

BOOK REVIEW

Der Neue Poseidipp. Edited by BERND SEIDENSTICKER, ADRIAN STÄHLI, and ANTJE WESSELS. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2015. Pp. 444. Hardcover, €79.95. ISBN 978-3-534-24356-3.

Fifteen years after the first complete publication of P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309 (hereafter “The New Poseidippus”), Seidensticker, Stähli, and Wessels present a full-length commentary on the book of epigrams. The purpose of the new commentary is two-fold: first, to synthesize the prolific scholarship on the recently discovered poems, and, second, to present as far as possible texts readable by non-specialists with the contexts necessary for understanding and appreciation. To facilitate the timely accomplishment of these ends, the editors relied on a team of scholars, each assigned one of the ten divisions of the epigram book, with the exception of the long section *Epitymbia* (“Epitaphs”) which was divided among four scholars. A series of workshops sponsored by the Sonderforschungsbereichs 626 *Ästhetische Erfahrung im Zeichen der Entgrenzung der Künste* of the Freie Universität Berlin helped coordinate the work on the commentary, so that the scope and detail of the commentary are consistent across the sections and related discussions are appropriately cross-referenced. *Der Neue Poseidipp* is an impressive work of scholarship that will serve as a basic reference for those working on the epigram book and as a point of entry for non-specialists.

The editors’ introduction discusses briefly the few known facts of Poseidippus’ life and the textual history of his epigrams preserved outside of The New Poseidippus, but focuses on identifying overarching issues of the papyrus and its contexts that will be discussed in detail later, such as Poseidippus’ authorship and Ptolemaic context, and the arrangement of the book. Poseidippus’ relationship with Callimachus is also introduced here, both in that Poseidippus is named as one of Callimachus’ opponents in the Florentine Scholia on *Aetia* fr. 1, and that Callimachus provides the best parallel for understanding Poseidippus as a court poet of the Ptolemies. The editors take an agnostic stance on Poseidippus’ relationship to Callimachean poetics, given the lack of directly programmatic passages in the epigram book, but note that the poems engage typically Hellenistic concerns, such as philology and cultural history, the cultural programs of the

Ptolemaic court, and ecphrasis and judgment of the visual arts. The introduction also raises the issues of whether Poseidippus himself arranged the epigrams in the form we have and what principles of arrangement can be discerned, and, further, whether the epigrams are universally actual inscriptions, or whether some should be read as purely literary creations. The editors do not take a strong stance on these issues, and note that authors of individual chapters will present their own views there.

Chapters on individual sections of *The New Poseidippus* (*Lithika*, *Oionoskopika*, etc.) begin with an introduction that typically focuses on the literary context and qualities of the section, for example that the epigrams on stones (*Lithika*) represents a virtually unique extension by Poseidippus of ecphrases of works of art in epigram, or that the epigrams on those lost at sea (*Nauagika*) are organized on a principle of alternating between epigrams on cenotaphs and on tombs proper. Individual epigrams are presented with a brief description, the Greek text, a thorough critical apparatus, translation, line-by-line commentary, a suggested reconstruction (and translation), and discussion. The comments, often of necessity, tend to focus on matters of textual criticism, identifying textual difficulties and weighing the merits of various emendations and supplements. The suggested reconstructions are meant to present a readable text that provides a handle for non-specialists, completing the likely sense of the epigram, but whose supplements lack textual support or continue to be the subject of dispute. The discussions are varied, often focusing on the literary qualities of the epigram, such as imagery, internal structure, or place within the organization of the section. A wide range of other topics are introduced or developed here also, such as philology (e.g. use of Homeric language or dialectical forms), political context (especially relations to the Ptolemaic court), or social context (e.g. comparing the epigrams on cures (*Iamatika*) to their non-literary counterparts from Epidaurus and other sites).

Final matters include appendices with text and translation of “The Old Poseidippus”, i.e., the epigrams and fragments known before the discovery of the Milan Papyrus, and an essay on literary geography in Poseidippus, e.g., how the organization of the stones described in the *Lithika* by their provenience suggests a movement from Asia, to Greece, and finally to Egypt, reflecting a Ptolemaic projection of the route of imperial power. A list of abbreviations, bibliographies of editions and literature on *The New Poseidippus*, and biographies of the authors, but no index, conclude the volume.

Der Neue Poseidipp is a monumental work that should serve as the authoritative text and commentary for this generation. The scholarship is thorough and extensive, and coordination between the individual authors is exemplary, so that the scope, quality, and cross-referencing in the individual chapters is consistent throughout the commentary. The primary focus of the commentary is on textual criticism, as is to be expected, but ample attention is given to literary matters, especially Poseidippus' place in and development of the genre and the question of arrangement, and to historical context, especially Poseidippus' relations with the Ptolemaic court. The approach to the text tends to be (appropriately) conservative, as the authors focus on evaluating emendations and supplements already set forth, only occasionally offering their own suggestions, and make a clear distinction in only accepting those with solid textual support into their texts, but admitting others that reflect the likely sense if not necessarily the original phraseology into the suggested reconstructions.

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