

Empire, there is hardly any engagement with the wider trends in the field, and the account is still based on abstract polarities such as Greek versus Oriental.

KOSTAS VLASSOPOULOS

University of Crete, Greece

vlasop@uoc.gr

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Art and Archaeology

It's short and sweet this issue. In all, there are ten books to survey – tackled here in order of date received.

My first title in fact comprises two independent books. Within a section dedicated to Graeco-Roman art and archaeology, the subject may come as something of a surprise: the case study is not 'Greek' or 'Roman', nor does it derive from the extended Mediterranean. Rather, *From Memory to Marble* analyses the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, inaugurated in 1949. Elizabeth Rankin and Rolf Michael Schneider have delivered a pair of volumes almost as monumental as the installation they describe, the first examining the context, origin, and legacy of the building's frieze,¹ the second cataloguing its twenty-seven scenes.² One of the many remarkable aspects of these two books is that both have been made available as free downloads. But what really stands out in the analysis is the 'unconditional collaboration' (5) between an art historian and a classical archaeologist: on the one hand, the project showcases how a broader art-historical training can enrich the traditional sorts of questions posed by classical archaeology, especially when it comes to issues of pictorial narrative; on the other, it demonstrates what classical archaeological formalism can offer to contemporary art history, and indeed larger debates about cultural history and contemporary identity politics. The result will be essential reading for anyone concerned with the legacy of classical ideas and imagery in South Africa.

A second volume launches us squarely back into the classical world – or more properly into the 'late antiquity' of its title.³ Importantly, the book is also remarkable for its breadth of geographical reference, exploring the relationship between art and religion across Europe and Asia during the first millennium BC. Edited by Jaś Elsner, the anthology is the latest title to grow from the Leverhulme-sponsored 'Empires of Faith' project, familiar to many through the associated exhibition on *Imagining the Divine* at the Ashmolean Museum in 2017–18.⁴ There are fourteen chapters in all,

¹ *From Memory to Marble. The Historical Frieze of the Voortrekker Monument. Part I: The Frieze.* By Elizabeth Rankin and Rolf Michael Schneider. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020. Pp. xiv + 508. 382 colour illustrations. Hardback £136.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-061522-7.

² *From Memory to Marble. The Historical Frieze of the Voortrekker Monument. Part II: The Scenes.* By Elizabeth Rankin and Rolf Michael Schneider. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020. Pp. xvi + 646. 400 colour illustrations. Hardback £136.50, ISBN: 978-3-11-061524-1.

³ *Empires of Faith in Late Antiquity. Histories of Art and Religion from India to Ireland.* Edited by Jaś Elsner. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xvi + 515. B/w illustrations, 16 colour plates. Hardback £105, ISBN: 978-1-108-56446-5.

⁴ For the exhibition catalogue, see J. Elsner, S. Lenk, *et al.*, *Imagining the Divine. Art and the Rise of World Religions* (Oxford, 2017); see also the companion collection of essays in J. Elsner and

each sharing a concern with the ‘histories of modern ideological self-construction’ (23) – an ‘interrogation of some of the more problematic restraining anchors that have been accumulated over the long history of the study of art and religion in the period of late antiquity’ (1–2). As the editor explains in his provocative introduction, three major aspects have constrained the study of art in late antiquity: religious, political, and evidentiary. In the chapters that follow, contributors take on each ‘anchor’ in turn. Predictably, one particular highlight for this reviewer comes in Stefanie Lenk’s analysis of a ‘Protestant Theology of Art’ through the lens of Ferdinand Piper’s *Monumentale Theologie* (1867), brilliantly turning to the nineteenth-century historiography in order to demonstrate how ‘the academic disciplines of Protestant theology and art history have never been fully reconciled’ (185).

The extended Mediterranean leads neatly on to my third title: a wide-ranging monograph on the Roman reception of Egyptian objects in the first centuries BC and AD.⁵ Pointing to both the quantity and quality of Egyptian imports displayed in Roman settings, Stephanie Pearson makes an impassioned case for the functioning of such objects as ‘highly valued, aesthetically pleasing works of art... in a way that has not yet been fully recognized by scholarship’ (196–7): ‘the Romans prized Egyptian art because it was art, and the Romans were art collectors’ (4). As with Elsner’s edited book, the history of scholarship proves fundamental to her argument. As Pearson explains in the first part of her book, her approach entails challenging ‘several entrenched trends’ in the historiography of Egyptian art (8), especially during the twentieth century (one might go further – thinking, for example, of the legacy of Winckelmann, not to mention Hegel). No less importantly, Pearson explains why we may need to rethink the Roman sacral connotations of Egyptian sculpture in particular – how statues ‘evoked a divine realm, in addition to being beautiful artworks’: ‘They conjured up the religiosity of an old and esteemed culture through its artistic tradition, for the purpose of gilding the Roman experience’ (160). For some, I suspect, what will be most refreshing here is the refusal to be sidetracked by questions about the applicability of post-Enlightenment frameworks of ‘art’ to classical antiquity (a major debate over the last decade).⁶ For others, what will likely appeal is the engaging writing style and short, reader-friendly endnotes. As we have come to expect from De Gruyter’s ICON series, the integrated colour images and design also do justice to the author’s claims about ‘outstanding craftsmanship and beauty’ (5).

My fourth and fifth titles form a diptych, each concerned with ideas about ‘decoration’ in the Roman world: on the one hand, a major monograph on the decorative principles of Pompeian domestic houses;⁷ on the other, an edited volume derived from a conference in Kiel in 2019 that ‘brought together a group of international scholars who sought to address

R. Wood (eds.), *Imagining the Divine. Art in Religions of Late Antiquity across Eurasia* (London, 2021).

⁵ *The Triumph and Trade of Egyptian Objects in Rome. Collecting Art in the Ancient Mediterranean*. By Stephanie Pearson. Image and Context 20. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. viii + 264. 63 b/w illustrations, 35 colour illustrations. Hardback £91, ISBN: 978-3-11-070040-4.

⁶ Fundamental is J. Tanner, *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece. Religion, Society and Artistic Rationalisation* (Cambridge, 2006).

⁷ *Decor-Räume in Pompejanischen Stadthäusern. Ausstattungsstrategien und Rezeptionsformen*. By Annette Haug. Decorative Principles in Late Republican and Early Imperial Italy 1. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020. Pp. x + 620. 427 colour illustrations. Hardback £118, ISBN: 978-3-11-069642-4.

a range of important, if somewhat overlooked, topics related to various forms of decorative media' (v).⁸ The two books are descended from an ERC-funded project managed under the auspices of Annette Haug ('DECOR: Decorative Principles in Late Republican and Early Imperial Italy').⁹ They also launch a new series by De Gruyter, with both volumes published as 'open-access' resources.

The whole category of ancient 'decoration' – like that of 'cosmetic' ornamentation, ultimately associated with grander Greek ideas about the *kosmos* – has generated a formidable bibliography in recent years.¹⁰ Indeed, Haug herself has in many ways led the vanguard, not least through her earlier work on Late Geometric Attic pottery and the beginnings of figurative imagery.¹¹ While the focus here is squarely on the Roman world, this larger critical backdrop looms large in both volumes. To deal first with the monograph, Haug offers a thorough analysis of how Pompeian domestic painterly 'decoration' evolved between the end of the second century BC and the early Imperial period. The book is organized around four sections: in good German tradition, the first deals with the methodological backdrop ('Forschungsoptionen zur Analyse decorativer Prinzipien'), while parts 2–4 proceed chronologically, from the First to Third Pompeian styles, with chapters structured around particular case studies. Most engaging is the fourth section, which adopts a more diachronic approach to what the author labels 'Decoscapes' (see 11–12), along with their spatial and social contexts. While Haug makes some brief attempts to connect her project with a broader art-historical backdrop (e.g. 12–16), the book ultimately falls back on a familiar Hölscherian framework of 'Form', 'Inhalt', and 'Kommunikation'. For many, I suspect, the result will be of importance as much for its thorough (and beautifully illustrated) presentation of material as for its analytical frame.

The edited volume is a shorter affair, this time tackling Roman 'principles of decoration' at large: eleven English-language chapters address 'the relationship between the built environment, decorative media and human action' (v). Anglophone audiences will be grateful for Haug's brief introduction to the volume, which attempts to lay out a structural approach to Roman 'principles of *decor*' – effectively providing an English-language overview of some of the key take-homes from her monograph (see 1 n. 1). That said, individual chapters also have much to contribute: stand-out discussions include Francesco de Angelis' analysis of the ritual 'framing' of the imagery in the Forum of Augustus, and Johannes Lipps's evaluation of the Casa di Augusto on

⁸ *Principles of Decoration in the Roman World*. Edited by Annette Haug and M. Taylor Lauritsen. Decorative Principles in Late Republican and Early Imperial Italy 2. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. vii + 194. 95 b/w illustrations, 21 colour illustrations. Hardback £109, ISBN: 978-3-11-073213-9.

⁹ A third title is forthcoming: A. Haug, A. Hielscher, and M. T. Lauritsen (eds.), *Materiality in Roman Art and Architecture. Aesthetics, Semantics and Function* (Berlin, 2022).

¹⁰ See e.g. T. Hölscher, 'Architectural Sculpture: Messages? Programs? Towards Rehabilitating the Notion of "Decoration"', in P. Schultz and R. von den Hoff (eds.), *Structure, Image, Ornament. Architectural Sculpture in the Greek World* (Oxford, 2009), 54–67; C. Marconi, 'Kosmos: The Imagery of the Greek Temple', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 45 (2004), 211–24; M. J. Squire and N. Dietrich (eds.), *Ornament and Figure in Graeco-Roman Art. Rethinking Visual Ontologies in Classical Antiquity* (Berlin, 2018); N. Barham, 'Theorizing Image and Abstraction in Ancient Rome: The Case of the Villa Farnesina', *Art History* 44 (2021), 164–85.

¹¹ A. Haug, *Bild und Ornament im frühen Athen* (Regensburg, 2015). On this topic, we can now look forward to N. Arrington, *Athens at the Margins. Pottery and People in the Early Mediterranean World* (Princeton, NJ, 2021).

the Palatine, focused on its stuccoed ceiling ('Of all ancient architectural decoration, we know the least about ceilings', 91).

The Vesuvian sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum lead to my sixth title.¹² Once again, the book derives from a larger collaborative project, this time at Heidelberg (supported by the DFG), and dedicated to 'Materiale Textkulturen'. As with the previous two volumes, De Gruyter has also made the book available as an 'open-access' resource. Roman practices of epigraphy are the subject: Fanny Opdenhoff offers a new descriptive overview of the authors, subjects, forms, and uses of writing (understood in the widest possible sense). The book is divided into three parts (see 4–6): a 'descriptive' overview (coupled with a wide-ranging catalogue at the back of the volume: 249–321); a so-called 'hermeneutic' analysis, centred on contemporary literary reflections (namely, fourteen Latin and Greek literary passages: 124–30); and a 'semiotic' evaluation of inscriptions in particular spatial contexts. The final chapter of the book, surveying the 'Ergebnisse', puts the three parts together, with some suggestive reflections about the 'appropriation of space through writing' ('Raumaneignung durch Schrift?': 224–47). Ultimately, I suspect the book will be most useful for introducing particular inscription types and case studies for advanced graduate courses in Latin epigraphy.

A seventh book is one that might have easily slipped through the net: an edited Francophone collection on the notion of 'caricature' in antiquity.¹³ Truth be told, this is a book for classical philologists as much as for art historians and archaeologists, with discussions ranging from the send-up of Cleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (Cécile Corbel-Morana) to the caricatures of Second Sophistic authors (Romain Brethes). As the three editors explain in their introduction, their theme crosses a range of different media, raising larger questions about the cultural history of laughter, humour, and transgression. One stand-out chapter comes in Francis Prost's analysis of 'Visages, portraits, caricatures dans l'Athènes du Ve siècle', tackling practices of caricature (in both art and text) in relation to developing cultural ideas about the individual. Overall, what emerges is an unresolved tension between ideas of caricature in the modern world (defined here as after the eighteenth century) and the diverse ancient materials discussed.

My eighth and ninth books are also edited collections, and form another pair. Both are oriented towards 'new approaches' and 'new directions': one in the context of Greek architecture,¹⁴ the other with broader reference to 'ancient material culture in the Greek and Roman world'.¹⁵ Both are published in Brill's *Monumenta Graeca et Romana* series – in a format that allows for A4 reproductions of images, plans, and diagrams.

¹² *Die Stadt als beschriebener Raum. Die Beispiele Pompeji und Herculaneum*. By Fanny Opdenhoff. *Materiale Textkulturen* 33. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2021. Pp. xxiv + 397. 56 b/w illustrations, 78 colour illustrations, 5 tables. Hardback £82, ISBN: 978-3-11-072269-7.

¹³ *La notion de caricature dans l'antiquité. Textes et images*. Edited by Anne Gangloff, Valérie Huet, and Christophe Vendries. Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2021. Pp. 232. B/w illustrations, 16 colour illustrations. Paperback €24, ISBN: 978-2-7535-8043-5.

¹⁴ *New Directions and Paradigms for the Study of Greek Architecture. Interdisciplinary Dialogues in the Field*. Edited by Philip Sapidstein and David Scahill. *Monumenta Graeca et Romana* 25. Leiden, Brill, 2019. Pp. xxii + 326. B/w illustrations. Hardback €138, ISBN: 978-90-04-41663-5.

¹⁵ *New Approaches to Ancient Material Culture in the Greek and Roman World: 21st-Century Methods and Classical Antiquity*. Edited by C. L. Cooper. *Monumenta Graeca et Romana* 27. Leiden, Brill, 2020. Pp. xiv + 213. B/w and colour illustrations. Hardback €109, ISBN: 978-90-04-44075-3.

This formal aspect is used to maximum advantage in the architecture volume. As Philip Sapirstein explains in his introduction, the book ‘attempts to take the pulse of current research in Greek architecture’ (1), with a useful overview asking ‘Where is the field now?’ (2–4).¹⁶ What follows is a motley collection of articles intended to reflect ‘pre-vailing trends in scholarship’ (9). I suspect most chapters will in fact be consulted as stand-alone contributions on particular sites and monuments; only a handful are dedicated to more thematic subjects – as with Matthias Grawehr’s scintillating chapter on ‘Looking at the Unfinished’, Sarah A. Rous’s analysis of ‘Upcycling’, and Mary B. Hollinshead’s overview of recent technological approaches to ‘Contexts for Greek Architecture’. The editors attempt to make a virtue of this miscellany, explaining that it ‘has the potential to reveal subtle and more recent shifts in thinking than would a review of published books and long articles’ (9): ‘The method of polling the field at large has resulted in what we hope to be a representative sample of ideas, curated thematically to highlight several recent developments within the study of Greek architecture’ (1). But whether or not the whole adds up to more than the sum of its parts is unclear: the volume is ultimately a set of conference proceedings, derived from a workshop of the same title at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens in late 2016.

Kate Cooper’s edited collection on ‘21st-Century Methods and Classical Antiquity’ likewise derives from a conference – in fact three, two held at Winnipeg (in 2013 and 2015) and one at Montreal (in 2014). The book is arguably more ambitious in diagnosing a set of ‘new’ concerns, defined in the editor’s introduction around the themes of ‘contextual’, ‘interconnected’, ‘experiential’, ‘technological’, ‘multiscalar’, and ‘revisionist’ approaches (11–19). Cooper sets out to ‘engage with ancient material culture using many avenues of enquiry’ (19), with particular emphasis on ‘multidisciplinary’ approaches that ‘blur the boundaries between archaeology, art history, cultural history, and literary studies, and borrow from disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, humanities, and the hard sciences’ (19). The nine chapters that follow are divided into three sections, ‘to address different aspects of the current state of the field’ (19): ‘Adopting Approaches’, ‘Material Approaches’, and ‘Reading Material’. Some contributions offer handy, student-friendly digests (as with Anna Collar’s ‘Networks, Connectivity, and Material Culture’). Others champion decidedly more experimental methods, often in highly scintillating ways: a case in point is the chapter on ‘Collaborative Investigations into the Production of Athenian Pottery’ by David Saunders, Karen Trentelman, and Jeffrey Maish, which uses spectroscopy and spectrometry to suggest that vase-production methods were ‘more complex than the conventional notion of a single three-stage firing process. . . suggests’ (124).

My tenth and final book is also an edited volume – and one that leads me full circle back to issues of legacy, tradition, and reception.¹⁷ It is yet another set of conference proceedings – this time derived from a workshop held at the Dutch University

¹⁶ Specifically, the author here offers an update to B. A. Barletta, ‘State of the Discipline: Greek Architecture’, *AJA* 115 (2011), 611–40, and the excellent M. M. Miles (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Architecture* (Malden, MA, 2016).

¹⁷ *Material World. The Intersection of Art, Science, and Nature in Ancient Literature and Its Renaissance Reception*. Edited by Guy Hedreen. NIKI Studies in Netherlandish-Italian Art History 15. Leiden, Brill, 2021. Pp. xviii + 308. 67 colour illustrations. Hardback €125, ISBN: 978-90-04-42376-3.

Institute for Art History in Florence in April 2018. The key contribution lies in the disciplinary range of approaches to ‘material worlds’, above all by exploring ancient ideas, objects, and themes in light of early modern ideas about art, nature, and science. Guy Hedreen sets the scene in his engaging introduction, which crosses back and forth between ancient writers and their Renaissance readers, while tackling the disciplinary charge of art history’s ‘dematerialisation of the material objects art historians work with’ (1); a larger aim, as Hedreen puts it in his coda, is to ask how to ‘understand the relationship, both temporally and conceptually, between the early modern period and antiquity’ (273). The shadow of the Elder Pliny looms large throughout: in Verity Platt’s discussion of wax (which translates into Italian a paper concurrently published in another pioneering book), for example;¹⁸ in Sarah Blake McHam’s chapter on ‘Pliny’s Hierarchy of Materials and its Influence in the Renaissance’; and in Carolyn Yerkes’s analysis of ‘The Architecture of Echoes’, which takes its cue from Pliny’s description of echoes that reverberate seven times (*HN* 36.23). At the same time, though, the quest to ‘cross chronological and disciplinary boundaries’ (vii) leads to some highly innovative approaches: among the many highlights is Morgan Ng’s paper on ‘Terremoti artificiali’, which explores early modern ideas about mining, excavation, and the subterranean world in connection with Aristotelian meteorology.

I close by noting that this marks the end of my pleasant liturgy for *Greece & Rome*. In my first review (*G&R* 66.1 [2019], 143), I made the point that ‘Change is what keeps the study of classical art and archaeology in business.’ Over the last four years, I hope to have kept readers abreast of such developments – in terms of the rise and fall of particular subjects, certainly, but also in relation to changing practices of scholarly publishing (just witness the proliferation in the last couple of years of open-access titles – including no fewer than five reviewed in this issue, all published by De Gruyter). I may be passing on the baton, but I look forward to reading what changes lie ahead.

MICHAEL SQUIRE

King’s College London, UK

michael.squire@kcl.ac.uk

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Philosophy

As Andrea Nightingale notes in her persuasive new monograph, scholars often seem reticent to acknowledge the theological context within which Plato develops his metaphysics.¹ By analysing and emphasizing the language of divinity applied to the forms, soul, and cosmos across four dialogues, the *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus*, Nightingale builds a case for rehabilitating Plato’s status as a fundamentally

¹⁸ The English-language article – which comes heartily recommended – appears in A. Anguissola and A. Grüner (eds.), *The Nature of Art. Pliny the Elder on Materials* (Turnhout, 2021).

¹ *Philosophy and Religion in Plato’s Dialogues*. By Andrea Nightingale. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xii + 296. 4 illustrations. Hardback £29.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-83730-9.