
This is a short but densely packed guide to Roman art, suited for use in undergraduate courses and for teachers of Classical Studies in schools. It covers portraiture, sculpture, painting, mosaics, silverwork, bronzework, jewellery, ceramics, glassware and gardens. A final chapter discusses briefly some general issues about Roman art: the influence of Greece; the impact of Augustan style; the importance of the patron as opposed to the artist; Roman interest in historical subjects and landscape; realism and fantasy; and how ordinary Romans related to art in their environment. There are suggestions for further reading and study, a glossary of technical terms, and forty three photographs and illustrations, all black and white. The book was obviously written with British readers in mind, since it seems to be assumed that visits to the British Museum and excursions to various archaeological sites in the United Kingdom are easily arranged. In the Southern Hemisphere good quality books and photographs are all that most students have to go on.

Haward arranges her treatment of Roman art not chronologically or by historical period, as is usually done, but by artistic medium or genre. In this respect the book resembles Martin Henig’s *A Handbook of Roman Art*, though smaller, less expensive and less lavishly illustrated. The coverage of each topic is matter-of-fact and succinct; the chapters read like model answers to essay or examination questions, with all the right information logically ordered and illustrated with specific examples. As is the case with Henig’s book this approach does tend to reduce all the art forms to a kind of equality of significance which is, in itself, a distortion. It fails to highlight sufficiently the ideologically loaded forms of public art as against minor art forms designed for private enjoyment. The greatest weakness of this book is that it does not deal with architecture; consequently sculpture, portraiture and painting are largely decontextualised; turned into a museum art; reduced in meaning through being viewed in isolation. One reason for this omission may be that ‘Roman Architecture’ is listed as another title in the same series, but the exclusion of architecture from this survey weakens its treatment of the other arts as well and, more importantly, the ability of the author to grapple with big questions about the uniqueness and originality of the
overall Roman achievement in the field of visual art. Another artistic medium that should certainly have been included is coinage.

Something needs to be said about the photographs. The quality is uneven, with the lighting and camera angle showing up as particular problems in some instances. This is not a book that could stand alone as a collection of visual resources for a course on Roman art because few of the major works are represented: no Prima Porta Augustus or scenes from the Villa of the Mysteries. In some photos it is hard to see features referred to in the text, and for many works discussed there is no photo at all, the assumption being that it will be familiar to readers from other sources. On the other hand, some photos seem barely justified given the minimal notice they receive in the text. In scale many of the pictures are too small for the reader to make out fine details.

Perhaps these are less troublesome weaknesses in this book because of its particular focus. Haward's interest is not primarily in individual works of art and their interpretation but rather in the broad stylistic characteristics of each art form. Her approach produces greater breadth than depth, in that the range of examples she refers to is very wide but none of them is dwelt upon for any length of time. Complexities and controversies of interpretation are generally excluded from her survey and something is lost as a result: the sense of Roman art as a challenge to the understanding, as something strange that needs to be interpreted rather than something known that needs to be learned. In a well-known scene on Trajan's Column, a male figure lies on the ground in an ungainly pose with one leg upraised toward the emperor who stands on a podium above. Haward expounds its meaning: 'a mule with ears laid back has scented the blood of the sacrifice before it and dug its heels in, unseating its rider' (32). This explanation is presented as if it were unproblematic. Students get an answer they can write down. What they don't get is the stimulus to look at the picture and try to work out what it means for themselves.

In summary, this book will be valuable in a supplementary role in courses on Roman art but is unsuitable for use as a principal text and source of visual images.

Marcus Wilson
University of Auckland