and Magna Graecia; there follows an appendix on Alexander's projects for the west. The title of the book is particularly apposite to the third chapter, which contains a useful survey on the political exploitation of the literary character of the Cyclops, who became a symbol for the tyrant in both Greece and Italy; interesting is Section 8, where C. traces the iconography of the *dux luscus* from Ennius' *Annales* to Petrarca.

Concluding the chapter, a short note deals with the implicit comparison between the Thirty Tyrants and the Galatians in literary sources. Indeed, the Galatian theme is often alluded to throughout the book, but the author seems to have overlooked some recent works on the subject (e.g. N. T. de Grummond and B. S. Ridgway [edd.], *From Pergamon to Sperlonga: Sculpture and Context* [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001]; on the other hand, no chapter is devoted exclusively to the Attalids, although references to them are scattered through all the book). Chapter 4 briefly discusses some mythological themes exploited by and against the Seleucids (one can, though, have doubts about whether 'naturalmente il Marsia che difese Celene dai Galati va identificato con un personaggio reale', p. 122).

C.'s work proves once again that historians of the Hellenistic world cannot do without analysis of the literary sources, although care must be taken not to assume that not all the themes treated by Hellenistic authors living in court circles are in fact pieces of royal ideology, especially if they are just passing references. The book contains useful and interesting material, but its treatment is often unsystematic, which makes it difficult to disentangle the new hypotheses proposed by the author from the dense presentations of the *status quaestionis*; a concluding section at the end of each chapter would have greatly helped the reader.

Typographical errors in the text are few (e.g. p. 97 n. 24 'Horden' for 'Hordern'), but more are concentrated in the bibliography at the end of the book (e.g. p. 132: 'Euf0rione'; p. 137: 'aand' repeated twice; p. 138: the name of the city is missing in Hammond 1988; p. 141: 'Nex York' and 'sue riti'; p. 143: 'Agamemmonidi'); it could have been useful if all the bibliography had been collected at the end, while many works are only quoted in footnotes.

Venice International University/
Università Cattolica del S. Cuore, Milan SILVIA BARBANTANI

EPISTOLARY FUNCTIONS

C. D. N. Costa: *Greek Fictional Letters*. Pp. xxiii + 189. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Cased. ISBN: 0-19-924001-9 (0-19-924546-0 pbk).

This is a welcome volume that provides easy access to some obscure, but interesting, material. Costa offers a text, translation, and commentary for fifty-one Greek letters dating from *c*. 100 B.C.E. to *c*. 250 C.E. All are fictional, with the possible exception of Philostratus' letter 73 to Julia Domna (a very short history of Greek prose style with special reference to Plato), which, as C. observes, may well be the product of actual correspondence.

In a brief introduction C. enumerates three categories of letters: (1) those reproduced or composed in historical or fictional narratives; (2) independent, imaginary compositions without moralizing or didactic intent, and usually comic; and (3) letters like those in category 2, but with such intent (pp. xiv–xv). Costa's collection includes letters of types 2 and 3 (i.e. 'comic' and 'philosophical'.) For an extended

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treatment of letters of the first type, see Patricia Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (Cambridge, 2001), though she discusses much of the material in C.'s categories 2 and 3 in some depth as well (see especially pp. 193–322).

Amongst the comic letters, we find compositions here by second sophistic authors Aelian, Alciphron, and Philostratus, and a few by one Aristaenetus, about whom little is known beyond the fact that he is late (perhaps 500 C.E.). The philosophical letters—all of uncertain authorship—include ones attributed to Anacharsis the Scythian, the Cynics Diogenes and Crates, Socrates, Aeschines, Euripides, Themistocles, Hippocrates, and Chion of Heraclea, an associate of Plato.

As C.'s commentary brings out so well, all the letters collected in this volume are exercises in literary ethopoeia and imitation. The influences of declamation, New Comedy, and mime are pronounced throughout: these letters are replete with farmers, fathers, pirates, parasites, courtesans, doctors, fishermen, and slaves. Topics involving dilemmas and antitheses also abound: the urban or the rustic life (Aelian 20; Alciphron 1.4, 11; 2.8, 38)? The practical or contemplative life (Chion 3)? Sophistry or sex (Aristaenetus 2.3)?

While the comic letters revel in stock characters and situations, the philosophical ones tend to take a known, historical association or event as their point of imaginative departure—even to the point of contradicting the historical account or supplying a motivation for the actions of some glamorous protagonist: Themistocles' politicking from exile during the Persian Wars; Euripides' friendship and alleged collaboration with Cephisophon; Socrates' mentoring of Xenophon about serving as a mercenary for Cyrus.

Both types of letter, comic and philosophical, often form part of a connected series, making them ancient precursors to the early modern epistolary novels of Richardson and Rousseau, and to the *Imaginary Conversations* of Walter Savage Landor. What perhaps makes C.'s volume so attractive—even useful as a resource—is that many of the *topoi* found in these letters also crop up in major authors like Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, and Lucian, reinforcing our appreciation of the extent to which their material was traditional.

University of Vermont M. D. USHER

PHILO THE ACADEMIC

C. BRITTAIN: *Philo of Larissa. The Last of the Academic Sceptics*. Pp. xii + 406. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-19-815298-1.

The sceptical phase of the Academy's history has attracted much scholarly attention in recent years. Philo himself, sometimes called the founder of the Fourth Academy, is the subject of H. Tarrant's monograph *Scepticism or Platonism?* (Cambridge, 1985), and Philo's epistemology is discussed by many of the authors of *Assent & Argument: Studies in Cicero's Academic Books* (Leiden, 1997) edited by B. Inwood and J. Mansfeld. But Brittain's large book is much the most comprehensive treatment that this elusive and intriguing figure has ever been given. Philo made contributions to ethics and rhetorical theory. This largely neglected material, as well as the more familiar evidence for his epistemological stance, is scrupulously analysed in B.'s hefty book. In a final appendix he collects and translates all the ancient texts mentioning

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