In sum, G.'s Aesop is a fine and intelligent volume that keeps the needs of the scholar and the pleasure of the reader in mind.

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KONON THE MYTHOGRAPHER

M. K. Brown: *The Narratives of Konon. Text, Translation and Commentary of the* Diegeseis. Pp. viii + 406. Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2002. Cased, €88. ISBN: 3-598-77712-4.

One of the most peculiar books in the mythographical tradition, Konon's *Diegeseis* has long needed an up-to-date commentary. It is full of extremely recondite myths, or unusual (often unique) versions of familiar myths. The author is a cipher; one can only guess at the context of his writing. Almost all of the book survives only in Photios' epitome, the extent of whose interference in the text cannot always be precisely estimated. The usual sorts of purchase on the problems raised by the text are often not available to the commentator, whose task is unusually daunting. Brown, publishing a revised thesis supervised by H.-G. Nesselrath, has done an admirable job under the circumstances. He has freshly collated the MSS, produced an accurate translation, and compiled a concise apparatus criticus. The commentary is businesslike and thorough, delineating the connections, or lack of them, between Konon's myths and alternative versions, and digging out the pertinent bibliography. One occasionally thinks of references to add, of course, though seldom of much importance. In the discussions I sometimes wished Brown had raised his sights a little and dared to address some general issues. For example, at the end of narrative 37 Konon remarks 'This is the true story about Kadmos and the foundation of Thebes; the others are myth and sorcerers' tales'. Palaiphatos uses such language several times, and the parallels are duly recorded. What we want is a discussion of when, how, and why purveyors of myth pooh-pooh other people's myths (one may start with T. C. W. Stinton's '"Si credere dignum est . . .": Some Expressions of Disbelief in Euripides and Others', *Collected Papers on Greek Tragedy* [Oxford, 1990], pp. 236–64). The tone of such talk in the age of Augustus is certainly worth pondering.

The Introduction is valuable, with sections on Konon's date, the title of the collection, the nature of the collection, the stories (foundation legends, aetia, erotic myths, paradoxography, paroemiography, fables and parables, Trojan and Roman myths), Konon's rationalism, his sources, Photios' handling of him, language and style, and the text. It is unfortunate that Brown could not have used Alan Cameron's forthcoming book *Greek Mythography in the Roman World,* which treats many of these topics at length and achieves solid results. With the unfair advantage of having read the typescript, I may state the likeliest context for Konon's weird collection: it is, of course, deliberately weird; it is meant as a reference for people who want something uniquely impressive for their conversation at symposia or their showpiece orations ('*that*'s not why Midas' ears are long; let me tell you the true story').

This commentary will be standard for a long time and Brown deserves the thanks and congratulations of all students of Greek myth for his excellent work.

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