



BOOK REVIEWS

Volume 30 No. 1
Summer 2013

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- 122 **A.W. Price**, *Virtue and Reason in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), xii + 356 pp., \$85.00. ISBN 9780199609611. Reviewed by Russell E. Jones.
- 127 **Sara Forsdyke**, *Slaves Tell Tales: And Other Episodes in the Politics of Popular Culture in Ancient Greece* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), xv + 275 pp., \$39.50. ISBN 9780691140056. Reviewed by John Dillon.
- 129 **John Cooper**, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), ix + 456 pp., \$35.00. ISBN 978-0691138602. Reviewed by Antony Preus.
- 132 **Catherine Collobert, Pierre Destrée and Francisco J. Gonzalez**, eds., *Plato and Myth: Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths. Mnemosyne Supplements*, 337 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), viii + 476 pp., \$222.00. ISBN 9789004218666. Reviewed by Catalin Partenie.
- 136 **Tony Burns**, *Aristotle and Natural Law* (London; New York: Continuum, 2011), vi + 217 pp., \$120.00. ISBN 9781847065551. Reviewed by Anthony Lisska.
- 140 **Debra Hamel**, *Reading Herodotus: A Guided Tour through the Wild Boars, Dancing Suitors, and Crazy Tyrants of The History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), xxiii + 329 pp., \$29.95 (pbk.). ISBN 9781421406565. Reviewed by Joel Alden Schlosser.
- 145 **William H.F. Altman**, *Plato the Teacher: The Crisis of the Republic* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2012), xxii + 489 pp., \$90.00. ISBN 9780739171387. Reviewed by Harold Tarrant.
- 149 **Robert J. Roecklein**, *Machiavelli and Epicureanism: An Investigation into the Origins of Early Modern Political Thought* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), xi + 213 pp., \$70.00. ISBN 9780739177105. Reviewed by Paul O Mahoney.
- 156 **Jason Hawke**, *Writing Authority: Elite Competition and Written Law in Early Greece* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011), x + 285 pp., \$45.00. ISBN 9780875804385. Reviewed by Cynthia Patterson.
- 160 **Emmanuel Bermon, Valéry Laurand and Jean Terrel**, eds., *Politique d'Aristote: famille, régimes, éducation* (Pessac: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2011), 188 pp., € 22.00 (pbk.). ISBN 9782867816321. Reviewed by Edwin Filotas.
- 166 **Kenneth R. Moore**, *Plato, Politics and a Practical Utopia: Social Constructivism and Civic Planning in the Laws* (New York: Continuum, 2012), 144 pp., \$110.00. ISBN 9781441153173. Reviewed by Lewis Trelawney-Cassidy.

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- 171 **Alan Ryan**, *On Politics: A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present*, 2 vols. (New York and London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2012), xxv + 1114 pp., \$75.00. ISBN 978087140465 7 (cloth). Reviewed by Quentin Taylor.
- 176 **Jon Miller**, ed., *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), x + 290 pp., \$85.00. ISBN 9780521514484. Reviewed by Matthew D. Walker.
- 180 **Susanne Carlsson**, *Hellenistic Democracies: Freedom, Independence and Political Procedure in Some East Greek City-State*. *Historia — Einzelschriften* 206 (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 372 pp., \$113.95. ISBN 978 35 150 92654. Reviewed by Shane Wallace.

Jon Miller, ed., *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), x + 290 pp., \$85.00. ISBN 9780521514484.

This volume, an entry in the Cambridge Critical Guides series, is not intended as an introductory reference work. Rather, it aims to 'advance new scholarship' (p. 15) on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*EN*). The volume consists of eleven chapters, plus a substantial introduction by Miller. It is divided into four main parts, of unequal length: (1) textual issues; (2) happiness; (3) philosophical psychology (the longest section); and (4) virtues.

In his introduction, Miller provides an interesting overview of the *EN*'s recent reception. He addresses the puzzle of why Aristotle's ethical theory largely disappeared from the philosophical scene for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, only to find renewed interest in the late twentieth-century.

Part I contains one chapter on textual issues in the *EN*. Michael Pakaluk offers a detailed and rigorous account of how the *EN*'s various parts form a coherent unity. Pakaluk focuses his reading of the *EN* around Aristotle's claim that the soul has (1) a non-rational orectic part and (2) a part having reason. Thus, Aristotle's claim explains *EN* II–V's treatment of the character virtues which perfect the *epithumētikon* and the *thumikon* and various kinds of *orexis* (e.g. for such goods as honour, money and companionship). It also explains *EN* VI's treatment of the dianoetic virtues. Pakaluk argues that Aristotle's remarks on the soul explain the *EN*'s other discussions as well. For instance, as discussed in Books VIII and IX, friendship is an extension of the agent's stance of love towards the thinking part of his soul, only in relation to this part as it exists in a friend. Pakaluk sees no inconsistencies between Books I and X. Nor, notably, does Pakaluk see any peculiarities concerning the *EN*'s two discussions of pleasure. On Pakaluk's reading, Book VII's account concerns the pleasures of the *non-rational* part of the soul (and paves the way for Aristotle to discuss *akrasia*). Book X's account, by contrast, concerns the pleasures of the *rational* part (and paves the way for Aristotle to discuss contemplation). Pakaluk's careful reading of the *EN* both challenges and invites responses from scholars who view the *EN* as a largely piecemeal collection of various discussions.

Part II contains three chapters on the much-discussed topic of happiness. Susan Sauvé Meyer offers a nuanced account of what it means to act for the sake of an ultimate end. While Meyer defends the viability of J.L. Ackrill's claim that one end can be for the sake of another by constituting the latter, she denies that Aristotle is an Ackrillian inclusivist (according to whom various goods choiceworthy for themselves are for the sake of happiness by constituting happiness). On Meyer's reading, Aristotle identifies happiness as contemplation. But contrary to recent proposals by Richard Kraut and Gabriel

Richardson Lear, Meyer contends that lower-order ends are not thereby for the sake of happiness by causally promoting or approximating contemplation. Rather, Meyer convincingly argues that contemplation is primarily an external regulative *telos*, i.e. an end that regulates ‘when, whether, and to what extent’ (p. 51) lower ends are to be pursued. Further, Meyer explains how a regulative constraint on the pursuit of lower-ends can serve as a *source of value* for those lower ends. An implication of Meyer’s view: contemplation, as a regulative end, allows an agent a ‘space of permissions’ to engage in ethically virtuous action for its own sake — regardless of whether such action causally promotes contemplation.

For his part, Norman Dahl argues that, according to the conclusion of *EN* I.7’s function argument, happiness consists in ‘a life of rational activity in accord with virtue *including* the best and most final virtue’ (p. 69; Dahl’s emphasis). In other words, happiness consists in virtuous activity of all sorts, including the virtuous exercise of theoretical reason. A potential problem with such a reading, as Dahl recognizes, is that it seems unmotivated. First, as Dahl notes, one might worry that reading the function argument’s conclusion in this way requires one to add text that is not there in Aristotle. Second, the function argument distinguishes the *best and most final* virtue from the other virtues, such that Aristotle seems to identify happiness (solely) as activity according to the former virtue.

In response, Dahl plays the first objection against itself: he argues that if Aristotle had meant that happiness consisted *solely* in a life according to the best and most final virtue, then Aristotle would have added text to that effect. Against the second objection, Dahl proposes that his reading makes sense of the contrast between the best and most final virtue and the other virtues: a life must include activity in accord with the former virtue if it is to attain primary *eudaimonia*. Dahl makes many suggestions that I find plausible and helpful, yet I am not convinced by Dahl’s reading of the function argument. If other readings require one to add text to the argument’s conclusion, then an alternative reading does not. As I have argued elsewhere, standard readings of the function argument consistently overlook the force of the *accordance relationship* between activity of soul and virtue.⁵⁸ Suppose that the accordance relationship is broadly regulative (such that activity accords with virtue if it is regulated by virtue). If so, then the function argument identifies happiness (1) as activity of soul *regulated by* virtue, and if there are many virtues, then (2) as activity *regulated by* the best and most final virtue. But if *sophia*, as the best and most final virtue, regulates the lower (practical) virtues of soul, then practically virtuous action will constitute activity of soul regulated by the best and most final virtue. Hence, something like Dahl’s basic view would still stand, only on a different basis.

⁵⁸ See Matthew Walker, ‘Aristotle on Activity “According to the Best and Most Final” Virtue’, *Apeiron*, 44 (2011), pp. 91–109.

According to A.A. Long, the space of possible positions in the inclusivist/exclusivist debate (over the constituents of happiness) seems sufficiently worked out that the debate ‘threatens to reduce study of *N.E.* to a virtual chess game’ (p. 94). For fresh insight on Aristotle’s views, Long examines the notion of *eudaimonia* by reference to its theological and noetic dimensions. Against the proposals of Kraut and Lear that contemplation serves as a model that ethically virtuous action approximates, or to which it is instrumental, Long spells out an alternative approach. Against those who identify happiness exclusively with contemplation, and who hold that only contemplation is godlike, Long argues that it is mistaken to think that Aristotle’s references to divinity are solely ‘to the contemplative, *as distinct from* the ethical or political, route to happiness’ (p. 107). For both kinds of virtuous activity exercise *nous* of some variety; but all noetic activity is godlike; and all godlike activity is happy. It is consistent with this view, as Long admits, and as Book X suggests, that some activities that exercise *nous* can be more godlike and more productive of happiness than others. In particular, contemplation is most godlike. But it does not follow that ethically virtuous action is not godlike, and so, not happy.

Part III’s five chapters cover topics in Aristotle’s philosophical psychology. Klaus Corcilius offers a rich account of non-rational desire, with a focus on the *De Anima*, and with an explanation of how human non-rational desire and the non-rational desire of non-rational animals can be given one basic explanation in terms of such desire’s role in self-maintenance. In his paper, Giles Pearson examines *EN VII.6* and the puzzles it raises concerning non-rational desire.

Iakovos Vasiliou tackles a puzzle generated by Aristotle’s account of moral education. On the one hand, in *EN II.1–3*, Aristotle adopts the ‘habituation principle’ that we become virtuous by performing virtuous actions; and this habituation principle seems to imply that virtuous actions are in some way metaphysically prior to virtuous agents. On the other hand, one might worry that acceptance of the metaphysical priority of actions (to agents) stands at odds with Aristotle’s apparent acceptance of what C.C.W. Taylor calls ‘the primacy of character’. For Aristotle indicates that ‘actions are called just or temperate when they are the sort that a just or temperate person would do’ (*EN II.4*). Vasiliou attempts to resolve the apparent vicious circle that arises, viz. that ‘virtuous actions become virtuous by being done by virtuous agents and that virtuous agents become virtuous by doing virtuous actions’ (p. 176). Vasiliou argues that we must not conflate (1) the *metaphysical* priority of agents to actions, i.e. the claim that virtuous agents are prior in being or definition to virtuous actions, and (2) the *epistemological* priority of agents to actions, i.e. the claim that one must *know* virtuous agents first before one is capable of identifying virtuous actions. Ultimately, Vasiliou argues, Aristotle

issues a qualified acceptance of the metaphysical priority of virtuous actions to virtuous agents.

In a clearly written and forcefully argued paper, Christopher Shields responds to misgivings that many philosophers (in particular Anscombe) have had about Aristotle's account of pleasure. Shields shows that Aristotle is not committed to an absurdity when he says both that pleasures *are* activities (in Book VII) and that they *complete* activities (in Book X). Shields argues that we should reject the assumption that gives rise to the charge of absurdity, viz. the thought that something cannot both be and complete an activity. Along the way, Shields shows how pleasures can supervene on psychic activities and — simultaneously — perfect them. One wonders what Shields would say in response to Pakaluk's suggestion about the different aims of the Book VII and Book X accounts of pleasure.

In his aporetic, but stimulating, contribution, Stephen Leighton examines inappropriate passions, such as envy, spite and shamelessness. Such passions, Aristotle notes, do not admit of the mean: rather, they are always excessive. Leighton wonders, however, whether Aristotle can justify the status of these passions as 'simply inappropriate' (p. 216). In particular, Leighton contends, it is hard to see how Aristotle can offer a triadic account of such passions, i.e. one that would require a 'neutral specification of a passion that was amendable to analysis in terms of excessive, deficiency, and the mean' (p. 223). Further, Leighton finds Aristotle's remarks on envy in the *Rhetoric* to be puzzling. It is hard to see how envy can ever be appropriate, yet Aristotle thinks that rhetoricians are to arouse envy through their speeches.

Section IV contains two papers (broadly) on virtues. T.H. Irwin explores the meaning of the *kalon* in Aristotle. He takes issue with aesthetic readings of the notion (according to which the *kalon* means 'beautiful', even in ethical contexts), psychological readings (according to which the *kalon* is the object of the soul's spirited part), and non-instrumental readings (according to which the *kalon* signifies non-instrumental goodness as such). Ultimately, Irwin identifies the *kalon* in ethical contexts as signifying a 'praiseworthy attempt to promote a common good' (p. 252), so that concern for the *kalon* is impartial and unselfish. For Irwin, then, the *kalon*, in ethical contexts, signifies 'moral rightness' (p. 252).

Finally, Hallvard Fossheim offers a novel treatment of general justice in *EN V*. According to Fossheim, traditional interpretations of general justice wrongly assume that general justice *really is* an ethical virtue. Fossheim, by contrast, argues that Aristotle merely characterizes general justice *in terms of* ethical virtue (without thinking that general justice really is an ethical virtue). For Fossheim, general justice is best understood as a feature belonging to lawful actions in a community; it is a virtue of political communities rather than of individuals.

In sum: consistent with the aims of the Cambridge series to which it belongs, Miller's collection has a more selective focus on specific problems in the *EN* than, e.g. *The Blackwell Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*. For readers with interests in ancient Greek political thought, then, the papers will be of variable interest. For readers with interests in the topics that its papers explore, however, Miller's collection is well worth reading.

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Susanne Carlsson, *Hellenistic Democracies: Freedom, Independence and Political Procedure in Some East Greek City-State*. *Historia — Einzelschriften* 206 (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 372 pp., \$113.95. ISBN 978 35150 92654.

Democracy in the Hellenistic world, oft dismissed as 'a quaint historical memory amid the bureaucratic rule of autocratic monarch, oligarchic group, or business consortium',⁶⁰ has been undergoing something of a renaissance. French scholarship has led the pack,⁶¹ but more recently English and German scholarship has caught up, most notably with Sviatoslav Dmitriev's *City-Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor* (Oxford, 2005), Volker Grieb's *Hellenistische Demokratie: Politische Organisation und Struktur in freien griechischen Poleis nach Alexander dem Großen*, *Historia — Einzelschriften* 199 (Stuttgart, 2008), and Christian Mann and Peter Schulz, '*Demokratie*' im Hellenismus: Von der Herrschaft des Volkes zur Herrschaft der Honoratioren? (Stuttgart, 2012). Carlsson's *Hellenistic Democracies* (Stuttgart, 2010), a lightly revised version of her homonymous 2005 PhD dissertation from the University of Uppsala, arrives therefore into an already packed field.

Hellenistic Democracies offers an analysis of the decrees of Iasos, Kalymna, Kos and Miletos (with Didyma), from the Classical to the Roman Periods. In an approach that builds on and is similar to Rhodes and Lewis's *Decrees of the Greek City States* (Oxford, 1997), Carlsson analyses the prescripts of civic

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⁶⁰ Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley, 1990), p. 632.

⁶¹ See, for example, Ph. Gauthier, 'Les cités hellénistiques', in *The Ancient Greek City-State*, ed. M. Hansen (Copenhagen, 1993), pp. 211–31; Ph. Gauthier, *Les cités grecques et leurs bienfaiteurs* (Paris, 1985); Ph. Gauthier, 'Les cités hellénistiques: épigraphie et histoire des institutions et des régimes politiques', in *Actes du 6e Congrès international d'épigraphie grecque et latine, Athènes 1982* (Athens, 1984), pp. 82–107; A. Bresson and R. Descat, *Les cités d'Asie mineure occidentale au IIe siècle a.C.* (Bordeaux, 2001); *Citoyenneté et participation à la basse époque hellénistique*, ed. P. Frölich and C. Müller (Geneva, 2005) — works which are not listed in Carlsson's bibliography.