

Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970, by Suzanne L. Marchand. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1996. xxiv + 400 pages, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$39.50.

by

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Down from Olympus is a magnificent contribution to the history of archaeology. Historian Suzanne Marchand traces how for over 150 years, mediated by research institutions and government patronage, the German intelligentsia's infatuation with the ancient Greeks shaped the development of German archaeology. Interaction between scholars and government officials made possible great accomplishments in collecting, fieldwork, and specialized scholarship and enabled classical archaeologists to control the development of other branches of archaeology. Marchand argues that growing dependence on state patronage also shaped the development of classical archaeology in ways that were not conducive to its professional and moral integrity.

Marchand's book joins a rapidly growing list of publications that are exploring the impact that patronage and institutional structures have had on the practice of archaeology. These include Paul Fagette's *Digging for Dollars* (1996) and Edwin Lyon's *A New Deal for Southeastern Archaeology* (1996), both of which examine the impact of the "New Deal" of the 1930s on American archaeology, as well as Bruce Kuklick's *Puritans in Babylon* (1996), which investigates the institutional development of Near Eastern studies in the United States.

The great strengths of Marchand's work are her control of archival sources and her refusal to simplify or schematize the history of German classical archaeology. At every stage she explores the vast array of options and viewpoints that were at play. The study of ancient Greek culture became central to the system of elite higher education initiated in Prussia by Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1809-1810. Middle-class German intellectuals already had come to view the contrast between the ancient Greeks and Romans as prefiguring the modern one between themselves and the French. Their romantic espousal of the Greeks was part of their struggle to free Germany from the influence of Roman-inspired French classicism and enlightenment culture. In northern Germany anti-Romanism also was encouraged by Lutheran antipathy for Roman Catholicism. Reactionary aristocrats, impressed by what 18th-century scholarship had learned about the traditional education of civil servants in China, saw the study of ancient Greece as providing future servants of the state with a rigorous education in the humanities that was reassuringly isolated from current political controversy.

While philological studies remained the core of classical education in both the elite high schools and the universities, in the era of "big scholarship" (*Grosswissenschaft*) that began in the late 19th century large amounts of government funding were directed to archaeological research through various agencies, especially the influential Deutsches-Archäologisches Institut. Increasingly, however, in their desire to protect and encourage such patronage, German classical archaeologists felt obliged to accommodate their research to political agendas. As Bismarckian avoidance of colonial entanglements gave way to a more aggressive foreign policy, archaeologists working in the Middle East claimed a role for themselves in promoting German economic and strategic interests, often at the expense of international collegiality. The rise to power of the Nazis elicited a new emphasis on racial affinities with ancient Greece and on the ancient Greeks' interest in the human body. As enthusiasm for a classical education waned, political considerations increasingly dominated the academic behavior of classical archaeologists.

Marchand's richly contextualized presentation refutes Martin Bernal's suggestion that racism was the major driving force promoting the early development of institutionalized German philhellenism. Yet, in interpreting the role Assyriologists played in "dermot[ing] the history of the Jews" as evidence of the "degeneration of German tolerance" (p. 221, 227), Marchand embraces the single explanation that she so productively eschews elsewhere. Anti-Semitism was rife in Germany and other Western societies in the late 19th century, but Assyriologists, like Egyptologists, had additional, more respectable, reasons for seeking to escape from the tyranny of Biblical history. They were also setting that history into a broader context that has represented a lasting gain in understanding human history.

While offering a treasure house of insights into German cultural history, Marchand avoids explicit generalization, although her analysis is not without obviously well-considered moral judgments. Yet her data suggest an answer to why, despite the nationalistic fervor in Germany during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Prussian and German states lavishly supported classical, oriental, and Romano-German archaeology, while allowing prehistoric German archaeology to languish in the hands of relatively impecunious local authorities and amateurs. In part this resulted from state patronage being in the hands of an academic establishment and officials trained in classical studies, but it also reflected the conservative political establishment's ambivalent attitude towards German nationalism, which it both exploited and feared. It is a great irony, though one Marchand does not comment on, that while some Nazi leaders fanatically promoted the study of German prehistory, the party itself, with its dreams of *imperium* and its close links to Italian fascism, identified symbolically more strongly with ancient Roman than with ancient Greek culture.

Marchand as a historian writes for an audience that is thoroughly familiar with modern European history. This permits her to focus narrowly on relations among the institutions that shaped German archaeology, but it supplies readers with only a disjointed picture of the broader context in which the events Marchand describes were happening. A few more pages outlining the political, social, and economic history of modern Germany and dealing with a few special topics such as nationalism and anti-Semitism would have made the book accessible to many more archaeologists. By shifting her book's focus more in the direction of social rather than purely institutional history, Marchand might have provided a clearer understanding of the conditions in which classical archaeology evolved.

Archaeologists also would have appreciated a more detailed examination of the internal operation of the major archaeological organizations. Traditionally, funnelling large sums of money for archaeological research through a small number of institutions has enhanced the power of a few, well-placed senior archaeologists. This results in large amounts of data being collected, sometimes in valuable methodological innovations, but rarely in innovative interpretations. Marchand's account suggests that in the case of German classical archaeology, innovation was further stifled by a desire not to displease powerful patrons and to maintain classical archaeology's privileged position in high school education and in relation to rival kinds of archaeology. By the 20th century, this lack of theoretical development left German classical archaeologists with few ideas of their own that were worth defending and hence, as Marchand observes, extremely vulnerable to political pressure and the vagaries of popular culture.