believe that this moving, even disturbing book will sell, and so it should; but not for Christmas.

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Art and Archaeology

The editors of *Classical Archaeology*[1] report that a Google enquiry into 'classical archaeology' will yield something like six million links: an indication, they say, of 'an unquestionable level of general interest in and awareness of classical archaeology'. Some of this general interest, as they proceed to point out, must be due to the popularization of Classical history through novels, films, and television documentaries: at least, there are ways in which the material culture of ancient Greece and Rome engages public curiosity beyond university lecture rooms and crowded school curricula. But part of the vitality of the subject must lie in its capacity to evolve: to adapt and change to such an extent that the very canonical implications of the term 'Classical' are jettisoned, in the face of dogmatic relativism. So, in a series of scholarly surveys encompassing the archaeologies of Mesoamerica, Oceania, the Middle East, and Asia, no absolute claims may be made for the value of studying the monuments of Periklean Athens or the aqueducts of the Roman Empire. The front cover of this volume accordingly features a stumpy terracotta figurine that could have been made almost anywhere in the world during the last ten thousand years. (In fact, it comes from Boeotia, an area sometimes put in the category of 'the third Greece': that is, populous but underdeveloped, and generally marginal to the eventful narratives of the ancient historians). This is Classical archaeology self-consciously on its best behaviour: although some of its contributors are not primarily field archaeologists, all duly subscribe to the editorial ethos of polite dissociation from any kinship with the past practice of the discipline – flawed as it was by dilettantism, connoisseurship, treasure-hunting, obsession with texts, and faith in the ennobling glories of 'Classsical civilization'. No names of Classical painters, therefore, must appear in the index; if the Parthenon must be mentioned, let it be as anything but a 'work of art'; and the scholar best qualified to discuss the image of Alexander should be a specialist in the Aegean Bronze Age. An *imprimatur* from Ian Morris judiciously recommends the book as 'an excellent introduction to how Greek and Roman archaeology has changed in the last twenty years'. But one cannot help feeling that something of the enchantment of the subject has been lost in this revisionist project. After all, when J. D. Beazley expressed his 'connoisseur'-like admiration for the vase-painter Exekias, he was not trying to mislead us into thinking that Exekias was some celebrity artist of sixth-century Athens; rather, he was sharing an instinctive admiration for what survives to us of the work of this otherwise obscure individual ('You cannot draw better; you can only draw differently'). Likewise we adore the horse-heads from the Parthenon because they are marvels of the sculptor's art, incomparably capturing a quintessence of horsiness. All such aesthetic regard has been purged here: this is a handbook that delivers first-rate accounts of the agricultural landscape in Greek and Roman territory (by Sue Alcock and Nicola Terrenato respectively) – but has nothing

[1] *Classical Archaeology*. Edited by Susan E. Alcock and Robin Osborne. Blackwell Studies in Global Archaeology. Oxford, 2007. Pp. xiii + 447. Hardback £60; paperback £19.99.

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to say about the invention of landscape painting during the late first century BC (there is precisely one paragraph on all Roman wall-painting). It is salutary of course to pursue Classical archaeology 'beyond the Acropolis'. But the Acropolis is still there. As is the most-visited site of all Classical sites: Pompeii, where two and a half million people are reckoned to make the touristic pilgrimage in a regular year. 'The buried cities of Vesuvius form the longest continuously excavated archaeological zone in the world – an honour they can never lose, and a burden they can never shift.' This truth, embedded among the many chapters of *The World of Pompeii*,[2] not only explains why there is no pause in the production of books about Pompeii and Herculaneum, but also accounts for why Pompeii alone constitutes a *cosmos*, whose academic exploration can belong to a series of titles including *The Greek World*, *The Biblical World*, etc. Here, thirty-nine authors combine to provide an overview of the site: from its earliest formation in sixth-century Campania (and its rediscovery in the age of Bourbon rule) to its organization at the time of the AD 79 eruption. Wallace-Hadrill on domestic architecture, Jashemski on gardens, Clarke on mosaics, De Caro on early cults – the international list is distinguished and capable, and the result a comprehensive if monotonal handbook. For readability, and colour reproductions, it remains hard to improve upon the folio-size volume on Pompeii edited by Filippo Coarelli – made available in English by the Riverside Book Company in 2002 – but those in search of sound scholarship and glossy illustrations are now offered Joanne Berry's *The Complete Pompeii*.[3] As Goethe famously observed, of all the world's disasters, there is none that has given so much pleasure to posterity as Pompeii – an observation made back in 1787 – and to the instinct for gawping at a terrible event we must add the modern fetish for prying into other people's houses and 'lifestyles'. Berry rightly cautions us not to consider Pompeii as a town 'frozen in time': many of the ancient inhabitants had time to take flight before the volcano's full bombardment, much organic matter perished, and early excavations of the site were not scientifically scrupulous. Yet there is no denying the gratification of itemizing minutiae, and *seeing* the place as it once was: so this book, with its generous spread of illustrations, including graphic reconstructions of structures and townscapes, should justify its place in any school or university library. What can literally be 'read' from the walls of Pompeii? An essay (by Bettina Bergmann) on the verbal messages painted on walls of the House of the Epigrams in the city's Insula V is one of many lively contributions to a symposium considering *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World*.[4] Pompeii, of course, was, in Roman terms, a 'provincial' place, yet a place where plenty of people, it seems, aspired to familiarity with the works of not only Virgil but also Homer: literary allusions weave with images to suggest a system of conversational cues for householders and their guests. What, however, are we to make of an assured Virgilian reference done in Ovidian style on a mosaic in the dining room of a villa in Kent? True, this belongs to a later period (the mid-fourth century AD), by which time Virgil and Ovid were well established as 'Classic' authors for

[2] *The World of Pompeii*. Edited by John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss. Routledge Worlds. London, Routledge, 2007. Pp. xxxv + 662. Hardback £135.

[3] *The Complete Pompeii*. By Joanne Berry. London, Thames and Hudson, 2007. Pp. 256. Hardback £24.95.

[4] *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World*. Edited by Zahra Newby and Ruth Leader-Newby. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xvii + 303. Hardback £65.

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study by anyone subject to 'Roman' schooling. Still, the notion of Romano-British villa-owners playing the same cultural 'games' as their counterparts in Campania makes a nice complement to Latin satire about Britons in togas – and attests to the extent of visual–verbal interplay throughout the Classical world. Too often, in the history of study, the ancient juxtaposition of words and images has been effectively dissected, because 'art historians' have looked at the images, leaving 'epigraphers' to take care of the inscriptions. The various contributors to this volume demonstrate conclusively that no such categorical separation was practised by ancient viewers – although how many of them were literate is, as ever, a moot point. This review began with notice of a book whose message and layout implicitly repudiate any celebration of the 'masterpieces' of Classical art. So it is fair to conclude by drawing attention to a pair of new books in which such celebration is shamelessly enjoyed. Both are by Ian Jenkins, and both rest on his authority as a long-serving curator at the British Museum. *The Parthenon Sculptures in the British Museum*[5] is primarily a photographic portfolio and, as such, not a novelty: however, it is a book well worth acquiring even by those familiar with the subject, because these images do not only convey the vigour and delicacy of the sculpture, but also isolate details that a viewer in the Duveen Gallery might forgivably overlook. Close-ups and peculiar angles reveal aspects of gesture and momentum otherwise submerged in the monumental scheme; reveal, too, certain touches of technical 'shorthand' – such as the roughly etched eyes of some horses on the south side of the Frieze – that may well have been completed by paintwork, originally, but whose effect now is merely to emphasize the general consistency of technical excellence. You can carve differently, but not better, than this. Readers requiring further scholarly analysis of the Parthenon sculptures, along with commentary on other important pieces in the British Museum, may prefer *Greek Architecture and its Sculpture*.[6] Beginning with an essay on what usually cannot be appreciated by a museum visitor – that is, the sacred structural context of Greek temple sculptures – Jenkins guides the reader through Bloomsbury's treasures, beginning with the few tantalizing fragments from the Artemision at Ephesus and ending with even fewer fragments from the Temple of Athena Polias at Priene. In between are concise discussions of the fifth-century monuments of the Athenian Akropolis, the temple of Apollo at Bassae, the Lycian tombs (and 'Nereid Monument'), and the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus. Modern problems of interpretation and reconstruction are not shirked – though in the case of the Parthenon Frieze they are rather simplified – but the tone of scholarship, and the care taken over 'production values' by the publishers, assume that we have cause, aesthetically, to stand in awe of these antique 'prayers in stone'. And that can be a refreshing assumption to make.

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[5] *The Parthenon Sculptures in the British Museum*. By Ian Jenkins, with photographs by Ivor Kerslake and Dudley Hubbard. London, British Museum Press, 2007. Pp. 144. Hardback £19.99.

[6] *Greek Architecture and its Sculpture in the British Museum*. By Ian Jenkins. London, British Museum Press, 2006. Pp. 271. Hardback £25.

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