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**Review of Anderson, B.; Rojas, F. (2017) Antiquarianisms:
contact, conflict, comparison**
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Benjamin Anderson and Felipe Rojas, eds., *Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, Comparison*. Joukowsky Institute Publications 8. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017. Pp. 226. £35.00.

As Benjamin Anderson and Felipe Rojas point out early on in this well-presented and enjoyable collection of essays, their edited volume continues a dialogue with Alain Schnapp's influential idea of "world antiquarianism" (reviewed in *History of Humanities* 1, no. 1 [2016]). The book engages with the epistemic and historical complexities of seeking to identify traditions of antiquarianism in periods and places away from post-Renaissance Europe. It does so by bringing out the heterogeneity inherent in thinking about the past, and the contestations and conflicts that were often part of such work. Central here is the argument that valorization of the past is a potentially universal trait in human societies, extending across the world and attested both in prehistoric and early historic periods. This book is a central contribution to the study of antiquarianism and contributes to the histories of naturalists, the history of archaeology as an emerging discipline, and the pedigrees of museum collections.

Such comparative antiquarianism is, however, not a universally accepted idea, with historians of archaeology also making the forceful point that European colonial antiquarian practices may be categorically different from other forms of appreciations of past material things around the world. The reuse, reinterpretation, and remembering of objects and images from preceding periods was indeed a ubiquitous phenomenon, but the core question may be what the outcome is of seeking comparison with cases of modern European antiquarianism. One such outcome may be—as Alfredo González-Ruibal eloquently argues in this book—that matters of power and inequality between cultures in contact are erased to some degree by stretching the definitional boundaries of antiquarianism to include most forms of valuing material pasts. This critical exploration provides the book with a firm intellectual mission and adds a pleasant clarity to it goals.

Chapters 1 and 2 set out the conceptual framework of the book, with chapter 2, by González-Ruibal, outlining the critical difference between antiquarianism of the European colonial era and apparently similar forms found elsewhere or earlier in time. His argument revolves around the question of inequality in power during moments of cultural contact and the possibility of radical difference between time periods and human societies. This provides an interesting challenge for the book, one that coeditor Felipe Rojas addresses in chapter 1 by formulating three guiding foci for the posterior case studies: First, who were the individuals or groups that we now would like to define as "antiquaries"? Second, Rojas asks what falls under the rubric of a trace of the past. And, third, he questions the perceived connection between the former two.

Chapters 3–9 present the seven included case studies, composed at an overall high standard and written with insightful precision. Each of them provides well-grounded and relevant studies of materials from either the pre-Hispanic Americas or regions in the eastern Mediterranean during the Ottoman Empire. Essays revolve around the omnipresence of ruins from the past, invoking Ann Stoler’s powerful allusion to the continuous “ruination” that describes both the accumulation of material traces of the past and how these represent residual forms of power and inequality. Sometimes, such traces are imposing and powerful, even alive, as in Steve Inomata’s study of perspectives on Inca landscapes. Other chapters strike a balance between illustrating examples of past forms of consciousnesses of history and ensuing entanglements with European colonizers, as is the case of the interaction of European and indigenous interests in the material traces of the past, outlined in the highly original chapters by Byron Ellsworth Hamann and Giuseppe Marconi.

Chapters 7–9 shift the view from the Americas to a focus on collecting in Ottoman-period Greece by Emily Neumeier (chap. 7); a close reading of an account by the British traveler Henry Baker Tristram (1822–1906) of his visit to parts of contemporary Jordan (chap. 8); and a consideration by coeditor Benjamin Anderson of a painting of Athens by Louis-Francois Cassas (chap. 9). Perhaps the unifying conclusion coming from these three chapters is that comparison between forms of antiquarianism can certainly be steeped in hegemonic tendencies (*sensu* González-Ruibal), but it can also offer complementarity and room for encounters, indeed acknowledging real difference, rather than subsuming local ideas about material pasts by modern European ones. Moreover, such encounters need not be between academic specialists but can in fact be open to multiple parties holding stakes in the material traces of the past.

This negotiation of different forms of antiquarianism makes the volume a valuable resource for those interested in the history of collections and archaeology, not least given its willingness to include a critical consideration of the attempt to, on the one hand, compare between world regions and periods and, on the other, compare the perhaps more canonical views on European antiquarianism. On this latter point, it is worth noting that comprehensive understandings of antiquarianism in modern Europe are essentially anachronistic. Individual antiquarians are to be appreciated on the basis of their personal accomplishment rather than as part of a definable discipline. Hence the name of the antiquarians’ foremost institution in London is not “Society of Antiquarianism,” instead foregrounding the historical particularities of individual antiquaries.

A central question in the book—whether antiquarianism is a practice that can meaningfully be identified in settings and periods beyond early modern Europe—remains ultimately open-ended. Chapter 20, a summarizing essay by Peter Miller, draws on wider definitions of what it means to compare, discussing the inevitability of comparing to reach understanding and the inevitability of adopting a perspective from

which to compare. One could argue that this view is comparable to what drove early modern European antiquarians, and Miller explores this by proposing not to take European points of view to understand materials elsewhere but to instead actively reverse this. Important, and perhaps somewhat understudied in this collection, is the role of landscapes in those moments of the present where the reflection onto the past is situated. Yes, landscapes contain ruins, fragments, and artifact detritus, but they are also modified, reworked, and maintained, both through environmental and human intentionality. The change manifested in landscapes, due to such complex processes, generates consciousness of pasts and a sense of long-term time, more generally. Indeed, landscape brings forth time.

This book succeeds in striking a good balance between comparing the eastern Mediterranean and the Americas, as well as critically discussing the nature of comparison in humanities research, and it contributes to the burgeoning debates on comparison in the human sciences. Oxbow Books is to be commended on producing a volume with an elegant layout and high-quality illustrations. It should be a welcome read for graduate students, historians of archaeology, and museum professionals working with collections.

Alexander Geurds

Almut-Barbara Renger and Xin Fan, eds., *Receptions of Greek and Roman Antiquity in East Asia*. Leiden: Brill, 2019. Pp. xxii+472. \$227.00.

“Many Party members are still in a fog about Chinese history, whether of the last hundred years or of ancient times. There are many Marxist-Leninist scholars who cannot open their mouths without citing ancient Greece; but as for their own ancestors—sorry, they have been forgotten.” Mao Zedong returned to the point three more times, adding, “Ignorant of their own country, some people can only relate tales of ancient Greece and other foreign lands, and even this knowledge is quite pathetic, consisting of odds and ends from old foreign books” (“Reform Our Learning,” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 3 [Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1965]). This 1941 speech, delivered in Yan’an, still captures something about the status and state of European classical Antiquity in China and, by extension, East Asia. The acerbic tone, moreover, has caught on again among top cadres in the era of Xi Jinping.

One of the findings that emerges from this volume—which contains twenty-three contributions on the history and current condition of Greek and Latin philology, history,