shows nothing short of inspiration. T. seems to communicate directly with Euclid, and he often manages to evoke, in a few concise comments, an entire feature of ancient Greek mathematical writing. No review can do justice to this feature of T.'s writing, which is a matter of style and verve no less than of argument.

Indeed, the two poles generate between them a special kind of energy, well known to readers, and fans, of T.'s writing. The author's well-known, subtle irony is in this case especially appropriate, as he describes the subtle, playful, make-believe activity of Greek geometry—and as he deals with a concept as elusive and subtle as 'being given'.

The value of the work is in its detail. Still, in rough outline, its main claim may be paraphrased as following: the notion of 'being given' is reducible neither to algebraical solubility nor to meta-geometrical constructability. Instead, once Greek geometry is understood in the terms intended by its authors—as a game of make-believe—the property of 'being given' makes sense as a statement within the game. This seems to me correct and important.

T. clearly intends his book strictly for scholars of Greek mathematics. There is no doubt that it will serve, for generations to come, as a reference-point for further specialized research. But all scholars of ancient Greek thought will benefit by a glance, at the very least, at the first chapter, to find there Greek geometrical practice as a special domain of playful imagination—a domain whose true nature should reflect on further aspects of Greek intellectual life. I hope such scholars may, then, even be tempted to read further into Greek mathematics.

Stanford University REVIEL NETZ

PLUTARCH AGAINST THE STOICS

M. Casevitz, D. Babut (edd.): *Plutarque:* Oeuvres morales. *Tome XV, 2^e^ partie. Traité 72:* Sur les notions communes, contre les stoïciens. (Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé.) Pp. 465. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002. Paper, €60. ISBN: 2-251-00507-2.

The present edition of Plutarch's *De Communibus Notitiis* [*DCN*] is the first full-sized, systematic commentary on this work and, as such, is quite invaluable for anyone who wishes to get to grips with the dense potage of allusion, quotation, and polemic which makes it at once such a useful and such a challenging source for our knowledge of Stoicism. (It is the companion and sequel to an edition of *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis* by the same team, but has been published first, and I should apologize if any of my comments turn out to have been anticipated there.) The text (Casevitz) and translation (primarily Babut) improve on the already excellent precedent of Cherniss's Loeb; but its real contribution is in B.'s 263 eye-straining pages of notes. These are replete with exactly what one would be looking for: judicious discussions of textual cruces; a wealth of parallels, which are often quoted, not just referenced; and thoughtful reconstructions of the Stoic arguments attacked. (It might be noted that a certain familiarity with the system seems presupposed: this is not a book for beginners.)

In his introduction, B. sets out his view of Plutarch's purpose. It is commonly assumed that Plutarch intended to show that Stoicism is at odds with everyday intuitions about the world, and so to ridicule their own claims that Stoicism is uniquely

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.338 Published online by Cambridge University Press

consistent with 'common conceptions'. But the term 'common conception' has a technical sense in Stoicism, referring to something like the concepts that are fundamental to our thought, and B. argues (pp. 16–19) that Plutarch's real intention is to show where Stoic doctrines are, after all, in contradiction with these. That the doctrines themselves are (confessedly) 'paradoxical' is not really the point: the fact that they contradict their conceptual premises is. To this extent, *DCN* is even closer to *De Stoicorum Repugnantiis* than is generally assumed.

I find this account very convincing, to the extent of being a little disappointed to find B. argue that Plutarch wanders away from the plan in the second half of the work. Here, B. suggests, he really does stoop to more superficial criticisms of the Stoics—notably, for example, of their misuse of language. An example is Chapter 28, where the Stoics are criticized for calling only the virtuous beautiful, and then for saying that a sage will 'love' not the virtuous (i.e. 'beautiful'), but an ('ugly') child who is not yet virtuous, but might be made so. Plutarch may not have objected to the practical upshot of the doctrine, as B. notes; but this does not make his criticism merely linguistic. He might as well be objecting to the underlying assumptions about human psychology and aesthetic value that led the Stoics to deny the term 'beautiful' to a fool. (In a similar way, criticisms of solecism in Stoic ethical vocabulary, as when they call 'preferred' things which we are supposed to pursue, just as if they were what most people would call 'good', are really criticisms of the way the Stoics reconceptualized ethical value.)

In general, my one reservation is that B., in common, it must be said, with most commentators, fails to delve very far behind the superficial aspect of Plutarch's arguments, to consider whether they might reflect the sincere philosophical disagreement of an alternative perspective. I accept that *DCN* is ostensibly a defence of earlier Academic Sceptics in particular (cf. n. 11); but, apart from the fact that even a rigorous Sceptic might adopt a position from which to argue (as Carneades asserted the greater plausibility of Calliphon in discussions of ethics), B. concedes that Plutarch always 'thought of himself as a Platonist' (p. 27; he might have added that he was a Platonist who saw no rift between his work and that of his Academic predecessors: *Lamprias* 63). At one point, B. even mounts a spirited defence of Plutarch against the charge that he attacks in the Stoics a position he holds himself (on the nature of time: see nn. 633, 651). Yet despite this, B. is mostly silent about Plutarch's own position on a given issue. But how (for example) could Plutarch fail to be thinking of the Platonist alternative when he attacks the Stoic belief that qualities are corporeal (*DCN* 50)? A reference to Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* 11, at least, is called for here.

B. is refreshingly thoughtful and fair-minded in assessing the merits of Plutarch's arguments as they stand: he does not always assume that the Stoics have the better of it (e.g. nn. 185, 763). But in his tendency to view the work as an essentially negative polemic, Plutarch generally comes out worst: his reports may be accurate (argued at nn. 629, 635), but his inferences 'tendentious', 'specious', or similar (notes *passim*). It is, of course, possible that these judgements are right on occasion, and B. is certainly less hasty than some to make them, but their value is relative to the accuracy of the underlying reconstruction, and one might invoke the principle of charity precisely to cast doubt on a reconstruction that leads to an argument that is tendentious, specious etc. Do we really believe that Plutarch could not have come up with a bookful of good arguments against the Stoics?

It is not only Plutarch who suffers: the Stoics can be spoilt by the favouritism shown them. I give one example: *DCN* 16, where Plutarch attacks the Stoics for arguing that evil must exist if virtue exists. The argument he ascribes to them is that good is

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.338 Published online by Cambridge University Press

recognized as the opposite of evil, so that the Stoics define virtue as the knowledge of good and evil. Against this, Plutarch says that the good could be recognized by contrast with what is merely indifferent, in which case the existence of evil would not after all be necessary for virtue (and the Stoic god could not so easily be excused for its introduction into the world). B. argues that Plutarch has deliberately abbreviated the Stoic definition of virtue to score an easy point (n. 214): the Stoics in fact defined virtue as the 'knowledge of what is good, evil and indifferent'. This is not only unfair to Plutarch (the Stoics needed to justify the existence of evil, so that the existence of indifferents is irrelevant in this context); it also reduces the Stoics' argument to a matter of semantics (e.g. the view that virtue cannot be defined without reference to evil). In fact, the Stoic argument presumably involved the fact that virtue is the only good, and that virtue requires deliberate choice. But the choice cannot be between indifferent and good, since the Stoics believe that no action is morally indifferent. Evil, in other words, must be a live option if there is to be virtue; and so it must exist. (For all this, cf. Seneca, *Epistle* 90.) Plutarch's argument represents the serious objection of someone who does believe that some actions are morally indifferent to a Stoic position more serious in its turn than B. suggests.

My methodological reservations (in which B. will no doubt recognize the clatter of a hobby-horse) should not be taken in any way to suggest that I underrate B.'s achievement in this work. I could write as much, and more, on virtues of the work which will, however, be readily apparent to those who use it. If I disagree with aspects of the commentary, that is not because it lacks care, detail, and a powerful scholarship which is witness to B.'s long reflection on Plutarch's engagement with the Stoics. The work is beautifully presented, and includes a bibliography, and indexes of passages, names, and Greek words.

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PAUSANIAS ON ELIS

M. Casevitz, J. Pouilloux, A. Jacquemin (edd.): *Pausanias:* Description de la Grèce. *Tome VI. Livre VI. L'Élide (II)*. (Collection des Universités de France publiée sous le patronage de l'Association Guillaume Budé.) Pp. xxxix + 337, map, plan. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002. Paper, €50. ISBN: 2-251-00501-3.

Olympia lies at the centre of Pausanias' description of the sacred landscape of Greece, occupying nearly one-fifth of the whole text and dominating his account of Elis in Books 5 and 6 (out of 10). That positioning is no accident. For Pausanias, as no doubt for many of his contemporaries, the sanctuary of Olympia is a space imbued to an unparalleled degree with the traces of the Hellenic past. It is also a site which confronts him with the enormous difficulties involved in any attempt to access that past and to see beneath the sacred monuments and statues of Greece to the 'realities' which lie behind them. That is a tension which runs, albeit often in less conspicuous form, through the whole of Pausanias' work. His account of Olympia acts as an exemplary centrepiece for his exposition of the alluring but barely graspable richness of the Hellenic heritage.

Book 6, the second of Pausanias' two Olympic books, takes us on a tour of the statues and monuments of the Altis (the Olympic sanctuary). Pausanias lists nearly

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