

control, narcissism and magical art. Hermione and Paulina might not be as easily 'contained'.

The only serious criticism that could be levelled at the book's approach is that at times it gets bogged down in debates with other scholars, and that this can blur the core readings and makes some chapters a little prolix; these debates are certainly important, but they do suggest that the author is thinking aloud rather than presenting the fully assimilated conclusions of that thinking. On the whole, though, the book is clearly and engagingly written, and offers important new paradigms for thinking about magic and about masculine identity in the drama and culture of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Perhaps most importantly, *Magic and Masculinity* gives a nuanced and striking portrait of the continuities between magic and 'true religion' in the period.

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Kathleen Wren Christian, *Empire without End. Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350–1527*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010. xiv + 440 pp. £40.00. ISBN: 978-0300154214.

This book marks a substantial advance in the study of antiquities collecting, for the breadth of its scope, the subtle interpretation or reinterpretation of individual episodes and larger phenomena, and the quantity of information it provides. It is divided into two parts closely connected by multiple internal references: the first (1–247) consists of a long essay, divided into seven chapters and an epilogue, that illustrates why and how dramatic changes in the practices of collecting antique figural sculpture took place between the years in which Petrarch wandered among the ruins of Rome and the Sack of the city (c. 1350–c. 1530); the second part (249–388) contains thirty-eight entries concerning collections of ancient sculpture formed during this period, detailing their formation, location, display and dispersal, as well as providing information on collectors and their families.

The main critical issue that the author challenges is the commonly held notion that the gradual emergence of an interest in antique sculpture during the late medieval and early modern period was the result of a linear process, articulated in a series of steps leading to a full appreciation of ancient statues for their aesthetic and historical qualities, a view expressed, for instance, in Roberto Weiss's pioneering study *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (1969). Building on her formidable knowledge of previous literature and of the original sources, Kathleen Wren Christian shows that the pattern that led to the 'rediscovery' of ancient statues was achieved through a more complex, stratified and diversified process. This multi-layered analysis is achieved through a close understanding of the social, political and ritual dynamics in which antiquities collecting was practiced in Rome.

By avoiding pre-formulated broad teleological ideas about the 'rediscovery' of ancient statuary, the author implicitly takes on an approach that we may categorize

under the label of 'New historicism', one that concentrates on 'the embeddedness of cultural objects in the contingencies of history' and takes human agency as a factor of change seriously.¹

Chapter V, for instance, provides a particularly sophisticated interpretation of the collecting preferences and motivations of popes Paul II (1464–71) and Sixtus IV (1471–84). The former is usually remembered as a collector of gems, cameos, coins and Byzantine icons, and for his desire to display some of the most famous statues of Rome in front of his private palace. By contrast, the most notorious act of the latter as pertains to the history of collecting, is the 1471 dedication of some of the most famous ancient bronze sculptures known at the time to the Roman people on the Capitoline Hill. For these reasons, Paul II and Sixtus IV are usually considered respectively as the 'first Renaissance collector' and the patron of the 'first museum'. Far from representing two consecutive steps in a teleological development that led from the appreciation of small, precious items to larger figural sculpture, the author convincingly argues that their approaches to collecting represent two opposed, almost antithetical conceptions of the function and meaning of ancient works of art: Paul II aimed at showing *maiestas* as a means to creating authority through the exaltation of the papal persona, almost in a Byzantine fashion, while Sixtus IV sought to show civic virtues as a means of appropriating to the papacy that *imperium* that the Roman people had regarded as their most treasured privilege since antiquity.

In general, in this book, shifting approaches to antiquities collecting appear as the result of conflicts among attitudes towards the past in competition with each other. Rather than a linear history of collecting, we are thus confronted with a series of retrospective ideas about antiquity that affected collecting practices in different ways. Thus, for instance, humanist views of ancient Rome (Chapter III) and those of the native nobility (Chapter IV) appear to have been closely interrelated and interacting on many levels, including visually in the urban fabric, while remaining in sustained competition between themselves.

The originality of this book consists in highlighting conflicts and contradictions rather than affinities and similarities. Tension is found, for instance, in the conflict between private pleasure and public virtue, which caused great anxiety in the field of collecting. Other issues that run through the text concern the use of ancient art to underpin political power and social advancement, and the reciprocal relationship between poetry and sculpture (Chapter VI), mostly articulated around the question whether marble or words are best suited to confer eternity. A further recurrent theme is that of 'inspirational' statues, mostly female figures, and in particular sleeping nymphs, which captured the imagination of humanists and collectors alike, stimulating peculiar forms of sociability and the composition of poems and epigrams that 'gave life' to the statues themselves.

In the second part of the book, entries on individual collections, alphabetically ordered, provide the reader with a synthetic outline of the history of the collection, with rich bibliography, followed by a chronological list of early descriptions, transcribed in full in the original language. This material provides a fundamental tool for

¹ Stephen Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder', in *Learning to Curse. Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 216–46, here 220.

future researchers and allows scholars easy access to a vast quantity of primary material that is often very hard to consult. The book is very clearly and elegantly written, and beautifully illustrated with high-quality images. In conclusion, although the subject may appear at first to be difficult, this is a thought-provoking and highly enjoyable study accessible to a wide readership.

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