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Vassiliki Panoussi, *Brides, Mourners, Bacchae: Women's Rituals in Roman Literature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. Pp. 288. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-4214-2891-8) \$54.95.

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Careful and informed readers will note both contributions and points of contention left unaddressed throughout this book, which came toward the end of de Romilly's long and distinguished career. To give just one example, she confidently declares that conspirators knocked the genitalia off the herms in 415 BCE, which is a traditional and possible interpretation, even though Thucydides only indicates mutilation of the faces (περικόπησαν τὰ πρόσωπα, 6.27).

One might also challenge some of de Romilly's underlying assumptions. She acknowledges, for instance, that the advisor is a trope in ancient historiography, but nevertheless declares that Alcibiades "had full authority over Tissaphernes, and thus in Persia" (115; reader, he did not). Similarly, she characterizes Alcibiades' flight to Sparta as an unprecedented betrayal (91–6), even though he fled there after being sentenced to death *in absentia* and our ancient sources likely exaggerate Alcibiades' contribution to Sparta. But, equally incorrectly, de Romilly accepts the year 404 BCE as the end of a golden era when in fact the Thirty lasted only about a year, after which the democracy was restored. War resumed only a few years later.

In other ways, *The Life of Alcibiades* shows its age. The spare bibliography is dated, as one would expect, but de Romilly also describes the banter between Alcibiades and Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* as containing "a hint of homosexual tenderness openly expressed" (25).

Ultimately, de Romilly's Alcibiades is a paradoxical character: a self-serving politician with the celebrity of movie and television stars (4) who used public office for personal gain and thus ruined his country *and* a phenomenally talented individual "destroyed by a flower of indiscretion" (198). Every generation sees itself on the road to hell and de Romilly's clear admiration for the man who is both hero and villain of her story sits uncomfortably at another moment of democracy imperiled. Nevertheless, *The Life of Alcibiades* serves as a reminder that the personal relationships of aristocrats and the blurred lines between public service and private ambition have always existed uneasily in democratic societies.

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Vassiliki Panoussi, *Brides, Mourners, Bacchae: Women's Rituals in Roman Literature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. Pp. 288. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-4214-2891-8) \$54.95.

In this engaging collection of published and unpublished work, Vassiliki Panoussi skillfully unpacks the interweaving of Bacchic, nuptial, and funerary imagery in Roman

texts, challenging in the Introduction the “traditional view of women as pawns of a patriarchal agenda” (3). Panoussi argues instead that for Roman authors, the depiction of ritual becomes a “‘space’ in which women become powerful agents who articulate a different point of view, one that is often ideologically opposed to that of ... men” (3). Building on recent work in the fields of Roman religion, Latin literature, and gender studies, she contends that by exploring the tensions of gender and genre in depictions of ritual acts we can find alternative views of women’s power in their “bonded agency” (8).

A neat summary of recent studies of the Roman wedding (Ch. 1) helpfully sets the stage for *Brides* (Part I). In Panoussi’s view, Catullus’ epithalamia (Ch. 2) are canvases on which to illustrate women’s agency (poem 61) and resistance (poem 62); here, ritual serves to mitigate the tensions of the transition from sheltered virginity to matronhood.

In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 9, the power of Egyptian Isis (Ch. 3) comes to the fore as she changes the sex of the desperate Iphis, negotiating ideas of gender by both instigating transgression and reconfirming “traditional sexual roles” (46). A transnational, multiethnic birth goddess who represents crossing boundaries (44), Isis is a divinity who can upset the social order and bring salvation. The motif of “marriage to death” looms large in the wartime weddings of Marcia and Polyxena (Ch. 4), through which Lucan (*Bell. Civ. 2*) and Seneca (*Troades*), respectively, employ aberrant nuptial rituals to symbolize the tragedies of civil conflict. In Petronius’ *Satyrical* (Ch. 5) the priestess Quartilla assumes the reins of power and becomes a “sadistic spectator” while her victim, the anti-hero Encolpius, suffers feminization (79). In his lampooning of Priapic and nuptial ritual, Petronius turns the idea of Catullus’ tender bride on its head: men are the ones broken, and male fragility is on display (81). The absurdities on daily view in Neronian Rome, Panoussi observes, inform the work of the last three authors.

To introduce Part II: *Mourners*, Panoussi reviews in Ch. 6 what is known of Roman funerary rituals. When properly implemented, women’s noisy lament had the power to mediate and heal the grief of individuals and the body politic; it offered too a “space... for the expression of feminine poetics” and could make women’s “bodies visible” and their “pain audible” (87). Unchecked, however, mourning could represent a problematic, disruptive force, symbolic of women’s irrationality and often displaying all the hallmarks of Bacchic frenzy.

Indeed themes of mourning and madness come into sharp focus in Ovid’s (*Meta.* 10 and 11) version of the tragedy of Orpheus (Ch. 7). Orpheus loses his bride Eurydice soon after his lugubrious wedding, and in his womanly, perpetual mourning the poet becomes a feminized victim of *sparagmos*; his famed songs are irresistible to everyone but the Ciconian Bacchantes (98). As Panoussi shows, in this interlude, traditionally female lament triumphs, albeit temporarily, over both elegy and epic, and women’s song drowns out “the male poetic voice” (100). In contrast, in Statius’ *Thebaid* (Ch. 8), female mourners stitch together the social

fabric men have rent in their civil war (105). Women's mourning, which has the potential to be equally "disturbing and destabilizing" (106) can bring resolution and justice (110).

In introducing Part III, *Bacchae* (Ch. 9), Panoussi wisely cautions that scholars must continue the difficult task of separating "fact from artistic imagination" in depictions of maenads and the adherents of Bacchic cult (117). She demonstrates that destruction (especially of the family), violence, and empowerment result when women take up the thyrsus, for "Roman authors use Bacchic motifs to showcase the problematic nature of women's agency" (119).

The violent quelling of Bacchic cult (Ch. 10) in 186 BCE seems to have resulted from a tragic admixture of misinformation and collective paranoia in Rome. Panoussi shows we may never know the facts of this purge; rather what deserves our close attention is the prejudiced language Livy in his *History* uses to damn the cult. Livy emphasizes that the danger to the state lay primarily in women's casting off their approved roles as *matronae*, opting for lives of noisy revel and debauchery (126-30); young men were rendered passive and feminized (122) in the bargain. Likewise, Ovid at *Meta.* 6 (Ch. 11) asks readers to imagine the terrifying possibilities should women unleash their dormant powers, showcasing perverted sacraments that make a mockery of "marriage, maenadism and sacrifice" (140) in the tale of Philomela and Procne. Ironically bonded by family and worship, these avenging sisters destroy the very body (Procne's son Itys) that would have ensured the continuance of the Thracian royal family and the health of its body politic. Finally, the famed Lemnian women (Ch. 12), as vengeful Bacchantes denying the imperatives of their societally constructed gender, massacre their men; princess Hypsipyle alone resists and safeguards her father. Reconfiguring Apollonius' Hypsipyle (148), Valerius and Statius create very different Bacchic Hypsipyles, the first highlighting her "beneficial authority" (158), the latter exalting her as a pious daughter, but by means of potentially unflattering intertextual allusions to problematic queens (161). Thus the two Flavian authors, who themselves witnessed the cruelties of civil conflict, reconsider the pivotal roles women's agency plays in the safety of a threatened state (165-7).

In Part IV, Panoussi explores female power both latent and manifest in "women-only rituals" that represent a hidden world of women's worship (Ch. 13). When these private rituals are invaded by the most masculine and epic of heroes, Hercules and Achilles, in decidedly non-epic contexts, ritual itself becomes the locus in which to explore both gender- and genre-bending. In these episodes we may observe a novel "self-fashioning" at work in the Augustan and Flavian periods (217), and crucially the legends involving Hercules "present an alternative, peaceful, narrative to the male foundation story of war and violence" (201).

In Propertius' poem 4.9, the poet endeavors to explain the origin of the exclusion of maidens from Hercules' worship (Ch. 14), reimagining the confrontation in which the bullish demigod shoves aside the aged priestess barring his entry from the restricted sanctuary of the Bona Dea. In Panoussi's view, this tale of a thriving female-only

community in Rome centuries before Romulus' birth represents the inclusivity of women's ritual standing in opposition to male violence, usurpation, and exclusion symbolized by Hercules' bulldozing impiety. Ovid's (*Fasti* 6) retelling of the legend of Mater Matuta (Ch. 15) similarly offers a message of female inclusivity: Ino's epic journey, from Juno-hounded Theban princess to Roman goddess Mater Matuta, finds an echo in Hercules' Juno-driven peregrinations as he, transformed and transformative, becomes an object of devotion on Roman soil. Hercules is an apt savior of Ino, for he also suffered through traumas of "infanticide, madness and violence" (200). Tellingly, Propertius' Hercules stands as an "obvious model for the *princeps* and the state" (187), while Ovid's celebration of Mater Matuta's cult, centering on women's mutual beneficence, may also be linked to Augustus' notions of family values (201). In Statius' (Ch. 16) reworking of the myth of Achilles' immersion in female-only cult in his *Achilleid*, the maidens of Scyros all but stamp out the masculinity of the hero in their charge. As Achilles is kept safe from Hera's wrath, female rituals become the sole vehicle by which to keep in check Achilles' rampant masculinity; crucially, rituals that are meant to control and shape maidens are shown here to provide them with the power to resist and control men, in turn (204).

In the Epilogue, Panoussi brings together the disparate threads of argument in her discussion of the hidden, nocturnal worship of Tacita revealed for all by Ovid (*Fasti* 2), rites emblematic of the rituals investigated throughout the book. In this tale, the garrulous nymph Lara, viciously mutilated by Jupiter and rendered speechless, becomes the punishing goddess Tacita, in turn silencing others through the women who practice magical rites in her name. Demonstrating that these episodes represent more than glorifications of violence against women ubiquitous in antiquity, Panoussi argues that literary collisions of ritual, gender, and genre are unique spaces in which to uncover women's voices as well as to "contemplate the relationship between power and poetry" (222). With this fascinating book, Panoussi has surely opened the door for more illuminating work on literary portraits of women's ritual acts.

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Kathleen McCarthy, *I, the Poet: First-Person Form in Horace, Catullus, and Propertius*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019. Pp. 258. Cloth (ISBN 978-1-5017-3955-2). \$52.95.

When Horace says *Vides ut alta stet nive candidum / Soracte* (*Odes* 1.9), the second person address invites readers to observe speech happening through the medium of a written text. But who is Horace talking to? When Thaliarchus is introduced in the second stanza, the presence of a named addressee does not invalidate a possible sense that