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Victoria C. Gardner Coates, Jon L. Seydl, *Antiquity Recovered. The Legacy of Pompeii and Herculaneum*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007. Pp. 304; figs. 121. ISBN 978-0-89236-872-3. \$60.00.

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This book offers very surprising insights about *Pompejirezeption* in the 20th century in the western world. It is the sequel of an exhibition held in Philadelphia in 2002, and the concept was worked out by collaborators of the J. Paul Getty Research Center at Los Angeles, an appropriate institution, with not only the Villa of the Papyri rebuilt at Malibu but also a rich collection of pompeiana and publications on the topic. The Getty Research Institute's collection was also enriched recently by the bequest of the late Halsted B. Vander Poel. The editors sketch the peculiarly favorable situation at Philadelphia during the 18th century regarding things classical, where the discoveries around Naples were followed with strong interest. As to that I can point here to a manuscript 'found at Herculaneum', pertaining to politics in Philadelphia, that illustrates this cultural impact. William Smith (1727-1803) from Aberdeen wrote *A Fragment of the Chronicles of Nathan Ben Saddi; A Rabbi of the Jews Lately Discovered in the Ruins of Herculaneum; and Translated from the Original, into the Italian Language. By the Command of the King of the Two-Sicilies and now first publish'd in English, Constantinople: printed in the year of the Vulgar Era 5707* (viz. Philadelphia 1758).

The contributors represent various research disciplines and some of them are *homines novi* in the old field of Pompeian studies, along with experts like Bettina Bergmann, Eugene Dwyer and Elaine Gazda. This means that we have essays on film (this time -- luckily -- not peplum trash, but art), literature and art, but also on papyrology and pyrodramas. The editors give a clear introduction, with short summaries of the papers presented. Claire Lyon and Marcia Reed present some gleanings of the *curiosa* in the Getty collection, which will make every pompeianist want to fly in immediately to Los Angeles. [A pedantic note: Figure 15, p. 148, does not show the atrium, but the small garden behind the tablinum in the House of Sallustius.]

The first paper, on volcanic studies at Naples from 1500 to 1700, lies somewhat outside the scope of the book. Sean Cocco discusses various studies and travel books and concludes that 16th-century scholars were more innovative than their successors in the 17th century. Cocco does not address the study of classical matters in Naples and the lack of interest in Pompeii, which might be explained by the focus on natural history and philosophy (at least in the early 18th century with Vico). Therefore, the link with the remainder of the book is weak.

Alden Gordon sketches the excavations in the 18th century and concentrates on the lack of openness to the world of the European Enlightenment. As we know from numerous records,

visitors were not allowed to take notes, let alone make sketches, and some of them devised hilarious tricks to do what they wanted. Gordon probably relies too much on the old book of Egon Corti on Pompeii and its discovery, when he describes the first steps by King Charles and the court.¹ He suggests that within the learned circles at Naples Mazocchi and Martorelli might have done better than the clan chosen by Minister Tanucci, but their publications were heavily ridiculed by the foreign scholars. In any case, the transmission of information could not be entirely prevented and the first illustrated publication by the French artist and architect Cochin and Bellicard became a great success. I think that the contrast between the rather primitive engravings of the Herculanean monuments and the 'classical' ones of Pozzuoli and other monuments open to the public stem from the fact that the first ones were made after sketches made from memory and the second ones worked-out sketches, and from the wish to show the first ones were really as primitive as sketches. The great engraver Charles-Nicolas Cochin could easily have done better.

Tina Najbjerg and Hérica Valladares demonstrate how figural paintings cut out during the oldest excavations can still be studied in the way modern archaeologists desire, viz. in recontextualising them and interpreting them within their original setting. Najbjerg proves her suggestion by presenting briefly the paintings found in the earliest excavations at Herculaneum (1739-1761) in a building known as the Basilica and nowadays seen as an Augusteum or, as Najbjerg proposes, a building devoted to the education of the young people at Herculaneum. These reflections are based on Najbjerg's previous work on this still enigmatic building, lying under the lava at the edge of the actual visible site. She also illustrates how artists and artisans in the late 18th century reproduced images on porcelain saucers, cups and dishes and remodeled them in three-dimensional statuettes.

Valladares discusses the four charming women on blue and green backgrounds from Stabiae. Although they are reproduced in almost all popular books on ancient painting and Campania, they have rarely been treated in scholarly discussions. Valladares starts with the old 18th-century interpretations and passes to the modern ones that only partly try to integrate the old context. Her own attempt, however, does not lead to a clear conclusion, since the identification of the figures is more or less left to the reader, while (seemingly?) the author does not arrive at an interpretation of her own. The stylistic comparison with the Villa della Farnesina is not worked out sufficiently (for me not convincingly at all) and other comparanda remain sketchy. These ladies must have served as vignettes on panels in a sober Third-Style decoration like that in the Casa del Centenario or House I 7, 7 at Pompeii.

James Porter contributes a paper on the discovery of ancient texts in the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum. No new text of Aeschylus, Homer or Livy or any other major author was discovered among the carbonised scrolls. He sketches how eagerly scholars dismissed the importance of the texts by Philodemus, which are interesting in their own right. Porter presents a sound debunking of the romantic vision of the villa as a philosophical retreat, e.g. of Calpurnius Piso, with Philodemus as the pet philosopher. We cannot deduce that from the facts. Even the 'library' was nothing but crates and heaps of papyri found in disorder. Porter rides his hobbyhorse in stressing the problem of classicism (or not) in these texts and concludes that the readers of these texts were strongly deluded by Antiquity, which offered a different face than they wished.² He refers to suggestions of new excavations to find more texts and apparently does not know of the dig made in the 1990s at the behest of the then director of the Papyrological Institute at Naples, Marcello Gigante. More or less unpublished, offering almost nothing to either archaeologist or tourist, these new ruins at the northern side of excavated Herculaneum are decaying rapidly.³ All these disappointments, however, did not

prevent literary reactions: the number of literary texts "found at Herculaneum" increased incredibly in the run of the 18th century. I mention only the pamphlet cited supra and the *Voyages d'Antenor en Grèce et en Asie*, presumably translated from a Greek manuscript from Herculaneum by E.-F. Lanthier in 1795.

Chlor Chard's essay 'Picnic at Pompeii' wittily and juicily describes how the travellers combined cultural interest with a Gargantuan appetite. Drinking plays an enormous role in the travelogues in which the authors had to keep in mind the seduction of hyperbole and digression. We may remember the topical element of drinking bottles of lacryma christi on the top of Vesuvius. As far as I can see Winckelmann introduced the image of the mountain climbers as Cyclopes who, seated on the brim of the crater stripped of their clothes, drank their wine "nackend wie die Zyklopen."

Lee Behlman highlights a nice topos in literary fiction, that of the faithful sentinel who did not quit his post during the night of the eruption. His skeleton was said to have been found in 1763 in a niche next to the Porta d'Ercolano, but is a pure invention of local guides. Behlman adds two artistic creations to the dossier, a large canvas by Edward John Poynter in Liverpool (1865) and a lost statue by Harriet Goodhue Hosmer (1878). This soldier is one of the (real and fantasy) skeletons brought to life again that are also tropes in Pompeian fiction and here discussed by Eugene Dwyer. His contribution focuses on the plaster casts of victims of the disaster of AD 79 and he concentrates on the literary fiction about these people. He makes clear that the casts of women provoked sexual fantasies in various authors like Edward Bulwer Lytton and Théophile Gautier. In the run of time this sudden erotic effect made place for emotions of mourning and contemplation of death.

So-called pyrodramas were huge events in the later 19th century. Nick Yablon gives a vivid evocation of this popular spectacle that would be replaced by film in the early 20th century, but, as he makes clear, must be studied as a phenomenon on its own. Every night in summer, thousands of people came to Coney Island near New York to see Pompeii destroyed for the umpteenth time by a voracious fire. James Pain and other entrepreneurs gave their shows all over the world. Returning to the USA, it is illustrative that the end of Pain's productions at New York in 1914 was not caused by the success of the new film medium, but by his work in the increasing weapon industry, where ammunition was needed more than fireworks. Yablon shows how, thanks to these pyrodramas, the Pompeii theme moved from the academic and literary levels towards bigger groups of people. The reworking of Bulwer's novel by Louisa Medina in 1835 stood at the beginning of this development: she made the Pompeians a reflection of modern American society, especially that of New York.

A double bill by Bettina Bergmann and Elaine Gazda is devoted to the famous painted frieze in the Villa of the Mysteries discovered in 1909 and soon after acquiring a cult status in archaeology, art history and psychology. Gazda sketches the vicissitudes about the planned one-to-one reproduction for Kelsey's new museum at Ann Arbor, which would become a 5/6th reproduction by Maria Barosso in 1925-1927, exhibited some six years ago in the University of Michigan.⁴ The painter had a great skill, and fame among the fascist circles of the late 1920s and 1930s. However, Gazda does not make clear how far this artist was really involved in this regime from the outset: she encountered great problems during the working process, which does not endorse the supposition that she had a certain status. The position of Vittorio Spinazzola -- dismissed in 1924 -- is unnecessarily highlighted: he played no role of consequence after 1924.⁵

Bergmann collects various theories on the interpretation of the frieze, especially those stemming from psychoanalyst and gender studies. It is not her goal to arrive at a reading of her own, but she makes a plea for an open-minded approach to this enigmatic cycle. Nevertheless, some ideas are rather strange to me, like that of the painter Patricia Olson, who claimed to become a member of the ritual depicted by entering into its realm. That recalls a similar attitude, displayed by male erotically aroused men in Leon Daudet's *Les bacchantes* of 1931, in which a party of French 'connaisseurs' tries to reconstruct the Bacchic rituals in the shape of a tableau vivant accompanied by symphonic music of Beethoven. All these products of emotional reactions demonstrate that the frieze is a challenging work of art that does not betray its meaning and has to suffer from bizarre approaches by bizarre people.

The film essay is on Roberto Rossellini's *Viaggio in Italia* of 1953 and Jean-Luc Godard's *Mépris* (the serious debut of Brigitte Bardot) of 1963. I only know the first movie, which made me think of Malcolm Lowry's short story "The Present Estate of Pompeii", only published posthumously in *Hear Us O Lord From Heaven* (1961), in which an unhappy couple strolls through Pompeii and experiences a sort of katabasis like Alex and Katherine in Rossellini's movie.⁶ Both films are on miscommunication and the misunderstanding of southern Italy by northerners. Jennie Hirsch interprets the two films as true Odysseys through Italy and structures her dense interpretation with the motif of trips in motorcars, which I think is too banal to serve as a key for this reading, as if all trips in films have to be seen as aftermaths of Odysseus' ten-year itinerary...

In sum the book is highly recommended to every scholar interested in the vicissitudes of Antiquity, especially Herculanean and Pompeian Antiquity, but also to those focusing on cultural memory in general. The presentation is impeccable and the illustrations are mostly highly rare and original examples of dealing with the Pompeian past.

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Notes:

1. Gordon et al. call the first king of Naples Charles VII, but there he was only known as Carlo di Borbone. In Spain he would become Carlo III and if we want to add a number, it must be Carlo II, as successor of the emperor Charles as King Carlo I (1500-1558). See R. Ajello, Carlo, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 20, 1977, 239-251 for a rapid overview.
2. J.I. Porter (ed.), *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greece and Rome*, Princeton 2006. Cf. my BMCR review [2006.05.37](#).
3. See e.g. C. Mattusch, *The Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum*, Los Angeles 2005, 53-54.
4. E.K. Gazda (ed.), *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii. Ancient Ritual -- Modern Muse*, Ann Arbor 2000, esp. 129-137, 200-204.
5. Neither archaeologist apparently knows of the short but very good biographies of the main players in P.G. Guzzo (ed.), *Pompei. Scienza e Società*, Milan 2001, by Filippo Delpino (Spinazzola) and Fausto Zevi (Amedeo Maiuri). See also P.G. Guzzo, A. Maiuri, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 67, 2006, 682-687. Barosso has no entry in this fundamental dictionary of Italians.
6. Campagna is mistakenly used for Campania. On the decisive role of guides see E.M. Moormann, *Guides in the Vesuvius Area Eternalised in Travelogues and Fiction*, *Rivista di Studi Pompeiani* 14 (2003) 31-48.