EUHEMERUS

M. WINIARCZYK: *Euhemeros von Messene. Leben, Werk und Nachwirkung*. Pp. x + 235. Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2002. Cased, €80. ISBN: 3-598-77706-X.

Marek Winiarczyk has provided the scholarly world with a fairly exhaustive collocation and evaluation of the scattered research on an obscure subject: the life, writings, and influence of Euhemerus of Messene. His book is bound to be the major work on the subject for some time to come, not simply because of its comprehensiveness, but also because his German is straightforward and comprehensible. But his book will not end discussion of Euhemerus. With regard to analysis, W. is conservative, and while this should be an asset, it consistently prevents him from making firm and useful statements about the primary material.

W. dispatches all of the attempts to give to Euhemerus a more precise set of dates than the evidence will permit. He concludes that Euhemerus lived around 300 B.C. and wrote at some time between the start of the last decade of the fourth century and 272/271 B.C. He also notes the likelihood that Euhemerus was a native of Sicilian Messene, but does not pursue the implications of such an origin.

Before embarking on a discussion of the *Hiera Anagraphe*, W. reminds his readers that there are no original fragments of the work, hence his classification, in his Teubner edition of the *reliquiae*, of all the texts as *testimonia* (he also adjusts some of these here from *dubia* to *falsa*). He then notes that Euhemerus stand in the literary traditions of ideal societies on fictional islands on the periphery of the known world, and of descriptions of a *locus amoenus*. At this point, W. first expresses the contention, which is repeated with undue regularity, that although there may be similarities to other texts or literary reminiscences, we cannot properly speak of 'sources' for Euhemerus. While it is salutary to be reminded that Panchaea corresponds to no specific part of the real world, and that Euhemerus is an original author, W. frustrates his reader by refusing to concede that the *Hiera Anagraphe* is closer to some texts than to others, and that some texts serve as models for the *Hiera Anagraphe*, and might help us to identify its genre and intent. W. qualifies the description of the *Hiera Anagraphe* as a utopian novel or travel romance; these elements are merely intended to provide a framework for an account of the origins of religion. The major part of the *Hiera Anagraphe* is composed of a presentation of Euhemerus' original 'Theogony' in the form of traditional theogonic discourse, a sophistic cultural history describing the development of human society, and, thanks to the travels of Zeus, descriptions of peoples and places all over the world.

W. indicates a number of phenomena which might have contributed to the thought of Euhemerus on religion, but he begins this discussion with a definition. It has been assumed that Euhemerus proposed a *theologia dipertita* of immortal, heavenly gods (the Sun, Moon, etc.) and mortal, earthly gods. W. asserts that Euhemerus did not clearly distinguish between the heavenly and earthly gods, but such a division was implicit in his language. Diodorus, he continues, assumed that Euhemerus had made such a distinction, adopted it, applied it to other works he excerpted, and 'clarified' it in his introduction to a summary of the *Hiera Anagraphe*. W.'s hypothesis has merit, and deserves further study, but should provoke controversy.

W. outlines the elements of Greek thought and practice which represent the precedents for Euhemerus' work, along with a careful chronological analysis of their development. These influences include: the deification of heroes, the legends of gods

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establishing their own cults, the tradition of the grave of Zeus on Crete, the concept of *euergesia*, the rationalistic interpretation of myth, the dismissive and atheistic explanations of the origin of religion which arose in the second half of the fifth century (especially those of Prodicus of Ceos), and the general- and ruler-cults of the late fifth to the early third centuries. Once again, W. refuses to speak of sources, but rather suggests that Euhemerus depended on a general knowledge of literature, philosophy, and religion, as well as his experience of the conflicts of the early Successors.

Euhemerus described finding his account of the gods inscribed on a stele in the temple of Zeus Triphylius on the island of Panchaea. W. points out that Euhemerus' description of Panchaea's society and economy is intended to suggest an archaic and closed culture, in which the stele recording the acts of the 'gods' might plausibly have been preserved. Likewise, W. notes that the descriptions of temples, steles with priestly interpreters, and discoveries of a stele or book were common motifs in Greek literature. He again denies that we can speak of 'sources' for Euhemerus, but I think we can very usefully speak of Plato's Atlantis story, for instance, as a source, without impinging upon the originality of Euhemerus.

W. is thorough and comprehensive in his discussion of the various interpretations of the *Hiera Anagraphe*, but is, I think, too narrow in his conclusions. He distinguishes seven identifications of the intent of the *Hiera Anagraphe*, and traces the history of each: (1) destruction of belief in the Olympian gods; (2) satire of the ruler-cult; (3) justification or defense of the ruler-cult; (4) description of an ideal system of government; (5) explanation of the origin of belief in the gods; (6) propagation of the idea of the unity and brotherhood of all men; and (7) reinterpretation of Greek mythology. Of these, W. rejects 1, 2, one version of 3, 4, 6, and 7. He believes Euhemerus addressed the origin of religion, and so entered into the discussion of ruler-cults at the beginning of the Hellenistic era. W. is too hasty in dismissing at least interpretations 6 and 7. Zeus's practice of establishing joint cults to himself and local rulers throughout the world, and the heterogeneous population of Panchaea, certainly suggest a basis for an international or supranational outlook, if not arguing the essential unity of mankind. It could also be argued that a novel presentation of the characters of myth and their relations and deeds constitutes a reinterpretation of myth.

W.'s views on Ennius' translation of the *Hiera Anagraphe* are sure to spark controversy. While noting that scholarly opinion holds that the *Euhemerus sive Sacra historia* was intended to promote rationalism and criticism of belief in the gods at Rome, W. suggests that Ennius meant to introduce educated Romans to the idea that a prominent person could be considered a god in his own lifetime, and so to prepare the ground for the eventual deification of Scipio Africanus. I would imagine that these theories are not mutually exclusive. He further maintains that Ennius' translation, prepared around 200–194 B.C., was a fairly free prose translation; Varro and Cicero read the work, but Lactantius (our principal source for '*testimonia*' to Ennius' work) knew it only indirectly. Laughton's arguments for the faithfulness of Lactantius' report seem more convincing on this point.

W.'s treatment of the influence of Euhemerus is perhaps the least satisfying part of his book. I think that Euhemerus' influence was more pervasive than W. appreciates. Nevertheless I agree that euhemerism involves the reduction of the gods to the place of deified men, not the apotheosis of benefactors of mankind, and that kingly power, not *euergesia*, is the basis of euhemeristic deification. W. readily admits Euhemerus' influence on the Hellenistic mythological romances, but I would contend that these

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novel fictions of the gods as ancient kings are central to Euhemerus' legacy. There are some omissions in W.'s list of euhemeristic historians, most importantly Castor of Rhodes, who introduced a euhemeristic narrative into his influential chronography. While W.'s discussion of Euhemerism in Jewish literature is brief but solid, I can by no means concur with his statement that euhemerism plays only a minor rôle in second- to fifth-century Christian apologetic. Only eight Church Fathers might refer to Euhemerus, but the idea that the gods were in fact deified men is absent from very few patristic works. W.'s treatment of mediaeval Euhemerism is spotty and derivative.

W. has laid the groundwork for all future study of Euhemerus. There is small chance that his conclusions will become canonical, and he himself, to his credit, is responsible for this. His presentation of the views of other scholars is thorough and fair. On the whole, his book is a comprehensive guide to the research on an intriguing subject.

University of Calgary BENJAMIN GARSTAD

COI SACRA PHILITAE

K. SPANOUDAKIS: *Philitas of Cos*. (*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 229.) Pp. xxviii + 454. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 90-04-12428-4.

Nowacki's commentary on the poetical fragments of Philitas appeared in 1927, and in the following year Kuchenmüller dealt with these together with the grammatical fragments in 117 pages of entertaining Latin. History has repeated itself. Hot on the heels of the two-volume Italian edition of Philitas' poetical and grammatical remains by L. Sbardella and E. Dettori (Rome, 2000) comes S.'s independent treatment of the complete works. It started life as a doctoral thesis on the poetical fragments, and most of the book (pp. 1–345) is devoted to them; Dettori's edition of the grammatical fragments is almost five times as long as S.'s, which takes up only fifty pages.

Philitas is a tempting but frustrating subject for research. He was highly regarded both by Hellenistic Greek poets and by Augustan elegists, and his presence has been detected or suspected in a wide range of ancient writing. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the pathetically exiguous poetic fragments, amounting to about forty lines, provide so little material towards an assessment of his work.

Philitas would have admired the πόνος with which S. has set about his researches. He has amassed a great deal of material relevant to the fragments (including much on their diction and lexical range) and an even greater amount which is likely to be irrelevant. He has striven to go beyond earlier scholars in reconstructing, for example, the plot of *Demeter*, Philitas' most famous poem. On pp. 244–303 he examines in detail the seventh *Idyll* of Theocritus and the Callimachean hymns to Apollo and Demeter in the hope of detecting there the influence of Philitas. Most of this speculation, it has to be said, is very tenuous. Conjecture is cheerfully piled upon conjecture until the reader forgets just how little is actually known about the poem. Here is the chief problem with this long and learned book: after reading S.'s extensive discussions, one can hardly remember where probability ended and imaginative reconstruction began. At times the work seems almost to be an exercise in the association of ideas.

Sbardella's edition of the poetical fragments is for the most part compendious, usefully gathering together and assessing conjectures about the text, context, and meaning of what little survives. S. is prepared to chance his arm much more often. One

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