

Socrates the self was simply our rational self and the irrational parts of the self are not essential (p. 214).

Richard Bett (10) follows the trend to study Socrates in Plato. But while Benson's approach appears to favour developmentalism and Griswold and Rowe a sort of unitarian approach, Bett opts for Grote's view in allowing Socrates to try out different philosophical positions in different Platonic dialogues. He argues that Socrates was a searcher like the sceptics but that he had "confidence about a number of things...; if one looks at the whole package, one will not be inclined to think Socrates a sceptic in any ordinary sense of the term" (p. 234). Melissa Lane (11) argues in an original way and rather convincingly for a new understanding of Socratic irony. She studies carefully many of the linguistic and social contexts in which Socrates uses expressions which interpreters have regarded as ironical and argues that they are better understood as simply sincere. "Socrates' self-deprecation, such as it is, is not necessarily ironic; ascriptions of *eirōneia* in Plato do not mean irony; friendship terms of address in Plato do not function ironically; and ironic praise is not, at least in some central cases, best understood as 'ironic' at all" (p. 256). If Lane's argument is accepted, it will definitely need to be taken into account in Platonic scholarship.

Terry Penner (12) presents some new features in his well-known theory of Socratic moral psychology. The new element is that in his rationalistic interpretation of the Socratic psychology of action, he now finds a role for appetites and passions. Fulfilling these leads to happiness and makes one act. Christopher Bobonich (13) also discusses Socrates and *eudaimonia*. His view of Socrates' account is more critical. In the last article (15), A. A. Long gives a very interesting presentation of "Socrates in Later Greek Philosophy". Long argues that Socrates' posthumous fame is partially due to the fact that his trial and death did not have their future colossal significance for his contemporaries. This enabled the Socratic writers to build a multifaceted picture which transformed the controversial historical figure into a philosophical icon.

In summary, this is an important book. Nevertheless, there are quite a lot of companions and handbooks available these days. Therefore, it might be asked whether it would be appropriate to demand more of them. In the case of this particular volume, one would certainly have wished the individual papers to have been in discussion with each other.

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DARYN LEHOUX: *Astronomy, Weather and Calendars in the Ancient World. Parapegmata and related texts in Classical and Near Eastern Societies*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007. ISBN 978-0-521-85181-7. XIV, 566 pp., 26 ill. GBP 65, EUR 90.

Daryn Lehoux's study of classical parapegmata is divided into two complementary parts: the first part is a series of analyses of the agricultural, astrological and calendrical contexts of classical parapegmata as well as discussions on the relevance of their Egyptian and Mesopotamian backgrounds, while the second part is an exhaustive catalogue of all extant parapegmata, complete with high quality editions and translations of most of the original sources.

Parapegmata are slabs of marble, plaster or clay, with inscriptions and holes for moveable pegs, designed to track temporal cycles of various sorts, but most scholars also include

as *parapegmata* contemporary texts designed for the same purpose. Lehoux refines the current definition somewhat when he clarifies that *parapegmata* were specifically used to track such temporal cycles as were not covered by the calendars in use. They are thus "extra-calendrical tools". This definition helps to explain the fact that Roman *parapegmata* after the Julian calendar reform track almost exclusively *lunar* cycles, since the reform made the calendar a better representation of the solar cycle, thus obviating the need to track the sun separately in *parapegmata*.

Lehoux challenges the widespread notion of an archaic Roman lunar calendar, and argues that the preoccupation of the makers of *parapegmata* with the Moon was almost entirely astrological. In the majority of Roman agricultural texts, specific tasks, such as planting or manuring, were timed to lunar phenomena. This included not only the lunar phases, but also lucky or unlucky lunar days, and the Moon's position relative to the horizon, that is, above it or below it (a distinction which is relevant in astrology). Interestingly, the logic of the lunar-scheduled tasks displays many features which are familiar from astrology, e.g. the idea that a waxing Moon can make crops grow. Although one of the central concerns of the makers of *parapegmata* was weather forecasting, this was not the only use of these devices, and their use also changed in a complex relationship with calendar evolution. This discovery leads to one of the (several) important points made by Lehoux about calendars and *parapegmata*, namely that, contrary to what many have assumed, the fact that they track certain temporal cycles is not evidence of the existence and use, at the same time, of a full-blown calendar system. In a similar manner the author also refutes other fanciful calendrical reconstructions that have been suggested based on *parapegmata*.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of Lehoux's analysis is, however, the chapter on the nature of the *sign* in *parapegmata*. Here he presents some important and well-formulated arguments for the need for a serious reevaluation of the two observational claims made about *parapegmata*; one by the ancients themselves that the connection between a meteorological phenomenon and an astronomical one was based on observation, and the other made by modern scholars, that *parapegmata* were used in conjunction with astronomical observation. Lehoux convincingly argues that neither claim holds true: a storm and a star cannot (usually) be simultaneously observed and thus at least some interpolation was necessary. This in turn would have required both a preexisting stellar scheme, i.e. a working knowledge of the heavens that predated the connection between the stars and weather, and this also requires regular and meticulous interpolation. To make matters worse, no single year would have yielded a clean record of observation, i.e. in no single year can one observe all stars in all positions without the disturbance of clouds. Put these points together, and the strong observational claim made by the ancients is much weaker in practice.

The modern claim that *parapegmata* were observational aids is refuted by Lehoux on the grounds that they generally index the data they present to a calendrical *date*, either as a column in a text, or through the placement of the peg. This suggests that users of *parapegmata* did not observe the star and then turn to the *parapegmata* to see the weather one should expect, but rather that they looked up the (current) date to see the weather of that date. Thus, Lehoux argues, the date, instead of the astronomical phenomenon, had become the sign that was observed. A semiotic shift occurred, in which the signs which were tied to the omnia were the dates of a canonised calendar. This idea has far-reaching implications for the study of ancient

(and probably also medieval) astrology, where ephemerides, the successor genre of *parapegmata*, were paramount, and often entirely superseded actual observation.

Lehoux also discusses the potential precursors of *parapegmata* in Mesopotamia and Egypt, and mainly arrives at the conclusion that the very different institutional and ideological assumptions behind the tracking of astronomical and meteorological phenomena yielded very different texts. In Mesopotamia, for instance, the consistent observation of celestial phenomena was part of a highly specialised state religion, whereas in Greece it was carried out by scattered individuals. As opposed to the clear line of influence in the area of planetary theory, astrometeorology did not pass on from Egypt and Babylon to Greece. But this is hardly surprising, because meteorological traditions must necessarily describe local weather. Different climates require different meteorological and agricultural traditions.

Lehoux's book raises many interesting points relevant to ancient astronomical, astrological and calendrical traditions. *Parapegmata* are special as sources in that respect; they belong at the crossroads between what have for us become very separate disciplines, and thus require their students to be very patient and grounded. Lehoux has here shown himself to be both. However, the work is somewhat uneven, and there are some things one would have wished had been included or pursued further; for instance, it seems strange that when the heliacal risings are described to the beginner (commendable in itself), nonetheless, the relationship of *parapegmata* to later ephemerides are hardly touched upon and their difference from astronomical tables is not even mentioned. This is strange because the Arabic astronomical tradition features briefly in the form of al-Bīrūnī's *parapegma*; his text is even included in translation. This leads one to hope, in vain, for even a brief discussion of the pre-Islamic Arabic meteorological tradition of lunar stations, the *anwa'*. That this discussion is missing is perhaps explained by the fact that the analytical part of the book seems to be a reworking of a collection of separate articles, tied together by a strict focus on the *parapegmata* as a distinct group of sources.

The many useful analyses, not to mention the considerable contribution made in the form of editions and translation of previously unedited texts in the second part of the book, more than make up for the partial unevenness of the work as a whole. In an important area of study that can certainly not be called overcrowded, Lehoux's work is most welcome.

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*A Handbook of Ancient Religions*. Edited by JOHN R. HINNELLS. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2007. ISBN 978-0-521-84712-4. 610 pp., 55 illustrations, 17 maps, 11 tables. GBP 80.

Let it be noted straight away that *A Handbook of Ancient Religions*, edited by John R. Hinnells, reaches beyond the expertise of not only the reviewer but also the usual scope of *Arctos*. Hinnells has built a career in comparative religion, and the ambitious breadth of the monograph reflects this. The division into chapters is both regional and chronological and covers (in order): the Palaeolithic, Egypt, Ugarit, Mesopotamia, Israel until the fall of the Second Temple, Greece, the Roman empire, ancient Europe, Indus, China, and Aztec and Inca. It seems to the reviewer pointless to start exhaustively discussing each of the chapters, so here a general overview will be provided instead.