

only two strategic comments. First, as regards Theophrastus following Aristotle's dialectical recommendations, there is something of a dilemma. The better the job Aristotle himself does, in the *Topics*, setting out the types of argument that are most useful in debate, the less need we have to see Theophrastus as following specifically Aristotelian advice. Thus, when Theophrastus focuses on consistency, there is no necessity to postulate an Aristotelian debt, even though we may agree that elsewhere Aristotelian models are in the background. Theophrastus is just being sensible and he has many other predecessors besides Aristotle, not least Plato. B. has usefully drawn attention to occasions when Theophrastus' performance *does* correspond to the recommendations of the *Topics*. Yet he tends to diagnose 'technical terms' more readily than is justified, and he has to concede that on the controversial claim in *Topics A 2* that dialectic helps in the search for principles, Theophrastus' programme does not yield substantial results.

But what of the tricky issue of the genre to which the *De sensibus* belongs? This is not (just) history evidently, since criticism is more prominent than reportage. B.'s tentative suggestion is that it is a 'preparation for, but not necessarily a prologue to, the exposition of Theophrastus' own doctrine' (p. 244). I would agree, but qualify *how* it is meant to be such a preparation. If *On Fire* (for instance) is anything to go by, when Theophrastus is being constructive he mostly leaves 'critical endoxography' behind. That in turn would leave us with the conclusion—banal to us, but maybe not then—that Theophrastus may well have believed you always needed to do your homework on others' views on your problems, before embarking on positive theories, first just to find out what they had said, and then, as Aristotle also wanted, to identify the difficulties they encountered.

Cambridge

G. E. R. LLOYD

PYRRHO

R. BETT: *Pyrrho, his Antecedents and his Legacy*. Pp. x + 264. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Cased, £35. ISBN: 0-19-825065-7.

Pyrrho was not a Pyrrhonist. I would like to think that this is not a particularly shocking piece of news, but it is still by no means the orthodoxy. Richard Bett is the foremost exponent of such a view writing in English, and his various papers on the thorny problems of Pyrrho and the Pyrrhonists are now followed and complemented by a full-length exposition of his views. The detail and quality of argument is high, and B. is never less than scrupulous and clear in his exposition, so this book deserves to be read and thought about seriously.

B. begins with a long and careful discussion of the major source for Pyrrho's philosophy, Aristocles *ap. Eus. PE* 14.18.1–4, and then turns to look to Pyrrho's predecessors and his legacy in the light of the position thus uncovered. B.'s general picture is that Pyrrho held a metaphysical thesis about the world. Things are radically indifferent—neither this way nor that—and as a result he declared that our senses and opinions were no use to us as guides to reality. This sceptical consequence—coupled with Pyrrho's famous and charismatic equipoise—formed the inspiration for the Pyrrhonist tradition, who orientated their philosophy to a different starting point, namely the question of whether we can be sure that our senses and opinions are reliable.

© Classical Association, 2001

I have considerable sympathy for this general view. But here I want to make two specific comments. My first concern is with the rôle which B. assigns to Pyrrho's pupil and follower, Timon of Phlius. On B.'s view, Timon's version of Pyrrho in the poem and prose writings which have survived is an authentic record of Pyrrho's original thought. He contrasts this with Xenophon and Plato's pictures of Socrates (p. 9). True, Plato and Xenophon never say 'here in a nutshell is Socrates' philosophy' as Timon seems to do in the passage which Aristocles cites. But I am not so convinced as B. that 'if they had done, these passages would not have been liable to the same kinds of suspicions as attach to the texts that we in fact have'. In any case, the parallel is perhaps not so helpful. We have so little of Timon's works that it is difficult to make any assessment of his reliability. Of course, he may have tried to present himself as the authentic follower of Pyrrho's own philosophy, but that is no reason to believe such a claim. Moreover, there are good reasons to think Timon was a philosopher in his own right. He wrote his own work *On senses* (DL 9.105), which we have no reason to think was a mere summary of his master's views, and it is he who is credited with bringing Pyrrhonism to Athens and becoming engaged with the views of the sceptic Arcesilaus (DL 9.110). Diogenes gives Timon his own *Life* and it is from Timon that the Pyrrhonian *diadoché* is drawn (9.115). So I would be more ready to give Timon his own place in the gradual expansion, elaboration, and transformation of Pyrrhonian philosophy—perhaps even crediting him with the focus on epistemology inherited by Aenesidemus, who probably read about Pyrrho through Timon's works.

My second concern is with B.'s treatment of the predecessors of Pyrrho's position. Questions of influence are always tricky, since although two philosophers may present similar views there may be no direct link between them. B. himself is clear about the chances of any conclusive statements on these matters (pp. 178–9). Still, I find little plausibility in B.'s suggested link between Pyrrho's indeterminacy thesis and Platonic views about 'particulars' or the perceptible world in *Rep.* and *Theaet.* (pp. 132–40, 183–6). We do know that Pyrrho had personal contact with the Democritean Anaxarchus (DL 9.63–4), and we are told that he was an enthusiastic reader of Homer and Democritus (DL 9.67). It therefore seems to me that the thesis of the 'conventionality' of phenomenal qualities (see DK 68 B9 and compare, for example, Pyrrho at DL 9.61), coupled with his promotion of an ethical ideal of happiness and freedom from fear (*euthumia*, *athambia*), makes Democritus a much more plausible candidate as Pyrrho's major inspiration.

Let me add a complaint about the formatting of the book. For some reason this volume is entirely free of any Greek text. This is of itself perhaps not so surprising. But instead we are offered transliteration, often of whole sentences or stretches of text (e.g. p. 97 n. 75). Now, the Greekless reader is not much better off with transliterated Greek than with the original script. And the reader with Greek is equally no better placed with this strange compromise. This would be only mildly annoying were it not also the case that often B.'s argument turns—as it must—on particular interpretations of single Greek words, or on the syntax of a particular phrase, or even—as in the crucial case of the Aristocles passage—on the rejection of a suggested textual emendation. This sort of discussion is much better understood and more easily evaluated if the texts themselves are present for consultation. The reader will probably need to have to hand Declava Caizzi's collection of the *testimonia* or a large pile of classical texts.

B. has produced an excellent work on a tricky subject. The problem with offering any interpretation of Pyrrho's views is clear. He wrote nothing. So we are dependent on later reports, strange biographical stories, and the like. Worse still, Pyrrho became the chosen figurehead of a long tradition of ancient scepticism which itself progressed

through a number of different phases, each of which has affected the transmission of material from earlier phases through selective quotation or paraphrase. Those disagreements I have with B. are due in the main to differences of opinion over which pieces of evidence to accept or emphasize and in what way. But then, one of the virtues of B.'s work is that it is always clear what one must do to disagree with him.

Magdalene College, Cambridge

JAMES WARREN

TRAILS OF SCEPTICISM

J. OPSOMER: *In Search of the Truth. Academic Tendencies in Middle Platonism*. Pp. 332. Brussels: Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1998. Paper, Euro 35 (approx.). ISBN: 90-6569-666-0.

M. A. WŁODARCZYK: *Pyrrhonian Inquiry*. Pp. x + 72. Cambridge: The Cambridge Philological Society, 2000. Paper. ISBN: 0-906014-24-7.

Opsomer and Włodarczyk address from different perspectives two quite dissimilar branches of ancient scepticism, the Academic and the Pyrrhonian.

O.'s book explores the reception and adaptation of the Academic philosophizing in the period of the so-called Middle Platonism covering the approximately 300 years between Antiochus and Plotinus. Chapter I serves as an introduction, stating the main thesis that sceptical method(s) were alive among some Middle Platonists. O. notes that, although there was no such thing as unified monolithic Middle Platonism, several authors, most especially Plutarch, have numerous links with the Academic tradition.

At the centre of the book (Chapter IV) is a case-study of Plut.'s first *Platonic Question* dealing with the *Theaetetus* 150c, while Chapters II and III provide a detailed background. The argument proceeds in long circuits. O. examines other Platonists' interpretations of the *Theaetetus*, of Socratic irony, maieutics, and the idea of anamnesis, thus gradually building up to the themes focused on in the case-study. Interestingly, it is shown (pp. 27–33) how ancient classifications of Plato's dialogues played a part in the epistemological debate. Chapter V presents Plut.'s sceptic associate Favorinus. Chapter VI zooms in on a neglected Christian source on ancient scepticism, the dialogue *Octavius* by M. Minucius Felix. *Τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα τῶν οὐκ ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν* (*Quaes. com.* 675B): indeed, Plut. himself would have been pleased with this choice over Augustine's more well-known *Contra Academicos*.

The book is a product of relentless scholarship. Philosophical analysis comes inseparable from the intricacies of the history of philosophy and occasional *Quellenforschung*. From the start the reader is thrown into the fascinating, if dizzy, world of ancient inter-school polemics that is closely matched by the modern debate. The book is fully indexed, with an extensive, possibly over-meticulous bibliography, as well as a hoard of data-packed notes in the solid continental fashion. Most Greek and Latin citations are translated; nearly every passage is also given in full in the original language.

O.'s achievement in the book, as well as in several previous articles, is twofold. First, he clarifies the status of the Academic sceptical inquiry as 'probabilist' epistemology