

Antiquity

Marco Beretta; Francesco Citti; Alessandro Iannucci (Editors). *Il culto di Epicuro: Testi, iconografia e paesaggio*. (Biblioteca di Nuncius: Studi e Testi, 71.) vi + 314 pp., figs., tables, index. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2014. €34 (paper).

As the three editors declare in their preface (pp. v–vi), *Il culto di Epicuro* presents a collection of twelve essays in Italian on the nature and intentions of the cult of Epicurus, which involved posthumous honorary celebrations in memory of both the founding philosopher of the Epicurean school and certain important later scholars. This cultic recognition represented a form of Epicurean propaganda through later antiquity.

The volume follows an interdisciplinary approach. The collected papers examine Epicurean cultic history through a range of methodologies and use different kinds of evidence. The materials involved are the philological, papyrological, and epigraphic evidence relating to the Epicurean cult in its historical, philosophical, and literary contexts, to which the majority of the essays are dedicated (pp. 1–150); the monumental and iconographic findings, old and new alike, which represented the *media* of the Epicurean cult and its public dissemination, especially the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, statues of Epicurus, and (controversially) some possible images of Lucretius (pp. 151–225); and the *Nachleben* of the Epicurean cult beyond antiquity (pp. 227–287), which is analyzed through two case studies: Giovanni Battista Pio’s commentary on Lucretius’s praise of Epicurus as a mortal god (*De rerum natura* 3.1–8) and the representation of Epicurean philosophy in two later operas.

The essays in Part I provide especially important updates to the conclusions reached by two fundamental earlier studies of Epicurean cult worship: Diskin Clay, “The Cults of Epicurus,” in *Paradosis and Survival: Three Chapters in the History of Epicurean Philosophy* (Michigan, 1998); and Bernard Frischer, *The Sculpted Word: Epicureanism and Philosophical Recruitment in Ancient Greece* (California, 1982), to which later additions have been made by the author in this volume (“Ripensando *The Sculpted Word*: Come ricostruire e interpretare la statua di Epicuro oggi” [pp. 177–192]).

Naturally, it is impossible to discuss fully the arguments of each individual essay in the limited space of this review. I therefore prefer to concentrate on the overall picture of Epicurus’s cult that the essays present and to evaluate its originality, stressing thereby a single underlying point of general importance within the many different individual perspectives.

The Epicureans did not engage in cultic worship of Epicurus, his immediate circle of friends and relatives, or his later successors (e.g., Zeno of Sidon, on whom see Gianluca Del Mastro’s contribution: “Filodemo e la lode di Zenone Sidonio” [pp. 89–109]) simply to spread the word of Epicureanism throughout Greece and Italy or to express honorific debts of thanks for the Epicureans’ teachings, which sought directly to deliver *aponia* (freedom from physical pain) and *ataraxia* (freedom from mental disturbance). The cult of Epicurus performed other functions in the Epicurean community.

First, the cult reinforced the confidence of Epicurus’s followers that Epicureanism represented the true and most accessible means to achieving happiness. By remembering the master Epicurus or his prominent early students, Epicureans perceived that many members of their school did become blessed and were stimulated to imitate them through practicing philosophy. The point is particularly well argued by Michael Erler (“La sacralizzazione di Socrate e di Epicuro” [pp. 1–13]), who also demonstrates the underlying Platonic origins of this program of imitation and shows how Epicurus changed it in ways relevant to his philosophy.

The cult is also important because, unlike other later forms of ceremonial worship that promised that happiness would be achieved in the future (e.g., certain ceremonial forms of Christianity), it ensured that human beings would feel happy in the here and now. Moreover, they would be able to remain happy throughout their lives, provided they assumed the right mental disposition for ethical conduct and indi-

vidual well-being (on which see Guido Milanese, “L’immagine di Epicuro, la totalità della vita, la cultura romana” [pp. 122–133]). Such conduct and well-being assimilates a human being, so far as is possible, to a god: for a god, as a permanently blessed living being, is exactly the kind of entity that an Epicurean aspired to emulate.

Finally, the cult of Epicurus provided, as Francesca Longo Auricchio rightly concludes (“Il culto di Epicuro: Testi e studi: Qualche aggiornamento” [pp. 62–64]), what is denied by the Epicurean doctrine of the mortal soul: individual immortality. Dead Epicureans who received cultic honors continued to exercise a benevolent influence on their friends in the Epicurean community, and in so doing they retained recognition and a kind of existence after death. Dying in Epicurus is therefore (paradoxically) a way of becoming immortal, while at the same time confirming through the cult the key doctrine that “death is nothing to us” (Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, §124). Death is the necessary termination of life, but it does not erase the friendships and benefits bestowed on the individual during his or her lifetime.

Enrico Piergiacomi

Enrico Piergiacomi obtained his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Trento, having defended a thesis on the theologies of the ancient atomists (Democritus, Epicurus, the Epicureans). His primary research fields include Presocratic thought and Hellenistic philosophy, with a special interest in the subdisciplines of theology, aesthetics, and ethics.

Héron d’Alexandrie. *Metrica: Introduction, texte critique, traduction française et notes de commentaire.* Edited by **Fabio Acerbi** and **Bernard Vitrac.** (Mathematica Graeca Antiqua, 4.) 712 pp., figs., tables, apps., bibl., index. Pisa/Rome: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2014. €220 (paper).

Hero of Alexandria was a Greek writer on mathematics, mechanics, and optics who poses some serious challenges for historians. At least twenty-one works have been attributed to him, but many have been roughly handled by history. While some, such as the *Pneumatica* and *Automata*, are preserved in the Greek, in numerous manuscripts, others exist in rather mutilated form; some are preserved only in Arabic or Latin translations; and still others are lost and their titles known only from ancient or medieval citations. And it is obvious that some of the works attributed to Hero are spurious. Even the century in which Hero lived is uncertain. Dates between the second century B.C.E. and the third century C.E. have been proposed. An influential proposal by Otto Neugebauer places Hero in the first century C.E., based on the circumstances of a lunar eclipse mentioned in the *Dioptra*. But it is far from clear that Hero observed this eclipse himself—or even that it corresponds to a real eclipse.

A characteristic of all Hero’s works is his concern for practical applications rather than new discoveries. The *Metrica* (under review here) is an elementary geometrical work devoted to mensuration. Book 1 concerns areas of plane figures such as triangles, rectangles, trapezoids, and regular polygons with as many as twelve sides, as well as circles and segments thereof, ellipses, and areas bounded in part by a parabola. Book 1 concludes with the areas of three-dimensional figures such as cylinders, cones, and spheres. Book 2 deals with the volumes of bodies such as cylinders, cones, spheres, and segments of spheres, as well as the five regular polyhedra. And Book 3 is concerned with the division of a plane figure or a solid into parts according to a stipulated ratio. Some of the discussion is basic and involves numerical examples rather than general proofs. But the operations on the figures involved in some of the problems, and the verbal description of the approach to an answer (in the form “If A is given then B is known, and consequently C is known . . .”), move the book beyond the very beginner’s level. For these parts of the discussion, Hero has drawn on Euclid’s *Data*. He also relies on Archimedes’ *Method* and *Measurement of a Circle* for some general results. Moreover, Hero does prove some interesting theorems, including a general rule for finding the area of a scalene triangle from the given sides without use of an altitude (or height). Equally