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Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker. Part 4: biography and antiquarian literature. E: Paradoxography and antiquities

Stefan Schorn, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker. Part 4: biography and antiquarian literature. E: Paradoxography and antiquities. Fasc. 2: paradoxographers of the imperial period and undated authors [Nos. 1667-1693]*. Leiden: Brill, 2022. Pp. xx, 1072. ISBN 9789004472679

Review by

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The massive volume in question is situated in a twofold tradition. On the one hand, it constitutes a new stage in the great publishing enterprise that aims to complete and update Felix Jacoby's *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. On the other hand, it aims (along with the yet-to-come fascicle 1) to supplement and replace Alessandro Giannini's *Paradoxographorum Graecorum Fragmenta*.

The 26 entries (numbers 1667-1693), previously published in a digital edition as part of the Jacoby Online project, deal with “collections of marvelous stories regarding nature, animals and humans” (p. 3).

The first author to be treated is Phlegon of Tralles, edited by K.E. Shannon-Henderson. Text (a new edition based on a collation of the *codex unicus* P, see p. 61), translation, introduction, commentary, and bibliography occupy over 300 pages, longer than any standalone edition of Phlegon's work, and form almost a third of the volume under review. This quantitative figure alone highlights the importance of the author and his work, *De mirabilibus*.^[1] The edition of the text is avowedly conservative; greater freedom is observed in the poetic passages, which are particularly problematic from a textual point of view. The introduction, among other things, features interesting reflections on Phlegon's career based on prosopographical

parallels (p. 46 ff.), and the commentary on the text is particularly precise, diligent, and rich. It is also characterized by constant attention to the *Realien* connected to the various *mirabilia*, which is one of the distinctive, and most welcome, features of the volume under review.

Some remarks: Philinnion's tomb is rightly likened to the "typical Macedonian type" (p. 80); besides the famous Vergina gravesite, it is also possible to refer to the impressive tomb of Kasta, discovered in 2012 a few kilometers from Amphipolis, where Philinnion's story was set. The discussion on the office of Aitolarch (p. 89-90) very appropriately recalls a recently discovered inscription confirming the existence of this office, at least in the imperial age. Particularly enlightening is the commentary on *Mir.* 22, the "monkey-child," which is linked back (p. 265) to anencephaly and to the fact that at Hermopolis in Egypt the mummy of an anencephalic fetus was found along with those of sacred baboons, in a Ptolemaic-era context. Similarly, the "dog-headed child" of *Mir.* 23 is tentatively explained with a reference to the so-called "Ambras syndrome," a congenital hypertrichosis of the face (p. 270).

Further on in the volume, the inclusion of testimonia related to the lost work on marvels by Damaskios (1668), missing in Giannini, is absolutely commendable. Another highly developed section is the one on the obscure Apollonios (1672), edited by J. Spittler. After a thorough discussion (p. 407-411), it is accepted that his *Amazing Histories* are an epitome of Bolos of Mendes' *Peri thaumasion*; the identification of the author with the celebrated Apollonios of Rhodes is cited only as a hypothesis (p. 414-415). The decision to leave factual errors in the text if attributable not to the copyists, but to the compiler himself (p. 426-427), is commendable. Again, the extensive commentary is very accurate.

The entry on the obscure Aristoteles/Aristokles (1673) is edited, like several others, by S.L. Sørensen. The learned comment (p. 526-528) about the weird fragment on a beautiful girl named Onoskelis/Onoskelia, born of a misogynist's relationship with a donkey, could perhaps be supplemented with a hint to the alleged births of animal/human hybrids, as a result of acts of bestiality, mentioned by Phaedrus (3.3) and Plutarch, *Sept.* 3 (149CE).^[2] Sørensen also edited the entry on the so-called *Paradoxographus Vaticanus* (1679). In the introduction it is pointed out that this is a valuable work, often the only source for various materials, and this edition has the merit of putting manuscript D, discovered in 1979, to good use.

The text lends itself to some reflections. At p. 580 l. 26 πλείους means “full” (from πλεῖος) and does not seem appropriate; the best reading seems that of D, πλοίοις (followed by καί). At p. 584 l. 87 the *lectio tradita* δέχεται is rightly accepted; at p. 586 l. 114-115, the text of V, ἐπὶ ἵππον ἢ σάλπιγγα, could be accepted (especially by emending, with Keller, κατέφυγεν into καταφύγη, “flees for refuge to a horse or a trumpet”), if one takes into consideration the sacral importance that the war-trumpet (*carnyx*) had among the Celts.^[3] As for the translation, paragraph 52.4 (p. 589) should not be understood, as is usually done, to mean that after the three days of anarchy the Persians beg the king to absolve them of their crimes. The meaning is rather “they implore [to be given] a king, who will rid them of illegality”. The actual reference is to a ritual re-enactment, at the time of succession, of the circumstances first leading to the establishment of monarchies, when people decided to give themselves a king in order to be saved from crime and lawlessness: see Herodotus 1.97-98 (the establishment of Deioces’ rule among the Medes) and Stobaeus 4.2.26 (from Seneca), describing the five days of ἀνομία at the death of the Persian king, aimed at rediscovering ὅσου ἄξιός ἐστιν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ νόμος.

Proceeding further, the treatment of the so-called *Paradoxographus Florentinus* (1680) by R. Greene is another fine piece of scholarship. The commentary is very thorough and detailed. Particularly interesting is the discussion of the varieties of petroleum that may have been known to the ancients (p. 680-681), as well as the discussion of submerged prehistoric settlements, visible through the crystal-clear waters of lakes Bracciano and Ohrid, which may have given rise to ancient legends of underwater cities (p. 769-772); at p. 701 there is an excellent defense of the *lectio tradita* Χρωψί of paragraph 15. A few additions are possible. The reference to an old photo depicting Lake Naftia in Sicily before it was drained (p. 686 n. 166) could be supplemented with some impressive 1935 footage.^[4] The swimming mice mentioned in paragraph 10 have sometimes been identified with water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*).^[5] It should be considered whether Bosporos mentioned in paragraph 35 is not the Cimmerian Bosporus or the city of the same name. The frigid river, in this case, could be the Tanais (see Dionysius of Byzantium, *Anaplous Bospori* 2).

The so-called *Paradoxographus Palatinus* (1681), edited by Sørensen, is another interesting text. As the editor notes (p. 828), the work of Alessandro de Martini^[6] could not be taken into account here. This is most unfortunate, because de Martini, referring to two neglected notes by A. Diller, has shown that some allegedly “corrupt” place

names in the text are instead perfectly sound. These are the well-known Balkan localities of Κάννινα (today Kaninë), Πέρνικος (Pernik), and Διάβολις (near the Devoll river), attested since the 10th century. The same de Martini also identified other chapters ascribable to the *Paradoxographus Palatinus* in the manuscript tradition, in particular one that refers to a fish living in Lake Ohrid, called μρεάνιν, a word that combines a distinctive Slavic root (compare Bulgarian мряна and Serbo-Croatian мрена, meaning “barbel”) with a demotic Greek ending.^[7] All of this clearly shows that the work was redacted in the Byzantine period (albeit with access to valuable pre-existing materials).

Among the next entries, 1682 (edited by I. Pajón Leyra) deals with P.Oxy II 218, nicely dubbed *Collection of horror stories*. From p. 871 begins a part devoted to particularly obscure works that dealt with rivers, springs, lakes, mountains, and stones; on p. 918-921 Sørensen discusses the issue of the enigmatic pseudo-Plutarchean treatise *De fluviiis* and the alleged authors mentioned in it. The book is concluded by two whopping indexes of places and names, spanning nearly ninety pages.

The volume is elegantly paginated, and the binding is sturdy (an indispensable feature, given its size). In its more than 1,000 pages, there are relatively few typos. More than average are found in the Phlegon section, especially in the Greek text: l. 120 φοβούμαι (*lege* φοβοῦμαι); l. 179 ρίψαι (*lege* ρῖψαι); l. 261 εὐρύς (*lege* εὐρύς); l. 271 μὲν (*lege* μέν); l. 276 κωλύσαι (*lege* κωλῦσαι); l. 324 οὔσαι (*lege* οὔσα), and the period after εὐπρεπής must be turned into a comma; l. 326 ἐμπεισόντος (*lege* ἐμπεσόντος); l. 412 αὐτήν (*lege* αὐτήν); l. 458 κατακσευάσαντες (*lege* κατασκευάσαντες); l. 463 ὤκησαν (*lege* ὠκησαν); see also p. 129, nine lines from the end, χόνα (*lege* χθόνα); p. 180, l. 6 γυναίκα (*lege* γυναικα); p. 220 the adjective χθόνιος is declined several times as if it were χθονιός; p. 221 l. 7 ξέστος (*lege* ξεστός)^[8]. Typos in the other sections seem generally less frequent^[9].

Oversights, all in all, are few: p. 80, Stramaglia does not defend, as stated, the paradosis ἄπερ, and in his edition he prints ὄπερ instead. The episode of Alexander the Great and the Water of Immortality, referred to on p. 683 and 722, does not appear in the α version of the *Romance of Alexander* edited by Kroll, but in the later ones. At p. 816, the Latin *cereos* does not mean “horned”, but “wax-like”.

As noted above, the texts that make up the volume under review have previously appeared in Jacoby Online. This explains the presence of various web links within the notes. Sometimes the use of URL shorteners would have been welcome (see p. 932); a perfunctory

reference to Wikipedia (p. 235 n. 1096), in a volume in which the scholarly bibliographies are very extensive and detailed, seems somewhat out of place. Fortunately, the reader was spared the links to the myriad web pages related to animal flatulence (in fact, a discomfoting testament to the “enduring popular interest” in the subject) discussed on p. 474, n. 314.

All in all, this monumental volume constitutes an indispensable acquisition for scholars, and thanks to its translations and extensive commentaries it will also enable a wider audience (or at least, those with access to libraries that can afford it) to engage with fascinating and little-known texts, for many of which it will undoubtedly constitute the reference edition for years to come.

Notes

[1] Phlegon’s other work on exceptionally long-lived humans, *De longaevis*, found in the same manuscript, is not included (as it was not in Giannini’s edition either): it could have been a welcome addition.

[2] See Á. Ibáñez Chacón, *Los Parallela minora atribuidos a Plutarco*, Málaga 2014, p. 385.

[3] See G. Sopeña Genzor, *La voz a través del cuerno. El paradigma documental del carnyx*, *Zephyrus* 87 (2021), p. 167-193, at 175.

[4] https://youtu.be/2f0rP_4muYg

[5] See K.F. Kitchell Jr., *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London and New York 2014, p. 191.

[6] Two articles published in *RFIC* 148.2 (2020), p. 446-469 and 149.2 (2021), p. 463-498; to these can now be added his doctoral thesis, *Il cosiddetto Paradoxographus Palatinus*, Genova 2023.

[7] See de Martini, *Il cosiddetto Paradoxographus Palatinus*, p. 271-272.

[8] There are some typos in the non-Greek parts of this section as well: p. 10, fourth-to-last line: Stragmalia (*lege* Stramaglia); p. 42 l. 7 codologically (*lege* codicologically); p. 239 n. 1122 serenids (*lege* sirenids), n. 1123 Tiberus (*lege* Tiberius); p. 287 l. 11 Hererro (*lege* Herrero). In addition, the surname Corcella is systematically given as Corcelli (e.g. p. 255 n. 1215; p. 305 l. 16). Lastly, in the apparatus to l. 13 (p. 10), it would be appropriate to indicate which of the two ἦ in the line is being referred to.

[9] See p. 396, apparatus to l. 136 εὐρίσκονται (twice; *lege* εὐρίσκονται); p. 398 l. 172 ἔλαβεν. (*lege* ἔλαβεν,); p. 400, l. 183 μελλισῶν (*lege* μελισσῶν); p. 451 n. 197 visible scholars (*lege* visible to scholars); p. 577 third-to-last line Tzetzes (*lege* Tzetzes); p. 905, l. 4 Anazarba (*lege* Anazarbos); p. 980 l. 15 paradoxographical (*lege* paradoxographical).