wide array of scholars working to expand the disciplinary boundaries of Classical archaeology.

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Christian Rollinger, ed. *Classical Antiquity in Video Games: Playing with the Ancient World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, xv and 294pp., 27 b/w figs, eBook ISBN 978-1-3500-6665-6)

Classical reception continues to be the low-hanging fruit of video game archaeology (i.e., archaeogaming (Reinhard 2018)), which makes sense as game developers continue to produce interactive digital entertainment set in antiquity, and largely in the ancient Mediterranean world. With copies of *Assassin's Creed: Origins* (set in Egypt), *Assassin's Creed: Odyssey* (set in Greece), and the *Civilization* series, for example, selling in the millions, player-interest in inhabiting an armored avatar for hundreds of hours has yet to wane. Developers such as Ubisoft, Creative Assembly, and others will continue to re-imagine historic events and environments so long as they continue to profit from them. For archaeologists and classicists, these games remain ripe for study from a variety of angles including popular, contemporary perception of classical antiquity through games, the notion of 'authenticity' in how games represent everything from clothing to politics to events, the portrayal of non-male characters in games set in the past, simulation and agent-based modeling (ABM), narratology, using these games as pedagogical tools in the Classics classroom, and more.

Classical Antiquity in Video Games is the fifth volume in Bloomsbury Academics' series, IMAGINES: Classical Receptions

in the Visual and Performing Arts, which includes fascicles on Homer, Art Nouveau, heavy metal music, and the Mediterranean Sea. This book, edited by Christian Rollinger, Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Trier, is the latest contribution to an increasingly rich field of archaeogaming scholarship focusing on classical reception; and, upon its publication, was only the second scholarly book to be dedicated to how video games portray the Classical world (Thorsen, 2012 being the first). Rollinger's volume precedes by one year the sixth volume in the IMAGINES series by Ross Clare (2021), *Ancient Greece and Rome in Videogames: Representation, Play, Transmedia.*

Bookended by a prologue, introduction, and epilogue, the book is divided into four parts: 'A Brave Old World: Re-Figuration of Ancient Cultures', three chapters on the popular perception and authenticity of classical antiquity, and the portrayal of women within games set in ancient Rome; 'A World at War: Martial Re-Presentations of the Ancient World', two chapters on historiography and military simulation in ancient Rome; 'Digital Epics: Role-Playing in the Ancient World', three chapters on playing in/with the past and how to stage narratives within those worlds; and 'Building an Ancient World: Re-Imagining Antiquity', four chapters on ancient primary sources and their adoption as narratives in various games by content-creators.

In his prologue and introduction, Rollinger adeptly places video games within the broader context of classical reception, first introducing the evolution of games followed by the emergence of reception studies and then blending the two with a literature review of game studies, archaeology, and Classics as they pertain to a contemporary understanding of antiquity. He closes with a call to action, regarding the amount of future work to be done in empirical research of classical reception and video games. This book (and others like it) can serve to launch 1,000 theses and dissertations, moving from theory and methodology to practice within individual examples of intellectual property.

In Part One, David Serrano Lozano's chapter capably sets the tone for the chapters that follow, serving as a bridge from television and film to interactive digital media and exploring how video games contribute (for better or worse) to the popular perception of the classical world. Tristan French and Andrew Gardner follow up with their chapter on the notion of authenticity within *Assassin's Creed: Origins* and *Ryse: Son of Rome,* including how authenticity in a game can be measured or judged, how different platforms and genres offer different kinds of authenticity, and what players want in an 'authentic' play experience. Sian Beavers closes out this section with her observations on the representation of women in *Ryse: Son of Rome.* She uses Boudicca as the main example, drawing comparisons between this game and depictions in other media of women in the ancient world while offering new insights into gender representation and identity.

In Part Two, Dominic Machado takes a deep-dive into *Total War: Rome II* and explores how the developers translated primary source accounts and other evidence into a different medium, creating historically informed battles, most notably, the Battle of Teutoburg Forest, and making them both engaging and fun to play. Jeremiah McCall also uses *Total War: Rome II* and *Fields of Glory 2* to explore notions of simulation and modeling of ancient battles in the dynamic environment of video games, adding a greater depth of understanding to the evolving complexity of the ancient battlefield.

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In Part Three, Roger Travis begins the discussion of role-playing games (RPGs) by styling the popular open-world games of Bethesda Softworks (e.g., *Elder Scrolls*) as epic storytelling and identity-formation on the part of the player-avatar, and further investigating how that compares with the Homeric tradition. Ross Clare uses *Nethergate* and *Titan Quest* as examples of 'colonial spaces' for the player-avatar to make their own, and how that affects the reception of antiquity, moving towards post-colonial practice in RPGs. Nico Nolden employs *The Secret World*, a nexus of gameplay within a historical setting, community-building among players, historical narratives and memory, in an effort to understand how this is all enabled through game mechanics. This research into how people interact and grow within gaming spaces to create their own material culture, narratives, and memories is a central tenet of archaeogaming, represented here in this massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG).

In the book's final part, Neville Morley explores what it means to be both historian and game designer, creating a Twine-based text adventure, *The Melian Game*, in which the player can choose a side in Thucydides' Melian Dialogue. Creating these kinds of games can help both the maker and the player better understand core concepts in the subject addressed, as Morley's game demonstrates. Maciej Paprocki describes his role as mythology consultant in the creation of *Apotheon*, peering behind the veil between development decisions as to what appeared in the final version of the game. Game studios are notoriously opaque with any behind-the-scenes information, so this chapter is especially helpful in shedding light onto character design, world-building, and storytelling. Alexander Flegler, himself a historian and game developer, uses the *Age of Empires* series to discuss how differing accounts of history contribute to the creation of historical games. As is often the case, players debate the authenticity of historical events and representations in these kinds of games, and Flegler is able to discuss a decision-making process that might please some while annoying others in the pursuit of making a fun and 'accurate' game. Erika Holter, Una Schäfer, and Sebastian Schwesinger round out Part Four by moving from games to game engines (software tools used to create games and game-spaces), and using them to create evidence-based digital reconstructions of ancient buildings, sites, and landscapes—part of the emerging field of virtual heritage. Through an example of recreating the Pnyx and Agora of Athens, the authors consider issues of creating archaeological re-imaginings with tools not designed specifically for that purpose.

Adam Chapman, author of the groundbreaking *Digital Games as History* (2016), closes the volume with an epilogue that could just as easily be a coda to the introduction, '*Quo Vadis* Historical Game Studies and Classical Receptions? Moving Two Fields Forward Together'. His two overarching themes of context and collaboration can be applied to the whole of archaeology, Classics, and their satellite disciplines. We are stronger together and can learn from each other by working in tandem. Cooperation benefits research and its publication. This is already happening in archaeogaming generally with computer scientists and archaeologists pairing off to examine legacy games, their code, media, and hardware (Aycock and Biittner, 2020). Chapman encourages researchers involved with historical games studies, archaeology, Classics, and reception studies to collaborate similarly. As for context, Chapman notes that the current generation of postgraduate students focusing on historical games are moving beyond

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the interiors of the games, incorporating the context of the game publishers themselves and their impact into how history is portrayed digitally for large audiences. Media companies wield extraordinary power in shaping public perception, and it is not enough to investigate a historical or archaeological game on its own. Researchers must consider ideologies of studios and the loyal core of their audiences placed within a wider context of current, real-world events occurring during a game's production. Thanks to the increasing porosity between online and offline presence, it is impossible for the real not to influence the virtual. In 2021, one can also argue that it is becoming more widely possible for the virtual to impact a wider reality.

Most of the chapters are illustrated with a few figures that are enough to show the reader the landscape under discussion without being overwhelming. Even in 2021, there remain a number of Classical scholars who have never played (or even seen) a video game set in the ancient Mediterranean world. The figures will help introduce these readers to a medium new to them and will hopefully encourage future investigation, wearing away the resistance of some towards playful media as a serious subject of study.

Regarding documentation, the thorough, valuable bibliography at the back of the book collates the sources of all of the chapters and should serve as a jumping-off point for future research. I would have preferred footnotes instead of endnotes for each chapter, but this may be a convention set by the publisher for this series. The separate lists of media and games cited are also helpful, as is the glossary of video game terms.

Classical Antiquity in Video Games is a welcome addition both to reception studies and to archaeogaming, organizing its contents so well as to begin with the portrayal of history in games, ending with using game-creation software as a way to engage with archaeological and historical evidence. I remain encouraged that academic publishers recognize interactive digital entertainment as an important part of contemporary research within archaeology and Classics, another medium with which to ask and answer questions of a past that is never far from the present. The authors of these articles are the vanguard, and, after finishing this book, I found myself looking forward to reading their future publications.

One point of order regarding the two-dimensional, printed publication of three- and four-dimensional digital spaces: traditional academic publishers find themselves at a crossroads in how to provide access to useful digital content supporting authors' arguments. Online galleries of screen captures, gameplay video (with or without author narration), 3D walkthroughs of game environments: all of these communicate experientially. It is one thing to discuss agent-based modeling present on the digital Roman battlefield, but it is quite another to watch the battle unfold in real-time. It may be that the rights-holders of proprietary intellectual property will not grant permission for reproduction in any medium, but based on game reviews, 'let's play' videos, and live-streams, the tolerance by studios for sharing has become more liberal and less-restrictive. This new attitude towards fair use and fair dealing will benefit scholarly publication, and future authors should request that their publishers include new media in the formats that present best an author's thesis. And the publishers must listen.

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Catherine J. Frieman. *An Archaeology of Innovation: Approaching Social and Technological Change in Human Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021, 238 pp., 24 figs, 2 tables, hbk, ISBN 978-1-5261-3264-2, eBook ISBN 978-1-5261-3267-3)

Innovation and change are some of the most recurrent themes addressed not only in archaeological research but also through social, economic, environmental, or biological sciences (among others). This interest can be justified since transitional moments are those which we usually know least, or because they are traditionally seen as structural in our shared past, and crucial for understanding the social trajectories that came afterwards. These transformative episodes have primarily been approached through a 'scientific' and even political lens that leads to sometimes direct transpositions from current points of view to the past. Only more recently have social considerations that try to accomplish archaeology's primary goal—which includes understanding the practices of past individuals and communities, materialities, or biographies—been fruitfully explored. *An Archaeology of Innovation* by Catherine J. Frieman succeeds, in an exceptionally easy to read and sometimes humorous way, in giving us an overview of different approaches to innovation, combining them from an archaeological perspective, and backing them up with multiple theories and examples from different times and regions. What this book provides is an updated archaeological take on the study of innovation, change, and resistance in the past and present, not reducing these subjects to '"Do-Need" frameworks' (p. 159), but instead highlighting archaeology's social nature.

The work comprises seven chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion, and twenty-six useful images and tables that simplify complex theories and concepts developed through the text.

In the Introduction, the first, and to me the most important, concept is the idea of knowledge 'bricolage'. For Frieman, this means that by overlapping bits and pieces of previous scientific work (from archaeology and other sciences), it will be possible to 'construct new and different visions of past worlds and the people who inhabited and created them' (p. 3). It becomes clear through the book that this bricolage includes not only scientific knowledge but also, particularly, all experiences, sensations, and even feelings (which prompted the author to write this book). Bricolage also works as a metaphor for innovation itself—the sum of different but connected parts.