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Laura K. McClure, ed. *Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World: Readings and Sources.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002. xiii + 318 pp. $111.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-631-22588-1; $46.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-631-22589-8.

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Concepts of Sexuality and Gender in the Ancient World

Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World is the first volume in a new and exciting series entitled Interpreting Ancient History, published by Blackwell Publishers. Two other volumes in this series have also been published: Craige B. Champion's *Roman Imperialism* (2003) and Eric W. Robinson's *Ancient Greek Democracy* (2003). In these books, intended primarily as undergraduate textbooks, scholarly articles are combined with related primary-source material to present ancient texts in the context of major issues and methodologies.

In an editor's introduction, McClure provides an excellent stand-alone history and summary of scholarship on women in the ancient world and gender studies. Any scholar or student seeking a succinct overview of the historical progress and theoretical foundation of women's and gender studies in the ancient word is highly advised to consult McClure's essay first. Also included in this introduction are the editor's own short descriptions of the nine articles in this volume. These articles are grouped in three parts, with four articles on Greece, four on Rome, and one on the Classical Tradition. For the most part, the focus of the authors is on analysis of literary texts such as poems, plays, and philosophical dialogues. Even the historical material, including texts from Livy and Cicero, is approached more from a literary than an historical point of view. The emphasis is less on topics like sexual habits, gender preference, and the lives of women in ancient Greece and Rome, and more on literary descriptions of these topics by ancient authors. Each article is accompanied by an appropriate reading from an ancient source, translated by the editor, and a black-and-white illustration of the topic in art, usually ancient.

The first essay, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour" by K. J. Dover, originally appeared in *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers* (1984), edited by John Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan. In this article, Dover, who is the author of a major study of Greek homosexuality (*Greek Homosexuality* [1989]), surveys Greek sexuality vocabulary and assumptions, cultural inhibitions toward sex, segregation of the sexes, attitudes towards adultery, commercial sexual practices, evidence for chastity and repression of sexual desire, homosexuality, the effect of social class and status on sexual activity, and statements about sex by Greek philosophers and writers of comedy. This essay is accompanied by an excerpt from Plato's *Symposium*, in which Aristophanes offers a mythological account of the origin of the sexes. McClure includes with this essay a representation of the god Zeus and his male lover Ganymede from an Attic red figure *kylix* of c. 455 B.C.E.

The second essay, "Double Consciousness in Sappho's Lyrics," is an excerpt from J. J. Winkler's *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (1990). Winkler examines the sixth century B.C.E. and Sappho's consciousness as woman and poet in the context of the masculine world of Homeric epic which she appropriates in her poetry. McClure appropriately accompanies this essay with a representation of Sappho on an Attic red figure *kalanthos* attributed to the Brygos Painter, c. 470 B.C.E. She follows the essay with translations of two poems of Sappho (numbers 1 and 31) and two passages from Homer (*Iliad* 5.114-132 and *Odyssey* 6.139-185) to which Winkler makes significant reference in his essay.

H. King's "Bound to Bleed: Artemis and Greek Women" first appeared in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt's collection of essays entitled *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (1983). King considers fifth-century Greek mythology and medical theory in the context of the role of Artemis as goddess of the female life cycle and, especially, of menstruation. King argues that the Greeks had two contrasting views of "woman," the *parthenon* or "unmarried woman, virgin" whose lack of discipline was a threat to society, and *gyne* or "woman" who represented controlled reproduction. The menstrual process marked the transition from the former to the latter.

McClure follows King's essay with a translation of two fifth-century B.C.E. texts: Hippocrates' treatise "On Unmarried Girls" and lines 59-105 of Euripides' *Hippolytus* (which describes the worship of Artemis). McClure illustrates this essay with a scene of Artemis propitiating a swan on a white ground *lekythos* attributed to the Pan Painter c. 490 B.C.E.

The last of the four essays devoted to Greek material is "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama" by F. I. Zeitlin, which originally appeared in *Representations* 11 (1985). Zeitlin uses a structural and psychoanalytic approach to the representations of male and female in fifth-century Athenian tragedy and comedy, with special attention to theatrical space, plot, references to the human body, and the Aristotelian concept of mimesis. Her particular focus is the death of Heracles at the hands of his wife Deineira in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*. Zeitlin concludes by suggesting that Plato's distaste for tragedy is embedded in a view of the genre as essentially an imitation of the feminine. Accompanying this essay are McClure's translations of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* 531-587 and 1046-1084, and of Euripides'*Bacchae* 912-944, passages which Zeitlin uses especially in her examination of references to male and female bodies in Athenian theater. Heracles and Deineira are depicted for this essay on an Attic red figure *pelike* in the manner of the Washing Painter c.440-430 B.C.E.

Introducing the Roman material is M. I. Finley's "The Silent Women of Rome," published previously in his *Discoveries and Controversies* (1968). In this important essay, Finley describes some of the challenges faced by historians studying the social history of women in ancient Rome, where respectable women were expected to remain outside the public eye. Since Finley focused this essay around a funerary inscription for a woman named Claudia, McClure chose as accompanying primary sources not only translations of Cornelia's inscription but also those of five other Roman women. She also provides an illustration of a grave relief for a Greek woman named Lysandra.

S. R. Joshel's "The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia" moves the reader from the evidence of Roman inscriptions to myth representations of violence against women in Livy's *Histories*. In this essay, which first appeared in A. Richlin's *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* (1992), Joshel observes how the women of Rome were raped, enslaved, and killed in order to make the Roman men and their empire come alive. Although Joshel focuses on two texts of Livy, McClure offers translations of only one of them, the rape of Lucretia (I.57.6-I.59.6); i.e., Livy's story of Verginia is not included. The Lucretia myth is also illustrated in a painting by Titian, c. 1568-71.

Joshel's article is followed by M. Wyke's "Mistress and Metaphor in Augustan Elegy," published previously in *Helios* 16 (1989). Wyke considers the degree to which the portrait of women in Latin love elegiac poetry reflects the social reality of women's lives in Augustan Rome (late first century B.C.E.). Focusing on the portrayal of Cynthia in the poetry of Propertius, Wyke concludes that poetic conventions are more important than biography and authenticity in this poetry and that these poetic conventions are determined by the cultural discourses about women in the Augustan Age, such as the portrayal of Clodia by Cicero in *Pro Caelio*. For this essay McClure translates three poems of Propertius (1.8a, 1.8b, and 2.5) as well as an excerpt from the *Pro Caelio*. She also provides a scene of a couple at a Roman banquet from a wall painting from Herculaneum, c. 70 C.E.

The final essay in the Roman section of the volume is A. Richlin's "Pliny's Brassiere," originally published in J. Hallet and M. Skinner's *Roman Sexualities* (1997). Unlike the other essays in *Sexuality and Gender in the Ancient World*, this essay deals not with literary material but with a technical passage from Pliny the Elder (first century C.E.) on breast milk and menstrual fluid. Richlin uses this passage to discuss Roman attitudes towards reproduction and the female body. She also uses the passage as evidence for folk medicinal practices actually used by Roman women for menstruation and other health conditions. McClure provides a translation of the passage from Pliny's *Natural History* 28.70-82 on which Richlin's essay is based. Accompanying this essay is an illustration of the "Bikini Girls" from a mosaic at the villa at Piazza Armerina in Sicily, c. 350 C.E.

The only essay in part 3, "Classical Tradition," is P. K. Joplin's "The Voice of the Shuttle Is Ours," from *Stanford Literature Review* 1 (1984).[1] Joplin uses the myth of Procne and Philomela from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (6.424-623) to discuss ways that this myth of rape and female mutilation has been interpreted by feminist scholars. In her essay, Joplin shows how Philomela's tapestry serves as an act of remembering and healing and obviates the male violence to which it responds. Following the essay is McClure's translation of the Procne and Philomela passage from Ovid. McClure also provides an illustration of Procne and Philomela from an Attic red figure *kylix*, c. 490 B.C.E.

Undergraduate users will appreciate McClure's short

but useful introductions which precede the ancient sources and her introductions to the essays in the editor's introduction. Many of the same undergraduates, however, would benefit from additional introductory material before each of the essays. Where summaries and conclusions are not provided by the authors themselves, the editor should have. Some basic biographical information about the authors and the context in which they wrote is also essential for undergraduate readers, few of whom will know, without some guidance, know who Moses Finley is or appreciate his place in classical scholarship. These students further need to know that Dover is also the author of a major study of ancient Greek homosexuality (*Greek Homosexuality* [1989]) and that Zeitlin is the author of a number of important studies on Greek tragedy, and, especially, on the portrayal of women in tragedy (e.g., Winkler and Zeitlin's *Nothing to Do with Dionysus* [1992]). While bibliographic information about the original publication of the articles does appear in the acknowledgements at the front of the book, an undergraduate user will not look for it there and this information should appear at the bottom of the first page of the reprinted article. Also useful for the undergraduate users are study questions based upon the article and questions on the source readings.

Undergraduate users may also be challenged by the use of multiple translations of the same primary text. While McClure herself has translated all the primary texts which accompany the articles, the authors use translations from a variety of sources in the articles. This occasionally makes for awkwardness of juxtaposition and phraseology. For example, McClure translates as "woman's breast-band" (pg. 254) the phrase which is translated as "brassiere" in the title of Richlin's article, "Pliny's Brassiere."

Many undergraduates will find it difficult to recognize and process passages translated in radically different ways. In her exegesis of Ovid's story of Procne and Philomela, Joplin, for example, uses Rolfe Humphries's translation of the *Metamorphoses*. Joplin quotes the following seven lines of Humphries translation:

<blockquote>"What punishment you will pay me, late or soon! / Now that I have no shame, I will proclaim it. / Given the chance, I will go where people are, / Tell everybody; if you shut me here, / I will move the very woods and rocks to pity. / The air of Heaven will hear, and any god, / If there is any god in Heaven, will hear me." (p 261)</blockquote>

Later, McClure translates these same lines (i.e., *Metamorphoses* VI.542-548) as:

<blockquote>"But if the gods see these things, indeed, if there are gods at all, / if all things have not perished with me, someday you will pay for this. / I will broadcast your crime, setting aside my shame. / If there is an opportunity, I will go to the people; if I am kept / imprisoned in this forest, I will fill the woods with my story / and I will move the stones to witness." (p. 290)</blockquote>

McClure could have eased the process of comparing such translations by numbering her lines with the same numeration used in the ancient text and, perhaps, by using footnotes to her translations to indicate where the same passage is used in the accompanying article.

McClure provides her own translation of Sappho I, often called the "Prayer to Aphrodite," which is also translated by Winkler in his essay. In this case, not only does one wonder why McClure did not explain to her undergraduate audience that these were translations of the same poem, but one also wonders why she felt it necessary to add her translation to Winkler's at all. The space could have been used to provide a translation of additional material from Homer (to which Winkler refers but does not translate). The same observations could be made in the Finley essay about the Claudia inscription, which is translated by both Finley and McClure.

Some comments are also warranted about the bibliographies in this book. In addition to the bibliographies provided by the authors of some of the essays, McClure provides a short bibliography of sources for future reference following the editor's introduction and a lengthy bibliography at the end of the volume. The purpose and scope of this final bibliography is unclear. It is neither a comprehensive bibliography on the topic nor a list of major works for future reference by undergraduates. Too many major works fitting one description or the other are missing to serve either purpose. Rather the bibliography appears to be not much more than a composite of all the other bibliographies in the book. This bibliography also has anomalies such as an incomplete reference to a 1997 article by Richlin and the absence of significant works by authors such as Zeitlin and Finley. The space used by this bibliography could have been used for another article, or, even better, for a bibliography of selected, important works with annotations geared to undergraduate users.

While this collection of essays cannot be used unaided by the average undergraduate, it can still serve as an excellent supplementary textbook in advanced college courses on gender and women's studies.

Note

[1]. The journal is inaccurately identified as the *Standford Literature Review* in the acknowledgements.

Joplin's essay has since been published, under the author's birth name, Patricia Klindienst, on the internet at http://www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/ayliu/research/klindienst.html along with an epilogue at http://www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/ayliu/resear

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the list discussion logs at:
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