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***Die griechische Biographie in hellenistischer Zeit:
Akten des internationalen Kongresses vom 26.–29. Juli
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When it comes to ancient biographies, the most common household name, even for nonclassicists, is certainly Plutarch. Biographical writings from the Hellenistic period seem to be a less popular object of study, not least because the textual situation is often quite problematic. The international congress on Greek biography in Hellenistic times, held at the University of Würzburg (26–29 July 2006), steps into this relative gap; the papers given at this congress are now collected in the volume under review.

The first main part is about the beginnings of biography in Greek literature (“Vorformen und Anfänge,” 3–78). Bernhard Zimmermann (“Anfänge der Autobiographie in der griechischen Literatur,” 3–9) traces the beginnings of autobiography back to certain passages in the *Odyssey*, which already highlight the psychological functions and dynamics of autobiographical storytelling. Michael Erler (“Biographische Elemente bei Platon und in hellenistischer Biographie,” 11–24) outlines a biographical approach to Plato’s dialogues that understands them as anecdotes from the life of Socrates, who is to be presented as *the* paradigmatic philosopher. Michael Reichel (“Xenophon als Biograph,” 25–43) points to the converging idealizing, if not apologetic, tendencies in Xenophon’s accounts of Socrates, Agesilaos, Cyrus, and the Greek generals of the *Anabasis*. William W. Fortenbaugh (“Biography and the Aristotelian Peripatos,” 45–78), in a comparatively

lengthy contribution that is in dialogue with A. Momigliano and A. Diehle, discusses biographical writing in the tradition of Aristotle—the so-called peripatetic biography. What is particularly remarkable in this contribution are the reflections on the philosophical anthropology that stands in the background of biographical writing: Should a biography detail the innate or acquired qualities of a person, and what precisely are these?

The second part consists of two rather general surveys over the field of biographical literature (“Themen und Arbeitsweisen,” 79–113). The contribution by Graziano Arrighetti (“Anekdote und Biographie: Μάλιστα τὸ μικρὸν φυλάττειν,” 79–100) follows the tendency of more recent research to “rehabilitate” the use of anecdotes in ancient biographies as a means of concisely illustrating a person’s character. Mary R. Lefkowitz (“Visits to Egypt in the Biographical Tradition,” 101–13) studies two instances where the origins of Greek philosophy (in the broadest sense) are traced back to Egypt: the account in Diogenes Laertius about Euripides and Plato visiting Egypt; and the report by Strabo about traces of Plato and Eudoxus in Egypt. Both passages reflect an admiration for, and a wish to associate with, the time-honored and most-respected, if only partly understood, Egyptian culture. A biblical scholar might be tempted to think of Matt 2:13–15, but Lefkowitz does not draw this connection.

The third part moves on from the general to the concrete (“Einzelne Biographien,” 115–255). Stefan Schorn presents a widely unknown author whose works are only preserved in fragments, Neanthes of Kyzikos (“‘Periegetische Biographie’—‘Historische Biographie’: Neanthes von Kyzikos (FgrHist 84) als Biograph,” 115–56). This detailed study discusses not only the identity and historical location of this author but also his writing about Plato, Pythagoras, and the Pythagoreans, as well as a number of other persons. Writing in the fourth century B.C.E., Neanthes does not follow the trend of “peripatetic” biography but works rather like a historian, collecting local traditions in the course of his travels and preserving the information provided by his sources. Therefore, Schorn proposes to classify Neanthes’ works as “periegetic” and “historical” biography. The contribution by Tiziano Dorandi (“Il Περὶ παλαιᾶς τρυφῆς attributo a Aristippo nella storia della biografia antica,” 157–72) is somewhat exceptional, since Dorandi presents an edition of eight fragments of this work, preserved in Diogenes Laertius, which are primarily about the sexual inclinations of rulers (frg. 1) and philosophers (frg. 2–8). However, since only these few fragments from the first and fourth book of this work are extant, it is hardly possible to say anything precise about the author and his work—apart from a tentative dating in the early Principate. Johannes Engels (“Philosophie in Reihen: Die Φιλοσόφων ἀναγραφὴ des Hippobotos,” 173–94) gives an overview of a “bio-doxographic” work from the late third or early second century B.C.E., the extant fragments of which are to be published in FgrHist 4.A.5. Gregor Staab (“Der Gewährsmann ‘Apollonios’ in den

neuplatonischen Pythagorasviten—Wundermann oder hellenistischer Literat?“ 195–217) suggests that the Apollonios cited by the biographies of Pythagoras by Porphyry and Iamblichus is not Apollonius of Tyana but Apollonius Molon from Rhodes, one of Cicero’s teachers. Francesca Longo Auricchio (“Gli studi sui testi biografici ercolanesi negli ultimi dieci anni,” 219–55) offers a survey of recent research in a very particular field. Although somewhat rambling, her contribution conveys to nonspecialist readers a vivid impression of ongoing work with a unique corpus of primary sources, ranging from the details of reconstructing lacunose passages in these papyri to the impact the texts from Herculaneum are making on the history of philosophy, particularly of the Epicurean school, in Hellenistic times. Remarkable, too, is the very rich bibliography (251–55).

The fourth part shifts the focus from the writers to the persons written about (“Biographische Traditionen über einzelne Personen,” 257–333). Klaus Döring (“Biographisches zur Person des Sokrates im Corpus Aristotelicum,” 257–67) gathers the references to Socrates’ family life from Aristotle’s works and tentatively contextualizes them in the framework of what Aristotle and his disciples knew and thought about melancholy as an inherited quality; Socrates’ family was the object of a case study. The contribution by Luc Brisson (“Aristoxenus: His Evidence on Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans. The Case of Philolaus,” 269–84) is somewhat unconventional in this volume, as Brisson approaches the testimonies about Philolaus being a Pythagorean with a critical historian’s mind. His historical result as to a Pythagorean who would have been a contemporary of Socrates is sobering, since the testimonies have little value as historical sources, yet he maintains the significance of these testimonies for the “intellectual figure of Philolaus” (283), who provides a connection between Platonism and the Pythagorean tradition. Michele Corradi (“L’origine della tradizione sul processo di Protagora,” 285–301) studies the motif of Protagoras’s lawsuit for his wages as a sophistic teacher against his student Euathlos and the intellectual endeavor of formulating and arguing for two opposing propositions; he tentatively traces it, via Aristotle and Plato, back to the Athenian comedy. Mauro Tulli (“Filosofia e commedia nella biografia di Aspasia,” 303–17) gathers the scattered pieces of information (in Plutarch’s *Life of Pericles*, in an entry in Harpokration’s Lexicon, and in a scholion to Plato’s *Menexenos*) about Pericles’ wife Aspasia and tries to trace them back to a Hellenistic work *Περὶ ἑταιρῶν*. Finally, Klaus Geus (“Mathematik und Biographie: Anmerkungen zu einer Vita des Archimedes,” 319–33), after identifying the mathematical guild as a biographical desert, follows the hints in the work of the mathematician Eutokios (sixth century C.E.) to a biography of Archimedes, presumably written by one Herakleios in the later Hellenistic period, which, among other things, advertised Archimedes’ approximate calculation of π .

The contributions gathered in the fifth part (“Beziehungen zu anderen Gattungen und Rezeption,” 335–442) widen the perspective—even beyond the Hellenistic period. The

very well documented contribution by Guido Schepens (“Zum Verhältnis von Biographie und Geschichtsschreibung in hellenistischer Zeit,” 335–61) challenges the—often quite vigorously defended—distinction between biography and historiography: biographical passages are an integral part of historiographical works, and biography as an account of (persons from) the past is, among others, a historiographical genre. In view of recent discussions on biography and historiography, biblical scholars will read it with profit. Irmgard Männlein-Robert (“Hellenistische Selbstepitaphien: Zwischen Autobiographie und Poetik,” 363–83) draws attention to the Hellenistic continuation of epitaph inscriptions that contain an outline of biographical information. Especially with regard to Meleagros, she shows how an author could playfully use these brief poems to style himself as a “classic.” Peter Scholz (“Autobiographien hellenistischer Herrscher und republikanischer *nobiles*—‘Ein Unterschied der Volksindividualität?’” 385–405) puts the relative preponderance of autobiographical writing by Roman politicians, as compared to Greeks, into perspective: The tradition of the Greek *polis* did not allow the individual citizen, even the aristocrat, to display his achievements, while the senatorial aristocracy in Rome had developed the institutional context—within the state and within the *gens*—for the autobiographic elaboration of one’s achievements. This consideration of the institutional framework of literary production seems to be a very promising avenue for research and helps to sharpen the respective profiles of Greek and Roman culture. Bernhard Heininger (“Das Paulusbild der *Apostelgeschichte* und die antike Biographie,” 407–29) contributes to the discussion about the genre of the Acts of the Apostles, which has gained some momentum in the last few decades. Heininger picks up C. H. Talbert’s suggestion to read Acts as a sequel to the Jesus biography that is the Gospel of Luke—in analogy to how Diogenes Laertius presents the lives and successions of famous philosophers. In particular, he interprets the literary portrait of Paul in terms of a philosopher’s biography, but he also points to the differences (Acts does not mention any of Paul’s writings, etc.). This contribution shows very well how New Testament exegesis can profit from interaction with up-to-date scholarship in classics. However, this is the only contribution from the biblical field. The reviewer, being a New Testament scholar, wonders whether it would not have been profitable to include one more contribution about the genre of the Gospels; the scope of Heininger’s contribution allows only for some brief remarks on that matter. Finally, Jørgen Mejer (“Biography and Doxography: Four Crucial Questions Raised by Diogenes Laertius,” 431–42) examines Diogenes Laertius’s *Life of Demokritos* (9.34–49) with regard to the reliability of factual information, the significance of anecdotes, and, most important, the origin of his doxographic mode of presentation. As for the latter, the doxographical part about Demokritos does not seem to be based on the known Hellenistic sources; this leads Mejer to conclude that the combination of a Demokritos’s life and opinions seems to be Diogenes’ genuine achievement.

The volume is completed by an *Index locorum* (443–73) and an *Index nominum* (475–92).

On the whole, the contributions to this volume are of outstanding quality; each of them comes with a separate bibliography, which facilitates further research on individual aspects. Readers who are at home in the field of biblical studies will find many parallels to their own work and will certainly draw inspiration from this state-of-the-art product of one of “our” sister disciplines. It is most warmly recommended.