

Preface

The treatise *Heron mechanicus* written by the Swiss mathematician Conrad Dasypodius and published 1580 in Strasbourg, is an important testimony of the revival of Greek and Roman Antiquity in the Renaissance period. As a humanist Dasypodius looked for ancient writers who could inspire and guide him when in 1571 he was commissioned to draw up a plan for the monumental clock in Strasbourg Cathedral. He established direct contacts to Federico Commandino and Petrus Ramus, and the Imperial Librarian Hugo Blotius played a decisive role in the acquisition of books and manuscripts in Italy. Thus Dasypodius could rely on a fine collection of manuscripts, and his reception of Vitruvius, Pappus, Heron, and Proclus is clearly perceptible. Apart from a partial German translation in Jacob Leupold's *Theatrum machinarum oder: Schau-Platz der Heb-Zeuge* (Leipzig 1725) no edition of the text has appeared since 1580. Thanks to the generosity and helpful assistance of Professor Menso Folkerts it has been possible to edit a reprint of the original with English translation. The reprint has been made from an original copy of this scarce work in the collection of Hans Schimank (1888-1979) preserved at the Institute for the History of Science at Hamburg University, and I wish to thank Professor em. Karin Reich for her consent for reprinting given years ago. The copy once belonged to the Municipal Library in Lübeck, but already about 1900 the book was not listed in the library catalogues.

Professor John D. North (Oxford) kindly provided me with a working copy of an English translation made by Bernard Aratowsky (1922-1986), who had studied classics at New York University. Aratowsky received his B.A. in 1944 and M.A. a year later. In 1947 he completed his doctoral dissertation in Archaeology and Classics at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. After having been Instructor at New York University and Stanford University he was appointed in 1950 first as Assistant Professor at the University of Florida (Gainesville) and four years later as Associate Professor for Classics and History, a post which Aratowsky held until 1966, when he took up a professorship at the State University of New York at New Paltz. There he was a member of the History Department and the Jewish Study Department and taught *inter alia* Latin, Greek and Roman Mythology, the History of Ancient Greece, Egypt and Israel.

Aratowsky only translated the main text, which has been revised cautiously. He omitted the epistle dedicatory, the list of eclipse data from 1573 to 1605 and the two poems by Paulus Melissus at the end of the book. The reprint at hand is complete, however. A general introduction and annotations have been added.

I am deeply grateful for the consent (and long-suffering patience!) of Bernard Aratowsky's widow Maud for publishing the work of her beloved husband.

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