

to Aensidemus, and the reason is that they did not recognize that the epistemological use of common reason has much more affinity with the Pyrrhonian philosophy.

The last paper deals with the philosophical school which did not have its representative among the Greek philosophers who visited Rome in 155 BC, the Epicureanism. V. Tsouna presents the figure of Philodemus, an Epicurean philosopher whose library and scrolls were saved by the ashes of the Mount Vesuvius. At the centre of her attention is Philodemus' ethics and moral psychology. The traditional view on the Epicurean philosophy is that it did not change during the existence of the school, but V. Tsouna shows the development of the Epicurean thought. In her essay, she places Philodemus in the frame of this development. Philodemus accepted Epicurus' thesis that the mind is able to limit the body in the field of morality, but he perceived also the existence of some reactions in the body which cannot and should not be moved away. What is also important in the field of morality is that emotions and beliefs fulfil the predominant role in their generation according to Philodemus. Their specific kinds are called "bites" (δηγμός) and "pangs" (νυγμός). The paper is closed by the analysis of Philodemus' method and its epistemological foundation.

The entire book should be assessed very highly. The views defended in it are well-supported by accurate readings of the texts as well as by sound arguments.

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Katharina Volk, *Manilius and his Intellectual Background*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, XIV + 314 pp., ISBN 978-0-19-926522-0.

Manilius is not an easy poet: laden with astrological material and written in often contorted phrases that strive to reconcile mathematical matters with specific demands of the hexameter, his *Astronomica* pose a veritable challenge to a layman embarking on interpretative investigation. By contrast, those versed in astrology are often baffled by Manilius' classification systems, his failure to account for the nature of planets, and many other "curious" features. And yet, the enterprise is not without its rewards, a fact attested in the rising number of modern inquiries into Manilius' poetics, or, for those particularly given to the study of astrology, in the scholarly output of Wolfgang Hübner alone¹.

An expert on Latin didactic poetry, Katharina Volk [= V.] produced a book that in virtue of its linguistic advantages and the relative rarity of the subjects is likely to become a standard reference work for any English-speaking scholar interested in the Roman poet or, for that matter, in the late Augustan culture. Hailed as "the first English-language monograph on Marcus Manilius", and praised as providing "a panorama of the cultural imagination of the Early Empire, a fascinating picture of the ways in which educated Greeks and Romans were accustomed to think and speak

¹ The most important is undoubtedly his *Manilius als Astrologe und Dichter*, ANRW II 32, 1 (1984), pp. 126–320, but one could also mention *Die Dodekatropos des Manilius (Manil. 2, 856–970)*, Stuttgart 1995 or *Die Eigenschaften der Tierkreiszeichen in der Antike: Ihre Darstellung und Verwendung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Manilius*, Wiesbaden 1982 (Sudhoffs Archiv, Beiheft 22).

about the cosmos and man's place in it"² it aims at portraying Manilius against the conceptual/intellectual background of his times, the possible fields of interest including poetics, astrology and philosophy. Hence, one seems entitled to expect an erudite, sweeping portrayal of intellectual life in late Augustan/early Tiberian Rome, and, given the peculiarities of the subject, vast references to the culture of the Greek and Eastern Mediterranean. A portrayal that would, almost necessarily, comprise an inquiry into "astrological" mentality, its possible biases, its conceptual framework – after all, Manilius' poem is to be appreciated on levels both purely aesthetic (poetry) and, at least in its broader outline, professional (astrology³). But whether the discussed work furnishes such a portrayal is quite another issue.

V.'s actual exposition follows an orderly arrangement, beginning with the chapter on intended aims and chosen methodology, followed by a study of Manilian vision of the world (thus, cosmology), and then with an inquiry in astrological matters investigated in the poem. The fourth chapter deals with actual history of astrology in Rome and discusses the date of the *Astronomica*, the fifth concentrates on poetics, and the sixth returns to the cosmological issue, this time attempting to uncover the possible sources of the poet. Brief conclusions, exhaustive indexes and useful (but hardly exhaustive) bibliography close the work.

It seems hardly surprising that V. is at her best when discussing Manilius against the literary culture of the era. Her argument for the all-Augustan date of the poem is lucid and persuasive, the support for suggested emendations in *Astr.* I 798–804 (pp. 141–144) sensible, the arguments in question well-weighted and manifesting commendable level of language sensibility. Still, I am somewhat disappointed with the discussion of ll. 547 f.: "sed cum autumnales coeperunt surgere Chelae/ felix aequato genitus pondere Librae"; what is meant in other cases discussed in Book Four is almost certainly *pars ascendentis* and everyday *anatole* of the sign. That Manilius' highly laudatory description alludes to Augustus' Ascendant and Sun sign is highly likely, yet, one has to note, the sudden turn to the discussion of *epanatole* (heliacal rising) effectively challenges the continuity and consistence of the ongoing exposition, possibly heralding a priority (at least temporary) of pro-Augustan praise over the actual subject matter (after all, an astrologer cannot confuse two vastly different astral phenomena). Yet, this aspect of the issue, while seemingly interesting from the point of view of a student of Manilian poetics, remains unmentioned.

Other questions related to poetics may be raised in connection with chapters 5.2–5.3. While the discussion of Manilius' approach to Callimachean and Latin literary tradition is certainly interesting (even if it necessarily repeats some of V.'s findings from her *The Poetics of Latin Didactic*, Oxford 2002), one may rightly wonder whether a mention of Greek astrological poets would not be in order. Certainly, the date of Dorotheus is slightly later, yet not so far removed as to wholly disable at least an attempt at comparison. Additionally, we know Dorotheus' was hardly the only astrological poem written in Greek (some fragments of a Homeric style poem attributed to Antiochus of Athens were in fact published in the *CCAG*⁴). Now, all that does not belie the greatness of Manilius' achievement, yet the failure to mention the very existence of Dorotheus' hexametric poem, a poem produced in all likelihood shortly after the emergence of the *Astronomica* is somewhat misleading: one may easily get the impression that Manilius is the only astrological poet of antiquity (the impression he would undoubtedly be happy to convey). Additionally, one is reminded that the serious treatment received by the Dorothean poem (quoted extensively by Hephaestio in his *Apotelesmatica*; translated into Pahlavi and then into Arabic) may be taken as proving that a poem could be treated as a reliable source of technical information. This latter, in turn, seems particularly

² Both quotations come from the official OUP description of the book (<http://www.us.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/ClassicalStudies/ClassicalLanguages/Latin/?view=usa&ci=9780199265220>).

³ This latter is of particular importance should we assume (as does V.) that the poem was actually employed in the composition of Maternus' *Mathesis* VIII.

⁴ *CCAG* I, pp. 108–113.

important as V. regards the *Astronomica* as “coffee-table book”, esthetically pleasing trinket to be admired at leisure. While I regard her assessment as to some degree justified, a mention of poems that were not only that would probably enrich the emerging picture.

A further bright point of the book is V.’s careful examination of possible philosophical/cosmological influences on Manilius’ world concept presented in Chapter Six. Certainly, the Stoic influences are detectable in Manilius’ concept of the world permeated and animated by the divine breath, while the concept of revelation may be influenced by the Hermetic writings (the presence of these latter confirmed by the position attributed to the figures of Nechepso and Petosiris in Manilian “history of astrology” in Book II). Laudable for its restraint and unhastiness, the discussion seems nevertheless hampered by an affliction that seems so characteristic of the book, namely the neglect of Greek astrological literature. In discussing Manilius’ concept of astrological determinism, V. may have benefited from references to Valens’ *opus* and his concept of *stratiotes heimarmenes*⁵, indeed, from Valens’ express quotations from Cleanthes (in Book VI 9) – still, the second century Antiochene remains completely absent from the discussion. Nevertheless, V.’s appreciation of Latin sources (particularly Cicero), her sensibility to the particular nature of philosophical eclecticism and its possible consequences contribute to the value of this chapter.

As manifest from the above remarks, the book is in many respects troubling: where the title promises a study of Manilius and his intellectual context, the latter part seems sadly missing from the work, at least if we take “context” as astrological one. Thus, one can well wonder at V.’s choice of astrological *comparanda*: of the *Fachliteratur*, only Claudius Ptolemy, Firmicus Maternus and antiquarian Censorinus (quoted once on the subject of the Great Year) are present in the purely astrological Chapter Two. While the presence of Maternus is easily explained by the express parallels between his *Mathesis* and our poem (indeed, there are reasons to suspect that the work was influenced either by the *Astronomica* itself or by a source common to both authors⁶), the choice of Ptolemy is never explained – and one needs to remember that there are profound indications of *Tetrabiblos*’ untypicality⁷. By contrast, no references are made to other, possibly even more important Greek sources, such as Paulus of Alexandria, an author considered to preserve the oldest tenets of Greek astrology⁸. Similarly, Valens’ *Anthologiae*, known in modern scholarship as a handbook of practicing astrologer, makes a single appearance as a source for the calculated length of the gestation period (p. 149), which seems quite surprising given the wealth of theoretical, practical, and conceptual material contained in the text (one could also mention the parallels concerning the revelatory nature of astrology that would be of particular value in the discussion⁹). The nearly total absence of the two works seems (at least to me) detrimental to the purpose of the book as this latter was defined in the opening chapter: namely, what results from V.’s investigations cannot but fail to portray Manilius against the astrological background. Additionally, a fact of possible importance

⁵ *Anthologiae* V 6, discussed at length in J. Komorowska, *Vettius Valens of Antioch: An Intellectual Monography*, Cracow 2004, pp. 294–332.

⁶ For the discussion of the subject, see Hübner, *Manilius...* (n. 2), pp. 139–144.

⁷ Such as, for example, the unique nature of his Zodiacal geography, made particularly manifest in G. de Callataÿ, *Οικουμένη ὑπουράνιος: réflexions sur l’origine et le sens de la géographie astrologique*, *Geographia Antiqua* VIII/IX (1999/2000), pp. 25–69.

⁸ Compare e.g. S. Denningmann, *Die astrologische Lehre der Doryphorie. Eine soziomorphe Metapher in der antiken Planetenastrologie*, München–Leipzig 2005, p. 66 (for the bibliography of the subject, cf. *ibid.*, n. 208).

⁹ In fact, I used Manilius as a comparandum when discussing Valens IV 11 in *Vettius Valens...* (n. 5), pp. 163 ff.

for the “astrological background” of Manilius, the exposition of Valens’ *Anthologiae* is far from the orderly arrangement of matters in Ptolemy’s *opus*¹⁰.

Possibly less damaging, though also noteworthy, is lack of references to Hephaestio, a late Greek astrologer whose work contains fairly extensive account of the decans doctrine (*Apotelesmatica* I 1)¹¹. The actual consequences of V.’s silence concerning the existence of *Carmen astrologicum* were mentioned above. As a consequence, the overall feeling on having read the book is that of disappointment and lingering regret. Major questions one could have formulated at the beginning remain unanswered: were Manilius’ intended readers versed in Greek literature? were they well versed in astrology? were they in position to appreciate the possible inconsistencies of the work, particularly as they relate to the predestination concept? Even more importantly, could Manilius himself be aware of these inconsistencies and, if he was, could he regard them as a constant of astrological theory? What motivated his actual choices? How do his theories relate to those of other astrologers (one could consider the example of mundane astrology)? What was his concept of man and culture (a point discussed briefly by Romano¹²)? What should one make of theories present in the *Astronomica* but absent from any other astrological work of antiquity¹³? Those are only some issues that one could raise with respect to Manilius’ milieu... Certainly, most of these and similar questions cannot reap definite answers, yet it is to some degree symptomatic that they are practically absent from the book.

The final words are a comment on the pricing and marketing policy of the Oxford University Press: I do understand both about the costs of producing a book that will not sell on the spot or make it to the *NYT* bestseller lists and about the need for aggressive marketing. Yet, having priced a book at \$125/£65.00 one could at the very least take the trouble to ensure its title and the catalogue description reflect the actual nature, focus and scholarly level of the work. In V.’s case, I am sorry to say, both are sadly off the mark.

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¹⁰ While I intend to discuss the function of this arrangement elsewhere, let me point out that it is highly likely that the organization of opening argument may be regarded illustrative of Ptolemy’s method throughout the *Apotelesmatica*.

¹¹ A reference would be particularly welcome on p. 100, as V. states: “in many of our classical sources they [i.e. decans] still carry Egyptian names, even though they are also typically assigned to the tutelage of individual planets”. The author never states what these sources are and neither does she refer the reader to a modern analysis of J.-H. Abry (*Les tablettes astrologiques de Grand (Vosges) et l’astrologie en Gaule romaine: actes de la Table-Ronde du 18 mars 1992 organisée au Centre d’Études Romaines et Gallo-Romaines de l’Université Lyon III*, édités par J.-H. Abry, textes rassemblés avec la collaboration d’A. Buisson, Lyon 1993).

¹² E. Romano, *Teoria del progresso ed età dell’oro in Manilio* (I, 66–112), RIFC CVII 1979, pp. 394–408.

¹³ For a short list of the more important peculiarities, see Hübner, *Manilius...* (n. 2), p. 144, n. 73.