tragedy reveal both the historicist need to perceive the foreignness of antiquity and the political choice to reject modernity and 'become Greek' by immersing oneself in the past.

Yet the move that broadened the scope of the discipline was also the move that dethroned classical study after the 1870s in both schools and universities. By stressing the distance between past and present, the new conception of history ultimately eroded the relevance of antiquity and presented the social sciences as an eminently more useful guide for modern concerns. The last two chapters present the development and results of this change. W. meticulously describes the marginalization of classical study in the curricula, the increasing interest in modern languages and literatures, as well as the growth of anti-classicist movements pronouncing the social uselessness of antiquity. While the ostensible outcome was the transformation of the classics into a specialized and predominantly élite discipline, the 'culture of classicism' had, simultaneously, a less obvious and, perhaps, more far-reaching effect. Classicists' renunciation of immediate social utility, as W. suggests, provided a new basis for the humanities that made it possible to criticize modern society, pursue knowledge for its own sake, and cultivate erudition as a path to personal development and responsible citizenship. Hence the formation of the humanities as a strong alternative to utilitarianism, after the last third of the nineteenth century, testifies to nothing less than a huge ideological victory for classics: the profound impact of classicism on the culture of modern American universities.

W.'s precise and imaginative work constitutes a valuable contribution to both intellectual history and the study of classical reception. A wide range of primary sources, including college curricula, lectures, journal articles, histories, grammars, and internal college correspondence, sustains the main thesis of the book. These texts not only bring to light a key moment in American history, but also raise some crucial questions about the current relevance of the ancient past, and the relationship between classical learning and political responsibility. What is the purpose of classical education? How can the study of ancient texts establish a counter-culture, a means of criticizing and opposing the dominant utilitarian and anti-intellectualist values of modern societies? Nineteenth-century scholars answered these questions by promoting an intriguing, yet profoundly ambivalent, alternative to commercial economy and industrialism. Their turn to antiquity substituted for social utility an individualist and profoundly idealist learning, whose aim at self-cultivation was strikingly incompatible with their affirmation of the need for political and social change. At the same time, however, their vision of citizenship and their ideal of 'educated Athens' have opened up new directions for classicists, and have provided us with a challenging model for contemporary critical and political thought.

University of Bristol ALEXANDRA LIANERI

THE LIFE OF MOMMSEN

S. REBENICH: *Theodor Mommsen. Eine Biographie*. Pp. 272, ills. Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 3-406-49295-9.

Theodor Mommsen, 1817–1903, is the towering figure among scholars of classical antiquity in the nineteenth century. In Germany today, ancient historians, classical philologists, archaeologists, and exponents of the neighbouring sciences are organized in the *Mommsen-Gesellschaft*. Thanks to the Nobel prize for literature,

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awarded to M. in 1902 for his *Roman History*, a broader public as well is still interested in him. In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of M.'s death, several books have already been published or will be during this year (for instance, the new edition of the letters between Mommsen and Wilamowitz by W. M. Calder III and R. Kirstein). Amidst these publications, Rebenich's biography is of central importance. It not only combines a masterly knowledge of the sources with clarity of form and comprehensive analysis, but also fills a serious gap.

There were several reasons for the erstwhile lack of a satisfactory biography of M. In his will, M. forbade the use of his *Nachlaß* for biographical purposes for thirty years. This made an immediate biography, written under the fresh impression of M.'s personality, impossible. After the waiting period, the 'Mommsen-committee' (founded by Ernst Mommsen and Wilamowitz) in 1934 commissioned the ancient historian L. Wickert to write M.'s biography. For a quarter of a century, and with a delay due to the war, Wickert took enormous care to collect documents (mostly letters) scattered all over Europe. His central source, the family archive, was destroyed in 1943. Eventually the first three volumes appeared (*Theodor Mommsen. Eine Biographie* [Frankfurt am Main, 1959, 1964, 1969]). They were a disappointment because Wickert had been unable to master the vast material presented on more than 1700 pages. And these volumes covered only the years 1817–58. A continuation along the same lines would have been senseless and impossible for the remaining, much more important, decades of M.'s life. Hence, Wickert's final volume (IV, 1980) was little more than the formal conclusion to a failed endeavour.

In the meantime, A. Heuß had published his *Theodor Mommsen und das 19. Jahrhundert* (Kiel, 1956, repr. Stuttgart, 1996), a milestone in the history of research on M. Unlike Wickert, he aimed at seeing M. in his historical environment. Yet Heuß did not have at his disposal the material later published by Wickert and, what is more important, he had no access to the archives in East Germany. This much weakened his account of M.'s rôle in the politics of science and scientific organization. Significantly, the late Heuß did not want this book to be reprinted.

The reunification of Germany in 1989 called for a new evaluation of M.'s life and work. Besides the historical change, a worldwide increasing interest in the history of classical scholarship favoured such an undertaking (many scholars' biographies, editions of their letters, and similar studies have been published over the last decades). R. devoted himself to this task. In 1997 his huge *Habilitationsschrift* appeared: *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack. Wissenschaft und Politik im Berlin des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, etc., 1997). Soon after, he published a revised and expanded version of Zangemeister's *Theodor Mommsen als Schriftsteller* (Hildesheim, 2000), the *Protokollbuch der Kirchenväter-Kommission der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, etc., 2000), and *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Theodor Mommsen und Friedrich Althoff* (forthcoming). With this preparation, R. was the man to write the still missing biography.

From the start, R.'s book attracts the reader through its lucid style, the absence of footnotes (there is an appendix with bibliographical references), and well-chosen photographs. In eight chapters that follow a loose chronological order, R. treats all aspects of M.'s life: his youth as a pastor's son (the father introduced him to the classical authors), his university time, his poetical and journalistic activities, his first professorship in Leipzig, his exile (after 1848) and return, his development into an inventor and manager of huge 'industrialized' research projects in the Berlin Academy, his eminently political character, his liberal opposition to Bismarck, antisemitism, etc.,

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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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