

Ann Raia, Cecelia Luschnig, Judith Lynn Sebesta, *The Worlds of Roman Women*. Newburyport, MA: Focus 2005. Pp. x + 189. ISBN 1-58510-130-3. US\$ 24.95 (pb).

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Courses on women in antiquity have become immensely popular, and we now can choose between several excellent textbooks that offer students interested in this burgeoning field access to the primary sources in translation.¹ What has been missing so far is a handy compilation of sources in the original Latin or Greek.² *The Worlds of Roman Women* now provides us with the desired intermediate Latin reader, and I am sure that it will be widely welcomed.

The anthology covers five centuries, starting with a comic fragment by Naevius and ending with excerpts from Suetonius and Aulus Gellius. Later Christian women writers like Proba (4th cent. CE) and Egeria (5th cent. CE) are excluded; the *Sulpiciae*

¹ Most importantly, E. Fantham et al. (1994), *Women in the Classical World : Image and Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); M. Lefkowitz and M. Fant (1982), *Women's Life in Greece and Rome*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), now available in a third edition (2005).

² I only know of one comparable collection, albeit with a German commentary: Franz Loretto, ed. (1994), *Frauen im alten Rom. Lateinisches Lesebuch. Vol. 1: Text; vol. 2: Kommentar* (Münster: Aschendorff).

Conquestio (*Epigr. Bob.* 37, ca. 400 CE) is probably included because its author (Junius Naucellius?) pretends to be the first-century poetess Sulpicia, wife of Calenus (cf. *Mart.* 10.35 and 10.38). The authors criticize Churchill, Brown, and Jeffrey's *Women Writing Latin*³ for containing only a few texts actually written by women of the Roman period (p. vii). In fact, their own collection offers even fewer texts by female authors than that anthology: the funerary inscriptions by Terentia (*ILS* 1046a) and Naevoeia Tyche (*ILS* 6373), two probably spurious excerpts from Cornelia's letters to her son C. Gracchus (*Nep. fr.* 59 Marshall), and, as the anthology's climax, the six elegies by Sulpicia ([*Tib.*] 3.13-18).

Overall, the sixty-three readings are well chosen. They expose students to an intriguing mix of literary and non-literary texts. Prose passages include examples of Roman historiography, biography, and epistolography, as well as snippets of medical, agricultural, legal, rhetorical, and encyclopedic writing. Poetry is represented with, e.g., comedy, satire, lyric, elegy, epigram, didactic, mock-didactic, and historical epos. An assortment of funerary inscriptions, including excerpts from the famous *Laudatio Turiae* and the *Laudatio Murdiae*, rounds off the selection.

³ L. Churchill, P. Brown, and J. Jeffrey, edd. (2002), *Women Writing Latin : From Roman Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, 3 vols. (New York : Routledge). Part 1 on Roman Antiquity offers six sections with a total of 35 texts.

As the title of the anthology indicates, this diverse material is arranged thematically by the different "worlds" or spheres in which Roman women moved, the worlds of childhood, learning, marriage, family, the body, the state, work and flirtation. Each section is introduced by well-informed essays of two or three pages that serve as an excellent first introduction into the subject. In addition, brief introductions accompany every Latin reading. Overly long texts have been shortened so that students with intermediate skills should be able to handle them within one class period.

A running commentary either faces or follows each reading passage. It usually succeeds in answering the questions with which intermediate students actually struggle. For that reason, the commentary is pretty basic, mostly concerned with giving grammar and vocabulary aid. The commentary is also graded, in the sense that the earlier selections in the book point out even common constructions (ablative absolutes, indirect statements) and address almost every subjunctive form. As the book progresses, however, the more basic explanations decrease in frequency.

The one feature of the book I found less appealing was the disconcertingly high number of more or less significant errors in the commentary. Here are a few typical examples: The phrase *optima lege* (Gell. 1.12.13) is explained as "abl. of quality" (p. 18), yet *optima* is nom., *lege* abl. of respect. On p. 44, the postponed

preposition *causā* (as in *eius causā*, *ILS 8393*) is described as "abl. of cause." Similarly, p. 58 misinterprets *ulciscerer* (Plaut. *Men.* 636), an imperfect subjunctive in an indirect question, as an "old infinitive form" (à la *laudari*). *Prodite* (Ov. *AA.* 3.131), to give one last example, is linked with *prodere* "exhibit, reveal" although the meter reveals that it is a form of *prodire*, "to go out, appear in public."

Historical information is not always accurate either. On p. 124, for example, the plural *Gallias* in Tac. *Ann.* 1.69.1 is taken as a reference to Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul. Tacitus, however, is describing events of the year 15 CE. By this time, Gallia Cisalpina had long ceased to be a province, and Gallia Transalpina had been re-christened Narbonensis. *Gallias* more likely refers to the provinces established by Augustus in the area conquered by Caesar, Belgica, Lugdunensis, and Aquitania, a.k.a. Tres Galliae.

Finally, questions of poetic meter are not a forte of the book. The passage Plaut. *Epid.* 221-34 consists of trochaic octonarii (cf. Lindsay's appendix), not iambic senarii (p. 101). The very first text of the anthology, a funeral inscription (*CLE* 1518), is printed as if it were prose but is actually composed in Phalaeceans. In Plaut. *Cist.* 38-41 (p. 139), the orthography has been modernized, but

superbiai, not *superbiae*, is required by the meter (iambic septenarii).⁴

On the whole, these errors, while unfortunate, do not significantly diminish the value of the anthology as a useful introduction into the *Worlds of Roman Women* for intermediate Latin classes. The book will find many enthusiastic readers, and I myself am looking forward to designing a class around it.

⁴ In the next line, the text should read *mer<e>tricum*. Other errors in the Latin of the readings: p. 45, l. 39 *iusti[t]us*; ll. 40-41 <*ad desiderium*> *luctumque reservatus videor*; p. 29, l. 20: *vatis*, read *vates*; p. 73: *coni[i]ciet*; *qua[r]ter*; p. 91 (Cels 4.27.2): *rettuli[t]*; (Cels 4.27.3): *acrum*, read *acre*; p. 99, l. 10: *composit*, read *compsit*; p. 111 (Liv. 41.3.5): delete comma between *animo* and *esse*; p. 119: colon needed after *credita*; p. 121: colon after *negor*: colon after *loquar*; p. 135, l. 2: C(ai<o>); p. 151 ([Tib.] 3.14.6): all manuscripts have *saepe*, not *saeve*. On pp. 109 (*bis*) and 123 (*bis*), words that should be separate have been printed together.