Gargiulo was to vases what Canova and Thorvaldsen were to sculpture; his art of 'perfecting' the past, like theirs, fell out of favour.

And we must not be too harsh on South Italian ware. It was, after all, a medium synchronized in time and place with the efflorescence of Greek theatrical drama, tragic and comic; and if one follows Oliver Taplin's argument that theatre was the main conduit for knowledge of mythology throughout the Greek world after the fifth century, and furthermore that vases were not only synchronic but also iconographically integrated with theatre in Magna Graecia, then much may be forgiven in terms of style. Taplin and others have done much to substantiate the process.[5] But has it registered with Roman art specialists? Zahra Newby, reassessing *Greek Myths in Roman Art and Culture*,[6] summarizes the Roman 'appropriation' of Greek myth as essentially a by-product of military conquest: so 'mythological images develop from objects of booty' (347). Surely, however, the diffusion of stories and motifs was more subtle and gradual than that. The theatres at Syracuse, Tarentum, and elsewhere were active before and after Roman annexation of their cities, with Latin versions of Greek classics on the bill by the mid-third century (and, of course, Greek artists had been busy in Rome and Etruria since the late seventh century). What Newby does by way of subsequent analysis will be a valuable addition to undergraduate bibliographies, as she moves between statues, statue-groups, wall-paintings, and funerary monuments, including sarcophagi. It seems a little unfair to present 'Arthur Derby [*sic*] Nock' as spokesman of the view that Romans displayed images of Greek myth merely as status symbols. Rhetorically, however, this lays the ground for stimulating discussions of the various and multi-layered modes in which such images served as 'more than simply decoration' (319). How 'decoration' relates to visual 'decorum' is left for us to figure out.

NIGEL SPIVEY
njs11@cam.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0017383517000122

Philosophy

As A. K. Cotton acknowledges at the beginning of her monograph *Platonic Dialogue and the Education of the Reader*,[1] 'the idea that a reader's relationship with Plato's text is analogous to that of the respondent with the discussion leader' within the dialogue, and 'that we engage in a dialogue with the text almost parallel to theirs', 'is almost a commonplace of Platonic criticism' (4). But Cotton has the merit of articulating this commonplace much more clearly and precisely than is often done, and of asking

[5] See, e.g. G. Bordignon (ed.), *Scene dal mito. Iconologia del dramma antico* (Rimini, 2015), containing a series of valuable case studies.

[6] *Greek Myths in Roman Art and Culture. Imagery, Values and Identity in Italy, 50 BC–AD 250*. By Zahra Newby. Greek Culture in the Roman World. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xx + 387. 114 b/w illustrations, 15 colour plates. Hardback £74.99, ISBN: 978-1-107-0722-4.

[1] *Platonic Dialogue and the Education of the Reader*. By A. K. Cotton. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. ix + 330. Hardback £73, ISBN: 978-0-19-968405-2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

how *exactly* the dialogue between interlocutors is supposed to affect the dialogue of the reader with the text, and what kind of reader response Plato is inviting. Not surprisingly, her starting point is Plato's notorious (written) concerns about written texts expressed in the *Phaedrus*: 'writing cannot contain or convey knowledge', and will give to the 'receiver' the mistaken perception that he or she has learned something – that is, has acquired knowledge – from reading (6–7). She claims that the *Phaedrus* also suggests, however, that a written text, in the right hands, 'may have a special role to play in awakening the soul of its receiver towards knowledge' (17). I have no doubt that Plato thought as much, but Cotton's reference to the language of *hupomnēmata* at 276d3, and to the way in which sensible images act as *hupomnēmata* for the recollection of the Forms earlier in the dialogue, fails to support her case: Socrates remarks in that passage that writings can serve only as 'reminders' *for their authors* (16). The book's central thesis is that the way in which writing can awaken the reader's soul 'towards knowledge' is not by pointing the reader, however indirectly, implicitly, non-dogmatically, or even ironically, towards the right views, but by developing the reader/learner's 'ability to engage *in a certain way*' in dialectical inquiry (26). The familiar developments between 'early', 'middle', and 'late' dialogues are thus accepted but seen as part of a single coherent educational project towards the reader's/learner's full development of what Cotton calls 'dialectical virtue'. Plato's reader is invited to treat the characterization of the interlocutors within the dialogues, and the description of their dialectical behaviour, 'as a commentary on responses appropriate and inappropriate in the reader' (28). Cotton's programme, clearly sketched in Chapter 1, is ambitious and sophisticated, and is carried out with impressive ingenuity in the following six chapters (the eighth and final chapter, besides summarizing some of the book's conclusions, introduces a notion of 'civic virtue' which does not appear to be sufficiently grounded on the analyses in the rest of the book). An especially instructive aspect of her inquiry is the attention paid to the 'affective' dimension of the interlocutor's and reader's responses: through the representation of the interlocutors in his written dialogues, and the labours to which he submits us as readers, Plato teaches us that 'the learner's engagement must be cognitive-affective in character; and it involves a range of specific experiences, including discomfort, frustration, anger, confusion, disbelief, and a desire to flee' (263). Perhaps because of her belief that what the Platonic dialogues are about is not philosophical views or doctrines but a process of education in 'dialectical virtue', Cotton has remarkably little to say concerning the psychological and epistemological underpinnings of the views on, and methods of, education which she attributes to Plato. The Cave allegory in the *Republic*, which is unsurprisingly adopted as an instructive image of Plato's insights on learning and educational development in Chapter 2, is discussed without any reference to the various cognitive stages which the phases of the ascent in and outside the Cave are meant to represent. Two central features of Plato's conception of learning identified by Cotton – the individual learner's own efforts and participation, and the necessity of some trigger to catalyse the learning process (263) – are not connected, as one might well have expected, to the 'theory of recollection' or the related imagery of psychic pregnancy or Socratic midwifery. Even Cotton's laudable stress on the 'affective' aspects of the learning process could have been helpfully complemented by some consideration of Platonic moral psychology. Despite these reservations, and the unavoidable limitations and oversimplifications involved in any attempt to characterize Plato's corpus as *one* single, unified project, I

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

believe that readers with an interest in Platonic writing and method will benefit greatly from Cotton's insightful inquiry.

Hugh Benson's *Clitophon's Challenge. Dialectic in Plato's Meno, Phaedo and Republic*[2] has, despite its title, remarkably little to say about Plato's (?) *Clitophon*, or the details of the complex challenge that the character Clitophon unleashes against the Socratic method in that dialogue. Moreover, despite its subtitle, the book focuses almost exclusively on one aspect of Platonic 'dialectic': the so-called 'method of hypothesis'. Benson formulates Clitophon's challenge as follows: 'How are we to acquire the virtue-knowledge that Socrates has so successfully encouraged us to seek' (7) but that Socrates himself constantly claims to lack? 'Virtue-knowledge' is first defined, rather vaguely, as 'knowledge which is in some way crucially connected with virtue' (2), and then, more strongly, as 'robust knowledge' which is both necessary and sufficient for virtue (16). Neither definition (nor indeed the label 'virtue-knowledge') is obviously relevant, however, to some of the objects of Socratic investigation which Benson uses in the following chapters as test cases for his interpretation of Plato's method of hypothesis (for example, the causes of generation and destruction in the *Phaedo*; the possibility of Kallipolis in the *Republic*). After a nuanced discussion of Socrates' claim, explored inconclusively in several early dialogues, that knowledge might be acquired from an expert teacher (a claim which Benson convincingly argues should not be taken as merely ironic) (Chapter 2), the author moves on to the *Meno* (Chapter 3). He takes Meno's paradox as a serious challenge to the possibility of learning by inquiring and 'discovering on one's own' (49), and the introduction of two features of 'classical Platonism' – the theory of recollection and the method of hypothesis – as Plato's solution: 'the theory of recollection provides the possibility of *de novo* discovery. The method of hypothesis provides the methodology of *de novo* discovery' (51). Benson's discussion of both the paradox and recollection is judicious, if slightly over-dependent upon existing scholarly approaches. While acknowledging that Plato does not indicate *how* recollection solves the paradox, he seems to misjudge the implications of passages such as 81d5–e2 and 86b6–c2 when he claims that they show Socrates' confidence *that* recollection solves the paradox (62, 76). The method of hypothesis, understood by Benson as the best method of inquiry to make discovery and the acquisition of knowledge possible in the absence of a knowledgeable teacher, is the focus of the rest of the book. His assumption is that a single and coherent method of hypothesis should emerge from the short and notoriously opaque presentations in the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*; his attempt to reconstruct such a method on their basis (Chapter 4) – albeit, ultimately, a 'messy' and imprecise method (270) – displays some ingenuity, but at the same time demands strained readings of the texts on several key occasions (for example, the suggestion that the *hormēthenta* of a certain hypothesis should include, broadly, the 'observations, sayings or common opinions. . .in some way appropriately associated with. . .the. . .component forms or concepts of the hypothesis' [174], and should be tested against other 'facts on the ground'). More puzzlingly, Benson does not offer any evidence for his assumption that, in the two dialogues, the method of hypothesis

[2] *Clitophon's Challenge. Dialectic in Plato's Meno, Phaedo and Republic.* By Hugh H. Benson. Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. x + 318. Hardback £44.49, ISBN: 978-0-19-932483-5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

is adopted as a (potentially successful) way to acquire knowledge, as opposed to a way to carry on a certain provisional inquiry on a certain matter. The speculative identification of the method of hypothesis with the dialectic of the central books of the *Republic*, rather than with the 'hypothetical' dianoetic form of reasoning of mathematicians and geometricians (Chapter 9), seems to beg the question in support of Benson's proposed interpretation of the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*. Despite these perplexities about the overall approach and conclusions of the book, Benson's arguments provide an interesting fresh challenge to the interpreters to devise (or defend) alternative accounts of the method(s) of hypothesis in the Platonic dialogues.

Some of the thorny exegetical and philosophical questions raised by Plato's introduction and solution of Meno's paradox in the *Meno*, upon which Benson touches cursorily in Chapter 3 of his book, are the focus of Gail Fine's *The Possibility of Inquiry. Meno's Paradox from Socrates to Sextus*.[3] This book brings together several threads of Fine's research into the subject published over the last twenty-five years, from her classic 1992 article 'Inquiry in the *Meno*' to two more recent pieces on Sextus Empiricus' reports of, and reactions to, anti-sceptical versions of Meno's paradox. Even if most chapters are revised (and often expanded) versions of published work, readers already familiar with Fine's theses would miss something important if they decided not to give further consideration to *The Possibility of Inquiry* as a whole: not only are the additions and improvements substantial but this is a very good example of a monograph in which the whole is more than the sum of its parts. In particular, the conceptual and argumentative framework of the Platonic section in Part I is essential in Part II to shed some light on the motivations and arguments of Aristotle (Chapter 6), the Epicureans (Chapter 7), the Stoics (Chapter 8), and the Sceptics (Chapters 10 and 11), and to understand Plutarch's intriguing account and assessment of rival solutions to Meno's paradox (Chapter 9). Given the limited space available here, however, I will confine myself to some observations on Part I. Chapter 1 sets the stage and the tone for the rest of the book:

> we routinely assume that we can inquire, and that at least some of our inquiries succeed, that we sometimes find what we are looking for.…Meno's paradox challenges the very possibility of inquiry…Though we might think to dismiss the paradox, Plato doesn't do so. (1)

Nor do Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Sceptics. Before examining how exactly they understand the challenge, and their solutions, Fine sketches some key conceptual distinctions which she uses systematically in the rest of the book. Since the kernel of the paradox seems to be the idea that if one does not know the object of one's inquiry one will not be able to inquire about it, an important distinction that she draws is between 'a *stepping-stone* and a *matching* version of the foreknowledge principle. According to the former, to inquire one needs to have some relevant knowledge. According to the latter, to inquire one needs to know the very thing one is inquiring into' (12). But what turns out to be even more important for her project is the question of *when* one must have this 'foreknowledge': although one could assume that this

[3] *The Possibility of Inquiry. Meno's Paradox from Socrates to Sextus*. By Gail Fine. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 399. Hardback £55, ISBN: 978-0-19-957739-2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

knowledge must be in us at the moment of the inquiry (it should be 'current knowledge'), previous knowledge, perhaps even prenatal knowledge, might be all that is needed for the possibility of successful inquiry (20–21). Chapters 2–5 are an exegetical and philosophical *tour de force*, in which Fine through painstakingly rigorous analysis of the text of the *Meno* constructs her original interpretation of the logic of Meno's paradox and of Plato's solution to it. It is impossible to do justice to the subtlety of her arguments here. One could perhaps dispute her proposal that Socrates' dilemmatic reformulation of Meno's paradox does not miss anything essential, since Meno's own third question at 80d7–8 ('even if you really encounter it [sc. what you do not know at all], how will you know that this is the thing that you didn't know?'), the 'recognition objection', can be answered in the same way as the 'targeting objection' ('what sort of thing, among those you don't know, will you put forward as the thing you're inquiring into?'). They can both be answered, according to Fine, by clarifying that Socrates' avowed lack of knowledge does not amount to a 'complete cognitive blank' (93), *pace* Meno. The proposal is founded upon the assumption that Meno is unable to grasp the distinction between knowledge and lower-level cognitive states, and that his 'recognition objection' can thus be tackled simply by clarifying that Socrates has relevant beliefs about the object of inquiry, virtue. But the distinction between being able to get an inquiry going, on the basis of existing beliefs, and to complete it successfully with the knowledge of having found *the* right answer might be alluded to in Meno's wording of the 'recognition objection' ('how will you *know* that this is the thing that you didn't know'). Perhaps more importantly, does it really matter how Meno himself understands his question? If his third question conveys a deep philosophical challenge which could be articulated clearly by someone who is able to make the correct distinction between knowledge and belief, then, whatever Meno's intentions, we should not assume that Socrates is warranted in ignoring it. But Fine's central, and more controversial, thesis is that the 'theory of recollection' and the geometrical examination of the slave, which are presented by Socrates as a solution to Meno's paradox and an illustration of the possibility of (successful) inquiry in the absence of knowledge, do not amount to an endorsement of the principle of foreknowledge as typically understood, making 'current knowledge' a prerequisite for inquiry (Chapters 4 and 5). After distinguishing several varieties of innatism (140–7), in a way which is both useful and deeply puzzling, given the inherently slippery nature of the terrain (for example, what does it mean to say that there are 'truths in us' from birth, suitable to be believed, whether or not we actually believe them or not, as 'content innatism' supposedly claims? [142]), Fine argues that Plato was not a full-blown 'cognitive-condition' or 'content' innatist about knowledge, or indeed true belief: our prenatal knowledge, completely forgotten at birth, left in us 'something', a 'persisting entity' which can be understood as 'a disposition to reacquire the knowledge we once had, or a disposition to favour truths over falsehoods' (152). In other words, 'the fact that we had prenatal knowledge of some range of things that we can recollect explains, or grounds, our ability to inquire and discover in this life' (176). Fine's proposal is defended with a striking amount of ingenuity. There are many ways in which, at first sight, it seems to be impossible to reconcile with the text of the *Meno*, and indeed with other relevant passages in the Platonic corpus: Fine does not sweep these difficulties under the carpet but on each occasion she makes the best possible case for an alternative reading of the text compatible with her proposal (although a more extensive discussion of recollection in other dialogues

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

would have been welcome). Even when the balance of plausibility appears to tell against these readings, individually or at least collectively (such as the translation of *analambanein* as 'taking up' knowledge in oneself, instead of 'recovering' such latent knowledge [150]; the claim that 'now' [*nun*] in 'the knowledge which the slave now has' [85d9] can be 'forward-referring, to the time when the slave *will* acquire the knowledge he has just been said to lack' [153]; the suggestion that beliefs can be 'stirred up' in the soul even if they were not there all along [161]), Fine's interpretive resourcefulness is unquestionable. What I find perhaps more problematic is that her interpretation seems to leave Plato with a philosophical position which is much less perspicuous and much more unstable than cruder forms of innatism. How does our now forgotten prenatal knowledge leave behind such a mysterious disposition to form correct beliefs, and ultimately to reacquire knowledge? What kind of psychological entity is this disposition? Why assume prenatal knowledge at all, and not more simply and directly the existence of such an innate disposition? But Fine's book has the great merit of helping us to reach the level of conceptual clarity about these and other problems which makes further engagement with Plato's text exciting, and hopefully profitable. It is a must-read for anyone with an interest in the *Meno*, Plato, or ancient epistemology.

The *Theaetetus*, one of the foundational texts in the history of epistemology, remains one of the most closely studied Platonic dialogues, by both students and scholars. John McDowell's classic translation, originally published in 1973, is now available again, virtually unchanged, in the Oxford World's Classics series, with a short Introduction, selected short (Anglophone), bibliography, notes, and glossary by Lesley Brown.[4] After a compact summary of the structure of the dialogue, the Introduction focuses on some vexed general 'enigmas' (x) concerning how to interpret the dialogue as a whole, within the context of the Platonic corpus, sketching some of the main exegetical options which have been pursued by readers of the *Theaetetus* since antiquity. It is a very useful reminder of the philosophical complexity and richness of the *Theaetetus*, but probably best read *after* the dialogue, since a first-time reader is not likely to be able to understand and appreciate the issues judiciously selected and raised by Brown without first analysing closely Plato's own arguments (with the aid of Brown's useful endnotes and glossary). I suspect that lecturers will be especially interested in having an affordable, compact book containing McDowell's translation to adopt in introductory classes (but McDowell's detailed commentary in his 1973 edition will remain essential for more advanced students), especially if they prefer the more literal approach of McDowell to the fluency and elegance of Levett's equally classic English translation, revised by Burnyeat, which accompanies Burnyeat's extensive introduction to the *Theaetetus* and is re-printed in the Hackett *Complete Works of Plato*.[5]

Roslyn Weiss's *Philosophers in the Republic. Plato's Two Paradigms*[6] will surprise most readers, and I suspect might frustrate a good deal of them as well. According to the

[4] *Plato. Theaetetus.* Translated by John McDowell. With an introduction and notes by Lesley Brown. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xxxiii + 161. Paperback £9.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-964616-6.

[5] M. J. Levett (trans.), *The Theaetetus of Plato*, rev. M. Burnyeat (Indianapolis, IN, 1990).

[6] *Philosophers in the Republic. Plato's Two Paradigms.* By Roslyn Weiss. Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2012. Pp. xi + 236. Hardback £44.95, ISBN: 978-0-8014-4974-1; paperback £18.95, ISBN: 978-1-5017-0442-0.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

author the book has 'a modest aim': 'to show that Plato's *Republic* contains two distinct and irreconcilable portrayals of the philosopher' (1). The aim is supposedly so modest that Weiss feels 'deeply confident' that her case is correct (1). As it turns out, she argues, with the creativity and flair which characterize some of her earlier monographs on Platonic dialogues such as the *Crito* and the *Meno*, that the philosopher-rulers of Kallipolis described in Book 7 are actually third-rate philosophers: they are led by their appetites, have no love for truth and knowledge, and are egoistically indifferent to the physical and moral welfare of their fellow-citizens (hence they need to be forced to learn first, and to rule later: they are 'philosophers by design'). They are therefore morally inferior to the unselfish 'philosophers by nature' introduced in Book 5 and in the first part of Book 6 (especially at 499a–502c), who are genuine lovers of truth, and to Socrates himself, a third and even superior 'paradigm' of the true philosophical life and its 'piety' (this third paradigm is not acknowledged in the book's subtitle, because it is not discussed, but illustrated, by Socrates in the *Republic*). What readers of the *Republic* normally identify as Plato's conception of justice and his portrayal of the ideal philosopher (or, at least, the ideal philosopher-ruler) are in fact only the contingent and ultimately unsatisfactory by-product of the way in which the character Socrates has to engage therapeutically with his interlocutors, Glaucon and Adeimantus, within the dramatic fiction of the dialogue: 'justice and philosophy as they really are have. . .little hope of winning Glaucon's and Adeimantus's admiration. What is called for, therefore, are slightly distorted versions of each' (7). But we, the 'Careful Readers', who are engaging in a very different dialogue with the text and Plato himself (see my review of Cotton above), are of course supposed to see that, and to understand what real justice and real philosophy are. This approach, which is often presented by its supporters as the best way to do justice to the sophistication, nuance, and literary mastery of Plato, ironically risks forcing us into a very uncharitable assessment of Plato's philosophical and literary credentials. If generations of readers and interpreters since antiquity have thought that Plato's 'message' to them in the *Republic* was, by and large, the same as Socrates' message to his interlocutors, then Plato tried to be too clever for his own good, and failed miserably as a philosophical teacher. This is an especially pressing issue since, on Weiss's reading, despite her own claims, justice in Book 4 and the philosopher in Book 7 are not simply 'slightly distorted versions' of the real things. In order to satisfy Glaucon's egoistic demand to show that justice is to one's own advantage, justice as a form of internal psychic harmony or health is consciously (and almost sophistically) jumbled up by Socrates with a different virtue, moderation, whereas real justice – the 'other-regarding social or interpersonal virtue' (184) that is never explicitly identified as such in the dialogue – is actually to be understood by us as 'the virtue that shows proper regard for the interests of others' (164). And the philosopher-rulers of Kallipolis turn out not to be 'philosophers' ('lovers-of-wisdom') after all, *pace* Weiss, since they do not love truth and knowledge in itself, but they are naturally appetitive types who were forced by the circumstances into a philosophical (*sic*) education. With an unexpected twist, we learn in the Conclusion that these 'unhealthy' philosophers, if they featured in the myth of Er in Book 10 (and we, the Careful Readers, are meant to notice their absence), would be liable to choose, unlike the 'healthy' and 'natural' ones, an unjust life for their next reincarnation, perhaps even the life of a tyrant, and would probably not even come to regret their choice (217)! It is a mystery to me how their supposed knowledge of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Good, however they arrived at it, could be compatible with such a choice. But it might be worth suspending one's incredulity towards Weiss's big, bold picture and engaging with her detailed arguments and close readings of the text: even when those arguments appear weak and those readings strained, they compel us, as Careful Readers, to diagnose precisely their shortcomings, and to come up with more plausible solutions (her discussion of the problematic relationship between justice and moderation in Chapter 5 is a very good example of this virtue of the book). Painstaking analysis and deconstruction of Weiss's arguments could be a valuable exercise to recommend to our advanced students.

Readers will probably be even more surprised by William Altman's central and most intriguing 'suggestion' in his *The Revival of Platonism in Cicero's Late Philosophy*:[7] Cicero not only tried to emulate Plato's philosophical style in his later philosophical writings, by constructing a 'sceptical' and 'ironic' (91) literary persona, 'Cicero', an 'amiable but indecisive New Academy bungler' (95) who can be compared to Plato's 'Socrates' (hence the subtitle of the book: '*Platonis aemulus* and the Invention of Cicero'); but he also 'showed himself to be Plato's rival as a fellow Platonist', and even 'excelled Plato as a distinctively Platonic philosopher' (3). Cicero's own philosophy is to be unearthed by the Careful Reader through a dialogue with Cicero the author, and the appreciation of Cicero's own constant, if often implicit, dialogue with Plato. Altman assumes that the Cave allegory is central to Plato's Platonism, and is no less central to Cicero's Platonism, although Cicero never explicitly mentions the Cave in his writings: so much so that 'Cicero's life is little more (and nothing less) than an extended commentary on – and a vivid instantiation of – Plato's Allegory' (83), and can help us to understand better what Plato's Platonism really is (98). Cicero surpassed Plato in his Platonism at least in the measure in which he 'walked the Platonic walk by descending into the dangerous Cave of Roman politics', learnt from the experience that the return to the Cave 'needed to be equated with "mastering rhetoric"' (10), and adopted a form of 'incipient feminism or "womanly humanism"' (25). Readers who can put up with Altman's taste for hyperbole, with his almost militant defence of Cicero's philosophical and human greatness against his 'enemies' (all those scholars who fail to fully appreciate him), and with his sometimes too dense and unstructured prose, might find in the book a refreshing challenge to look for more continuity than usually found in the Platonism of Cicero's *philosophica* between early and late writings. They might do so even if they prudently discard Altman's assumption that there is something like the quality of 'being a true Platonist', or the 'essence of Platonism', which can be attributed to Cicero (or indeed Plato himself).

The all-pervasive influence of Plato's insights on the role of images and imagination upon late antique aesthetics is explored by Anne Sheppard in her monograph *The Poetics of Phantasia. Imagination in Ancient Aesthetics*.[8] At about 110 pages, the treatment of the relevant material is obviously extremely selective, but still wide-ranging in its chronological and conceptual scope. After a useful introductory chapter sketching the main lines

[7] *The Revival of Platonism in Cicero's Late Philosophy. Platonis aemulus and the Invention of Cicero*. By William H. F. Altman. Lanham, MD, Lexington Books, 2016. Pp. xxxii + 351. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-1-4985-2711-8.

[8] *The Poetics of Phantasia. Imagination in Ancient Aesthetics*. By Anne Sheppard. London, Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. xiv + 122. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-4725-0765-5; paperback £28.99, ISBN: 978-1-4742-5759-6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of the development of the philosophical vocabulary of imagination from Plato to the Stoics, Sheppard focuses mostly on the reception and elaboration of Platonic and Aristotelian views from the first century AD to late antiquity, with a special interest in Neoplatonism (the title of the book is thus greatly overstating its content, and Classicists and literary theorists will no doubt be greatly disappointed in their expectations). Epistemological and psychological uses of the language of *phantasia* with no direct aesthetic import are not explored; conversely the book includes material in which the language of *phantasia* does not occur, but other relevant notions – such as 'putting before the eyes', 'making you feel as if you were there', 'models' and 'copies', 'analogies', and 'symbols' – are central. The focus is on the aesthetics of literature (especially poetry and oratory), with very few forays in the visual arts. The three main chapters are thematically arranged around the central notions of mental visualization, vividness, aesthetic realism, and the arousal of emotions (Chapter 1); intellectual 'mirroring', mathematical projection, copying, and analogy (Chapter 2); inspiration and allegory (Chapter 3). Sheppard is more interested in drawing our attention to the thematic and conceptual resonances of ancient (and modern) texts and ideas than in providing close analyses, or drawing overarching conclusions about the 'poetics of *phantasia*' in antiquity – or indeed any systematic and coherent picture of the aesthetics of any particular philosophical author or school. What emerges quite clearly as her conclusion is that 'there is no single ancient concept of imagination, any more than there is a single modern concept' (102), and that imagination was seldom identified as the locus of 'what we call the creativity of the artist', which 'was far more commonly attributed to inspiration from an external source' (103). The book is eminently readable, but its size and style should not mislead us: only readers with an existing knowledge of the ancient material will be able to fully understand its content, or appreciate its interest (for example, I am not sure that Sheppard provides enough background information on Plato's Divided Line and dianoetic thought in Chapter 2 to allow novices to follow her exploration of the Neoplatonic commentaries; and the useful 'timeline' of ancient writers and thinkers in the preface does not make up for the lack of appropriate contextualization for some relatively obscure figures, since it is limited to a list of names and dates).

The faithful mirroring of what is real – whether through vivid, realistic representation of particulars or via a symbolic or an allegorical grasp of higher-level intellectual entities – is at the heart of Sheppard's account of ancient *phantasia*; the volume *Probabilities, Hypotheticals, and Counterfactuals in Ancient Greek Thought*,[9] edited by Victoria Wohl, 'explores the cluster of concepts linked by the Greek word *eikos*. . .what is probable, likely, or reasonable' (1). In Greek legal thought, historiography, literature, political theory, philosophy, and science, '*eikos* is a way of thinking about the probable and the improbable, the factual and the counterfactual, the hypothetical and the real' (1). The thirteen chapters do not aim for comprehensive coverage, but look at a selection of case studies of ancient Greek conceptualizations of *eikos*, with broad chronological scope, from Homer to Plotinus, and from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Although the chapters specifically devoted to philosophical discussions are few (Bryan on *eikos* in Plato's *Phaedrus*, Allen on Aristotle on probability and persuasiveness in the *Rhetoric*, and Balot on 'likely

[9] *Probabilities, Hypotheticals, and Counterfactuals in Ancient Greek Thought*. Edited by Victoria Wohl. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xii + 294. 8 b/w illustrations. Hardback £67, ISBN: 978-1-107-05049-5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press

stories' in Plato's *Laws*), Plato (especially the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus*) and Aristotle (especially the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*) feature prominently throughout the volume. Readers who might expect some treatment of the role of hypotheses and conditionals in ancient philosophical and mathematical method and logic will be disappointed: the 'hypotheticals' of the title belong only to the sphere of 'the probable' or 'the likely'. The editor's Introduction successfully manages to highlight some of the conceptual and thematic threads of the volume, emphasizing both continuities and similarities, on the one hand, and generic differences, on the other. One is left to wonder, however, whether the language of *eikos* was used *so* broadly and variously within the huge chronological and generic scope of the Greek texts under consideration that the thematic unity of the volume is ultimately less tight than advertised. In what way, for example, is (mere) plausibility or truth-likeness conceptually connected with natural probability, and how is this linked with fictional likelihood or counter-factuality? But the high-quality chapters will provide to the Careful Reader much food for thought to try to answer these questions.

To conclude, the second edition of *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*,[10] edited by Richard Sorabji, deserves at least a brief mention here. The book, first published in 1990, includes twenty articles discussing a number of commentators on Aristotle, in both the Peripatetic and the Platonist traditions, and spanning the whole breadth of the ancient philosophical curriculum, from metaphysics to logic, from psychology to ethics. When it first appeared, the volume – a mix of previously published articles and newly commissioned ones, all by major scholars in the field – was an attempt to offer some essential historical and conceptual framework for the then infant and now monumental project on the Ancient Commentators, which started in 1987 and has now seen the publication of over a hundred volumes of translations and four major sourcebooks. In the second edition, which reprints all the original articles and the bibliography without any change, Sorabji adds a useful new thirty-five-page Introduction in which he offers a few (obviously very selective) updates on the material examined in each article, and announces the imminent birth of the volume *Aristotle Re-Interpreted* (also published by Bloomsbury in 2016). As this is my last review for *Greece & Rome*, I will leave it to my successor to review the new volume in due course. What I can say here is that the impressive progress in the quantity and quality of the scholarship on the 'philosophy of the commentators' over the last three decades (clearly on display in the new volume), and the renaissance in the study of the philosophy of late antiquity which it stimulated in turn, are the strongest testament to the exceptional transformative effects that Sorabji's project has had, and continues to exercise upon the discipline – and *Aristotle Transformed*, an important milestone in this process, will keep contributing to that transformation.

LUCA CASTAGNOLI
luca.castagnoli@oriel.ox.ac.uk
doi:10.1017/S0017383517000134

[10] *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*. Edited by Richard Sorabji. Second edition. London and New York, Bloomsbury, 2016. Pp. xlvii + 595. Hardback £130, ISBN: 978-1-4725-8907-1.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017383517000134 Published online by Cambridge University Press