

F. concentrates primarily on two periods which she identifies as those in which the most and the most significant productions of Greek tragedy occurred: the period from 1910 to the Depression and that from 1970 to the present. The epilogue notes that the performance of many other Greek tragedies not discussed in detail confirms the trend that, since the 1960s, Greek tragedy has been refashioned to respond to important problems of the present time. This last chapter also explores the way in which Euripides' Iphigeneia plays have been adapted to reflect issues in contemporary life.

Six appendices contain information on American professional productions and new versions of Sophocles' and Euripides' *Electras*, *Antigone*, *Persae*, *Ajax*, *Prometheus Bound*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Medea* and Euripides' *Iphigeneias*. The volume contains endnotes and references that provide a substantial bibliography for the topic.

This book is highly recommended for any scholar interested in the reception of Greek tragedy in the modern world. It not only contains a treasure house of information on American productions, but also provides a model of how reception should be studied.

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ANCIENT NOTIONS OF GENDER IDENTITY

HOLMES (B.) *Gender. Antiquity and its Legacy*. Pp. 213. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012. Paper, £12.99 (Cased, £35). ISBN: 978-1-84511-929-4 (978-1-84511-928-7 hbk).

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This is a well-researched and thought-provoking book that will appeal to both classicists and gender studies scholars because of H.'s focus on interdisciplinary – and therefore highly innovative – research on the ancient Greek, Roman and contemporary conceptualisations of sex, gender, sexual difference and sexuality. Although many feminist theorists and gender studies scholars might initially disagree with H.'s (and other theorists') bold claim that 'gender's critical edge has grown dull' (p. 1) by pointing out that the discipline of gender studies is being reinvigorated by brand-new and vital theoretical materialist input, or neo-materialist philosophies that wish to break out of modern dichotomised binaries (such as femininity versus masculinity, nature versus culture, and body versus mind), whilst putting the biological domain, sex and the body back in the spotlight, as is also acknowledged by H. (pp. 72–4), these scholars would none the less still applaud H.'s eagerness to analyse and rethink 'the history of gender' and 'its future' (p. 2) by rereading classical texts and myths.

After a brief overview of the development of gender studies and its basic concepts in the introductory chapter, H. informs her readers about her wish to prove antiquity's relevance to gender studies and contemporary sexual politics. By challenging the current narratives and monolithic interpretations of classical antiquity, H. hopes to correct the traditional picture of how ancient Greeks and Romans supposedly dealt with sex, gender and sexuality. H.'s overall project and her feminist emphasis on the importance of contextualised research might therefore remind some readers of feminist theorist C. Hemmings' *Why Stories Matter. The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (2011), in which Hemmings rereads and retells the dominant and often stifling stories that have been produced about Western feminist theory.

By challenging the long-standing conviction that classical antiquity has to be strictly separated from the historical periods of modernity and postmodernity, without however

overstressing the continuity between the former and the latter two, H. convincingly demonstrates that our present-day debates on gender and sexual politics have their roots in ancient Greek and Roman texts, myths and artefacts whilst retelling the grand narrative of antiquity. H. does not lapse into the (post)modern seductions of uncritically applying (post) modern concepts to premodern times, but in fact is extremely critical of theories, such as cultural historian Thomas Laqueur's, that claim to understand the classical conceptualisations of sex and gender by interpreting them through the modern and highly influential – but now also controversial – sex versus gender perspective. H. instead wants to convince the reader that '[s]ex is never just about sex in classical antiquity' (p. 98), and that (post) modern theories of sex, gender and sexuality hence cannot capture the complexity of how the ancient Greeks and Romans really thought about the sexed body, feminine and masculine traits and sexuality.

H.'s main argument thus consists of the claim that even though "[t]he ancients" ... have informed the very conceptualisation of gender' (p. 7), their definitions of sex and gender at the same time differ greatly from our (post)modern ones. This is revealed by H. in three well-documented chapters that consecutively address how the sexed body, sexual difference and the gendering of the body was understood in antiquity by referring to the poems of Hesiod and the feminist readings of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies ('The Nature of Gender, the Gender of Nature'); how gender labels have been applied to ancient Greek and Roman subjects, whilst at the same time revealing the potential relevance of Judith Butler's ideas about gender performance with regards to how sexual acts were interpreted in classical antiquity ('The Practice of Gender, the Gender of Practice'); and, finally, how the myths of powerful female – and hence gender-bending – figures such as Clytemnestra, Demeter and Antigone have been interpreted by feminist philosophers such as Luce Irigaray, Adriana Cavarero and Butler, and are still considered to be playing an important role in today's feminist and sexual politics ('The Politics of Gender, the Gender of Politics').

The volume thus offers an over-abundance of interesting topics, theories and claims – although the book's last chapter admittedly turns out to be a rather bland overview of recent feminist literature. There are none the less some truly provocative claims being made by H. in the first two chapters: her thorough critique of the presumption that the pre-Butlerian, binary conceptualisation of sex (i.e. the biological, sexed body) versus gender (i.e. the socially constructed roles, characteristics and norms that are being attributed to women and men) could be straightforwardly applied to ancient Greek and Roman times, is excellent food for thought. In the book's first chapter, H. convincingly shows that ancient Greek and Roman poetical, medical and philosophical texts cannot be interpreted as if they were presenting a homological, inverted image of our standard notions of sex and gender – as Laqueur suggests (see e.g. pp. 26–7). The ancients did not think in such binary, oppositional patterns, according to H., and instead put forward a radically different notion, namely that of 'an embodied gendered identity that is fluid *and* fixed' (p. 16), precisely because they did not have such a rigid conception of culture as something that completely opposes nature – an opposition that apparently only came into being with the advent of modern philosophy.

This argumentative move enables H. to examine the ancient notions of gender identity and sexuality more closely in the second chapter: now that we no longer have to believe that classical antiquity is the exact mirror image of modernity when it comes to sex and gender, H. persuasively reveals that a subject's gender identity in ancient Greek and Roman times can never be interpreted without looking at the particular sexual acts and power relations this person was involved in. By making use of Foucauldian and Butlerian philosophy, H. effectively illustrates that gender norms had to be upheld at all

times in classical antiquity: Greek, and Roman men in particular, constantly ran the risk of being accused of effeminate behaviour, and were afraid to be seen as passive, powerless subjects. Femininity, and especially masculinity, were such fragile identities, that one had to perform one's gender and repeat these performances over and over again in order not to be seen as destabilising societal norms.

This does not mean, however, that H. is undermining her own argumentation here: by revealing the continuity between the Roman idealised *uir bonus* and our current societal gender expectations and norms, H. in fact demonstrates how classical antiquity can help us understand contemporary sexual politics better, even though the premodern and (post)modern vocabularies of sex, gender and sexuality cannot be completely interchanged. H. in the end thus succeeds in convincing her readers that classical antiquity has the potential to boost the current debates about gender and sexual politics.

The volume is an outstanding resource for those who are interested in classical and contemporary theories of sex, gender and sexuality, and the development of these theories. Although H. could have paid more attention to the now immensely popular feminist new materialist theories of the body, as articulated by, for instance, feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz and feminist theorist and physicist Karen Barad – whose *œuvres* might actually provide the missing link between ancient and (post)modern conceptualisations of matter and the bodily – H. has written an intriguing book that brings two academic disciplines together in a fruitful manner, and for that reason alone this book will be enthusiastically received by classicists and gender studies scholars.

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THE RECEPTION OF 'GREEK LOVE'

ORRELLS (D.) *Classical Culture and Modern Masculinity*. Pp. x + 301, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Cased, £66, US\$125. ISBN: 978-0-19-923644-2.

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This volume asks how has the ancient pederastic teaching scene exemplified the production and transference of knowledge from one generation to the next (p. 4), and what the relationship is between knowledge and pederastic desire. O.'s chronological limits are 1750–1930, distinct periods of Philhellenism in German and British intellectual history. O. evaluates scholarly historical accounts of ancient Greek pederasty and the consequences of those accounts within the exclusively homosocial environment of the German universities and Oxbridge colleges (p. 192).

Chapter 1, 'Paiðerastia and the Contexts of German Historicism', looks at German classical scholar Johann Matthias Gesner (1691–1761) and his fascination with Socrates, and examines the fine line between pederastic pedagogy and pedagogic pederasty. Gesner was uncomfortable with Socrates' homoerotic desires, and ultimately convinced himself of Socrates' sexual continence and purity. This chapter also examines Karl Otfried Müller's 1824 *History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, in which pederasty is something specific to the Doric civilisation, and which is much concerned with racial stereotypes. In addition, the chapter considers Eduard Meier's 1837 encyclopedia entry on 'Päderastie', 'the first piece of modern scholarship to collect as much knowledge about Greek pederasty as possible' (p. 88), but in the end Meier argued for the peculiarity