

ancient theorisation of dance as well as on the meta-poetical dimension of dance scenes in late-antique literature. This monograph will most probably become a reference book on ancient dance and should be read by anyone interested in the study of ancient performance. However, given its great breadth, it will also appeal to a larger array of readers, especially those working on the different authors S. discusses.

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## COMPARATIVE STUDIES ON ANCIENT GREECE AND CHINA

LLOYD (G.E.R.), ZHAO (J.J.) (edd.) *Ancient Greece and China Compared*. In collaboration with Qiaosheng Dong. Pp. xvi + 430, figs, ills, map. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-107-08666-1.

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While the contributors to this volume offer an undoubtedly rich and probing exploration of a selection of themes and problems anchored by their specific training and expertise, the more significant outcome arguably lies in their sophisticated handling of the comparative exercise. How do you compare two immense civilisations, each replete with their linguistic, cultural, historical, political, social, economic (one could go on here) particularities? This most basic question is the impetus to the volume, and in these still early days of comparative scholarship we have been offered a primer and a touchstone that will be of much service to present and future researchers.

In the introductory chapter Lloyd, the co-editor of the volume, provides an overview of the methodological complexities underlying comparative work across disciplines. He writes with a mastery that few scholars can display and legitimately wield, and his long-standing experience and skill as one of the early vanguards of Sino-Greek studies come to bear on the searching narrative with which this text opens. The motivating question of *how* one should compare lends itself almost immediately to its negative formulation, or how one should *not* compare, and Lloyd guides the reader through a catalogue of pitfalls to be avoided. Chief amongst these is the *laissez-faire* comparison, a blind juxtaposing of comparanda problematically freed from their vital contexts, where the motivations for comparison and the methodology that bridges or disconnects ideas across cultures are not accounted for. Such failures usually involve a deeper failure to see one's own situatedness, conceptually speaking, which overwhelms the analysis with false assumptions of identity enabled by the wholesale imposition of one's own categories over the 'other' system. Yet, Lloyd's interests obviously do not lie at the opposite end of the scale, where an autarkic self-understanding of one's own culture and one's values renders the Other strictly incomparable. A fruitful comparative exchange is possible, Lloyd tells us, if it is instead underwritten by the double act of admitting one's conceptual conventions, and thus abstaining from the chimera of a neutral ground of analysis, as well as admitting that one's rootedness in a tradition or culture of concepts does *not* entail a hermetically sealed language

impervious to revision. Classical Greece and China do not, on this reading, admit to monolithic systems subsumed by the larger stereotypes of a logocentric ‘west’ and an anti-rational, mystical ‘east’.

The value of comparative thought lies in seeing each of these traditions in their dynamism and diversity, and, while mindful of their unique parameters, juxtaposing them in a perspicuous conversation that adds to our understanding of a given set of problems in each context. Lloyd’s comments underscore an important and subtle point – namely, that comparisons are made available to a lesser or greater degree by the rich tapestries of thought that constitute the intellectual fabrics of the Graeco-Roman world and early China. Identifying this availability and pursuing it for what it might offer us requires the painstaking work of negotiating the shifting registers of two ancient languages, of tracking how similar problems might take different forms and lead to contradictory ends, and how different sets of motivations might lead to a convergence in patterns of thought. Reading these differences in the similarities, and similarities in the differences, affords the comparativist an additional lens otherwise absent to the scholar who remains within the bounds of a single tradition.

Part I builds on the methodological insights of the introductory chapter with additional points of emphasis. N. Sivin brings into sharper focus the stakes involved in one’s choice of comparanda and cautions the researcher against imposing a common standard where one might not exist. While *re* 熱, for instance, is often translated as ‘fever’, Sivin pays close attention to contexts of use to reveal a set of disparate symptoms associated with the term that resists incorporation within a modern, biomedical paradigm. A more fruitful comparison utilises the methodological construct of the ‘cultural manifold’, in which problems presented by concepts such as *re* admit multiple dimensions of a lived experience all interacting to form a coherent whole. The ‘cultural manifold’ is, by now, a well-known resource in comparative studies developed by Sivin and Lloyd in *The Way and the Word* (2002), and Sivin reminds us here of the value of negotiating the complex structures of a given problem and the larger cultural contexts to which they belong.

W. Scheidel, in ‘Comparing Comparisons’, underscores the value of comparative work in light of the ‘hyper-specialisation’ of academia and extols the widened perspectives that it potentially affords the otherwise cloistered scholar. Yet, as an approach that is fairly nascent, undeveloped and suffers from neglect within a variety of disciplines, Scheidel’s remarks focus on strategies for putting comparisons on a firm methodological footing. His specific area of interest is comparative history, and he sets about establishing principles and standards by which comparative historical research might successfully be brought into conversation with the strictly causal analyses of the social sciences. Scheidel’s concluding overview of monographs in comparative history over the last three decades, with a brief discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of their respective methodologies and research design, offers the reader a valuable point of reference.

R. Wardy concludes the section on methodology by foregrounding the challenges presented in the exercise of translation between two discrete semantic fields. His goal is to articulate what the distinctively philosophical problem of translation might be, and he steers clear in this task of the assumption that much is lost in translation or the more extreme position, often taken by practitioners of the Continental tradition, that translation, strictly speaking, is impossible. Wardy seeks to go beyond the established model of translating between languages using the logical paradigm of a metalanguage. Languages are messy affairs, and Wardy calls out philosophers for neglecting the dirtier, thicker life of semantic fields. It is precisely through such a tending that he concludes with a translation between two orders of ‘ineffability’ – that of Zhuangzi on the one hand and Heraclitus on the other.

The remainder of the volume consists of essays that exemplify the methodological principles of the opening sections in their exploration of diverse themes related to religion, philosophy, art, literature, mathematics, the life sciences and agriculture and planning. R.A.H King embarks on a comparative study of Zhuangzi and Epictetus to inquire into conceptions of freedom within overarching models of obedience. Setting up a nuanced parallel between two structures of constraint, viz. the Stoic model of Nature or God or Law and Zhuangzi's conception of *tian* or *dao*, King is able to shift the discussion about freedom from a negative articulation (a freedom *from* intervention of norms and obligations) to a positive conception (a freedom *for* human flourishing in accordance with norms and obligations). The comparison yields a particularly interesting observation in the idea that certain norms and obligations inform the prescriptive visions of the *Zhuangzi*. Here, the Daoist complement to the Stoic virtue of *prohairesis*, the self-conscious, purposeful volition in accordance with rationality, is to be seen in the ideal of wandering (*you* 遊), which King renders as a self-aware responsiveness not wholly outside the bounds of rationality. His comparative study thus offers a refreshing alternative to the mystical, anti-rationalism the *Zhuangzi* has been repeatedly identified with.

Co-editor Zhao sounds an important, cautionary note in her essay by highlighting the perils of assimilating one philosopher into another's conceptual edifice. This being a frequent result of comparisons between Xunzi and Aristotle (with the former often being 'compared' as 'a Chinese Aristotle'), Zhao undertakes a study of shame-related concepts in both philosophers by carefully accounting for the conceptual clusters that are unique to each case. Thus, while both Aristotle and Xunzi aid us in an understanding of shame that goes beyond mere public opinion and instead complements an internal process of self-cultivation, the larger conceptual frameworks of self-cultivation, human flourishing and happiness (of which 'shame' constitutes a part) differ in significant ways for each philosopher.

L. Raphals charts the various trends in Greek and Chinese accounts of humans as they are located in continuums of living things. Her essay is an expansive survey of various models of human nature that shows the considerable diversity with which humans are seen as both distinct from and contiguous with animal life. She examines evolutionary models and reveals how, in some cases (predominantly Greek), priority is given to intra-species transformation, while in others (like the *Zhuangzi* and the *Liezi*), emphasis is laid on inter-species change. Raphals' discussions of the logic of scales of nature and various taxonomies further adds to the immense value this essay will have for further research.

M. Puett's essay on the conception of ghosts, spirits and divinities in Chinese and Greek classical texts offers an astute application of comparative methods in that it dismantles the often ill-conceived comparison of Greek divinities as psychologically complex personalities as opposed to Chinese models of impersonal cosmic forces. Undermining the stereotypical dichotomy that results from these assumptions between a 'tragic' cosmology and a 'harmonious' one, Puett turns to important dimensions of the ritual genre that reveal how there is ample personality, psychological complexity and antagonism that defines relations between ghosts, gods and humans in the Chinese context too.

These remain but a selection of the insightful essays that comprise the collection, and one is unable to consider each contribution in the limited space available here. It should hopefully suffice to mention what is on offer: J. Tanner presents a study of visual historical representations in ancient Greece and China, focusing on material culture and other institutional structures of the art world as tools for 'picturing' history; Y. Zhou offers an illuminating window into the world of femmes fatales, contrasting the figure of Helen and her post-Homeric copies with the lore of the 'Classic Trio', three dark and deviant women associated with the fall of China's three earliest dynasties; in the area of mathematics,

R. Netz compares Archimedes and Liu Hui, and K. Chemla examines the historiography of mathematics (in nineteenth-century Europe) with specific attention to the value attributed to abstraction in classical Chinese mathematical texts; V. Lo and E. Re'em participate in a 'sensory turn' in history by calling our attention to the role of *aphrodisia* in theories of love, sex and the emotions; X. Liu, E. Margaritis and M. Jones develop an understanding of the social implications of food production and consumption in ancient Greece and China, drawing on both textual as well as archaeological evidence to underscore the origins of unequal access to food; and M. Nylan compares the manuscript culture evidenced by the libraries at Alexandria and the palace libraries of the Western Han emperor Chengdi.

The contributions this volume makes to a variety of disciplines as well as to the development and successful practice of comparative methodologies are not to be underestimated. It has the potential to serve as an indispensable handbook for both particular interests and general instruction in comparative studies.

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## EARLY MODERN ENGLISH MYTHOGRAPHIES

HARTMANN (A.-M.) *English Mythography in its European Context 1500–1650*. Pp. xii + 283. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. Cased, £70, US\$90. ISBN: 978-0-19-880770-4.

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This learned and insightful study analyses six key mythographies composed in Tudor and Stuart England, a genre often studied by scholars of Renaissance literature and of the early modern reception of classical antiquity as paratextual, auxiliary to original poetry and to editions of classical Latin and Greek literature. By contrast, H. proposes to interpret these diverse texts as a 'distinct group' worthy of sustained investigation, arguing in her introduction that English Renaissance mythographies were conceived as 'coherent works' that may be interpreted both as 'integrated wholes' and as belonging to a unified genre (pp. 1; 9). As H. admits, most early modern readers did not approach mythographies in this manner, instead treating them as texts that 'could be dipped into when and where needed' as source material for mythological fables themselves as well as for related ornamental matter such as epithets (p. 50). Although the book does not entirely succeed in proving that English mythographies are a cohesive genre (the material, organisation and underlying assumptions concerning the nature and origin of myth in these six works are simply too diverse to make the case that they belong to a single kind), there is much of value in H.'s analysis of English mythographic writings, both for scholars of Renaissance literature and culture and for Classicists interested in the early modern reception of classical myth, or in classical and early Christian expositors of myth including Fulgentius, Augustine and Ovid.

H.'s introduction provides both a summation and a critique of prior scholarship on Renaissance mythography, one especially attentive to Jean Seznec's classic *La Survivance des dieux antiques* (1940, translated into English in 1953 as *The Survival of*