

John Glucker, *Classics and Classicists. Selected Essays, 1964–2000*, edited by Amos Edelheit, Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2020, 374 pp. ISBN (10) 1-5275-4088-X.

This is the only collection of articles by John Glucker, a classicist of great wisdom and international renown, to appear in print. It consists of five parts (*Parodos, Graeca, Latina, Afterlife, Exodos*) and a total of twenty-seven contributions, plus a complete bibliography of Glucker's works. The papers are aptly chosen to represent the different periods and the vast variety of interests of the author: Greek and Roman philosophy and literature, textual and historical problems, matters of vocabulary, metre, and verse, questions concerning the sources and transmission of ancient texts, comparative and critical studies, reception studies, the history of scholarship, and much else. To convey an idea of the contents of this volume, it comprises studies on Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Cicero, and Philo; papers on Aeschylus and the principal authors of the Augustan era; meticulous explorations of the contributions to the study of the Classics by scholars such as Isaac Casaubon and Wilhelm Wagner; and an extensive general study of the origin of the verb *ὑπάρχω*, to exist, and its cognates as philosophical terms. Considerations of space prevent me from engaging with all of these studies or from discussing matters in detail. I shall comment selectively on some studies that I found especially interesting on account of their originality, acumen, and scholarly and philosophical contribution.

It seems appropriate to begin with Aeschylus. In two brilliant studies, 'Aeschylus and the Third Actor' and 'Aeschylus and the Third Actor: Some Early Discussions', Glucker makes an original and compelling case against the thesis, notably defended by Else and endorsed by some subsequent scholars as well, that it was Aeschylus and not Sophocles who introduced the third actor. A thorough re-examination of the ancient evidence demonstrates that Else mishandled the sources and that, in fact, the unequivocal testimony of five trustworthy sources speaks against the introduction of the third actor by Aeschylus. This alone would have been a sufficiently important result, but Glucker does more. He shows that the anonymous compiler of the *Vita Aeschyli*, who turns out to be the only source claiming that Aeschylus introduced the third actor, was in fact confused. Glucker shatters the credibility of the anonymous compiler with thorough systematicity and suggests that the only source of the latter's thesis is the common knowledge that, in the *Oresteia* and some other plays, Aeschylus used three actors; because the anonymous compiler was muddled about the chronological facts, he inferred, mistakenly, that Aeschylus must have been the one to introduce the third actor. In truth, Glucker argues, the third actor was introduced by Sophocles for the needs of his own plays. Aeschylus had no motive to introduce a third actor into his earlier, slow-moving and stately plays. But the third actor had been introduced by Sophocles by the time that Aeschylus wrote the *Oresteia*. And therefore Aeschylus makes use of the third actor, even though he does so in only three scenes of the trilogy numbering approximately 260 lines altogether. In sum, this is a pioneering study that, in my view, decisively establishes its main conclusion. In the second of the aforementioned two articles, Glucker completes that study by an excursus into the eighteenth and nineteenth century literature on the subject, which constitutes a lesson on how to do history of scholarship.

Turning to Plato, I wish to single out two especially interesting pieces concerning Plato's reception in the post-Classical era. 'Piety, Dogs and a Platonic Reminiscence: Philo, *Quod Deterius* 54–56 and Plato, *Euthyphro* 12e–15a' identifies the striking similarities between the two passages¹ and shows how Philo extracts from Plato's text positive theological positions such as that God lacks

¹ These similarities are also registered by John Dillon (1977), *The Middle Platonists* (London) 1977, 150, cited by Glucker, 98 n.1.

nothing, piety amounts to serving the god in the way that slaves serve their master, and those who serve the god do so with a view to their own benefit and not, of course, the benefit of the god. Of particular interest is the query whether or to what extent Plato's Socrates is responsible for the misleading equation of ὄσιον with εὐσεβής, as well as Gucker's suggestion that Euthyphro agrees that the gods love the ὄσιον because of its own nature (10e) on account of the close connection between ὄσιον and δίκαιον. While I am not sure that we can detect the character Euthyphro's genuine beliefs, I have no doubt that the basic claims of this article are correct and I share Gucker's 'aesthetic' satisfaction in discovering Philo as one of the relatively few ancient readers of the *Euthyphro*.

'Images of Plato in Late Antiquity' goes well beyond the commonplace that there was never a single kind of Platonism and that, in fact, various interpretations of Plato's dialogues were circulating both among Plato's own pupils and among his later followers. Gucker argues, with admirable epistemic caution, that there were at least two main 'images' of Plato in Late Antiquity, one attributable to the 'average educated Greek' who learned something about Plato from doxographies, biographies, and compendia of varying quality, the other acquired by serious students of Plato who studied both the dialogues themselves and the commentaries on those dialogues and who interpreted Plato through a Neo-Platonic lens. Gucker's aim in this article is not to summarise the different versions of Neo-Platonism or the Middle Platonic compendia. Rather he raises and addresses certain specific questions rarely or incompletely discussed in the secondary literature. First, are there any features shared by most or all of the Platonic literature in Late Antiquity? Second, do the authors of that literature generally discuss problems of chronology and development with regard to Plato's dialogues? Third, how do they deal with the phenomenon of one dialogue contradicting something said in another? Fourth, is Plato regarded only as a dogmatist in Late Antiquity or also as a Sceptic? Fifth, in so far as he is regarded as a dogmatist, precisely what are the dogmas attributed to him? Gucker's answers are characteristically well documented and many of them extremely interesting. For instance, I find especially intriguing the claim that the serious students of Plato in the period under discussion have little interest in chronology and do not discuss the issue of his development. Basically, they are all unitarians of one sort or another. Moreover, Plato is read as a dogmatist whose dialogues express different aspects of the same set of doctrines. For the learned Neo-Platonist, Plato is 'one of them' and is interpreted so as to be made to contribute to Neo-Platonist themes: One, the Mind, the Soul, degrees of Being and Knowledge, what is above Being, things human and divine, etc. The 'image' of Plato suggested by the compendia, however, is quite different: there Plato emerges as a cosmologist in tandem with the Presocratic tradition, and the dialogue that the compendia principally dwell on is the *Timaeus*. That the latter was enormously influential in Late Antiquity is a well known fact. Gucker's special contribution is that he connects the image of Plato as a cosmologist with the tradition of doxographical compendia and textbooks and, moreover, compares and contrasts that image with the image of Plato suggested by the Neo-Platonist tradition.

Equally enlightening and brimming with original ideas are the articles concerning Aristotle. To give an example, 'Second Thoughts on the Aristotelian Μίμησις' registers the tension between Chapter 1 of the *Poetics*, where Aristotle includes in *mimēsis* not only epic and dramatic poetry but also several other poetic forms, and the following surviving chapters where the discussion is narrowed down to epic and tragedy. Gucker addresses the question why Aristotle remains almost entirely silent concerning e.g. lyric poetry, the dithyramb (despite the fact that the latter enjoyed a certain revival at the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth), the mime, and even the Socratic conversations. Gucker engages in depth with earlier scholarship on the *Poetics* and in

particular the magnificent edition of Sykutris, and he argues that Aristotle's motivation for focusing on epic and tragedy but skipping other forms of poetic *mimēsis* has to do with Aristotle's keen awareness of both the political realities and the literary realities of his era. The epic as well as tragedy still enjoyed an independent life in the context of the *polis*. For instance, Homer was recited at the Panathenaic festival and also was taught and analysed in lectures and courses before the festival and beyond it. Even though Aristotle argues that tragedy is a fuller and more perfected literary form than epic poetry, nonetheless he treats the latter as an independent poetic form in a way in which he does not treat e.g. elegy. If I understand him correctly, Glucker airs the hypothesis that Aristotle does not discuss poetic genres that he considers, so to speak, antiquated and of no particular interest to his contemporaries. One might add that Aristotle had the opportunity to test the waters concerning the interests of his audience, since the material found in the *Poetics* was taught in the Lyceum and the students probably made their preferences known in that context.

Of the remaining chapters, it would be amiss not to underscore the importance of 'The Origin of ὑπάρχω and ὑπαρξις as philosophical terms', which goes through a large number of texts of various periods and literary genres and argues that ὑπάρχειν and its cognates are frequently used in the literature of the fifth century and later in the existential sense and other related senses. Notably, the verb ὑπάρχειν can mean 'to begin', 'to initiate', 'to constitute', 'to possess', and also 'to be there available', 'to be there by nature', or simply 'to be' or 'to exist'. Philosophically, the very important result of this study is this: 'ὑπάρχω in all its different senses points to the existence of something or some things which are there, independent of the speaker or the writer. Whether it is some property, an instrument, a constitution, a friendship, strength or danger, a right or a part of the body – or even φύσις or προγόνων ἀρεταί – it is basically regarded as 'being there' (or 'being already there'), objectively and independently of our actions' (p. 56). This is a crucial contribution to the ongoing controversy about whether or not the ancient Greeks have a notion of existence.

To conclude, John Glucker's collection of essays should be in every library. It contains an amazing wealth of philological and scholarly information, offers very valuable philosophical insights, identifies mistaken assumptions that have remained unquestioned for many generations, and discusses a vast variety of subjects with a thoroughness, incisiveness, and systematicity that sets an example for us all.

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