

WHITE, Stephen. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers: An Edited Translation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. vi + 519 pp. Hardcover, \$145.00—Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* occupies a unique place in the history of Western philosophy. In addition to its valuable summaries of the doctrines of philosophers and their schools, it is often the best, or, indeed, the only source available for biographical details of many figures. Yet, as a work, it is often criticized for a lack of originality and critical judgement, notable only because it happened to survive while all other philosophical histories of the era did not, or useful only because Diogenes had access to sources which are now lost to us. White sets himself against this pessimistic interpretation of Diogenes, and endeavors to show both the genuine merits of his work and his worth as a historian.

To this end, White begins his edition with an excellent introduction that attempts to piece together the puzzle of Diogenes' life, working from the scanty biographical details we have of him, clues in the *Lives*, and the history of his era. He then moves to the *Lives* itself, addressing the motivations and thematic scope of the work, something which might be confusing to initial readers. Although Diogenes begins with a discussion about the supposed origins of philosophy and biographies of the Seven Sages, his work does not continue into Diogenes' present day (despite a few mentions of his contemporaries or near contemporaries, like Sextus Empiricus), instead stopping for the most part at the Hellenistic Era, ending with Epicurus. Through his discussions of Diogenes' motivations and the views of philosophers in the imperial period, White shows that what Diogenes set himself to write was not a complete history of philosophy from its origins to the present day, but rather a story of how philosophy reached its supposed peak in the Hellenistic Era.

The translation itself is clear and readable. Occasionally, White will mention when Diogenes misconstrues certain doctrines, such as in his summary of Aristotle's view of actuality and potentiality in Book V, but for the most part, White is not seeking to write a commentary on the philosophers mentioned by Diogenes, instead using footnotes mostly to give historical context or track references to other works. In some areas, Greek terms that are particularly tricky to translate, like *logos*, are transliterated and bracketed next to their various translated uses throughout the chapter, along with cases where the Greek is needed to understand what Diogenes is saying about etymologies or relations between terms.

There are some areas where a greater explanation of the rationale in translation or mention of alternative possibilities would have been helpful. To focus on one particular case, Diogenes gives a summary of Stoic Logic, along with Stoic Ethics and Physics, as part of the life of Zeno of Citium in Book VII. In this, he discusses a technical term in Stoic epistemology, the *phantasia katalēptikē*, which White renders as "cognitive presentation." The translation of both words of this term is quite contested, with the first term being rendered as "grasping," "apprehensive," and "comprehensive" as well as "cognitive," and the second term being translated as "impression" or "appearance" as well as "presentation." While the Greek for both elements of the phrase is given separately in the glossary of philosophical terms, and while White says that this is "Stoic technical terminology" in a footnote, he does not mention the other possibilities or why this might be contested. While White's commitment to readability and flow is well taken, the brevity of commentary does sometimes pose challenges, especially with very artificial technical vocabulary, like that of Stoic Logic. Readers who are new to the field may benefit from more information about such technical terms and White's reasons for translating them as he does.

One of the more difficult tasks in producing an edition of the *Lives* is handling the citations, given the vast number of authors and fragments that appear in the work and the various sources and compendiums which draw on the *Lives*, such as the Diels-Kranz (DK) for the pre-Socratic philosophers or the *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (SVF) for the Stoics. White handles this problem efficiently, marking each fragment with a bracketed fragment number corresponding to an index of citations. In this index, the fragment numbers and their corresponding locations in the *Lives* are given grouped by author, with the corresponding compendium information, if relevant, given there as well. This, in addition to a comprehensive index of persons mentioned and a glossary of the philosophical terms in transliterated Greek, makes the work fairly easy to navigate for research purposes. Also provided is a very helpful list of further readings and relevant authors for the material in each of the ten books.

White does an admirable job of producing an edition that will be adequate for both researchers and those mostly unfamiliar with Ancient Greek philosophy, albeit with a bent towards the former. By situating Diogenes within a particular context and elaborating on his likely motivations and sympathies, White's volume should give readers a greater appreciation for the *Lives* not just as a sourcebook, but as an engaging work by an able historian of philosophy.—Anthony Hejduk, *Columbia University*