VITAE PHILOSOPHIA DUX

G. Clark, T. Rajak (edd.): *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World. Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin*. Pp. xvii + 348. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Cased, £45. ISBN: 0-19-829990-7.

'I think I am one . . . who undertakes to practice the true art of politics' (*Gorg.* 521d). Socrates' claim that the true philosopher is the true politician and should rule the city has been the subject of lively discussion from antiquity until today. Has there ever been a sucessful connection between political power and philosophy, and did philosophy influence the actions of powerful men at all? Did philosophy really affect people's behaviour, or did it not rather serve as a means to console those who were powerless, and to assure those who were in power? Were there not many who were convinced, like Kallikles, that (Plato, *Gorg*. 484c) 'philosophy is no doubt pleasant enough . . . taken moderately and in youth, but it is the ruination of a man if he stays in it too long', an attitude which seems to be favoured by many in Greece and in Rome? Recent scholarship has been sceptical about the relevance of philosophical doctrines to the behaviour of Greek and Roman politicians.

In her books and articles Miriam Griffin reminds us that philosophy did play an important rôle in Greek and Roman society. One important aspect of this rôle consisted in helping people to understand and to express themselves. The papers collected in this volume in her honour prove how fruitful Miriam Griffin's thesis is. Different though the papers are in topic and approach, they all agree that philosophy was of significant importance in ancient life. The papers give an idea of the variety of ways in which power and philosophy were connected. They show that in antiquity philosophy was a hermeneutical tool for the ancients to understand themselves and their traditions.

In a first section four articles discuss the contribution of philosophy to the development of political thought, and the question how political concepts contributed to men's well being. Leslie Brown deals with Plato's *Crito* and Socrates' claim that he did not feel free to leave the city, despite being able to do so. He rather felt obliged to obey the laws of Athens, because he has accepted their benefits. Brown analyses the meaning of 'agreement' and maintains that the argument is not successful, because two different kinds of agreement are conflated: the 'cognitive' agreement—as Brown calls it—that something is the case, and the 'performative' agreement, from which an obligation to do something follows. The *homologia* of what people believe must not be mixed up with agreement which causes obligations to act. Brown refers to the decisive part *homologia* plays in the Socratic elenchus. Martha Nussbaum draws attention to problems which arise when it is argued that only virtue is necessary for human *eudaimonia*. What about *paideia*, she asks; what about health care? If one accepts those as necessary as well, one has to accept that there are people who have the power to provide help or not. Nussbaum discusses the cases of Diogenes the Cynic and Marcus Aurelius the Stoic emperor, and poses the question whether it is not necessary for virtue to be connected with emotional attachment in order to make people care for others.

Two other papers, by Jill Harries on Cicero and Fergus Millar on Ulpian, deal with philosophy in 'Roman dress' and discuss relations between Greek thought and Roman law. Harries agrees that there are differences between Cicero the philosophical writer and Cicero the orator in court. But orators did use philosophical concepts or Greek

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.1.73 Published online by Cambridge University Press

techniques of definition in court, adapting them to the audiences and adding a 'public dimension to the philosophical and rhetorical approaches' to the law (p. 68). Millar refers to Ulpian's claim, in the preface to his *Institutes*, that law is philosophy, and wonders whether this proves to be the case in general. Ulpian, a legal expert and learned man, used many techniques when interpreting the law, which affected the way of life of the Roman citizens. But it remains unclear whether Ulpian is really to be called a philosopher, rather than an intellectual in politics.

Contributions to the second section deal with the power of philosophy to moderate emotions. Recent scholarship underlines the therapeutic intentions of philosophical discourse and its techniques, developed especially in Hellenistic philosophy. Epicurus' claim that 'empty is that philospher's discourse that offers no therapy for human passion' seems to be programmatic.

Malcolm Schofield's paper about 'Academic Therapy' interestingly argues that philosophical therapy also played a part in the Academy; Philo testifies to it. Cicero might have this tradition in mind when writing the *Tusculan Disputations*. Even in Plato's dialogues philosophical therapy is at work; Schofield points to the *Charmides*. However, in the *Charmides* the conversation is, it seems, protreptic and prepares Charmides for the therapeutic *epodē* rather than offers the therapy itself. It is the *Phaedo* where one finds therapeutic *paramythia* at work.

Mary Beagon's paper takes M. Sergius as example of how, in Roman society, weakness of physical health and disability caused by bravery in battle was not rewarded in politics, but was used in a philosophical context to create a paradigm of moral success. The elder Pliny referred to Sergius in order to illustrate how internal resistance can overcome external fortune.

Barbara Levick challenges the claim that philosophy does any good to the powerless, and she questions whether philosophy ever changed anyone's mind. She focuses on possible influences, philosophy on Greek and Roman women. Although a few of them were well educated and even were decribed as philosophers, Levick claims that in antiquity philosophy did not care much about women.

Glen Bowersock, in the final paper of this section, reminds us of the importance philosophy gained in the second century, due, he argues, not least to a change of attitude towards it. Greek values were accepted in the Roman world more than before, although not everywhere in the same way. Philosophers looked for worldly success; spectacular 'performance' and self-presentation as stars became acceptable to the public. Sophistic and philosophy were no longer strictly separated. Sophistic rhetoric, rather, was 'closely allied with the prevalence and practice of Greek philosophy' (p. 157).

In a third section the focus of the papers turns from the subjects of power to those who were able to exercise power. The impression is that the powerful rarely expressed themselves using the language of philosophy. Even Cicero, 'A Man of Letters', behaved like a politician rather than like a philosopher when he carried the burden of offical posts, as Zvi Yavetz suggests, because in politics he lacked time. Like other politicians in antiquity and today, he had to decide under pressure and to act like a pragmatist. Yavetz doubts that under these circumstances philosophy had much to offer (p. 170).

Three other papers in this section deal with the growing acceptance of Roman emperors and the way how untraditional power was presented by traditional language. On the subject of 'Deus or Divus', David Wardle sees no connection between the choice of the title 'divus' for the deified Caesar and traditional religion and philosophical speculation. He argues that this tradition was invented, and supported by the language of archaic Roman religious law. It might be added that philosophers

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like the Epicurean Philodemus in *de dis* (cols 8–10) argue for the existence of star gods, introducing a new aspect into Epicureanism perhaps in order to explain the deification of Caesar in terms of Epicurean philosophy to his *patronus* Piso. In 'Arcanum Imperii: The Powers of Augustus, the Refusal of Power', Hannah Cotton and Alex Yakobson are interested in the traditional topos of refusal of power and the rôle it played in Augustus' effort to establish untraditional power. The way *recusationes* were used here and elsewhere illuminates an important aspect of the Augustan principate, because it helped to keep the republican sentiment and the 'ambivalent attitude towards the idea of . . . sole rule' (p. 195). Werner Eck discusses the topos of *recusatio* as well. He reminds us that the refusal of power had become a standard topos by imperial times. He analyses Trajan's accession in terms of a political deal, and contrasts this with Pliny, who took pains in his *Panegyricus* to assure the audience that Trajan had to be persuaded to take over power, and that he did this only because the country urged him to do so.

Following Miriam Griffin's suggestion that the ancients' use of philosophical terms and concepts, either to support or to contradict their decisions on political or other issues, can be compared with what happened in Christianity, a fourth section focuses on different aspects of the relation between pagan philospophy and Christian thought. Loveday Alexander shows how Jews and Christians used philosophical concepts to illustrate and to explain their own beliefs. Standard topics in the *vitae philosophorum* were used in constructing the lives of Christian and Jewish martyrs. Interestingly, Alexander refers to the book of *Acts*, which portrays Paul and his behaviour in Athens while drawing on philosophical models like Socrates, and on the tradition of the use of free speech by philosophers (*parrhesia*) towards tyrants and others in power.

Margaret Atkins deals with a time when Christianity prevails and is supported by power. She reminds us that Augustine—unlike Cicero—does not draw a line between a philosophical, private audience and a public one. He used philosophical arguments and interpretations in his public sermons as well, and adapted them to the context and the audience. Polymnia Athanassiadi argues that pagan philosophers were made to become orthodox and intolerant because they had to defend themselves against the growing influence of Judaism and Christianity in late antiquity. Julian, for instance, was trying to protect pagan philosophy against Christianity and to soften rivalry within the pagan camp. Rivalry amongst Platonists about true interpretations of Plato led to the marginalization of Platonist philosophers in the fourth and fifth century. It was for that reason, Athanassiadi argues, that philosophy became an issue for specialists.

The final paper of this collection, by Jonathan Barnes, offers a wide range of testimonies concerning those who called themselves philosophers, men and women alike, both pagan and Christian. It turns out that most of them wished not to align themselves with a particular school, but to express their wish for wisdom and their desire to study things human or divine. The testimonies collected by Barnes prove indeed that 'the Empire teemed with such people' (p. 306). One might guess that those common people who called themselves philosophers were looking for confirmation of their decisions, and found help in philosophy, understood as *ars vitae*, for leading their lives.

To sum up: this collection confirms that philosophy was of importance in Greek and Roman life, that philosophical teachings were used by people to manage their lives also in a Roman context. Seneca's 'Graecis verbis, Latinis moribus philosophari' (*Ep.* 59.7)

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characterizes well the relation between philosophy and tradition. Much can be gained from reading this book.

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THE WISDOM OF THE ANCIENTS

G. R. BOYS-STONES: *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy. A Study of its Development from the Stoics to Origen*. Pp. viii + 241. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Cased, £35. ISBN: 0-19-815264-7.

Boys-Stones has produced a provocative and densely argued book that covers a wide field, exploring interconnections between Stoicism, Judaism, Platonism, and early Christianity. His arguments may not convince all, but they will cause scholars in these various fields to look afresh at what is often too familiar to them. Unfortunately the rather bland title fails to convey the range of B.-S.'s interests; this is not a book only about philosophy.

B.-S. argues that the early centuries A.D. saw a dramatic change in the way philosophy was conducted. Crucial to this change was the belief, which B. traces back to the early Stoics, that it was possible to recover 'the primitive, privileged wisdom of early man' (p. vi). The main theme of the book is the contribution of this idea to the development of post-Hellenistic philosophy, in particular to Platonism. It is divided into two parts: Part I, 'Ancient Wisdom: Stoic Exegesis', and Part II, 'Ancient Tradition: Post-Hellenistic Philosophy'. Along the way, B.-S. has much to say on philosophical criticism of Judaism and Christianity and the resulting Jewish and Christian apologetic literature.

Belief in a distant golden age was not unusual amongst ancient thinkers, but according to B.-S. the early Stoics took this rather further than most. First, they believed that early man, uncorrupted, lived in pre-philosophical harmony with nature, almost an unself-conscious prototype of the Stoic wise man. Secondly, early man's understanding of the world, albeit in distorted form, had been handed down in the mythology of the poets. Consequently, allegorical interpretations of the poets could extract the fragments of primitive wisdom that survive and lead to at least partial confirmation of the Stoic view of the world. Later, Posidonius, in the first century B.C., opened up greater possibilities by arguing that early mankind included philosophers, a position found in a more developed form in the first century A.D. Stoic, L. Annaeus Cornutus. Cornutus believed that it was the early philosophers themselves who dressed their ideas in allegory before the poets began to transmit them to future generations. If this were so, then the recovery of ancient wisdom would become a more realistic proposition.

B.-S. believes that Stoics such as Cornutus looked not only to Greek mythology in their search for lost ancient wisdom but to the traditions of other cultures as well. The older and more independent a tradition could be said to be, the more philosophical validity it had. B.-S. devotes two chapters to exploring the implications of this idea for intellectual conflict between Greeks and Jews. It was this idea that lay at the root of accusations by Greeks that the Jews were really Egyptians who had abandoned the culture of their ancestors. The Jews respond by stressing the antiquity of their people in relation to others. There are, I feel, two problems with the introduction of Jewish material into B.-S.'s argument. First, because he wants to make Posidonius a turning-point in Stoic thought, as he argues by means of a substantial discussion of

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