

CONSTELLATION MYTHS IN ENGLISH

HARD (R.) (trans.) *Eratosthenes and Hyginus: Constellation Myths. With Aratus's Phaenomena*. Pp. xlvi+210, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Paper, £8.99, US\$15.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-871698-3.

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H. has collected and translated into graceful and readable English the most important Greek and Latin texts on the mythology of the constellations and furnished them with light annotations. H.'s book, in the series *Oxford World's Classics*, can be warmly recommended to students and general readers with an interest in Greco-Roman astral mythology. Scholars, too, will often find it a good first place to look, provided they keep in mind H.'s decisions about what to translate and what to leave out.

Some Greek star and constellation names are already present in Homer and Hesiod. Thus the Pleiades, Arcturus, Orion and the Bear have been called by the same names for some 2,700 years. Snippets attributed to various fifth-century figures engaged in astrometeorology mention a few other constellations, for example Democritus made use of our Aquila and Lyra. A big event that occurred probably in the fifth century BCE was the Greek adoption of the Babylonian zodiac, with only minor changes. For example, where the Babylonians had the Bull of Heaven and the Great Twins, the Greeks placed our Taurus and Gemini; but the Babylonians' Hired Labourer became our Aries, the ram. The oldest Greek attempt of which we know to fill out the entire sphere with constellations and to describe them systematically was the *Phaenomena* (and the closely associated *Mirror*) of Eudoxus of Cnidus. This has not survived, but it inspired Aratus of Soli to produce a versified *Phaenomena* that was extraordinarily popular in antiquity. That Aratus does draw on the lost works of Eudoxus is confirmed by Hipparchus who, in his *Commentary on the Phaenomena of Aratus and Eudoxus*, quotes many parallel passages to demonstrate the dependence of the poet on the mathematician.

There were of course old legends about the stars and constellations, but the collecting of variant forms of constellation myths and the spinning out of new ones was a learned enthusiasm of the Hellenistic period. There are only a few constellation myths in Aratus – a primary example being the story of the decision of Justice to leave the world of human beings and retreat to the sky, where we see her as Virgo. The work that came to define the genre was the *Catasterisms* (though the title is not certain) of Eratosthenes of Cyrene, best known for his measurement of the Earth. A *catasterism* (from *καταστερέω*) is a placing among the stars. As H. points out in the introduction, this could happen in a number of different ways: Zeus might place an object or person in the sky (as Zeus did with Ursa Major to save her from destruction) or only an image of the thing (as with Hercules) or, if the story demanded it, this could happen in some other way, as in Justice's decision to absent herself from the Earth.

That Eratosthenes wrote a work on the constellations has sometimes been doubted. For example, the Abbé Halma, in his 1821 edition and translation of the *Catasterisms*, exclaimed, 'What foolishness! What ineptitudes! And how could Eratosthenes write them?' In twentieth-century reference works, in both Classical studies and history of science, the *Catasterisms* was often treated as pseudo-Eratosthenic. But scholarly opinion has steadily been shifting towards the reality of a work by Eratosthenes on the constellations. Such a work clearly lay behind the *De astronomia* of Hyginus, which cites Eratosthenes many times.

The major remnants in Greek of this work by Eratosthenes exist in two different forms, known as the *Epitome* and the *Vatican Fragments*. The former is more complete, containing legends for all the constellations of the time. The latter has slightly fewer constellations, but is not a simple truncation of the *Epitome*, since it contains stories that are not found in the *Epitome*. H. endorses the view of J. Martin that both of these versions derived from a late-antique augmented edition of the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, in which extracts from Eratosthenes were interspersed with the verses of Aratus, to which Eratosthenes could be considered to form a sort of commentary. Then, perhaps around the tenth century, a Byzantine compiler re-assembled what was left of Eratosthenes by extracting the snippets from the augmented edition of Aratus. Eratosthenes had listed the constellations in a logical order, and for each he recounted stories, often with variants, of the events leading to the catasterism, and provided literary authorities for many of these. He concluded with an enumeration of the stars in each major part of the constellation. The *De astronomia* of Hyginus is a vital part of the evidence, for it is believed to be based on a version of Eratosthenes' work that was closer to the original than most of the surviving Greek material. In Book 2, Hyginus recounts the myths, and in Book 3 he gives for each constellation the number of stars contained in each part of the figure.

The structure of H.'s book is provided by the *Epitome*. For each constellation, H. presents first a translation of the mythological portions of the corresponding entry in the *Epitome*, omitting the 'scientific' enumeration of the stars. When the *Vatican Fragments* for the same constellation contain extra mythological detail or alternative versions of the story, these portions are translated as well. These are followed by a translation of the corresponding entries from Books 2 and 3 of Hyginus (so here we *do* get an enumeration of the stars). The translations are followed by H.'s commentary on the given constellation. All this Eratosthenic material is followed by a prose translation of the *Phaenomena* of Aratus. In an appendix, H. translates short extracts from the *Introduction to the Phaenomena* of Geminus, comprising portions of Chapters 1, 3 and 5, dealing with the zodiac, the constellations and the circles of the celestial sphere. Geminus' text is more lucid and helpful than the corresponding material in Books 1 and 4 of Hyginus, for which it may be considered a substitute.

For the *Catasterisms*, H. uses the text of J. Pàmias i Massana and A. Zucker (2013), for the *De astronomia* of Hyginus the text of A. Le Boeuffle (1983) and for the *Phaenomena* of Aratus the text of D. Kidd (1997). For the text of Geminus, H. uses the edition of K. Manitius (1898), but it might have been better to use G. Aujac's edition (1975), which tends to stay closer to the manuscripts and which has the advantage of using a major manuscript that was unavailable to Manitius. However, for the short sections of Geminus that are included, there is little difference between these choices. H. gives Geminus' date as the first century CE, which was, indeed, once favoured. But more recent scholarship has returned Geminus to the first century BCE, his traditional place (A. Jones, 'Geminus and the *Isia*', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 99 [1999], 255–67).

The primary focus of H.'s book is the constellation myth. His translations are accompanied by short, lucid notes drawing on more than a dozen other ancient sources, including Hesiod, Ovid and Apollodorus. The book provides an excellent introduction to its subject, though scholars will have to remember that the complete texts of the *Epitome* and the *Vatican Fragments* are not included. The introduction is useful, but densely written and rather sparsely furnished with notes. We are informed (p. xxiv) that, in his original work, Eratosthenes had arranged the constellations in a different order from that found in the *Epitome* and that this original order is known from two constellation lists – but no notice is given of how to find them. (They are available in E. Maass's *Commentariorum in Aratum reliquiae* [1898] and also in an appendix in Pàmias i

Massana's edition.) This is just one of several cases in which just a little extra detail would have made the book more useful to scholars without unduly burdening general readers. Sometimes the astronomical explanations are a little less than perfectly clear. For example, H. says (p. xxxi), 'If the axis of the earth were perpendicular to its orbit, the sun would always rise and set at the equator', which few general readers will understand to mean rise due east and set due west. And there are a few minor glitches: for example, in the translation of Hyginus' mythological treatment of Hercules, a sentence has inadvertently been omitted (p. 29); in Hyginus' description of the stars in Hercules, a right thigh has come out as a left thigh (p. 27); and in Geminus' constellation list (p. 169) Lyra has been omitted. But these are minor matters. This valuable book is rich with detail, but compact and reasonably priced. I will keep my copy within ready reach.

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NEW LITERARY AND SUB-LITERARY TEXTS FROM OXYRHYNCHUS

BRUSUELAS (J.H.), MECCARIELLO (C.) (edd., trans.) *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Volume LXXXI*. (Graeco-Roman Memoirs 102.) Pp. xii + 167, pls. London: The Egypt Exploration Society, 2016. Cased, £85. ISBN: 978-0-85698-229-3.

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The eighty-first volume of the Oxyrhynchus papyri contains 'assorted "firsts"' (p. v). In addition to its new texts, this volume is the first to feature editions of literary and sub-literary texts produced with the help of the *Ancient Lives* project (but see *P. Oxy.* LXXVIII 5156 and *CR* 64.2 [2014], 331). Twelve black-and-white plates present twenty of the thirty-two papyri.

Four new literary texts (5261–4), sixteen known literary texts (5265–80) and five sub-literary texts (5281–5), of which three preserve hypotheses to plays by Euripides, form the core of this volume. This review will briefly discuss these editions before turning to the four documents (5286–9) and the oldest fragment of 1 Timothy (5259), which, with the first Oxyrhynchus fragment of Ephesians (5258) and a text of the *Hymn of the Cross* (5260), frame this volume.

New fragments of a novel about the legendary pharaoh Sesonchosis (5262 and 5263) and a narrative about a queen who conquered Egypt and built pyramids (5264) receive thorough commentary (pp. 19–46). As an addition, it might be noted that in 5263 forms of φοῖνιξ and ἄκτις (and a derivative) are consistently spelled with <ει> for <ι> (fr. 2, col. ii, lines 25, 26–7, 29 and 30). The longest fragment of 5264 ends τροπ[*c.1*] . [], for which the editor suggests τροπ[α]α and supplies a supporting discussion of the pyramids as 'memorials of power' (μ[νη]μεῖα τῆς δυνάμε[ω]ς: lines 8–10) in contrast to their usual identification in Greek literature as tombs. I considered τροπ[ο]ν α, but doubt that it is more plausible. In support of τροπ[α]α, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (4.25.3) may be