

Richard Sorabji, Robert W. Sharples (eds.), *Greek and Roman Philosophy 100BC–200AD*, 2 vols., London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2007 (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, Supplement 94), XII, 720 pp., ISBN 978-1-905670-07-9 (I), 978-1-905670-08-6 (II).

As is the case with many other Classical disciplines, the loss of documentary evidence proves to be a considerable obstacle to any research of the Greek philosophical thought in the Hellenistic and early Roman eras. Indeed, what we have are bare scraps of copious intellectual production, comprising either rare direct quotations or, much more often, paraphrases, often adduced with polemical intent. Clearly, not an enviable situation for researcher. Notwithstanding, the twentieth century was marked with some noteworthy advances in the field. At its dawn, the German tradition of *Quellenforschung* provided the scholarly world with the basic tools for investigation of the Stoic thought (von Arnim's *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*) and of the doxographic tradition (Diels' *Doxographi Graeci*) – much as we may complain about the inadequacies of these works, their intrinsic value and the essential contribution to the furthering of respective studies is hardly in question. Similar progress has been made with the later Aristotelian tradition: it is the very same turn of the century that saw the emergence of the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*. The impact was profound if not exactly immediate: the century produced an amazing number of works devoted to the Hellenistic, Roman and Imperial philosophy, a fact easily verifiable should one glance through the bibliography of any recent work on Stoicism, Middle Platonism or exegetic tradition. Hardly surprisingly, at some point it became necessary that the achievements be summarized: the 1987 brought the publication of the first of seven *ANRW* volumes devoted to the development of Imperial philosophy (*ANRW* II 36, 1–7). For nearly twenty years, those volumes formed something of the *summa*. We may safely say that in 2007 they have acquired a worthy successor.

The successor, strikingly, is not of parallel dimensions: the two volumes that appeared as the Supplement 94 of the “Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies” equate (as far as their length is concerned) a single issue of *ANRW*. Still, it is not precisely the dimension, but the contents that count. An after-product of a conference hosted by the University of London in 2004, the work contains thirty seven articles, some of them preserving the original lecture character. The thirty seven are arranged in four principal sections as the work follows the issues related to the development of differing philosophical traditions: the Stoic (and Cynic), the Epicurean, the Platonic (and Sceptic), and the Aristotelian schools. These four are preceded by a general introduction and crowned by a ‘partial census’ of Epicureans, not to mention indexes and bibliography. Within each section, the arrangement is decided either by chronology or by philosophical issue at stake: this apparently double criterion seems particularly apt given, on the one hand, the time span involved and the fundamental differences of opinion we may observe between e.g. Arcesilaus and Alcinous, and, on the other, the necessity to provide a comprehensive picture of, say, predestination as understood by the Aristotelians. Additionally, a list of all known representatives of a given tradition was thoughtfully provided at the beginning of each section: given the obscurity of some of the names (who, save for most devoted students of ancient philosophy, would immediately identify Aristocles of Messene?), the idea seems particularly laudable. Additionally, it should be noted that the choice and arrangement of issues rather than favouring a detailed discussions of particular, highly advanced problems aims at providing a comprehensive overview of the development of philosophical thought before Plotinus – as a result, the two volumes may be regarded as up to date ‘companions’ to relevant schools.

The overview starts with Stoics and Cynics and it would be hard not to notice the predominance of the Stoicism. While the section starts with a fascinating account of Posidonius and his researches in physics by Stephen White (pp. 35–76), the attention quickly turns to ethical matters: George Boys-Stones deals with the contribution made to the Stoicism by the great Roman Cornutus (pp. 77–88), Miriam Griffith with the pedagogical dimensions of Seneca's *Epistulae* (pp. 89–113) and John Sellars

with the concept of *askesis* in Epictetus (pp. 115–140). Strikingly, the three articles seem to interconnect, forming a highly instructive vision of the understanding of philosophical instruction, and of the practicalities of Stoicism in the imperial era. The investigation of the sect continues in Richard Sorabji's contributions (on the Stoic self, pp. 141–162, and on emotion, pp. 163–174), dealing with the recent advances in the study of Stoic psychology, a subject wrecked by particular difficulties owing to the transmission problems. Then, closing the Stoic section, the brief study of Marcus Aurelius (by Christopher Gill, pp. 175–187) contributes to the lively discussion of the emperor's philosophical allegiance, and, significantly, pays considerable attention to the priority of practical matters in the approach so manifest in the *Meditations*. As a result Marcus emerges as a true Stoic, whose interests were limited (possibly due to the demands of his position) to ethics. Finally, the sole discussion of imperial Cynicism, by Michael Trapp (pp. 189–203), highlights the important problems involved in the investigation of the sect: the position of Cynicism as a *philosophical* school, the autonomy and uniqueness of respective tenets etc. These questions seem particularly important given the fact that possibly more than any other Socratic school Cynics are known to us mostly by their 'atopic' behaviour and, moreover, via literary or anecdotal descriptions.

The discussion of imperial Epicureanism, matter long considered unattractive, understandably focuses on Demetrios, Diogenes and Philodemus. The mere quantity of the works left by this latter suffices to prove that the philosophical current was all but dead in the period in question and it seems likely that the continuing decipherment of the data will provide us with an ample opportunity to re-evaluate the philosophical cast of mind that motivated the emergence of the *On piety*. Hence, the Epicureanism is bound to attract considerable attention in the near future – awareness of this colour the relatively short section with certain introductory quality which makes it particularly worthwhile. Thus, Diskin Clay discusses the possible (and highly likely) importance of the shadowy Demetrios of Laconia (pp. 207–211) and, at the end of the section, the heritage of Diogenes of Oenoanda (pp. 283–291), Voula Tsouna deals with Philodemus' interpretation of human emotion (pp. 213–241), and Simon Trépanier pays homage to Lucretius' great achievement and its didactic aims (pp. 243–282). The section is supplemented by a valuable census of known and suspected Epicureans of the period, also compiled by Clay (pp. 639–643).

Of all four sections of the work, the one devoted to the Platonic thought is by far the longest – hardly a surprising circumstance when we take into account the recent achievements in the investigation of the current, or, possibly even more important point, the variety of changes that occurred in the Platonism in the discussed period. From the Carneadean and Philonian scepticism, through the Neopythagorean influences and Plutarch's metaphysics, to the rhetoricized works of Apuleius and Maximus, with additional look at the somewhat untypical Philo, the section covers an impressively vast and fertile field of study (hence, I will mention only some of the contributors to this particular part of the work). Charles Brittain, the author of *Philo of Larissa*, opens the discussion with a chapter on the Academic scepticism as this latter was perceived by later philosophers (pp. 297–316), thus providing a reader with a glimpse of internal discord within the Platonic heritage and, simultaneously, relating to the period preceding the 'rebirth' of positive doctrine. In turn, the renewal forms the chief point of interest in Harold Tarrant's article on Antiochus (pp. 317–332). In turn, Antiochus' student, Cicero, the man whose writings are one of the principal sources for the epistemology and ethics of his predecessors, is the focus of Jonathan Powell's interest (pp. 333–345). His essay, styled as a dialogue, draws attention to the recent developments in Ciceronian scholarship, highlights the problems related to Arpinate's position in the history of philosophy, his innovativeness and philosophical tastes.

Introduced by Michael Trapp's study of the Neopythagorean thought (pp. 347–363), the Middle Platonic metaphysics gets a lion's share of attention in the articles of Mauro Bonazzi (on Eudorus, pp. 365–377), Jan Opsomer (on Plutarch, pp. 379–395), John Dillon (on Numenius, pp. 397–402) and Angelos Kritikos (on Platonic principles in Origen, pp. 403–417). In some part, these chapters form a critical overview of the recent findings, and while they do not cooperate to form a comprehensive picture of the Middle Platonic metaphysics, they do provide an insight into the problems and the controversies raging in the respective period as well as into the issues that remain controversial in the

modern scholarship. The same must be said of the more ‘practically’ oriented contributions of Tarrant (on moral goals and virtues, pp. 419–429) and Boys-Stones (on fate, pp. 431–447). It is also worth mentioning that the section accounts for the often ignored ‘marketing’ aspect of the philosophical activity (in Tarrant’s *Platonic Educators in Growing Market*, pp. 449–465, and, to some extent, in Trapp’s essay on the two popularizers – Apuleius of Madaura and Maximus of Tyre, pp. 467–482). At the end of this particular section one finds Runia’s essay on Philo (pp. 483–500) – while the argument of this essay is in distinct opposition to Dodds’ seminal article of 1928 (*The Parmenides of Plato and the Origins of the Neoplatonic One*, CQ XXII, pp. 129–142), one cannot help but notice that it also acknowledges the import of Dodds’ findings and highlights their impact on the later scholarship.

It might be that the section devoted to the Aristotelians will prove the most difficult read: logic and, more precisely, syllogistics figure prominently in the discussion, so it is hard to imagine an absolute beginner starting here. Still, it needs to be emphasized that Jonathan Barnes presents his argument in his usual lucid and precise manner, doing his best to keep the reader out of trouble (on Peripatetic logic, pp. 531–546, on epistemology, pp. 547–562). This interest in logic and epistemology seems well justified given the overall interest in the Aristotelian *Categories*, so well attested in works of both Aristotelians and Neoplatonists¹. At the same time, however, it should be noted that logic is hardly the only issue tackled in this section: in fact, the manifest aim is to cover the majority of important subjects: hence, the matter studied vary from the ommentary tradition itself, through logic and syllogistics, epistemology, physics (Sorabji on the concepts of time and space in the discussion with the Stoics, pp. 563–574, and on the modifications introduced to the Aristotelian heaven, pp. 575–594), theory of fate (by Robert W. Sharples, pp. 595–606), the concept of soul and intellect (by Sharples, pp. 607–620), philosophy of emotions (by Sorabji, pp. 621–626), to the definition of happiness (by Sharples, pp. 627–637). Certainly a challenging section, yet, given the quality of contributions, well worth the time.

As it happens with almost every work, some potential inadequacies could be pointed out in the case of the discussed collection. Among those most apparent: Galen remains almost entirely absent from its pages, which may well surprise the reader given the importance of his *Placita Hippocratis et Platonis* for any attempt at reconstruction of the Stoic concept of the soul and of emotion, of the inborn qualities. Interestingly, when discussing the scholarship on Stoic psychology of self, Sorabji numbers several scholars whose views diverge from his own: one of the bones of contention is precisely the value of Galen’s testimony on the matter (p. 153, n. 1) – the caveat provides an insight into the current scholarly debate and simultaneously, introduces the less experienced reader to the idiosyncrasies of this particular kind of research.

To conclude: *Greek and Roman Philosophy* is a highly valuable work that both summarizes the current scholarly research and contributes to the continuing debate on Hellenistic and Roman philosophy. While some of its parts call for a philosophically advanced reader, others may prove of considerable value to those interested in more general cultural milieu of the imperial era (this seems particularly true of Tarrant’s piece on Platonists as educators or Sharples’ essay on the commentary tradition). One may also appreciate the fact that while every essay provides its own bibliography, separate and particularly well organized bibliographic list was assembled by Sharples in the second volume with particular emphasis on the recent (post-1987) scholarship (pp. 645–685). Even more importantly, one may well admire the authors’ capacity for expounding the often complex problems in a relatively easy manner and hope their work will contribute to the growing interest in the study of less popular and less renowned issues and personages of ancient philosophy that are all too often seem disregarded due to an alleged lack of originality.

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¹ For the Neoplatonic interest in Aristotelian logic, see above all the list compiled by G.E. Karamanolis in his *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*, Oxford 2006, pp. 337–339.