

Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-19-538874-9. Pp. xx + 471.

A second edition of this classic work on Roman sex and gender is very welcome, if not an essential purchase for those who already own the 1999 original. Other than some smoothing out around the edges of the text, the basic arguments remain as they were then: that Greek and Roman models of sexuality were based on practices rather than identity or orientation; that the basic Roman model of sexual activity (unlike the Greek) was based on domination and subjection performed through penetration, whether of men or women; and that the biological sex of a Roman man's sexual object was (therefore) not especially predictable or indeed interesting—what was more important was that (again, unlike in Greece) the sexual object was not a citizen, certainly not one beyond the age of a 'boy', and what was much more important was that they were penetrated rather than penetrating. Even so, sexual receptivity wasn't taken *that* seriously: Williams points out that the only punishment for a man who 'submitted to unmanly things with his body' was that he was, like women, beast-fighters and the blind, excluded from appearing before a magistrate on behalf of someone else.

That these basic arguments were ever especially controversial may seem surprising, but Williams reminds us that notions of homosexual identities and subcultures were still to be found in the scholarship of the 1990s. What keeps the book relevant today is another and more original side to Williams' argument, which is his insistence on the importance of gender in Roman sexual discourse; this is as much an enquiry into masculinity as same-sex attraction and activity. The central imperative of Roman masculinity, on this reading, is domination both of others and of oneself. As a result, the general disapproval of uncontrolled lust in men (whether to penetrate or be penetrated) is not related to the biological sex of the object of that lust: effeminacy could be attached to inappropriate or unrestrained sexual relations with women as easily as to those with men.

This explains the puzzling figure of the 'womanizing *cinaedus*', and indeed Williams demonstrates (building on Winkler and Halperin's remarks on the Greek *kinaidos*) that the *cinaedus* was primarily portrayed in Roman discourse as gender-deviant without necessarily being passive or predictably attracted to men. He was in no sense a 'homosexual'—and indeed may not in any real sense have existed: Williams notes in his 'Afterword' to the second edition that the word *cinaedus* is only ever found as an insult, never as a self-identification. This renders pointless investigation of 'their' identity or culture, as opposed to the culture that created them: "Rather than asking what 'bastards' or 'cocksuckers' think of themselves, we can inquire into what sorts of qualities seem to lead to someone being given these labels, and then explore the cultural logic and internal coherence of those qualities." (256)

This 'Afterword' concentrates less on developments in scholarship over the last decade—and it is particularly regrettable that James Davidson's *The Greeks and Greek Love* (2008) could not be taken into account—than on answering objections leveled at the first edition. Nonetheless, the synchronic approach taken to evidence for figures as disparate in time and culture as Clodius and Elagabalus will still make some

readers uncomfortable, and Williams' justification here that there simply wasn't much change in Roman culture over time is surprising against the background of recent scholarly interest in the 'Roman Cultural Revolution'. Other minor reasons for hesitation also remain: although the 'Afterword' makes an interesting case that "the textual and visual traditions tell much the same story" (262), the treatment of artistic evidence is rather summary, and that of women's sexual practices almost non-existent: for Williams as well as the Romans, men dominate. The discussion of the *lex Scantinia* (131–5) does not entirely convince: although the argument that the law targeted *stuprum* conducted with both men and women is plausible, all the cases we hear about are related to men, and there may simply be too little evidence to resolve the question. And given the book's firm rejection for the Roman world of modern categories such as homosexuality and heterosexuality, the title, though explicitly defended as an 'intentional paradox', is somewhat baffling. But the methodological questions that the book raises make it particularly useful as a textbook, as does the new 'Appendix 4' on graffiti at Pompeii (a topic that is not easy for Anglophone students to tackle), and the basic discussion of definitions in the 'Introduction': I know of no better concise discussion of 'masculinity'.

JOSEPHINE CRAWLEY QUINN
WORCESTER COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD