

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Ptolemaios. *Handbuch der Geographie. Ergänzungsband* by Florian Mittenhuber and Alfred Stückelberger

Review by: Alexander Jones

Source: *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 132, No. 2 (SUMMER 2011), pp. 340-341

Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41237473>

Accessed: 05-11-2019 19:22 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

The Johns Hopkins University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The American Journal of Philology*

and there is a lot here to encourage further thought about reading and writing (in fact, literacy), culture and its renewal among generations, and performance and identity. Not to sound like an imperial *vir doctus*, I recommend we read and discuss this book.

ZSUZSANNA VÁRHELYI

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
e-mail: varhelyi@bu.edu

FLORIAN MITTENHUBER AND ALFRED STÜCKELBERGER, eds. *Ptolemaios. Handbuch der Geographie. Ergänzungsband*. Basel: Schwabe, 2009. 487 pp. 47 color ills., 94 black-and-white ills., 105 tables, 12 graphs. Cloth, €89.50

In producing its edition of Ptolemy's *Geography* (reviewed in *AJP* 129 [2008]:128–31), the Berne team led by Alfred Stückelberger and Gerd Grasshoff wisely chose not to undertake a comprehensive geographical and historical commentary; this is undoubtedly one of the reasons that they were able to complete in a remarkably short time the first scientifically usable text of the complete work to appear after a century and a half of unfinished or intentionally partial editions. The present supplement volume is a collection of studies by various individuals and collaborations (mostly from the editorial team) on topics relating to the *Geography*. They fall more or less under three broad headings: the history of the *Geography*'s transmission, the work's technical presuppositions and sources, and more general topics relating to Ptolemy.

Among the sections on the work's transmission, the "Übersicht" of the Greek manuscripts (Burri) and the "Stemma-Entwurf" (Stückelberger and Mittenhuber) are the most indispensable for users of the edition. As the titles imply, these sections do not provide detailed technical descriptions of the manuscripts—a separate section on the Istanbul codex (Fuchs and Oltrogge) shows what is nowadays possible—or an exhaustively documented demonstration of their textual relationships in the manner of, say, Heiberg's *prolegomena* to his Teubner editions of Ptolemy and other scientific authors. Such a study remains highly desirable, since even Paul Schnabel's posthumous *Text und Karten des Ptolemäus* (Leipzig, 1938), hitherto the only broad treatment of these questions, omits most of the evidence for its now somewhat superseded conclusions. Fortunately, the longer and well-illustrated section on the tradition of the Ptolemaic maps (Mittenhuber) is backed up by the same author's outstanding monograph, *Text- und Kartentradiation in der Geographie des Klaudios Ptolemaios* (Bern, 2009).

In terms of absolute contribution to scholarship, the most valuable section of the entire book is the edition of the κανὼν πόλεων ἐπισημῶν or "Table of Noteworthy Cities" (Stückelberger, Mittenhuber, and Koch). This list of about 370 cities with their locations in degrees of longitude and latitude is transmitted as part of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*. Ptolemy's introduction to the *Handy Tables* indicates

that he included such a list so that users could employ the astronomical tables with reference to any geographical location. The “Table of Noteworthy Cities” is derived from the *Geography* and closely related to the summaries associated with the regional maps in Book 8, but in its separate course of transmission, it was subject to textual interventions as well as accidental corruptions—a fragment of it preserved in a third-century papyrus, *P. Rylands* 3.522, shows that this process had begun within decades of Ptolemy’s lifetime. Hitherto, the only published texts of the “Table of Noteworthy Cities” usable for scholarly purposes were the transcriptions of two early manuscript versions in Ernst Honigmann’s *Die sieben Klimata und die poleis episemoi* (Heidelberg, 1929), and, regrettably, the forthcoming first critical edition of the *Handy Tables* by Anne Tihon and Raymond Mercier will apparently not include it. The Berne editors seek to reconstitute a text as close as possible to Ptolemy’s original. For the sake of study of the later tradition of the list and its relation to geographical lists in medieval geographical and astronomical sources, especially in Arabic, it would be highly desirable to have the contents of both principal and derivative manuscripts made available in spreadsheet form as well.

A substantial part of the volume addresses the relationship of the longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates of localities in the *Geography* to the information as it was presented to Ptolemy in his sources (Stückelberger and Mittenhuber), and to summary, region-by-region discussions of the “Weltbild” represented in Ptolemy’s maps (Mittenhuber, Geus, Winkler, Grünzweig, Humbach, Şengör). Of the excurses having a more general reference to Ptolemaic studies, two deserve particular mention as invitations to further research: Stückelberger’s section on the language and style of the *Geography* (the more valuable because Ptolemy’s style and vocabulary have hardly been investigated since Franz Boll’s *Studien über Claudius Ptolemäus* [Leipzig, 1894]), and Fuchs’ essay on the iconography of Ptolemy’s portrait, though Fuchs surprisingly makes no mention of the Getty Museum’s remarkable silver plate representing Ptolemy in colloquy with Hermes.

ALEXANDER JONES

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD,
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
e-mail: alexander.jones@nyu.edu