ERATOSTHENES

K. GEUS: *Eratosthenes von Kyrene. Studien zur hellenistischen Kultur und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*. Pp. 412. Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2002. Paper, €88. ISBN: 3-406-48976-1.

This is a detailed study of what remains of the works of E(ratosthenes), one of the most interesting and less studied personalities of the early Hellenistic age. The book's aim is to present and evaluate his contribution to Hellenistic science and culture, an extremely difficult task considering E.'s wide range of interests: poetry, astronomy, geography, philology, chronography and history were all fields where he left a lasting mark.

After an introductory section on E.'s life, the book is arranged in chapters that analyse his work on each of these subjects. What results is a reliable and well argued overview of E.'s intellectual development, from his early years in Athens, when he was interested in Platonic philosophy, to his call to the Ptolemies' court in Alexandria, where he developed his interest in geography and the natural sciences. G. offers an impressive reconstruction of what must have been one of the most significant works of E., the *Platonikos* (scil. *logos*, that is, *Writing on Plato*). He argues convincingly that all the fragments of E. we possess dealing with mathematics, the natural sciences and musical theory must have originally belonged to this single imposing work, that contained definitions of different mathematical, musical, and metaphysical terms, aimed at explaining difficult passages of the Platonic corpus. The same philosophical interests are evident in E.'s activity as a poet. The Platonic elements in the elegy *Erigone* and the epic poem *Hermes*, as well as the presence in them of some contradictions of views E. defends in his scientific works, lead the author to the conclusion that most of E.'s poetic activity is likely to have taken place when he was in Athens, before he moved on to Alexandria and undertook independent research in the natural sciences.

After he moved to the museum in Alexandria, E. seems to have worked mainly on astronomy and geography, and later on history and philology. The only two complete works that have come down to us date back to this period: the epigram offering a solution to the famous problem of the duplication of the cube and the letter quoting it, addressed to Ptolemy III. E.'s output in the field of astronomy was influential as well: this applies especially to his catalogue of the constellations (*Astronomy* or *Katasterismoi*), which had a wide circulation in antiquity in a series of later adaptations. In its original version, it must have been not only a list of stars but also a mythographical work, narrating the myths connected with the constellations and characteristically linking science and philology. Another astronomical work was the writing *On the Measurement of the Earth*, that contained not only the well known calculation of the circumference of the globe but also other astronomical and geographical issues, such as the size and distance of the sun and the moon, discussions of eclipses, and measurements of the height of mountains.

In the ancient world the best known of all E.'s works was surely his *Geography*, where he collected, ordered and evaluated a mass of geographical data available from earlier research, effectively founding scientific geography. A successful compromise between theoretical demands and practical feasibility, the *Geography* became a standard reference work for geography in antiquity, thanks to the wealth of information it contained and to E.'s sure hand in the selection and evaluation of his sources.

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Another field in which E. left a mark was philology. His most important grammatical work, *On Old Comedy*, was a mainly descriptive writing with its main focus on matters regarding the explanation of passages and words. This must have been a feature of E.'s grammatical output in general: though certainly first-rate, his works did not introduce methodological innovations in this field, nor does he seem to discuss more general questions such as normative grammar.

In the last two chapters G. defends the attribution to E. of a historical work, the *History of the Galatians*, and challenges the modern belief that E. was the founder of scientific chronography. This statement, G. argues, is simply not supported by the fragments of the three works we possess on chronography: in the best preserved of these works, *On Olympic Victors*, E. uses literary and not epigraphical sources, and his main interest seems to be collecting *realia*, not offering a chronological framework for Greek history.

This book is an amazing feat of erudition and critical judgement. It is worth mentioning that G.'s task has been even more difficult as he had to work without the help of a reliable collection of sources: the only complete edition of E.'s fragments is Bernhardy' pioneer work, published in 1822. Since then, only the geographical and poetical writings have been the object of serious studies (see H. Berger's 1880 edition of the geographical material, and E. Hiller's work on the poetical fragments). Remarkably, G. at the beginning of each chapter offers an invaluable starting point for anyone who might be interested in furthering his research on E.: a list of all the sources of fragments belonging to the works discussed in the chapter, including many new or overlooked ones. Only one example is enough to show to how much remains to be done: on p. 112 G. mentions four fragments mostly ignored by modern scholarship—remarkably, they belong to the *Hermes*, perhaps the best known and most studied of E.'s works in modern times. G.'s book is therefore not only a welcome addition to the studies on Hellenistic culture and science, but will surely provide an important stimulus to further research on E. and his time.

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CRATES OF MALLOS

M. BROGGIATO: *Cratete di Mallo: I frammenti. Edizione, introduzione e note*. (Pleiadi: Studi sulla letteratura antica 2.) Pp. xciv + 359. La Spezia: Agorà Edizioni, 2001. Paper, €30. ISBN: 88-87218-34-X.

Until recently, Crates of Mallos, grammarian, critic, and scholar of the second century B.C., has not been well served by modern scholarship. Rudolph Pfeiffer, in his *History of Classical Scholarship I* (Oxford, 1968), p. 239 n. 7, lamented the lack of a modern critical edition of Crates' fragments, and this has remained the case until now. General knowledge of Crates appears to be limited to the anecdote related by Suetonius (*Gramm*. 2.1–2), who tells us that he had a nasty encounter with a sewer on the Palatine, broke his leg, and spent his recuperation period lecturing and discussing grammar with anyone who chose to listen. A few scholars in the past attempted to tackle him, notably Hans Joachim Mette, whose book on Crates' cosmology, *Sphairopoiia*, was published in 1936. Unfortunately neither this book nor its companion volume *Parateresis* (Halle, 1952), with its similarly heterogeneous

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