

basis that eradication would imply the eschaton, in the realizing of which established powers had little interest. More important, that overall trend – and its focus on inter-religious tension – obscures the much more textured realities of daily life, in which Jewish actors often exerted as much influence as their non-Christian peers. Kraemer's book thus reveals the forgotten realities not of a minority group for a brief moment in time, but of a huge empire-wide stakeholder group over multiple centuries. Just by its topic, then, it would likely prove important, but the rigour of its readings and its sensitivity to its subjects make it an instant classic.

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Art and Archaeology

This review again reflects the exciting chronological and geographical range within which Classicists operate and the diverse approaches and disciplinary knowledge that illuminate the ancient world for us. Alexa Piqueux's monograph, *The Comic Body in Ancient Greek Theatre and Art, 440–320BCE*,¹ explores how costume and gesture entwine with speech to bring alive the comedy body, drawing equally on images painted on vases and extant texts of Old and Middle Comedy. One of the greatest difficulties of working with these two data sets is that the texts originate in Athens while the majority of vases that depict comedy were actually made in southern Italy and Sicily. This necessitates a first chapter that investigates the 'Italianness' of these vases, the extent to which they might be directly reflective of Attic comedy, drawing on that comedy more generally for thematic inspiration, or showing adaptation of Greek comedy and its performance in Italian contexts. This might involve looking for clues in the images of the construction of temporary stages on which travelling troupes might have been performing in Italy (57) or considering the way in which particular comic themes, that seem so peculiar to Athens, might have played to different audiences in Italy by appealing to contentions within local societies, for example generational divides in Paestan society (66).

The remaining chapters focus more precisely on the physical appearance of comic actors, considering masks, padding, phallus, gesture, and movement. The discussion starts with masks and an exploration of the creation of comic ugliness through their references to other types of faces, whether monstrous, animal, or ethnically 'other', particularly by resembling the faces of satyrs or the Black African, a discussion that perhaps needed a bit more disentangling and extended discussion. A key aspect of Piqueux's

¹ *The Comic Body in Ancient Greek Theatre and Art, 440–320BCE*. By Alexa Piqueux. Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xviii + 365. 87 b/w and colour illustrations. Hardback £88, ISBN: 978-0-192-84554-2.

interpretation is the ambiguous nature of the comic costume, offering enough freedom for a character to metamorphose in the course of the play. The ridiculous comic costumes of the actors not only signify comedy to the external audience but also often provide the 'joke' of the comedy itself. An Apulian krater shows an old man character in disguise as a woman, his diaphanous women's clothes doing nothing to disguise the padding and phallus beneath and whose old man mask is fully on show now that the lady mask he has been hiding behind is dangling in his hand (184). This line of thinking also leads her to reject the idea that named Athenian 'celebrities' who appear in comedy were represented by instantly recognizable and personal portrait masks. Instead, she proposes the idea of the metaphorical mask that could refer equally to that individual but also to a character type, eliding the real and imaginary Athenian worlds (88). The potential slippages between characters and real bodies are driven home by the juxtaposition of the male actors playing female characters on the stage, the male actors playing male characters disguising themselves as women, and the real women who perhaps performed as musicians during the performance (135). The strongest part of this study is the way that it nails the methods in which comic stage distorts and subverts the real bodies of the Athenian *demos* and the ideal bodies of the figurative arts as well as coarsely reflecting codes of deportment and attire in society and, as a result, this is not only a book for readers interested in comedy per se but for anybody investigating gender and status in Athens more generally.

A particular strength of this book is the methodological care taken in working between text and images, respecting the different ways they communicate. That approach extends also to the consideration of the relation between the visual and the spoken on stage, exploring the way that speech, gesture, and costume enliven each other. The lines the characters speak add specificity to the ambiguity of comic costumes, both their own and others', introducing characters who the audience may not otherwise immediately recognize (another clue allowing us to do away with the idea of precise portrait masks). Particularly clever is the way that Piqueux is able to demonstrate how this entanglement of movement and speech might be shown in vase painting. On the New York Goose Play Vase, the written lines that are imagined to be spoken by the depicted characters are not only positioned so as to emanate from their mouths but then follow trajectories that mimic the suggested movement of the characters, whether marching confidently across the vase surface straight outwards or twirling around in imitation of the depicted movement of the character speaking the line (267).

Eleni Hasiki's *Potters at Work in Ancient Corinth*² revisits a fascinating set of just over 1,000 *pinakes* (ceramic painted plaques) found in Penteskouphia, just west of Corinth, in two separate excavations either side of the turn of the twentieth century (1879 and 1905) and dispersed across various museums in Germany, France, and Corinth. They are all black figure, date to the sixth century BCE, and most have holes in the top so that they can be hung. These little plaques seem to have often served as practice surfaces for vase painters who practised different figures or even new techniques on them. One was used to paint a pair of legs depicted up to calf height before the painter

² *Potters at Work in Ancient Corinth. Industry, Religion, and the Penteskouphia Pinakes*. By Eleni Hasiki. Hesperia Supplement 51. Princeton, NJ, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2021. Pp. xxii + 418. 234 b/w illustrations. Paperback £55, ISBN: 978-0-8766-1553-9.

abandoned that effort in favour of drawing a ship (58). They have also become famous because a good slice of them (102 scenes on 97 *pinakes*) show scenes of pottery production, offering an insider's view of the industry, from the first job of digging the clay, to throwing the pots on a wheel, to firing the kiln. Examination of these images, alongside other known images of ceramic production on vases from Athens and archaeological evidence of workshops and kilns excavated throughout the Greek world, allows Hasiki to build an engaging account of the craft, illuminating the small-scale nature of workshops mostly running on one kiln.

For whose consumption were these scenes made? These were not practice scenes, because they are not duplicated on vases, nor do the *pinakes* themselves seem to have been envisaged as 'end product' for sale, since they do not appear ever to have been exported like other Corinthian ware. Many of the *pinakes* bearing these workplace scenes are painted on both sides, the other side often bearing images either of or associated with Poseidon, suggesting that they may serve a function as votives to the god, perhaps either dedicated in workshops or, given these were all found together, hung outside from trees. Hasiki then goes on to tie the *pinakes* to a particular moment in the history of Corinthian ware, suggesting that these were all made at a time when Corinthian potters might have increasingly felt the need for divine assistance to safeguard their livelihoods in the face of growing competition from Athenian craftsmen. Whether or not one would wish to make such a certain correlation, this remains a great opportunity to look behind familiar vases to view the craftspeople who made them and the workshops in which they were created.

Like Hasiki, Christian Niederhuber has produced a catalogue of a familiar corpus in order to re-evaluate them. His *Roman Imperial Portrait Practice in the Second Century AD. Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the Younger* is less approachable than Hasiki's, though it does feature frequent, useful, and succinct summaries for a less specialist reader. One might think that the world knows everything it needs to know about imperial portraits, but Niederhuber convinces in his justification for the exercise, not only to reassign the pair's portrait types but mostly to gain more insight into the workings of the trade and the circumstances in which these types were generated.³

One of the main contentions of the book is that there were fewer 'official' portrait types than most have previously suspected and that they were often generated for more pragmatic reasons than is often surmised (for instance, the idea that new portrait types ushered in new titles for the emperor, while his wife got a portrait refresh as reward for producing each new imperial offspring). So, for instance, both get an official portrait type at the moment they first step into public interest, Marcus Aurelius when he is adopted by Antoninus Pius and Faustina when she becomes Marcus's wife. After that, new types are generated as the gap between existing type and imperial personage stretches beyond tolerance (Marcus Aurelius needs to age, adopting a beard as he does so, and Faustina's portraits mark the passage of time with a succession of new hairdos). Faustina does seem to have had a new portrait made at the time her husband became emperor, tellingly acquiring hooded eyelids like Marcus's that emphasize her proximity

³ *Roman Imperial Portrait Practice in the Second Century AD. Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the Younger*. By Christian Niederhuber. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. xxiv + 214. 273 b/w illustrations. Hardback £93, ISBN: 978-0-192-84565-8.

to the new emperor (40), but the occasion does not generate a new type for Marcus Aurelius because a new mature and restrained portrait seems only to have been released a few months before.

Niederhuber also examines the aims of these portraits: to guarantee recognisability; reflect elite styles and fashions; and to convey dynastic and imperial messaging. Recognisability, of course, does not necessarily mean utterly lifelike portraiture but rather the presence of features that distinguish these individuals from anybody else, important because, as Niederhuber points out, emperors' portraits are not, in essence, very different than those commissioned by wealthy elites across empire. Emperors and their wives respond to and set fashion trends for these economic and social elites. Much is made of Faustina's changing hairdos (it is perhaps easier to agree that Faustina likely did set courtly trends than that portraits faithfully reflect her real-life daily hair choices). Even so, imperial authority is presented in other ways. Most private commissions feature elites in civil costume while busts of the emperor often wear military attire, accentuating rather different qualities than those conveyed by the urbane coiffure (84). This need to assert imperial messaging is hinted again by Faustina's hooded eyes that make of the imperial couple an indisputable matching imperial pair (40). In other words, the portraits reflect that difficult line emperors step, as first among equals of an aristocracy on whose complicity they rely and the quasi-divine autocratic powers of the principate that elevate them from them.

The later chapters offer a fascinating, but disappointingly brief, look behind the scenes to the people who created and duplicated these images. Official new types resulted in a master portrait that was then passed to the leading sculptural workshops and the mint (where it could be turned into a two-dimensional profile for easy use by the die cutters), perhaps in the form of plaster casts. Once in receipt of such a model, the craftsmen working in these venues might make incremental changes to it as they felt was needed, explaining why portrait and coin types do not clearly line up with each other and why some types might exist concurrently. It is a particular shame that there is not more space given to the really difficult question of how these portrait types were disseminated beyond Rome to the provinces, though there is clearly much to develop here on the idea that the differences that we see in provincial portraits are not simply down to levels of skill or chosen material but also the need to fit with local expectations of the emperor and of portraiture itself (90). In this model, the imperial portrait becomes a complex image of negotiation, on the one hand the imposition of an ideal shaped by the court but dependent on the approbation of the millions of people around the empire who consumed these images and used them for their own needs on a local platform.

On to edited volumes. Domestic spaces offer such a rich avenue for exploration that the appearance of a volume dedicated to them is both welcome and timely given recent strides in reassessing these spaces and examining the lives of members of the household often overlooked, whether by tracing their physical traces in media like graffiti or designing approaches that allow us to find them even in the absence of such traces. *Housing in the Ancient Mediterranean World. Material and Textual Approaches*, edited by J. A. Baird and April Pudsey,⁴ sets out to showcase approaches that move beyond

⁴ *Housing in the Ancient Mediterranean World. Material and Textual Approaches*. Edited by J. A. Baird and April Pudsey. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xvi + 499. 74 b/w and colour illustrations. Hardback £105, ISBN: 978-1-108-84526-7.

attempts to marry textual and architectural evidence. The introduction calls for a move to value houses as a place to trace individual ‘microhistories’ rather than cultural archetypes, to explore the ways that the relations of people in the house are entangled with the structure of the house and to understand the house as a place of memory, in which respect it could adopt approaches from the final volume covered in this review (see below). These are worthy themes, but the subsequent content and arrangement shows some of the problems with edited volumes in that these themes are not made explicit in the main body of the book. On the one hand there is a great range of papers here featuring a broad chronological stretch and showcasing a good variety of approaches, but these are at the whim of the interests and specialisms of the authors more than the overall aim of the editors. It is not quite clear how each chapter relates to the others, or the journey taken throughout the book. In the introduction, Caspar Meyer’s extremely welcome chapter on the display and interpretation of ‘domestic’ artefacts in museums is explained, quite sensibly, as a kind of coda looking back on the contemporary attitudes that shape our expectations of the ancient domestic explored in the previously-introduced chapters, but it actually appears as Chapter Two in the book.

Of the individual chapters, particularly welcome are those that indicate the range of domestic experiences in the ancient world by concentrating on houses in the Fayum and Dura Europus. Lisa Nevett and Janett Morgan’s contributions are key inclusions, since they have both been so central to reassessing the multifunctionality of Greek houses. Hannah Platts’ contribution offers an introduction to her novel and important approach of exploring the multi-sensory experience of Roman domestic environments. The greatest credit to the editors must go to commissioning Penelope Allison to provide an epilogue, since her work on exploring Pompeian houses through their artefactual assemblages was so crucial in moving beyond investigations dominated by social, art, or architectural historical approaches. Allison provides an insightful and often critical overview of the book, measuring the extent to which its contributions have responded to concerns about approaches to domestic space she first raised in an article published in 2001.⁵ In the end, the gains are incremental. Most chapters still draw predominantly on text and architecture, though they do so in a more nuanced and self-aware manner. Very few of the chapters work extensively with other types of archaeological data; as she says, partly perhaps because the conference title privileged the architectural and textual and because so many of the sites, as for instance the Villa of Diomedes, are empty wrecks. The overall result is that the book effectively showcases current trends in domestic studies, but rather misses the chance to set forward a new agenda. It does, however, show the potential for a much more extensive, collaborative project that could do so.

The possibilities of what could be gained by direct specialist analysis of a richer set of data types is very well demonstrated by the edited volume publishing the excavations of *Kellis. A Roman-Period Village in Egypt’s Dakhleh Oasis*, edited by Colin Hope and Gillian Bowen.⁶ Kellis, which lies on the oasis in the Egyptian western desert, several days’ travel from the Nile Valley (and considered remote enough to be a suitable

⁵ Penelope Allison, ‘Using the Material and the Written Sources: Turn of the Millennium Approaches to Roman Domestic Spaces’, *AJA* 105.2 (2001), 181–208.

⁶ *Kellis. A Roman-Period Village in Egypt’s Dakhleh Oasis*. Edited by Colin A. Hope and Gillian E. Bowen. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. xxxiv + 480. 171 b/w & colour illustrations. Hardback £95, ISBN: 978-0-521-19032-9.

location for the exile of troublesome Christian clergy in late antiquity), seems to have been settled in the first century CE when wells were sunk to maximize agricultural productivity. As a collection of different specialists' findings and analysis (crucial to drawing the best from the material), this volume might seem a bit daunting (it can be hard to follow the intricacies and there are relatively few overview/summaries to help orientation), but the details it provides are fascinating. The extraordinary range of material, from extensive written records including private letters and details of financial and legal transactions to artefacts such as baskets and textiles preserved in desert conditions, will be astonishing to readers less familiar with Egyptian archaeology.

To start with domestic space, the architecture of the houses provides a starting point for examining daily life in the town. The houses conform in the main to New Kingdom traditions, preserving effective solutions to meet the environment. Most appear to have been two storied, arranged with yards and other unroofed spaces, where the hearth is often located, and the roof was clearly used as living and storage space. They are made of mud brick, often covered inside with white mud plaster with timber used for door frames. Roofs are often barrel vaulted; however, there is a great deal of variation of form and size, clearly suggesting differentiations of wealth. Some adopt deliberate classical affectations of porticoes and wall painting, and one house had a *stibadium* (a semicircular dining couch that increasingly took over from the *triclinium* couches in later Roman interiors). As in Pompeii, charcoal sketches on walls reflect alternative ad hoc ways of enhancing and marking private space, from children's scribbles to an elaborate bedroom scene, which, if found in Pompeii, would doubtlessly and rather euphemistically be termed 'erotic' (71). The texts shed light on the constituent members of the household: families and their slaves, but also tenants leasing individual rooms. The multifunctionality of domestic space is made clear by the animal manure that shows the sheltering of animals in the houses' unroofed spaces. Several houses include traces of industry: a pottery workshop evidenced by a kiln, fragments of unfired vessels, and bit of a potter's wheel and a blacksmith's workshop filled with iron slag and filings (29), while the written records show a man named Tithoes working as a carpenter from his house (45).

The real fascination here is the ways in which the inhabitants of Kellis managed the cultural complexities of life in Egypt in the Roman period. The finds reflect the fluid nature in which Greek, Roman, and Egyptian traditions coexisted. The temples of the pre-Christian city are pharaonic in nature, include hieroglyphics (not used in the living city), and honour Tutu (Tithoes), his mother Naith, and consort Tapashay (Tapsais), but the finds inside show clear evidence of syncretism, in artistic expression at least, with images of Isis/Demeter and Hermes in classical style alongside others in traditional style. The decisions to favour one culture over another are not exclusive: a bronze statuette of Tapsais is fashioned in traditional style but inscribed in Greek (227). The cemeteries show a similar conservatism in terms of tomb types, treatment of the body, decoration of cartonnages and grave goods, though, as in the houses, different levels of wealth are clearly invested and some fancier tombs adopt classical elements (315). In its later phase, the city had its own symbol of Roman urbanity: a bath house with a hypocaust system. The people of Kellis moved with agility, combining or choosing between different cultural options as the context demanded, even adopting different personal names when they were being recorded in Greek and in Coptic. The texts also show the extent to which they interacted with the world outside through

frequent trips and business deals. These interactions are even traced in the bodies, some of which exhibit the presence of parasites, such as pinworms, and infections such as schistosomiasis that could not have been contracted in the oasis area (370). On the other hand, some practices seem to be entirely idiosyncratic, having no obvious external influence or cultural allegiance, such as the liberal use of rosemary in the graves of the biggest Christian cemetery (356).

The remains also trace the transition to Christianity, marked by the abandonment and partial re-use of the temples, the building of the churches and the creation of new cemeteries with new rituals commensurate with the local interpretation of Christian faith (no more fancy grave goods). The written record, too, shows the influence of faith in life. The final story of adaptation is the abandonment of the city at the end of the fourth century, probably due mostly to the increasing hostility of the environment. The ongoing difficulty of the environment is reflected in the ongoing battle to keep encroaching sand out of houses, while the evidence for 'desert lung syndrome' in the skeletons and level of attrition in their teeth show the sand encroaching into bodies too (369, 387). The final insights into life in Kellis are from the clues we can get of the value the inhabitants ascribed to different objects as they left: written records and even, somewhat inexplicably, a basket of very fine glassware that must surely have been valued possessions (106–7) left behind, while the removal of timber from door frames reminds us of just what a precious resource it was to communities used to life in the desert.

Finally, the second volume of the Impact of the Ancient City project, *Remembering and Forgetting the Ancient City*, edited by Javier Martínez Jiménez and Sam Ottewill-Soulsby,⁷ again delivers a rich set of essays, coherently arranged around focused themes. This volume emphasizes the ancient city as an object of memory (xvii), whose resilience is proven by its adaptability. Memory connects inhabitants to the idea of the city even as its physical manifestation changes past all recognition and enables them to cope with that change by the faith they have in their cognitive maps (122), which offer them mental images of the city forged through the emotions and memories associated with different locations within it. As in the last volume, the real achievement and innovation of this set of essays is the extension beyond Eurocentric perspectives to include the spread of Islam across the Mediterranean. Particularly instructive for those of us who work primarily on Greece or Rome is to see the world imagined from other perspectives, exposing the relativity of the classical world. The tenth-century scholar Ḥamza al-Isfahānī places Persia literally at the centre of world, just as Vitruvius had done with Rome, and portrays Alexander the Great not as the great general but as the destroyer of cities and thief of knowledge.

Some chapters focus on modern and contemporary attempts to accommodate, recall, and forget the past: in Sofia Greaves's chapter, nineteenth-century Neapolitan town planners eager to modernize Naples recall the sophistication of the aqueduct system of the ancient city. The use of recalling the sophistication and success of the Roman past in order to bolster contemporary pride is a tack (as the editors demonstrate) also taken by the city council of Mérida, which consistently privileges and accentuates the

⁷ *Remembering and Forgetting the Ancient City*. Edited by Javier Martínez Jiménez and Sam Ottewill-Soulsby. Impact of the Ancient City volume 2. Oxford, Oxbow Press, 2022. Pp. xxii + 337. 55 b/w illustrations. Hardback £38, ISBN: 978-1-789-25816-5.

city's Roman past, preferring to forget its Visigothic and Islamic phases. Meanwhile, Suna Agastyia's essay on the plans to rebuild Bursa after a massive fire in 1958 shows a different way of trying to accommodate simultaneously all the previous phases of a city most famous for being the first capital of the Ottomans.

In other chapters, this same process is seen taking place in the more distant past. Martínez focuses on the destruction of late antique basilicas in cities of southern Gaul, describing their replacement by churches over the same spot allowing the cities to respond to new concerns (most notably the local clergy's interest in commemorating themselves over long-dead martyrs) while asserting continuity through their Romanesque style. Edward Zychowicz-Coghill's essay focuses on the multiple layers of 'remembering' through juxtaposition and adaptation in Iran. Sassanians inserted themselves literally in the shadows of Achaemenid predecessors, building tombs under theirs and inscribing themselves on their palaces, while Iranian dynasties of the tenth century looked to the Sassanians for models of conduct and legitimation.

Elsewhere, settlers have to make sense of the remains left by other cultures in their new territory, as in Ammira Bennison's paper about the ways in which Islamic settlers in the Maghreb of North Africa understood the Roman ruins around them. Published itineraries reported the marvels encountered while travelling: aqueducts, monumental buildings, and bridges. Most interesting are the interpretations and narratives ascribed to them; the amphitheatre at El Djem, for example, re-imagined as the palace of a seventh-century queen who fought against the advancing Muslims (289). This re-remembering of major monuments is picked up by Elizabeth Key Fowden's account of the changing identities of the Temple of Zeus Olympios in Athens, first rearranged by the early churches built in its ruins and then certainly by 1395 known as the Palace of Hadrian. Under Islamic rule, the ruins were then re-imagined as the traces of the Throne of Belkis, a palace built by Solomon for his bride, whilst its function was re-allocated to become the city's *musalla*, an open-air prayer ground, before an emerging torrent of European visitors started recalling and insisting on the site as a ruin of a highly prized classical heritage. The real power of this volume is that these changes through time are not seen as mistakes obfuscating a 'true' classical heritage in need of being saved from later accretions through excavation and correction, but as indicators of how these monuments and memories serve a dynamic role within successive generations' cognitive maps of their environment.

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Philosophy

I begin with two books about the cosmos. The first one is Olaf Almqvist's *Chaos, Cosmos and Creation in Early Greek Theogonies*.¹ This monograph skilfully combines

¹ *Chaos, Cosmos and Creation in Early Greek Theogonies. An Ontological Exploration*. By Olaf Almqvist. London. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022. Pp. 256. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-1-350-22184-0.