

freedmen do not undergo change in status over time and remain locked into a static subculture.⁹

In conclusion, this book provides a well-planned and readable introduction to the study of ancient narrative fiction. The scholarship is up-to-date and wide-ranging, the critical judgements are balanced and carefully weighed, and the writing is engaged and therefore highly readable. The book is relatively inexpensive and deserves a place in the libraries of all institutions in which research into the ancient romances takes place.

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Christian Laes, *Kinderen bij de Romeinen. Zes eeuwen dagelijks leven*. Davidsford, Leuven. 2006. Paperback. ISBN 90-5826393-2. 343 pp.

This book has an unassuming yet comprehensive title. This is a good reflection of its contents and the approach of the author to his subject.

I found the style of the book one of its most pleasant aspects. Although it is a well researched work that makes use of many fields of knowledge, it never becomes pretentious. It is readable, accessible and reflects a sympathetic and humane approach to the subject without falling into the trap of either sentimentality or sensationalism. Given the subject matter the latter possibility could have been a real danger.

The author succeeds in giving the reader an idea of what it meant to be a child in the Roman World in the Late Republic and Early Empire. By making use of what he calls 'de mentaliteitsgeschiednis van de Romeinse Oudheid', the reader learns what the cultivated male Roman thought about children and childhood. Contributing to an understanding of childhood in Roman times are the black and white illustrations, consisting mostly of photos of statues and relief sculptures, but also of frescoes and depictions on vases. The one illustration which really brings home to one what it meant to be a slave child in the Roman Empire is that of a black child sitting on his haunches, head resting on his knees, bound in chains (143).

The book is divided into 5 chapters. The first is 'Hoe leefden kinderen? Demografie, ecologie en psychosociale realiteit van het antieke bestaan'. Here the material world of the Roman child is discussed, including housing, hygiene and life expectancy. The shortness of the latter had many implica-

⁹ Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Transl. W.R. Trask (Princeton 1953) 53.

tions for children: the early loss of a parent, probably having a step-parent, the loss of a sibling, of a friend. In short, life for a Roman child was one of uncertainty. Section 8, 'De psychosociale realiteit van het Romeinse huwelijks- en gezinsleven' (36-41), is particularly insightful.

In chapter 2, 'De vroegste kinderjaren (0-7jaar)', use is made mainly of the texts of ancient *medici* and philosophers. Here are interesting discussions on childbirth, the role of parents and nurses, the development of the child, diet, toys, first words and so on. Section 6, 'De rol van de ouders: hun hoop en verdriet' (87-95), makes ample use of epitaphs. It is clear that children were important to all layers of society albeit for different reasons. This is a most informative chapter, well worth reading.

'Romeinse kinderen op school (ca.7-15 jaar)', is the title of chapter 3. Again the subject is approached and presented in a thought-provoking manner, forcing one to question whether our own modern approach to education is necessarily the best.

Laes does his best to include information about girls in his research, something not easily achieved given the male focus of ancient sources. He does, however, succeed in chapter 4, 'Romeinse kinderen aan het werk'. This is the most comprehensive chapter. The subject is approached from many angles and sections such as 'Kinderarbeid en slaven in juridische bepalingen', 'Welgestelde kinderen: jonge keizers, magistraten en raadsleden', 'Industriële activiteit: goudmijnen en steengroeven' en 'Kinderen in het Romeinse leger' are included. It is clear that the division between childhood and adulthood is less distinct in the Roman world than in ours and that children came into contact with the professional life of their parents much earlier. Often this leads to much more effective socializing than achieved nowadays in school-orientated societies.

The last chapter discusses the very important topic of 'Pedofilie en pederastie'. Laes makes it interesting by presenting full case stories and ample quotes from ancient sources. Of these I cannot refrain from giving the following from *Dig.* 1.6.2 by Seneca Rhetor: 'Onkuisheid is voor een vrijgeborene een misdaad, voor een slaaf een noodzaak, voor een vrijgelatene zijn plicht' (233). What a summary of ancient thought on the subject! He approaches this controversial topic from different angles in an attempt to understand the phenomenon. This is an unbiased, level-headed discussion. The conclusion in Section 7, 'Besluit: naar een beter begrip van antieke pederastie' (247-49) illustrates this excellently.

The 'Slotakkoord en algemeen besluit' is very useful to the reader who does not have the time to read the whole book, but does want to know to what conclusions this authoritative writer has come. A significant conclusion, for instance, is that childhood to the Romans was rather a social than a psycho-

logical category (256). In a society where power often implied the use of violence, this had many implications for children, especially when one takes into consideration the double function children often had in Roman society, 'tegelijk outsiders en zorgenkinderen' (258).

The 'Methodologisch postscriptum' can be read as a preface as it answers many possible critical questions. Reading it first can be most instructive. In fact, the explanation of how the author approaches and uses all the possible ancient sources contributes to the reader's confidence on the validity of his conclusions. In the category of literary sources, for example, he makes use of 'epiek, lyriek en liefdespoëzie, tragedie, komedie, satiren, epigrammen, romans, fables, anecdotes, redivoeringen, brieven, historiografie, biografie, juridische passages, medische teksten (populair-)filosofische en theologische uiteenzettingen' (268). But he does this keeping in mind the aims and characteristics of the different genres, the rhetorical principle that often masks the true emotions of writers as well as the *persona* theory. He argues that literary sources can be regarded as reflecting public opinion on childhood if the same ideas are found in different genres (270).

This section of the book also contains a discussion of publications of modern scholars (since 1975) on childhood in Roman antiquity (273-77). Laes makes it clear that the demands made on modern historians of ancient life are daunting: 'Meer dan vroeger zagen historici zich genoodzaakt zich te ontpoppen tot intellectuele duizendpoten: demografie, sociologie, psychologie en vergelijkende antropologie gingen integraal deel uitmaken van hun taak' (275).

An interesting statistic given by Laes is that only about 2.5% of the literary output of the Greeks and Romans has survived the ages, and that these reflect mostly the world of the top layer of society. To try to form as complete a picture of Roman childhood as possible, Laes thus also makes use of material sources such as inscriptions, papyri, potsherds, coins, archaeological finds and 'beenderonderzoek'.

To me the most positive aspect of the book is the level-headed but engaged attitude of the writer towards his sources and subject. He is open-minded and honest, a disarming combination which makes reading the book an 'uitdagende en provocatieve intellectuele activiteit' (279). For instance, when reading Chapter 5 ('Pedofilie en pederastie'), one cannot help but echo Laes' question if our attitude to 'kinderen en lichamelijkheid, intimiteit, seksualiteit en seksuele minderjarigheid' is not often ambiguous and even hypocritical.

The 'verklarende woordelijst, lijst van gebruikte afkortingen, noten and bibliografie' all add to the reader- and user-friendly qualities of the book. An index would, however, have been most welcome.

This book has to my mind succeeded in doing what the author intended, namely to cause ‘een aanzet tot verder denken, een reflectie op schijnbaar vanzelfsprekende zekerheden, een vonk in de passionele bezigheid [van] geschiedschrijving’ (262).

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Johan C. Thom, *Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus. Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 33. Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck. 2005. Pp. 207. ISBN 3-16-148660-9.

The hymn addressed to Zeus composed by the Second Stoic scholar Cleanthes is a short text of thirty-nine lines quoted by John Stobaeus in the first book of his *Anthology*, and preserved in a single important Neapolitan manuscript. Despite its brevity, the hymn is rightly regarded as a text of immense significance. Very few complete texts from the early Stoa have survived (as any examination of Von Arnim's *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* soon makes quite apparent, we rely heavily on later authors for our reconstruction of the doctrines of this philosophical school), and so it is understandable that students of post-Aristotelian philosophy should attribute such value to the *ipsisima verba* of an early senior Stoic philosopher who had actually known and conversed with the school's founder, Zeno. The text is also fascinating as a proclamation of Stoic doctrine on the interconnectedness of physics and theology, and the impression it gives of sincere pious devotion, particularly since the discourse has been delivered in a traditional format (a hymn) using largely non-technical terms, phrases, and poetic cadences familiar from the established hymnic tradition. There is less of Parmenides here, and more that is Homeric, Hesiodic, or Aeschylean.

Johan Thom has produced a text, translation, and detailed commentary of this poem (achieving the same clarity, good sense, and comprehensiveness which he demonstrated in his 1995 edition and commentary of the *Pythagorean Golden Verses*). An introductory section (pp. 1-29) sets out and evaluates the evidence for Cleanthes' dates and his interest in theological issues, discusses questions of the genre, style, and performance-context of the poem (where Thom emphasises the centrality of 'prayer' in the hymn and therefore prefers not to view it as a purely literary or philosophical hymn but rather as a serious effort to communicate both with the divinity addressed and the human audience of the hymn's performance), and carefully plots the structure of the poem, showing the logical sequence of thought which moves from invocation, through argument, to final prayer. Space is also devoted to

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