

logical differences, in the defence of traditional political values and the need to stop civic confrontation; very importantly, both authors agree on the importance of mystery cults as essential for civic harmony. Barzini supports this idea through an analysis of the elements of both plays. In Chapter 8, he develops the idea that ‘the crisis of the polis is at the very core of the two plays’ (131). Very simply, we could say that he sees the *Bacchae* as a confrontation between the tyrant and the community ‘of equals’, represented in this case by the maenads, who are supported by the male components of the polis. In the same way, Aristophanes, via the chorus, makes a strong defence of positive traditional values, foregrounding the importance of festivals as a substantial means for the cohesion of the polis.

Chapter 9 underlines the roles of Dionysus and Demeter as benefactors of humanity and, consequently, of the city. Under this frame, the functional assimilation of both deities is reinforced through the profile of Dionysus as a chthonian god, a fact of special importance in relation to the cult at Eleusis (Iacchus) and linked to the Orphic orientation of Dionysism. The link connecting Dionysism, the cult of Demeter, prosperity and civic cohesion pervades *Bacchae* and *Frogs* to some extent, as can be detected in the interventions of the choruses, as much in the contents as in the choice of vocabulary, allusions and concepts. In the final main chapter, the author reinforces his argument about the proximity of the plays analysed, despite the ‘different political outlooks’ of Euripides and Aristophanes. Mystical initiation and participation in collective rituals are paralleled to moral virtue and presented as fundamental for civic concord and proper political activity. Both plays coincide in this nuclear idea. And, of course, poets have a primordial role as ‘educators’ of the citizens in the spirit of egalitarianism, concord and respect for traditional religion.

After the conclusions (197–98), succinctly summarizing the main ideas, follow notes (199–233), references (235–49) and an index (251–60).

I substantially agree with Barzini’s approach, as can be verified in two of my papers, mainly (but not only) centred on *Frogs*: ‘Las Ranas de Aristófanes y la religión de los atenienses’, in A. López Eire (ed.), *Sociedad, política y literatura. Comedia griega antigua* (Salamanca 1997), 197–217, and ‘Religion, Theater, and the Salvation of the City: Some Thoughts on Aristophanes’ *Frogs*’, *Studia Philologica Valentina* 18, n.s. 15 (2016), 449–68. Perhaps I would not be so optimistic regarding the use of the term ‘inclusiveness’ (specially with reference to women), but I think that, in general terms, Barzini has contributed to a better interpretation of *Bacchae* and *Frogs* in the context of the decisive and delicate historical period in which they were performed. Once again, we can verify that ‘religion’ is not an independent category in the frame of Greek culture: theatre, festivals, civic life, political decisions are permeated by the category ‘religion’. This book is a good contribution to our knowledge of this unrepeatable moment that is the Athenian democracy of the fifth century BC.

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BIRD (R.) *Sophrosune in the Greek Novel: Reading Reactions to Desire* (Bloomsbury Classical Studies Monographs). London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. vi + 235. £85. 9781350108646.*
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If one theme can be said to unite the diverse group of texts known as the ancient Greek novels, it would be erotic love. Rachel Bird tackles this familiar issue from a fresh angle by

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focusing on *sōphrosunē*, which she argues is ‘abundantly present in characterizations and ... intrinsic to the reading process’ (1). The choice to leave the term untranslated throughout allows Bird to explore its full spectrum of meaning with greater nuance, covering sexual chastity, moral prudence, emotional control and intellectual reasoning. As she rightly notes, there is no comprehensive treatment of novelistic *sōphrosunē*, and her monograph undeniably succeeds in offering a thorough and thoughtful analysis of this theme, albeit with some limitations.

The introduction surveys relevant scholarship, a history of *sōphrosunē* across classical literature and philosophy, spanning amongst others Euripides, Plato, Plutarch and a gesture towards Christianity, before describing the book’s structure. Bird outlines the organization of the work with admirable clarity, but less space is devoted to why this approach is necessary. Despite a short overview of scholarship which teases the importance of cultural context, feminist approaches and gender theory (2–4), exactly where this book sits within this landscape is unclear. Foucault’s famous and robustly critiqued theories are mentioned in passing (2), but Bird does not delve deeper into these wider debates about shifts in attitudes towards sexual ethics, or the distinctiveness of the novels’ portrayal of sexuality. Instead, Bird defines her approach as ‘working from the text outwards’ (1). This is an entirely reasonable methodology, but one which, given this lack of explicit contextualization, also raises questions about just how far outwards the book’s arguments should be extended.

The strength of the work lies in its close readings, and Bird consistently shows herself to be a perceptive novel reader. The first of the book’s three chapters, by far the longest and most dense, catalogues linguistic instances of *sōphrosunē* and associated terms within each canonical novel. While this is described as a focus on *σωφρ-* terms (23), Bird wisely does not limit her analysis solely to these cognates, rightly arguing that *hagneia* (‘purity’ or ‘chastity’) in Xenophon of Ephesus (42–44) and *parthenia* (‘virginity’) in Achilles Tatius (76–80) also give insight into each novel’s depiction of sexuality. Bird’s analysis is thoughtful and frequently persuasive, as in her reading of Achilles Tatius through Plato’s *Charmides* (88–92), but the structure sometimes constrains the argument’s effectiveness. Although the wider discussion of Longus’ text is convincing, Bird somewhat tenuously hangs it on one of the only two instances of *sōphrosunē* in the novel, a passing reference to the name of the slave who abandons Daphnis as a baby (56). Similarly, although Bird describes Chaereas’ assault on Callirhoe as setting a precedent for the importance of self-control (31), this follows discussions of Dionysius and Artaxerxes, both of whom appear later in the novel. This nonlinear approach is not intrinsically problematic, but it does invite consideration of just how strongly *sōphrosunē* as a specific virtue, rather than a general concern for sexual ethics, is marked in each text from the outset.

The following chapters move beyond linguistic analysis to consider readerly responses to *sōphrosunē*, specifically audience voyeurism (Chapter 2) and metanarrative significance (Chapter 3). Many of the passages referenced here are well discussed, but Bird argues against the grain by considering opportunities for audience self-control rather than titillation, including in readers not traditionally considered through the lens of the ‘male gaze’. Yet Bird does not discuss the historical evidence for ancient readership which, although far from unproblematic, would have given more weight to the argument, as the careful speculation about female readers (151–52) otherwise risks resting on a potentially simplistic opposition between objectifying or identifying with novelistic heroines. The final chapter again retreads some well-covered ground, both in terms of passages discussed and narratological approach, but juxtaposes strikingly some of the most self-reflexive passages in Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus with the *Ephesiaka* (168–78), a text rarely assumed to possess such sophistication.

Bird’s analysis is insightful and precise, often building to convincing interpretations. Yet the focus on close textual readings in isolation from contextual concerns also limits

wider conclusions. While the decision not to define *sōphrosunē* strictly is reasonable, this lack of broader contextualization allows it to slip from a culturally specific virtue to a more general antonym to erotic desire as the work progresses into increasingly self-reflexively narratological territory. In her conclusion Bird hints at a potential Christian resonance in Heliodorus' representation of Charikleia (184), but otherwise the broader significance of novelistic *sōphrosunē* in the Imperial period and beyond remains an open question. This is not to chastise Bird's work unduly for its limitations, since it undeniably succeeds in its stated aims. Given its success in building such a detailed and perceptive picture of *sōphrosunē* within the novels, however, hopefully Bird's work will inspire further research beyond the texts as well.

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BOARDMAN (J.) A Classical Archaeologist's Life: The Story So Far. An Autobiography.

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John Boardman's long and illustrious academic career is best documented by his numerous publications on various aspects of classical art and archaeology. Several decades of students (myself included) were introduced to Greek art through his general account, first published by Thames and Hudson in 1964 and now in its fifth edition (*Greek Art* (London 2016)), and then to the specifics of vases and sculpture via more focused handbooks in the same 'World of Art' series. Beginning with *Athenian Black Figure Vases* (London 1974), these well-illustrated, oft-cited and much-translated reference works comprise only a small fraction of Boardman's contribution to the field, answering in his words an 'obligation to explain my subject to students and the public' (173). This autobiography, published in his early 90s, gives readers a glimpse into the personal experiences and professional career of one of classical archaeology's larger than life figures: from his birth in Ilford in the 1920s to his retirement from Oxford in the 1990s, and beyond.

A stream of recollections, some longer, more detailed or private than the others, the book is divided into three parts. The first, expectedly, concerns family and childhood, education and career, excavations and travels; the second, no doubt most familiar to Classicists, details academic interests, collaborations and awards (among them a knighthood in 1989); and the third, perhaps surprising to many readers, is devoted entirely to ancient gems – a career-long passion originating with several foundational books during the 1960s and culminating in landmark publications such as one on the Royal Collection (with K. Aschengreen Piacenti, *Ancient and Modern Gems and Jewels in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (London 2008)) by invitation of Sir Anthony Blunt and another on the Beverly Collection kept at Alnwick Castle (with D. Scarisbrick and C. Wagner, *The Beverley Collection of Gems at Alnwick Castle* (London 2017)). Information across generously headed subsections does not always appear in exact order, and there is a certain amount of fluidity between past and present. The index is rather uneven with some individuals and places served better than others; similarly, the illustrations sometimes fail to name known individuals. A bibliography of Boardman's publications, ordered by type and year, concludes the book and updates that found in *Periplous: Papers on Classical Art and Archaeology Presented to Sir John Boardman* (London 2000).