the importance of tithing. Imperial gifts, church revenues, less the clergy's claims on them, the sale of treasures, which Ambrose had to defend, also come under scrutiny. Then there were the graded types of recipient and items for distribution; and the development of hostels, imitated by Julian the Apostate. Occasions for almsgiving, and resistance are also explored, and all manner of promotion. In culmination comes an acute account of the meanings of almsgiving. The entire analysis incidentally offers readers enriching insights into the life and thought of the age (how important was preaching?). And pagans, like classical traditions, are given their due. The aim of M. S. Cyrino's **Big Screen Rome*[17] is to 'contribute to the continuing exercise of merging classics and cinema' (whatever that means), 'not only to facilitate scholarly research in the field, but also enhance the viewing pleasure of the individual spectator'. Her method is to offer cast list, plot line, ancient background, background to the film, making the movie, themes and interpretations, core issues, and five essay questions each for nine films from *Quo Vadis* to *Gladiator*. It is surprising that the 'connoisseur's piece', *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, which, flop though it was, brought an Oxford Odeon down in the sixties, finds a place only in the introduction to the hangdog *Gladiator*; *Gladiator* also sucks in the discussion of *munera* (218), for all Kirk Douglas' earlier displays. The sections on the films are informative, though gushing (avoid Cyrino on Richard Burton's voice, 146), and certainly would enhance viewing pleasure. The historical backgrounds are basic, with insane emperors, patrician conspirators, Stoic plots, opposing factions of *optimates* and *populares*, Capua a posh city, and the succession of Commodus as Caesar. The book is aimed at an American audience and is the by-product of an industry devoted to material that is often meretricious; it has little to do with studying 'classics', but in case it inspires someone to look further I attach an asterisk to the title.

doi: 10.1017/S0017383507000095 B. M. LEVICK

[17] *Big Screen Rome*. By Monica Silveira Cyrino. Blackwell, Malden, MA, Oxford, and Carlton, Victoria, 2005. Pp. xiv + 274. 15 Illustrations, 2 maps. £50 hardback, £19.99 paperback.

Philosophy

This year provides good material for reflection on what one expects from 'histories' and 'encyclopaedias' and 'guides' and 'companions'. Perhaps it should not be the same in each case: but some editors seem clearer about the scope for differentiation than others. The Cambridge Histories of *Hellenistic Philosophy*[1] and of *Greek and Roman Political Thought*,[2] both of which appear this year in paperback, are, as one might expect, fairly straightforwardly accounts of the *status quaestionis*, and excellent in their kind (see my positive notices of their first appearance at *G&R* 48 [2001] 109–10). The new Blackwell *Companion to Ancient Philosophy*[3] is rather different in

[1] *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*. Edited by Keimpe Algra, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Mansfeld and Malcolm Schofield. Cambridge UP, 1999. Pp. xix + 916. Paperback £29.99.

[2] *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*. Edited by Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield in association with Simon Harrison and Melissa Lane. Cambridge UP, 2000. 2 maps. Pp. xx + 745. Paperback £27.99.

[3] *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*. Blackwell Companions to Philosophy. Edited by Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin. Oxford, 2006. Pp. xxxvi + 791. 3 maps. Hardback £95.

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aiming at a sense of work still to be done. A series of first-rate exegetical studies are complemented by intelligent and lively reflection on methodological issues peculiar to the discipline: notably Jorgen Mejer on doxography, R. W. Sharples on the sources of Hellenistic philosophy, and Philippe Hoffman on Platonist commentary. The editorial work (by Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin) is admirable: the contributors seem to share a clear sense of what the volume as a whole is for; each piece has a guide to sources and further reading; there is an index locorum, and a very good general index. The pitch is quite high: it is not a beginners' book. But someone with a bit of background who wishes to explore the research potential of the area will find it very useful. Curnow's *Philosophers of the Ancient World. An A–Z Guide*[4] offers less sense of direction: think gazetteer rather than road map. It does not even note primary sources on the whole; and it is far from cutting-edge in what information it does provide. But it is still a valuable book. In containing 'over 2,300' entries (1), it must be a nearly comprehensive catalogue of known ancient philosophers – at least if the prospectus for Richard Goulet's ongoing *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques* is anything to go by. (That, by my reckoning, will have something like 2,800 entries when it is finished.) And Curnow's *A–Z* has the advantage over Goulet of being in a single volume, at a fraction of the price. And in English. *Meet the Philosophers of Ancient Greece*[5] is billed by its editor, Patricia O'Grady, as an attempt to make philosophy itself less intimidating (xvii) through a survey of what one contributor unforgivably calls the 'childhood of our intellectual civilization' (9). Seventy short chapters by fifty-one contributors give 2–3 page introductions to philosophers from Thales to John Philoponus, with a few literary figures thrown in, and some fourteen 'archaeological sites'. At their best the chapters are genuinely engaging, and it is difficult to see much harm in the worst, but a stronger editorial hand could have made more of it: there is no systematic attempt to cross-refer articles, or even to group them with any sense of how they might read against one another. Just for example: Zeno of Elea is four chapters away from Parmenides; Lucretius and Seneca are treated in a section on Hellenistic philosophers, while Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are assigned to 'The Roman Period'. Some of the literary and archaeological sections make no account of their presence in this book (even where account could be made): why is there an entry on 'Troy and Heinrich Schliemann', for example? It is not, to repeat, a *bad* book, but it fails the test of a good work of reference: it fails to engross the reader who intended merely to dip in. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*[6] provides its own commentary on the state of the subject as usual. Some teasers from the latest volumes: Howard Curzer on ways in which Aristotle's 'ideal' person can err, and Pauliina Remes on four-dimensionality in Plotinus (vol. 28); an attempt at reconstituting Iamblichus' *Protrepticus* by D. S. Hutchinson and M. R. Johnson, and an explanation of why Aristotelian plants cannot perceive by Damian Murphy (vol. 29); a defence of Asclepiades of Bithynia by Roberto Polito, and of

[4] *The Philosophers of the Ancient World. An A–Z Guide*. By Trevor Curnow. Duckworth, London, 2006. Pp. xviii + 296. 10 maps. Paperback £16.99.

[5] *Meet the Philosophers of Ancient Greece. Everything you always wanted to know about Ancient Greek philosophy but didn't know who to ask*. Edited by Patricia F. O'Grady. Ashgate, Aldershot, 2005. Pp. xx + 312. 2 maps, 10 plates, 14 b&w illustrations. Hardback £55; paperback £16.99.

[6] *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*. Edited by David Sedley. Vol. XXVIII, Summer 2005: Oxford UP, 2005. Pp. viii + 386. Hardback £42. Vol. XXIX, Winter 2005: Oxford UP, 2005. Pp. 412. Hardback £42. Vol. XXX, Summer 2006: Oxford UP, 2006. Pp. viii + 406. Hardback £42.

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Pyrrhonist Scepticism by Casey Perin (vol. 30). The companionship offered by Blackwell's *Companion to Socrates*[7] is less directive than that of its more generic sibling. Thirty papers are grouped into discussions of: Biography and Sources; Plato; Hellenistic philosophy; 'From the Medieval Period to Modernity'; and 'The Modern Period'. A high standard is maintained with unusual, if not perfect, consistency; and the variety of perspectives to which we are introduced proved remarkable, to me at least. Alongside more conventional depictions, we encounter Socrates as last of the free thinkers (Richard Janko), as psycho-sexual retard (Tad Brennan), as a Djinn in the Arabic reception (Ilai Alon), as a by-word for perversion in Early Modern France (Daniel Mclean). There are a lot of things going on at a theoretical level too, but with varying levels of integrity. In particular, the exploration of Socrates as a historical figure spills out beyond 'biography and sources' into 'reception' contexts where it might be less appropriate. (Nicholas White, just for example, upbraids Hegel for his 'inaccurate' portrayal of Socrates.) Chapters on psychoanalysis (Jonathan Lear), and on the so-called 'Socratic method' of teaching in the contemporary academy (Avi Mintz), seem pretty well gratuitous, even though each is a very good read, as it happens. It would be churlish to regret the rich package of perspectives it gives us; but the volume misses a chance to help with theoretical approaches to this difficult figure. It always seems to me that we underestimate the so-called 'minor' Socratics, not only as evidence for Socrates himself, but also as context for the 'major' Socratics (Plato and Xenophon), and for their own intrinsic merit. (The two Blackwell Companions already mentioned are as guilty of this as anyone, though both nod in their direction.) At least the Cynics get a look in now and then, though as William Desmond notes in *The Greek Praise of Poverty*,[8] historians of Cynicism have tended to be '[t]oo easily seduced by the Cynics' rhetoric of otherness', and so have constructed explanations of the movement which see it in reaction both to its culture and, even, its philosophical antecedents. Desmond makes a convincing case for the position that Cynical discourse was deeply embedded in the rhetoric and cultural outlook of classical Athens. The Cynics, he argues, built a rhetoric of 'wealth' and 'power' associated with philosophy on a well-established theme of democratic Athens that material poverty and hardship foster virtue, and promote the self-sufficiency of the *polis*. As well as tracing continuities between this line and the Socratic tradition, Desmond also draws parallels between the absolutist position of the Cynics in the face of specious convention, and the ontological absolutism of Parmenides and Zeno in the face of the world of appearances: 'Parmenides' indubitable "it is" becomes the Cynics' self-insistent "I am" – two "unshakeable truths", which become in fact the only truths for the Eleatics and Cynics respectively' (166). I have some reservations, more about clarity than content: for example, it was not always entirely clear to me where the balance is between direct assimilation by the Cynics of popular values explored here and the paradoxical subversion of conventional vocabulary in expressing them; and the Eleatic theme seems a little strained – no less so if it was intended merely to show that the Cynics were on the wavelength of an intellectual culture that went wider than Socrates. But the enterprise as a whole is an extremely illuminating one, and quite unusual (and commendable) in finding the terms to

[7] *A Companion to Socrates*. Blackwell Companions to Philosophy. Edited by Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar. Blackwell, Oxford, 2006. Pp. xxiv + 533. Hardback £85.

[8] *The Greek Praise of Poverty. Origins of Ancient Cynicism*. By William D. Desmond. University of Notre Dame Press, 2006. Pp. xiv + 240. Hardback $48; paperback $25.

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locate a philosophical movement in its cultural context without resort to glib plausibilities. For two central works of Plato and Aristotle, Blackwell's has chosen to offer guidance rather than company. *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*[9] leads the way very effectively by providing some original angles on the *Ethics* as a whole, and papers covering the usual territory in a clear and reasonably systematic manner. It begins with a chapter usefully locating the *Nicomachean Ethics* against the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Protrepticus* (Chris Bobonich), and ends by comparing and contrasting its philosophical position with that of Aquinas (T. H. Irwin) and 'Contemporary Ethics' (Sarah Broadie). Some interesting themes emerge from the fourteen chapters that come in between, notably an emphasis on the nature of practical wisdom (of course); but also on moral aesthetics (in Roger Crisp on 'Greatness of Soul', as well as the chapter devoted to the 'Fine' by Gabriel Lear), and on the crucially *political* context of the ethical theory (in a chapter by Malcolm Schofield, but also in that by Charles Young on 'Aristotle's Justice'). Other chapters include: Gavin Lawrence on function, Richard Kraut (the editor of the volume) on the practical syllogism, Susan Meyer on the 'voluntary', C. D. C. Reeve on the 'virtues of thought', A. W. Price on *akrasia*, and Jennifer Whiting on *philia*. All of these papers are excellent; though for more or less subjective reasons (and not necessarily because I agreed with them), the highlights for me were Rosalind Hursthouse's lively critique and reformulation of the doctrine of the 'mean'; and Dorothea Frede's account of the way in which Aristotle incorporated pleasure and pain into his ethical theory. *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*[10] takes its cue rather less obviously from the scope and structure of the subject through which it is supposed to lead us. Two papers on the 'challenge' to justice in Books 1–2 (by Rachel Barney and Christopher Shields respectively) are *preceded* by Jonathan Lear's subtle and provoking account of the exploitation of 'Allegory and Myth in Plato's *Republic*' which starts from reflection on the early stages of the educational curriculum sketched in Books 2–3. (Lear argues for the therapeutic effect of the 'noble lie' and the image of the Cave, and indeed the *Republic* itself, on the back of the analysis of allegory suggested there.) The collection ends with a study of justice by Rachel Singpurwalla which might more naturally have come in front of the valuable chapters on knowledge and recollection (by Michael Frerejohn, who finds evidence of the latter in the Cave) and the 'forms' (by Terry Penner, who suggests that the lack of systematic defence of the theory is due to the fact that their existence is in some sense too obvious). There is nothing to speak of on Books 8–10 at all. So let the volume be judged by the standards of its several contributions, all of which are, again, excellent. Some offer quite novel perspectives on the work. Christopher Rowe (appropriately placed this time in pole position) does so in arguing for its literary and philosophical unity; Mark McPherran does so in his convincing representation of it as 'a theological work as well as a political and moral one' (84). David Keyt gives what he suggests is the first sustained study of the image of the 'ship of state' in Book 6; and Hendrik Lorenz and Mariana Anagnostopoulos complete coverage of the standard topics with papers on Plato's psychological theory. I was struck by the fact that there is a paper on moral aesthetics here too (by Gabriel Lear): do I detect a

[9] *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*. Edited by Richard Kraut. Oxford, 2006. Pp. viii + 384. Hardback £55; paperback £17.99.

[10] *The Blackwell Guide to Plato's Republic*. Edited by Gerasimos Santas. Oxford, 2006. Pp. ix + 292. Hardback £55; paperback £17.99.

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trend? If so, Stefan Büttner's *Antike Ästhetik*[11] is timely. It hardly breaks new ground, but gives a useful and comprehensive survey of ancient aesthetic thought in the realms of art, nature and psychology from Plato, through the Hellenistic period (including a survey of the sceptical responses to aesthetic theory) and into Plotinus. The bibliographical section is helpful, but also contains glaring omissions. Back to the *Republic*, and G. R. F. Ferrari's *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*.[12] This is an essay on the central analogy of the *Republic*, the analogy between political and psychological structure. Its argument is that we should see it as no *more* than analogy, and Ferrari argues against readings which assume that Plato *explains* the political structure of a city by the psychological character of its inhabitants or rulers as individuals (or, conversely, readings which assume that he explains the psychological character of individuals as a consequence of their social context). It is, he argues, only in the case of the tyranny on the one hand and the ideal city on the other that we find rulers whose souls are the appropriate analogue of the cities they rule. But while a tyrant achieves tyranny by tyrannizing himself (96–9), it is only a matter of *law* that the just man is the ideal ruler for the just state: after all, the rulers of the just state have, according to Plato's analogy, only to be *wise*, not just. The argument is fresh and stimulating; and for the most part wholly convincing (decisive, I would say, against the position associated here with Bernard Williams that Plato is driven by the principle that a state draws its character from the character of its citizens). I wonder, though, whether the souls of the ideal rulers might reflect the structure of their state for more than incidental reasons. One thing strikingly absent from Ferrari's discussion is the *educational* system which is built into the structure of Kallipolis. But Plato surely posits an ideal *relationship* between the ideal person and the ideal state? As her title suggests, Frisbee Sheffield develops a reading of the *Symposium* as a strongly ethical work in *Plato's Symposium. The Ethics of Desire*.[13] Sheffield takes her cue from the question asked by Hephaestus of the passionate lovers: 'What is it you really want from each other?' (192de). It is hardly giving away the ending to say that the answer is *eudaimonia*: what is interesting is Sheffield's account of how Plato gets us there. She develops a detailed reading of Socrates' speech as it builds on those of the other symposiasts to argue that, as mortal creatures, we are capable of possessing the good only through realizing our potential for productive activity, which in turn is activated in the presence of beauty. Desire for another is ultimately a means for *self*-realization, then. Chapter 5 attempts to show (esp. *contra* Vlastos) that inter-personal relationships remain an integral part of the philosopher's life, so conceived; and Chapter 6, through an account of Alcibiades' intrusion into the proceedings, that such a life remains rooted in the comedy of human existence, even as it works the higher mysteries. A gently aporetic appendix weighs the evidence for the psychological model presupposed by the *Symposium*. Dominic Scott devotes due time to the ethical dimension of the *Meno* as well, in his monograph on *Plato's Meno*, the third title in the excellent

[11] *Antike Ästhetik. Eine Einführung in die Prinzipien des Schönen*. By Stefan Büttner. C. H. Beck, Munich, 2006. Pp. 211. 14 illustrations. Paperback €12.90.

[12] *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*. By G. R. F. Ferrari. University of Chicago Press, 2005. Pp. 130. Paperback £12.

[13] *Plato's Symposium*. The Ethics of Desire. By Frisbee C. C. Sheffield. Oxford UP, 2006. Pp. viii + 252. Hardback £50.

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Cambridge Studies in the Dialogues of Plato.[14] But his focal theme is the Socratic method itself: the possibility of discovery, which is challenged by what is traditionally (though, as Scott makes clear, lazily) known as 'Meno's paradox'. Scott develops an elegant and convincing account of the theory of recollection as its solution. He argues that the theory identifies, not quasi-empirical items of knowledge which the soul acquired at some earlier point, but the sort of apparatus required to understand logical connections which, as the precondition for learning, is literally unlearnable. This brings the theory in line with a controversial view he has developed in earlier work, that recollection is not the basis for everyday empirical experience, but the mechanism for specifically philosophical enquiry. To complement this grand vindication of Socratic inquiry, Scott identifies further moments in the *Meno* where Socrates is put as it were 'on trial' by observations made (albeit unwittingly) by Meno; and he traces indications that Meno, for his part, makes some genuine progress through the course of the dialogue. The *Meno* also comes under examination by Rosalyn Weiss in *The Socratic Paradox and its Enemies*[15] – along with the *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Minor*, *Republic* 4 and *Laws* 9. What these texts have in common is their status, directly or (in the case of *Republic* 4) indirectly as proof-texts for the Socratic paradox that 'no-one does wrong willingly'. Weiss argues that this claim has been long misunderstood as a consequence of the idea that Socrates equates wisdom with virtue. In fact, she argues, the thesis that 'no-one does wrong willingly' is the 'core paradox' (15) in terms of which the others should be understood. And it is not as paradoxical as we normally think. It does not mean that people cannot choose injustice if they realize how beneficial justice is; it rather means that when they (deliberately) choose injustice they will meet with consequences no-one could want (wretchedness). It is only in the *Protagoras* that Socrates denies the possibility of *akrasia* (choosing what one thinks would be less beneficial), and there only because of the peculiar polemical context which leads Socrates, in elenchic refutation of Protagoras, to adopt the position that pleasure alone is beneficial. In general, then, Socrates is more old-fashioned and down-to-earth than we thought, appalled at the lack of moral leadership given by the educators of his day, railing more or less *ad hominem* at their moral bankruptcy and its effects. This is an attractive picture in many ways, and certainly calls closer attention to these central texts. One residual concern, though: Weiss effectively denies a developmental reading of the dialogues, as will be apparent from the range of texts considered in her account; but unlike most anti-developmental readings, which do the opposite, this one seems to collapse Plato's views into those of Socrates. Can this be right? Another work dealing with Plato and Socratic inquiry is Peter Warnek's *Descent of Socrates*,[16] a rare Anglophone study of ancient philosophy in the continental tradition. Warneck focuses on the *Apology*, *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Meno* and *Phaedrus* to argue that Plato's dialogues *invent* the tradition of philosophy by which we normally think we explain them, with the Socratic search for self-knowledge as, in effect, its foundation myth. The papers in Tarrant and

[14] *Plato's Meno. Cambridge Studies in the Dialogues of Plato*. By Dominic Scott. Cambridge UP, 2006. Pp. x + 238. Hardback £50.

[15] *The Socratic Paradox and its Enemies*. By Roslyn Weiss. University of Chicago Press, 2006. Pp. xii +235. Cloth $35.

[16] *Descent of Socrates. Self-Knowledge and Cryptic Nature in the Platonic Dialogues*. By Peter Warnek. Indiana University Press, 2005. Pp. xix + 234. Paperback $26.95.

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Baltzly's *Reading Plato in Antiquity*[17] are united, insofar as they are, by a focus on exegetical strategies adapted to Plato's texts by his later followers. This is a point not very well put, it has to be said, by an introduction which talks about this as a study in how a 'classic' is received (I'll say more about that below); but there are some fascinating perspectives on offer here. Some are familiar (Richard Sorabji and Lloyd Gerson reprise their disagreement over whether Plato and Aristotle are damaged by Platonist readings that harmonize them); some rather newer, to me at least (Atsushi Sumi on Plotinus finding the solutions to Platonic riddles 'behind' his text; Tim Buckley's ingenious attempt to show that Proclus reads the *Phaedrus* myth as a kind of map and model for the history of what he regards as 'true' Platonism). But my hesitation at seeing all of this as a study in the study of a 'classic' is that the exegetical strategies explored by the contributors amount to so many displays of ingenuity unless one understands the end to which they are put – *why* Plato achieves the status he does. The problem, for me, is that this is a question which the word 'classic' looks designed to evade. While it remains unanswered, the most immediate contribution of this collection will be the explication of exegetical results rather than the methodology by which they were achieved: Tarrant on Antiochus on common notions; John Dillon, John Cleary and Marije Martiin variously on Proclus and the *Timaeus*; John Finamore on Apuleius' *daimones*; Julius Rocca on Galen and expertise; John Phillips on Plotinus and evil; Luc Brisson and Dirk Baltzly, variously, on 'civic', 'purificatory' and other grades of virtue; Hayden Ausland on an 'esoteric' mathematical model of justice lurking behind the *Republic*; Ken Parry on Byzantium's interest in Proclus as 'last of the pagan philosophers'.

In his 1996 book, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy* (reviewed *G&R* 44 [1997] 110), Christopher Gill argued that the Greeks, at least from Homer to Aristotle, held an 'objective-participant' model of the self – a model which, inter alia, includes the idea that the self does not constitute an irreducibly private realm, but is something which can be usefully explored from a third-person perspective. *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*[18] picks up the thread in arguing that the 'objective-participant' model continues to underpin Hellenistic ethical thought. But something new happens in the Hellenistic schools as well, he argues: this is the idea that the self is constituted, not by a psychological 'core' distinct from its corporeal housing, but as a 'holistic' psycho-physical unity. This insight is the starting-point for an innovative study of Hellenistic psychology and ethics – innovative not least for the historical dynamics Gill's distinctive perspective opens up. Behind the rhetoric of philosophical polemics, Gill finds substantial ethical similarities ('convergence') between the Stoics and Epicureans, and more pervasive reception of Socratic and Platonic ideas than either school drew attention to in so many words. Gill finds, for example, characteristically Socratic ethical claims at the heart of Epicureanism despite hostile Epicurean remarks about Socrates and roots for the Stoic view of the human person in Plato's *Timaeus* which lead him to characterize Chrysippus as developing Platonic thought rather than rejecting it (e.g. 137). (Conversely, he can argue that the *language* of Platonic dualism in later Stoic contexts need not indicate a concession to Plato's theoretical model. Posidonius himself was an entirely orthodox Stoic despite his more overt use of Platonic language.) Those

[17] *Reading Plato in Antiquity*. Edited by Harold Tarrant and Dirk Baltzly. Duckworth, London, 2006. Pp. ix + 268. Hardback £50.

[18] *The Structured Self in Hellenistic and Roman Thought*. By Christopher Gill. Oxford UP, 2006. Pp. xxii + 522. Hardback £80.

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familiar with Gill's work will not baulk at the size of the study, which weighs in at some 500 pages. As in his earlier book, Gill takes a commanding position and explores an expansive horizon. His account is comprehensive and detailed, without getting bogged down; there is collegiate dialogue both with secondary commentators and modern philosophical perspectives on his issues. Gill ends with a chapter on 'literary reception' intended to show how his model is reflected in literature as well as philosophy. This is no less interesting for the suspicion that the self-consciously philosophical associations of his case studies – Virgil and, especially, Plutarch and Seneca (409–10) – might undermine their absolute right to act as representatives for the wider literary tradition in this context. I got the impression from *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics*[19] that it is not really the volume its editor wanted it to be. First, there is the title which strains at a specificity belied by its content; then there is, in the Introduction, what reads almost like an apology for the inclusion of papers on Plato which are not narrowly ethical – and three papers which are not *even* on Plato or Aristotle (2). What we get is very good quality: James Allen on the argumentative trajectory of the *Protagoras*; Julia Annas bringing subtlety and nuance to the debate between 'unitarian' and 'developmental' readings of Plato; David Sedley rehabilitating Agathon in the *Symposium* as a kind of Socrates before Diotima; M. M. McCabe on the essentially discursive nature of Platonic dialectic and the vision of the Good in which it culminates; Christoph Rapp on Aristotle's doctrine of the mean; Giesela Striker on the need to remember that the *Nicomachean Ethics* is part of an avowedly political project; Christoph Horn on *epieikeia* ('equity') and the conditions for its superiority to straight justice; Jan Szaif on the scope for justice and generosity in virtue ethics; Susanne Bobzien on moral development in Epicurus; and Brad Inwood on Empedocles on personal identity. A loose-knit collection, after all, then: but one whose variety does no less credit to its honorand, Dorothea Frede. The papers in *Der Einfluß des Hellenismus auf die Philosophie der Frühen Neuzeit*[20] cover (within the generous terms of the volume title) a real medley of people and topics. Naturally enough, Leibniz, Spinoza and, especially, Descartes loom largest. Descartes' 'deceiving God' is given medieval antecedents in a fascinating paper by Gábor Borbély that covers the medieval reception of Scepticism as well (but leaves a lot more to be done); Markus Schmitz, conversely, looks at Stoic elements in Descartes' positive epistemology which help underpin his proposal for a universal science. Jon Miller compares and contrasts the Stoics and Spinoza on suicide (and relates both to some modern perspectives); Catherine Wilson looks at the various manoeuvres attempted by each in defending the immortality of the soul against 'Epicurean' theories which entail its dissolution. Other papers deal with: the Stoics in Franceso Robertello's account of *mimesis* (Ulrike Zeuch); Priscian behind Ficino's theory of the intellect (Péter Lautner); Lipsius as a filter for Stoic ideas in the European tradition (Jan Papy); Epicurean influence on Hobbes' political thought (Bernd Ludwig); and the ancient sources for Christian Franken's catalogue of atheists (József Simon). The editorial touch is light: a single index (*nominorum*), no bibliography, and no introduction. I don't say this to detract from the value of the volume. But the reception of

[19] *The Virtuous Life in Greek Ethics*. Edited by Burkhard Reis, with the assistance of Stella Haffmans. Cambridge UP, 2006. Pp. x + 277. Hardback £50.

[20] *Der Einfluß des Hellenismus auf die Philosophie der Frühen Neuzeit*. Wolfenbütteler Forschungen vol. 108. Edited by Gábor Boros. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2005. Pp. 198. Hardback €59.

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ancient philosophy in early modernity is an important field, thinly worked. It could do with a serious manifesto, more systematic attention, and (in general) bit more flag-flying. A job for a Guide or Companion, perhaps?

doi: 10.1017/S0017383507000101 GEORGE BOYS-STONES

General

Classicists need never feel lonely again: the number of companion volumes just keeps on growing. *The Edinburgh Companion to Ancient Greece and Rome* (eds. Bispham, Harrison and Sparkes)[1] is divided into four parts – the first contains introductions to the sub-disciplines within contemporary classics, to the regions (and 'regions') of the ancient world, and to the chronological periods (from 'dark-age' Greece to late antiquity). The second part deals with material culture and the third with texts and genres. The last section, 'Essential information and systems of reference' comprises eleven brief chapters that present all the things that you wanted to know about classics but were afraid to ask (from the names of the Greek months to the length of a *plethron*). The editors have chosen excellent contributors and the individual sections, as well as offering broad introductions, also lead readers to more challenging and cutting-edge approaches to the classical world in a clear way. The somewhat traditional selection of topics, however, does not fully exploit the fresh perspectives of the individual contributors. By contrast the inclusion of the final reference section is a thoughtful and considered attempt to accommodate the needs of a modern student. This student-friendly approach is sadly not reflected in the hardback price: £120. David Potter's *The Roman Empire*[2] is another addition to the excellent Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World series. Something of the size and complexity of the subject-matter is reflected in the volume itself. Although the volume reiterates familiar ways of presenting material (Part 1 sources, part 2 narrative etc.), individual authors find ways of cutting across traditional disciplinary boundaries. The outward-looking feel of the volume is reflected, for instance, in part 6 – religion – where 'traditional cult' forms only one of four chapters in this section; the others look out to Judaism and Christianity. The Cambridge Companions was one of the first companion series and this longevity is perhaps reflected in the latest volume, Glen Bugh's *The Hellenistic World*[3] (the chapters look long, the illustrations are scarce, and they are grouped together as plates, contributing to the impenetrable feel of the volume). However, despite first appearances, the volume contains meticulous coverage of key areas, by eminent scholars in the field, and a pleasantly surprising transdisciplinary approach within the individual chapters – for instance, Shipley and Hansen's chapter on the *polis* and federalism contains an enlightening section on 'physical layouts', Thompson's chapter on the Hellenistic family introduces a new 'hot topic' in classics more generally, and Rotroff's 'Material Culture' gives an excellent example of the integration of material culture into social life, eloquently showing the importance of objects (despite the curious extraction of 'Art' into a

[1] *The Edinburgh Companion to Ancient Greece and Rome*. Edited by Edward Bispham, Thomas Harrison and Brian A. Sparkes. Edinburgh UP, 2006. Pp. xii + 604. Hardback £120.

[2] *A Companion to the Roman Empire*. Edited by David S. Potter. Blackwell, 2006. Pp. xxxi + 691. Hardback £95.

[3] *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*. Edited by Glenn R. Bugh. Cambridge UP, 2006. Pp. xxix + 371. Paperback $29.99.

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