

166–67) that in the ninth century “slave of the king” came to be used of imperial officials, when in fact this language dates back to the sixth century (Procopius. *Historia Arcana* [Secret history], ch. 30, sect. 26).

Some thematic omissions in *Byzantine Slavery* are surprising. It does not ask whether Byzantine slavery was closer to the male-biased slavery of Rome or the female-biased slavery of Islam and late medieval cities, nor does it address the different experiences of male and female slaves. Textile work does not appear in the book, although this was presumably a principal employment for slaves. There is little analysis of violence or sexual exploitation and nothing on the strikingly innovative ban on sex with one’s own slaves (cf. A. Laiou, ed., *Consent and Coercion*).

*Byzantine Slavery*’s production standards are lax. One learns that this is a translation of an already-published monograph only on the copyright page and in various tell-tale lapses, such as the failure to substitute “English” for “French” on p. 82 (see also 93, 108, 169, 246). The translation is often obscure in a way that distracts from the argument, and typographical errors are too many. General readers interested in Byzantine slavery should beware of the book’s substantive errors, too. For example, the Roman Empire reaching its maximum extent in the sixth century (57), *oiketês* etymologically linked to a domestic function (86), the *servus vicarius* as “the overseer of other slaves” (107), manumission in the church dated to the sixth century (123), questioning of the problem of slavery “appeared only in the works of the Cappadocian fathers” (132), Justinian establishing the law of asylum (133), Roman law preventing a slave from having more than one master (138), Roman emperors banning castrated slaves (169), and unreliable accounts of the Roman law of self-sale and child sale (173–75) and of slave prices (appendix C).

Rotman explores fascinating and challenging territory. His book’s strengths lie in its discussion of Byzantine-Arab relations, its attention to the vocabulary of slavery, and its presentation of the colorful hagiographical evidence. It is regrettable that the republication of the book in English did not occasion an attempt to take account of recent advances or to correct the original’s shortcomings. Errors of fact and judgment remain frequent in *Byzantine Slavery*, and as its bibliography reveals, the study is disconnected from recent work in ancient and modern slavery.

———Kyle Harper, University of Oklahoma

Nancy Worman, *Abusive Mouths in Classical Athens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

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In the wake of Bakhtin, the roughhousing genres of ancient Athens—especially Old Comedy, but also iambic poetry and satyr plays—have been productively

evaluated through the frame of the carnival. From this vantage point, the prospective reader of *Abusive Mouths in Classical Athens*, a rich reappraisal of such genres, faces the open maw of a Rabelaisian funhouse. Upon entry, one finds the usual suspects: the slippery tongue, the gullet that defines the stock character of the hungry outsider, and the orifice at the other end, the often “gaping” asshole that has been central to so much scholarship on Greek sex in recent decades. But there is much more inside. Focusing on the figure of the mouth in a range of archaic and classical genres, Worman charts a rich world of character types that shape Athenian debates about those capable of advising the polis and those interested only in serving appetites—their own and those of the public. By probing the “oral fixation” of ancient Greek invective, she builds a strong case for the claim that the mouth, where speech and appetitive behaviors converge, functions “as the central metonym for the excesses of the democratic polis” (p. 61).

The figure of metonymy dominates the book’s analysis of how the body is taken up in the rhetoric of abuse. Drawing on Barthes’ treatment of the *blason* and the “metonymic falsehood” in *S/Z*, Worman demonstrates how poets and orators dismantle the body to invest some of its parts with the power to figure that most elusive of signifieds: character. Foremost among these parts, naturally, is the mouth. Nearly as important is the anus, which often appears in close proximity to the mouth on the grotesquely reconfigured body. Capitalizing on this proximity, Worman reads the fixation on effeminizing sexual practices that is so prevalent in abuse language, as well as the less noticed but arguably more significant interest in eating, as part of an overarching critique of public speakers. That is, talking about the lower hole and the consuming mouth is really just talking about talking (though talking, dizzyingly, is metonymic of character more broadly defined). Worman’s shift of emphasis does not create the body as a site for expressing anxieties about character in Athens: scholars have extensively documented how charges of depravity facilitated attacks on a citizen’s masculinity and, hence, his right to political participation. But by funneling these anxieties through the mouth and foregrounding non-sexual appetites, Worman subtly realigns our perspective on the representational potential of bodies, thereby accommodating our sources’ obsessive interest in what people do with their mouths as an index of virtue and vice.

More vice than virtue, of course. Worman is interested in blame, and in fact, another of the book’s major aims is to rethink its generic character. Noting that iambos has long challenged conventional generic markers such as meter, she proposes that we attend to the “discursive nature of abusive speech” (p. 9): its tone, its subjects, and its repertoire of (especially oral) images. This “iambic mode” has not only an internal coherence but also, she argues, a history. The book traces this history from early epic and sympotic poetry, through the mode’s transformation into an instrument of political critique in

Old Comedy, to fourth-century prose (Plato, oratory, Aristotle, Theophrastus). Although the iambic mode becomes, at times, rather diffuse, especially in the fourth-century genres, and the two central characters—the boorish haranguer and the effete chatterer—grow less sharply defined over time, Worman nevertheless shows, over six very full chapters, the persistent attention to the mouth in the negative characterization of public speakers. The book thus helps to stake out new space beyond formalism and sociolinguistics for thinking about genre in the classical period. This, together with its baroque portraits of the characters who populated Athens’ dirtiest domains of civic speech, makes *Abusive Mouths in Classical Athens* well worth the price of admission.

———Brooke Holmes, Princeton University

McRae, Andrew, *Literature and Domestic Travel in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 247 pp.

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In 1641, John Taylor, a Thames waterman and poet, struggled over how best to describe his tour through England’s rivers, referring to his “travell, Jorney [sic], Voyage, Perambulation, and Perigrination, or what you please to call it” (p. 220). The difficulty arose because in early modern England to “travel” generally meant to leave the nation: domestic mobility was viewed as a threat to social stability in a world where, ideally, everyone knew his or her place. In this valuable work, Andrew McRae argues that between about 1550 and 1700 people attempted to conceptualize and legitimize travel within England, and in doing so, created a new concept of nationhood “founded upon and enacted through instances of individual mobility” (236).

McRae focuses on how literature participated in this change, and one of his book’s main strengths is the breadth of his literary sources, ranging from pamphlets, broadsides, and maps to Drayton and Evelyn. The study is divided into two sections, the first examining the structures, both natural and artificial, that permitted travel, and the second looking at particular travelers. In chapters on rivers, roads, and inns and alehouses, McRae argues that anxieties over changing economic structures were expressed in discourse on domestic mobility. The discussion of how abstract “ways” became concrete and mappable “roads” is particularly strong, exploiting excellent recent scholarship on the creation of a national postal system and the improvement of stagecoach routes.

In the book’s second section, McRae uses the records of royal progress entertainments to further bolster an argument he proposed in 2004 in his *Literature and Satire and the Early Stuart State*. In that volume McRae challenged Habermas’ vision of the late-seventeenth-century development of the English public sphere, detecting a multiplicity of public spheres forming in Elizabeth’s reign.