CrossMark

Wall', from the early second century AD through to the end of the fifth century.[25] The book stems from a fruitful collaboration, bringing together the academic expertise of Rob Collins (its principal author) with the curatorial eye of various specialists in the museums and centres along Hadrian's Wall. What really sets the volume apart, though, is the quality of its illustrations: selected 'from a fraction of the many thousands of objects that could be illustrated' (13), printed on thick, glossy paper, and reproduced mainly in colour.

The authors take seriously the charge of immersing readers into a world by turns familiar and strange (17). After inviting us to 'forget everything you know – or that you think you know – about Hadrian's Wall' (16), the book mounts a 'modest attempt to consider life along Hadrian's Wall as a cross-cultural experience' (17), thereby providing 'important insights into the past' (146). Among the many objects that manifest the point is a mould-blown blue glass cup (probably from South Shields), forged into the shape of 'an African's head' – which in turn 'reflects the racial diversity of the Roman Empire' (22, fig. 1.7).

While most subsequent chapters are structured according to tried and tested themes ('Dress and Appearance', 'Eating and Drinking', 'Business and Pleasure', 'Belief, in Life and Death', etc.), others are wholly more innovative. Particularly welcome is the eighth chapter, dedicated to 'Unknowns' – twelve objects that have baffled archaeologists, including those made of copper alloy in so-called 'dodecahedron' shape ('Suggested uses have included that it was part of a game, was a mount for a standard or sceptre, or perhaps even related to surveying due to the holes on each face', 135). Within a popularizing book like this, it is gratifying to see inscribed objects included (their texts printed here in both Latin and English): not just sandstone altars (e.g. 110, fig. 7.1), measures (e.g. 62, fig. 4.6), signet rings (e.g. 34, fig. 2.15), and tombstones (e.g. 127, fig. 7.37), but also the Vindolanda writing tablets that have so enriched our understanding of Romano-British life. Among the various texts discussed here, my personal favourite has to be the supposed 'intelligence report' on British natives, with its disparaging diminutive reference to *Brittunculi*, or horrible 'little Britons' (78–9, fig. 5.6). In current political circumstances, the name somehow seems appropriate: Nigel Farage, if you're reading, what better rebrand for the Brexit Party?

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Philosophy

Sara Brill's new book develops her argument for understanding 'shared life' as central to Aristotle's ethics and politics.[1] By focusing on this notion of shared life, she seeks to

[25] *Living on the Edge of Empire. The Objects and People of Hadrian's Wall*. By Rob Collins, with Barbara Birley, Alexandra Croom, Jane Laskey, Frances McIntosh, Tim Padley, Andrew Parkin, and Elsa Price. Barnsley, Pen & Sword Archaeology, 2020. Pp. 168. Colour illustrations. Hardback £25, ISBN: 978-1-78346-327-5.

[1] *Aristotle on the Concept of Shared Life*. By Sara Brill. Classics in Theory. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. vii + 281. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-883958-3.

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establish the connection between Aristotle's ethical, political, and zoological works in order to ground her emphasis on the essential animality of human society in Aristotle's conception. Her argument turns on a distinction between *bios*, a 'way of life' that we can choose or reject, and *zoē*, 'life itself' (3), and she is committed to establishing the generally unrecognized significance of the latter in Aristotle's ethical thought. The volume is divided into three parts. The first ('Shared Life in Aristotle's Ethics and Politics') concentrates on developing an account of Aristotle's concept of 'shared life' in the ethical and political works in such a way as to establish the importance of the zoological perspective. Here, Brill argues that shared life is at the heart of many of the central concerns of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, including his account of friendship. This is not simply sharing of goods or communal living: 'Because living in its authoritative sense is perceiving and thinking, sharing one's life is sharing in perception and sharing in thinking' (52). Brill finds a similar focus on shared *zoē* in the *Eudemian Ethics*, and the suggestion that our self-awareness and self-concern depend on the presence of others. She further develops her central claim: for all that Aristotle makes repeated assertions of human exceptionality, he also adopts a zoological framework of analysis that locates human friendship within the category of 'animal attachment', albeit as a special case. Human society is distinguished from animal society, but primarily as an *intensification* of the animal, rather than as a rejection of it. As Brill notes, setting up some of the critical analysis found in the third part of the book, her emphasis on community helps to highlight both its fragility and the consequences of exclusion. This is an idea she explains further in her analysis of shared life in the *Politics*: 'if Aristotle's ethics show us the most vivid form of shared life, his *Politics* shows us the conditions of its destruction' (92). Brill considers two extremes of shared life to be found in the *Politics*. Aristotle rejects communism for the sake of the *philia* that lies at the heart of a true community. His account of tyranny, meanwhile, can be understood as an analysis of a *polis* lacking a meaningful presence of shared life or the common good. The second part of the book concentrates on fleshing out the detail of the zoological perspective at the heart of Brill's argument by focusing on the zoological works in particular. She makes the sensible point that, while Aristotle's zoological works may be inaccurate in biological detail, they nevertheless help us to understand his own thinking about the nature and relationship of intelligence and life. Beginning with the *History of Animals*, Brill looks for the political in Aristotle's biological, and argues that he conceives of animal sociality in terms of its various manifestations of the political bond of a common task. It is within this context that we should situate even shared human life. This is not to say that humans are not to be distinguished from animals: what marks humans out is the fact that they can choose their way of life (*bios*). But this choice does not liberate them from the fact of their animality. For this reason, analysis of Aristotle's politics, and of the *polis* itself, should be informed by an awareness of his zoological sensibility. At times in the detail of Brill's own analysis, this zoological emphasis seems to fade into the background, but her central claim remains that human politics is an intensification of animal sociality, rather than a rejection of it. The third and final part presents an intriguing exploration of intersections between Brill's account of Aristotle's *zoē*-politics and modern critical theory (her volume is published in the interdisciplinary series Classics in Theory). She first addresses the connection between Aristotle's commitment to private ownership and his eugenics legislation, noting the double mean of *tokos* as both 'interest' and 'child'. She is particularly interesting on Aristotle's concern

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with the threat of uncontrolled or excessive reproduction. She then turns to an analysis of Aristotle's account of – and ambivalence towards – the maternal bond as central to his understanding of human communities and, especially, friendship. The two chapters of Part III are particularly compelling; I look forward to seeing further approaches to Aristotle, and ancient philosophy in general, along these lines.

Alex Dressler puts Cicero, Lucretius, and Seneca into dialogue with modern thinkers such as Derrida and de Beauvoir in developing an explicitly feminist reading of these philosophers in *Personification and the Feminine in Roman Philosophy*.[2] Dressler is explicit in his Introduction about his desire to seek a 'forward looking' approach (rather than looking back to excavate the classical precursors of Roman philosophy) which may be of interdisciplinary relevance. He aims, in fact, at a kind of 'reparative reading', an act which provides pleasure and stimulation even within an apparently hostile intellectual environment (the implications of this way of reading are developed further in the book's conclusion). Dressler argues that feminine virtues have a much more significant role to play in Roman philosophical writing than has generally been recognized. In fact, he suggests that the feminine virtues are essential to the Roman philosophical notion of self. For all that Roman (philosophical) thought is dominated by masculinity and the male, it is also dependent on the feminine and effeminate. The philosophers recognize and do not entirely reject the feminine within themselves. Dressler is particularly interested in 'feminine personification': that is, the use of figurative language to personify concepts and abstractions that are grammatically feminine in such a way as to highlight their agency. He sees this as an example of these philosophers using the literary aspect of their writing to demonstrate the significance of feminine concepts, such as embodiment and vulnerability, while also seeking to, in a sense, master this aspect of themselves. Dressler works with the twin notions of 'literary personification' (the attribution of human character and qualities to non-human phenomena and ideas) and 'philosophical personification' (the philosophical analysis – and construction – of personhood). Here, as elsewhere, he works with a fundamental, although somewhat underexamined, division between 'literature' and 'philosophy'. The individual chapters are organized by topic, rather than chronology. At times this means that Dressler introduces a sometimes dizzying array of evidence to build his case. In some chapters, however, he focuses on close readings of individual texts, providing interesting and detailed insights. He begins with a chapter ('Love, Literature, and Philosophy') developing what he takes to be a general Roman philosophical notion of 'ownness'. This is close in sense to Stoic *oikeiosis*, but is an idea he believes to be central to Roman philosophy across the schools. Dressler considers this notion of 'ownness' within the context of Roman analysis of friendship and self-sufficiency, and argues that it is importantly informed by a sensitivity to affection and the vulnerability of (the need for) loving relations: 'In an attempt to map and protect the confusing space between himself and his friend, the Roman produces *two forms of friendship*: corporeal and spiritual, feminine and masculine' (40, emphasis in original), each understood in terms of the other. He points to the fact that oikeiotic language is often accompanied by feminine literary personification as evidence of the fundamental connection between feminine and masculine in

[2] *Personification and the Feminine in Roman Philosophy*. By Alex Dressler. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xiii + 312. Hardback £88.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-10596-6.

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the development of a philosophical understanding of oneself. It is on this repeated commitment to personification that Dressler focuses in his second chapter ('The Subjects of Personification and Personhood'), again seeking to demonstrate the widespread presence of feminine literary personification in masculine philosophical personification, allowing men to understand themselves through their exploration of, as it were, their 'feminine side'. The significance of 'real' women to this model is explored in the third chapter ('Mothers, Sons, and Metaphysics: Others' Agency and Self-Identity in the Roman Stoic Notion of a Person'), which considers the rhetorical means by which Cicero and Seneca construct their philosophical accounts of 'ownness'. Dressler argues that these authors co-opt the feminine language of emotion partly by excluding the 'primary others who were essential features of his own early ownness: women, slaves, and his own earlier physical vulnerability and passivity in infancy and early life' (99). There is thus, as he observes, a tension between what these philosophers say and how they say it. Chapter 4 ('Girl behind the Woman: Cicero and Tullia, Lucretius and the Life of the Body Mind') turns to Lucretius and, with a particular a focus on the distinction between *animus* and *anima*, Dressler applies his interpretative frame to the use of figurative and personificatory language in several key passages of *On the Nature of Things*. So, for example, he suggests that the positive value of both Epicurus and Lucretius comes in part through their ability to stand as male 'conquerors' over an 'obscenely personified' feminine nature. This chapter is particularly strong in demonstrating the connection between literary and philosophical personification, as Dressler understands those categories. Chapter 5 ('Embodied Persons and Bodies Personified: The Phenomenology of Perspectives in Seneca *Ep.* 121') continues the exploration of Roman approaches to the self, with a focus on Seneca *Ep.* 121. Dressler highlights the way in which Seneca's interest in subjectivity pushes him to use rhetorical and poetic discourse, which in turn prompts him to develop his discussion of subjectivity further. A final substantial chapter ('Nature's Property in *On Duties* 1: The Feminine Communism of Cicero's Radical Aesthetics') turns to Cicero's *On Duties* and its construction of what it is to own and be owned. Here, too, Dressler finds interesting points of connection between Cicero's rhetoric and his sense of self. Some readers are likely to be put off by the jargonistic and theory-heavy exposition, but the book undoubtedly offers many original and interesting suggestions for those willing to follow Dressler in his pursuit of the feminine side of the Roman philosophers.

Will Desmond has produced a substantial and detailed study of Hegel's interest in and response to antiquity, built around the triad of 'universality, particularity, and individuality' (31).[3] Desmond identifies this formula at the heart of Hegel's interaction with and construction of Greece and Rome. After an Introduction ('Hegel and the Ancient World') setting out the biographical and cultural context for the 'German Aristotle' (23), in which he usefully emphasizes Hegel's credentials as a philologist as well as a philosopher, Desmond divides his account into five substantial sections, focusing on politics, aesthetics, religion, philosophy, and history in turn. Throughout, Hegel's particular connection to the ancient philosophers is clear. Desmond notes, for example, the manner in which the *Science of Logic* 'claimed to prove and make concrete the

[3] *Hegel's Antiquity*. By Will D. Desmond. Classical Presences. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. xii + 391. Hardback £90, ISBN: 978-0-19-883906-4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383520000339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

unity of thought and being with which the Eleatics had inaugurated philosophy itself' (27). For Hegel, the project was not to discover fundamental ideas (since this was the achievement of the ancients), but rather to 'unify and exemplify them in actuality' (29). Elsewhere, Desmond notes the deep influence of Aristotle, particularly on Hegel's epistemology, and of the Stoic division of philosophy. Chapter 2 ('Beautiful City, Lawful Empire, Rational State') focuses on Hegel's political thought, and on the *Philosophy of Right*, demonstrating the influence, both negative and positive, of both Greece and Rome. Desmond notes, for example, Hegel's interest in the then unfashionable *Republic* as 'first articulating the primacy and rationality of the state' (46), although he goes on to point out that Hegel's preference for rule by constitutional monarch leads him away from the 'great presumption' (89) of Plato's philosopher kings towards the Roman emperors. The cast of ancient protagonists and antagonists in this area of Hegel's thought includes Aristotle, Epicurus, the Roman Stoics, Greek myth, and Socrates. One of the strengths of Desmond's analysis is his acknowledgement of what might seem to be puzzling absences from Hegel's account. So, for example, he points to the surprising absence of discussion of the ancient philosophical background in Hegel's treatment of the family. The chapters on 'Art' and the *Lectures on Aesthetics* and on 'Religion' and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* touch less frequently on the ancient philosophers, although, of course, the influence of Aristotle's *Poetics* is felt in the former and of Aristotle's god in the latter. Noting that Hegel's engagement with antiquity is sometimes fruitfully unfaithful, Desmond observes that 'his system places Greek, Roman, and Christian in relation to an Aristotelian conception of god: a move that does some violence to these three traditions, even while it presages revolutionary consequences for conceiving the human' (196). I particularly enjoyed learning more of Hegel's challenge to Xenophanes' critique of anthropomorphic religion, on the grounds that Greek gods are not, despite what Xenophanes claims, anthropomorphic enough. Naturally, the chapter on 'Philosophy' and the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* offers the most for those interested in Hegel's dialogue with ancient philosophy itself. From Hegel's perspective, the history of philosophy *is* philosophy, and he regards the ancients as often more insightful than the moderns. Thus, the study of the history of philosophy is what will provoke the realization of 'philosophy as *the* end in itself' (243). In assessing Hegel's philosophical affiliations, Desmond suggests that we should 'take him as a Janus-figure, straddling the threshold of ancient and more modern perspectives: from different angles, he is an Aristotelian, Neoplatonist, Kantian, as well as a process thinker' (248–9). Notable here is the reminder that Hegel bears some responsibility for the exclusion of Chinese and Indian thought from the Western conception of the philosophical tradition, and perhaps also the perception of Roman philosophy as essentially derivative. Desmond offers close readings of sections of Hegel's 'detailed, challenging, and rewarding' (254) lectures on philosophy, working through his account chronologically, from the Presocratics to Neoplatonism. In each case, he unpicks both Hegel's critical insights and his construction of the past in relation to his own Idealism. Hegel treats Plato as an essentially unsystematic thinker, albeit 'groping towards the elements of a true system' (279), criticized as not idealistic enough in his politics. Aristotle is undoubtedly the most important ancient thinker for Hegel, who treats Aristotle's philosophy as an 'evolutionary theory of everything' (296). Unsurprisingly, the Neoplatonists, and Proclus in particular, appeal to Hegel as committed synthesizers. In this chapter, as elsewhere,

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Desmond faces up to some notable omissions from Hegel's account, such as his apparent lack of interest in Proclus' hostility to Christianity. In a final short chapter, 'History, Cosmos, Mind, and (Not Quite) Everything', Desmond turns to Hegel's interest in history and the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, noting that, for all his pretensions to sum up the whole past, he inevitably falls short. Throughout, Desmond provides useful overviews of Hegel's work, so that even those with less familiarity will gain much from the details of his discussion. He has set himself no minor challenge in seeking to cover so much in one volume. His playful Kierkegaardian suggestion for an alternative title to 'Hegel's Antiquity' runs to seven lines. I was frequently struck by the thought that any of the individual chapters could be plausibly developed into a book-length treatment. Indeed, as Desmond suggests, the fact that each chapter tends to take an individual work and theme as its focus means that they can be read in isolation from one another or as an inspiring whole.

The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot is the first volume in Bloomsbury's new Re-inventing Philosophy as a Way of Life series.[4] The volume collects fourteen short pieces of Hadot's writing, none of which has previously been available in English translation. Arnold Davidson and Daniele Lorenzini provide a brief foreword setting out the central commitments and significance of Hadot's approach to ancient philosophy, especially his focus on philosophy as a way of life, and his notion of reading as an active dialogical process. Matthew Sharpe's Introduction offers a useful summary of Hadot's intellectual biography, philosophy, and influence. He rightly points out the clear influence of Hadot's work on the 'Modern Stoics' currently working to popularize the Hellenistic school as providing the tools to cope with modern life. He also gives a useful brief introduction to the criticisms that have been levelled at Hadot's treatment of ancient philosophy in particular, noting that Hadot has often been accused of downplaying the rationality that is at the heart of ancient philosophy in favour of a more existentialist vision. Sharpe goes on to introduce the selection of writings and demonstrate how they work together to answer some of those criticisms. The selections are divided into four sections. The first section, 'Key Parameters', includes four chapters addressing the fundamental elements of Hadot's approach to ancient philosophy, beginning with a short intellectual autobiography ('My Books and My Research') and including essays on 'Ancient Philosophy: An Ethics or a Practice?' and 'The Oral Teaching of Plato'. The second chapter in this section, 'The Ancient Philosophers', gives a valuable overview of Hadot's attitude towards the history of ancient philosophy. Originally written as a preface to Richard Goulet's *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, the chapter considers the scope and purpose of ancient philosophy by surveying the range of titles preserved in ancient catalogues. Hadot seeks to contrast the ancient conception of philosophy with modern notions, pointing to the diversity in both content and genre of ancient philosophical writing and, inevitably, leading to the claim that the ancient version of the discipline was always more a matter of 'living speech than a written work, and more a life than a speech' (47). For Hadot, to understand ancient philosophy is

[4] *The Selected Writings of Pierre Hadot. Philosophy as Practice.* Translated by Matthew Sharpe and Federico Testa. Re-inventing Philosophy as a Way of Life. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Pp. xii + 307. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-1-4742-7297-1; paperback £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-4742-7299-5.

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more than simply to work out the arguments (which is not to say that he rejects the importance of those arguments):

in order to comprehend ancient philosophy, it will not suffice to analyse the structure of thought which is expressed, for example, in the dialogues of Plato or the writings of Aristotle. To this absolutely indispensable research, it would be necessary to add an effort to grasp the philosophical process in all its lived reality, concrete and existential, and in all its dimensions, not solely literary but [also] social, political, religious, institutional, juridical, geographical and anthropological. (50)

How we might go about such an enormous task is demonstrated in several of the other chapters collected here. The second section, 'Aspects', includes chapters on philosophy as conversion, the division of ancient philosophy, and the relationship between philosophy, rhetoric, dialectic, and pedagogy. An interesting third section on 'Nature' includes two chapters which usefully relate to Hadot's *Veil of Nature*. The fourth section, 'Figures', collects chapters on Marcus Aurelius, the figure of the philosophical Sage, and Foucault, with whom Hadot enjoyed a prolonged and significant interaction. The final section, 'Ends', includes one chapter on the 'chronological' end of ancient philosophy – informed by Hadot's long-standing interest in Neoplatonism – and another on different models of *eudaimonia* ('human flourishing'). The chapters collected here provide a useful expansion of anglophone access to his work. They will inevitably appeal more to those already inclined to be persuaded by the value of Hadot's approach but, as Sharpe notes in his Introduction, they also provide an interesting implicit riposte to many of the criticisms to which it has been subjected.

Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Aristotelianism is a recent publication in the Bloomsbury Studies in the Aristotelian Tradition series.[5] It offers fourteen newly commissioned chapters, divided into three sections. Throughout, the influence of Alasdair MacIntyre is particularly keenly felt, not least in the fact that he has authored the first chapter in the collection. The editors set out their approach and intention in a brief Introduction, which argues for the value of situating Aristotelianism against the background of modern ethics: 'Aristotelianism rightly understood can provide us with the theoretical and ethical resources for a radical critique of contemporary moral and political order' (2). The aim is, in part, to look at the original texts afresh, without necessarily restricting oneself to attention to '"the letter" of their arguments' (4). Part 1 ('The Aristotelian Tradition of Virtues') presents six chapters on ancient and early Christian Aristotelianism. In the first, Alasdair MacIntyre sets out to describe 'Four – or More? – Political Aristotles': that is, Aristotle, Aristotle as understood by Aquinas, Aristotle as understood in the sixteenth century, and the 'present-day' Aristotle. MacIntyre reintroduces themes from his earlier work, such as the need to read the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* together, and the deficiencies that result from Aristotle's exclusion of women and others. MacIntyre notes the plurality of Aristoteles found, not only through the history of thought, but even today, and concludes that this is partly the result of the fact that Aristotle's texts 'underdetermine

[5] *Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Aristotelianism*. Edited by Andrius Bielskis, Eleni Leontsini, and Kelvin Knight. Bloomsbury Studies in the Aristotelian Tradition. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. Pp. x + 243. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-1-3501-2217-8.

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their interpretation at significant points', noting that, in approaching the texts, we should be wary not to become victim to our own unrecognized presuppositions. In the second of four chapters in Part 2, 'Modernity, Conflict and MacIntyrean Aristotelianism', Christof Rapp ('Virtues and the Common Good: Alasdair MacIntyre Reads Aristotle') challenges the degree to which MacIntyre's Aristotelianism is genuinely Aristotelian. He argues that, in rejecting the appeal to a fixed human nature that lies at the heart of Aristotle's ethics, MacIntyre essentially strips the philosophical centre from Aristotle's conception of virtue. While the resulting position may have much to recommend it, Rapp's final move is to question the appeal to the pre-modern with which MacIntyre lends authority to his arguments. Part 3 ('Virtue Ethics and Modern Social and Political Theory') comprises four chapters positioning modern Aristotelianism in the broader context of modern moral and political philosophy. In the final chapter, for example, Paul Blackledge identifies what he sees as a conflict between the implications of MacIntyre's historical-sociological conception of practices, and those of his ahistorical account of human nature. Blackledge situates the question within a political context, arguing for the need to return to the Marxist perspective of MacIntyre's earlier work.

Those more convinced of the need to return to the letter of text will be extremely grateful for the publication of Dorothea Frede's brand-new two-volume edition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in De Gruyter's German-language series of the complete works of Aristotle.[6] Volume 1 includes a German translation and useful introduction, including an account of the reception of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as well as an extensive bibliography. Volume 2 presents more than 600 pages of detailed commentary, indispensable to any scholar of Aristotle's ethics.

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General

Materiality of ancient text – written, painted, scratched, or carved – is a topic dear to my heart, and I find the visual dimension of ancient writing fascinating for many reasons. Like many Classicists, I also find a great joy in puzzling out the meanings of the lettered lines, arched like dancing serpents, on archaic Greek vases. If one pauses in front of an interesting pot in a museum, it is very easy to forget the time and the rest of the exhibition, as the somersaulting shapes of the continuous script reveal first their letters, then words, rewarding the reader's patience with a short sentence or two: 'Rejoice! Drink well!' At times, we have to admit defeat and acknowledge that we are in front of a 'nonsense' inscription: that is, an inscription whose lettering creates meanings in a different

[6] *Aristoteles. Nikomachische Ethik*. By Dorothea Frede. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020. Pp. xxx + 1016 (two volumes). Hardback £172, ISBN: 978-3-11-055948-4.

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