

to assume that there are debates articulated in terms of commentary on Plato when there is no reason to think so. G.'s reconstruction of the debate in these terms dovetails with his more holistic approach to understanding Chrysippus' theory and its merits. Many of his conclusions in this chapter coincide with those of Teun Tieleman in *Chrysippus on Affections* (that book appeared in time for G. to refer to it but only in an additional note).

The volume is quite smartly produced, and besides the bibliography of Sorabji's work, there is a consolidated bibliography, an *index locorum* and an index of names (which can serve as a general index, since there are analytical subheadings under the major names).

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CYNICISM

DESMOND (W.D.) *The Greek Praise of Poverty. Origins of Ancient Cynicism*. Pp. xiv + 241. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006. Paper, US\$25 (Cased, US\$48). ISBN: 978-0-268-02582-3 (978-0-268-02581-6 hbk).

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Desmond's thesis that Ancient Cynicism is a truly Greek phenomenon is thoroughly and convincingly argued for. He refers to a vast corpus of passages from epic, historic, philosophical and literary texts where poverty is chosen above wealth, toil and voluntary asceticism above idleness, few above much. The book closes with an intriguing theory about the Eleatic foundations of Cynic philosophy. D. (pp. 145–6) shows how Cynicism's roots can be traced back to Parmenides' Being and its attributes, which 'give the Greek praise of poverty a philosophical aspect: the truth is so beautiful and absorbing that to glimpse it can transform a person¹, turns him in a different region and wrenches him away from his previous devotion to conventional goods ...'. Parmenides' Being functions as a role model for the Cynic philosopher, who 'unconsciously emulates the attributes of the Eleatic one, and so proclaims his self-sufficiency, unity, consistency, and inner purity from contaminating desires and relations'.

D.'s book selects only one of the many themes dealt with by Cynic authors – the praise of poverty – yet manages to place Cynicism firmly in its context. D. refutes those who make Cynicism a marginal phenomenon in the history of Greek thought and the Cynic philosopher a clown with no philosophical relevance.

First D. reviews and refutes approaches which neglect the continuity between Cynic asceticism and classical culture, or which relegate Cynicism to the edges of classical culture, by attributing to it an Oriental or a specific post-classical Hellenistic origin, or by seeing Cynicism as human possibility outside time and space. His aim is to look for intellectual, military and social asceticism in Classical culture, i.e. to look for

¹In this way (and without quoting them) D. provides support for P. Kingsley, *Reality* (Inverness, California, 2003) and C. Robbiano, *Becoming Being. On Parmenides' transformative philosophy* (St. Augustin, 2006), which attribute a transformative quality to Parmenides' philosophy.

proto-Cynic Greek praise of poverty. 'This praise of poverty will take us through three essential spheres of Greek culture – work, war, and philosophical wisdom (p. 22) ... I seek to demonstrate the more general point that Greek economic conditions and historical experience provide a fertile ground for various forms of asceticism and therefore for Cynicism. In uncovering these conditions I have tried to maintain a balance between factual assertions and larger intellectual considerations' (p. 24).

Chapter 2, 'Praise of Poverty and Work', tackles the theme 'poverty is wealth' by looking at texts embracing a qualitative understanding of wealth: true value lies not in external goods as such but in the person who has and uses them, in the just or unjust way in which he accumulated wealth. D. analyses texts from Hesiod to Aristotle that express either distrust for moneymakers and businessmen or the suspicion against politicians who might have become rich thanks to bribes. D. calls this a 'virtue theory of value': the virtue of a person is what makes a difference in the value of the thing he possesses. While studying the background for Diogenes' claims about the burdens of wealth, D. does not hesitate to refer to the history of economics and specifically to the expensive tasks delegated to wealthy individuals like the *triêrarchia* – the task of making a ship seaworthy – and other *leitourgiai* (state-services), which became more and more unaffordable even for citizens regarded as rich, who gradually started to envy the poor who did not have such burdens. Another key concept is the 'imperial work-ethic', and the related energy, which had first been used in Greek history to attain imperialistic goals, whereas later the ethic of work and energy remains, but the lover of toil (*ponos*), instead of accumulating wealth, fortifies and fulfils himself – think of Heracles, of the philosophic work ethic of Plato, of Aristotle's actualisation of one's potential by means of one's proper activity. The Cynic philosopher never interrupts his physical and mental training, which is not economically productive in any conventional sense, but increases his inner wealth.

Chapter 3, 'Praise of Poverty and War', examines precedents for Cynic martial asceticism by looking at the Greek association of either geographical or voluntary poverty with martial value. The Greeks often expressed the conviction that whereas the rich are degenerate and effeminate (look at the Persians), the poor are strong, manly and energetic (like the Greeks and later specifically the Spartans). D. virtuously traces back revolts from materialism in Greek texts, beginning with the *Iliad* and proceeding via Herodotus and Thucydides to Plato and Xenophon. The Cynics internalise the virtues of courage, hardiness and manliness and use these to fight metaphorical wars against luxury, complacency and greed, in order (paradoxically) to defend their lack of possessions.

Chapter 4, 'Praise of Poverty and Philosophical Wisdom', shows that many philosophers before Diogenes defended the tenet that to know one 'big thing' is what counts, whereas to know many things is a waste of time. D. sees the Eleatic one, detached from the reality of sense experience, as a model for the Cynic philosopher, who is free from any change or disturbance coming from the many things of the world around him. Parmenides is seen as the one who gave an alternative richness to the Greeks that can transform the one who finds it and free him from conventional notions. Freedom from conventions was defended by philosophers influenced by Parmenides like Democritus and Empedocles, and later Plato. '... the Cynic turns enthusiastically to the simplicity of truth – "I am". One is now, and that is enough. Fully realizing this "one big" truth makes one "rich" in one's poverty, "powerful" in one's apparent weakness, and, despite one's seeming enslavement to Fortune, free and glad to follow whatever direction the road may take' (p. 167).

This book deserves to be read by any scholar who is working on Cynic philosophy and also by anyone who is interested in the Greek mentality and in the theme of the preferability of poverty above wealth.

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EPICUREANISM

KOCH (R.) *Comment peut-on être dieu? La Secte d'Épicure*. Pp. 303, ills. Paris: Éditions Belin, 2005. Paper, €26. ISBN: 978-2-7011-4024-7. doi:10.1017/S0009840X07000376

Koch has written an idiosyncratic and stimulating – if sometimes frustrating – book. At its best, it suggests a refreshing approach to the examination of the Epicurean school and of Epicureanism as a philosophical movement and way of life, which pays particular attention to its attitude to cult and its own often quasi-cultic nature. K. is to be commended for using a wide range of sources – epigraphic, papyrological and literary – in building a case for questioning the relevance and usefulness of a sharp distinction between ‘religious’ and ‘philosophical’ groups and modes of thought. It is unfortunate, then, that at times the virtue of this range of interests leads to the overall structure of the book being somewhat difficult to navigate. Some of the general conclusions will not strike many as convincing (for example: the claim at pp. 222–3 that the Epicureans were the first to present an attitude to the divine which was guided by conscious rational critique seriously underplays much of Presocratic and Classical theological inquiry). But along the way, K. makes some valuable suggestions.

The book is divided into three sections. The first, ‘Cinq cents ans d'Épicurisme’, gives a history of the school, but concentrates in particular on some often neglected pieces of evidence. One of its strengths is the inclusion of epigraphic material, inscriptions dedicated to or by or else involving individuals who are often named as ‘Epicureans’. (An appendix – Annexe 2: Dossier épigraphique – helpfully lists the sources, but it must be admitted that some inclusions are at best speculative. For example, does this stele commemorating a gladiator show a specifically Epicurean influence, let alone allegiance? ‘I, Archimedes, was laid to rest here. I was not and then I was; I am no longer and I care not. Hail to you, passer-by.’ See K. at pp. 63–4.) Having usefully gathered this evidence, however, K. draws general conclusions which are not so convincing. It is not clear to me that epigraphic evidence offers ‘des traces réputées les plus irrécusables’ (p. 51): a clear and self-conscious statement of philosophical identity and allegiance. K. does have some thoughts about what it might have meant for such people, who often held other religious or civic offices, to so call themselves in such public contexts (e.g. p. 64), but I suspect that this is a much more complicated matter which will have been subject to various differing local and chronological factors. Further, any general claims about the diffusion and popularity of Epicureanism across the Mediterranean, for example, are not well supported by the small size of the sample. (There are 45 items in the dossier.) It would be helpful to have some comparative data for other philosophical schools.

The second section, ‘Les dieux chex eux, ou le bonheur selon Épicure’, gives a variety of perspectives on the Epicurean notions of divinity and the related claim that the Epicurean sage lives a life like that of a god. Some parts of this are not particularly successful: K. hardly does justice to the long-running controversy over