good on factual aspects of Persian affairs, he neglects ideology, saying nothing on *βασιλέος οἶκον* (9.3), *δρηπέτῃσι* (11.2; cp. 44.1) or the giving of earth and water (48.2). Amongst other desiderata for this reader were the significance of Miletus (6), the mildness of Darius (20, 41.4, 119.1), early Athenian interest in the Propontis (36.1), private triremes (39.1, 41.1; cp. 89), the sense of 'democracy' at 43.3, Persian treatment of Greek temples (96), the sex of Cimon's horses (103.3, noted by Sh.), and possible procedure in the impeachments of Miltiades (104.2, 136).

The level of linguistic comment is good, though on this front the volume does not completely supersede Sh., and there are points where students will want to have both to hand, as well as W. W. Goodwin's *Greek Grammar*, to which McQ. cross-refers; the latter may also be useful in occasional cases where McQ.'s explanations are not clear (e.g. 82.2, 84.3, 100.1). Given that this is likely for a great many readers to be their first encounter with Ionic, it is a pity that there is no synopsis of the dialect's major characteristics; while particular instances of many features are explained, some (e.g. metathesis of aspirates, declension of *πόλις*) are not mentioned at all.

McQ.'s agenda in the Preface implicitly presumes as its objective the sound understanding of a historical source, and this is reflected in the commentary. Despite the inclusion of the likes of Evans, Gould, Lateiner, and Lang in the introductory bibliography, there is very little consideration of Herodotus as author, and aspects such as imagery (1.2, 109.5), progression markers and summary phrases (32, 119.4), indications of disagreement in sources (134.1; cp. 53.1 and 137.4 with Sh.) and of autopsy (47.1; cp. *μέχρι ἐμέο* at 119.4), multiple explanations (75.3, 84), and expressions of uncertainty (82.1) go unremarked.

Production is somewhat disappointing: there is a significant scatter of typos, and a fair number of slips and factual errors (e.g. 36.2: read 'mm' for 'km'; 73.2: Crius' *son* fought at Salamis; 77.3: *δόξαν* is acc. absol.; 84.3: Anacreon fl. *c.* 540, before Cleomenes; 89: *five* drachmas each; 95.2: take *κομιδὴν* with *ποιεύμενοι*; 97.2: read 'unfriendly', and *φρονέω* = 'have sense/piety' [so Sh., Powell *s.v.* 3]; 130.1: 'Hippocleides doesn't care' is paralleled at Hermippus fr.16KA; 140.2: Myrrhina tribute is 1.5 or 1.3000T). More serious, perhaps, is the lack of an index, for which cross-referencing, however thorough, is no substitute. If this is an economy, it is misplaced, as is the reproduction of Sh.'s two maps—surely modern substitutes could have been provided (and more of them)?

Writing a comprehensive commentary on a book of Herodotus today is a huge undertaking for one individual; criticisms notwithstanding, this one is welcome, and will be very useful—but may we hope for a second edition, enlarged and corrected, before too long?

University of Leeds ROGER BROCK

PLATO'S *ALCIBIADES*

N. DENYER (ed.): *Plato:* Alcibiades. Pp. xi + 254. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Paper, £15.95 (Cased, £45). ISBN: 0-521-63414-8 (0-521-63281-1 hbk).

Nicholas Denyer's superb new edition of the *Alcibiades* appears in the familar Cambridge 'green-and-yellow' series (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics). The

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.2.296 Published online by Cambridge University Press

commentary deserves to be read not only by those wishing to deepen their acquaintance with Plato's *Alcibiades I*, but by anyone who wants to refine his appreciation of Plato's philosophic writing and calibrate his ear to the nuances of Plato's Greek. The introduction, which is a little gem, offers far more than background information on this one dialogue. It contains some of the most trenchant pages yet written about the methods by which scholars have brought questions of authenticity, stylometry, and chronology to bear on the whole body of the dialogues.

The *Alcibiades* has suffered neglect among modern interpreters of Plato, a fate D. traces to Schleiermacher's influential verdict that the dialogue was too far beneath Plato's usual standard to have been written by him (p. 15). Hence the introduction devotes almost its entire second half to the question of the dialogue's authenticity, a topic that draws in its wake a broader scrutiny of the methods by which the boundaries of the Platonic corpus have come to be defined.

Earlier sections cleave to the type of historical, cultural, and philosophic discussion one would expect to introduce a dialogue whose authenticity is not in question. From these sections I select three points, two of them particular to the *Alcibiades* and one more general. D. pays close attention, both here and in the commentary, to the seduction of Alcibiades by Socrates that is in effect the action of this dialogue. He finds Socrates' strategy of pricking the young man's competitive and ambitious spirit a risky one, so risky as to offer some justification for the worry—made concrete in the indictment of 399—that Socrates' company can corrupt young men (p. 8). A section on the date and motive of the dialogue takes up indications supporting the 'guess' (p. 11) that Plato wrote it in the early 350s, then fits this date to the hypothesis that upon return from his final frustrating venture in Sicily Plato composed the *Alcibiades* in order to show the younger Dionysius and the world 'the only sort of philosophical handbook that could be written', and in order to portray in Socrates' noble failure with Alcibiades a foreshadowing of his own worthy but fruitless attempt to bring true philosophy to the Syracusan court.

The general point concerns the balance between literary form and philosophic content in a Platonic dialogue, to which D. devotes a section (pp. 9–11). He begins by pointing out an asymmetry. We cannot assess the arguments made by characters in the dialogues as so many stages in a dramatic plot unless we have first assessed each for the soundness of its logic. We cannot, for example, take Socrates to be putting forward a fallacious argument for a true conclusion unless we have detected the fallacy. (The point remains true despite the fact that it sidesteps the question whether such fallacies should be attributed directly to Plato.) By contrast, we may if we wish assess the logic of these arguments without attending to their dramatic point, and in doing so we would be fulfilling one at least of Plato's ends in writing dramatic dialogue, namely to provoke his readers to think philosophically for themselves.

But D. immediately redresses this imbalance. To ignore the drama of the dialogues, he contends, is to miss part of their philosophic content, not simply their literary craftsmanship. For one thing, an argument's position in the plot of the whole is tantamount to a comment by Plato on that argument's philosophic rigor. And for another, to portray an exemplary philosopher at work is to take a stance on what philosophy is, how it should be pursued, and with whom; and such meta-philosophical questions are themselves philosophical. I would only add that the dialogues use similar means to take a stance on topics other than philosophy—friendship, for example, through the portrayal of Crito.

In the long section that considers whether the dialogue is genuine Plato, first to fall are what D. calls the frivolous arguments against authenticity. These include the

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time-honored scholarly habit of confirmation by parallels. D. rightly and refreshingly questions 'the assumption that everything in a genuine work of Plato has a parallel in other genuine works of Plato' (p. 16). It should not worry us that the *Alcibiades* contains one or two rare and poetic words not found elsewhere in the dialogues, provided the presence of those words can be justified by the context.

Stylometric tests of authenticity, for their part—those that operate on features not readily discernible by readers and therefore also by potential imitators—fall to the following argument (pp. 19–20). Nothing less would be required for the test to merit our confidence than a large supply both of what we know to be genuine Plato and of what we know to be pastiche of Plato that, like the *Alcibiades*, long passed muster as the real thing. Then, if the test consistently sorted the known sheep from the known goats, we could trust its verdict on the *Alcibiades*. But, of course, we have no such supply of known and plausible Platonic pastiche. Indeed, D. adds—and the mischievous touch is characteristic—if we are going to hold that antiquity went wrong in ascribing the *Alcibiades* to Plato, it is far from clear that we have a good supply even of what we know to be the real thing.

D. saves his most radical claims for last. The *Alcibiades* does not fit the widely accepted scheme dividing the dialogues into early, middle, and late periods of writing. It appears rather to run through the styles of all three periods in order—a fact which some have taken to betray its spuriousness. D. accepts this argument, and responds: so much the worse for the standard chronology. There is no good reason to believe that 'early', 'middle', and 'late' correspond to anything more than different Platonic manners of writing, which Plato could adopt as appropriate, at any period of his life (p. 23). If the *Alcibiades* contains all three, that would correspond to Alcibiades' development in the dialogue towards some serious philosophic thought (p. 24). (One thinks also of the shift in register between Book 1 of the *Republic* and the rest of the work—a shift that has likewise prompted chronological hypotheses.) In general, we may consider ourselves free to 'treat the whole of Plato's works as more of a single body', and to account for similarities and differences between works by considering 'who is being made to speak, to which audience, and with what motives' (p. 25).

D. evidently finds this approach liberating, and puts it into practice in his commentary. This is not the first time that the standard chronology has come in for critique in quarters where it once reigned supreme. But D.'s protest, in such company, is the most forthright yet.

The text printed in this edition differs in several places from Burnet's. D. is not shy with emendations, almost all of which struck me as sensible. Particularly notable is the reading *αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτὸ* 129b1. D.'s explanation of this difficult phrase is excellent. To discover 'the itself itself' would be to spell out that feature common to all cases in which we can rightly speak of any x itself. It is not limited to cases where x is a person or 'self'.

The commentary is replete with well-chosen parallels both of style and of content. It is sensitive to Plato's turns of phrase—uncommonly so to his use of particles and of forms of address. It pays close attention to such matters as the structure of the dialogue, the strategy of Socrates' arguments, and the characterization of Alcibiades. And its control of logical analysis is sure.

This is not an edition for beginners; but that is all right, because the *Alcibiades* is not a dialogue for beginners.

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/53.2.296 Published online by Cambridge University Press