

not true without exceptions, but only roughly true (1094b19–22, 1142a18–19). The activities of practical insight and theoretical inquiry are said to be analogous because both aim at being truthful and precise (107). This may not amount to a structural analogy, however, only to a community of aims. One might also say that this community is only formal because the content of these aims is fairly different in each case.

In sum, the book is thorough and for the most part very well argued. It is a substantial contribution to the study of Aristotle's ethics.

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Gideon Nisbet. *Greek Epigram in the Roman Empire: Martial's Forgotten Rivals*. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. xiii, 237. \$125.00. ISBN 0-19-926337-X.

The past few years have seen an increasing interest in the study of ancient Greek epigram. Nisbet's book is devoted entirely to a specific subgenre, scoptic epigram, which had its *floruit* between the first and second centuries A.D. and which is conserved mainly in book 11 of the *Greek Anthology*. Since scoptic epigrams have been largely neglected by scholars, Nisbet's book "about short, funny poems" (xv) can only be welcomed.

The book, starting with an attempt at reconstructing the "context of reading/performance for the subgenre itself" (1), follows with discussion of some of the major authors of the genre (Loukillios, Nikarkhos—but the new epigrams in *P Oxy.* 3725 and 4501–4502, on which Nisbet announces he is writing an article, are not taken into account—Ammianus, "Loukianos") and a brief survey of some of the minor authors. This is a reasonable choice, designed to show the variety of voices and satiric personalities.

Following A. Cameron (*The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes* [Oxford 1983]), Nisbet suggests the symposium as the original context of epigrams, since this was the natural setting for jokes (but there is no mention of R. Reitzenstein, *Epigramm und Skolion* [Giessen 1893]). Although this thesis is basically convincing, Nisbet goes so far as to deny any literary existence for these poems, put in books "designed for use . . . at symposia", not in "'literary' books" (35). But evidence clearly points elsewhere (see now E. Magnelli, "Nicarco, *AP* 11.328: allusioni oscene e allusioni erudite (con osservazioni sulla trasmissione degli epigrammi scoptici)," *SemRom*, forthcoming) and one does not see why a sympotic origin should necessarily exclude a more formalized collection in books designed to be read, not just to be brought to a symposium as an easy repertoire of jokes.

The most disappointing part of the book is the one dedicated to discussion of individual epigrams. Nisbet is conscious that these poems are often multilayered, subtle, and clever, but he all too often provides unconvincing readings. Nisbet tends to recognize intertextual allusion where only vague resemblance is at work. He sees Aristophanes and New Comedy as the major models for the techniques of paradox, hyperbole, and surrealism on which the jokes are often based, but, although the comic tradition may have had an *indirect* influence on scoptic epigrams, discussion of more recent literary phenomena, both Greek and Roman—such as epigram itself, Roman satire, Catullus' poetry, etc.—would have been more useful. Nisbet's approach is thus particularly disappointing: just because scoptic epigram flourished in the first century A.D., this does not mean that it did not exist earlier. Our

perception could well depend on Meleager's choice of epigrams for his anthology. One would have expected a fuller discussion of where the subgenre came from: Nisbet's assertion that these epigrams "come from nowhere" is unjustified (he does not mention J. Blomquist's article, "The Development of the Satirical Epigram in the Hellenistic Period," in M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, and G. C. Wakker, eds., *Genre in Hellenistic Poetry* [Groningen 1998] 45–60, which collects examples of satirical epigrams dating from the fourth to the first centuries B.C.). And that "they go nowhere" (209) is simply not true: what about Agathias, for example, and some of the other poets of his *Kyklos*?

Basically, we learn nothing about the formal artistry of these poems or the way in which they play with the epigrammatic tradition. For example, I would have liked to learn something about the connections between the bawdiness of Nikarkhos and his epigrammatic predecessors coming from Meleager's or Philip's *Garlands*, such as Dioscurides, Marcus Argentarius, and Philodemos, each of whom occasionally practiced obscenities in language and tone. I would also have liked to understand what makes an epigram scopic rather than erotic: why are some epigrams included, with very small changes, both in books 11 and 12?

There are serious omissions regarding secondary bibliography: as a consequence, Nisbet tends to take for granted what is often mere speculation, thus providing inaccurate, if not misleading, suggestions. Some few examples: had he taken into account scholarly discussion about the complicated composition of book 12 of the *Anthology*, he would have been more cautious in saying that in the preface of the book "Cephalas *demonstrably* [my emphasis] recycles a preamble of earlier provenance" (24)—which is nothing more than an hypothesis; in *AP* 6.321, an epigram by Leonides of Alexandria is dedicated, according to Nisbet, to Nero, but Nero is just a possibility, and one of many (see D. L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* [Cambridge 1981] 514).

In conclusion, Nisbet's book has the merit of directing scholarly attention on a too-often neglected subgenre; unfortunately, much remains to be done.

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Susan A. Stephens. *Seeing Double: Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria*. Hellenistic Culture and Society, 37. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 2003. Pp. xvi, 292. \$65.00. ISBN 0-520-22973-8.

With her expertise in Egyptian literature and culture, Susan Stephens is in a unique position to evaluate how the Ptolemaic monarchs' engagement with Egyptian matters influenced the poetry produced in Alexandria in the early to middle third century. Her book goes beyond the recent work of scholars such as Koenen, Bing, and Selden to examine how Egyptian references in this poetry locate it within a wider dialogue about kingship occurring in roughly the same period and place (11).

The book's title distills its approach (9):

. . . the cumulative effect of this poetry would have been to allow the reader to discern Egyptian cultural formations, but contained within or domesticated by its framework of Greekness. The effect is one of an optical illusion—looked at from one angle discrete elements in the narrative are