

con is likely to be misled. F-G makes his own comment on Jerome in his forward, 'Jerome's present work now translated represents his thoughts on Eusebius' work rather than a precise translation', into a self-fulfilling prophecy. F-G also seems unaware of other changes in fourth-century Latin: the term *castellum* is translated by him as fortress, castle or fort. This may be reasonable where Eusebius has *phourion*, but not where he has *kome*. Mayerson has pointed out that by the fourth century *castellum* often simply means a village, no longer necessarily a fortified one.⁷ Thus as well as being inconsistent these translations are misleading. The Latin term *via publica* was a technical term, referring to an official Roman public highway with milestones. Unfortunately F-G only sometimes translates this as public highway, and at others merely as highway, thus misleading his reader.

There are also omissions (*On* 175,25-26), and additions to the text (e.g. *On* 9,6-7) where F-G adds the description of 'city' to the fort (*castellum*) called Thamara, where Jerome has nothing (Eusebius calls Thamara a *kome*.)

More examples could be given of F-G's lack of consistency in translation, but one further mistranslation (showing a surprising lack of familiarity with the biblical text) should be mentioned. Chasbi (*On* 172,6 = 173,9) is noted by both Eusebius and Jerome as the site where Tamar bore her sons to Judah, referring to the well-known biblical story (Gen 38:5) where Judah is seduced by his daughter-in-law Tamar dressed as a prostitute. F-G's translation of Eusebius is correct: 'here children were born to Judah'. However Jerome, as is his wont, adds some extra information to Eusebius, writing *ubi geminos Iudae filios Thamar edidit* — 'where Tamar brought forth twin sons to Judah'. F-G translates this as 'where a son called Tamar was born to Judah'.

T finishes with an interesting excursus and discussion of what she identifies as Eusebius' exact use of prepositions showing the location of sites. It is a pity her collaborators have not been more exact in their use of the material. *Caveat lector!*

Susan Weingarten

Tel Aviv University

Matthew W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001 (paperback 2003). 392 pp. ISBN 0 415 24982 1.

The study of magic and magicians in the Greco-Roman world is a popular subject nowadays, with many scholars delving into the enticing mixture of sorcery, sex and popular religion which emerges from the ancient descriptions of magic by writers who often viewed it unfavorably and from the artifacts and texts produced by its actual practitioners in Antiquity. Such materials enable contemporary Classicists and ancient historians to put to good use all the questions, perspectives and comparanda provided by such disciplines as anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, cultural studies and gender studies, and to turn the study of ancient magic into a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary affair. Conscious of this growing trend, Dickie deliberately turns his back on all the buzz and returns to the tried and true methods of Classical Studies, namely the meticulous philological analysis of the Greek and Latin texts of Antiquity and the construction of the historical picture that emerges from this analysis. As his specific topic he chooses the identity and social location of the practitioners of magic in the Greco-Roman world. True to his philological-historical method, he orders his enquiry chronologically, beginning in the fifth century BCE and reaching up to the seventh century CE (though he himself prefers the older labels, BC and

⁷ P. Mayerson, 'The Saracens and the *limes*', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 262 (1986) 45 n. 4 = id., *Monks, Martyrs, Soldiers and Saracens* (NY/Jerusalem 1994) 281 n. 4.

AD, which have served Classicists so well in the past). Within this diachronic framework, an attempt is made at geographical differentiation (Athens vs. the rest of Greece, the city of Rome vs. the rest of her empire), and at differentiation according to gender (male vs. female practitioners).

The book's structure is therefore quite straightforward. The first chapter deals with the development of the Greek concept of magic in the fifth century BCE. Convinced that there is no sense in studying Greek magic from the time prior to the emergence of that concept within Greek culture, Dickie brushes aside the Homeric poems and Hesiod, and begins his analysis with Heraclitus and Aeschylus. His conclusion is that by the late fifth century BCE the Greeks had developed a cluster of terms — *goêteia*, *pharmakeia*, *mageia*, etc. — which were more or less synonymous, and quite akin to the modern conception of 'magic'. The next three chapters deal with sorcerers in the fifth and fourth centuries, with sorceresses in Athens at the same time, and with sorcerers and sorceresses in the Hellenistic period. Throughout, Dickie sees his evidence clearly pointing to both male and female magic-workers and falling into several distinct types — mendicant beggars-cum-magicians, wandering holy men and women, Oriental priests, courtesans and their handlers, and an assortment of poor old women with a penchant for strong drink. In the Hellenistic period, one more type of magician emerges, that of the (male) scholar-intellectual in search of esoteric knowledge, such as Bolus of Mendes or the authors of several compendia of occult lore fathered upon Pythagoras or Democritus. Throughout, Dickie also shows that while various types of magic-workers sometimes were persecuted, or at least prosecuted, they generally had little to fear from the law, or from society at large; sometimes they even joined the entourage of the rich and the powerful, providing services and earning protection, fame and even material prosperity.

Moving to the Roman period, Dickie devotes the fifth chapter to the Roman adoption of the Greek concept of *mageia* / *magia* and of many Greek magical practices. Chapter 6 is devoted to an analysis of the status of magicians in Roman law and society, and their exposure to legal prosecution (especially under the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficiis* of 81 BCE), expulsion and mob violence. Dickie also discusses the regulations in some pagan temples, prohibiting the entry of practitioners of magic into the sacred precincts, as an example of some strictures within pagan society at large upon those who practiced magic. The next chapter turns to the actual sorcerers and sorceresses of pagan Rome, and demonstrates their abundance in every corner of the city and on every level of society. He moves from the humblest diviners and conjurers to the 'house magicians' of the rich and famous, from the brothels and the crowded neighborhoods populated mostly by foreigners to the forum and the imperial court, and from the drunken old ladies with their secret lore to the study-rooms of learned intellectuals in search of occult wisdom. The eighth chapter turns from Rome to her provinces, and to holy men, philosopher-magicians, physician-magicians and Gnostics, all united by their adoption of magical practices and their use of much Oriental and pseudo-Oriental lore. Such figures as Apollonius of Tyana, Apion the Egyptian grammarian, Thessalus the herbalist, Alexander of Abonuteichos and many others provide telling examples of the place of magic in the lives of philosophers, scientists, intellectuals and religious entrepreneurs, and of its impact upon their location within Roman provincial society, from its humblest rungs to the entourages of Roman governors.

With the ninth chapter we move to the Christian Empire, and to the legal position of magicians in the post-Constantinian world. Now there are more laws intended to curb magical activities, and it is often hard to tell whether their motivation was Christian anti-paganism or imperial fear of sedition and civil unrest. But in spite of some hair-raising stories told by Ammianus Marcellinus of the persecution of even the most innocent dabblers in magic, there is no evidence even in this period of an all-out state war on magic and its practitioners. The Church, on the other hand, took a tougher view, and tried to bar from its services all practitioners of magic; sometimes, as Dickie shows, it even turned to the civil authorities for help in persecuting and punishing magicians. The tenth and final chapter looks at the actual magicians in the Early

Byzantine period, and finds some of the magicians coming from the ranks of the Church itself, including even some Bishops; but the drunken old sorceress is still around, as are the Oriental magicians (with Jews now becoming more prominent, at least in the Christian sources), and the practitioners who hover around the circuses and the theaters and cater to the competitors and their fans. Learned magicians are still around, as are the many writers and producers of all the amulets unearthed by archeologists and other excavators, amulets whose use was often vehemently condemned by the Church Fathers.

Like all 'tell all you know' studies — to borrow a phrase from Moses Finley's famous debunking of this type of antiquarian scholarship — Dickie's tedious survey of the evidence pertaining to male and female magicians in Greek and Latin sources is not without its value. On the one hand, he provides a reliable and comprehensive review of all the well-known sources and adds a few sources that have gone mostly unnoticed by previous scholars (especially those that lie hidden in the thick tomes of patristic literature). On the other hand, it serves as a welcome corrective to some of the excesses of recent scholarship and its trendy agendas, and especially the claim that the 'woman-as-magician' stereotype of Classical and Early Christian literature is just a figment of the male writers' imagination. As Dickie repeatedly and rightly stresses, there is ample evidence, in many different types of sources, that female magicians, just like male ones, were a common feature of Greek and Roman societies from Athens of the fifth century BCE all the way to the Muslim conquest.

Having said that, one cannot help noting that the book suffers from all the drawbacks exposed in Finley's famous critique of the ways by which some Classicists and ancient historians used to write history. The exclusivity granted to Greek and Latin sources means that important bodies of evidence which happened to be written in other languages and scripts — like Demotic, Coptic, Aramaic and Hebrew — are left entirely out of the picture, even when they are begging to tell us what they know about magic and magicians in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Early Byzantine periods, and even when they are available in reliable modern translations. The 'back to the sources' approach also spells the self-conscious omission of much of the previous scholarship on the topics and persons covered in this book — including the works of Cumont, Wellmann, Morton Smith and many others — even when Dickie's earlier studies make it clear that he has read these scholars. And the deliberate shunning of any theoretical or comparative perspective from which to analyze the sources means that what could be teased out of the Greek and Latin sources often is not, and what is deduced from them is often quite meaningless, precisely because it ends up being more of the same. Once he became 'conscious of not having been able to isolate particularly marked regional and chronological variations in the forms in which magic-workers came' (p. 5), Dickie was on the right track. The next step should have been to abridge the endless analysis of raw materials into a much shorter survey, and move on to more interesting questions, such as why it is that sources spread over a millennium and more repeatedly point to the same types of practitioners, which sources are likely to be biased or misleading and in what ways, what other sources can shed light on the identity of magicians in Antiquity, or how the picture that emerges from all our sources differs from or resembles pictures that emerge from other cultures and periods. These and many other questions could have been raised here, but unfortunately were not. The result is a book which sometimes reads like a German dissertation of a full century ago, except that it is written in English, does not cite the sources in their original languages (which is, however, not the author's own choice, but a concession to his readers and publisher), and is five times longer.