anthologist's fate not to please everybody, but this collection will please most people, and it is a very welcome addition to the literature of ancient epistolography.

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EUCLID'S *DATA*

C. M. Taisbak: *ΔΕΔΟΜΕΝΑ. Euclid's* Data*, or The Importance of Being Given. The Greek Text Translated and Explained.* (Acta Historica Scientiarum Naturalium et Medicinalium 45.) Pp. 271, ills. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2003. Cased, DKr 335/£30/US$42/€48. ISBN: 87-7289-815-1.

The *Data*, traditionally ascribed to Euclid, the author of the *Elements*, deals with a limited type of results: showing that, with one geometrical object being 'given', another is given as well. The background to this is as follows. In theorems, the goal is to show the truth of a claim; in problems it is to perform a task after being given certain objects (e.g. being given a straight line, to construct on it an equilateral triangle). Now, the more you are 'given', the easier is the fulfilment of the task. The *Data* provides one with a mechanism for extending what one has been given by the terms of the problem. This is a tool for the solution of problems.

One can note a historical development: from an early Greek mathematics focused on the solution of special problems, to late-antique and medieval mathematics focused on the systematic arrangement of theorems. This largely accounts for the rise of the *Elements* into its canonical rôle in our own image of Greek mathematics, and the relative obscurity of the *Data*.

T.'s book is an outstanding contribution to the study of ancient mathematics, and may serve in correcting this historical imbalance. Formally a bilingual text with commentary, this book is really a research monograph whose argument is conducted through attention to the unfolding of the detail through the text of the *Data*. The translation is precise and thoughtful, and the few anachronistic symbols employed are in the spirit of the original. As for the text, T. simply follows H. Menge, *Euclidis Data* (Leipzig, 1896); a reasonable choice, but I regret T.'s decision not to consult the manuscript tradition for the diagrams.

This is the first research monograph dedicated to the *Data*, and may be seen as a complementary volume to the treatment of the *Elements* in I. Mueller, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Deductive Structure in Euclid's Elements* (Cambridge, MA, 1981). Like Mueller before him, T. looks for the foundational mathematical principles underlying the work. One can identify in this book two poles, a negative and a positive. The negative pole is in the argument that the *Data* is not concerned with doing algebraical manipulations via geometrical representations (the core of this argument is in Chapter 13, arguing for the non-algebraical nature of proposition 86, but many comments throughout the book serve the same purpose). The positive pole is in the analysis of Greek geometrical practice as a ritualized game of make-believe (the terms are mine), providing in this way a context for the expression 'being given'. The core of this argument is in the first chapter, dedicated to the definitions, but T.'s discussion throughout is motivated by this understanding of Greek geometry.

The negative pole of the book is by now familiar and usually non-controversial. The argument still needs to be made, and it is made persuasively by T. The positive pole

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shows nothing short of inspiration. T. seems to communicate directly with Euclid, and he often manages to evoke, in a few concise comments, an entire feature of ancient Greek mathematical writing. No review can do justice to this feature of T.'s writing, which is a matter of style and verve no less than of argument.

Indeed, the two poles generate between them a special kind of energy, well known to readers, and fans, of T.'s writing. The author's well-known, subtle irony is in this case especially appropriate, as he describes the subtle, playful, make-believe activity of Greek geometry—and as he deals with a concept as elusive and subtle as 'being given'.

The value of the work is in its detail. Still, in rough outline, its main claim may be paraphrased as following: the notion of 'being given' is reducible neither to algebraical solubility nor to meta-geometrical constructability. Instead, once Greek geometry is understood in the terms intended by its authors—as a game of make-believe—the property of 'being given' makes sense as a statement within the game. This seems to me correct and important.

T. clearly intends his book strictly for scholars of Greek mathematics. There is no doubt that it will serve, for generations to come, as a reference-point for further specialized research. But all scholars of ancient Greek thought will benefit by a glance, at the very least, at the first chapter, to find there Greek geometrical practice as a special domain of playful imagination—a domain whose true nature should reflect on further aspects of Greek intellectual life. I hope such scholars may, then, even be tempted to read further into Greek mathematics.

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PLUTARCH AGAINST THE STOICS

M. Casevitz, D. Babut (edd.): *Plutarque:* Oeuvres morales. *Tome XV, 2^e^ partie. Traité 72:* Sur les notions communes, contre les stoïciens. (Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé.) Pp. 465. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002. Paper, €60. ISBN: 2-251-00507-2.

The present edition of Plutarch's *De Communibus Notitiis* [*DCN*] is the first full-sized, systematic commentary on this work and, as such, is quite invaluable for anyone who wishes to get to grips with the dense potage of allusion, quotation, and polemic which makes it at once such a useful and such a challenging source for our knowledge of Stoicism. (It is the companion and sequel to an edition of *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis* by the same team, but has been published first, and I should apologize if any of my comments turn out to have been anticipated there.) The text (Casevitz) and translation (primarily Babut) improve on the already excellent precedent of Cherniss's Loeb; but its real contribution is in B.'s 263 eye-straining pages of notes. These are replete with exactly what one would be looking for: judicious discussions of textual cruces; a wealth of parallels, which are often quoted, not just referenced; and thoughtful reconstructions of the Stoic arguments attacked. (It might be noted that a certain familiarity with the system seems presupposed: this is not a book for beginners.)

In his introduction, B. sets out his view of Plutarch's purpose. It is commonly assumed that Plutarch intended to show that Stoicism is at odds with everyday intuitions about the world, and so to ridicule their own claims that Stoicism is uniquely

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