

This study, then, offers a variety of subtle and nuanced interpretations, some more convincing perhaps than others. The deployment of anthropological theories of gift-exchange, for example, seems strained in places. The characteristics of Ciceronian letters that W. identifies as typical of gift-exchange are not *necessarily* a direct result of their functioning as a kind of gift (other explanations are available); arguably too there is a qualitative difference between the function of gift-exchange in the societies described by, for example, M. Mauss (*The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* [1969], pp. 10–11, 22–3), and the exchanging of letters in Roman society (especially with regard to the notions of ‘circulation’ and ‘increase’). In the end, W.’s formulation works better as a tool for structuring her own discussion than one that offers sociological insights into Roman practices.

The argument that Seneca’s *Epistles* consistently aim to challenge their Ciceronian predecessors is also open to question. (See, e.g., p. 118: ‘Rather than simply mimicking or emulating Ciceronian precedent, Seneca’s renditions of triangularity in friendship and letters are designed to undermine it’.) W. makes much of *Epistle* 118 in this regard, proposing that it ‘underlines the persisting importance of the Ciceronian themes whose presence pervades the collection’s early books’ (p. 101). But, according to note 6 (on p. 101), the first direct mention of Cicero does not appear until Book 2 (in *Epistle* 17), and then we encounter only four more references in the next forty or so epistles. Certainly *Epistle* 118 engages at some length with Cicero, but this seems rather late in the collection to declare a major thematic point. W. is clearly aware of this problem, describing the letter as ‘so late in the sequence’ (p. 101), but attempts to minimise it with the claim that the letter is nevertheless ‘prominently positioned’. This gives the impression of stretching the evidence to suit a prefabricated hypothesis. Overall, the tendency to proceed through bold interpretative assertion means that some conclusions will find greater acceptance than others.

The book is well produced, with only a few minor slips (on p. 4, ‘And yet it is unlikely’ is needed for ‘And yet is unlikely’; on p. 122, the Latin phrase *sic itaque me audi tamquam mecum loquor* seems to have gone untranslated).

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A STUDY OF *AMICITIA*

WILLIAMS (C. A.) *Reading Roman Friendship*. Pp. x + 378, ills. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Cased, £65, US\$110. ISBN: 978-1-107-00365-1.

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Roman *amicitia* is a slippery concept. The English word ‘friendship’ covers some of the conceptual territory, but its supposed Roman equivalent is applied to everything from hard-nosed political alliances to the loving kisses exchanged by Fronto and Marcus Aurelius. Earlier scholarship tended to emphasise the tactical, as in Syme’s declaration that ‘*amicitia* was a weapon of politics, not a sentiment based on congeniality’ (R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* [1939], pp. 157). Syme was challenged for this narrow interpretation on his home territory of politics and prosopography by Brunt (P. Brunt, *The Fall of the Roman Republic* [1988], pp. 351–81). More recent work has developed a broader view, taking in the relationship of *amicitia* to patronage (P. White, *Promised Verse* [1993]), its

emotional dimensions (D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* [1997]) and its place in the Roman economic system (K. Verboven, *The Economy of Friends* [2002]).

W.'s book is a welcome extension of these more recent trends, though in a different direction. As he makes clear in his introduction, he is less interested in drawing definitional boundaries, or even recreating an experience, than in following the contours of the textual evidence to understand how various terms were used. W. addresses some inevitable questions, such as the degree to which *amici* were merely allies. He even proposes a tentative schema, suggesting we think about *amicitia* as the opposite of *inimicitia* (p. 23, returned to briefly at pp. 128–9, 238). But overall he avoids stamping down this flattened earth. Instead, within his textualist orientation (Bakhtin is invoked on discourse registers), he turns his focus to issues of gender and sexuality in a set of evidence approached synchronically.

Chapter 1 contests Cicero's constriction of *amicitia* to men only. In a typically engaging use of cross-cultural comparanda, W. invokes Nietzsche, Montaigne and others to show that Cicero's bias endured, before proceeding to deconstruct it at its roots in the Roman world. Working around the dearth of female voices in Latin literature, W. identifies *amicae* in Plautus, Propertius, Martial, Juvenal and Petronius. His best direct evidence comes from the second-century C.E. letters between Claudia Severa and Sulpicia Lepidna from Vindolanda. Finding more than glimmers of meaning in these small gems is a challenge, given that the words *amica* and *amicitia* do not appear. But here and elsewhere W. is circumspect in evaluating the evidence, rightly allowing that other terms (*karissima*, *soror* as equivalent to *amica*) and style (copious terms of endearment) signal a relationship that bears comparison with *amicitia* among men. W. is equally careful in advancing the novel observation that, despite the common use of *amica* in literary sources to indicate a man's lover, in epitaphs men and women appear to have friendly, non-erotic relationships as *amicus* and *amica* (pp. 97, 336).

In a more expansive Chapter 2, W. explores the overlapping spheres of love and friendship. If a man's *amica* was often his lover, why could not a woman's *amica* be her lover? W.'s investigation suggests this possibility was latent in the broader notion of *amicitia* (p. 132). On the other hand, while *amor* is often found in Roman marriage, its linguistic derivative *amicitia* is lacking: husbands and wives did not conceive of themselves as 'friends', it would seem (p. 134). Another useful negative conclusion is that *amicitia* and pederasty were apparently not conflated (p. 140). W.'s exploration of *amor* and *amicitia* (pp. 143–8) in a triangular relationship structure benefits from his ability to follow terminology into the emotional and social spaces it cannot completely account for. Likewise we learn that the terms 'brother' (*frater*) and 'sister' (*soror*) could be used to refer to either friends or lovers (pp. 162–5), or left playfully ambiguous. For Chapter 3, W. shifts from thematic exploration to a survey of *amicitia* in a selection of canonical texts. While some of W.'s short sections seem dutiful (W. cannot do much with the scarce instances of *amicitia* in Virgil), for authors where W. finds more purchase, the strategies developed in previous chapters lead to enlightening readings. For Catullus, *amicus* or *amica* could indicate a sexual partner, a friend or a less differentiated relationship taking in aspects of both (pp. 174–85). When Propertius spies on the erotic tussles of Gallus and his *amica*, the resulting love triangle amounts to another concoction of the values and practices of friendship and sexual partners (pp. 197–214; similarly in Petronius at pp. 214–18). In his letters, Cicero never calls Tiro an *amicus*, but does profess his love (p. 232). As he conducts political negotiations with powerful citizens like Pompey and Caesar, Cicero even flirts with the notion that his *amor* towards them could be construed as erotic *eros* (pp. 234–5). W. closes the chapter by taking on various modern interpretations of the strikingly intimate *amicitia* of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius. The earlier

discussion of Cicero's letters allows W. to show that some highly demonstrative language in their correspondence was unexceptional, but that the orator and emperor also exceed these bounds in ways that suggest a more fluid *amor* (p. 258).

A final chapter on Roman epitaphs continues W.'s close-to-the-ground survey of *amicitia*, but otherwise stands apart from previous chapters in approach and structure. He begins with a reconstruction of an intricate set of relationships attested by a tomb complex outside the Porta Nocera at Pompeii. This is a tale worthy of a short story, involving a female patron, her freedman and the freedman's friend, who becomes estranged. W. tells it with a brio that enlivens our generally static understanding of Roman social roles. These opening examples are followed by an orientation to basic features of epigraphical evidence, laying the groundwork for the bulk of the chapter, a typology of relationships involving *amici* commemorated in funerary inscriptions. The typology is likely to be most useful as resource for its assembly, classification and commentary on epitaphs relevant to *amicitia*. But it also leads to significant new understandings, such as the highlighting of the rare but meaningful instances of *amici* who were erotically or Platonically dedicated enough to one another to be buried as pairs (p. 349).

A strength of W.'s book is its broad survey of the social, emotional and erotic dimensions of *amicitia*, taking in canonical literary sources, fragmentary ones (Domitius Marsus, p. 167) and epigraphical evidence. Others are W.'s thought-provoking modern comparanda, his graceful and economical phrasing and copious thought-provoking examples. There is a certain amount of repetition (e.g. the unreliability of reportage from members of a culture at pp. 19, 27; the TV shows *Seinfeld* and *Friends* on pp. 64 and 118), and one might have hoped for a concluding chapter that would synthesise W.'s observations. But overall W. has produced a broad-ranging and subtle volume that will serve general and scholarly audiences as an introduction, guide and sourcebook for central aspects of friendship in the Roman world.

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CATULLAN STUDIES

MORELLI (A.M.) (ed.) *Lepos e mores. Una giornata su Catullo. Atti del Convegno Internazionale Cassino, 27 maggio 2010*. (Collana di Studi Umanistici 2.) Pp. 286. Cassino: Edizioni Università di Cassino, 2012. Paper, €27. ISBN: 978-88-8317-065-2.

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It should occasion no surprise that Catullan studies are alive and well in Italian classical scholarship. What is remarkable about this collection is the quality of scholarship, which – unusually for some edited volumes – is uniformly high. By this I refer not only to the great perspicuity of the interpretations, all of which are illuminating and most of which I found persuasive, but also and more fundamentally to the impressive scope and precision of the scholarship. I therefore recommend the volume for how its chapters might serve to model ways of approaching classical literary scholarship more generally as well as for its authors' particular insights into Catullus.

Scholars and advanced students of Catullus will find much of interest here, centring on 'il rapporto che intercorre tra il *lepos* (l'eleganza, lo humour e la *doctrina* della poesia catulliana) e la caratterizzazione dell'*ethos* dell'*ego*, dei destinatari e delle altre *personae*