

Revisiting the Miletus Astronomical Inscriptions

Greek lapidary inscriptions relating to astronomy are rare other than the brief texts inscribed on some sundials. The corpus of non-sundial astronomical inscriptions on stone is dominated by seven fragments found in the course of the German excavations at Miletus between 1899 and the middle of the 20th century. Most of them were first published by Diels & Rehm (1904) and Rehm (1904), with partial reeditions by Lehoux (2005), Jones (2016), Bevan, Jones, & Lehoux (2019), and Lehoux (2020). The most recent and ongoing work, which takes account of rediscovered archival photographs and squeezes, new photography, and Reflectance Transformation Imaging, establishes that the fragments can be assigned to three distinct second-century-BCE inscriptions: two *parapegmata* (predictions of annually recurring stellar and solar phenomena and weather) and a text on cycles for regulating lunisolar calendars. The present paper addresses two questions: how much can, and should, we reconstruct of these texts from the surviving fragments, and what was the cultural context motivating the erection of such inscriptions?

Bibliography

- Bevan, George, Alexander Jones, and Daryn Lehoux. 2019. "The Miletus Parapegma and the Keskinos Astronomical Inscription: New Evidence From Reflectance Transformation Imaging." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 212, 137–146.
- Diels, Hermann, and Albert Rehm. 1904. "Parapegmenfragmente aus Milet." *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich-Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Kl. 23, 92–111.

- Jones, Alexander. 2016. "The Miletos Inscription on Calendrical Cycles: IMilet inv. 84 + inv. 1604." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 198, 113–127.
- Lehoux, Daryn. 2005. "The Parapegma Fragments from Miletus." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 152, 125–140.
- Lehoux, Daryn. 2020. "Image, Text, and Pattern: Reconstructing Parapegmata." In Alexander Jones and Christián Carman, eds., *Instruments – Observations – Theories: Studies in the History of Astronomy in Honor of James Evans*. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3928498. 109–131. Paper DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3975725.
- Rehm, Albert. 1904. "Weiteres zu den Milesischen Parapegmen." *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich-Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Kl. 23, 752–759.