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The ghosts of Cannae: Hannibal and the darkest hour of the Roman Republic, by Robert L. O'Connell (book review)

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ISBN 978-0-19-532738-0. \$29.95. ED

Ryan (law, Univ. of Virginia Sch. of Law) tells the compelling and scrupulously researched story of two schools, one urban (Thomas Jefferson High School) and one suburban (Freeman High School), located five miles apart in Richmond. The author delves into the politics of public education and school finance reform and provides fascinating glimpses into the societal forces that keep public schools racially and economically segregated. Ryan makes the points that racial and socioeconomic isolation (in the cities, suburbs, and exurbs) prevents equal educational opportunities and that housing policy should be linked to school policy. He gives many examples from around the nation related to school choice, vouchers, charter schools, standardized testing, and funding disparities. The author makes sense of key court cases and the many acronyms that punctuate any discussion of education reform. **VERDICT** Highly recommended for readers interested in education, public policy, political science, law, and especially the intersections among these areas.—Elizabeth Connor, *The Citadel, Military Coll. of South Carolina Lib., Charleston*

HISTORY

Dwyer, Eugene. Pompeii's Living Statues: Ancient Roman Lives Stolen from Death. Univ. of Michigan. 2010. c.216p. illus. maps. ISBN 978-0-472-11727-7. \$45. ARCHAEOLOGY

Pompeii's Vesuvius victims—as well as the fields of museum studies and archaeology, along with more recent Italian politics—come to life here through plaster casts of those who lost their lives in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E. Dwyer (art history, Kenyon Coll.) invites the reader to experience the 1861 unification of Italy and what it meant for those working on Pompeian artifacts. While keeping the focus on the statues themselves, formed by pouring plaster into cavities where ancient Pompeians lay amid hardened ash, Dwyer adds information about the era of the eruption, comparative analyses from colleagues in the field, and archaeological and political context to create a holistic scope for deeper understanding of the lives of the victims of Pompeii and the people who brought them back to life. Dwyer thus expands the scope of the lessons from the Pompeii Museum and of general museum studies. **VERDICT** Scholars and armchair travelers alike will be fascinated by this distinctive book.—Nadine Dalton Speidel, *Cuyahoga Cty. P.L., Parma, OH*

★ **Flavell, Julie. When London Was Capital of America.** Yale Univ. 2010. c.336p. illus. ISBN 978-0-300-13739-2. \$32.50. HIST

For the inhabitants of the British Empire

on the eve of the American Revolution, London stood as the epitome of refinement, amusement, and taste. Many aspiring Scots, English provincials, and colonists from North America and the West Indies gravitated to the metropolis seeking both social and political advancement, while others wallowed in Hogarthian vice in a city typified by coffeehouses, elite fashions, and the trappings of international commerce. Here, independent scholar Flavell (*Britain and America Go to War*) re-creates with stunning lucidity the bustling world of Georgian London, a world where planter, slave, and Yankee mixed with metropolitans of all ranks. Combining a sinuous narrative style with scholarly depth, Flavell closely follows the experiences of the South Carolinian Henry Laurens, the unfortunate Long Islander Stephen Sayre, and the illustrious Ben Franklin as well as a host of other characters as, with mixed results, they sought distinction in the capital. **VERDICT** Flavell's absorbing account is a remarkable achievement. Through meticulous research and elegant prose, she brings to life a city at the height of its powers. Highly recommended for scholars of the revolutionary Atlantic as well as enthusiasts of the era's history.—Brian Odom, *Pelham P.L., AL*

Hughes, Ben. Conquer or Die!: Wellington's Veterans and the Liberation of the New World. Osprey. Aug. 2010. c.392p. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 978-1-84908-183-2. \$25.95. HIST

The wars of South American liberation (1808–26) were led mostly by Simón Bolívar, who liberated no fewer than six South American countries from Spanish domination. This is covered most admirably in John Lynch's *Simon Bolivar: A Life* and John Charles Chasteen's *Americanos: Latin America's Struggle for Independence*. One important aspect of this conflict that hasn't been chronicled in decades is the contribution of the British Legion, a collection of over 6000 volunteers, mostly Napoleonic veterans, who fought between 1817 and 1821 in South America. Utilizing contemporary sources from both sides of the Atlantic, Hughes sets a fast pace, beginning with the struggle to raise regiments, equip them, and sail them safely across the ocean; moving on to the campaigns and battles themselves; and ending with the legion's defiant stand and victory at the Battle of Carabobo in June 1821. **VERDICT** Told through the volunteers' diaries, letters, and journals and supported by contemporary newspaper accounts, this is an important addition to the literature of both South America and post-Napoleonic Britain. Strongly recommended to all seeking this useful additional coverage of the era.

(Illustrations not seen.)—David Lee Poremba, *Keiser Univ., Orlando, FL*

O'Connell, Robert L. The Ghosts of Cannae: Hannibal and the Darkest Hour of the Roman Republic. Random. Jul. 2010. c.336p. maps. index. ISBN 978-1-4000-6702-2. \$27. HIST

The battle of Cannae was a milestone of the Second Punic War: an immense tactical triumph for the Carthaginian general Hannibal and a defeat for Rome, nearly destroying its army. Yet it was Rome, not Carthage, that eventually triumphed in the war, owing in large part both to the military lessons learned at Cannae and to the Roman survivors of the battle who had their revenge on Hannibal and his forces 16 years later. Military historian O'Connell sets the battle itself as the narrative's centerpiece, but much of the text is devoted to exploring the war as a whole, its numerous players, and the strategy and mentality of both sides, allowing the reader to better grasp the events leading into Cannae and its aftereffects. **VERDICT** O'Connell's examination is thoughtful and in-depth enough to interest readers of classical or military history. Its accessible coverage of the war also makes it a fine choice for those who may not be as familiar with the historical events. An excellent companion to Adrian Goldsworthy's *Cannae: Hannibal's Greatest Victory* or Gregory Daly's *Cannae: The Experience of Battle in the Second Punic War*. Libraries having either of those earlier titles may consider this one optional unless collecting comprehensively.—Kathleen McCallister, *Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia*

Richard, Carl J. Why We're All Romans: The Roman Contribution to the Western World. Rowman & Littlefield. 2010. c.352p. illus. index. ISBN 978-0-7425-6778-8. \$26.95. HIST

Richard (history, Univ. of Louisiana, Lafayette; *Greeks & Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers*) gives us another work on classical influences, aimed at educated but nonexpert readers. Taking a broader focus than in his previous titles, he does not limit his study only to influences on early America but seeks to demonstrate how Roman culture influenced later Western culture in nearly all disciplines, including law, engineering, literature, and philosophy. Working on this monumental scale over such well-trod ground requires some deftness, and while Richard's prose is clear and engaging (he cites excerpts from his previous *Twelve Greeks and Romans Who Changed the World*), his treatment of the subject matter is uneven and evidence provided does not always make a strong case. **VERDICT** Although this is an entertaining and informative book for readers interested

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