

MARK BRADLEY, VICTORIA LEONARD and LAURENCE TOTELIN (EDS), *BODILY FLUIDS IN ANTIQUITY*. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. xix + 431, illus. ISBN 9781138343726. £120.00.

The editors set out their project clearly in the introduction: to be the first broad study of corporeal fluids in the ancient world. In doing so, the volume adopts a *longue durée* approach with papers ranging from the second millennium B.C.E. to Late Antiquity as well as the reception of classical ideas in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. It also includes discussions of Egyptian as well as Greek and Roman evidence.

Instead of providing a single definition of what a ‘bodily fluid’ is, this book takes readers on a *tour d’horizon* of the many inventive ways bodily fluids were conceptualised and classified in the ancient world—as well as the transmission and reception of such ideas in later times. The contributors variously provide their own definition or refer back to Amy Coker’s discussion in ch. 1. Coker gives a thorough analysis of the Greek and Roman lexica on bodily discharge and describes a fluid as a substance lacking in viscosity. As the editors note, this chapter informs the whole volume, explaining how bodily discharges were categorised and determined by language.

Several corporeal fluids are investigated across the volume. Blood (including menstrual blood) is the most prominent, as attested by its lengthy entry in the index. It is then followed by the seed of both sexes (chs 7, 8, 10, 11, 18, 22), milk (chs 8, 14, 15, 22), tears (chs 6, 8, 16, 20, 21, 22), sweat (chs 4, 13, 16, 18), phlegm (chs 7, 10, 13), urine (chs 8, 10) and saliva (chs 8, 18). Ch. 19 by Tasha Dobbin-Bennett focuses on the ‘putrefactive fluids’ that leave the confines of post-mortem bodies.

*Bodily Fluids in Antiquity* includes an impressive twenty-four chapters, each relatively short but substantial in their quality. Instead of being organised chronologically or geographically, the editors have chosen to divide them according to seven themes. While it works well in some cases (such as in the later sections), for others the connections between the different papers are less clear. Each chapter ends with its own bibliography that contains useful references to the editions of their sources, thus highlighting the extensive scope of the evidence available about bodily fluids in antiquity.

The first thematic section is entitled ‘A woman’s flux’. Rosalind Janssen investigates menstruation in the Egyptian village of Deir-el-Medina in the second millennium B.C.E. Irene Salvo examines the transmission and knowledge of menstruation in magical and medical texts from the Greek world. Jane Burkowski analyses representations of another fluid—sweat—in the elegiac poetry of the Late Republican and Augustan age, and Catalina Popescu underlines how Ovid’s Galatea represented the impervious, and therefore flawless, female body.

The following section investigates ‘erotic and generative fluids’. Julie Laskaris connects the eyes with the creation of generative seeds, but it is often unclear as to how they relate to the human fluid system. Rebecca Fallas considers the efficacy of bodily fluids, in particular male semen and its potency. Claude-Emmanuelle Centlivres Challet demonstrates that bodily fluids are associated with a person’s good (or bad) reputation in Juvenal’s satires. Tara Mulder examines the role of wetness in female bodies in foetal sex differentiation. Rebecca Flemming investigates male and female seeds’ contribution to the act of *generatio*. Adam Parker explores the implications and interpretations of objects depicting ejaculating phalli in the Roman worlds.

Then in ‘Nutritive and healthy fluids’, Emily Kearns opens by presenting the different representations of blood in the *Iliad* and Aeschylean tragedies. John Wilkins studies Galen’s dietary and pharmacological works, his theory of humour and the impact of animal and vegetal fluids on the human body. The next two chapters focus on breastmilk and breastfeeding: Thea Lawrence questions the relationship between women’s milk and female blood from a Roman perspective while defining the latter fluid as sordid and deadly. Laurence Totelin examines the significance of the act of breastfeeding in Christian stories.

In ‘Dissolving and liquefying bodies’, Peter Kelly connects Ovid’s story of Leucothoe’s bodily dissolution in his *Metamorphoses* with Lucretius’ frankincense analogy in his *De rerum natura*. Michael Goyette highlights how bodily fluids and emotional variations are connected with the physical world in the writings of Seneca the Younger, and Andreas Gavrielatos explains how corporeal fluids—particularly saliva and sweat—were used as a literary device to ridicule people in Persius’ *Satires*.

The sixth section focuses on ‘Wounded and putrefying bodies’. Tasha Dobbin-Bennett, while acknowledging her essay stands beyond the chronological scope set by the editors, challenges the modern negative perception of post-mortem bodily fluids in her study of Egyptian Middle

Kingdom coffins. Goran Vidović aligns bodily fluids with the symbolical cycle of crime and retribution in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy. Assaf Krebs argues that metaphysical wounds challenge the integrity of the body in the story of Cyane in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Finally, 'Ancient fluids. Afterlife and reception' investigates the influence of classical conceptions of bodily fluids in the European literature and medicine of later times. Anastasia Stylianou informs us on the representations of martyrs' blood in the Bible and the works of the early Church. Caroline Spearing underlines how Abraham Cowley's *Plantarum Libri Sex* relies on well-known ancient medical theory, and Helen King focuses on the virgin body and the existence of 'virginity tests' involving fluids throughout the centuries. The volume is completed with a final paper by the editors Mark Bradley and Victoria Leonard where readers can find a synthesis of the major themes developed in this book.

This collection of essays is remarkable not only for the breadth of its scope, materials and approaches, but also for its quality. Every chapter engages with the central question of how bodily fluids were described and categorised in antiquity. And while the volume's second line of inquiry—the analysis of variations and continuities in how fluids were conceptualised throughout time and space—is not always so prominent, the last chapter ties together the different pieces of work admirably. There could perhaps have been more dialogue between the chapters. While the editors encouraged contributors to reflect on the relationship between their own arguments and those of other essays and all contributions are cross-referenced, the connections often remain superficial. Very few of them build upon or go against each other's arguments, even when papers discuss similar topics. The well-curated bibliographies and comprehensive index of twenty-five pages will certainly strengthen such endeavour and benefit the readers, even those less familiar with the subject.

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GEORGIA L. IRBY, *CONCEPTIONS OF THE WATERY WORLD IN GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY* (Bloomsbury classical studies monographs). London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. xii + 275, illus., maps. ISBN 9781784538293. £85.00.

Approximately 71 per cent of the earth's surface is covered by water, 97 per cent of which is contained within the five interconnected oceanic zones spread across the surface of the Blue Planet. This humble substance is no mere foil for terrestrial topography but is rather essential for the emergence and sustenance of life as we know it. It is therefore little wonder that scholars in the humanities have begun to situate water at the centre of their inquiries into the histories and cultures of human and non-human animals.

The conceptual currents radiating out from the so-called Blue Humanities have found particularly firm purchase in scholarship on ancient Greece and Rome. The majority of this work has centred on the practical importance of the sea to the economies and societies of the Mediterranean Basin (e.g. P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea* (2000); C. Broodbank, *The Making of the Middle Sea* (2013); E. Mataix Ferrándiz, *Shipwrecks, Legal Landscapes, and Mediterranean Paradigms* (2022)). A smaller, but no less radical body of scholarship, has taken a less historicist route, and focused instead on the imaginative engagements by ancient authors and artists with the maritime world and the ecosystems it generates and supports (e.g. M.C. Beaulieu, *The Sea in the Greek Imagination* (2015); E. Kneebone, *Oppian's Halieutica* (2020)).

Georgia L. Irby's *Conceptions of the Watery World in Greco-Roman Antiquity* makes a timely and original contribution to this rapidly expanding domain of thought and inquiry by reorienting our angle of vision towards the epistemological status of the aquatic through an interrogation of ancient attempts to explain water from scientific, philosophical and religious perspectives. This is the first instalment in a two-volume series preceding *Using and Conquering the Watery World in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (2021). In *Conceptions*, as its title suggests, Irby focuses solely on intellectual engagements and entanglements with water, seeking to illuminate the manifold ways in