brevity, not to Philoponus' attitude to the tradition. A minor point: the crucial link between Iamblichus and Simplicius is missing from the diagram on p. 59; in p. 57 n. 72 read 'Luna S. 127–146'.

By way of conclusion, I should note that this book displays impressive scholarship in the disciplines of the history of literary and biblical exegesis, as well as the history of philosophy. Even if the connection between 'spätantikes Sprachdenken' and 'christliche Exegese' may be more tenuous than F. believes, he has certainly shown himself to be as competent an exegete as Philoponus could have wished for.

Catholic University of Nijmegen F. A. J. DE HAAS

SIGNS & PORTENTS

M. Franz: *Von Gorgias bis Lukrez. Antike Ästhetik und Poetik als vergleichende Zeichentheorie* (LiteraturForschung). Pp. xvi + 680, ills. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999. Cased. ISBN: 3-05-00327-8.

Michael Franz's book is the first in a trilogy on comparative semiotics. The other two are concerned with the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

Giving the first general account of ancient approaches to comparative semiotics and aesthetics, F. deals with all the arts relevant to forming Greek aesthetics, in both literature and art history, from the Presocratics to the Stoa, namely poetry, sculpture, painting, and music. F.'s intended audiences of classicists and semioticians will both encounter difficulties. For non-classicists he presupposes too much knowledge of his discussed authors. Classicists curious about ancient approaches to semiotics will find the book difficult, because the lack of an *index rerum*, of definitions of technical terms, of cross-references between chapters, and of a summarizing conclusion presupposes linear reading of the 680 pages.

F. rightly stresses the necessity for cultural semiotics, which combines semantics of aestheticism, and literary and art theory in an interdisciplinary approach. Accordingly, he provides exemplary analyses of a few works of art with respect to their semiotic value (e.g. the Terme Boxer, pp. 545–79), but mainly concentrates on philosophers' approaches to poetics. In Chapter I, F. introduces his topic by showing the uses of different signs in the disciplines he is dealing with. The Presocratics introduced the *tekmeria*-method, using the visible (evident) as a sign to indicate the invisible (non-evident). Then F. links this philosophy with the political, judicial, and economic systems of Anaximander's times, and finds functional analogues in similar thought-patterns. Anaximander, F. argues, transfers his observations of the contemporary judiciary system into his philosophy, which employs exactly this ability to abstract from empirical observation and construct paradigms.

F. continues to find similar procedures in contemporary arts, e.g. in medicine (diagnosis from the observation of the body's ingestion and excretions), historiography (Thucydides uses medical terms and methods to describe the pathology of war), and legal and rhetorical distinctions between *semeia* and *tekmeria.* These textual analyses are long and unwieldy; much space is used to summarize the texts F. is dealing with or to discuss topics irrelevant to their use of semiotics.

An interesting approach is the comparison between two disparate systems of art or culture and the finding of structural similarities between them, e.g. between sculptures and the political system, with the sculptures actually working as signs for the latter (e.g.

© Classical Association, 2001

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.2.302 Published online by Cambridge University Press

pp. 78ff. the 'closed' appearance of Polyclitus' sculpture represents the closed system of the *polis*); the aesthetic interpretation of art can be transferred to the analysis of other systems. All systems of art F. treats are interpretable with the same semiotic method.

Theoretical analysis of signs and aesthetics begins, as F. argues on pp. 117–67, with Gorgias, whose concentration on epideictic speeches shows a preference for aesthetic enjoyment over the pragmatism of symbouleutic or legal speeches. In *Helena* he is the first to reflect extensively on poetry's effect on the audience's emotions.

Next to being the first 'aesthetic semiotician', he is also the first theorist of fictionality, since he states that something that is conceivable is not necessarily real (DK B 3, 80; pp. 128ff.). Language in its referential function, furthermore, portrays perceptible things in a non-perceptible way, via phonemic or graphemic symbols. This, as F. convincingly shows, is similar to arguments found again among modern reception aestheticists, namely Charles Peirce's definition of the symbol (p. 129; Peirce's terminology was influenced by Philodemus, p. 301). Gorgias knows that there may be a discrepancy between the author's intentions and the audience's interpretation of them.

Plato's approach to aesthetics (pp. 183–227) is different; his 'organon'-model of language (*Cratylus*) is, like his concept of ideas, based on 'indices' (in Peirce's sense: signs which are only associated with their referents, and as evident signs indicate something non-evident which can only be inferred from them). Existing things on earth imitate the ideas (mimesis) and act as their 'indices'. Poetry, since it is essentially mimesis, functions as an 'icon' (which resembles its referent closely), even when it portrays fictitious circumstances. Thus, for Plato, mimesis in poetics is negatively charged since it is twice removed from the ideas—it only imitates things (the world) which themselves imitate ideas.

Aristotle's semiotic model is more complicated (pp. 229–63), since he includes the cognitive aspect; for example, linguistic utterances are symbols for what happens in the speaker's soul (*Int.* 1.16). Fictitious texts (e.g. tragedy) are, contrary to Plato, admissible as 'truly' expressing what is possible and conceivable as long as it is structurally coherent (p. 241). Beyond the fictional level of the work of art there may, however, be a non-fictional, transcendent level of some truth. Thus mimesis may be an aid to cognition, since poetry deals with universals and is an aid to seeing the underlying *Gestalt* of truth.

In the Stoa's aesthetics (pp. 339–411), arts and poetry are of course *adiaphora*; *aisthesis* can, however, gain a higher position through Stoic axiology, transforming aesthetic predicates like 'ugly/beautiful' into predicates of moral values. Philodemus the Epicurean gives aesthetics no ethical function: philosophical *aisthesis* is not normative for art (p. 506), and poetry does not have to have a *skopos* except following its own inherent laws.

The Epicurean Lucretius, however, goes beyond this approach, turning his poem into an iconic representation of the world. In his aesthetic concept, *eidola*/*simulacra* are objectively true 'signs', even if they are non-evident signs (*corpora caeca*). Misinterpretations through the human mind or through *simulacra* forming *sua sponte* may, however, arise (e.g. centaurs as improbable but conceivable combinations of very subtle thought-*eidola*).

F.'s semiotic and reception-aesthetic analysis is more interesting and well-substantiated than his philological analysis. He has read an impressive amount of literature and is sometimes too keen to prove it. More focused on its actual topic, provided with an index and a summarizing conclusion, and stripped of some mistakes,

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.2.302 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this book would give an even more useful and rewarding discussion of an obviously worthwhile theoretical approach.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford REGINE MAY

PERCEPTION

T. SCHIRREN: *Aisthesis vor Platon. Eine semantisch-systematische Untersuchung zum Problem der Wahrnehmung*. Pp. xxvi + 286. Stuttgart and Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1998. Cased. ISBN: 3-519-107666-7.

One of the challenges of studying Presocratic philosophy is the avoidance of terminological and conceptual anachronism. S.'s study tries to show that the distinction between αἴσθησις as mere sensory awareness, on the one hand, and thought or knowledge, on the other, is generally not represented in preplatonic writing. His argument is in two parts. The first is a word study of αἰσθάνεσθαι and cognates. How were verbs of perception used in relation to works of thinking and knowing (e.g. μανθάνειν, πυνθάνεσθαι, γιγνώσκειν) before the Platonic division between the physical and the intelligible world? The approach here is roughly structuralist: meanings of αἰσθάνεσθαι are identified by surveying patterns of contrast with other cognitive verbs. Thucydides provides the main evidence, though the orators, Herodotus, and the Hippocratic writings are also separately analysed. The general conclusion for Thucydides (p. 61) is that αἰσθάνεσθαι indicates an alert awareness and cognition of what is real. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the suddenness of the events 'perceived'. The conclusion is generally supported by an analysis of the orators. In the Hippocratic corpus αἴσθησις occurs as a technical term for 'physical affection', and as thinking itself is seen as a function of physical affections, we again see the absence of the Platonic contrast between perception and thought. Though S. allots one section to the relationships between ὁρᾶν, ἀκούειν, and αἰσθάνεσθαι in Thucydides, one aspect that deserves more prominence is the relationship between αἰσθάνεσθαι and verbs of specific sense modalities. One occasion when this consideration would be relevant is when S. argues (p. 48) that the fact that αἰσθάνεσθαι is never used in the imperative indicates that it refers to a passive receptiveness which perhaps cannot be controlled. But the imperative may be missing not because αἰσθάνεσθαι indicates a passive receptive disposition but because it is too general a term to be appropriately used in the imperative. If you want somebody to perceive, you tell him to look, hear, or smell. The scope of S.'s word study is perhaps too limited here to be reliable as a guide to general views about perception.

In the second part S. brings his thesis to bear on the Presocratic philosophers, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Alcmaeon, Parmenides, Empedocles, and finally the Sophists. In view of the scarcity of occurrences of αἰσθάνεσθαι in the fragments, S. sensibly abandons the lexical approach. Instead, he analyses the material in relation to the overarching notion of 'sensibility' (*Sinnlichkeit*), which includes not just sense-perception proper but also (erotic) sensuality. Through this notion the Presocratics are placed in relation to the 'world experience' (*Weltgefühl*) characteristic of lyric poetry, according to which the self is in the grip of the powers of sensuality. For example, S. argues that Parmenides criticizes the lyric world experience by showing its implication in what is not. Weaknesses show up, however, when S. seeks to avoid the view that the Parmenidean critique of the senses anticipates the Platonic. In what is surely an exaggeration, S. says (p. 202) that it has been generally accepted since K. Reinhardt

© Classical Association, 2001

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/51.2.302 Published online by Cambridge University Press