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amples: The section entitled “Equestrian sports in Greece and Etruria” (pp. 16–17) devotes half of its space to discussions about Rome, including Caligula and Nero. The beginning of p. 22 takes us in three sentences from Caesar back to Fulvius Nobilior in 186 BC, and then immediately forth to the 6th century AD.

Despite these critical remarks, *Spectacle in the Roman World* provides what the Classical World Series sets out to do, namely, giving beginner students an introduction to a central Roman topic. Its strengths are the inclusion of areas beyond the city of Rome and the discussion of all types of sources. Hopefully, *Spectacle in the Roman World* will encourage students to understand that buildings, texts, archaeological material and inscriptions together can provide a fuller picture of ancient cultural contexts.

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Classics and Comics, eds. G. Kovacs & C.W. Marshall, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 288 pp., 38 figs. ISBN 978-0-19-973419-1.

Reception studies have become an undisputed part of the Classical curriculum during the last decades, and considering the cultural appraisal comics have enjoyed in the very same period, it was only to be expected that the links between comics and Classics would become the focus of scholarly attention sooner or later. And this volume is indeed welcome: as the editors put it in the introduction, “comics represent an important and underexplored corpus of material that reflects popular conceptions of antiquity” (p. vii–ix). This anthology, therefore, sets out to explore how Classical themes are treated in the world of comics. But also, more ambitiously, it aims to explore how comics can actually contribute to our understanding of antiquity.

The anthology consists of four parts, preceded by an introduction where George Kovacs considers the contexts in which comics have developed as a medium and the various ways in which Classical themes are adapted to this medium. Of the following four parts, the first is the most wide-ranging, exploring a number of approaches to the topic of Classics and comics. The two first contributions in this part are the most innovative, as they explore what the world of comics can actually tell us of the ancient world: Gideon Nisbet examines a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus and proposes to read it as a graphic novel, while Kyle P. Johnson approaches the shield of Achilles which is described in Homer’s *Iliad* as a comic strip. Nicho-

las A. Theisen analyses how Classical themes are treated in Japanese manga culture, thereby demonstrating that western readers invest such themes with meaning that may not have been intended. Finally, Brett M. Rogers examines the superhero myth and its links with American comics.

Part two continues on this track and explores the adaptations of mythologies in comics. C.W. Marshall examines how the furies are portrayed and developed mainly in two well-known comics presented by DC Comics, Neil Gaiman’s *The Sandman* and *Wonder Woman*. Craig Dethloff then analyses the development of the American superhero-comics and the changing expectations that these superheroes were supposed to meet; Dethloff makes the interesting observation that the ancient gods, not really “superheroic” in the modern sense of the expression, were difficult to adapt to such expectations and that they were used rather because of “the spirit of aesthetic elegance they conveyed” (p. 114). R. Clinton Simms then examines how one of the most problematic of these gods, Ares, has been portrayed in comics. Simms demonstrates how Ares has become an increasingly complex figure; however, one could have wished that Simms would have delved deeper into the changing concepts of war that have led to the emergence of this more troubled, complex Ares in recent comic adaptations. Finally Benjamin Stevens analyses the interplay between superhero characters and biblical themes in *Kingdom Come*, without specifically analysing Classical mythology, however.

Part three turns from gods to issues of ancient history. Vincent Tomasso discusses references to the Battle of Thermopylae in Frank Miller’s *Sin City* and interprets this reference as an argument that there is no room for “ancient Greek values” in today’s cynical world. Emily Fairey compares the Persians as depicted by Frank Miller in *300* and the Persians as they are rendered in Greek vase painting. Fairey concludes that Miller’s Persians stem from the “supervillain” tradition. However, she could have penetrated more deeply the idea that the portrayal of these “supervillains” may have stemmed from the idea of the battle representing a “clash of civilisations”, an idea recurring through later western cultural history. Anise K. Strong examines the “dream of Augustus” which is a fascinating episode from Neil Gaiman’s *The Sandman* and Martin T. Dinter provides an overview of the idea of Antiquity in the French/Belgian *Les Bandes Dessinées*-tradition.

Part four treats adaption of the myth of Troy to comics. Cartoonist Eric Shanower describes his work with his acclaimed *Age of Bronze* in a “cartoon essay”. This is a pleasant surprise, but of course makes perfect sense in this context. Chiara Sulprizio analyses Shanower’s decision to leave the gods out of the story and instead put the emphasis on human motivations, more specifically love, eroticism and desire. However one might argue that Sulprizio could have ad-

dressed other topics that seem controversial. For example, is it reasonable to do as Shanower wants to do, and reconcile *all* the versions of the story into one? Are not the different versions parts of the story? Further, does it make sense to place the story, which was so clearly part of a “distant Greek mythological past,” in an archaeologically well-defined Bronze Age? Thomas E. Jenkins, finally, analyses adaptations of the *Odyssey* in the well-known “adult fantasy” magazine *Heavy Metal*.

The volume ends with an extremely helpful section of references. First, there is a list of “Classical comics” most frequently referred to in the anthology and considered most important by the editors. Second, there is a list of other comics that are also of some importance. These are augmented with lists of resources, both in print and digital, on comics and comic-based theory. The book is handsomely printed and edited, and this reviewer could find no apparent typos or errors.

This, truly, is a pioneer work. The contributions explore a wide range of different issues and a variety of methodological approaches, from the sophisticated comics theory employed by Johnson to intertextuality as utilized by Stevens. The volume also outlines a range of topics that await further exploration. This is all to be expected from an anthology that represents a “first” in the field.

However, the reader is also left with an impression of a certain lack of coherence, and that certain discussions could have been taken further. For instance, the different appropriations of the traditions from Classics that seem to be apparent in European *bandes dessinées* on the one hand and American comics on the other, simply beg for analysis. Still, it could be argued that these matters could be taken up in another volume or in a number of volumes where they could be examined in greater detail. But above all one lacks a coherent discussion of “Classics” and comics. A number of contributions end up discussing the links between comics and “culture” or “heritage” in general, never really arriving at the question of what—if anything—is special to the relations between comics and Classics.

There are two further somewhat problematic issues that should be mentioned. The first one is that of illustrations. There is simply too few of them. Frequently this reviewer found himself logging on to Google in order to search for artwork from the comics discussed just in order to get an impression of what the discussions were about. One could argue that if this volume made me curious enough to seek out the comics under discussion for myself, that alone is a success. And it is fully understandable if copyright issues restrict the amount of artwork from various comics that can be reproduced in a volume of this kind. Still, this presents problems, not least as some contributions refer in detail not only to the visual style of the comics under scrutiny but also frequently to individual captions.

The second issue is that of readership. The editors consider their target audience “the capeless classical scholar” (p. 5). One could note that some of the contributions probably work better if the reader has some knowledge of the issues discussed in the individual papers. Above all quite a few of the contributions benefit from at least some acquaintance with the comics discussed. The reader could be expected to have some knowledge of *Asterix*, but it is not so obvious that the he or she is familiar with some of the others, such as Gaiman’s *The Sandman*, a work of great complexity and intricacy, nor is it indeed self-evident that a European reader is familiar with the myriad of US superhero comic characters that pass through the pages of this volume.

Classics and Comics is evidently a labour of love: in the concluding presentation of the contributors, which is written in a congenially light tone, C.W. Marshall writes that he “has been conducting research for this volume since he was eleven”, p. 248). On the whole, enthusiasm shines through. This is a good thing. It is to be hoped that this volume provides a starting point for further research in the field, and that the capeless teachers and researchers in Classics are inspired by it to get acquainted with the field of comics. If this happens, then this volume will indeed be a success.

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M. Prusac, *From Face to Face: Recarving of Roman Portraits and the Late-Antique Portrait Art* (Monumenta Graeca et Romana), Brill, Leiden & Oxford 2011. xxii + 202 pp. + 155 plates ISBN: 978-90-04-18271-4.

This book is a significant contribution to the study of Late Antiquity. During the last two decades, immense interest in this period has swept across the various fields of Classical studies and Art history: what is new in Marina Prusac’s (hereafter MP) study is the specific focus on recarving techniques in Late Antique portraiture. MP examines how, and under which historical circumstances, this phenomenon may be explained, and how it influenced the specific style or styles of Late Antique portraiture. In other words, she studies how developments in techniques and style were closely intertwined with social practices. It is argued throughout the book that, whilst earlier 1st and 2nd century AD portraits were usually recarved as a consequence of public memory sanctions *damnatio memoriae*, the recarving of portraits in Late Antiquity must be understood in the wider context of reuse during Late Antiquity, a practice which increased dramatically from