

owning the same kind of brooch and perhaps coming from the same area. That, however, is not the same as suggesting that the brooches were acquired with the intention to signify coded meanings about identity. It should also be noted that the very restricted distribution of the Wirral brooch presented in Fig 5.2 has been radically altered by the recent publication of Portable Antiquities Scheme finds (F. McIntosh, 'The Wirral Brooch', *ArchJ* 171 [2014], 111–50, illus. 7).

Chapter 3's discussion of Africans in Roman Britain is another fascinating account and it, along with the diasporas project, represents a useful antidote to any claims that the population of provincial Roman Britain was homogenous. One might wonder why Africans were chosen for discussion, rather than Spaniards, Greeks or Syrians. Of course, none of those groups were presented in the stylised and sometimes stereotypical fashion that Africans were. We might also acknowledge, as E. does, our own post-colonial concerns and their impact on what we research and how we emphasise it.

The challenges presented by this book are not born of any weaknesses in E.'s study, but rather the way in which identity is studied in archaeology. Identities are and were fluid, contingent, nested and in many cases immensely difficult to reconstruct. A personal example might serve to illustrate this. The reviewer has spent most of his adult life in northern Britain. He was, however, born in south-western England and feels a real sense of identity with that region. The isotopes in his bones might show that he grew up in the south west but would not reveal that he still, many years later, felt that connection. He almost never wears or uses something that would indicate he was born in Somerset. Yet when he dropped his daughter off at school in Northumberland recently he referred to her plimsolls as 'daps'. No one outside of the West Country would use this term, but he did not even realise that it was a dialect term, until it was pointed out to him that in Northumberland plimsolls are 'sand shoes', not 'daps'. How much of this could be recovered archaeologically? Very little. Indeed, we might interpret plimsolls as pretty homogenous footwear worn by all primary age school children and having very little to do with their geographical identity.

None of this should take away from the fact that E.'s book is an excellent and thought-provoking study. It displays a keen eye for detail and rigorous analysis and should be commended. Identity and the movement of people will certainly remain an important topic, given contemporary concerns and academia's need to be 'relevant' and have 'impact'. How we sort out the myriad identities that a person or community may have held in the past remains a challenge of the first order. E. has shown how some minority groups could be identified in Roman Britain and thus blazed a trail. There will undoubtedly be followers in her footsteps.

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THE *ODYSSEY*, IDENTITY AND MODERN CULTURE

GARDNER (H.), MURNAGHAN (S.) (edd.) *Odyssean Identities in Modern Cultures. The Journey Home*. Pp. xii + 337, ill. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2014. Cased, US\$79.95. ISBN: 978-0-8142-1248-6.

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The *Odyssey* is, for J. Peradotto (*Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narration in the Odyssey* [1990], pp. 53–8, 169), a 'centrifugal' poem, full of what the editors of this volume call: 'loose ends, unresolved tensions, competing values and incomplete closure'

(p. 3). The process of Odysseus' reintegration into life on Ithaca, its effect on his family and the temporary status of this situation, signalled by Tiresias' prophecy of a second voyage in *Od.* 11.119–37, all suggest the fragility, if not impossibility, of the long-desired *nostos* of the protagonist. G. and M.'s rich and expansive volume, a collection originating from a 2011 conference entitled '*Nostos: War, the Odyssey and Narratives of Return*' at the University of South Carolina, explores how post-1900 literature and visual media have responded to the uncertainties of homecoming and identity: whether directly interacting with the *Odyssey*, or juxtaposed with the ancient poem in a way which allows mutual reflection. Over the course of thirteen chapters, the contributors cover a range of North American and European media, including prose, drama, poetry, film, art and television – the commonality shared between them being that these works engage with what G. and M. describe as 'aspects of *nostos* that, in the Western tradition, are given their first and most influential expression in the *Odyssey*' (p. 3).

The four sections – 'Gender Roles, Reversed and Fragmented', 'War, *Nostos* and Personal Identity', '*Nostos* and the New World' and 'Post-Modern Returns to the Self' – are structured in a way which allows independence of chapters, and of sections, but also an appropriate and relevant fluidity across the volume concerning three recurring themes of gender, place and identity as sites where Odyssean identities come under strain in the modern world. The returns of the featured Odyssean figures are sometimes goals of aspiration: for example, the allegorical tests of endurance in a selection of works by Charlotte Yonge embody a Christian life-course or a return to faith – dependent on traditional feminine values, and made more difficult by the absence of male figures (Schultze). More often, however, there is a sense of ambivalence concerning *nostos*, or *nostos* is conceived as a moment of jeopardy which brings uncertainties to the forefront. An articulate chapter by Pache, on Melissa Gibson's play *Current Nobody*, explores the inversion of the roles of Odysseus and Penelope, and how a superficially straightforward gender role swap reveals a fragmentation of identity caused by the inability to break fully with the traditional Odyssean narrative. The poetry of Yannis Ritsos and Gail Holst-Warhaft, as explored by Reuter, 'fleshes out' the hanging questions in the epic concerning Penelope's ambivalence – for Ritsos, constructing her despair around Odysseus' return rather than his absence, and for Holst-Warhaft, playing with the notion that Penelope needs fully to recognise Odysseus, and how Odysseus' return marks her own *nostos*, as outlined by the 'shipwrecked sailor' simile of *Odyssey* 23.233–40.

The construction of identity and the reconstruction of the past are the focus of the analyses offered by M., Boyd and Giannopoulou, who explore amnesia, either undesired or deliberate, as an obstruction to identity. Giannopoulou examines the constructed inaccessibility of Zachary Mason's fictional hypotext of *The Lost Books of the Odyssey*: the loss of Odysseus' memory and identity reflects the status of the book as a thing which can be corrupted or lost, but which is also liberating. *Mad Men*'s Don Draper (Boyd) deliberately conceals all the traces of his past that he can, and reinvents himself under his new name. The disorientation of Odyssean characters in the modern world is also signalled in the art of De Chirico and Rebecca West's novel *The Return of the Soldier* (M.), which rely on the reclamation of a physical space and the identity forged within, in tandem with the limitations of memory, to find a place in the modern world. Like West, Charles Fenwick's *Cold Mountain* (Burgess), Gwendolyn Brooks' *The Anniad* (Whelan-Stewart), Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (Flack) all use the setting of war for the trauma of rediscovering identity. The latter, in particular, is a fresh account of well-trodden ground, whilst Whelan-Stewart's exploration offers a valuable insight into how issues of race, gender and class intersect with the *Odyssey* in the post-war landscape of America.

Chapters which explore perspectives on *nostos* from characters other than those who have Odysseus or Penelope as their model prove to be some of the most dynamic of the volume, as it is here that the most novel arguments are made. Here home is a consistently ambivalent place: Purves's chapter on Sebald's *The Emigrants* offers an insightful and meaningfully balanced reading of the inability of characters in both the Homeric poem and Sebald to sleep in their normal place, either because of their own absence from home (in Sebald's case, as displaced persons), or in the absence of others (such as Laertes' refusal to sleep in the house in *Od.* 11.187–96). The acknowledgement of the instability of home as a concept also runs throughout Dougherty's chapter on Marilynne Robinson's *Homecoming*, which presents a third kind of person who is both Odyssean and Penelopean – who both goes and stays, in the full awareness of both the limitations of each form of living. Dougherty and Pache offer the only two contributions which consider return from the perspective of Telemachean characters – in the case of *Homecoming*, the two sisters who respond to the models provided by the older generation, and in Gibson's play, a daughter whose maturation offers a possible break from the cycle of ambivalence or regret experienced in other chapters by other returnees and those to whom they return.

The volume is ideally situated in a series entitled *Classical Memories/Modern Identities*, which aims to explore how the classical past has been moulded and appropriated to create 'a usable past and a livable present'. Whilst it is aimed at both classicists and students of modern culture, the majority of contributors are classicists (ten out of fourteen chapters). Still, the chapters are, on the whole, clearly written and appropriate for both readerships. Only Guo's chapter on returns in the Chinese story of Mulan might have benefited from some more explicit exposition of its relevance to thinking about the *Odyssey*, for the benefit of the intended readership. The variations of the Mulan legend, which involve her death, or total rejection of her male alter ego, illustrate the impossibility of return for a woman, who ought never have left in the first place. The editors justify the inclusion of the chapter, but readers who are using chapters in isolation may miss the point. Similarly, one contributor refers to translation page numbers, instead of line references, which would be more user-friendly.

The most notable achievement of this volume is that it makes a strong case for exploring what might only appear to be tangential receptions of the *Odyssey*: students will benefit greatly from being encouraged to read distant texts in parallel, and using each as a lens for the other. The familiar aspects of the Homeric poem are easy to recognise in broad strokes in a variety of media, but it is often difficult to articulate why our inclination to read these loose connections as Odyssean is significant. At its most successful, the volume provides some lucid examples of how reading the *Odyssey* through modern works can enable this articulation.

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RECEPTION OF MEDEA

WETMORE (K. J.) JR. *Black Medea. Adaptations for Modern Plays.* Pp. xii + 343. Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2013. Cased, US\$119.99. ISBN: 978-1-60497-865-0.
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The fascination with adaptations of classical dramas tends to ebb and flow with theatre artists and scholars as they look for new ways to establish a contemporary relevance to