

DOWN FROM OLYMPUS

S. L. MARCHAND: *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970*. Pp. xxiv + 400, 35 ills. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996. Cased, \$39.50/£28. ISBN: 0-691-04393-0.

Eliza M. Butler's useful study *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* (Cambridge, 1935) is now more than sixty years old. As its subtitle indicated, it was concerned with the influence of Greek art and poetry over 'the great German writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries'. A larger part of the book dealt with 1750–1850, and it is only in the final chapter that we meet any later figures such as Schliemann, Nietzsche, and Stefan George. Footnotes and bibliography are few. It makes for pleasant reading on matters of refinement but has little to do with the socio-political background of the last two centuries.

M.'s book covers the same subject, goes further and deeper, and brings the social and political background into sharp focus. Footnotes abound, the bibliography runs to over twelve pages, and although 'the great German writers' are given due attention, the author's ambit is much wider. She does not limit herself to the great or to writers, she is interested in a much more comprehensive picture that shows the powerful grip that during the last two hundred years the philhellenic obsession has exerted over German literature, education, institutions, and politics. The result is a complex study of the ways in which the high promise of the late eighteenth-century image of classical Greece, with its romantic purity and revolutionary disdain for any Frenchified nonsense, came to be accepted as an ideal, which over succeeding generations became rigidly fixed and failed to live up to that initial promise, eventually serving morally vacuous ends. This account involves the author in a detailed and varied consideration of how the position of the Greeks on the aesthetic high ground sank down in response to political, national, and scientific developments. She shows how the social position of 'Graecophilia' in elite, aristocratic levels filtered down the *Gymnasien* of the day to middle-class German youths, and the ways in which the desire to preserve the interest in classical Greece was maintained in the face of its lessening popularity. As M. says, 'Over the course of a century and more, German philhellenism moved from left, to liberal, to right, and from the fetish of young outsiders to the credo of aged academicians' (p. 6).

That early, aesthetic attitude came face to face with the rise of scholarship, and even in Friedrich Wolf's day for some 'the Greeks spoke only to the expert philologist' (p. 23). The gap continued to widen. But whereas the literary-cum-philological caucus was not loath to welcome art (particularly classical sculpture) as a bedfellow, the increasingly historicist approach to art diminished Greek art's vaunted universality. However, Winckelmann's eighteenth-century model (neatly dubbed 'Platonic Pygmalionism', p. 15) became even less tenable with the advent of archaeology. The Olympia excavations did not provide the sculptures desiderated, but the Pergamum sculptures were more acceptable, even if belonging to a 'decadent' period, particularly when the successful transfer of the sculptures of the Great Altar from the site to Berlin gave Germany a much needed boost in its museum holdings. National esteem was at stake, though the final consequences of such acquisitiveness were not lost on the art critic Karl Scheffler, who after the First World War remarked that 'If the era of the Kaiserreich had lasted fifty years longer, if the war had come later and excavation had continued, we would surely have had to make room in the museum for an entire Greek

city' (p. 290 n. 7). 'Big archaeology', having escaped from the grip of philology, was vital for national self-representation; being state-funded, it had to answer imperialist demands and expectations.

The pre-eminent position of classical Greek language and literature was threatened by art and by archaeology, but at least they were products of the same Hellenic source. New finds and fresh angles of approach gave rise to greater concerns. From the prehistoric direction Schliemann, whatever we make of his methods and his propensity for embellishment, having begun his search with the intention of proving the truthfulness of Homer's epics, reduced the importance of the literary tradition and started to topple philological study from its Olympian throne. From two other directions the attack was more serious. 'Germandom' (Chapter 5) saw the local archaeologists unearthing the prehistory of the German state (whether *Germania romana* or *Germania libera* eventually came to mean little difference), whilst Orientalism (Chapter 6) signalled cultural and financial investment (private, public, and royal) in the Ottoman Empire and engaged the talents of such colourful characters as Robert Koldewey and Theodor Wiegand. M. shows clearly how the opposition between the classical Deutsches-Archaologisches Institut and its oriental rival Deutsche-Orient Gesellschaft mirrored *in parvo* the clash between the old guard of the National Liberals and the new nationalists.

M. has placed her main emphasis, as the subtitle indicates, on the rôle of archaeology in the descent from Olympus, and she makes brilliant use of the archival material in Germany, Greece, and elsewhere to which she was given access. She weaves these dry (and not so dry) memoranda and minutes into her larger tapestry. And although she stresses that her main aim is to make clear the ways in which institutions developed, and this she does superbly, she does not fail to present engaging vignettes of the protagonists. There is always something new she has to tell of academics such as Ernst Curtius, Karl Humann, Alexander Conze, Werner Jaeger, etc. Not all come away squeaky-clean; high-minded scholarship was not untouched by the taint of racial élitism.

For once, the 'advance praise' with which the dust-jackets of most books now come emblazoned is not overblown. This is an extremely well-written, massively detailed, and acutely perceptive treatment of a serious subject. It shows clearly that classicists (whether philologists, aesthetes, or archaeologists) must on occasion be called to account for the effects of their indoctrination of the young. The well-chosen illustrations mix people, places, and monuments, from Winckelmann in 1768 to the bombed out Pergamum museum in the 1940s, and help to highlight the descent of philhellenism over the last two hundred years.

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ANCIENT LANDSCAPES

G. SHIPLEY, J. SALMON (edd.): *Human Landscapes in Classical Antiquity: Environment and Culture*. (Leicester–Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society, 6.) Pp. xiv + 344, 30 figs. London and New York: Routledge, 1996. £50. ISBN: 0-415-10755-5.

This volume presents in twelve essays the results of the Leicester–Nottingham Ancient History Seminar (1991–3) on 'Nature Matters: Approaches to the Ecology