

Continued from p.21

characteristics of the towns and regions he visits. As he moves from the Swiss Alps to Wales, Greece, and Indonesia, Sieberson offers a series of vignettes that combine the genres of history and travel narrative, and then returns to his enduring passion for the ascent of the mountain. For climbing and travel enthusiasts, this will be a treasured read. —Jay Freeman

Rendez-vous with Art.

By Philippe de Montebello and Martin Gayford.

Sept. 2014. 248p. illus. Thames & Hudson, \$35 (9780500239247). 700.

Former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art de Montebello and art critic Gayford embark on an “experiment in shared appreciation,” traveling to the great museums of the world to stand together in front of the masterpieces that move them. Wandering the halls of the Prado, Palazzo Pitti, and the Louvre, the connoisseurs allow themselves extended encounters with ancient classics and Renaissance masters, formulating a series of conversational and loosely organized dialogues. Though they are extremely knowledgeable on the historical background of the works, the authors’ main focus is more narrowly aesthetic. Their exchanges center on the importance of sustained observation, on the formal characteristics of beauty, and on the

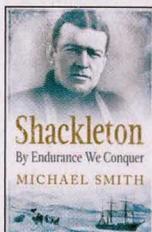
work museums perform in framing the visitor’s experience. The outspoken de Montebello particularly emphasizes the importance of the viewer’s own emotional connection with art in discriminating the good from the great. Rather than a traditional art history or theoretical text, the authors’ seeks to revive, through their journeys and conversations, the timeless pleasures of looking deeply at artworks themselves and to mark the irreplaceability of first-person artistic encounters. —Lindsay Bosch

★ Shackleton: By Endurance We Conquer.

By Michael Smith.

Nov. 2014. 464p. illus. OneWorld, \$30 (9781780745725); e-book (9781780745732). 919.8904.

Polar explorer Ernest Shackleton (1874–1922) needs little introduction, and yet a complete biography of his life has proven to be an elusive goal. Many authors have focused on the dramatic appeal of the failed and yet unforgettable *Endurance* expedition. Smith, who previously wrote about overlooked Antarctic hero Tom Crean, makes a significant effort to discuss Shackleton’s personal and business relationships as well as his adventurous journeys. This look at his family, friends, and numerous well-known romantic



entanglements both humanizes Shackleton and elevates his unusual achievements even further. He was a survivor who possessed near superhuman determination, and yet Smith makes it clear that he was also capable of the most common faults and failures. Through his use of reports, diaries, books, and the private papers of Shackleton’s contemporaries, both those who admired and those who reviled him, and, most importantly, the men who served at his side, Smith provides a well-rounded look at the renowned explorer. It is Smith’s writing style, however, that makes this biography such a page-turner and a wonderfully rich portrait of a twentieth-century icon. Shackleton has finally received the literary treatment his legendary life deserves. —Colleen Mondor

YA: *Teens will be fascinated by Shackleton, and Smith’s biography is a perfect subject for teen book reports. CM.*

★ SS United States. By John Maxtone-Graham.

Oct. 2014. 240p. illus. Norton, \$75 (9780393241709). 623.82432.

This big, gorgeous book correlates beautifully with its subject. The author is an expert on ocean-liner technology and history, and his vast knowledge, to say nothing of his infectious enthusiasm, is lovingly focused on the ship that was the U.S. entry in the international stable of ocean-liner queens that reigned as the “only”

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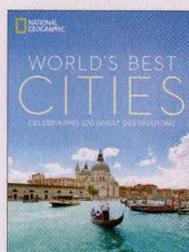
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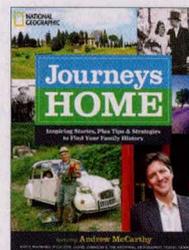
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