

For more recent periods J. Bourdin analyses the diaries of emigrants going to the far West in ‘The Mechanisms of Trust: The Emigrants’ Response to the Dangers of the Overland Trails to Oregon and California in the 1840s and Early 1850s’. The experience of mobility for groups of people or a whole community in exile is presented in two contributions on the twentieth century. I. About and A. Sutre focus on the chosen mobility of the tsigan population in ‘Circulations raisonnées. Consciences et discours du voyage dans les sociétés romani-tsiganes au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle’ while A. Kunth presents ‘À l’épreuve de l’incertitude. Réfugiés arméniens en route et en déroute au lendemain de la Première Guerre mondiale’ on Armenian refugees.

Summaries of the contributions in French and in English are provided at the end. One of the editors, Moatti, played a central role in developing the study of mobility in the Roman world. This rich book shows the appeal of a transperiodic approach to this theme. One can only regret the lack of a conclusion as well as a general organisation that is sometimes difficult to follow. The volume is divided into five parts, dedicated respectively to statuses, characters, spaces of the in-between and finally on cognitive and status changes. Given the diversity of the contributions, in terms of sources, time and spaces, as well as the complexity of the case studies, it is often difficult to understand why a contribution is placed in a specific part and not elsewhere. But this is a minor point: the volume offers an important insight on a field of research only starting to develop, echoing the contemporaneity of its issues.

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## FEMALE HOMOSEXUALITY

BOEHRINGER (S.) *Female Homosexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Translated from the French by Anna Preger. Pp. xlv + 380, ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2021 (originally published as *L’Homosexualité féminine dans l’Antiquité grecque et romaine*, 2007). Paper, £34.99, US\$44.95 (Cased, £96, US\$128). ISBN: 978-0-367-74476-2 (978-0-367-74478-6 hbk).

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The recent translation of *L’Homosexualité féminine dans l’Antiquité grecque et romaine* successfully renders complex arguments in a very readable English version. Although over ten years have passed since the original French publication, the work and its arguments remain under-appreciated both within and outside Classics, despite being the most comprehensive study of ancient sexual relations between women. In B.’s words, ‘The conversation I hoped my book would open has yet to happen’ (p. xvii). Furthermore, female sexuality, particularly homosexuality, remains an afterthought in ancient sexuality studies more generally, meriting this re-publication of her carefully argued monograph in English. B.’s sensitive readings provide full contexts (literary, performative, social) for texts and offer clear explanations that enable readers to evaluate properly her conclusions. Although the translated text has not been updated, B. includes a

preface with reflections on the study of ancient sexuality and an overview of important developments and bibliography since 2007.

The monograph is organised chronologically into three chapters. Chapter 1 covers the archaic period and includes discussion of Alcman's *Partheneia*, Sappho's poetry, Anacreon's poem 358 and a rare version of the myth of Kallisto. B. argues that sexual relations between women were openly acknowledged in poetry and treated no differently than same-sex relations between men, making female homosexuality not outside sexual norms in this period. Chapter 2 covers the classical and the Hellenistic periods with a focus on Plato's work and some fragments of Asclepiades of Samos. In addition to Plato's *Laws* and *Symposium*, which in her reading discuss sexual relations between women as a reality on a par with other sexual practices, much of the discussion for the classical period focuses on the silences (specifically in Aristotle and Aristophanes), and what that silence says about attitudes to female homosexuality. B. concludes that female homosexuality was acknowledged as a valid and familiar erotic practice in the classical period, but was not talked about in mainstream contexts because it had no social or political consequences. B.'s grouping of classical and Hellenistic texts together contrasts their way of thinking about such relationships with Roman attitudes, while still highlighting the change in outlook between the two periods. She argues that neither classical nor Hellenistic writers masculinised or vilified women engaging in sexual relations with other women. The final chapter focuses on the Roman imperial period and the evolution of female homosexuality as a negative *topos* that threatened masculinity. An epilogue on Lucian is also included.

B. takes a constructionist approach to sexuality, following K. Dover (*Greek Homosexuality* [1978]), M. Foucault (*History of Sexuality*, vols 2 & 3 [1984]) and D. Halperin (*One Hundred Years* [1990]) (author of the preface and cited often), that, contrary to A. Richlin (*Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3 [1993]), denies the existence of sexual identities in the ancient world. The ancients instead had sexual practices: 'there was no sexual "being", only sexual "doing"' (p. 14). She uses homosexuality only 'in the sense of "same-sex relations" and not to designate a category of people who identify themselves as such and have a shared culture' (p. 12). B. justifies this terminology by arguing that terms like same-sex still conjure a familiar category to any modern audience. B. moves beyond Foucault et al. in recognising that female homosexuality requires its own investigation instead of adapting models of male sexuality, like pederasty, to female relations, and by arguing that, unlike male sexuality, the sex assigned at birth did matter to Greeks and Romans when discussing female sexuality. Yet she rejects any notion of equality between female partners, stating that penetrator and penetrated were only one model of the asymmetry present in ancient sexual relations.

A few images and types of images round out her arguments, but B. is most at home discussing the literary evidence. Her method involves close readings of texts referencing female homosexuality and sexuality more generally, and it considers their literary and social context as well as the power of these representations, including their influence on behaviour. Surprisingly, Sappho gets short shrift, where the main focus is dismantling arguments that equate the relations in her poems as a female version of pederasty. Even so, she considers Sappho's *erōs* as mirroring male lyric poets rather than presenting a different (female) perspective of desire. Erinna is named, but her work is not discussed, and Nossis appears as part of a footnote. The result is that the focus is largely on the elite male perspective. Nevertheless, the close readings of these texts (less commonly studied in such detail by scholars of ancient sexuality) are a strength of the book, lead to interesting conclusions about social attitudes to sexual relations between women and allow B. to trace changes in attitudes from the Greek archaic to the Roman imperial period.

B.'s detailed readings lead not only to fresh conclusions, but also controversial ones. She highlights a variant of the story of Kallisto in which Zeus disguises himself as Artemis to win her affection and in doing so locates female homosexuality in myth alongside male homosexuality and the myth of Ganymede. A key divergence with other scholarship (J. Thorp, *Phoenix* 46 [1992]) is her argument that Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium* highlights longing, but not specifically a sexual longing and thus does not represent a sexual preference and a homosexual *erōs*. By providing a reading of epigram 5.207 by Asclepiades in the context of his corpus, B. demonstrates that the comments on two Samian women create humour, but that the internal target is the persona, who has no luck with love interests generally. Rather than vilifying the women, it highlights female sexuality as an alternative to other sexualities without presenting it as a threat to masculine society. This interpretation differs from other scholars who argue for the development of a negative attitude towards female homosexuality starting with the Hellenistic period (M. Skinner, *Sexuality* [2005]) and, some conclude, borne out in this epigram (K. Dover, in: M. Nussbaum and J. Sivola [edd.], *Sleep of Reason* [2002]). B. also rethinks the myth of Iphis and Ianthe in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* as a change from love between women to a love 'in keeping with human laws' (p. 237), rather than simply a change from female to male. It is thus with Ovid that the first evidence of bias against female homosexuality emerges. Many of B.'s conclusions have not been given their due in contemporary scholarship, and this new translation offers an opportunity to revisit her work.

Despite complex and careful argument, B. writes for both the expert and the novice. Her focus on the male perspective (or a homogeneous audience) is limiting, however, and a number of her conclusions will continue to elicit controversy, but such detailed explorations of commonly cited passages are important reading for any researcher of female sexuality. B. convincingly shows that female homosexuality was a recognised and familiar erotic practice in the Greek world on a par with other sexual practices and only became seen as a threat to masculinity (and denigrated as a result) under the Romans. Her monograph demonstrates the importance of female sexuality to revealing the norms and values of the Greeks and Romans more generally and showcases how an understanding of Greek and Roman sexualities is incomplete without detailed consideration of female sexuality.

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## MARRIED LIFE IN ANTIQUITY

CENTLIVRES CHALLET (C.-E.) (ed.) *Married Life in Greco-Roman Antiquity*. Pp. xii + 215, ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. Cased, £120, US\$160. ISBN: 978-0-367-34504-4.

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Marriage, according to the famous statement of the Roman jurist Modestinus (*D.* 23.2.1), is a 'union of a man and a woman, a partnership for the whole life involving divine as well as human law' (trans. Watson). This view is not very different across cultures in different