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G.E.R. LLOYD, *Being, Humanity, and Understanding*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. vi + 136. ISBN 978-0-19-965472-7. £25.00 (hardback). doi:10.1017/S0007087413000708

In this study of sizeable philosophical and scientific questions regarding the nature of the human experience in ancient cultures, G.E.R. Lloyd uses persuasive ethnographic and ontological methods. Lloyd's nuanced comprehension of the historiography of science studies is compellingly employed to unpack previous misunderstandings and misreadings, while speaking to the future of the field.

Lloyd illustrates complex general theory with acute and entertaining examples, making for an accessible read. The description of the Native Americans who drowned Spanish prisoners out of curiosity to see if their bodies decomposed as their own would, for example, illustrates his overall argument against assumptions of universalism (p. 11). Focusing mainly on

ancient Greece and China, Lloyd's study is nonetheless broad in scope and argues for a similar breadth of mind.

Chapter 1 discusses the common trope of placing humanity between God or gods and animals, and the idea that we are defined by what we are not. Humans immediately appear to be occupying a stable ontological space; that is, however, instantly disrupted by disagreeing theories of what separates man from animals, and, indeed, from gods. Chapter 2 analyses the idea of error, and introduces the 'understanding' of the title. This chapter strongly denies the soundness of any assumption of universalism in our understanding of error, as well as related concepts such as truth.

Chapter 3 reassesses previous understandings of ancient philosophy and science, and claims that the latter should be judged by its aims rather than its results: to focus on the mistakes or errors made is misleading in a study of the human condition in other civilizations. Lloyd takes a detailed look at a broad range of the concerns and aims of ancient science, and, indeed, what variously constituted science in different cultures at different points in history. The categories of modern science are meaningless when applied to ancient attempts to understand the world, Lloyd argues, but important attempts they were nonetheless.

Chapter 4, 'Language and audiences', once again suggests that context is key. Considering the problems that arise when we do not know or understand the audience for whom texts are made, Lloyd examines the role of philosophers in their various cultures and questions how this knowledge influences our understanding of their words.

Lloyd offers some solutions and propositions for moving forward in the field in the final chapter, 'Philosophical implications'. Lloyd also explores the problems of language, long held in literary and cultural theory as restrictive even when the language is a native tongue. Lloyd's particular study of ancient language further complicates the dynamic of understanding, when submersion in dead languages can never be total, and the limitations of translation are made apparent. The tensions between the literal and the metaphoric, and the judgements we make when we divide these concepts, are deconstructed. However, the ability to learn new frameworks through which we assess our personal experience is proven, Lloyd argues, and this offers direction for further research in the field.

For the scholar of the history of science, Lloyd's study is an insightful and often philosophical examination of the nature of the human condition in ancient societies. It is the awareness and analysis of the field's problems, the conceptual systems that the scholar is often unaware of and even trapped by, that provides a persuasive argument for the text. As stated in the introduction, on the agenda are not only ancient cosmologies but also 'both *our* understanding of the world, and more particularly our understanding of other people, and how *they* have understood the world' (p. 1, original emphasis). In this book, Lloyd successfully disrupts notions of ultimate, cross-cultural, truths about being human and understanding humanity.

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DANIELA WUENSCH and KLAUS P. SOMMER (eds.), **Ludwig Borchardt, Die altägyptische Zeitmessung**. Reprint mit einer Einleitung von Daniela Wuensch: Was die alten Ägypter über Uhren und Zeitmessung wussten. Göttingen: Termessos Verlag, 2013. Pp. 189. ISBN 978-3938016-14-5. €36.80 (hardback).

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Sometimes, scholarly books are of such importance that they remain the main starting point for any serious study of the subject in question for decades. The book reprinted here is certainly a prime example of this. Published originally in 1920, Borchardt's treatise is still the only comprehensive major study of clocks and time-measuring devices in ancient Egypt. Of course, new material has come to light and there have been advances in understanding of the long-known.