THE BODY IN QUESTION

JAMES I. PORTER (ed.): *Constructions of the Classical Body*. Pp. viii + 397, ills. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999. Cased, $59.50. ISBN: 0-472-109081-0.

This is a collection of papers originally presented at a conference in 1990: several show signs of their age. Six have since been printed elsewhere, and two of these (the best) are available in books: Carson's 'Dirt and Desire' (D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler, F. I. Zeitlin [edd.], *Before Sexuality* [Princeton, 1990]) and King's 'Chronic Pain and the Creation of Narrative' (*Hippocrates' Woman* [London, 1998]). Some are at best tangential to the subject, which seems to have set off an avalanche of bad writing, yet the whole is strangely uninformed by literary or cultural theory. Readers will do better to go straight to two invaluable surveys in the *Annual Review of Anthropology*: Margaret Lock, 'Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and the Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge', 22 (1993), 133–55 and Rosalind C. Morris, 'All Made Up: Performance Theory and the New Anthropology of Sex and Gender', 24 (1995), 567–92.

Had the easily accessible pieces and some of the weaker bits been omitted there might have been room for the entirety of Zeitlin's 'Reflections on Erotic Desire'. There is much meat here and much to argue with. However, the editor included only about half, leaving us in the absurd position of having to quote an important English article in Italian translation: S. Settis (ed.), *I Greci* (Turin, 1996), I, pp. 369–430.

It is also a pity Henderson's 'Smashing Bodies' was not translated into English. I choose a sentence at random (the only possible way): 'Maleness surrenders its unity to the multiplier effect of sexual difference or, at any rate, inscribes intolerable contradiction within the contours of its bodyscape' (p. 21). Basic facts are wrong: on a vase we find 'genitalia dangled in our faces' (p. 23). Shins, actually, as a glance at the picture will show.

Kurke's 'Pindar and the Prostitutes' is also off-topic. K. gives a reading of fr. 122, where Pindar complains about a commission, calls himself a prostitute for accepting it, and invites the guests at the victory symposium to imagine themselves as prostitutes; thus he 'achieves the effect of poetic S/M—a brief and pleasurable flirtation with bondage' (p. 110). This seems an unlikely way to get asked back to the party. She uncovers not triumph or self-fashioning but, predictably, 'anxiety'. Her texts are eccentric. So at fr. 112.6: ἀπαγορίας, translated as 'possibility of refusal'. The word, did it exist, would mean 'defense'. K. has missed the Doric long α and confused ἀπηγόρημα with ἀπαγόρευμα. Many details need to be verified, e.g. '*xenos* is also the technical term for the man who visits a temple prostitute' (p. 110). Check the citations and see.

Humphreys's 'From a Grin to a Death' looks for 'attempts to articulate a democratic theory of the citizen's body to counterbalance the aristocratic model' (p. 128) and finds a concerted propaganda effort by Cimon. The evidence seems very tenuous. For example, H. baldly states that the herms set up for the victory at Eion are represented on a pot by the Pan Painter (*ARV*^{2} 555, 92), a suggestion refuted by Lissarrague (see bibliography). But all Plut. *Cim*. 7.2 says is that Cimon set up three herms with inscriptions, and the Pan Painter is *very* fond of herms. There are odd assumptions, including that Cimon somehow controlled the iconography and was issuing commemorative pots, e.g. the Eurymedon vase.

In 'Sexual Bodybuilding', Sissa offers *vieux jeu* reflections on Foucault and a sloppy

© Oxford University Press, 2001

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.1.138 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and shallow travesty of Aeschines 1 in a desperate effort to prove that 'the ancients did conceive of homosexuality as an identity' (p. 147) and hated homos. Anachronisms abound—'gay', 'cruising'—while the Greek terms significantly never appear. Active/passive, citizen/slave, etc. are ignored when convenient. Most of her statements are flatly contradicted by the text. I recommend two exercises to the reader. One, set S.'s paraphrases next to the Greek (e.g. p. 158 vs. Aesch. 1.37). Two, think of President Clinton and use her arguments to prove that Americans hate 'heterosexuality'.

Potter and Barton make random observations on smells and blushing.

Richlin gives a subtle meditation on the meaning of heads and head-hunting in Rome, covering *diminutio capitis*, *capite censi*, capital punishment, and the special meaning of the silencing of 'Cicero's Head'. It is engaged and rooted in the texts.

Downing's 'Anti-Pygmalion' goes over ground far better covered by Myerowitz, whom he dislikes and misunderstands.

Edwards in 'The Suffering Body' eschews crude generalizations to examine the particular case of the body in Seneca's *Letters* and the specifically Roman imagery of these literary *ludi*. Seneca obsesses about pain and torture. He achieves intellectual control—so he thinks—by facing up to his fears. But S. is always the *editor* of his own spectacles. Unfortunately, the translations (taken from the Loeb) do the author and reader disservice.

Gleason's 'Truth Contests and Talking Corpses' gathers various stories involving resurrections and trials (*Golden Ass*, *Acts of Peter*) to arrive at the idea that truth is power (including rhetorical power) over the body. G. read Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* only after writing this essay and Barton's *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans* would also have appealed. Two objections: (1) 'body' is stretching it a bit; rather power over the material, since the bodies in question include dogs, statues, inflated bladders, and a smoked herring. (2) In fact, the Christian narratives show quite the opposite: Peter has power over the material world because he has the truth. Add Perkins, 'Social World of the *Acts of Peter*', in J. Tatum (ed.), *Search for the Ancient Novel* (Baltimore, 1994), pp. 296–307.

Lamerton claims that Plotinus' shame at his embodiment is 'something new in cosmology and psychology' (p. 316), and offers a biographical and psychoanalytic explanation: Plotinus was weaned too late and had a breast fixation (p. 323).

Hexter, in 'Ovid's Body', after some po-mo punning around, reveals himself as an old-fashioned positivist ('some of the tidbits in the ancient lives of Virgil . . . offer authentic or at least creditable information', p. 329). He then gets down to his unstated topic: medieval pseudepigrapha and speculations on Ovid's exile.

Wyke's 'Herculean Muscle!: The Classicizing Rhetoric of Bodybuilding' is fun, with a refreshing insistence on presenting facts and interpretations clearly.

University of Cincinnati HOLT N. PARKER

IN YOUR DREAMS

D. SHULMAN, G. G. STROUMSA (edd.): *Dream Cultures. Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming*. Pp. x + 325, figs. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. Cased, £42. ISBN: 0-19-512336-0.

This book is the fruit of a workshop held in 1995, exactly 100 years after Freud had

© Oxford University Press, 2001

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.1.138 Published online by Cambridge University Press