anything (and, as one would expect from T., there is plenty that is stimulating and provocative) that will interest them. Perhaps it is simply too early for the book that this sets out to be to have been written, and what is needed is a sourcebook which will make the primary material more readily available (e.g. G. Boys-Stones and C. Brittain, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophers* [Cambridge, forthcoming], which will concentrate on Platonists). Another potentially misleading aspect is that the 'ancient attempts to wrestle with Plato's writings' with which T. is concerned, at least in the last part, are nearly solely those within the Platonist tradition. Plato was a fundamentally important author for Peripateticism and Stoicism in particular, yet how they went about reading his corpus is largely neglected. This may have been down to the confines of space, but a wider overview including the approaches of other schools, whether friendly or hostile or both, and less detailed exegesis might have given the book more overall coherence and provided it with a more easily identifiable target readership.

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THE OLD ACADEMY

J. DILLON: *The Heirs of Plato. A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 B.C.)*. Pp. x + 252. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-19-823766-9.

In this compact book Dillon studies the meagerly attested philosophers who transmitted the Academic tradition from the year of Plato's death down to the accession of Arcesilaus as scholarch. Starting with an excellent account of 'the physical structure of the Academy' and 'Plato's intellectual legacy', D. devotes the next three chapters to the main figures Speusippus, Xenocrates, and Polemo, and concludes with a chapter on 'minor figures' (Philip of Opus, Hermodorus of Syracuse, Heraclides Ponticus, and Crantor) and an epilogue entitled 'Arcesilaus and the turn to scepticism'. It is not his first publication on this material. As early as 1977 he began his now classic book *The Middle Platonists* with a forty-page survey of these same thinkers. The new book more or less repeats his previous treatment of the themes Plato transmitted to his successors, and it also draws on several articles he has published in the years between. Major work in the 1970s and 1980s by Isnardi Parente, Tarán, and Krämer has done much to illuminate what, in effect, is the beginning of Platonism, and D. draws constructively, though sometimes critically, on their studies.

It is a handy volume to use because D. translates the principal evidence for each of his main figures, discussing it under such headings as physics, logic, and ethics. Apart from this useful sourcebook feature, there is a certain resonance of Diogenes Laertius in the way the main chapters divide their material between a chatty 'life and works' section and one on 'philosophy'. The biographical details on Speusippus and company help to enliven a book whose doctrinal material is often dry and obscure. Clear though its organization is, the arrangement by individuals comes at some cost, especially in the treatment of basic principles and metaphysics. It would have been possible to present the ideas of Speusippus, Xenocrates, Philip, and Polemo as relatively concerted

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interpretations of Plato, rather than in this book's encylopaedic and separate form; and that arrangement could have yielded a sharper picture of the Academy's achievement in this period, and also a stronger sense of its legacy to Stoicism, a theme that D. rightly emphasizes.

He describes this as 'perforce a rather speculative book', but no one should complain that it is unduly so. Between the wholesale scepticism about Plato's 'unwritten doctrines', canvassed by Cherniss, and the 'Tübingen School's' attempts to make them decisive for Plato's supposedly esoteric teaching, D. steers a deft course. He shows that such late dialogues as *Philebus*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*, together with the testimony of Aristotle concerning such notions as the One and the Indefinite Dyad, are sufficient to motivate the metaphysical and numerical system-building essayed by Speusippus and Xenocrates. If Plato, as D. suggests, 'came finally to view the Forms in general as numerical entities' (p. 19), his immediate successors will have been justified as well as motivated in their (to us) bizarre focus on numbers. Yet this is such a big 'if' that I wish D. had given more space to discussing the relevant Aristotelian passages. The impression I get from them is that, unlike Speusippus and Xenocrates, Plato never 'reduced Forms to numbers' in the way that Aristotle claims that they did.

D. wants us to find genuine philosophical merit in the metaphysics of Speusippus and Xenocrates. If he is right, Speusippus did not junk Platonic Forms altogether but identified them with the mathematical powers of the World-Soul. Whatever that might mean, I find it strained to credit Speusippus (p. 49) with 'rationalizing and restructuring' Plato's theory of Forms if, as would appear to be the case, he jettisoned the Forms of qualities (Beauty, Equality etc.), which we take to be one of Plato's greatest philosophical legacies and one which continues to resonate in Plotinus. For, as D. observes in discussing Xenocrates' definition of Form as the 'paradigmatic cause of naturally composed things', it is not clear where that 'would leave Forms of abstractions, such as Justice or Moderation, which are . . . Plato's favourite types of Form' (p. 119).

The mathematics of Speusippus and Xenocrates is a topic that, in spite of D.'s sympathetic treatment, I have not yet learned to appreciate, but his chapter on Polemo is thoroughly engaging. Although our attested evidence for Polemo's doctrines is exiguous, we know that he taught the young Zeno of Citium. D. gives a persuasive account of Polemo's probable influence on Zeno's ethics; and he also follows Sedley in proposing that Cicero, *Academica* 1.24–9 preserves authentic Old Academic and specifically Polemonian material on the basic principles of cosmology. If this is right, the earliest Stoic physics was largely based upon ideas, ultimately going back to Plato's *Timaeus*, that had been developed in the post-Platonic Academy. But in that case, an interesting question arises. In the Ciceronian material, which is so close to Stoic cosmology, there is no hint of mathematics or mention of number. Did Polemo, then, abandon that preoccupation of Speusippus and Xenocrates, or should we revert to the older opinion that Cicero's material is largely a retrojection of Stoicism onto the Old Academy?

Although D. does not raise this particular question, *The Heirs of Plato*, for all its brevity, is an excellent resource for provoking further thought about the ideas and impact of its principal personages.

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