

societies will sometimes deny that there *are* any homosexuals in their society . . . because like left-handers their peculiarity, their “deviance”, has little or no social significance.’ How much more care—anthropological, cultural, logical—would it take to make any part of that pronouncement adequate! At another, less strident but equally important level, there is a fine and sparky discussion of Plato’s *Crito* and its arguments for obedience to the *nomoi* (by James Boyd White and Charles Gray), but it is an argument that assumes that ‘law’ itself is a cross-cultural norm. Should the historicity of Greek law not be an issue in this discussion? ‘The Greeks and Us’ is currently and properly a major concern in the academy. Turner, Marchand, and Detienne have argued tellingly for a dynamical and complex relation between modern disciplinary formation and the classical past. Recent modernism (e.g. Derrida, Foucault, Cixous, and Irigaray—not to mention Freud, Nietzsche, and Hegel) has self-consciously constructed itself in and through a view of Greek culture. Greek constructions of Greekness (a field certainly not limited to the classical period) have been increasingly articulated. In the current growth of studies of what has been called ‘nos Grecs, leurs modernes’, this volume has a rather restricted sense of its own project.

That said, there is some carefully articulated work here, and the agonistic structure is politely and consistently followed through. Williams is rightly taken to task for not noting that Hyllus (probably) speaks the final lines of the *Trachiniae*, which may affect how the remarks relate to the play—a criticism which might be extended to *Shame and Necessity*’s strategies of reading. Nussbaum’s account of her involvement in the Colorado law court on the issue of homosexual legislation shows how complex are the power games when philosophy tries to enter politics (as Plato might have testified). More recent writings and decisions (as well as Posner’s comments) call for a further account, I would suggest. White and Gray debate with clarity and force where the persuasiveness of Plato’s *Crito* lies. Yearley’s reading of Melville’s *Billy Budd*, however, is not nuanced enough (in the face of recent Melville studies) and struggles to bring Aquinas and Aristotle to bear. Schollmeier fails to convince his respondent, Candace Vogler, ‘to broaden the Kantian picture’. This is a thoughtful and thought-provoking volume which in proceeding under Adkins’s intellectual aegis does more than merely celebrate one of the most influential of modern classicists.

King’s College, Cambridge

SIMON GOLDHILL

## THINGS OLD AND NEW

A. M. KINNEGING: *Aristocracy, Antiquity and History: Classicism in Political Thought*. Pp. xii + 348. New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 1996. \$39.95. ISBN: 1-56000-222-0.

This is an enormously enjoyable book, vigorously written in an occasionally idiosyncratic English. Although the central exploration of Roman values is a means to an end, and not in itself of great originality, classicists will find their interest engaged by the insistence that to write history teleologically is systematically to ignore what is lost in changes, by the demonstration of the place of Roman history and texts in the political thought of medieval and early modern France, and by the brief but tantalizing observations on just what it was that romanticism changed.

K., professor of political thought at Leiden, first argues that ‘if one reads the past too much in the light of the present, one is bound to overestimate the importance of

the new in the society of the past, and underestimate the old in the society of the present' (p. 10). He aims to investigate the thought and values of the French *ancien régime* 'without reference to its future' (p. 11), insisting that if the historian reads forward in time, rather than backwards, it will be possible to understand past values as a contemporary observer would have understood them. Only if we manage that, K. suggests, can we actually understand 'modernity', since only by coming from the past perspective can we catch sight of how much modernity shares with the past from which it differentiates itself.

Part II, 'The Appeal of the Ancients', sets out the nature of the French aristocracy and its education, showing how in the seventeenth century there was a 'renouncement of ignorance': being well educated, which meant being steeped in classical texts, became part of the aristocratic ethos. K. explains what exactly was 'known' about antiquity, and by whom, stressing that the Romans dominated the pre-revolutionary view of antiquity. He explores the use made of different elements of Roman writing (especially Roman law and 'belles lettres') in the work of Budé, Bodin, and Bossuet.

Part III is an exposition of Roman values from Roman writers themselves. This is neatly done, with much quotation, above all from Cicero, and some effective grounding of Roman values in Roman society (and vice versa) in a chapter entitled 'The Society of Unequals' which has sensitive discussions of the right and wrong sorts of wealth and poverty. The material is familiar, but put together in an elegant and stimulating way.

Part IV, 'The Appeal to the Ancients', traces the development of political thought in France and the use of ancient texts by French writers. K. objects that the characterization of theory of government into ascending and descending theses—that power lies originally and essentially in the people or that power lies originally and essentially in God and through God in the king—oversimplifies by ignoring the nobility. He himself characterizes 'the aristocratic tradition in political thought . . . as a protracted intellectual attempt to define the limits of the power of the central government under the head of the king' (p. 237), and distinguishes a 'thèse royale', arguing that there should be no limits on the king's power, a 'thèse féodale', tracing mixed government in France back to Tacitus' Germans, and a 'thèse parlementaire', in which monarchy was absolute but tempered, for which Caesar's description of Gaul provided the ultimate model. K. follows the history of the French monarchy from the Carolingians on, and then looks at a range of theorists from Seyssel in the early sixteenth century to Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* of 1748. K. notably argues that Montesquieu's views on commerce and on liberty, often held to be distinctly 'modern', have clear classical roots.

The book ends with a short chapter about why the classical world lost its domination of political thought after the end of the eighteenth century. K. argues that, crucially, 'the knowledge how to achieve an end replaces the knowledge what ends to achieve' (p. 305). But he argues also that romantic critics of this changed notion were themselves indebted to the ancients for their critique, but to Greeks rather than to Romans. K. notes the affinity between 'the romantic distinction between self and other, autonomy and heteronomy, and the Roman distinction between virtue and vice' (p. 318) and suggests that 'romanticism should in the end be conceived of as a new classicism'. He further suggests that the value system of the premodern world survives to a much greater extent than is acknowledged, and in particular that the 'honour ethic' continues to be very much a part of our life, part of the old that is overlooked because not looked for.

Many of K.'s claims in the first and last chapters will provoke lively discussion, but

these are issues worth discussing and ones on which classicists as well as historians of political thought would do well to ponder.

*Corpus Christi College, Oxford*

ROBIN OSBORNE

## GIBBON

R. MCKITTERICK, R. QUINAULT (edd.): *Edward Gibbon and Empire*. Pp. xvi + 351. Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Cased, £40/\$64.95. ISBN: 0-521-49724-8.

Edward Gibbon and his *Decline and Fall* are enjoying a ripe old posterity. The bicentenaries of, respectively, the author's birth (1737), the alleged moment of the opus's conception (Ides of October, 1764), the publication of Volume I (1776), the publication of the last three volumes (1788), and most recently the author's death (1794) have all been commemorated and celebrated with due pomp and homage, and usually appropriate scholarship. Not least, since 1994 we now have readily available, thanks to David Womersley, a three-volume edition containing not only a good text but also a challenging introduction, an invaluable bibliographical index (completing a project of Gibbon himself), and a reprint of the original general index to all six volumes (not compiled by Gibbon).

Which makes it all the odder that the volume under review—another product ultimately of the 1994 bicentenary—should choose to cite almost every modern edition except Womersley's, even though Womersley himself is among the twelve contributors besides the editors. (The full list of contents is: 'Introduction' [Rosamond McKitterick and Roland Quinault]; 'Gibbon and the Later Roman Empire: Causes and Circumstances' [John Matthews]; 'Gibbon and Justinian' [Averil Cameron]; 'Gibbon and the Middle Period of Byzantine Empire' [James Howard-Johnston]; 'Byzantine Soldiers, Missionaries and Diplomacy under Gibbon's Eyes' [Jonathan Shepard]; 'Gibbon and the Later Byzantine Empires' [Anthony Bryer]; 'Gibbon and the Merovingians' [Ian Wood]; 'Gibbon, Hodgkin, and the Invaders of Italy' [T. S. Brown]; 'Gibbon and the Early Middle Ages in Eighteenth-century Europe' [Rosamond McKitterick]; 'Gibbon and the "Watchmen of the Holy City": Revision and Religion in the *Decline and Fall*' [David Womersley]; 'Gibbon and International Relations' [Jeremy Black]; 'Gibbon's Roman Empire as a Universal Monarchy: the *Decline and Fall* and the Imperial Idea in Early Modern Europe' [John Robertson]; 'The Conception of Gibbon's *History*' [Peter Ghosh]; 'Winston Churchill and Gibbon' [Roland Quinault]; and 'Epilogue' [J. W. Burrow, Rosamond McKitterick, and Roland Quinault].) Not that that is the volume's only peculiarity by any means. Scarcely less remarkable is its title. In a trivial sense any writing on Gibbon is also writing on Gibbon-and-empire, but the title leads one reasonably to expect at least a concentrated focus on Gibbon's view and treatment of empire and empires, ancient and/or modern, and perhaps also on the direct effects of empire and empires on the historian. Actually, just a handful of the essays take either of those themes as their sole or even main focus, John Robertson's demonstration of Gibbon's hostility to the Roman empire being perhaps the cream of the crop.

Another arresting feature, which sharply marks the volume as of 1994 and utterly differentiates it from that produced by the centenary commemoration of 1894, is that