his private life, and more. The book closes with a survey of M.'s fortune in the twentieth century.

All fields receive well-balanced attention. In each case the context, whether political, historical, religious-confessional, or other, is made clear. Many connective lines become visible: for instance, M.'s liberal political views and his indefatigable pursuit of scientific and other achievements are rooted in his Protestant background; knowledge of M.'s liberal position is essential to understanding many views expressed in his writings on ancient history; his decision to become a law student had practical reasons, but the then-current debate between rivalling scientific tendencies in law had political implications which left their impression on M.; his years at the Archaeological Institute in Rome (1845–7) were decisive not only in turning him from a lawyer to a historian, but also in teaching him what he would later on practise with unprecedented mastery: the organization of broad international cooperations and the systematic publication of large amounts of material (the importance of the Roman Institute in many nineteenth-century scholars' *vitae* cannot be overestimated: compare, for example, its influence on Wilamowitz and Kaibel, perceptible in their letters currently being edited by W. M. Calder III, M. Dubischar, and S. Heilen). In R.'s presentation, the complexity of M.'s life and work becomes more easily accessible than it was before. This is the result of a thoughtful choice of leading questions before and while navigating through the immense archival material. On the other hand, R. respects the limits imposed on our understanding of M. not only by the distance in time but also by the fact that M. had a deep aversion to revealing himself. In thousands of letters he says almost nothing about his inner feelings. R. proves well aware of this in giving Chapter 7.4 the modest title 'Instead of a Psycho-gram'.

R.'s book is altogether a thorough, comprehensive, and stimulating biography that will interest a broad academic public. An English translation is much to be hoped for.

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THE BOSTON FAKE GODDESS?

K. Lapatin: *Mysteries of the Snake Goddess. Art, Desire, and the Forging of History.* Pp. xii + 274, ills. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 0-618-14475-7.

Anyone who is at all interested in the contribution of archaeology to our understanding of history will find this fascinating. It is basically the story of the Minoan gold and ivory statuette widely known as the 'Boston Snake Goddess', until recently the pride of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts's collection of antiquities, but it encompasses much wider issues. Beginning with the Goddess's acquisition by the museum in 1914, L. explores variant accounts of how the piece arrived in Boston, where it originally came from, and its relationship to other 'Minoan' artefacts. The book reads almost like a murder mystery, in the course of which we meet a host of interesting characters: untraceable Cretan emigrants, romantically inclined archaeologists, credulous collectors, dubious dealers, and accomplished forgers. L. tells the story of Sir Arthur Evans's discovery of Knossos and reconstruction of Minoan culture, a reconstruction based on genuine finds but strongly influenced by early-twentieth-century views about the ancient world. On the one hand, Minoan figurines were compared to classical Greek sculpture, and Crete hailed as the cradle of European civilization; on the other, Evans's discoveries were

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.2.481 Published online by Cambridge University Press

seized upon as tallying with Bachofen's ideas of matriarchy as an early stage through which all societies develop, a schema which was being applied to Greek religion by Evans's contemporaries Jane Harrison and James George Frazer. In L.'s account, the growing popularity of the idea of a prehistoric Mother Goddess combined with an enthusiastic reception for Evans's finds to create a ready audience for the 'Minoan' statuettes which appeared on the international art market in the 1920s and 1930s, many of them passing through the hands of the Parisian dealers Feuardent Frères. L. looks at the cases of a number of such statuettes, of 'goddesses' and 'boy-gods', not one of which has a respectable provenience, but which were accepted as genuine and bought for exorbitant prices by private collectors like Henry Walters in Baltimore and Evans himself, as well as curators at the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. In particular, Evans seems to have had a very soft spot for the ivory 'boy-god' he purchased from Feuardent sometime in the early 1920s, now in the Seattle Art Musem, which he came to regard as a 'companion piece' to the Boston Goddess, despite the complete absence of an archaeological context for either piece.

Evans's vision of Minoan culture was given material form by the work of the Swiss artists Émile Gilliéron and his homonymous son, who 'restored' the frescoes which are such an important part of the reconstruction of the palace at Knossos—'the Gilliérons were responsible, perhaps more than anyone other than the excavator himself, for the romantic vision of Minoan society evident on the site and promulgated in diverse publications' (p. 133). The degree to which the fresco restorations are reliant on the painters' imaginations has long been recognized, but the Gilliérons also played a significant rôle, via their thriving business, in making replicas of Bronze Age artefacts, first based on the Mycenaean finds of Schliemann and others, then on the 'Cretan antiquities' unearthed by Evans; these reproductions were bought by many museums, as being of excellent quality but more affordable and more easily available than the 'real thing'. The question is, did the Gilliérons ever try to pass off their copies as originals? L. finally traces the Boston Goddess herself back to Crete, where she seems to have been acquired by the American Richard Seager, a friend of Evans, from none other than the Gilliérons. Both the lack of an authentic find-context and the rather shady dealings hinted at in the correspondence surrounding her acquisition and subsequent sale, via intermediaries, to Boston MFA do strongly suggest that the Goddess is a fake. L. makes his case extremely persuasively, while being scrupulously fair throughout in explaining the limits of the evidence available. Extra life is added to L.'s already compelling tale by the 110 black-and-white illustrations, of the Minoan artefacts, their supposed proveniences, the cast of the drama, and some crucial pieces of correspondence. Appendices provide an A–Z of the *dramatis personae*, a catalogue of the unprovenanced Cretan statuettes discussed, and an inconclusive analytical report on the materials of which the Boston Goddess is made.

This should be compulsory reading for all students of ancient art and history, and not just those concerned with the Minoan period. While the subject matter is in any case attractive, L.'s masterly presentation makes the book unputdownable—I read it on the beach in Corfu, having had trouble wresting it from the grasp of my non-classicist companion, who was likewise riveted. In short, I would recommend the book wholeheartedly to anyone with the remotest interest in the ancient world, or history more generally. Not only does it raise issues of fundamental importance to our discipline, but, unlike many of the volumes which appear in these pages, *Mysteries of the Snake Goddess* is a thoroughly good read.

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.2.481 Published online by Cambridge University Press