

ANCIENT TEXTS BY WOMEN WRITERS

NATOLI (B. A.), PITTS (A.), HALLETT (J. P.) *Ancient Women Writers of Greece and Rome*. Pp. xvi+408, ills, map. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. Paper, £32.99, US\$42.95 (Cased, £120, US\$160). ISBN: 978-0-367-46252-9 (978-0-367-46877-4 hbk).

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Many students are still under the false impression that, with maybe the exception of Sappho, women played virtually no role in the literary world of ancient Greece and Rome. Despite abundant scholarship, beautiful translations and anthologies available on women authors of antiquity, until now no book has brought together scholarship, original texts with commentary and translations in a student- and budget-friendly form. To fill this gap, Natoli, Pitts and Hallett offer a welcome ‘student-centered’ sourcebook of sixteen women writers spanning from the seventh century BCE to the second century CE that ‘aims to make these texts and major works of scholarship on them accessible to all students, whatever their proficiency in ancient languages’ (p. x).

This book is of massive utility for the undergraduate classroom where it could fit naturally on the syllabus of a course on women and gender in the ancient world, as well as intermediate and advanced Greek and Latin courses. While comparable volumes are available for use in courses in translation – for example, I.M. Plant’s *Women Writers of Ancient Greece and Rome* (2004) or J.M. Snyder’s *The Woman and the Lyre* (1989) – the great strength of this book is the inclusion of the original texts and commentaries. This addition offers the opportunity for close textual readings of women authors in the Greek and Latin classroom, providing a necessary complement to other Greek and Latin readers that introduce students to the lives and experiences of ancient women through mostly male-authored sources, such as S.K. Dickison and Hallett’s *A Roman Women Reader* (2015). There are three appendices useful particularly to language students: one on ancient Greek dialects, another on metre and a third on disputed Sappho fragments, the so-called ‘Brother’s Poem’ and ‘Kypriis Poem’, with an overview of the controversy over their discovery and publication, the original texts with vocabulary and notes, but notably no English translations.

While Natoli and Pitts, in their preface, emphasise the surprise and delight of their students that the writings of over 60 ancient women survive in some shape or form, Hallett’s introduction sobers us up and reminds us of the frustration that these surviving texts are in fact only a small portion of the female-authored texts likely to have been produced in the classical era. Unlike the introduction to Plant’s sourcebook (2004), which surveys the range – across space, time and genre – of female-authored works in antiquity, Hallett focuses the introduction, titled ‘Looking at Ancient Women Writers through Male and Female Lenses’, on the role of gender in the interpretation of female-authored texts, as well as their survival – a word ‘especially apt’ for texts that have persisted through the ravages of time and gender bias (p. 1). Hallett emphasises the role of the interpreter’s identity and life experience in uncovering the many layers in the tantalisingly few lines of ancient women’s perspectives we have, challenging us to consider our own lenses and biases. In so doing, Hallett creates a space that is refreshing for the specialist, provocative for the student and fertile ground for the instructor.

While Hallett’s introduction outlines many of the fascinating and varied accounts of textual survival – notably the role of the Italian papyrologist Medea Norsa (1877–1952) to whom the book is dedicated –, the introduction’s near-exclusive focus on contextualising

only Sappho and Sulpicia leaves novice readers without a crucial framework for the place of female authors in antiquity as a whole. Both the preface and the introduction also lack clear programmatic statements justifying the collection's choice of authors and time frame, both of which almost exclusively favour lyric poetry. This lack leaves the inclusion of a prose source like the personal letters of Claudia Severa (Chapter 11), which offers us a rare view into the friendship between two ancient women, feel out of place with the other chapters that focus more on women's literary contributions than their personal lives and experiences. Without a larger framework in the preface or introduction, students reading this book might understandably be left with the impression that ancient women only wrote poetry and have no further insight into the not inconsiderable number of female-authored texts on, for example, medicine, philosophy or alchemy, or the issues concerning authenticity or authorship of such sources.

Beyond the introduction, each chapter forms a discrete unit that could easily be used on its own or in tandem with other chapters, underscoring the pedagogical utility of the volume. The Greek chapters cover archaic to Hellenistic poets, including Sappho, Corinna, Erinna, Moero of Byzantium, Nossis, Anyte and Praxilla. The Roman chapters provide a bit of variety with selections in both Greek and Latin. The Latin chapters cover Sulpicia, Sulpicia Caleni, the Vindolanda letters of Claudia Severa, an anonymous verse inscription from Pompeii and a verse epitaph written by Terentia. The Greek selections include one surviving poem by Melinno as well as the inscriptions on the Colossus of Memnon by Julia Balbilla, Caecilia Trebulla and Damo. The authors are organised (loosely) chronologically, though this is not immediately apparent (or emphasised) – a wise choice given our lack of secure dating for many of them. Each chapter opens with a short introductory essay that outlines the issues of preservation, historical context and literary and thematic elements in the surviving works of each author in question, followed by ample bibliography for further reading, an excellent resource for kicking off student research projects.

The Greek and Latin original texts are followed by running vocabulary of the more unusual words and line-by-line commentary. The commentaries focus closely on elementary grammar issues, with glosses of trickier phrases, and are most appropriate for undergraduate and upper secondary school language students. There are, unfortunately, a few scattered typos and inaccuracies in the texts and commentaries where novice students may not catch them. As a representative example, the commentary on Sappho 1 mistakenly refers to the first aorist as the strong aorist and the second as the weak (p. 29). Future editions will hopefully smooth out most of these issues.

The translations tend towards the literal over the literary, helpful for language students who want to double-check their work. They do not, however, follow the glosses or suggestions for appropriate translation given in the commentaries, as my Latin elegy students, who read and thoroughly enjoyed the Sulpicia chapter with me, pointed out with some disappointment and confusion. The translations are annotated with their own commentary, an addition that should make the inclusion of a unit on women writers in the ancient world even more appealing to instructors of women in antiquity courses or general classical civilisation courses in translation. Some of these annotations are repeated verbatim from the language commentary, but most are limited to explanations of mythological or historical references. They also lack the introductory comments on each selection and much of the literary context that is provided in the language commentary. For example, students reading only the translation of the Vindolanda letters in Chapter 11 would miss out on the notes in the Latin commentary that point out the possible literary allusions to Virgil's *Aeneid*. To get the most out of each chapter, students may need to do some flipping back and forth between the two sets of comments.

Natoli, Pitts and Hallett have given students and instructors an invaluable resource to help enrich our picture of the ancient literary world and the place of women in it. While it is not a comprehensive collection of ancient women's writings, they have chosen representative texts that challenge students to engage more closely with the contributions of women to classical literature both in their original languages and in English.

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STRATEGIES OF POLITENESS

UNCETA GÓMEZ (L.), BERGER (Ł.) (edd.) *Politeness in Ancient Greek and Latin*. Pp. xvi + 408, figs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-009-12303-7.
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This will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of those interested in the ways in which social relationships in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds are managed. Drawing on recent scholarship in Pragmatics, Conversation Analysis and Computational Linguistics and taking as exemplars not only texts by canonical authors, such as Plato, Euripides, Cicero and Plautus, but also non-literary sources, this collection offers us insights into how politeness and impoliteness were conveyed and perceived in those worlds.

The volume emerges from a conference, 'Approaches to Greek and Latin Im/Politeness', organised by the editors at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid in June 2017. As a conference collection it is outstanding. To be sure, the contributors, Hellenists and Latinists, focus on different authors or different resources and take different approaches to the topic. But it is clear that they have worked together with the editors (and with each other) with a common objective: to produce a volume that introduces us to new developments in im/politeness research, that demonstrates how they may be applied and that proposes research directions for the future.

In Chapter 1 ('Im/Politeness Research in Ancient Greek and Latin: Concepts, Methods, Data') – a fine contribution, supplemented by a useful glossary (pp. 366–7) – Unceta Gómez and Berger introduce readers to the ways in which we might view im/politeness. The chapter begins with a useful 'history' of developments in the field of politeness research, showing us where the study of politeness began (with Robin Lakoff and, later, Geoffrey Leech's 'Politeness Principle' [pp. 6–7]); its next stage of development (the influential 1978 and 1987 studies by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, which revolve around the concept of positive and negative 'face'); and where it is now (the 'discursive turn', and 'second-wave' and 'third-wave' theories [pp. 16–20]). Alongside these theoretical approaches emerging out of the discipline of Pragmatics, Unceta Gómez and Berger introduce Conversation Analysis, the emic perspective of which allows for a more nuanced understanding of im/politeness.

As the authors acknowledge, we face clear difficulties when trying to identify im/politeness in the ancient world: we lack native speakers (p. 28); politeness phenomena are linked to the values of the elite (p. 36); and the literary texts that have survived to us are highly polished (are we hearing 'real oral productions' [p. 25]?). The following chapters