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# The American Historical Review

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Other Roman women before and after meddled in public affairs: the losers were attacked in the literary tradition as over-sexed or masculine; those on an author's side were model wives and mothers who intervened on grounds of clemency or patriotism. Kampen provides a valuable discussion of women on historical reliefs, focusing on the scene showing Septimius Severus and Julia Domna and family at a sacrifice on the arch at Lepcis Magna. She shows that women are rare on these large public monuments (contrast this with the frequent appearance of women of the imperial family on coins) and that they belong chiefly to two categories that act as parallel symbols: women of the people or of defeated enemies, both representing an entire community, and women of the imperial family (sometimes in association with Vestals, state officials) representing the blending of family and state. Domna watches her husband and sons clasp hands and "becomes the sign that this act is both familial and dynastic, personal and political" (p. 231). Finally, Boatwright in a highly competent article discusses the extraordinary euergetism of Plancia Magna of Perge in Pamphylia, who was honored as eponymous magistrate, priestess, and "daughter of the city," and who early in the reign of Hadrian paid for the grand southern gate, with statues of gods and heroes, her father and brother, and male and female members of the imperial family. The dialogue between Kampen and Boatwright forms a point of departure for new research.

The volume will be useful for some university courses. A second edition would be improved by the addition of a general bibliography and the augmentation of the index.

SUSAN TREGGIARI  
Stanford University

SUSAN TREGGIARI. *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*. New York: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press. 1991. Pp. xv, 578. \$120.00.

Susan Treggiari assembles and analyzes a vast array of literary and legal sources in a magisterial examination of the institution of Roman marriage in the period ranging from the early first century B.C. to the beginning of the third century A.D. The result is a study of fundamental importance that is required reading for anyone who teaches or writes on Roman society and for historians of the family in other ages as well. Even compared to the high quality of much recent work on the Roman family in classical times, this book stands out as a superb culmination of recent advances in knowledge and an obvious point of departure for future work on this theme.

Treggiari arranges her book along the lines of what can best be described as the "life-cycle" of the Roman family. Beginning with definitions and legal requirements for marriage, Treggiari surveys criteria for

spouse selection, the politics of arranging a betrothal, the customary practices associated with weddings, affectionate marriage as an ideal, sexual conduct, property relations, living conditions, and separation. This last section treats divorce and death, and closes with brief remarks on remarriage, where "the cycle began again" (p. 502).

Six appendixes deal with alleged adulterers, prosecutions for adultery, remarks of philosophers on sexual matters, magistrates from the decade 60–50 B.C. whose wives can be identified, and attested divorces in the late Republic and *separatim* early Principate. All are in essence selections from the broad pool of evidence Treggiari has mastered, and they offer a convenience that signals the work's double orientation as a tool of teaching and research. The value is further enhanced by a chronological chart, a stemma of the Julio-Claudian family, and a set of fine indexes (on texts, persons, and subjects). All principal texts are translated into precise and idiomatic English.

Not surprisingly, Treggiari builds on the considerable body of her own work on Roman domestic life. This includes study of "irregular" unions such as respectable concubinage, which often functioned as a type of second marriage for elite males, and *contubernium*, a type of union that began when at least one of the partners was a slave. But the richness and complexity of Roman "quasi-marital" relationships almost pale beside what we learn of *matrimonium iustum* (full-status marriage). The wealth of detail alone makes the volume indispensable, but it is also true that the author has advanced the state of our knowledge on a number of individual topics. Two deserve special emphasis: life in the household and divorce.

Accounts of life in the Roman household have tended to focus on the activities of males, an imbalance Treggiari redresses in a chapter entitled "*Domus*." This richly detailed and fascinating portrayal of spousal relations and daily conduct begins with a survey of recent advances made by students of Roman demography, above all on mortality, age at marriage, and reproductivity. Treggiari then examines family structure, placing the nuclear core in the context of an extensive upper-class household and describing the impact of events such as divorce, death of spouse, and remarriage. The final section, devoted to married life, is perhaps the most interesting, including a wealth of information on the social role and activities of married women and relations between husbands and wives (where we find, for example, evidence for what behaviors constituted "mental cruelty" among the Romans).

At last we have a full and satisfactory account of Roman divorce (see also the author's excellent essay, "Divorce Roman Style: How Easy and How Frequent Was It?" in B. Rawson, ed., *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome* [1991], 31–46). As Treggiari shows, a firm corollary of the bilaterality of marriage was the unilateral nature of divorce. Divorce, like

marriage, was essentially a private affair, with great discretion allowed to the principals. Despite the relative ease of dissolving a marriage, the parties were not beyond criticism and divorce itself was typically thought a misfortune. Commentators whose own societies place severe restrictions on dissolution of marriages have tended to confuse freedom to divorce with frequency of divorce: in fact, Treggiari's provisional total of divorces attested during the early Principate (Augustus to Domitian) amounts to only twenty-seven examples (see appendix 6). We learn that, contrary to the beliefs of modern scholars who have preferred to moralize about "Roman decadence," the fact that spouses were not compelled to remain in loveless unions may well have strengthened the institution of Roman marriage.

The only part of the book that may provoke significant disagreement is the discussion on the double standard of sexual conduct for males and females, and particularly the argument that biology explains this (pp. 311–19). Treggiari traces the double standard to the primate ancestors of humans, speculating that the different and complementary attitudes of men and women toward sexual behavior derive from the contrasting experiences of each gender in "the period of ape-life in the trees" (p. 319). This thesis runs against the grain of the recent trend, inspired in great part by Michel Foucault, that views sexuality as by and large a social construct, and so redefines even some elements that were once regarded as purely biological facts, such as fertility and the human body.

Unlike some other recent studies of the Roman family, this book does not present the relationship between law and life as simple and straightforward. Nor does it describe the evolution of each one as a linear development, whereby changes in social values and practices are followed, often at a distance of decades, by corresponding adjustments in legal rules. As Treggiari shows, the law changes, but not always in one direction, and it arises from the balancing of ever-present interests more than as a reflection of steady-state historical trends. Allied to this observation is the constant recognition that when the Romans attempted to regulate especially delicate matters like sexual conduct, the results were often inadequate, self-contradictory, or just bad law.

It is easy to predict that this volume will become a standard work of reference for students of Roman marriage and related fields. Treggiari's empirical approach, fortified by vast learning and a superior sophistication of argument, has raised the subject to a new plane, making it harder than ever, for example, to prefer the peculiar though influential views of Paul Veyne on Roman family life. Of supreme importance is the conclusion that "instead of one simple pattern into which lives or marriages might theoretically fit, there were many" (p. 504). This hard-won recognition of the vigor and complexity of the institution of Roman marriage should give a fair idea of the vol-

ume's immense value for those who intend to work in this field. Here is a firm foundation on which to build.

THOMAS A. J. MCGINN  
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RONALD H. SACK. *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend*. Selinsgrove, N.J.: Susquehanna University Press or Associated University Presses, Toronto. 1991. Pp. 143. \$27.50.

Historiographic research has recently become an issue in Mesopotamian studies, where inquiry had been limited to verifying the historicity of a text rather than to examining the cultural attitudes of the writers (Mario Liverani, *Orientalia* 42 [1973], 178–94). Ronald H. Sack's new book (basically an expanded reworking for a more general audience of his article in *Mesopotamia* 17 [1982], 67–131) is a welcome addition to this new historiographic spirit. While not a biography or commentary on the Chaldean period, his topic is the career of the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 B.C.). Although there has been recent work on this subject (D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon* [1985]), Sack does not duplicate material but rather surveys the neglected secondary classical and Hebrew sources about the monarch and compares the variety of cultural attitudes in them. He also attempts to grasp the nature of the preservation of the cuneiform tradition in other cultures. Sack utilizes research about folklore (drawing on B. Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore* [1975]), concluding that later sources about Nebuchadnezzar came not only from oral but also from written transmissions. For example, the Greek historian Megasthenes appeared to rely on Persian apocalyptic literature, while Berossus depended on cuneiform sources.

The classical writers concentrated on Nebuchadnezzar's building projects rather than his conquests, since they appealed to an audience charmed by Babylon's structures and their permanence; thus, they associated them with a god-like personage. Sack blames Herodotus for setting this folkloristic tone, confusing historical truth by combining characteristics of Nebuchadnezzar (who is not mentioned by name) with other individuals. He does not believe that Herodotus visited Babylon, which ignores evidence that he correctly described its domestic architecture (O. Ravn, *Herodotus' Description of Babylon* [1942], 79–80).

Because of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Judah, destruction of the Solomonic temple, and deportation policy, the Jewish sources viewed the Chaldean king in a different manner than the classical writers. The rabbinic sources attempted to keep his memory alive in oral and written folkloristic tradition and thus created negative images, some of which are reminiscent of the Chaldean king Nabonidus (556–539 B.C.). The writer of Daniel merged the two sources, accord-