling that forms a part of Pentecostalist religious services in the southern Appalachians (217–21).

It is not a big step from the ancient mysteries to the ancient oracles. Richard Stoneman, well known for his work on Alexander the Great, turns his attentions now to a subject that would certainly have appealed to the great Macedonian leader: Greek oracles. *The Ancient Oracles. Making the Gods Speak* had its genesis in a series of lecture tours to the western coast of Turkey.[87] Although the book suffers a little from the quality of its illustrations (Collier's *Priestess of Delphi* comes out particularly poorly [32]), Stoneman keeps the general reader well entertained throughout this journey into one of the most distinctive but, at the same time, enigmatic aspects of ancient Greek religion. It is divided into fourteen chapters and, in addition to coverage of all the main oracular

[86] *Mystery Cults in the Ancient World*. By Hugh Bowden. London, Thames and Hudson, 2010. Pp. 256. 189 illustrations, 28 in colour. Hardback £28, ISBN: 978-0500-25164-5.

[87] *The Ancient Oracles. Making the Gods Speak*. By Richard Stoneman. New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press, 2011. Pp. xviii + 270. 30 b/w illustrations. Hardback, £25, ISBN: 978-0-300-14042-2.

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sites, it provides interesting accounts of healing/dream oracles (focusing on Amphiarus, Asclepius, and Sarapis), Christian responses to the 'pagan' oracles, and the functioning of Greek lot oracles. A tomb at Olympos, for example, was inscribed with a series of twenty-four do-it-yourself hexameter oracles: whoever visited the tomb with a set of knuckle-bone dice (*astralogoi*) would be able to gain enlightenment on the throw of the dice. Alpha reveals that: 'you will carry off everything successfully: the god says so'; sigma counsels caution: 'Phoebus says clearly: "Wait, friend"' (141), and so on. Just how was it that such oracles managed to endure for over a thousand years? As Stoneman reminds us, the oracles endured because they were successful. If you get the wrong answer, it is simply because you have been asking the wrong question: 'Failure never disproves the system. You may doubt the message, but never the god' (222). Alan Cameron is master of the *mega biblion*. The 534 pages of his *Callimachus and His Critics* (1995) looks like a modest warm-up act when set against his latest 878-page blockbuster, *The Last Pagans of Rome*.[88] It is not just a big book, but a great book. There are few scholars who have done more to open up the field of late antique literary studies and to transform our understanding of the period than Alan Cameron. This work is a remarkable testament to the abilities of a scholar whose first article (as recorded in the bibliography) was published almost fifty years ago, and whose ideas will without doubt continue to inform and direct debate for many years to come. The single most important aspect of this book is the detailed and convincing deconstruction of the idea of 'paganism' as a meaningful and coherent religious and social system that was marshalled and sustained in opposition to the growing force of Christianity. It might seem like something of a cheat to turn to the end of the conclusion without a careful consideration of the preceding 800 pages, but it seems reasonable to give Cameron the final word in the debunking of the 'last of the pagans' (look away now if you don't want to know how the story ends):

> It might seem that much of the argument of this book has been negative. There was no pagan revival in the West, no pagan party, no pagan literary circles, no pagan patronage of the classics, no pagan propaganda in art or literature, no pagans editing classical texts, above all no last pagan stand. But all these apparent negatives actually add up to a resounding positive. So many of the activities, artifacts, and enthusiasms that have been identified as hallmarks of an elaborate, concerted campaign to combat Christianity turn out to have been central elements in the life of cultivated Christians. This is the one area in which paganism (defined as the Roman tradition, Rome's glorious past) continued to exercise real power and influence on men's minds. Despite the best attempts of Augustine and other rigorists, the Roman literary tradition played a vital and continuing role in shaping the thought-world of Christians, both at the time and in the centuries to come. (801)

In recent years we have become increasingly aware of the destructive effect that humankind has had, and continues to have, on the natural world. Global warming may once have been considered as a joke, but climate change, and the experience of extreme and unpredictable weather patterns, has clearly raised our consciousness about the relationship between humans and their physical environment. In *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome* (an expanded and translated

[88] *The Last Pagans of Rome*. By Alan Cameron. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 878. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-19-974727-6.

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version of his 2009 *Umweltgeschichte der Antike*), Lukas Thommen investigates the ways in which the peoples of the ancient world engaged with, and exploited, the natural world around them.[89] As in the modern world, this relationship was shot through with ambiguity: both Greeks and Romans (on a greater scale and with increased efficiency) harnessed natural resources without much thought for the consequences; but at the same time they retained a deep respect for nature and the divinities who sustained it. Unlike the modern world, however, 'The Greeks and Romans…still lacked the technological wherewithal to inflict global damage on the environment. They thus never faced the necessity of fundamentally reconsidering their behaviour towards nature' (2). The book is divided into two halves, the first covering Greece and the second Rome – moving from 'Geographical Space', 'People and Nature', and 'Agriculture', through to 'Fire and Water', 'Earthquakes and Volcanoes', and 'Mining'. The Roman section concludes with two further sections: on 'Urban Problems and Rural Villa Construction' and 'The Environment in Roman Britain'. Thommen's emphasis on environmental history clearly opens up new ground. The volume contains much interesting material and provides a welcome encouragement to the reader to think a little differently about the ancient world. It is well illustrated, even if some of the illustrations – such as the map of 'Main mining areas and products in Roman Britain' (137) – bring back the alarming memory of long-forgotten geography textbooks; though much can be forgiven to a text that restores Russell Meiggs's *Trees and Timber in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (1982) to a position of prominence. No-one with an interest in languages could fail to be captivated by the linguistic story told by Joseph B. Solodow in *Latin Alive. The Survival of Latin in English and the Romance Languages*.[90] As the title suggests, this is a book about the influence of Latin on the English language ('not a sister to Latin, nor even a second cousin' [1]) and its gradual evolution into French, Spanish, and Italian. It is divided into four main parts: 'Latin', 'The Romance Vocabulary', 'Proto-Romance, or What the Languages Share', and 'Earliest Texts and Future Directions, or Where the Languages Diverge'. The story is detailed and highly technical in places (we encounter sections on 'Voiceless Plosives', 'Palatalization', and the 'Analytic Passive', for example) but not remotely off-putting – the back-cover blurb is quite right to state that *Latin Alive* offers 'a gripping narrative of language change'. One of the appealing features of the book is that it is crammed with fantastic word facts and etymologies that will never leave you without something to say in awkward moments when conversations about the weather have run their course: 'laundry' turns out to be derived from the gerundive *lavanda* (101); the use of 'nett' (as opposed to 'gross') reaches English from the Latin *nitidum* ('bright') via the French *net* ('clean') (135). And finally, to

[89] *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome*. By Lukas Thommen. Translated by Philip Hill. Key Themes in Ancient History. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xi + 186. 25 b/w illustrations, 2 maps. Hardback £45, ISBN: 978-1-107-00216-6; paperback £17.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-17465-7.

[90] *Latin Alive. The Survival of Latin in English and the Romance Languages*. By Joseph B. Solodow. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xii + 356. 7 maps. Hardback £58, ISBN: 978-0-521-51575-7; paperback £16.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-73418-9.

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end with a teaser: how on earth is the Latin *ambo* ('both') related to the English word 'bust'? (Answer on 61.)

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