

Daniela Dueck, with a chapter by Kai Brodersen, *Geography in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xvi + 142: ISBN-13: 978-0521197885 (Hardback, \$87.95); ISBN: 978-0521120258 (Paperback, 39.95).

Worthy of Cambridge's *Key Themes in Classical Antiquity* Series, Dueck's little volume is a useful introduction to geography in Classical Antiquity. Opting for a thematic rather than chronological arrangement, Dueck focuses on the primary trajectories of ancient Mediterranean geography: the widely accessible (and not necessarily fictive) ambit of descriptive geography; scientific and mathematical geography; and the cartographic or visual aspects (in a chapter by Kai Brodersen). Dueck focuses on the particular aims, purposes, and applications of descriptive and scientific geography.

The book is arranged in five subdivided chapters. In the Introduction (chapter 1), Dueck sets the tone for the volume, foregrounding the sweeping awareness of and curiosity about geography, travel, and cartography. She stresses the lack in antiquity of a clear disciplinary definition of geography, and its overlap with other intellectual fields. Geography was presented in manifold genres: toponyms and foreign landscapes prevail in literature, especially Homer, Aeschylus, Pindar; geographical digressions in Herodotus and Thucydides make historical accounts more accessible and vivid. Geography required no specific skills—it was “practiced” by an array of people from unlettered sailors to the highly educated, and it differed from the modern discipline in theory and practice. Dueck attempts to delineate the distinctions between Greek and Roman approaches and the changing geographical paradigm within her thematic arrangement (e.g., the Greek geographical arc was maritime; for the Romans, terrestrial). The Greeks and Romans raised different questions and had multifarious goals, within varied social and political contexts. Dueck asserts that Rome associated geography and war, and she recognizes Rome's “practical” aims. Dueck notes Strabo's geopolitical explanation for the rise of Rome (6.4.1), the geographical significance of Latin *cognomina*, and that Roman political achievements were defined by geography (e.g., Scipio “Africanus,” to whom Dueck merely alludes, p. 14). Dueck abjures from the full politicization of Roman geography and, almost alarmingly, never once uses the word “propaganda,” an issue around which she dances in the context of the Roman geographical paradigm. She also seems to make a chronological division between Greek and Roman in her treatment of Polybius, Strabo and especially Ptolemy, whom she described as “imbued with Roman political orientation” (p. 18)—none of these authors would have considered themselves “Roman.” Dueck, however, is right to emphasize the ancient interest in both the *oikoumene* (the **inhabited** world – the unpeopled areas held no interest for the ancients) and its logical arrangement, which in turn fueled geographical theory.

In Chapter 2 (“Descriptive Geography”), Dueck surveys literary approaches in three subsections: epic, myth, and poetry; historiography from Herodotus onwards; travelogues and curiosities. Her précis of geography in myth and poetry is cursory, as dictated by the constraints of her medium. From Homer to Hesiod, to Apollonius of

Rhodes, to Valerius Flaccus, geographical excursions remained a mixture of fact and fiction but were updated with advances in scientific geography and the improved knowledge of distant lands. Dueck merely touches on the exploitation of geographical knowledge in Alcman, Pindar, Greek drama (Aeschylus's geographical awareness was particularly extensive, but not treated by Dueck). The Roman poets employed geography to demonstrate erudition (Catullus) or to showcase political and geographical achievements (Vergil, Ovid, Horace). Dueck then turns to the historiographical tradition, exploring the integration of history and geography. In Thucydides and Xenophon, geography and topography enhance the historical discussion; in Ephorus, geography is treated discretely from the primary historical text, whence develops more strictly focused geographical sub-genres that culminate in Strabo's massive geographical treatment of the entire world. Dueck's survey includes all of the major historical writers and a good many lesser known ones, and her comments on how each author employs geography for broader purposes are generally thoughtful and solidly based on the texts. Useful are Dueck's discussions on the evolution of historiography and how the sub-genre of "geography" bolsters and veers from "pure" historiography. She then turns to accounts of travel by sea (*Periploi* or coasting guides) and land (Itineraries), surveying the primary evidence, including non-Greek initiatives (Necho, Hanno), and political enterprises (Alexander the Great and Ptolemy VIII, although elsewhere she omits Alexander's efforts to collect and record digital data: see p. 12) which further expanded geographical horizons and knowledge.

Turning to Mathematical geography (chapter 3), Dueck addresses three particular aspects: shapes and sizes; the theory of climatic zones and ethno-geography; and locating coordinates. She emphasizes the reliance on both sensory assessment and a rational approach which was shaped by the Greek sensibility of symmetry and aesthetics. Scientific approaches were not exclusive of literary efforts, and the focus remained not the entire world but rather on the *oikoumene*, as centered around the Mediterranean (*mare nostrum* in Latin), and also reflect a mix of fact and imagination. From Anaximander onwards, ancient endeavors concentrated on determining the shape and extent of *oikoumene*, the size of the earth (Dueck makes intriguing references to Atlantis in this regard: p. 77), the size and shapes of the continents, and even the heights of mountains and depth of the sea—often described in terms of metaphor and familiar vocabulary (see Dueck 2005b). Curiously, although embracing technical Greek terminology elsewhere (*stadia*, *klimata*, etc.), Dueck omits from her discussion the Greek terms *diaphragma* (Dichaearchus' term for his line of parallel from the straights of Heracles, through Sardinia, etc., to Mt. Himaeus) and *sphragides* (document seals, the term applied by Eratosthenes to the shapes of countries, especially in the east). cursory, yet lucid, is her aperçu of the theory of climatic zones and ethno-geography, evolving attempts to locate coordinates, and the synergy of geography and astronomy.

Brodersen's chapter on Cartography (chapter 4) begins with intriguing contemporary examples of material Chinese maps. Brodersen sagely warns that contemporary evidence from the Mediterranean is limited and that reconstructions, relying all too much on

modern preconceptions and methods, are at best misleading. His survey of the surviving material both literary and graphic is perfunctory, dismissing the hoaxes (the Augustan gold coin, the Soletto map) and hitting the highlights (souvenir silver beakers from Hadrian's Wall, Dura shield, Artemidorus papyrus). Deeper discussion of his "Maps in the Service of the State" (Aristagoras of Miletus and Agrippa) would be welcome.

In the final chapter "Geography in Practice," Dueck explores the connections between experience and textual evidence, real knowledge of sea and land routes, the non-political reasons for travel (pilgrimage and Panhellenic games), the reciprocity of travel and geographical knowledge, and the legal need for accurate topographical data. Dueck queries how broadly geographical knowledge may have been disseminated, but dismisses our ability to answer such a question, despite her own abundance of geographical references in popular culture and geographically inspired proverbial expressions. Tempering her pessimism, she optimistically asserts: "One does not have to be able to pick out these sites on a globe to absorb some geographical ideas about them and, needless to say, one does not have to have been there" (p. 120).

Regarding supplementary materials, the Chronology is helpful, but betrays the book's cursory treatment of late geography. (Perhaps Cambridge will issue another volume on the rich geographical tradition in late antiquity?) Dueck's lengthy bibliography omits some older reference works that might be of use to the target audience in favor of more specialized recent scholarship. Welcome would be a concordance of works cited and excerpted (one of the volume's strengths is Dueck's generosity in citing primary material). An appendix on the primary geographical authors, with more fulsome detail than in the Chronology, might also benefit the student.

Despite the inevitable quibbles, this concise and clearly organized volume is a suitable introduction to this fascinating topic for the educated layperson, or a handy text around which to build an undergraduate course. Dueck's argument is well grounded in primary evidence and she provides generous excerpts of pertinent and interesting texts throughout. Dueck raises some important questions and she has managed to address many of the practical and theoretical questions that a undergraduate student might ask: how were distances calculated? how were sea depths calculated? did the ancients know about China? Dueck explores the mythic, literary, and practical aspects of this captivating field of study with imagination and sympathy, emphasizing not what the ancients got wrong, or their lack of sophisticated and accurate tools, or how their geographical theories might seem naïve to the modern reader, but instead she highlights the spirit of inquisitiveness and exploration that fuelled ancient inquiry into myriad scientific matters.

GEORGIA L. IRBY
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY
GLIRBY@WM.EDU