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Review of *The Story of Greece and Rome* by Tony Spawforth

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changed perceptions of Seneca's Latin. Similarly, a promising chapter on 'Witchcraft and Stagecraft' (pp.119-139) is initially informative on Roman attitudes regarding witchcraft, but then follows a long diversion on French theatre and specifically Corneille's 1635 staging of *Medée*. This is successful as a close reading between Seneca and Corneille, but incongruous as a chapter within a general introduction, and not necessarily of interest to the Classicist, who may have preferred a chapter on comparisons between Seneca and Euripides.

The final chapter seeks to define Seneca's version of the myth within the web of intertext, and among the multiple modern re-readings and re-stagings. Here the lighter touch, covering a greater number of examples and across more artistic genres, but in less detail, is welcome, and encourages an appreciation for the uniquely Senecan elements of the Medea myth. This style is more within the remit of a general introduction.

This book is eminently suitable for the undergraduate reading Seneca or exploring Reception, and I would suggest that the first four chapters would be useful for a student in secondary education. Parts of the book would even benefit those reading Euripides' version of the myth, or Seneca's letters, as his philosophy is often linked to his creative output. The extensive notes and bibliography also provide many opportunities for further exploration to interested readers.

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The Story of Greece and Rome

Spawforth (T.) Pp. x + 375, maps, b/w & colour pls. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2018. Cased, £20, US$30. ISBN: 978-0-300-21711-7.

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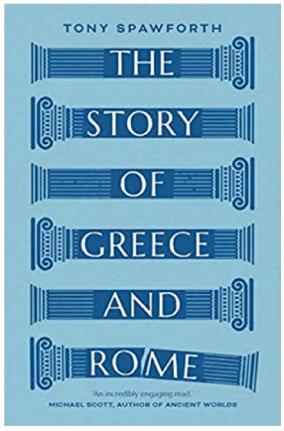

The story of Greece and Rome is a familiar one; unless it isn't anymore. If it isn't, then it needs to be retold; and Tony Spawforth would seem to be a good man for the job. He is an emeritus professor of Ancient History, the author of several books, and the presenter of many documentaries. I watched one of these; in which a young Tony Spawforth enthusiastically pursues the mortal remains and immortal glory of Alexander the Great. He says that he'd loved such things as a boy, and so had become an archaeologist. He journeys to out-of-the-way excavations and returns to university museums. He consults with expert colleagues but tells his own story. His story of Greece and Rome might have been the basis of another documentary or two; but that it is a book makes it of more educational interest.

If the story of Greece and Rome is no longer as familiar as it was, it is because fewer people read about it. Documentary films are supposed to take the place, or supply the lack, of a more literate engagement with the history of antiquity. Ideally, a documentary illustrates and supplements the viewers' reading. But if there were no more books on Greece and Rome, there would soon be no more films; just as if there were no museums, there would be no archaeological findings, only out-of-the-way ruins.

Spawforth says that his story 'is aimed at readers who are interested enough in the topic to start reading this book, but who have little or no background in the disciplines of Classics or Ancient History' (11). As I read, it seemed to me that the book might find an audience either among young students in an introductory survey, or among older world travellers. Spawforth is determined to make it 'relatable', with plenty of references to the present day and its popular culture. But most of the time he spends in the present day he spends in the museums that house the artifacts of classical antiquity. He seems to have been to every one in the world, and to know not only the Greek and Roman holdings but the histories of their acquisitions. As I read I was often reminded of Herodotus, who would often adduce in support of his inquiries what he himself saw in the places he had personally visited.

Spawforth also calls upon the pertinent ancient authors, but presents them in an unconventional way. He indeed does not assume that his audience has them in their background. Thus in describing the Minoan civilisation he quotes a passage about the power of King Minos; and only afterward identifies Thucydides as its author. An observation about Roman power is attributed to 'a Greek writer called Polybius' (94). Spawforth tells us of 'an Athenian philosopher writing in the early to mid-300s BC', before he tells us that it is Plato (124); and quotes another 'ancient writer' without ever telling us that it is Plutarch. Likewise, he does not assume that his audience knows Pope's Homer, but does take the time to acquaint them with that classic example of classical translation, and then makes a point of quoting Pope when he has occasion to lay out some lines from the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. And in his extensive use of Herodotus we can see what can come of a pedagogical rather than a scholarly exposition of an unfamiliar but important ancient author.

The Story of Greece and Rome sorts out the Greeks and Romans so as to keep them clear and distinct, but not so as to elide their interactions. The individual chapters are well organised, and the transitions between them should help maintain the interest of students. If it would also appeal to older readers, all the better; and if it comes at Plato or Plutarch in such a way as to distract any conventionally textual teachers, let it be a salutary reminder of the circumstances in which we now would teach our students about Greece and Rome.

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Beyond the Nile. Egypt and the Classical World

Spier, J., Potts, T., and Cole, S. (Eds). Los Angeles, Getty Museums. ISBN 978-1606065518. Pp. 360. Ill. 200. Hardback. £45.00.

Steven Hunt
University of Cambridge

This is the catalogue of the eponymous exhibition presented at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in 2018. It is a weighty volume,