

BOOK REVIEW

Women and the Roman City in the Latin West. Edited by EMILY HEMELRIJK and GREG WOOLF. Mnemosyne Supplements. 360. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013. Pp. xxii + 408. Hardcover, \$180.00. ISBN 978-04-25594-4.

The communities of the Latin West have not yet received the scholarly attention that their counterparts in the eastern half of the Roman Empire have enjoyed. Some correction of this imbalance is now available in Emily Hemelrijk's and Greg Woolf's valuable volume, *Women and the Roman City in the Latin West*, which brings together nineteen contributions (all but one in English) of an overall high quality that were originally presented at a conference in Amsterdam in 2011. Those wondering what might have been unique about womanhood in the western empire will be largely disappointed: the volume as a whole does not address the question, although a few contributions take up aspects of it. Instead, the editors acknowledge up front that their geographical parameters are no more than "a convenient and temporary analytic category" (4), and even this is not applied strictly.

The collection is divided into five parts, each of which is well unified by themes and foci, with contributions often reinforcing conclusions drawn elsewhere in volume. The first section ("Civic Roles") focuses on female euergetism, which is demonstrated to have been more extensive and more prominent than is generally acknowledged. Women first begin to appear as public benefactors in the first century BCE, a trend that Alison Cooley and Emily Hemelrijk link to increased financial independence that is thought to have accompanied the expansion of marriage *sine manu* in that period. It is worth noting, however, that the evidence for the increase in unions of this type is far from certain. Cooley and Francesca Cenerini highlight the role women of the imperial house as participants in this established tradition of female euergetism and as high profile examples to be imitated by women in the western provinces and Italy. Caution is warranted, however: the nature of the evidence, honorific inscriptions and statuary, skews our view of women in the provinces toward the upper classes, as Werner Eck and Christian Witschel remind us.

Two of the three articles in “Part II: Participation in Cult” look at female involvement in the worship of gods hailing from the east. John North investigates how the gender of worshippers in the cults of Mithras, Isis, and Attis affected competition among these groups, whereas Wolfgang Spickermann explores differences in female involvement in the cult the Magna Mater in the eastern and western parts of the empire. James Rives argues that it was through their roles as priestesses and as public benefactors that women attained the honor, long thought to be available only to men, of presiding over sacrifices *pro populo*.

The third section looks at “Public Presentation”. Glenys Davies finds it difficult to distinguish between honorary and funerary statues of women based on type, but does see a difference between the poses chosen by (for?) women of the provinces and those by women of the imperial house. Wealthy women in the provinces did not automatically imitate those in the capitol. Sheila Dillon explores female portraiture on the island of Delos during the Republic. Mary Harlow offers an interesting consideration of how a Roman woman’s attire would have affected her experience out on the city street. Ursula Rothe looks at what differences in the popularity of ethnic dress in funerary portraiture can tell us about cultural identity and gender roles.

Part IV (“Economics”) looks at the role of women in the workforce. Rebecca Flemming’s study of medical professionals, both male and female, in the West reveals that they were generally of lower social status than those in the East. Women appear as midwives, but also as doctors who probably worked with both male and female patients. Both Miriam Groen-Vallinga and Claire Holleran argue that women formed a greater part of the workforce than is generally acknowledged, and that freeborn women had fewer opportunities for job training than slaves or freedwomen. Holleran makes a persuasive case that the paucity of female occupations recorded in epitaphs is a reflection of the fact that the ideal Roman woman stayed at home. Coen van Galen argues that the inclusion of women in the grain dole in Rome was due to the fact that recipients of the dole were required to be *sui iuris*, a status some women held.

The volume ends with three articles on “Mobility”. Greg Woolf makes the large-scale argument, based on epigraphic surveys of the western provinces, that when women moved within the Empire, it was most often in the company of a male relative or because the women themselves were part of the slave trade. Migration within a region is more common than long distance movement. Perhaps unexpectedly this holds true for aristocrats as well as the lower classes: there is little evidence for intermarriage among elites of different communities. Woolf

concludes with a tantalizing sketch of what DNA analysis might someday be able to tell us about the movement of people in antiquity. Two more narrowly defined studies support Woolf's conclusions about the conditions under which women moved about in the Empire. Elizabeth Greene looks at what the Vindolanda tablets can tell us about the lives of women who were part of that military community, and Lien Foubert fleshes out what we can know about two military wives who traveled to Britain from elsewhere.

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