

Serena Bianchetti, Michele R. Cataudella, and Hans-Joachim Gehrke, eds., *Brill's Companion to Ancient Geography: The Inhabited World in Greek and Roman Tradition* (ed., Leiden 2016). ISBN: 978-90-04-28511-8. Pp. xviii + 490; illus. 20.

The study of ancient geography is one of the most topical areas of classical studies, with extensive research appearing in the last two decades. There have been new editions of Pytheas, Dikaiarchos, Eratosthenes, Krates, Strabo, and Pomponius Mela, and a vast amount of work on ancient mapping. Sessions at conferences and whole conferences themselves are devoted to the topic. The current volume represents another addition to its rapidly growing bibliography.

The Brill *Companion* is a collection of 21 essays by European scholars, arranged essentially chronologically, with some grouping that reflects the trends in scholarship of a particular period. As with any volume of this sort, the material varies in quality, from interesting new topics to relatively brief summaries of well-known issues presented more fully elsewhere.

The first section (“Geography Before Geography”), as its title implies, concerns itself with the development of themes and techniques that led to the actual establishment of geography in the latter third century BC. Reinhold Bichler begins the volume (pp. 3–20) with an examination of geographical themes examined by Herodotos and the information that he obtained from Persian sources. It is a useful summary, although the author is perhaps too dismissive of early geographical issues such as the voyage of Skylax of Karyanda or the circumnavigation of Africa. The matter of the circumnavigation also appears in Pietro Janni’s article on the function of the sea and seafaring in the development of Greek geographical thought (pp. 21–42). To be sure, the accounts of early travellers are often not accurate and were always enhanced, often by the travellers themselves (a problem occurring into the twentieth century), but one must not be too skeptical. The reports are important, and the modern scholar should make as much use as possible of the actual data preserved, with little concern about the absolute accuracy of the material. The way in which early travellers were in error is perhaps less important than what they recorded, and too much emphasis on equating ancient toponyms with modern ones can be an insidious trap: few would suggest today that the Kassiterides are the Scillies. This section also includes articles on the meaning of the term Magna Graecia (Megale Hellas) by Gianfranco Maddoli, political borders in Greece by Giovanna Daverio Rocchi, and two on Alexander the Great and geography, by Hans-Joachim Gehrke and Veronica Bucciardini.

The second section, “Geography Between Science and Politics,” begins with the late fourth century BC, when scholars such as Eudoxos of Knidos and Dikaiarchos moved close to the development of geography as a discipline, as Michele R. Cataudella reports (pp. 115–31). Serena Bianchetti’s essay on Eratosthenes (pp. 132–49) is a useful summary, but this reviewer might be excused at expressing his

astonishment that it relies on old editions of the scholar, from a century or more ago, rather than his of 2010 (*Eratosthenes' Geography*, Princeton).

One of the most important essays in the volume is that by Klaus Geus, “Progress in the Sciences: Astronomy and Hipparchus” (pp. 150–60). Hipparchos is a frustrating, yet essential author in the history of geography. He was not a geographer, yet in the late second century BC he wrote one of the most important geographical texts, *Against the Geography of Eratosthenes*, which, to make matters more inscrutable, is essentially known only through the recension of Strabo over a century later. Geus skillfully takes the reader through the minefield of Hipparchos interpretation, providing the first solid analysis of the issues since that of D.R. Dicks over a half a century ago.

A subsection on the farthest horizons in Greco-Roman thought includes essays on the Indian Ocean (always enigmatic in antiquity) by Didier Marcotte (pp. 163–83) and on the confusions between the eastern coast of Africa and India (by Pierre Schneider, pp. 184–202), both studies on perceptions of the eastern and southern limits of the inhabited world. Another significant article is that by Pascal Arnaud, “Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa and His Geographical Work” (pp. 205–222), which clarifies many of the issues regarding the contributions of this important personality to the history of geography, especially regarding his enigmatic map and how it was known and used. Arnaud also definitively (and thankfully) rejects the pervasive idea that the mysterious Chorographer, an author mentioned only by Strabo, and who wrote on southern Italy and Sicily, was in fact Agrippa. There are also essays on the measuring on the world (by Anne Kolb), Strabo (by Francesco Prontera) and the Black Sea in the Roman period (by Eckart Olshausen).

Important also are the presentations by Gonzalo Cruz Andreotti on Roman Iberia (pp. 274–97), and, especially, that by Kai Brodersen about Solinus (pp. 298–310), the forgotten author of ancient geography, long dismissed as little more than a clone of Pliny the Elder. Brodersen gives Solinus the attention that he is due, and makes it clear that he was in fact an important contributor to scholarship, regardless of his dependence on Pliny (and Pomponius Mela). Germaine Aujac’s article on the *Geographical Guide* of Ptolemy (pp. 313–34) is a solid account of this author--another mathematician drawn to geography, with the attendant issues--as well as his enigmatic source, Marinus of Tyre.

The final section, “Geographical Rebounds,” is devoted to geographical scholarship in late antiquity, including an essay on the Peutinger Map (by Michael Rathmann, pp. 337–62), one on geography and religion (Emilio Galvagno, pp. 363–80), and, of the most interest, one on Eusebios and geography (Jan R. Stenger, pp. 381–98). One does not normally consider the Christian scholar as important in the history of geography, but his *Onomastikon*, even if catalogic, has important geographical data. An essay on Kosmas Indikopleustes would have been welcome in this section.

Any collection of essays is going to have strengths and weaknesses. Some of the articles would have been improved through editing by a native English speaker. The volume is attractively presented, with a thorough index (although the lack of subheadings can make it difficult to use) and a welcome list of passages cited, so often lacking in a work of this type. The bibliography is extensive, but many of the important recent works on the history of ancient geography seem to have been hardly digested by the various authors and are listed more for a sense of completeness. It is astonishing that the volume *Ancient Perspectives* (ed. Richard J.A. Talbert, Chicago 2012), perhaps the most important work on ancient mapping of the last decade, seems to have been unknown to any of the authors. Older editions of geographical authors rather than the most recent ones are often preferred: this is especially true in regard to Pytheas, Dikaiarchos, and Eratosthenes. If one is going to make use of an English translation of Strabo, the Loeb, in places over a century old, hardly seems the best choice, as some but not all of the authors realized.

There are a number of illustrations, yet there are some issues with quality and choice, since there is no excuse for using the Bunbury maps of 1879 or the Miller ones of 1887 unless one is actually critiquing their mapmaking. Given the recent work on the topic, surely one could have done better than a 1753 drawing of the Peutinger Map.

It is perhaps never fair to say any volume should have included material that obviously the editors chose not to, but it is astonishing, given the vast amount of anglophone scholarship in ancient geography, that they limited the contributors to continental European scholars. Nevertheless it should be stated that the volume has much of interest and is a welcome addition to contemporary geographical scholarship.

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