the 'Old Age' section. It continues and concludes an argument found in fr. 145 dealing with impairment of eyesight, which—Diogenes argues—is experienced by young people as well. NF 134 counters an allegation that old persons suffer from madness, arguing that madness is not 'caused by old age but by another natural cause'. The most important and interesting fragments are NF 126–7, which S. rightly calls 'the chief jewels in the crown formed by the 1997 finds' ('Digging up . . .', cited above, p. 72). They deal with theology and religion, a topic that seems to be at the centre of the Physics treatise. Although part of the text is lost and restoration of the wording is uncertain, the argument can be recognized. The text argues that people will not necessarily behave morally because of a belief in gods. Diogenes holds that those who disregard justice will not be deterred from wrongdoing by fear of the gods; wise men will behave in a just manner on account of their correct opinions, not because of fear of death; ordinary people will be moral on account of laws and the penalties imposed by laws. It is very interesting to see, once again that, like Plato's philosophers, Epicurean wise men will not need laws in order to behave morally. Morality is independent of law. Perhaps Plato's argument in the *Laws* comes to mind (900c–903a), that the gods care for everything, even small things, in order to restore justice. To prove his case, Diogenes refers to Jews and Egyptians who, according to his judgement, are most abominable, although they are superstitious. Diogenes also attacks the Stoics for their idea that god is the creator of the world and wishes humans to serve as his fellow citizens. He calls this a myth, which is good for persuasion only, rather than a rational argument. This reminds one of passages like Epicurus *Ep. Men.* 134.2, but also of passages in Plato's dialogues (e.g. *Laws* 903a), where myths are used as a kind of *peitho* in contrast to rational *apodeixis*. There is a lot to learn from the new texts and S.'s comments in his supplement. The reader will find it useful. however, also to have his edition in *Anatolian Studies* at hand, in which, for instance, one finds a more extended commentary on this anti-Stoic polemic and other passages.

The supplement proves to be a most useful tool for further research. It once again shows the importance of Diogenes' text. It is all the more regrettable, as the preface of S.'s book indicates (p. 13), that 'no work has been possible at Oinoanda since 1997 and there is no certainty that it will continue in the near future'. S. elsewhere estimates ('Digging up . . .', cited above, p. 75), that about 70% of the inscription remains undiscovered. But there might be hope. The postscript (p. 157) informs us about a visit in 2003 and the finding of one new fragment. Let us hope, then, that S. and his team will have the opportunity to continue their work on the site in order to complete a fascinating testimony to the survival of Epicureanism in imperial times.

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SKOPTIC EPIGRAM

G. NISBET: *Greek Epigram in the Roman Empire. Martial's Forgotten Rivals*. Pp. xviii + 237. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-19-926337-X.

N.'s revised 1998 Oxford dissertation presents readings of satirical epigrams from the *Palatine Anthology*, especially those of Loukillios, with chapters on Nikarkhos,

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Ammianos, and a few others. N. argues that Loukillios invented, under Nero, the genre of 'skoptic epigram', with roots in Aristophanes. Following Alan Cameron (19), N. posits that skoptic epigram was written for performance at symposia.

This lively, clearly organized book makes some use of theory: Eco on humor, Conte on genre. N. attends to writers rarely discussed and imagines them in social context. The book's main contribution, derived from an Iserian extrapolation of intended readership, is to define the consumers of skoptic epigram as disgruntled (lower-) middle-class professional men and explain its 'discursive invisibility' (p. 18). N. alludes throughout to his forthcoming article on papyrus fragments of Nikarkhos, which he takes to be cheap editions, like 'dime novels'; I wish this material were presented in the book. N.'s claim, supported, would expand current models of readership, low art, and popular culture. But N. presents no theoretical model for popular culture; despite lip service to Foucault (p. 36), he engages neither with him nor with Althusser, Gramsci, or the Birmingham School, except for a passing nod to Dick Hebdige. If this is subversive literature (pp. 13, 115, 212–13), subversive of what, and how? If N.'s thesis is that skoptic epigram 'bubbled up' from below (p. 210), then why not deal with subliterary material, here mentioned only in passing (pp. 16, 133 n. 32)? William Hansen's *Anthology of Ancient Greek Popular Literature* appears in a note (so N. can dismiss Hansen's approach, p. 210 n. 1), but Aesop and *Philogelos* are invisible. Graffiti and anonymous verse have been much discussed; not here.

Oxford did N. no favors by printing the book in its current condition. Its self-consciously daring breeziness made it hard going, even where I agreed. A 'dramatis personae' in the front matter includes 'Nikarkhos: a cheeky Egyptian' and 'Ammianos: a punning pundit'; 'cheeky' recurs often, along with 'spot on'; ellipses, meaning 'significant pause with raised eyebrow', pepper the pages. Typical style, in a patronizing corrective to 'Marxism' (*in toto*): 'Giving ideology bigger bandwidth is one of the cooler projects of Cultural Studies' (p. 114).

Indeed, theory, for N., is a fashion statement, and 'cheeky' manifests his basically indulgent attitude towards his writers. Though he repeatedly voices discomfort with their misogyny, and Loukillios' verses against women and poor people are critiqued (pp. 70–81) and dismissed as 'a tedious catalogue of spite' (p. 81), Loukillios is the star ('a small masterpiece', p. 46; 'the cheeky, indigent Greek versifier who will pioneer skoptic epigram', p. 201; 'indigent' and 'Greek' are both conjectures, 'pioneer' surely a misconception). N. adopts his poets' viewpoint: a poem on a drunken old woman is a 'cute epigrammatic anecdote' and said to be, not 'harsh . . . invective', but rather comparable to 'mainstream' texts—which in a note (p. 89 n. 22) turn out to be *Priapea* 12 and 57, Horace *Epod.* 8, Martial 12.67. (Can N. have read them? The middle two begin 'Cornix et caries vetusque bustum' and 'Rogare longo putidam te saeculo', while *Priapea* 12 rejects the old woman's hairy genitals. Martial 12.67, evidently an erroneous citation, celebrates Virgil's birthday.) This argument is in turn hung with disclaimers (p. 90, with n. 23). A joke about the size of a prostitute's anus is called 'a neat bit of characterization by the back door' (p. 85); censure of the poem's invitation to complicity follows (pp. 86–87). N.'s claim to be 'influenced by feminist scholarship and, especially, queer theory' is supported solely by a note that references the sociologist Edwin Schur and a 1985 article by Tucker Farley, then announces, 'Queer theory is very much the cutting edge of Cultural Materialism right now' (p. 11 n. 14). Unsurprisingly, gender theory plays no real part in the book's argument.

This inconsistency is never resolved, but then N. also announces his fondness for indeterminacy. It certainly characterizes his argumentation: 'I might say X—it would be risky—but it's tempting—[argues X]—X would make sense, if that were the kind of

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argument we would stoop to—I cannot decide'. N. thus disclaims responsibility for most of the book's arguments. But readers who might disagree with N. about Loukillios' worth are dismissed as unhip (p. xvii, 'prissy') and 'dismissive'; let me emphasize that it is possible to take N.'s texts seriously and disagree with N. He often knocks other critics for his own chief faults: 'critical evasions' (p. 165), circularity (pp. 98, 111, 117, 204), devoting space to historicizing arguments based on tenuous evidence (pp. 4, 107–11, 116, 156 n. 56), contempt. The debate over Loukillios' name is called 'a ritual display of contempt . . . depressingly Alpha Male' (p. 112); this concludes a tirade in which N. calls previous scholarship 'interminable wranglings' (p. 107), 'flimsy in the extreme' (p. 109), 'lightweight and unconvincing in the extreme . . . an unsatisfying, self-indulgent sideshow' (p. 111). Finding that one of those attacked is female, he calls her an '(Alpha) male "impersonator" ' (p. 112 n. 36). Nor is N. consistently indeterminate: 'the identity of this Loukianos has to be left open' (p. 178) vs. 'I believe that he probably is Lucian of Samosata' (p. 179); 'I'm suspicious of anyone who claims to know what an ancient author "has in mind" ' (p. 100) vs. 'this has to be intentional' (p. 136), 'Ammianos must have anticipated' (p. 153).

N. sneers at his predecessors ('terribly bad', p. xvi), using Albert Linnenkugel's 1926 Paderborn dissertation as a whipping boy: was this necessary? His hero is Louis Robert; others are ignored ('there's hardly any scholarship on the quite lovely Latin *Priapea*', p. 111 n. 34) or patronized (on Alan Cameron: 'his account frees us up to find *interesting* reasons why particular poems are . . . here', p. 207). Is it worse to ignore feminism altogether or to profess a feminist stance and ignore important work by women? Among many omissions: N. devotes an entire chapter to the relation between satire and symposium with no mention of Emily Gowers' *The Loaded Table*.

But this is nothing to the omissions of primary sources (though not quite as many as the sketchy Index Locorum suggests). These probably relate to the fact that N. does not see texts in Latin as precursors to texts in Greek: 'epigram is very much Greek-language territory until Martial' (p. 104), though N. knows the lists of Roman precursors in Martial and Pliny (p. 197 n. 34). The existence of invective epigram by Catullus is not even mentioned, nor the bilingual world that went with it and preceded it; N. looks to Old and New Comedy as models for Loukillios. And why confine the imagined context for epigram to the symposium, as if that were the only all-male space? And why 'imagined'? N. looks only at Plutarch and (scantily) at Athenaeus, without troubling with Gellius (see 19.9, 19.11), Macrobius (*Sat*. Book 2), or Sidonius Apollinaris (see esp. *Ep*. 1.11, 5.17.10, 9.13, and *C*. 22.5). Mystifyingly, N. says skoptic epigram 'comes from nowhere . . . [and] . . . goes nowhere . . . after a very small number of centuries, recalled only by its unwanted bastard child Martial' (p. 209), though N. himself deals with writers who postdate Martial. 'What happened after that [= the reign of Hadrian]? The likelihood is we'll never know' (p. 213). What about Ausonius? Ennodius? Agathias Scholasticus? Did no one read the manuscript of this book? N. does say in the acknowledgements that he ignored the 'oft-repeated caveats' of his supervisors, Ewen Bowie and Peter Parsons. If the purpose of the Oxford Classical Monographs Series is to showcase the work of younger scholars, more help seems called for.

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