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Review of *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* Vol. 34 by David Sedley

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The eleven papers in this volume, from long-established scholars such as Burnyeat and Ferrari as well as relative newcomers, continue the tradition of serious scholarship, mainly in the analytic tradition, for which the *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* series is highly regarded. Four papers are devoted to Plato, six to Aristotle, and one to Plotinus. Nearly all of the contributors specifically thank the editor, David Sedley, which implies he is to be commended not only for selecting these articles, but also for improving them. No single theme unifies the essays, but most of the papers aim at the correction of some interpretation that is uniformly or widely shared in recent scholarship. It would not be right to call the papers equally weighty, but each requires serious study and none is for beginners. Scholars will want this collection on their own shelves or in a nearby library.

"Socratic Irony as Pretence" G. R. F. Ferrari

Ferrari brings a version of contemporary "pretense theory" of irony to bear on Socrates. Specialists in ancient philosophy have not noticed the inadequacy of the "traditional theory" of irony, which emphasizes a contrast between a statement's true meaning and its literal meaning. According to pretense theory, irony involves pretending to be in a context where one's (actually inappropriate) action or speech would be appropriate (6). Socrates pretends, e.g., to be in the presence of someone superior by being (inappropriately) deferential. Socratic irony is "solipsistic" not communicative, since he wants it to go unnoticed as he disturbs his interlocutor's unfounded self-satisfaction (16). Those who see through Socratic irony see what Socrates still tries to hide (18-19). Whereas Socrates never drops his irony and aims to test or improve his interlocutors, Platonic irony needs an appreciative audience because it aims to be understood (29). Platonic writing is self-assertive display, not moral or philosophical exhortation. Ferrari's interesting paper makes one wish it were always as clear as it sometimes is. At the least, a taxonomy of forms of irony (solipsistic, everyday, communicative, Platonic, etc.) would help. Also, given that Plato is the source of both Socratic irony and his own markedly different irony, has Ferrari made Socrates the central victim of Platonic irony?

"Appearances and Calculations: Plato's Division of the Soul" Jessica Moss

Moss examines two arguments in *Republic X* that use internal conflict to divide the soul into a calculating part and a non-calculating part (602c-603a and 603e-605c). Calculation is opposed to a violent emotional part and to a part that assents to mere appearances. Moss takes these [latter two parts] to be the same, non-calculating part: appetite plus spirit. On this reading, pleasures and desires become (fallible) perceptual states of awareness, and the soul's emotional evaluations stand in need of correction by calculation (or measurement or deliberation) since

they may be illusions just as some sense perceptions are. She defends the non-rational parts as capable of beliefs, means-end "thinking," and as susceptible to persuasion, but also as unable to transcend appearances (65). Reason has its own desires based on its calculation of what is truly good. Against many who would diminish the significance of these passages, she finds in them the key to Plato's distinction between rationality and non-rationality. It is unfortunate that Moss does not address the chimera image of the soul (588b ff.). Also, when reading this paper after Ferrari's, one cannot but be struck by the absence of any appeal to Socratic irony.

"Glaucou's Challenge and Thrasymacheanism" C. D. C. Reeve

Dissatisfied with received accounts of the beginning of *Republic* II, Reeve sets aside most scholarship and presents a fresh reading. He examines closely the demand to praise justice Glaucon and Adeimantus make on Socrates. This challenge arises secondary to their own critique of common opinions about justice, which usually go unstated, but which Thrasymachus presents as his own wisdom. Reeve takes Thrasymachus as expressing a naturalistic view of justice based on egoistic eudaimonism, and he makes a strong case for its internal consistency. Reeve sees the *Republic* as the Socratic response to Thrasymacheanism as it is (faithfully) restated by Glaucon and Adeimantus (84-86). This paper is notable for its careful attention to the text and serious consideration of the philosophical questions raised by the text.

"The Copula and Semantic Continuity in Plato's *Sophist*" Fiona Leigh

Leigh examines Lesley Brown's influential interpretation of uses of *einai* in *Sophist*. On Brown's view, some copulative uses of *esti* are not merely copulative but have existential force, i.e., they are semantically continuous with complete, existential uses that admit no complement. Leigh defends Brown against recent criticism from John Malcolm as a prelude to her own criticism that this reading is insufficiently supported by *Sophist*. Although this is the shortest paper in the collection, it makes considerable demands on the reader. One must juggle murky passages in *Sophist* concerning whether 'what is not' is, Brown's reading of those passages, Malcolm's construal of Brown's reading, Leigh's defense of Brown as (mis-)construed by Malcolm, and Leigh's own critique of Brown. Such complexity is not Leigh's fault, to be sure, but the paper does seem to presuppose fresh familiarity with Brown's thesis.

"What's the Matter with Prime Matter?" Frank Lewis

Lewis defends the view that Aristotle genuinely endorsed at least most of what he is traditionally understood to have held about prime matter. In Lewis's "philosophical reconstruction," prime matter essentially has only the capacities to be affected by the various occurrent contraries (hot, cold, wet, dry) of the elemental bodies. Prime matter is found only as affected by pairs of these accidental properties and is the persistent principle underlying, not all substantial change, but elemental change. Matter is spoken of in many ways, and Lewis takes being matter to be "a second-level functional property" that belongs to something in virtue of its first-level causal powers. For example, bronze and wood both have determinate first-level passive powers for receiving specific contraries, and thus each has the second-level functional property of being matter. Lewis engages a multiplicity of Aristotelian texts and contemporary interpreters in an illuminating way; one issue he does not address is the relation between matter and extension.

"Elemental Teleology in Aristotle's *Physics* 2.8" Margaret Scharle

Scharle's paper extends much more widely over the corpus than her title suggests. Aristotle's puzzling discussion of whether rain falls for the sake of an end is the focal point for a discussion of multiple texts. She rejects both those who argue that rainfall is non-teleological and those who argue that winter rain falls for the sake of crop growth. She emphasizes that natural motions for the sake of an end must be referred specifically to the nature or natural being that

has the end. Her own account is that winter rainfall is teleological in the sense that elemental motions to natural places imitate the Prime Mover. This preserves an important sense of cosmic teleology, without claiming that rain falls to make the crops grow and without removing the accidental character of rare, summer rain. The argument is complex, with a number of moving parts. She says so much to make Aristotle's non-biological teleology intelligible that it would be interesting to know whether she thinks any of his teleology remains defensible in light of modern and contemporary challenges.

"Alteration and Aristotle's Theory of Change in *Physics* 6" Damian Murphy

Murphy examines Aristotle's account of unified change as continuous in time and as infinitely divisible because time is infinitely divisible. Murphy defends Aristotle's claim that infinite temporal divisibility (ITD) holds for all changes by concentrating on the case of alteration (specifically, change of color). Alteration presents more difficulties than does locomotion, due in part to questions about positing an infinite array of shades of color and in part to texts that have led many interpreters to deny that Aristotle thinks alterations are infinitely divisible. Murphy draws some fine distinctions, e.g., between infinite divisibility of a change and infinite divisibility of the "path" of that change. The persuasiveness of these fine distinctions is uneven, not least because the texts are treated in isolation from consideration of what is at stake philosophically for Aristotle or for us in these passages. In the concluding section of the paper Murphy constricts the scope of his argument for ITD to changes in color; for other qualitative changes, he says ITD is "not obviously false" (217).

"*Kinêsis* vs. *Energeia*: A Much-Read Passage in (but Not of) Aristotle's *Metaphysics*" M. F. Burnyeat

This seventy-page article, some thirteen years in the making, devoted to eighteen lines of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, approaches the status of a short book. Burnyeat argues that "the Passage" (*Met. Theta* 6, 1048b18-35), which asserts an exclusive distinction between motion (*kinêsis*) and actuality (*energeia*), is genuinely Aristotelian but does not belong to *Metaphysics*; the distinction is unique in Aristotle's corpus and should not be brought to bear on other parts of it (220, 259). Ultimately, Burnyeat reconstructs a version of the Passage that he considers a genuine fragment that was introduced into the text here perhaps to prevent a misinterpretation (that *all* actualities are motions) arising from the identification of motion as one sort of actuality (1048b8-9). His argument, with its extensive analysis of manuscripts, its meticulous attention to detail, and its comprehensive examination of Aristotle's writings, casts serious doubt on the textual tradition: he found no ancient author other than Michael of Ephesus (Pseudo-Alexander) exhibiting knowledge of the Passage's exclusive sense of *energeia* (231-32, 278). Burnyeat's argument for the Passage's uniqueness in the corpus also provides support for its authenticity, especially by showing its affinity to arguments in *Nicomachean Ethics* that distinguish pleasure from motion. However genuine the Passage may be, it will no longer be possible to treat it as belonging to *Theta* without confronting Burnyeat's study.

"Aristotle's Argument for a Human Function" Rachel Barney

Barney attempts to delineate precisely how Aristotle argues for the claim that human beings do have a function without identifying what that function is. She argues that Aristotle alludes to and rejects a Platonic conception of function as instrumentality (*Republic* 352d9-e4), which would render a human being something that some user uses to accomplish a task (299-300). Barney resists any reading that would make the *Ethics* depend directly on teleological principles from Aristotle's theoretical treatises. The ethical argument should be construed as supportive of natural teleology, not as a deduction from it. Barney offers two "complementary" (319) readings of the argument, the more interesting of which she calls the "realization" argument. According to this reading, Aristotle invites us to see that the functions of the various artisans instantiate or realize the good of the artisans themselves as human beings (not merely as artisans of a

particular type). The most attractive dimension of this reading is that, according to it, the *human* good is not the isolated privilege of the virtuous few, but it is found in differing modes of realization throughout the various human lives and even in the good functioning of the parts of the human body (318).

"*Nicomachean Ethics* 7.3 on Akratic Ignorance" Martin Pickavé and Jennifer Whiting

Pickavé and Whiting defend the argumentative and textual integrity of this chapter as a "progressive articulation" of Aristotle's analysis of akrasia; the price of this interpretation is that one must abandon the widely shared reading "that Aristotle seeks to explain akratic behaviour by a failure either to have or to use knowledge of some *particular*" (324). They emphasize Aristotle's claim that the akratic agent acts voluntarily (1152a6-19), which includes "knowing the particulars" (1111a22-23). Akrasia is a genuine problem only when the agent avoids the kind of ignorance of universals characteristic of vice and the kind of ignorance of particulars that makes action involuntary (110b24-1111a26). The distinctively akratic impairment of knowledge is revealed only when Aristotle addresses matters *phusikôs* (1147a24-b12). The presence of *epithumia* (and its effects), the authors say, explains which universal beliefs get activated or used and which do not; this preserves the voluntariness and the humanness of akratic action and shows how the relevant "practical syllogism" issues in action, not in change of belief (353-56). This paper goes a long way toward making the details of Aristotle's text intelligible without explaining away the puzzling character of akratic action.

"Automatic Action in Plotinus" James Wilberding

"Automatic action" is spontaneous, non-deliberative action in the sensible world performed by the sage without being drawn away from contemplation of the intelligible and becoming thereby engrossed in the world. Wilberding finds several (not all) Plotinus scholars embracing this interpretation in passing, without an examination of the evidence in its favor, an account of its origin in the soul, and a determination of the limits of this sort of action. He defends the view that Plotinus is committed to some important role for automatic action emerging out of the ascent of the soul, much as art makes possible intelligent bodily action without deliberation or conscious attention. In addition to this, he argues that some deliberative (i.e., non-automatic) action might still be required and that this mundane engagement would not necessarily prevent the sage from being "continually directed to the intelligible" (389-90). By "continually" Wilberding means only that the sage does not lose his train of thought despite interruptions that force him to suspend contemplative activity intermittently, an interpretation drawn from Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*. Moreover, some deliberative attention to the "delicate neglect" of the body is necessary to preserve reason's capacity to look upward (394-97). The sage attends to practical action not as genuinely noble, but as something necessary or compulsory, although Wilberding is non-committal on just what sort of necessity this is (note 82). Might such action be fairly described as, in some important sense, automatic?

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