MENANDER (A) RHETOR

M. HEATH: *Menander. A Rhetor in Context*. Pp. xviii + 374. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Cased, £65. ISBN: 0-19-925920-8.

This is a significant book for anyone interested in the Second Sophistic or the rhetorical culture of late antiquity in general. Heath divides his nine chapters into three parts. Part I ('Continuity and Innovation') addresses the history of rhetoric in the second ('Transformation') and third ('Fruition') centuries. Here H. explains how Hermogenean issue-theory (*stasis*) influenced the course of late antique rhetoric by offering an exposition of the theory itself and its origins and an attempt to trace its fate in the work of third-century A.D. rhetoricians and commentators, both known and (largely) unknown, with a good deal of useful background information included as well. Lesser lights, such as Nicagoras and Maior, get what is surely their most extensive treatment in English heretofore, and here also H. persuasively (re)states an attractive case for keeping Longinus and his *peri hupsous* late. The organization in this section is complicated, as evidenced by a good deal of cross-referencing, and there's some repetition of information within the section and elsewhere in the book. A significant portion of the book comes from earlier publications, particularly in this section, but there is also some admirable self-correction, and it's very handy to have H.'s work on these problems all in one place.

Those new to issue-theory may find this section hard going, despite some attempt to accommodate, and may find H.'s own voice lost in the exposition, but H. gamely includes an ancient reference to issue-theory as *phluaria* (p. 23), and in general offers frequent and clear signposts to his reader. What is sometimes also missed, more importantly, is some broader treatment of the phenomena at hand. There is, for instance, a subchapter on 'Technical Commentary' (3.8), yet insufficient reference is made to a more widespread culture of commentary, and none, for that matter, to more theoretical approaches to these problems, such as can be found in the 1999 volume *Commentaries—Kommentare* edited by Glenn Most (Göttingen), or Roy Gibson and Christina Kraus's *Classical Commentary* (Leiden, 2002) (both reviewed in *CR* 54 [2004], 5–12 by Michael Reeve). But the material here is well worth the slow read: beyond getting something of a selective field guide to Walz's *Rhetores Graeci* here one finds a wealth of interesting detail, for instance: 'hairy-heart syndrome' could have caused Hermogenes' early disappearance from sophistic performance (p. 41). At the end of this part H. expands his enquiry and addresses interesting Christian connections and explicitly begins his defence of the liveliness of the third-century rhetorical scene, a topic he resumes more extensively in Part III.

In Part II ('Menander of Laodicea') we bid farewell to the 'Menander Rhetor' that so profoundly influenced Anglophone interpretations of ancient poetry via the pole position of his epideictic treatises in Francis Cairns' *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1971). This Menander then became practically a household name by his inclusion in Russell and Winterbottom's *Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford, 1972), finally getting his own edition in Russell and Wilson's *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford, 1981). In H. he emerges not as the man who changed the world but chiefly as author of a now lost commentary on Demosthenes: here he becomes Menander 'The Divider' (*diairetes* and *epimerisdon*).

In this densest section of the book all known fragments and testimonia pertaining to Menander are collected, getting F1 treatment, all printed in Greek and translated into English. (Of these twenty-three fragments about fifteen are actual quotation of

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni259 Published online by Cambridge University Press

lost texts.) Again the specialized reading is worth the effort: Menander's commentary was hugely influential and surprisingly he is possibly not known as author of the well-known treatises on epideictic until the eleventh century: H. casts doubt on a fifth-century papyrus that has normally been taken as a reference to Menander as author of one of the treatises. H. urges us to exercise *epoche*, though he does seem to accept Treatise II as Menander's because 'it divides epideictic speeches in the same sense that Menander divides Demosthenes' (p. 128).

The toughest going in all the book are the eighty pages on 'The Demosthenes Scholia' (Chapter 5) and what H. finds reconstructable therein as 'Menander's Commentary' (Chapter 6). It is easy to get lost here, but H. keeps his eye on what is particularly Menandrian in all of this ('Menander specialized in subtle, erudite, and sophisticated application of current rhetorical theory to the Demosthenic text', p. 212) and helpful summaries are placed along the way. Specialists will find his views on Dilts's edition of the Demosthenes scholia and essentially all previous work on these scholia to be of particular importance.

Part III ('Classroom and Career') starts out by connecting the Demosthenes commentary with contemporary teaching techniques. It is the most readable part of the book and possibly the most significant, for here (though anticipated in Part I) H. argues for two important theses: (1) that, contrary to widespread belief, the rhetorical flourishing of the second century suffered no real loss in the third century (and onwards); and (2) that contrary to widespread belief rhetorical practice (and therefore theory) were of great importance to real life in Greece under Rome. H. illustrates these theses with interesting vignettes and learned excurses based on information from obvious texts such as Libanius, but also from deep reading in (*inter alios*) *Rhetores Graeci*: Chapter 8, 'Technography', features a particularly illuminating discussion on the contexts and methods of writing commentaries with the pressures of impatient slaves or (dis)advantages of shorthand.

H.'s devaluation of epideictic in the final chapter ('The Relevance of Rhetoric') is important and it will secure this book a significant place in the ongoing debate over the definition of the Second Sophistic. H. persuasively grounds his call for reevaluation in a vigorous defence of the importance of local politics and advocacy (9.3–4), and very effectively defends the practice of declamation, so frequently dismissed as puerile and escapist. The book concludes with a fairly compelling argument that illustrates the interplay between theory and practice: Greeks developed the complicated artifice of issue-theory not only because 'one needs to know how the case is to be argued even before the prologue can be composed [but because] it also seems well-adapted to a jurisdiction in which the conduct of a trial is very largely at the magistrate's discretion' (p. 320). Further food for thought on the penultimate page: 'the system makes it easier to become at least minimally competent . . . there is a possible parallel in the codification of Roman law that began in the third century, which could also be seen as lowering the discipline's entry-threshold'. I wish that these stimulating suggestions could have been pursued further, but it is very good that they have got this far. H.'s Greeks seem to walk around with issue-theory to the forefront of their minds; H. tells us how it got there, so that what remains to be queried (*inter alia*) is this theoretical habit itself, or perhaps to what degree it was merely a matter of being perceived to theorize. And what of the Latin-speaking world?

I noticed only one or two typographical errors in the book, but some references are missing, e.g. Penella 1990, Hunger 1978, and Garnsey 1970. The general index is fairly

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni259 Published online by Cambridge University Press

comprehensive, including Greek words, but it would have been helpful to have subdivisions for the major entries.

Clare College, Cambridge CHARLES WEISS
doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni259

PROCLUS ON THE *TIMAEUS*

A. LERNOULD: *Physique et théologie. Lecture du* Timée *de Platon par Proclus*. Pp. 405. Calais: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2001. ISBN: 2-85939-644-6.

This monument of chalcenteric scholasticism, the reworking of a doctoral thesis submitted at the University of Lille in 1992, is devoted to a close analysis of the structure of Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus* of Plato, with a view to demonstrating the elaborately 'dialectical' format of Proclus' treatment of the work. One's first reaction is to reflect that this serves Proclus right for putting out a 1133 (Teubner) page commentary on the first twenty-seven (Stephanus) pages of Plato's dialogue (up to 44d2); but that is not quite fair to L., who in fact provides a most useful analysis of the structure and rationale of Proclus' commentary as a whole, and then a most detailed account of the first part of it.

Proclus, after all, it must be admitted, is very much concerned to present Plato's work as an entirely logical construction, demonstrating the fundamental 'theological' principles behind the account of the nature of the physical cosmos. The *Timaeus* was for him, following as he did the schema of dialogues laid down first by Iamblichus, one of the two 'summits' of Platonic philosophy—its counterpart being the *Parmenides*, which set out the structure of the intelligible universe. It is essential to Proclus' vision that the 'physics' of the *Timaeus* be based firmly ('geometrically') on certain metaphysical first principles, and it is these that Lernould is concerned here to set before us.

His work is divided, after a brief introduction (pp. 11–24), into two parts. The first, and shorter, one (pp. 27–112), divided into five chapters, sets out, first, Proclus' account of the *skopos*, or subject matter, of the dialogue, and then an analysis of the commentary as a whole. This is followed (Chapter 3) by a close study of how Proclus divides up the *Timaeus* in his introduction (1.4.6–6.16 Diehl), and then a discussion of the divisions of the various levels of demiurgy in Books 2 and 3 of the *Commentary*. Here the important thing that emerges is the distinction of a primary from a secondary level of demiurgy, the primary being that conducted by the Demiurge, or demiurgic Intellect, himself, the secondary by the so-called 'young gods', instructed by the Demiurge in his address to them at *Tim.* 41a–d. The primary demiurgy is itself divided into three: the creation of the universe as a whole (*Tim.* 29d4–31b4); the creation of its chief parts, the cosmic body and soul (31b5–37c5), followed by the institution of time and its instruments (37c–41a)—and thirdly, L. would argue with some plausibility, the creation of the elements (47e–61c), though this comes after the secondary demiurgy.

This secondary demiurgy, in turn, covers the embodiment of the immortal part of the human soul, and the creation of the mortal part and then of the human body. There are further subdivisions of each of these, which we need not go into here. Suffice it to say that L.'s analysis is impressively thorough, and leaves not much to quibble with. His conclusion (Chapter 5) sums this all up, and raises the interesting

The Classical Review vol. 55 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2005; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/clrevj/bni259 Published online by Cambridge University Press