archaeological record. If one does not subscribe to the delicate literary arguments which have preceded, the archaeology of this book actually says very little.

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THREE STUDIES ON ANAXIMANDER

D. L. Couprie, R. Hahn, G. Naddaf: *Anaximander in Context. New Studies in the Origins of Greek Philosophy*. Pp. xiv + 290, maps, ills. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003. Paper, US$27.95 (Cased, US$81.50). ISBN: 0-7914-5538-6 (0-7914-5537-8 hbk).

This volume belongs to a curious genre. It is neither an edited collection of articles (though it has a brief anonymous introduction, a consolidated bibliography and a set of indices); nor is it a co-authored book, since the three authors have written separate essays; nor is it a monograph, since it contains three contributions without cross-references. It is, rather, a pair of covers, between which there co-exist in slightly uneasy harmony, three 'monographs' (that is the authors' term, p. 1) about Anaximander, each between sixty and eighty pages in length. Two of these are extensively illustrated: the volume includes sixty-two black and white photographs, diagrams and drawings, and six tables.

Nevertheless, despite this pictorial *embarras de richesse*, the volume hardly delivers 250 pages worth of new material. The illusion that we have three substantial new monographs for the price of one is somewhat transitory.

For a start, there is a good deal of overlap and repetition between the three contributions. Perhaps that is inevitable: when you think about it, what is there to write about? All of thirteen genuine words by Anaximander are preserved—maybe, on a generous estimate—in the form of fr. 1. Curiously, though, none of the authors quotes or discusses that text.

Still, the fewer the fragments, the more the scope for speculation. The authors of this book rise to the challenge, exploring tantalizing hints about the shape of Anaximander's earth, the distances to the circles that carry the stars, moon, and sun, and his pioneering map of the inhabited world. These are the slightly repetitive themes of the collection, together with the search for a sympathetic understanding of a man whose primitive tools and archaic images demand an immense effort of historical imagination.

The three essays cohere in their desire to trace the cultural background against which Anaximander's recorded activities made sense. All three use evidence from the civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean to ground their speculations. Both Naddaf and Hahn stress the routes whereby ideas from Egypt could have influenced Anaximander's thinking; Couprie, by contrast, sees a radical break from the traditional picture of the solar system as a dome of sky over a flat earth. Instead, Anaximander's achievement was to envisage depth in three dimensional space and to place the spinning chariot wheels of the heavenly bodies one behind the other. Couprie argues that these wheels must have progressed back and forth along a diagonal cylinder to provide the annual variation in the seasons and solstices.

The second essay ('Proportions and Numbers in Anaximander and Early Greek Thought', by Robert Hahn) is closely related to Hahn's previously published monograph *Anaximander and the Architects*. Here, as there, he argues that we should

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understand the work of Anaximander in relation to the methods employed by archaic architects in Greece and Egypt. Anaximander used the unit that measures the height and diameter of the column drum earth (height one unit, diameter three) as the module in terms of which other distances and structures of the architecture of the universe are measured out. Yet there are problems even in this second rehearsal of Hahn's theory, for he uses Anaximander's procedure as evidence for his claim that Milesian architects probably employed that approach (p. 82). Is it more likely that they used that modular approach, once we recognize that he clearly did? Perhaps so, given that he might have learnt it from them, or they from him. But then, so what? Can that hypothesis add anything to our understanding of his choice of the proportions he chose?

What seems crucial is that Anaximander chose a set of numbers with a mathematical rationale: it formed a systematic series, and that fact invites us to suppose that Anaximander adopted the numbers not on the basis of empirical observations but on the assumption that the universe is orderly. Yet Couprie is too swift in dismissing the idea that some kind of measurements could have entered the calculations. It is simply not true that geometry is unable to draw inferences about distance from temporal measurements available to the observer, once the idea of depth in space has been envisaged. Distance is related to speed of travel and time taken, and the last of those factors could be measured. Of course, we must then either assume equal speed of travel on the part of all the bodies, or build in variable speeds at the circumference. In the first case, we could account for the variable time by positing the appropriate distances, but Anaximander clearly did not do that. On the second hypothesis, the distance will be only one of two unknown factors. Still, we may imagine that Anaximander might have measured the time taken for a body to complete a full circle, as one factor in calculating his proposed series of distances.

This collection of essays could have benefited from some competent editing to eliminate a range of errors of grammar, spelling, scholarship, and various kinds of incoherence, particularly in Naddaf's essay.

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PRESOCRATIC IDENTITY

A. LAKS, C. LOUGUET (edd.): *Qu'est-ce que la Philosophie Présocratique? What is Presocratic Philosophy?* (Cahiers de philologie: Série Apparat critique 20.) Pp. 550. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2002. Paper, €29. ISBN: 2-85939-740-X.

As André Laks observes in the preface to this volume, there has been no international forum for the discussion of Presocratic philosophy comparable with those that cater for Platonists, Aristotelians, and students of Hellenistic philosophy. The colloquium at which the papers collected here were delivered was organized in October 2000 in an attempt to put that right—and a second meeting is scheduled for September 2004. There must have been quite a buzz about the occasion, to judge from the ambition and appetite evident in most of the contributions.

The five papers in the opening section all address the identity of Presocratic philosophy, with Laks focusing at the outset on the conjunction of the very terms 'Presocratic' and 'philosophy' to describe it (first used—so far as Laks can establish—by J. A. Eberhard in a history of philosophy manual of 1788). Subsequent

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