

the evidence uncovered. The discussion focuses on the definition of the three different phases of occupation known topographically at the site: the first is ascribed to the late Neolithic; the second is datable between the sixth and fourth century B.C., and refers to a scarcely recognisable Greek structure; and finally, the third and principal phase of occupation, the farm, dated to the mid-second century—first half of the fourth century A.D. It is from this phase that the main archaeological evidence derives: both the architectural structures and the artefacts. This was a rectangular structure of small dimensions (270 m²), characterised by a succession of narrow spaces (residential quarters, a kitchen, storage rooms and service areas), in which was found also a small atrium and a modest heated area that functioned as a *balneum*. The complex was organised around a portico opened to the outside, supported by wooden pilasters on stone bases. L. gives a detailed description of this imperial structure, abandoned in the first half of the fourth century A.D., after a period of minor renovations, paying particular attention to wall construction techniques, roofing and flooring techniques, and the decorative programme of residential space. Of high quality and effect are the virtual reconstructions proposed by M. Limoncelli that facilitate the reading and comprehension of the evidence.

The bulk of the volume, in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, is dedicated to the artefacts and eco-facts found during the excavation, dated from the prehistoric period to the fourth century A. D.: ceramics, coins, metals, glass and archaeozoological remains. One can appreciate the ample catalogue, curated by specialists from various sub-fields, not only for the quality of their scientific study, their careful descriptions and the rich comparisons, but also for the quality of the images and page layout, that aids consultation of the volume.

Chapter 7, edited by L., presents the conclusions. All the available data, studied in detail, are employed to furnish answers to some final questions: how does one insert the farm of San Biagio into imperial settlement organisation in Metapontum's hinterland? Who occupied this farm? What was produced there? Why was it abandoned? The arguments advanced and the comparative contexts from nearby Apulia and central Basilicata seem on-point and are for the most part persuasive.

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ROMAN ART

MARLOWE (E.) *Shaky Ground. Context, Connoisseurship and the History of Roman Art*. Pp. x + 168, ills. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2013. Cased, £45. ISBN: 978-0-7156-4064-7.

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This highly stimulating and important essay should become required reading for historians of Roman art but also for museum curators and all those interested in exhibition practice. M.'s basic premise is two-fold. Thanks to strong positions taken by, *inter alia*, the Archaeological Institute of America and the Association of Art Museum Directors regarding the acquisition and publication of antiquities, and especially after the recent trials of dealer Giacomo Medici and Getty curator Marion True, scholars, museums and the general public have become increasingly aware of the impact of looting and forgery on our understanding of ancient art. None the less, M. reminds us that objects acquired before the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import,

Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property have largely escaped comparable scrutiny.

Consequently, those of us who teach Roman art to undergraduates or write textbooks for college students (I plead guilty to both charges) present a flawed, ‘ungrounded’ history of Roman art starring such works as the Barberini Togatus representing a man holding busts of his ancestors, the Fonseca portrait of a Flavian(?) lady sporting a spectacularly elaborate coiffure, and the over-life-size heroically nude bronze portrait of a mid-third century man usually identified as Trebonianus Gallus. M. argues that just as many of us avoid teaching and publishing unprovenanced recent acquisitions in order to make a small contribution to the effort to combat looting and the destruction of archaeological sites, we should also purge our courses and books of these ‘masterpieces’ and replace them with other works with secure contexts.

That recommendation may be feasible for some canonical artworks, such as the Fonseca bust, and for the more recently acquired portraits of Septimius Severus and Julia Domna at Indiana University, albeit by substituting works of lesser quality or in a poorer state of preservation. But the elimination from introductory books and courses of unique works such as the Barberini Togatus and the Trebonianus Gallus, whose authenticity seems beyond doubt, would seriously compromise any history of Roman art. In short, I believe that M.’s book is a most welcome wake-up call, but her suggested cure is an undesirable over-correction. Undergraduates are not naturally drawn to Roman art classes. Choosing to discuss works of great beauty and the highest quality is a good means to the worthy end of attracting more students to the study of Roman art, at which point the issues of grounded vs ungrounded works, looting and forgery can be profitably presented.

Especially compelling is M.’s critique of museum display practices, which often ignore contextual evidence that would enrich the understanding of ancient art on the part of museum visitors. She cites, *inter alia*, two striking examples of what I would call ‘lost opportunities’. The first is the separation in the Athens National Archaeological Museum of the marble copy of Polykleitos’ bronze Diadoumenos from the Republican Roman portrait of the ‘Pseudo-Athlete’ from the same building in Delos. The portrait cannot be fully understood without knowing its juxtaposition with the Greek athlete, nor can the copy be appreciated in its Roman context without understanding its function as a model. The second is the inexplicable placement of the head of the emperor Caracalla on a pedestal in one grand new gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the display in another location of the extant fragments of the body, which enable the viewer to visualise what the full statue looked like. Museum curators, please take note. Emphasising context in the display of artworks should be a primary goal.

In her preface, M. explains that the inspiration for the volume came from seminars and lecture courses she teaches at Colgate University. It is standard for universities to argue the importance of scholarship for effective teaching (and successful tenure and promotion reviews). This is an excellent example in reverse – thoughtful pedagogy leading to meaningful scholarship.

A final, less positive note. The photographs are, in a word, terrible. Some, for example Figure 3, are so bad that it is impossible to follow M.’s discussion. The unacceptably poor quality of the illustrations is the result both of M. furnishing photographs that are merely ‘snapshots’ taken in low-light conditions in museums and of bad reproductions of good photographs by the publisher. Bloomsbury should invest in better paper and better printing or it should not publish art books.

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