Philosophy

The Presocratics make an ideal route into the study of (ancient) philosophy – at least I have always thought so – and James Warren's *Presocratics*[1] outlines exactly the sort of course appropriate for the intelligent newcomer. It does an excellent job of introducing the subject by clear, well-illustrated accounts of the thinkers it covers – viz. Thales to Democritus (with an epilogue on Philolaus and Diogenes of Apollonia). One thing that not all studies of the Presocratics achieve is an appropriate sense of their dialectical context. Yet this is important not only for understanding the philosophy of the individuals involved but also for understanding what we mean when we talk about a 'philosophical' tradition at all at this period – before, that is, the self-conscious invention of such a thing by Plato and Aristotle. An excellent collection of articles edited by Maria Michela Sassi, *La costruzione del discorso filosofico nell'età dei Presocratici*,[2] recognizes the interconnectedness of the various questions involved here, and presents a stimulating and timely set of reflections on them. A piece on the Seven Sages and 'dialogue' is to some extent programmatic for a central section dealing with Presocratic engagements with other Presocratics; it is preceded and followed by papers that look in various ways at Presocratic interaction with existing genres, and the development of new ways of intellectual self-presentation. A final section contains five papers that look at the earliest historians of philosophy – Hippias the doxographer as well as Plato and Aristotle. This volume combines sophistication, significance, elegance – and economy. Socrates is the ever-elusive subject of two new books. Luis Navia's *Socrates*[3] sets out with the aim of reconstructing the historical Socrates by sifting all the sources, and privileging none (18–19). So far so good; but in practice Navia gets little out of his survey of Xenophon and Aristotle to temper his ultimate reliance on Plato (cf. 179) and, specifically, dialogues that are assumed (without comment) to be 'early' Plato (170). There are allusions to the Cynics and Phaedo, but no other Socratic evidence – and the mistaken claim at 177 that a famous incident from one of Phaedo's works survives only in a report from Cicero inspires no confidence that he is familiar with the wider corpus of *Socraticorum reliquiae*. The result is no worse than thoroughly conventional; but anyone who wishes to find the historical Socrates (which Navia believes to be necessary 'in order to make some sense of the legacy that is associated with him': 179) needs to address the possibility that the works that we are forced to take as our evidence for him stand in a relationship with him that is more complicated than that of 'disclosure' or 'distortion' (cf. 91). *The Death of Socrates*[4] by Emily Wilson is on safer ground in surveying Socrates' reception, from antiquity to the present day. Wilson focuses on his death, showing it to be an especially precarious moment for Socrates' memory. His death is an 'easy' one (10–16), in stark contrast with the iconic violence that characterizes, say, Jesus' execution, or Cato's suicide. What is more, the dignified silence of a Jesus or a Cato raises questions about the volubility of Socrates – not to mention his apparent

[1] *Presocratics*. By James Warren. Stocksfield, Acumen, 2007. Pp. xv + 224, with one map. Hardback £45; paperback £14.99.

[2] *La costruzione del discorso filosofico nell'età dei Presocratici*. Edited by Maria Michela Sassi. Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2006. Pp. xii + 397. Paperback 30.

[3] *Socrates. A Life Examined*. By Luis E. Navia. New York, NY, Prometheus Books, 2007. Pp. 291. Hardback $28.

[4] *The Death of Socrates. Hero, Villain, Chatterbox, Saint*. By Emily Wilson. London, Profile Books, 2007. Pp. 247. Hardback £15.99.

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indifference to the grief of his friends and family. Inexplicably, given this focus on reception, Wilson begins her study as a personal reaction to Socrates as a historical figure – and on the basis of some very dubious history. (The *Phaedo* is read straight as a document for Socrates' death, while the *Apology* is ignored in the doubly tendentious claim (at 1) that Socrates was executed *by the government* and *for his beliefs*.) But perhaps its being dubious is the point? Are we supposed to realize by the end of the book that its opening chapters – perhaps, then, the assumptions about Socrates we as readers bring to the book – are themselves heavily mediated? Whatever the case, there is no doubting that, once it gets under way, this is a very readable, thought-provoking study, and covers an enormous range of material. Socrates gets a fair amount of attention in this year's *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*:[5] especially worthy of note is Melissa Lane's argument that *eironeia* is used of Socrates only by his adversaries, and only to mean straightforward concealment. Among the remaining articles – which, unusually, are of somewhat variable quality – six more concern Socrates and/or Plato; one Aristotle; and one Carneades. There are also three reviews: especially striking is a withering critique of the so-called 'Tübingen' school of Platonic interpretation by Wolfgang-Rainer Mann, occasioned by the publication of the collected works of one of its principal proponents, Conrad Gaiser. 'Tübingen' argues that Plato reserved his most important doctrines for oral communication, and a pertinent question this immediately raises is addressed by one of its fellow-travellers, Rafael Ferber: *Warum hat Platon die 'ungeschriebene Lehre' nicht geschrieben?*[6] Originally printed in 1992 as an article, Ferber has expanded it to the size of a modest monograph by the addition of a section reflecting on the original work, its reception, and the progress of debate in the intervening fifteen years. Ferber's basic view is that the 'unwritten doctrines' were not written down because the principles they concern (the One and the Indefinite Dyad) cannot be described without paradox. I am not sure that I find that a very compelling answer (communication, especially Platonic communication, is not all about the relevant kind of describing). But, on the bright side, Ferber does believe, unlike the main 'Tübingen' stream, that knowledge of these first principles is at least *possible* for us humans. As often with Tübingen, there is a touch of the pamphleteering about Ferber's work; but that is not wholly a bad thing. And there is something in particular worth pausing over in a remark he makes about the relative marginalization of continental scholarship on Plato in a world where the dominance of English leads to the readier diffusion of the Anglo-American tradition (83–4). It struck me when reading Hugh Benson's *Companion to Plato*.[7] This is, I should say, a good book in its kind but (as its kind often is) it is ossifying in its conservatism, and – more to the immediate point – exhibits a bias towards Anglo-American scholarship that would make Ferber's hair stand on end. A roll-call of the contributors says everything you need to know: Ahbel-Rappe, Benson, Brickhouse, Dancy, Devereux, Frerejohn, Freeland, Gill (M. L.), Janaway, Kahn, Keyt, Long, Matthews, McCabe, McPherran, Meyer, Miller, Modrak, Nails, Penner, Prior, Reeve, Rowe, Santas, Sedley, Shields, Smith (N. D.), White (M. J. and N.),

[5] *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*. Edited by David Sedley. Vol. XXXI, Winter 2006. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. viii + 414. Hardback £47; paperback £25.

[6] *Warum hat Platon die 'ungeschriebene Lehre' nicht geschrieben?* By Rafael Ferber. Munich, C. H. Beck Verlag, 2007. Pp. 176. Paperback €19.90.

[7] *A Companion to Plato*. Edited by Hugh H. Benson. Oxford, Blackwell, 2006. Pp. xv + 473. Hardback £85.

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Young. It is not that I am against the tradition myself (it is very much my own). But it is hard to see what the point of a collection like this might be if it refuses to instruct its readers in perspectives that they will not pick up anyway. Malcolm Schofield shows more self-awareness when (at 5) he acknowledges the anglocentrism of his *Plato*[8] – an outstanding study of Plato's political philosophy. Schofield's wider argument is that utopianism is a universal of human thought (for example, 201), and one that retains an immediate relevance for us. In this context, Plato's *Republic* in particular becomes a paradigm for what can be done with political utopianism. Chapters on Plato's historical embededness in the discourse of democratic Athens start to open up a view of Plato as someone much more in touch with the political realities critiqued by his utopias than is sometimes assumed. For example, Schofield argues that dialogues such the *Protagoras* and *Statesman* try to make the case for an 'architectonic political knowledge' that could underpin democratic government, and that their ultimate failure is what grounds the appeal to philosophy as the basis for the cities of Kallipolis and Magnesia. There are chapters on Plato's view that acquisitiveness is the root of political evil; and on his view that a cohesive ideology – specifically a religious ideology – is needed to create unity even in utopia. Withal, Schofield traces the resonance of Plato's works through their modern reception in political philosophy, bringing him right up to date without compromising the historically sensitive and nuanced picture he constructs. This kind of act is very difficult to pull off successfully: Schofield triumphs – and makes it seem easy. Schofield's claim that Plato is a fully-engaged child of his democratic environment leads him to question the grounds of Nietzsche's preference for Thucydides over Plato (esp. 197–212; 332). Darien Shanske moves in the other direction when he takes Nietzsche's comments as a cue to explore the philosophical credentials of Thucydides in *Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History*.[9] Shanske's Thucydides (if I understand him: there is rather a lot to misunderstand) emerges as a sort of cross between Heraclitus and Wittgenstein. The *History* (which is really the *Composition*, *συγγραφέ*: 20) *of the Peloponnesian War* is not a naive attempt to describe historical reality, but rather the linguistic *construction* of a whole new world – or a whole new way of seeing the world. (The overtly historical narrative, and especially the 'Archaeology' with which the book opens, is only the 'hook'.) This exercise is supposed to prove illuminating for us insofar as the tensions in his construction play out tensions inherent in rationality, thus reflecting (on) the nature of human experience. Some elements of the analysis struck me as rather forced – not least the pervasive assertion of conceptual links between Thucydides and classical tragedy, which are grounded on the dubious (and unargued) insistence that tragedy is the purest expression of the Athenian mindset. And much of the more obviously plausible analysis might have been handled in more familiar historiographical terms. But the book is a stimulating read – and contributes something to the idea that there might be ways of (re)writing 'history' that are really ways of writing about philosophy. Commentaries on Platonic works this year include two on the *Parmenides* – a traditional magnet for enthusiasts. Indeed, it has been so since the beginnings of the Platonic revival, a fact that makes the surviving portion of Proclus' commentary very valuable for our understanding of that

[8] *Plato. Political Philosophy*. By Malcolm Schofield. Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. x + 384. Hardback £58; paperback £19.99.

[9] *Thucydides and the Philosophical Origins of History*. By Darien Shanske. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xii + 268. Hardback £51.

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movement. Proclus' text was last edited by Cousin in 1864, and a great deal of important work on the tradition has been done since then, so the first volume of a new OCT edition by Carlos Steel is very welcome.[10] The pages barely contain their text, though: the reader will feel more than a little envy for the 'large margins' we hear about in Cardinal Bessario's edition (xiii). It is a common enough view of the *Parmenides* in more recent studies that the work stands as a critical turning point in Plato's thought, preparing the way for his work in the 'later' dialogues. But to provide a single, coherent account of all that this implies is not a simple matter: it involves a stance on the theory of forms as we know it from the (putatively) earlier works, on the nature of the criticisms offered in the *Parmenides*, on the dialectical fireworks with which those criticisms are followed up in the second half of the dialogue, and on the precise character of the metaphysics with which Plato is left for his later work. Scholars have often found it tempting to defer (that is, ignore) some of these questions in the pursuit of others but, in *Plato's Forms in Transition*, Samuel C. Rickless sets out to bag them all.[11] In his view, the critical stretch of the *Parmenides* addresses, not the theory of forms as a whole, but certain 'auxiliary principles' that characterized it in its 'middle period'. Purged of these (especially the principle that a form cannot possess contrary attributes), Plato is left with a leaner version of the theory. If this is not commonly recognized, it is only because it lacks some of the features of the original. Most strikingly, forms are brought within time, and even (in principle, at least) within the perceptible world (249). In general, there is retreat from the two-world theory of works such as the *Republic*. In a brief conclusion, Rickless is able to suggest how this fits the context of Plato's later dialogues much better: the *Sophist*, for example (definition by division and collection becomes possible when we accept the internal complexity of forms); or the *Theaetetus* (whose discussion of knowledge notoriously remains rooted in the perceived world). All of this makes for a bold, but surprisingly compelling account. Scholarship has been less enamoured of the *Lysis*, traditionally viewed as a second-rate discussion of friendship. Terry Penner and Christopher Rowe, however, argue in *Plato's Lysis*[12] that the dialogue is in fact a first rate discussion of *desire* – for which love for a person (*not* the mutuality of friendship as such: 233) serves as a paradigm. The central conclusion of the first part of this study, a detailed and close reading of the text itself, is that the 'first friend', traditionally so called – that is, the ultimate object of desire that grounds and explains all other desires – is a form of knowledge: 'the wisdom which brings happiness and without which there is no happiness' (150). The second part of the book, characterized as a 'second trip through the *Lysis*' (195), develops some of the philosophical issues this reading raises. One concerns the logic of desire: Penner and Rowe ascribe to Plato the idea that one can *only* desire what as a matter of fact works to one's benefit (what, in other words, brings one close to the 'first friend'), which means that there are such things as *false* desires, that one can be mistaken about what one wants. (No-one, in Plato's view, errs willingly, after all: 223.) Another issue concerns the worry that, on the account given by Penner and Rowe, love is never

[10] *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem commentaria. Tomus I Libros I–III continens*. Edited by Carlos Steel. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. liii + 300. Hardback £37.50.

[11] *Plato's Forms in Transition. A Reading of the* Parmenides. By Samuel C. Rickless. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xv + 272. Hardback £50.

[12] *Plato's Lysis*. By Terry Penner and Christopher Rowe. Cambridge Studies in the Dialogues of Plato. Reprinted with corrections. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 366. Hardback £59.

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altruistic: all desire is structured towards one's own happiness. Kantian alarm bells are rung by the idea that persons, as objects of love, thus become one's instruments or means: but so be it, say Penner and Rowe: better, actually, that it should be so. To find that one's own happiness is affected by the happiness of another might be exactly what love should be like. Commentaries generally like to address self-contained stretches of text or argument, but Chris Emlyn-Jones deliberately resists doing so in his edition and translation of *Plato, Republic 1–2.368c4*.[13] Extending the treatment of *Republic* 1 into the 'second introduction' at the beginning of book 2 is a clever programmatic move. Emlyn-Jones sensibly argues that the (source-critical) question of whether *Republic* 1 was originally written as a separate dialogue is irrelevant to the question of why and how Plato uses it as the introduction to the *Republic* as we have it. These questions he answers by suggesting that Plato wished to present the *Republic* as a way of addressing the inadequacies of Socrates' *elenchus* and use of the craft analogy for a definitive refutation of Thrasymachus. The provisional, introductory nature of *Republic* 1 is, then, essential to its purpose. Readers who come to the *Republic* through this commentary will not only understand their text the better for this sense, but will also, with luck, be attracted to study the rest of the *Republic* as well. Fritz-Gregor Herrman's *New Essays on Plato*[14] includes nine papers whose diversity is belied by the volume's subtitle. Richard Stalley gives an account of the relationship between law and justice in Plato; Verity Harte discusses Plato's interest in the way we might mistake a copy for the original, and in the process casts interesting light on recent debate over the theory of recollection; Herrmann himself argues for originality in Plato's use of the word *ousia*; Stefan Büttner tries to save the unity of the Platonic agent by rooting psychological tripartition in a trinity of cognitive functions (roughly: perception, belief, and knowledge); Antony Hatzistavrou asserts that the philosopher kings are no less happy for being made to govern (I agree: but perhaps the question should be whether they will be happier still when they are dead?); Patricia Clarke argues that 'appearance' as discussed in the early stages of the *Theaetetus* must be polysemous, Vasilis Politis that Plato maintains a 'two-tier' ontology in the *Sophist*, and Andrew Mason that the concept of timeless eternity is introduced by Plato to secure the imperishability of god by making him, even temporally, unchanging. Stephen Halliwell, in a wonderful study of Aristotle (especially *Politics* 2.6), shows that he had an intelligently nuanced view of the Platonic dialogue (and what hope for us if he had not?). Plato is the starting point for two further books not principally concerned with him. His images of memory as the traces in a wax block, or as writing in a book, lie behind another collection of articles edited by Maria Michela Sassi: *Tracce nella mente*.[15] The collection includes papers dealing with theories of memory in Plato himself (by Giuseppe Cambiano), in Aristotle (Sassi), the Stoics (Katerina Ierodiakonou), Plotinus (Christina D'Ancona), Augustine (Beatrice Cillerai), the Arabic tradition (Carla Di Martino), Giordano Bruno (Niccoletta Tirinnanzi), Hobbes and Descartes (Alfredo Ferrarin), Spinoza (Filippo Mignini),

[13] *Plato, Republic 1–2.368c4*. With introduction, translation, and commentary by Chris Emlyn-Jones. Oxford, Oxbow Books, 2007. Pp. vi + 194. Hardback £40; paperback £18.

[14] *New Essays on Plato. Language and Thought in Fourth-Century Greek Philosophy*. Edited by Fritz-Gregor Herrmann. Swansea, The Classical Press of Wales, 2006. Pp. viii + 227. Hardback £45.

[15] *Tracce nella mente. Teorie della memoria da Platone ai moderni*. Edited by Maria Michela Sassi. Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2007. Pp. x + 265, with 12 illustrations. Paperback €30.

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and Leibniz (Massimo Mugnai). The closing paper by Claudio Pogliano is a diachronic survey of theories about where mnemonic functions have their physiological base. Production values are identical with Sassi's *Costruzione del discorso filosofico* (above); though that had an *index locorum* in addition to the *index nominum* that is all we get here. Dieter Lau's *Metaphertheorien der Antike und ihre philosophischen Prinzipien*[16] argues that Aristotle's account of metaphor builds on Plato's interest in relationships of analogy and of genus and species. For Aristotle, these become two distinct modes of ontological classification, which have reflexes in the two principal forms of metaphor, viz. metaphor by analogy, and metaphor through the substitution of genus for species (or species for genus) (*Poetics* 1457b6-9). Metaphor, in this way, is not merely an ornament to speech, but has a central role to play in Aristotle's theory of language. After such a sophisticated account of Aristotle, it is a bit disappointing that Lau is ready to accept that the post-Aristotelian treatment of metaphor is as dull and narrow as convention avers. If it is true that rhetorical theorists developed a particular aspect of Aristotle's discussion of metaphor, it does not follow that metaphorology as a whole suffered atrophy. Aristotle's logic features along with that of Chrysippus and Galen at the forefront of *Truth, etc.*,[17] based on Jonathan Barnes' 2004 John Locke Lectures. The six chapters explore ancient treatments of such things as time-dependent truths, predication, connectors, syllogistic form, the scientific status of logic, and debates over its use and usefulness. Barnes' ostensible conclusion ('we' are better at logic than they were: 526–7) is as deflationary as the preface is coy ('ancient logic lacks sex appeal': vii). But perhaps neither claim is the whole point: as Barnes' final chapter especially makes clear, logic, particularly in antiquity, was not an end in itself, but part of the larger science of man. For Christopher Shields' *Aristotle*,[18] metaphysics plays the principal part in this science. In his excellent account, Shields aims to 'motivate' Aristotle's philosophy (1, 2, 3) – that is, I take it, to *explain* why he takes the positions he does rather than merely describe those positions. To this end, he goes to some lengths, first of all to make credible Aristotle's metaphysics, and then to show that it underpins the full range of his philosophical activity – even those areas that at first sight might appear accessible without it (346). Metaphysical issues of one sort or another are, then, the direct concern of the first three-quarters of the book, which only turns to ethics at 306, and deals with politics, rhetoric, and poetics in short order thereafter. (There is nothing to speak of on the biological works.) Even so, the length of this work might undercut its purpose to some extent, since one could get a long way into Aristotle himself with the effort Shields demands – and deserves. Perhaps not a stand-alone introduction, then: but a first-rate companion to a course on Aristotle. Pavel Gregoric on *Aristotle on the Common Sense*[19] looks like a very much narrower study, but it turns out to have a surprisingly wide reach. When Plato discusses the way in which we integrate the distinct channels of our sensory

[16] *Metaphertheorien der Antike und ihre philosophischen Prinzipien. Ein Beitrag zur Grundlagenforschung in der Literaturwissenschaft*. By Dieter Lau. Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2006. Pp. 437. Paperback £44.50.

[17] *Truth, etc. Six Lectures on Ancient Logic*. By Jonathan Barnes. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. x + 551. Hardback £42.

[18] *Aristotle*. By Christopher Shields. Routledge Philosophers. London and New York NY, Routledge, 2007. Pp. xvi + 456. Hardback £55; paperback £13.99.

[19] *Aristotle on the Common Sense*. By Pavel Gregoric. Oxford Aristotle Studies. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xiv + 252. Hardback £40.

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information about the world, he ascribes the power of integration to our reason. Aristotle, however, is keen to keep his explanation at the level of perception itself, in order to be able to generalize it to the experience of non-rational animals also (6; cf. 99 on memory); hence his interest in what he calls the 'common sense'. But, as Gregoric shows, rather against previous assumptions, we have to be very careful with this phrase, which does not have a fixed, technical meaning in the Aristotelian corpus. In fact there are several things it can mean. ('Touch' for example is called a 'common sense' for the relatively straightforward reason that it is a sense common to all perceiving entities.) So commentators have been traditionally misled into the search for something capable of covering cases that are actually quite diverse. On the back of this important preliminary work, Gregoric is able to argue that the 'common sense' that performs the function of sensory integration is in fact not something *additional to* the several senses, but a higher-order perceptual power emerging from their unity in the soul (cf. 59). In the final part of his study, he explores a range of particular questions that this model can answer – including, for example, how we can perceive and discriminate between different properties at the same time. Arbogast Schmitt's *Die Moderne und Platon*[20] (which is as much about Aristotle as Plato) ascribes a fundamental role to discrimination in ancient theories of cognition. This is a wide-ranging study (which, it has to be said, is not an easy read) covering a great swathe of historical thinkers and philosophical topics, from the political to the poetic. But Schmitt's central aim is to rescue Plato and Aristotle from a charge of epistemological naivety typically levelled against them by post-Enlightenment empiricism. From this perspective, a perspective which argues that knowledge requires us to turn our minds inwards to explore the ideas given to us in sense perception, Plato and Aristotle are taken to be engaged in an unsophisticated project of aligning our inner thoughts with external reality. But Schmitt argues that Plato and Aristotle are not so ingenuous as they might seem. What they recognized is that the act of discrimination is already an epistemological act: to perceive is already to judge. They too, then, were interested in the complex issues that arise between human experience and understanding, and in ways that remain worthy of our attention. *From Epicurus to Epictetus*[21] is 'partly a sequel' (vii) to A. A. Long's *Stoic Studies*, in gathering together articles by Long which, with one exception, have already been published. There are eighteen in all, covering thirty years of his considerable output, and dealing with topics as diverse as linguistic philosophy, epistemology, astrology, psychology, political philosophy, and ethics. (The 'new' article is a typically thought-provoking piece on the 'self' in Seneca.) No-one who works in the field needs to be introduced to Long, nor does his work, which has set the agenda in so many areas, need further recommendation. Precisely this, though, makes me wonder about the intellectual economies of a collection like this. Repaginated, and in minor details updated, references to the articles in this collection will be doubly out of kilter with references to their originals, none of which (Long being Long) were obscure to begin with. W. O. Stephens' *Stoic Ethics*[22] is an effective and clear introduction to Epictetus, and through him to

[20] *Die Moderne und Platon*. By Arbogast Schmitt. Stuttgart, Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2003. Pp. xii + 584. Hardback €69.95.

[21] *From Epicurus to Epictetus. Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*. By A. A. Long. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xiv + 439. Hardback £58; paperback £25.

[22] *Stoic Ethics. Epictetus and Happiness as Freedom*. By William O. Stephens. Continuum Studies in Ancient Philosophy. London and New York, NY, Continuum, 2007. Pp. xvii + 178. Hardback £60.

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the Stoa in general. The book is a 'lightly edited' version of a seventeen-year-old doctoral dissertation (vii), and it shows its age: not to mention major work by A. A. Long himself, there are details of Stoic physics and logic that have received more sophisticated examination in recent scholarship (cf. 150–1); and the essential 'orthodoxy' of Epictetus, for which Stephens argues, is hardly controversial nowadays. (Much more controversial, in fact, is the idea that the Hellenistic Stoa can be summed up by reference to a single, inflexible 'orthodoxy'.) This aside, though, Stephens' great regard for Epictetus shines through, and he sets out a clear and compelling route through his thought from the issue of *prohairesis* ('choice'), through its implications for our proper attitude to external matters in general, and to individual humans (especially those we love) more particularly. The Stoics also set the agenda for Michael Trapp's *Philosophy in the Roman Empire*.[23] The key to this book lies in its subtitle, for it is a book that concerns itself very little with the new movements in metaphysics and epistemology characteristic of the Roman period (Platonism and Christianity), but much more with issues that, in Trapp's view, were most fully and systematically treated by the Stoics (144, 165): issues such as selfhood, emotion, inter-personal relations, and politics. Within the terms set by this approach, the account is assured, clear, and well-signposted, and it comes to the conclusion natural to all studies of Imperial philosophy that focus on continuations of the Hellenistic schools: that, in general, it differs hardly at all in philosophical substance from the debates of the second, or even the fourth centuries BC (for example, 96). Nevertheless, Trapp adds something quite significant in his final chapter, which explores the 'mis-alignment' (cf. 233) that this conservatism produces with the language of the Roman political class at which it apparently aims its pedagogy. Trapp concludes modestly that, through this misalignment, philosophy calls, not for revolution, but the 'adjustment' of existing norms (233); but the thought (that philosophy may be teaching through means other than direct, explicit injunction) opens up all sorts of possibilities for the exploration of texts that it is otherwise rather hard to take seriously as very much more than elegant reworkings of schools that have had their day. Scholarship on Plotinus has traditionally taken as little notice of the living philosophical traditions that formed his dialectical context as Trapp does of the Platonist revival for which Plotinus is the poster-boy. One of the reasons for this, no doubt, is that Plotinus himself does not provide easy guidance in the matter; another is the unfortunate hegemony of a History of Ideas that tends to be attracted by obvious novelty, so that it is precisely those areas where Plotinus' relationship with his predecessors is least apparent that have attracted most attention. But two new commentaries, *Plotinus' Cosmology* by James Wilberding,[24] and *Plotinus on Eudaimonia* by Kieran McGroarty,[25] approach him self-consciously at points in his system where it is easiest to see his engagement with earlier speculation. Wilberding's treatise, *Enneads* II.1, deals with the everlastingness of the universe, the heavens, and the heavenly bodies. The substantial introduction and commentary alike not only give a good account of the arguments but also spell out what is at stake against a rich

[23] *Philosophy in the Roman Empire. Ethics, Politics and Society*. By Michael Trapp. Ashgate Ancient Philosophy Series. Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007. Pp. xiv + 285. Hardback. £55.

[24] *Plotinus' Cosmology. A Study of* Ennead *II.1 (40)*. Text, Translation, and Commentary. By James Wilberding. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xi + 269. Hardback £66.

[25] *Plotinus on* Eudaimonia. *A Commentary on* Ennead *I.4*. Translation and commentary. By Kieran McGroarty. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xxiii + 236. Hardback. £53.

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background of work in this area by Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. What is at stake, by the way, turns out to involve more than cosmology alone: the question of how permanently enduring *identity* is possible for corporeal, and so transient, bodies brings Plotinian anthropology into the frame as well. McGroarty locates Plotinus' discussion of *eudaimonia* (*Enneads* I.4) within a dialectical context established by the Peripatetics and Stoics – though, oddly, with little reference to those Platonists in Plotinus' immediate past through which their debate is clearly mediated. Plotinus' view that we find our happiness in the activity of the intellect, an activity that not only does not involve the experience of our bodies but actually occurs on an ontological plane separate from them, leads to some weighty questions. Among those addressed by McGroarty are the role of consciousness in *eudaimonia*, and the morality of suicide. There are, however, further questions that naturally arise about psychological unity and identity, whose exploration here seems a little half-hearted – especially given a claim made by McGroarty at the outset (xviii) that Plotinus was himself too humane to live his own philosophy. Appendices deal with Ambrose's use of this treatise in his *Jacob and the Happy Life*, and with the issue of suicide (to the use of which McGroarty suggests Plotinus became more sympathetic during his last illness). Wilberding's defence of his study of Plotinian cosmology as the place 'where metaphysical speculations become concrete, where visible roles are conferred on ontological entities' (4), stands in telling contrast to the relief expressed by Eyjólfur Emilsson that, in dealing with *Plotinus on Intellect*,[26] he is freed from the need to consider lower realms of being (2–3). His book, then, is in the more traditional, expositional mode; though, since it is characteristic of Plotinus' system (certainly *vis à vis* earlier Platonisms) that intellect is itself derived from a higher principle (the 'One'), there are still serious questions one can ask that would not be possible in a system where it was a 'given'. This Emilsson does, devoting much of the first two chapters of the book to the questions of how intellect is supposed to come about – and why, indeed, it is *intellect* that comes about at this level. (The answer, very roughly, is to do with the necessarily reflexive nature of the attempt by the second hypostasis to find reunion with the One: it turns perforce to the image of the One in itself, and becomes self-aware in doing so.) Emilsson examines the structure of intellect, and the epistemological advantages of the move – characteristic of later Platonism, if not of Plotinus uniquely – by which the objects of intellect are made internal to the intellect itself. The final chapter contains a useful discussion of noetic versus discursive thought – which asserts the important (and convincing) position that complex thought is not *ipso facto* 'discursive'. Giannis Stamatellos leans to the source-critical wing of Plotinian scholarship in his *Plotinus and the Presocratics*.[27] What he is able to show is that Plotinus had better acquaintance with early Greek philosophy, and took it more seriously, than either Neoplatonist or Presocratic scholars have tended to allow. This is something with obvious consequences for Presocratic studies, which will need to take more account of Plotinus' testimony thanks to Stamatellos. It is a little less clear what the implications for Plotinus might be, though: even if his knowledge of Presocratic texts is first-hand, his interpretation

[26] *Plotinus on Intellect*. By Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. viii + 232. Hardback £35.

[27] *Plotinus and the Presocratics. A Philosophical Study of Presocratic Influences in Plotinus' Enneads*. By Giannis Stamatellos. SUNY Series in Ancient Greek Philosophy. Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 2007. Pp. xi + 270. Hardback $75; paperback $24.95.

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of them is mediated by Plato, as Stamatellos recognizes (for instance, Parmenides at 31, 76; Heraclitus at 48; Anaxagoras at 54). All he can conclude, then, is that Plotinus appealed to the Presocratics to establish his philosophy as part of the tradition they initiated (see especially 173): but this seems highly unsatisfactory to me. Why not say that his appeal is intended to make *them* into the forebears of *his* tradition? And anyway, what of more ancient traditions of wisdom recognized, for example, at *Enneads* 3.6.19.25–41? Such questions seem more to the point than something Stamatellos dwells on far too much: what the Presocratics might 'really' have thought about various matters also treated by Plotinus. His views on this matter tell us nothing at all about Plotinus' engagement with them. *Augustine's Way Into the Will*[28] is a sophisticated rereading of the *de libro arbitrio* as an exercise, not in psychological or metaphysical analysis, but rather in epistemological self-discovery. Rather than offer objective demonstrations of the nature of 'will', Augustine invites the readers to see for themselves that to query and *deny* its existence in themselves is tantamount to denying the possibility of knowledge and philosophical inquiry: for to seek knowledge is to *will* it. Harrison argues that the subjective character of this appeal determines many features of the work as a whole: he uses it to argue for its structural unity, for example; and for the increasingly taciturn presence of the interlocutor ('Evodius'), whose silence (he suggests) makes space for the reader's first-person engagement with the argument. (Indeed, Harrison shows that it is only due to late editorial intervention that the interlocutor acquired a name and, with it, an identity that allows us to make of him anything other than the reader's spokesman to being with.) This is a highly successful example of a study that is sensitive to form in the business of clarifying content – recognizing that ancients were not always asking quite the questions that we are asking, and rarely set out their answers in the way that we do. Finally, a book which makes contact with a number of the other issues and thinkers covered in this round-up: Catherine Osborne's *Dumb Beasts and Dead Philosophers*.[29] Herodotus, Aristotle, and the Desert Fathers are at the centre of a study that starts with ancient attitudes towards animals, and proceeds to examine the basis of moral evaluation more generally. Osborne argues that ancient philosophers constructed animals as objects of respect through ethical and cognitive models that made them similar to us in relevant respects. In Aristotelian terms, for example, they can flourish, as we can (albeit their flourishing is not what is termed *eudaimonia*: 106); and they can think in ways comparable to human thought (ch. 4). (In an argument that has interesting resonances with Gregoric, Osborne argues that we should not privilege linguistic ability in the analysis of thought, suggesting a more prominent role for *phantasia* instead.) Osborne's larger thesis is that, in every case where we deem an object worthy of our concern, be it human being, or animal, or inanimate object (for example, 144), it is made so by our own construction, what Osborne calls our 'moral vision' (see especially 39). One gets the impression that Osborne would not like to think of herself as a relativist, although her conclusion tends along Protagorean lines: for although (like Protagoras) she suggests that this moral vision is educable, and that

[28] *Augustine's Way Into the Will. The Theological and Philosophical Significance of* De Libero Arbitrio. By Simon Harrison. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. viii + 191. Hardback £47.

[29] *Dumb Beasts and Dead Philosophers. Humanity and the Humane in Ancient Philosophy and Literature*. By Catherine Osborne. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xi + 262. Hardback £40.

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some ways of looking are *better* than others, it is not clear (as it is not with Protagoras) by what standard one is to be judged better than another. Still, Protagoras was a humane, wide-ranging, and thought-provoking thinker: the comparison works largely to Osborne's advantage. But I end on an anti-Protagorean note, by affirming the possibility of error. In my review of Arnold Hermann's book on Parmenides, *To Think Like God* (*G&R* 53 [2006], 129), I made him the founder of Parmenides Publishing. I am happy to note that Parmenides Publishing was in fact founded by his wife, Sara Hermann.

doi: 10.1017/S0017383507000393 GEORGE BOYS-STONES

General

One of the most thought-provoking series of books to have been published in recent years is without doubt that on 'Roman Literature and its Contexts' (edited by Stephen Hinds and Denis Feeney). This has showcased some of the very best theoretically-informed writing on Roman literature (including Martindale's *Redeeming the Text*, Hardie's *Epic Successors of Virgil*, Hinds' *Allusion and Intertext*, Feeney's *Literature and Religion at Rome* and Edwards' *Writing Rome*). In their one hundred and fifty or so pages, the books show – in true Callimachean style – the benefits of concision and at the same time have turned the humble footnote into something of an art form. The latest volume is no exception. Richard Hunter's *The Shadow of Callimachus. Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome*,[1] invites us to rethink the way that we construct the relationship between Roman poets and the Hellenistic literary tradition. Keying into recent wider developments in Postcolonial theory, the book presents an exciting interrogation of the old certainties about the colonizing literary power of Rome, from the point of view of the colonized territory of Hellenistic literature. Hunter recasts the importance of lost Greek poetic material for our understanding of Roman poetry (something that has been rather downplayed within Latin literary criticism in recent years). With characteristic subtlety he shows how Greek cultural production was not a remote and discrete category for the Romans, but something far more immediate, ambivalent. From the reception of Callimachus to *Pastoral Palimpsests. Essays in the Reception of Theocritus and Virgil*.[2] This is the third volume of Rethymnon Classical Studies to come out of the University of Crete in the last five years under the editorship of Michael Paschalis. After *Horace and Lyric Poetry* (2002) and *Imperial Epic* (2005) now comes a work devoted to the reception of Theocritus and Virgil. This is a stimulating collection of essays (first presented at a conference in 2006), by a strong cast of academics, that gives some sense of the ways in which reception studies are expanding and enriching our worldview. The essays take us from Pseudo-Theocritus and Aesop via Milton, Wordsworth, and Thomas Hardy, through to the aesthetics of pastoral melancholy in Virgil and Bob Dylan. A literal not literary palimpsest is the subject of R. Netz and W. Noel's *The Archimedes Codex*.

[1] *The Shadow of Callimachus. Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome*. By Richard Hunter. Roman Literature and its Contexts. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xi + 162. Hardback £45; paperback £15.99.

[2] *Pastoral Palimpsests. Essays in the Reception of Theocritus and Virgil*. Edited by Michael Paschalis. Rethymnon Classical Studies Volume 3. Heraklion, Crete University Press, 2007. Pp. xi + 216. Paperback €25.

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