

In ch. 2 L. sets the stage, presenting the demographic and material context of Roman childhood. Though L. is aware of the difficulties of working with model life tables, high fertility rates have to be linked to high mortality rates especially during infancy, resulting in the frequent death of young children with which parents as well as siblings had to cope. Chs 3 and 4 follow the life course approach and concentrate on those persons involved with the upbringing of a child from birth to age fifteen. We are introduced to the rôles and functions of parents, midwives, wet nurses, *paedagogi*, *ludi magistri* and *grammatici*. L. also discusses ancient debates on the rôle of corporal punishment in education. Although these chapters are highly informative, one might still turn to Rawson for a more systematic approach to the different stages of Roman childhood.

In chs 5 and 6 L. ceases following the life course approach and presents his strongest chapters on children's work and on paedophilia and pederasty — topics not touched by either Rawson or Harlow/Laurence. Child labour was not discussed as a concept *per se* in antiquity, it was rather an undisputed fact that children supported and contributed to their families' welfare. As working children were not a concern of literary texts, L. turns instead to epigraphical, archaeological, papyrological, legal and even osteological evidence. He reveals the different social and working environments of young slaves, children of the Roman élite up to the *aula Caesaris*, apprentices in the crafts, performers and entertainers, orphans and poor children in the cities, children in the countryside and in the army. The overall picture shows that working did not mark an abrupt transition from a carefree childhood to adulthood (something of a modern concept), but that children followed in their parents' footsteps and that working was part of their socialization. In his treatment of paedophilia and pederasty, L. also warns his readers against applying modern standards to radically different Roman ideas of sexuality and subservience. L. builds on his previous work on Statius and Martial to present Roman notions on the relationship between master and *puer delicatus* which he sets in the broader context of sexuality in antiquity thereby stressing the different attitudes of Greeks and Romans. In both cultures, sexuality was linked with status, but when it came to availability, the Romans, unlike the Greeks, did not stress age, but rather physical development and social and civil status (242). A different concept of childhood and sexuality thus emerges. Lastly, L. touches on the influence of Christianity in prohibiting paedophilia as a threat to familial and especially marital relations.

L.'s study does not tackle all aspects of children's life during the Roman Empire: that is not its aim. In his conclusion, L. drives home his point that not age, but physical development and appearance were important criteria for being considered a child. Childhood has to be seen as a social rather than a psychological category (282–3). To describe children as 'outsiders' within their families due to the different social and legal status of children and parents might risk oversimplifying this picture a little: some adult men with surviving fathers were still subject to *patria potestas* while others lost their fathers at a young age. Having the same legal status as slaves was therefore not necessarily a marker for being a child and thus a social 'outsider'. Nonetheless, L. has masterfully presented not only the social meaning of childhood in Roman antiquity, but also the grim realities of children's lives.

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J. KÖNIG, *SAINTS AND SYMPOSIASTS: THE LITERATURE OF FOOD AND THE SYMPOSIUM IN GRECO-ROMAN AND EARLY CHRISTIAN CULTURE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xi + 417, illus. ISBN 9780521886857. £70.00/US\$115.00.

This valuable work brings together the Greco-Roman symposium, the literary forms that engaged with it, early Christian engagements and Christian debate in later antiquity over reuses of pagan forms or rejection of earlier luxurious ways.

König focuses principally on Plutarch's sympotic questions, that kind of enquiring discourse that took place at the symposium and addressed itself to sympotic issues of a kind that might have arisen in the elegies of Theognis, in Plato or in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems*. Plutarch has that emphasis on decorum and the great Greek past which characterizes Greek literature of the period. From Plutarch K. extends to other 'encyclopaedic' collections of discussions about food, from Athenaeus to

Macrobius; and to aspects of Greco-Roman eating culture, focusing mainly on the Greek East and the rise of Christianity in Antioch and Alexandria. There are many pleasing features: the emphasis on the Greek East, the open-mindedness of Greco-Roman authors in comparison with much Christian ‘monologism’ (if Christianity *was* that uniform), the combining of sympotic discourse with artefacts such as the Mildenhall Treasure in the British Museum. The earliest examples of what K. calls ‘Mediterranean dining culture’ occur in the Book of Amos and elsewhere in Jewish culture; in the Roman period, the Gospels provide excellent evidence for reclining at dinner in Palestine in the first century A.D. (though Jesus has a radical take on such dining); and Antioch offers strong evidence archaeological and otherwise in favour of and against sympotic culture.

Sympotic studies have been prolific in Greek studies (Oswyn Murray and Pauline Schmitt Pantel and many related publications, particularly from the Centre Gernet in Paris), and have extended to some extent into Roman culture (Matthew Rollins, Konrad Vössing, Elke Stein-Hölkeskamp), helped by the archaeological evidence of Katherine Dunbabin. What happened at the fusion of the two, in, say, Roman Miletus or Roman Corinth in A.D. 200? K. is not particularly interested in the precise forms of Greek and Roman dining (presence of women, hierarchies, drinking vessels), though he has illustrations and some discussion of symposia in Antioch and elsewhere; rather in the literary constructions that sparked off them. So Plutarch has an open, enquiring discussion among élite equals for and against flowers, and all sorts of questions, as does Athenaeus in a rather more quotation-based content. These authors perpetuate the culture of the élite symposium in a way that such Greek authors as Dio Chrysostom and Galen do not. Jesus is present at reclining meals but his message is counter-cultural and the environment often hostile. In the Gospels, Plutarch’s suave guests are replaced by tax-gatherers, sinners and Pharisees trying to catch him out. There can be no sympotic equality between master and disciples, no shared ethics between Jesus and captious scholars. This works well at a later period, where Libanius, as appreciative of the great sympotic past of Greek culture as Plutarch, is in marked contrast to John Chrysostom, so utterly opposed to the gluttony and debauchery of the symposium that he ate on his own because wine upset him — he had a delicate stomach and he often forgot meal times because of ecclesiastical preoccupations. John lacks Augustus’ judgement of the appropriate occasion (state banquet or a quiet snack on his own), so nicely set out in Suetonius’ biography, mainly because, according to Palladius, he promoted parsimony in the face of luxury. Rooted in the discourse of luxury, the unfortunate divine lived a prey to his hypochondria. This is mild stuff in comparison with K.’s final chapter which has St Antony in the desert, various Stylites and exhortations to virgins to starve themselves away from conception. The baroque revels of the hagiographers end the book on a high note. This approach brings many nice touches — one that Macrobius does not merely bring an account of sympotic literature to a neat end at the end of antiquity; he also lacks that openness of vision that Plutarch was able to cultivate. Christianity, K. thinks, was uneasy about the multiple answers to pagan sympotic questions, ‘the playful indeterminacy of sympotic conversation comes into conflict with new models of monologic authority’ (353). Whether or not Macrobius was a Christian, and whether or not the new religion was widely monologic or only so in some places in some polemics, the world had changed its sacrificial practices from pagan multiplicity to the sacrifice of Christ that in ritual abstracted itself entirely from the materials of food into the mystery of the Eucharist. Commensality was another matter, but to what extent did a Christian wish to participate in the life of the city? Another large question with many different answers.

This excellent volume sets the ‘social knowledge’ of Athenaeus and Plutarch (matched with the inscriptions of the Greek cities of Asia Minor) against the purity and separateness of some early Christian thought; it richly explores ‘talking with the dead’ in pagan and Christian contexts (the great Greek past of Plato and Aristotle in Galen and Tertullian). K. divides his material into two parts, ‘conversation and community’ and ‘consumption and transgression’, the latter allowing much play for Lucian, parasites and other satirical takes on symposia, as well as thundering denunciations of debauchery; and he begins, pleasingly, with Britain’s own obsessions with discourses about food in newspapers and television programmes. There is no time to be in the kitchen with all the TV debate about baking and seductive presenters. Unmissable.

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