various modern efforts to read a literary-critical significance into the scene. P. 158: K. improbably sees echoes of Sappho in *Eq.* 730, where 'Who is wronging you, Paphlagon?' seems more likely to be a question common in a competitive and quarrelsome city than a reminiscence of Sappho 1.19-20, and the farewell exchanges at Sappho 94.5-7, famously criticized by Denys Page (*Sappho and Alcaeus* 83) as reflecting social conventions rather than deep feeling, seem unlikely to have come into Ar.'s or the audience's mind when Paphlagon takes farewell of his speaker's garland at *Eq.* 1250-1, or when Hermes bids farewell to Trygaios at *Pax* 719; Sappho echoes, not surprisingly, seem not to occur in extant Old Comedy. On p. 160 a slip of the pen makes Pindar *Nem.* 1 refer to Olympia (for Ortygia); p. 166, n. 286: M. Heath's scepticism (*Political Comedy* 18) concerns the seriousness with which Ar. treats his quarrels with Kleon in *Acharnians*, not the reality of the quarrels. Pp. 192-3: The Strasbourg Epode is unconvincingly claimed, with Rosen, as the model for *Ach.* 1150-60, on the basis of such parallels as a dog being mentioned in each, both curses expressed by the optative, and 'May I see him suffering', the last being, as noted with many parallels by Fraenkel (*Horace* 29, referred to by K.) a standard element in curses. Pp. 213-4: K.'s defence of a proceleusmatic in Eupolis fr. 366 (iambic trimeter), obelized in K-A, overlooks the fact that the metrical authorities he invokes are all concerned with lyric passages. Pp. 235-9: A long and learned argument for seeing a double sense, with allusion to the chromatic in musical theory, in Theopompos fr. 25, where Leotrophides is described as εὖχρως... καὶ χαρίεις ὥσπερ νεκρός, founders on the clear evidence of *Av.* 1405-7 (where scholia quote the Theopompos lines), that L. was not another dithyrambic poet but a choregos. P. 269: K. wrongly attributes to Zimmermann the categorical statement that cretic metre is 'something completely untragic.' Pp. 284-5: There is bad confusion over the text of R and ΣR in the critical apparatus given for *Thes.* 161ff.

The book is well produced, with good indexes; none of the dozen misprints noted should trouble the reader. Altogether, despite a few blemishes mostly due to excess of zeal, it shows admirable common sense, is blessedly free from theoretical jargon, and is valuable as well as enjoyable.

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Whose Socrates?

Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Plato's Socrates*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. xiv + 240 pp.

A visitor from the outer space of Classical and historical scholarship might, perhaps, entertain the idea that a book called *Plato's Socrates* would attempt to study, in greater depth and with more detail than hitherto, the various images of the character called Socrates who appears in so many of Plato's dialogues; compare them both among themselves and with the Socrates of other 'primary sources' such as Xenophon, Aristotle, and the remains of Aeschines and Antisthenes; and attempt, by various forms of elimination, combination, conjecture and suchlike gymnastics to arrive somewhat nearer the historical Socrates. This is an exercise performed time and again over the centuries of modern scholarship — most recently (albeit not in an entirely philological and historical manner)

by the late Gregory Vlastos in chapter 3 (pp. 81-106) of his *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, Cambridge 1991.

Anyone familiar with Brickhouse and Smith's previous book and articles, going back to 1983 — of which the present book is a culmination — and with current fashions in philosophical scholarship, should know better. Since the 1970s, philosophical scholarship on Socrates, especially in English and more especially in the United States, has been dominated by the imposing figure of Gregory Vlastos. The collection of essays which he edited in 1971, *The Philosophy of Socrates*, brought Socrates firmly back into fashion among philosophers. His *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* of 1991, his posthumous *Socratic Studies*, Cambridge 1994, and many articles on Socratic themes written in between and not yet collected, continued the same trend of thought and employed the same methods and approach. Meanwhile, as a Greek colleague has it, ὁ Βλαστὸς ἔχει βλαστούς. Much of the philosophical scholarship concerning Socrates and published in English has taken Vlastos' methods and approach for granted, disputing only the more controversial 'small details' of the 'Socratic (or Early Platonic) philosophy' arrived at by these methods. In 1992, two influential books emanated from the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge: *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates*, edited by Hugh Benson (Oxford), and *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, edited by Richard Kraut. The editors declare, in their introductions, their allegiance to Vlastos and his approach to Socrates, and similar sentiments are expressed by the authors of many of the essays contained in these two volumes. For the next generation or so of English-speaking students of philosophy, it appears that 'Socrates' will continue to mean, essentially, Vlastos.

The approach is quite simple, and it was hardly new in the 1970s: the great name of Gregory Vlastos only brought it to the fore and contributed to its 'canonical' status among philosophical scholars. The Socrates of Plato's earlier dialogues is essentially the historical Socrates — and, even if one is prepared to doubt all or part of this ascription of 'Socrates'' views to Socrates, the Socrates of the early dialogues represents, at least, a fairly coherent and consistent philosophy: Early Plato, the Early Dialogues, and suchlike names will do. The main methodical problem is how to extract this philosophy from what, after all, are not philosophical tracts or handbooks but philosophical dramas. Here opinions differ. Vlastos would acknowledge that much of what Socrates of the early dialogues says is ironical. Others would maintain that there is no irony, and make no concessions to the dramatic form: whatever Socrates says, even in the form of a question or an objection, should be taken as an expression of 'Socratic philosophy' — with a few exceptions, of which anon. But disagreement is mainly 'within the family', about the extent of '*echtsokratische*' statements, not about the principle that Socrates of the early dialogues is a purveyor of consistent philosophical views, no matter who his interlocutor and audience are and what the dramatic context may be.

Brickhouse and Smith have disagreed over the years on points of detail with many of the views of Vlastos and some other disciples. But in principle, they accept his approach, with the caveat that the philosophy which emerges need not necessarily be in its entirety that of the historical Socrates or the early Plato, provided 'that a distinct philosophy can be found consistently portrayed as Socrates' in Plato's early dialogues, and that the philosophy so portrayed is itself consistent' (vii-viii). Later (157), this makes them exclude the evidence of Xenophon and of Plato's middle dialogues, 'because we have elected in this book to focus on Plato's early dialogues and the Socrates whose views are represented therein'. This does not prevent them from citing Xenophon where his statements

appear to support their understanding of early Platonic texts (e.g. 173; 174; 177; 192-3; 200).

Of greater importance is their methodical principle, implied quite clearly in their discussion of Socrates' professions of ignorance: 'How much can we trust Socrates' other proclaimed views if one of the opinions he most often expresses... is not to be believed? ... Unless there is some other answer to be given, we might as well despair of reconstructing a "Socratic philosophy" from the many arguments and assertions we find him making, for these, too, might only be expressed ironically' (32: as if irony were the only manner of not pressing your opinions on an unprepared interlocutor).

It is true that the authors themselves are not always averse to ascribing irony to Socrates, in places where even a philosophical scholar cannot take his statements quite seriously as Socratic doctrines (e.g. 36; 65; 83; 188 n. 22); or that in some places they admit that Socrates here is not expressing his views, but is using ordinary language or 'relies upon what Socrates' interlocutors are prepared to accept' (e.g. 111 n. 16; 119 — with the adverb 'frequently'; 187; 188 n. 22). These are indeed 'black swans', but one should not, perhaps, press the point: the rule is still that, unless a particular swan is undeniably black, one should take it for granted it is white. Any statement — whatever its syntax, rhetorical figure, context and background — made by Socrates in an early dialogue — unless it is manifestly foolish, ridiculous or out of tune with other parts of the reconstructed 'Socratic philosophy', should be taken to represent some facet of that philosophy. As a result, most of the discussions of Platonic texts in this book (the overwhelming majority of which are taken from *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Meno* and *Gorgias*, with a sprinkling of *Charmides* and *Laches*) consist of 'purple passages' with comments. Formulae like 'this passage says', 'in this passage Socrates says' and variants are quite frequent. In the first sixty pages or so (until I became somewhat tired of this exercise), I counted at least thirty-five occurrences of 'passage' or 'passages'. This is Vlastos' T^1, T^2, T^3... T_n in plainer English. 'Plato's Socrates' is here represented, not as a character in lively — and multifarious — philosophical and dramatic conversations, but rather as a professional philosopher who 'speaks in passages'. The immediate contexts of some of these passages are sometimes described in minimal terms, for the convenience of readers who — to be charitable — have forgotten them. The main task is to find enough passages which can be combined and, with the aid of some 'glossing', be made to represent consistent doctrines. (The word 'doctrine' itself is quite frequent, but I have made no statistics of its occurrences.)

Needless to say, Plato did not write passages, and so the authors are free to start and end each passage wherever it suits their purpose (see, e.g., 30-1; 65-6). Needless to say, many of these passages are brought in because they have already been mulled over by philosophical scholars of the last generation or two. Indeed, most of the discussions in this book, including those which extend and develop earlier work done by the authors themselves, take their cue not from a careful and persistent worrying-out of the Platonic dialogues themselves, but from the views of Vlastos, Irwin, Kraut, Benson, McPherran and other recent authors. Plato's dialogues seem to be treated as a repository of Socratic passages, well-known from the secondary literature, waiting for the philosophical scholar to reemploy (and sometimes even to discover, for the first time, a hitherto unemployed Socratic passage) — to point a new moral or readorn an old tale.

This *ignoratio dialogi* is patent almost on every page where passages are quoted and discussed, or where more general statements about Socratic philosophy are made. A few

examples will suffice. Socrates 'invariably fails to support the dialogue's positive conclusions with a full moral theory' (4: But is Socrates — or Plato: *semper hic erro* — writing tracts, or is he — as we are constantly led to think — 'speaking in passages' and leaving them to the modern interpreter to 'harmonize'?); 'Much to his surprise, Socrates sometimes finds that the *elenchos* produces a conclusion he finds difficult to accept (see, for example, *Hip.Mi.* 376b8-c6; *Lys.* 218c4-8)' (8; cf. 99. When did A. J. A. Waldock first reveal to an astonished world 'the Documentary Fallacy'?); 'The other virtues are dropped from his discussion in the *Euthydemus*, though this would have given Socrates an excellent opportunity to argue for the unity of the virtues...' (107 n. 9: poor Socrates: *ganz unmethodisch*!); 'Nowhere... in the *Apology* or in any other early dialogue does he say precisely what he thinks makes something unjust and unholy' (131; but I thought that in the earlier dialogues, Socrates — or is it Plato? *semper* κτλ. — usually insists on the others performing that sort of thankless task: even such a careless reader of the early dialogues as Thrasymachus spotted that: *Rep.* I, 337a5-7); 'In the *Protagoras* and *Meno*, Socrates insists that virtue cannot be taught at all, precisely because there are no experts on virtue' (159. Even assuming that there are not, has not Koyré reminded us long ago that *de non esse ad non posse non valet consequentia*?); 'When Socrates interrogates Meletus at the trial, Meletus has a number of opportunities to make this accusation. Yet... Meletus consistently and incredibly bungles each opportunity to show the jury that Socrates' conception is criminal' (186. 'Documentary Fallacy' again). Such methods reach the height of absurdity in note 46 on page 128, which I leave to the reader to relish at his leisure.

If this review has concentrated so far on issues of method, this is no accident. I intended it to do just that, and I shall continue in the same vein. The authors' main conclusions are summed up clearly and concisely by them — with a considerable sprinkling of *avia Pieridum* and *poscimur Aonides* — on pp. v-vii of the Preface, and in the concluding sections of the various chapters. It would be unkind to the reader if I disclosed to him 'whodunit' in each particular case — and one admits that the authors are quite adept at creating tension and expectations before they finally lay hands on the unsuspecting criminal. Quite a few of their conclusions differ in substance from aspects of the 'Socratic philosophy' of Vlastos, Irwin, Kraut, Benson, and even of Brickhouse and Smith in previous incarnations. But the methods are very similar, and the starting-point is invariably some recent discussion by a philosophical scholar *de genere isto*. The text of Plato is subordinate to the contemporary controversy, and when it appears to be recalcitrant, it is made to fit in. Again, a few examples.

In chapter 2 ('Socratic Epistemology', 31-72, esp. 31-45), the authors follow 'recent scholarship' in rejecting Socratic irony and accepting Socrates' professions of ignorance at face value (32). What, then, about Socrates' frequent assertions, in various dialogues, that he does know this or that thing — even that he is certain about it? Vlastos (*Socratic Studies* 2, 'Socrates' disavowal of Knowledge', 39-66; first published in 1985 as an article which is listed here in the bibliography) had suggested that these statements refer to two kinds of knowledge. Our authors accept this, but the nature and contents of these two kinds of knowledge is quite different in their reconstruction. It is no longer a matter of 'knowledge$_C$' and 'knowledge$_E$', as Vlastos would have it, but of two different kinds of knowledge, 'human wisdom' and 'divine wisdom'. I shall concentrate on their interpretation of two Platonic passages which appear to be the mainstay of their arguments in this section.

On p. 36 we are told: 'Socrates says that the wise person is able to judge all *bona fide* cases of a given moral quality (*La.* 199c3-e4)'. Pray, where in that passage of Plato do we find such a statement? Socrates does say — *and remember: in an argument with Nicias* — that, if ἀνδρεία is an ἐπιστήμη δεινῶν καὶ θαρραλέων (c5-6) in the past, present and future (b10-c1), then it must be an ἐπιστήμη ἀγαθῶν καὶ κακῶν (c7-8). Can the holder of such an ἐπιστήμη be lacking in σωφροσύνη, δικαιοσύνη, and ὁσιότης? Of course not (d4-e1). Nicias demurs, with some hesitation. Nothing, one notes, has been said of 'the Mother of all Virtues', σοφία or φρόνησις: the σοφία of 194d1-195a1, which is soon renamed ἐπιστήμη, is a *particular* σοφία. That this particular ... ἀρετή (what's the difference?) is turned, by a calculated move, into σύμπασα ἀρετή (197a10-199e4) is still a far cry from implying that 'the wise person is able to judge all *bona fide* cases of a given moral quality'. This is simply not in Plato's text.

Another trait of the person who has real 'moral wisdom' (lacking, according to our authors, in Socrates himself and most other mortals) is knowing not just *that*, say, δικαιοσύνη and σωφροσύνη can make one happy, but also knowing *why* they can do so (30-31; 39-41). Here the authors cite *Gorgias* 509a5, where Socrates says ἐγὼ ταῦτα οὐκ οἶδα ὅπως ἔχει. One admits that these words have not been studied by commentators as closely as they should have been. But the way in which our authors turn ὅπως ἔχει silently (39-40) from 'how it is' to 'why it is' — and then (41) to 'why what he knows is true' (as if we had ὅπως οἶδα — with ὅπως already clearly meaning 'why' — rather than ὅπως ἔχει) is nothing like a proper study of these terms. The ὅπῃ ἔχει of *Charm.* 166a6 (cited on 43) is an interesting specimen; but one notes that, in a discussion of σωφροσύνη, the question there is ἕκαστον *τῶν ὄντων* ὅπῃ ἔχει. One also notes ὅπῃ φαίνεται a few lines later, at d9 — hardly a causal expression. More specimens of similar expressions should be studied, and Fr.1 of Heraclitus may offer some help. But to conclude that our ὅπως ἔχει is virtually Aristotle's τὸ διότι (39 n. 23) is somewhat premature.

In plain philological terms, to conclude that, according to Socrates, ἀρετή consists of a certain 'moral wisdom' in which Socrates himself has no share and which hardly any mortal possesses would also go against the grain. After all, each thing, including a horse, a table or a ladle, has an ἀρετή peculiar to it: this merely means that it is good as a horse, a table or a ladle. (Every schoolperson, when schools were still places of learning, used to know that ἀρετή is the nominal counterpart of ἀγαθός, just as σοφία is of σοφός and ἀνδρεία is of ἀνδρεῖος). Speaking of ἀρετή in a human context, we refer just as much to this or that human animal being good at what is human, not at some super-human quality which hardly a mortal has ever attained (unless one takes seriously the statement that Gorgias, Prodicus and Hippias have attained it: no irony, please). To assume, not only that Socrates maintained that real (human) ἀρετή was beyond the ken of most mortals, but also that such statements 'would have been readily recognized by Socrates' interlocutors and by Plato and his readers' would be somewhat unkind to these gentlepersons' competence in their own language.

'Socrates' psychology' (chapter 3, 73-102) consists, *in nuce*, in showing people like Polus and Callicles, this chapter's prime examples, that their *real* (but hidden) self believes exactly what Socrates believes, despite their outward and audible statements to the contrary: e.g., that their true self believes that suffering injustice is preferable to doing it (SPD, of course, as against DPS). This claim is largely based on translating βούλομαι and cognates at *Gorg.* 467b5ff. as 'desire', and interpreting it in a sense not unlike that of the Stoic πρώτη ὁρμή (86-92: the Stoic parallel is mine). This *may* be what Polus means

at 466b11-c12 (although he is more likely not to mean anything as precise as that); but already at d8-e2, Socrates foreshadows his own understanding of βούλομαι as a conscious and rational act of choice. Admittedly, Plato is not always consistent in his use of βούλομαι (as pointed out by Dodds, p.236); but in this particular case, the whole of Socrates' argument would be useless if one understood βούλομαι to refer to plain, unthinking natural desire. Here we have a strictly philosophical argument which hinges on the nature of βούλησις; and in strictly philosophical discussions, as well as in a number of fifth-century literary texts, βούλομαι usually 'denotes... deliberation plus decision rather than volition: πᾶσα βούλησις ἐν λογιστικῷ'. (Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity*, University of California Press 1982, Appendix I, 145-9, esp. 147). Polus, and οἱ πολλοί, 'believe the same things that Socrates believes', not because of some hidden psychological drive or some rational *id* unknown to their irrational *ego*, but because — despite their clever and provocative declamations in favour of injustice — they still hold on to some of the traditional and 'decent' ideas on which they have been brought up. Anyway, the 'psychological theory', if it existed, was clearly a failure. We are not shown in the dialogues (and do we have any other evidence?) that Polus, Callicles, Meno and their ilk were finally 'cured' once Socrates demonstrated to them their 'true selves'. (One could argue that, even on a more 'traditional' interpretation, Socrates fails to make them think properly: but the 'traditional' interpreter is permitted to assume that this is precisely because there is something in their — rather complex — personality which makes them impervious to Socrates' efforts.)

One could cite and discuss more of the same, but my concern is not with '*Vollständigkeit*' but with method, and my space is limited. By selecting, combining and speculating on any number of suitable passages, taken out of dialogue and often out of Greek, one can construct an infinite variety of 'Socratic philosophies' — as various members of 'the School of Vlastos' have indeed done. By the same token, if any statement made by Socrates (with a few irritating exceptions, of course) in any early dialogue can be construed as Socratic doctrine, then why indeed not take *Gorgias* 523a1-527a4 quite seriously, combine it with a few other scattered passages spoken by Socrates about some lives which are or are not worth living, and conclude that 'Socrates believes that there is good reason to think everyone will be better off dead' (201-212)? In a world where most people, including Socrates, have no hope of attaining moral wisdom, and being good persons (which is what having ἀρετή means); where most politicians and ordinary citizens are equally corrupt; where the constant preoccupation with the ἔλεγχος can, in the best way, teach a few elect partial truths and change the life of a few people, yet without making them really good, wise and happy — the only question is why wait until you are seventy.

That the method has generated διαφωνία should not in itself disturb us all that much: διαφωνία is as old as philosophy itself — and philosophical scholarship of the sort presented here is clearly more philosophical than scholarly. Greek is sometimes mistranslated: e.g., at *Charm.* 166c7-d4, διερευνώμην τί λέγω is not 'I would wish to understand what I say', and μή ποτε λάθω οἰόμενος μέν τι εἰδέναι is not 'that I might overlook something, thinking I know something' (14); at *Euthyd.* 280d7-8, the subject of οὐ γὰρ δήπου ἁμαρτάνοι γ' ἄν ποτέ τι is not 'one', but σοφία, and ἀνάγκη ὀρθῶς πράττειν καὶ τυγχάνειν is not exactly 'is necessarily correct in what he [again for σοφία] does and in what happens' (106-7). Not infrequently, things are read into the text which are simply not in the Greek before me: at *Apol.* 28e6, ἐξετάζω ἐμαυτόν is not the same as ἐλέγχω

ἐμαυτόν (which is what is translated: 14); at *Prot.* 329d4-8, the possibility that μόρια ἀρετῆς are to each other like τοῦ χρυσοῦ μόρια is not 'endorsed by Socrates' (69-70), but is merely one of two alternatives he puts to Protagoras; at *Gorg.* 491e9-492a1, it is not merely that 'Callicles *may* [emphasis mine] simply be saying that nothing is really good... unless it provides the most intense sense of pleasure' (100): he says so (in slightly different words): 491e6-492a3. Again, such instances could be multiplied.

My chief quarrel with this book, and with the approach it represents, is what I have called *ignoratio dialogi*. Plato chose to write dialogues, and the Socrates of each dialogue is faced with different interlocutors, a different audience, and different circumstances. To take whatever statement Socrates makes to any person in any situation in any dialogue as representing 'Socratic philosophy' (unless κτλ.), is to turn Plato into a poor figure of a dramatist, or to accuse him of portraying Socrates as a man who has not the slightest idea of how to communicate with the very people whom he wishes to 'cure' and help discover their 'true but hidden self'. What is more: if Plato's Socrates is such a stereotype preacher of his own doctrines, declaiming at anybody in any situation passages from his own great feasts, paying no regard to what the other side may think or comprehend (except κτλ.), why should Plato express that sort of 'preaching in passages' in dramatic form, rather than in continuous prose works περὶ τῆς τοῦ Σωκράτους ἐπιστημολογίας and the like? That the Socrates of most of the early dialogues does not manage to 'save' his interlocutors is admitted: but to claim that he does not even *try* to speak to each of them at his own level? (I shall only cite *Euthyph.* 14c3-4; *Men.* 75d2-7: such 'passages' could be multiplied.) What is more, such dramas, portraying a tireless preacher 'passaging' all and sundry, day in day out, and never trying to listen properly to what they say, would be hardly οἷα ἂν γένοιτο καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον — not to mention τὰ γενόμενα. This is simply not what goes on in most of the early dialogues. That Socrates of these dialogues is attempting to make his interlocutors think and criticize their own muddled thinking is obvious; but he does not do this by preaching, and he consciously avoids presenting them with his own views. By arguing *with* them, he manages to keep each of them arguing with him for a considerable length of time. How many a Meno or a Euthyphro would have had the patience — in real life or in proper dramatic representations — to go on listening to litanies like 'the wise person is able to judge all *bona fide* cases of a given moral quality', before leaving in despair — or setting fire to the φροντιστήριον?

While the 'Socratic philosophy' industry represented here has been going on, some scholars have shown us how profitable for the understanding of Plato's philosophical dramas their analysis as philosophical dramas can be. (Indeed, the extraction of passages from various parts of various philosophical dramas and their harmonization into all sorts of 'Socratic philosophy' is not unlike cutting limbs from various live organisms and combining them together in the hope of producing a new (and superior?) living creature.) In the present book, hardly any work which interprets the dialogues as philosophical dramas is mentioned. Michael Stokes' *Plato's Socratic Conversations* (London 1986) is listed in the bibliography at the end and mentioned briefly in footnote 15 on p. 10: the *lector candidus* of that note is most likely to think that Stokes' book is just another attempt, in the tradition of Vlastos, to 'reconstruct a "Socratic philosophy"'. Alexandre Koyré's *Discovering Plato* (New York 1945: I cite only the English translation) or Jacob Klein's *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* (Chicago 1965) are not even mentioned. No wonder. As Hesiod knew, the full analysis of a dialogue as an organic whole is hard: it

requires much more than philosophical scholarship and a reading of the more recent secondary literature written by philosophical scholars in English. It should be an exercise in philological dexterity, historical method and literary comprehension as well as in philosophical analysis. Treating the arguments of various passages as grist to one's philosophical mill, and treading safely in the footsteps of those who have trodden safely in the footsteps, is far less demanding. One merely plays the game 'within the family'. My guess is that it will go on.

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Whose Plato?

Harold Tarrant, *Thrasyllan Platonism*, Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1993, xii + 260 pp.

While most philosophical scholars have taken a modern edition of Plato (or a translation based on a modern edition) as a 'given', and constructed 'Platonisms' or reconstructed 'Socratic philosophies' on the basis of such a 'given', a number of Classical scholars have begun in recent years to question the reliability of much of the transmitted text itself. The issue is no longer that of athetizing whole dialogues known to some or many of the ancients as Plato's - that was a preoccupation of nineteenth-century scholars, mainly in the German tradition: the problem now is how much possible interference with the text of Plato could have occurred before our manuscript tradition began. After all, no MS of Plato is earlier than the ninth century — that is, a good twelve centuries after Plato — and the testimonia in ancient and mediaeval sources (which also depend on MSS and where 'normalization' is always possible and often practised) and in the papyri cover, between them, only small sections of the dialogues. Alexander of Aphrodisias and Proclus knew of 'Platonists' who interfered with the text of Plato for 'ideological' reasons, and Galen suspected similar procedures in his copy of *Timaeus* and looked for what he believed to be a more reliable 'edition'. More recently, John Whittaker (*Phoenix* 23, 1969, 181-5; 27, 1973, 387-91 - now chapters II and III of his *Studies in Platonism and Patristic Thought*, London 1984) and John Dillon (*AJP* 110, 1989, 50-72) have shown that other 'ideological' tamperings with Plato's text may also have occurred. Clearly, much was going on during the period of the emergence of Middle Platonism. One 'minor' problem is that the evidence, precisely for that period, is meagre in the extreme.

Harold Tarrant is something of a 'maximalist'. In his previous book, *Scepticism or Platonism? The Philosophy of the Fourth Academy* (Cambridge 1985), he was willing to ascribe to Philo of Larissa's 'Fourth Academy' the anonymous commentary on Plato's *Theaetetus* (Pap. Berlin 9782), and — through the mediation of Antiochus of Ascalon καλοῦ καὶ νέου γεγονότος — the whole of Sextus *M VII* 89-260 (See my review in *JHS CIX*, 1989, 272-3). His present hero is Thrasyllus, Tiberius' astrologer and the initiator of the tetralogical division and order of Plato's dialogues which is preserved in Diogenes and in the main MSS. Tarrant is prepared to ascribe to Thrasyllus not merely that tetralogical arrangement, but also the whole of Diogenes Laertius 3. 47-66, which he claims to be part of an εἰσαγωγή written by Thrasyllus as an introduction to a new edition of the whole Platonic corpus, destined soon to dominate the tradition. Since Thrasyllus is men-