

The third main section, "Net Links," is the largest and most varied in content. It consists of a vertical menu of about forty links, with subjects arranged alphabetically, from Ancient Celts to Women. Each subject link leads to a page containing thirty to fifty links covering various aspects of the subject by different authors. The essays in "Net Links" vary widely in form, content, and quality. For example, clicking the Ancient Meso-American link will lead the user to a link for a text-heavy history of Mexico or to a graphics-intensive virtual tour through Maya ruins in the Yucatan. Clicking the "Economics" link, the user can find a table depicting a comparative chronology of exchange values (from cows in 9000 BCE to metal coins in 14 CE) or a detailed study of the relationship between the origin of writing and the specialized economy of Mesopotamia. Clicking on Games and Contests will take the user to a page of Latin cryptograms and riddles or to a page where a computerized version of the Egyptian board game, Hounds and Jackals, can be downloaded onto the user's home system. Approximately 1600 links can be found in "Net Links" alone—not counting those that lead outside The Mining Company's *Ancient/Classical History* site itself.

With its intricate and seemingly endless passageways, *Ancient/Classical History* is not unlike the multicursal Minoan labyrinth, and like the *labrys* from which it takes its name, such a structure can be double-edged. A user can discover unexpected treasures among the links, pages, and linked sites, or can become hopelessly disoriented and lost in an overwhelming data environment. However, for those with a taste for adventure, this informative and entertaining website is well worth exploring.

Lotte Motz. **The Faces of the Goddess.** New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. \$30.00 cloth.

Liz Locke

In 1996, an e-mail message came in to the students of the Folklore Institute from a person inquiring about written sources on the subject of matriarchy. I responded by suggesting Sherry Ortner's oft-cited article, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" and Joan Bamberger's "The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society," both included in Rosaldo and Lamphere's anthology, *Women, Culture, and Society*, from Stanford University Press. Because both of these articles make the case that there has never been a human society whose political, military, economic, and religious power and authority rested primarily in the hands of women, I also suggested

that the questioner consult the work of Maria Gimbutas, now-deceased, describing and evaluating her (and others') archeological discoveries of Neolithic female figurines in Northern Europe upon which she based her claim to having recovered evidence of matriarchy as a widespread social institution among Europe's ancient peoples.

I never saw anything more from the writer of the original message, perhaps because she or he was driven into stunned silence by the volume and ferocity of e-mail that subsequently addressed the issue, mainly vilifying Gimbutas's scholarship, locating her among the ranks of such previously scorned proponents/devotees of the Great Mother as Göethe, J.J. Bachofen, Robert Briffault, Erich Neumann, Elinor Gadon, Riane Eisler, and Robert Graves. This is an emotional issue, especially among those late-twentieth-century Americans who are dedicated to revealing and paying belated homage to the repressed feminine in Western culture, but also for their adversaries in academe. I wish I had been able to recommend Lotte Motz's new book, *The Faces of the Goddess*.

Motz's book takes Gimbutas and others to task, but she does so with diplomacy and well-reasoned argumentation regarding one specific, central concern of modern matriarchy theory: was the human female's status *as the bearer of children*—her sexual fecundity, her potential or enacted biological motherhood—ever valued by the members of tribal societies to the extent that it served as the basis for both real and titular religious, economic, and political *authority* in those communities? Did the image of a nurturing, "primordial, maternal, all-encompassing, and sovereign" (1) Mother arise from the facts of a Neolithic reality? Or does the image belong, as Mary Lefkowitz posits in *Women and Greek Myth*, to a spiritual attitude peculiar to our own times?

In responding to these questions, Motz takes us on an accessible but rigorous eight-chapter journey of comparativist scholarship dealing with mythologies and other cultural institutions from Northern Europe to Japan, stopping along the way to consider the evidence of artifacts, customs, and texts specific to the prehistoric Inuit and Aleut peoples, the Latvians, Mesopotamians, Anatolians, Greeks, and Mexicans, all the while keeping a tight focus on the central fact of biological, rather than honorific or nominal, motherhood. Although she candidly rejects any claim to expertise in several culture areas, relying on the scholarship of such luminaries as Åke Hultrantz, Franz Boas, Thorkild Jacobsen, Lewis Farnell and Walter Burkert, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, and Joseph Kitagawa, her familiarity with their work—combined with the simple fact that she has put so much good information on the subject into one volume—serves the interested scholar and more casual reader equally well.

While I admit to taking up *The Faces of the Goddess* already convinced that the Great Mother represents an important archetype of the modern Western psyche more than any putative matriarchy held by women honored for their sexual generativity, I was further persuaded of that view by Motz's careful and culturally specific treatments of the actual and mythological roles of and attitudes toward women within each context. By the end of the book, you may also be persuaded that the reduction of the female image to its reproductive and nurturing capacities, while perhaps seductive as a pathway leading out of patriarchy, is insufficient for an understanding of its complexity. Establishing images of feminine power and authority in the social and religious consciousness of today's peoples is essential to curing our patriarchal dis-ease, but it comes at the price of allowing ourselves to realize that this is not an act of restoration, but of hope.

William Hansen, ed. **Anthology of Ancient Greek Popular Literature**. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Pp. xxix + 349, preface. \$18.95 paper.

Adrienne Mayor

Folklorists familiar with classical Greek myth will be surprised to learn of the existence of an obscure but rich body of lesser-known popular materials from ancient Greece. Available now for the first time in one collection—some material never before translated into English—these novels, fables, nuggets of wisdom, jokes, fortune-telling manuals, cemetery verses, and compilations of natural marvels have been generally ignored as unpolished sensationalism, “light reading” unworthy of serious study. In presenting this wide range of examples of what he terms “ancient Greek popular literature,” William Hansen has done a signal service for scholars interested in what interested the reading public of antiquity. Since many of the texts in this volume circulated in several languages up through the Middle Ages, Hansen's anthology is a treasure for medievalists as well as classicists, ancient historians, scholars of European popular culture, and folklorists.

Hansen's thought provoking introduction relates ancient popular literature to modern counterparts and traces similarities and differences to formulate a valuable definition of the genre of the ancient popular aesthetic, as opposed to the traditional elite aesthetic. Popular literature of antiquity offered readers what Pierre Bourdieu called the primacy of content over form—straightforward engagement of the audience, rather than subtle,