

## BOOK REVIEW

*Erôs in Ancient Greece*. Edited by ED SANDERS, CHIARA THUMIGER, CHRISTOPHER CAREY and NICK LOWE. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xiv + 368. Hardcover, \$160.00. ISBN 978-0-19-960550-7.

This volume brings together 17 papers selected from among those presented at a March 2009 conference at University College London. What differentiates this collection from many previous studies of Greek eros is its focus on love as an emotion, rather than a social or historical praxis. The emotions have been the object of much scholarly debate in recent years, both inside and outside the field of classical studies, so this engagement is welcome.

Love's status as an emotion is not unproblematic, however, as is acknowledged in the lead essay by David Konstan, "Between Appetite and Emotion, or Why Can't Animals Have Eros?" Drawing on Aristotle and a range of relatively late literary texts, Konstan distinguishes eros as a uniquely human emotion because it involves rational thought as well as appetite and instinctive affection. Although acknowledging the many stories of erotic bonds between animals and humans (treated at even greater length in Steven D. Smith's "Monstrous Love? Erotic Reciprocity in Aelian's *De Natura Animalium*"), he demurs that these are not really sexual in nature. However, human-animal copulation is common enough in the imaginary world of Greek myth, and Smith is more convincing in arguing that the common anecdotes about dolphins' or horses' infatuation with a boy do have a sexual component stimulated by closeness to beauty and even featuring delight in reciprocity. We should add that intimacy need not take the form of penetrative intercourse to be erotic, as anyone can attest who enjoys the reciprocal pleasure of wrestling with a dog or stroking the soft fur of a cat. Moreover, animals' loyalty or protectiveness of their human friends may be based on at least a quasi-rational calculation of interest. That it is dolphins, the most intelligent non-human species, who so often fall in love with boys according to the Greeks should tell us something. This whole discussion could benefit from engagement with some of the recent anthropological work on human-animal bonding.

Konstan's stimulating essay is followed by the two principal editors, who each contribute a chapter on the role of eros in Greek tragedy. Thumiger successfully argues that throughout tragedy, eros is associated with "madness that has catastrophic consequences for the subject and the wider community" (28). Tragic eros is usually characterized as deviant or, if within marriage, the cause of conflict and violence (as with Deianeira in the *Trachiniae*). I am surprised that this essay makes no reference to Ruth Padel's *In and Out of the Mind: Greek Images of the Tragic Self* (Princeton 1992). After usefully engaging with the anthropological debate whether sexual jealousy is a universal emotion, Sanders' essay shows that it certainly was a powerful emotion for the Greeks, in light of his masterful demonstration that it was a primary motivation for Medea's acts in Euripides' play. He observes that Medea's eros for Jason is repeatedly invoked through the play, which also uses words relating to the "bed" more than any other Greek drama. The other emotions highlighted in the play—hatred, grief, wounded pride, envy, sense of betrayal, thirst for vengeance—all form part of what psychologists would recognize as a jealousy complex.

Less successful is Armand D'Angour's "Love's Battlefield: Rethinking Sappho Fragment 31." After pointing out, uncontroversially, that Sappho uses Homeric language of the battlefield (pain, wound, burning, limb-loosening, ally, flight and pursuit) to describe the combat of love, he proceeds to offer a highly speculative reconstruction of what he considers to be not one, but multiple missing stanzas at the end of fr. 31 LP. However, noting Sappho's occasional use of Iliadic language (which at this point had become a panhellenic *Kunstsprache*) is not the same as proving a primary conceptualization of love in martial terms; fr. 16 LP emphatically contrasts the two realms. His martial reconstruction of the missing stanza(s) actually diverges rather strongly from the emphasis on *otium* in the corresponding stanza of Catullus' translation.

The second major section of the collection focuses on erotic emotion as analyzed in ancient philosophy and medicine. Olivier Renaut examines the link between eros and Homeric *thymos* in Phaedrus' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, and also sees *thymos* as the crucial psychic intermediary between reason and instinct in the *Phaedrus*. Ralph Rosen notes that Galen's medical writings show little engagement with Plato's subtle discussions of eros, even though Galen was otherwise very familiar with Plato's work. Galen clearly locates eros along with other desiderative tendencies in the liver. Eleni Leontsini observes that the Stoic Zeno of Citium differs from Plato and Aristotle in making eros, rather than *philia*, the basis of civic concord, but had some precedent for his understanding of eros in

Aristotle's discussion of *philia*. The stand-out essay in this section, both in clarity and argument, is Christopher Gill's discussion of Stoic eros: in contrast to Plato's mind-body dualism, the Stoics sought "psychophysical holism" and placed a higher value on having children.

Among the remaining essays, Emma Stafford's iconographic survey is the longest and most important: she demonstrates that Eros' artistic depiction shifts from the pederastic and gymnic context also associated with the late archaic altar in front of the Academy to predominantly heterosexual scenes of the wedding and women's chamber after 450 BCE, more consistent with the joint cult of Eros and Aphrodite on the North slope of the acropolis, likely of Periclean date. This is certainly consistent with other trends in Greek vase painting and my own thesis of a Periclean policy favoring earlier marriage and more children, in lieu of the more leisurely and elite pederastic pursuits of earlier generations.

The second half of the collection is rounded out with essays on the cosmological Eros in Hesiod (Glenn Most), contrasting conceptions of eros in Plutarch's *Amatorius* and *Lives* (Michele Lucchesi), Plato's adoption of lyric and Parmenidean imagery in the *Phaedrus* (Douglas Cairns), patterns of using the terms *eros*, *philia*, and *pothos* in the plays of Aristophanes (James Robson), Ibycus, fragment 286 PMGF (Vanessa Cazzato), the magical power of lamps in the Greek magical papyri and Hellenistic epigram (Maria Kanellou), and the two-way nature of the male gaze in Strato's collection of pederastic epigrams (Andreas Fountoulakis). I do have the sense that the essays in this half of the collection are less consistent in their focus on evaluating eros as an emotion. There is nevertheless much that can be said in praise of all these essays, which can be read with profit by students of Greek literature and philosophy.

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