is learned but she does not always argue convincingly for a point. Regarding Philoponus' report (test. 5), for instance, she does not really argue convincingly about the question she set herself, that is how much of it reflects Aristocles' account (pp. 58–60), a question that should be resolved before discussing Aristocles' dependence on Aristotle's *On Philosophy*. Concerning the adjective ἀστάθμητος, Ch. does not argue why it should refer to the things themselves and not their perception (p. 95); her references to Lucian and Sextus in this regard strongly suggest the latter.

The book closes with a rich bibliography and four useful indexes, of sources, names, Greek words, and *locorum*. I have noticed some misprints and mistakes (p. 25, l. 5 'are' is missing; p. 25 para. 15, ll. 6–7 'why did he changed'; p. 34 para. 5, l. 10 ἐιπειν [the circumflex is missing]; p. 91, l. 4 'hought' for 'thought'; p. 93, l. 10 full-stop is missing; p. 114, l. 4 ἀδιάροροσ for ἀδιάφοροσ; p. 180 the title of Wilamowitz's book is 'Antigonos von Karystos' not 'Antigonus', and Wolffs' 'Porphyrius' not 'Porphyr'), and some awkard English (p. 93, para. 2, p. 151, n. 11), while some references are not precise enough (p. 99, n. 16 Bett [1994a], p. 106, n. 27 Long [1981] without page numbers, p. 139 Plato's *Theaetetus* 156, 182). In general, Ch.'s book is learned, cautious, sensitive to detail, and definitely fills a gap in scholarship. But eventually the reader learns little about Aristocles and his philosophy.

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HIEROCLES THE NEOPLATONIST

H. S. SCHIBLI: *Hierocles of Alexandria*. Pp. xvi + 419. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Cased, £60. ISBN: 0-19-924921-0.

Relatively little is known of the life and work of Hierocles of Alexandria. He was a student of Plutarch of Athens, who died around A.D. 431/2, and he himself must have been active in the first half of the fifth century. The only work preserved in full is his *Commentary on the Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans* (122 pages in the Teubner edition by F. W. Koehler). In addition, the ninth-century humanist Photius preserved excerpts and summaries of Hierocles' *On Providence* (*Bibl.* cod. 214, 251). Hierocles has thus far not received much attention in Anglo-Saxon scholarship, but this situation has been admirably rectified by Schibli's book, which offers us a comprehensive introduction to Hierocles' life and work, as well as copiously commented translations of both the *Commentary* and the fragments of *On Providence*.

The introduction (which makes up almost half of the book and is in itself a short monograph on Hierocles) starts out with a discussion of the meagre evidence we have for Hierocles' life. S. succeeds in filling this out by locating Hierocles' life within the Neoplatonist tradition, the Alexandrian intellectual milieu and the pagan and Christian conflict. We learn *inter alia* that he was probably a fellow-student of Syrianus, that he was an effective and influential teacher in Alexandria, and that he was at some stage of his career flogged and exiled by the Christian authorities in Constantinople before resuming his teaching career in Alexandria. S. suggests that this severe punishment could only have been for practising sacrifices or theurgical rites, or a combination of both (p. 40), both of which would have been an essential part of the life of a Neoplatonist pagan philosopher.

For the contents of his teaching we depend on his only two known works, the

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Commentary on the Golden Verses and *On Providence.* As in many other respects, Hierocles followed Iamblichus in considering the *Golden Verses* as a propaedeutic to philosophy. S. rightly underlines three important characteristics of the *Commentary* (pp. 17–18): (i) it was intended and used by Hierocles as an introduction to philosophy; (ii) Hierocles therefore focuses in the *Commentary* on ethical issues, leaving metaphysical topics for more advanced courses; and (iii) the work indicates that Hierocles follows the Pythagoreanizing programme of which Iamblichus was the most important exponent (see D. J. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived* [Oxford, 1989]). The fact that Hierocles uses the commentary genre to convey his own philosophical ideas is not surprising; by his time this had become a popular philosophical literary form in all philosophical schools of late antiquity. It is therefore a pity that S. does not discuss this work *qua* commentary; for example, how it compares with the other available commentaries on the *Golden Verses*, and the interpretative strategies it uses: Hierocles tries to interpret the poem on the one hand within the context of what he understands to be the Pythagorean–Platonic tradition, and on the other hand he explains each section of the poem in terms of its relation to the whole (e.g. in Chapter 15.3 he interprets vv. 30–1 by pointing out how these verses relate to each of the preceding sections). From Photius' extracts and summaries of *On Providence* it is clear that this work 'was to a large extent a thematic history of philosophy, written of course from a Neoplatonic perspective' (p. 22).

The larger part of the introduction is devoted to Hierocles' philosophy: first the tripartite division into contemplative, civic, and telestic philosophy, which Hierocles also finds reflected in the *Golden Verses*, and then Hierocles' views on providence, fate, and free will, which are of course the particular topics of *On Providence*. S.'s discussion is wide-ranging, clear, and persuasive. One of the most notable positions taken in this discussion is his agreement with Ilsetraut Hadot that it is a mistake to view Hierocles as representative of a 'primitive' Alexandrian Neoplatonism influenced by a Christian monotheism, which did not accept Plotinus' triad of the One, intellect, and soul, but which considered intellect to be the absolute highest principle (pp. 44–58). The latter view, put forward by K. Praechter (*ByzZ* 21 [1912], 1–27; 'Hierokles', *RE* VIII/2 (1913), 1479–87), has long held sway as *opinio communis*, but has in recent years been opposed by Hadot in her important study, *Le problème du neoplatonisme alexandrin* (Paris, 1978), and in several subsequent articles (most recently 'Hierokles von Alexandreia', *DNP* 5 [1998], 542–3). S. argues, with Hadot, that far from falling back to the pagan Middle Platonist Origen, Hierocles clearly presents a development of the Iamblichean tradition. Although this debate will probably continue, S. certainly makes a very strong case for Hadot's position.

In his translation of the *Commentary* S. uses Koehler's text, but he also makes judicious use of the older edition by Mullach, as well as emendations suggested by more recent scholars. For *On Providence* he uses R. Henry's Budé edition of Photius' *Bibliotheca.* His translation is lucid and his extensive set of notes helpful and to the point.

As one may expect from a book published by Oxford University Press, the book is in general well edited. Somewhat surprising, however, is the number of errors in the Greek in the notes in certain sections of the translation. Most of these are minor errors, such as the use of a grave instead of an acute accent or a rough instead of a smooth breathing, and vice versa (on pp. 228–36, for example, there are sixteen such errors), but a few more glaring mistakes also occasionally escaped the proofreader's vigilance, e.g. εἰκῶνες instead of εἰκόνας (p. 176, n. 4), ἡέζων instead of ῥέζων (p. 198, n. 10), or ἔχεσαθαι for ἔχεσθαι (p. 214, n. 7).

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However, these are minor cavils. This is a most valuable and important contribution to the study of late antique philosophy, which makes a neglected Neoplatonist accessible to a wider readership, including those with little or no Greek. It is an indispensable addition to any serious research library.

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THE RITUAL LAMENT UPDATED

M. ALEXIOU: *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. Second edition, revised by D. Yatromanolakis and P. Roilos. Pp. xviii + 293. Lanham, Boulder, New York, and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002 (first edition 1974). Paper, £22.95. ISBN: 0-7452-0757-2.

Many thanks are owed to Gregory Nagy, editor of the Rowman & Littlefield monograph series *Greek Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, for his commitment to bringing Margaret Alexiou's seminal work back into print. As he states in his Foreword, this book 'has been consistently consulted and cited as the most authoritative work on the tradition of singing laments in the prehistory and history of the Greek-speaking peoples'. The two editors created a Greek revised edition and, at the request of Alexiou and Nagy, this new English edition, both of which faithfully preserve the original 1974 version of *The Ritual Lament* in framework, methodology, and interpretations; a few updated references are included, along with a very useful bibliographical supplement that includes titles published through 1998. This refreshed edition is welcome indeed; it is an essential source for any study of women's song traditions.

In her *Preface*, written in 1973, Alexiou clearly states her purpose: 'to study the evolution of the ritual lament throughout Greek tradition, indicating how poets of different ages were able to draw on a common fund of ideas, themes, and formulae, frequently investing an old and well-established convention with a new significance and contributing something of their own' (p. xv). She studies the laments 'in relation to the funeral ritual and in relation to other kinds of ritual laments and songs to the dead' (p. 131) to show the continuity, evolution, and change in the use of imagery in laments from antiquity to the modern era, and also to highlight their originality. She draws on a variety of sources, both literary and archaeological, and includes often full-text examples of laments in Greek with English translation and interpretation. Her sources for the songs are nineteenth- and early twentieth-century collections of Greek folksongs (e.g. N. Politis), and her own fieldwork, conducted in Greece during the 1960s. Most, if not all, of the Greek folksongs that appear in the book had never before been translated into English—or even studied, for that matter, by English-speaking scholars.

Alexiou approaches her interdisciplinary investigation of women's lament traditions in three parts. In 'Lament & Ritual', Alexiou explores tradition and change from antiquity to modern survivals, with reference to the wake, the funeral procession, burial and after, and legislation governing lamentation and funerals. She includes excerpts from Homer, Byzantine and modern Greek poetry and song to illustrate the diachronic flow of both the popular and learned lament traditions, focusing on issues of performance context, composition and form, reception, and interpretation in literature, epigraphy, archaeology, and history. In 'Gods, Cities and Men', she

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