

carrying the meaning, yet, as K. shows clearly, the 'golden-mouthed' Dio's representation of such ideals is through the most poetic of prose. É. Prioux's chapter on metapoetic gardens in Achilles Tatius, Longus and Philostratus is also concerned with reflections on style. Gardens play an important role in the Greek novel, especially in Longus, and as Prioux shows in a careful and convincing philological study, particular words in the garden ephrasais of each author recur as metaphors for literary texture, style, genre and subject matter, and which in each case lead back to Homer as a common poetic font for imperial prose. M. Biraud concludes the volume with a detailed metrical analysis of the prose rhythm of the prefaces of two prose works, *Erotica Pathemata* by Parthenius and *Chaereas and Callirhoe* by Chariton. It would be a useful exercise to bring his conclusions, namely that the quantitative pronunciation is combined with the accentual in a doubling of rhythmic effects reflecting a doubly faceted learning, to the prefaces of the other Greek novels.

This is a short but very useful book, well produced and full of new discoveries, covering as it does a wide range of authors of both languages.

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ASPECTS OF VARIETY

FITZGERALD (W.) *Variety. The Life of a Roman Concept*. Pp. x + 243. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016. Cased, £38.50, US\$55. ISBN: 978-0-226-29949-5.

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This enjoyable, thoughtful and leisurely book aims to re-energise a moribund metaphor, a concept which has, from humble beginnings (derived, some would say, from the Latin *uarus*, 'pimple'), become increasingly pervasive through Western cultural history and so fallen into relative triteness: variety, sometimes stylised as diversity, and thus a function of choice, the watchword of late capitalism. As such, the project could have been terrifyingly broad; yet it daintily tiptoes along the thread, often obscure, which connects Latin aesthetics with Anglophone poetry and modern theory, powered by F.'s deft prose. And it is an emblematic tying-up of threads in F.'s previous work, from the study of lyric and Catullus to Martial via slavery, alongside new quests, particularly the unpacking of Gellius, resulting in a dizzying array of texts being presented for our consideration. The enquiry avoids frivolity and diffuseness by being grounded in focused close readings, and the resulting book is, broadly speaking, split into two parts, the first more overtly conceptual and the second somewhat more text-directed.

That said, the first chapter, 'Words and Meanings', starts by paying scrupulous attention to appearances of the words 'various' and 'variety' in English texts beginning with M. Arnold's 'Dover Beach' and proceeding to L. MacNeice's 'Snow'. Then retreat is beaten to the semantic fields of a multiplicity of terms in Latin and Greek, before the argument first settles on the bodily implications of *distinguere*, as in the livid bruise of the comic slave when beaten, then returns to what is repeatedly labelled the '*varietas* complex'. Throughout, an important distinction seems to be between specific meanings of *varius* or similar words in context, as opposed to their general meanings – a bifurcated concern which occasionally renders the argument rather bitty. By contrast, the far-reaching second

chapter, 'Variety's Contexts' (whose plural title oddly differs from the singular reproduced at the top of every right-hand page), does real heavy lifting regarding the applicability of variety to the natural world, to rhetoric, to aesthetics, pleasure, and the aesthetics of pleasure, and then (the most captivating, where ps.-Virgil's *Moretum* is sandwiched between G. Flaubert's *Salammô* and Plato on democracy) to politics: go big or go home. The seemingly scattergun eclecticism of the readings offered here results in a wealth of delectable titbits from disparate periods, especially dazzling on the topic of Christian theodicy, seamlessly integrated with its ancestry from pagan authors. Even sports-writing rates a look in when the discussion alights on 'sameness' (p. 51).

The second part of the book is more sedate, though equally perspicacious. The more specific treatments of the works of individual Classical authors in the third chapter, 'Putting Variety at Issue', follow ostensibly more conventional patterns. First Pliny, patron saint of mediocrity, comes under the microscope; then follows, almost as an excursus, Lucretius' celebration of nature in its infinite combinations of atoms, although the brunt of this section taught me more about the opening of J. Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, Lucretian intertextuality in Catullus 46 and – most remarkably – Gerard Manley Hopkins, an extraordinary subject here because F. explicitly admits that he 'was probably not influenced by Lucretius' (p. 106). Such sleight of hand is typical of F.'s impressive reconfiguring of reception as mere affinity. Chapter 3's final quick-fire salvo involves only two passages from Horace: *Odes* 4.2, where perhaps something could have been made of the oddity in *iuuenescit* as 'growing younger' (v. 55, with M. Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity: Horace's Fourth Book of Odes* [1986], p. 61), and the opening (though really only two lines) of the *Ars Poetica*. No loss, though, for Horace is a prime instigator of the fourth chapter, 'Confronting Variety', which celebrates the list as a site for the interplay of difference and sameness. This chapter will be required reading on the priamel, and (alongside the earlier arguments about the natural sublime) for Statius' villa poetry, but once again the collocation of exemplary texts, ranging from erotic elegy (Ovid and Propertius) to Seneca's *Phaedra*, the ps.-Virgilian *Copa* and indeed Poliziano, via selected satire, the *echt*-Roman literature of excess, is truly thought-provoking.

The final chapter, 'Miscellany', tackles works, several frequently overlooked, which comprise supposedly unrelated elements, be they poetry or letter collections or sympotically motivated quotation compendia, and finishes with a tantalising and, indeed, useful sampler of ways to analyse Gellius, broached in unorthodox (heterodox?) fashion via Montaigne. Lyric Horace again features prominently, but I learned much about more shadowy figures such as Clement of Alexandria and Pamphile, the latter one of the miscellanists who populate Gellius' pages, in a sort of *mise en abyme*. This chapter stands against the totalising impulse which is trendy in the study of Latin literature, where 'the search for the perfect book' (to quote A. Barchiesi, p. 151) has overtaken our explications of how works hang together. F. is a sure guide here, even if this reader felt that an inordinate amount of space is lavished on the issue of titles. But this is a question of taste, which in no way obviates the importance and relevance of F.'s work, however amorphous its subject may have seemed at first glance. Add to this the methodological beef with current reception studies (opposing the oft-repeated mantra that 'meaning is constituted at the point of reception' with 'meaning inheres in the tools that are available', p. 198), and it is clear that the melding of subject and approach, while it might take some getting used to, has far-reaching implications for our texts from ancient to modern, in a-historical dialogue with each other. Literary criticism, then, is revamped by F. as a matter of sensitive subjectivity which resists conformity and hierarchy (and even expertise): perhaps appropriately so, when the panoply of authors present themselves as multifarious and inexplicable human actors. After all, F. treats Joshua Reynolds as a conservative who wrote to condemn the

stylistic application of variety to the depiction of nature (pp. 37–8); yet Thomas Gainsborough could say of Reynolds, ‘Damn the fellow, how various he is’ (J. Lindsay, *Thomas Gainsborough: His Life and Art* [1981], p. 122).

Errors are few in a work of this simultaneous density and sweep (e.g. p. 145, ‘Certainly this is a *copia* is enlivened’; p. 195, ‘World is the potential for different encounters’; p. 199, ‘tendency’; p. 233, ‘*Episolography*’). Typographically speaking, I was not a massive fan of the decision to employ English transliterations for Greek throughout. And the three-page index could have done with expansion to match the book’s ambition (lacking, for instance, an entry for *zeugma*, ‘miscellany’s emblematic figure of speech’, p. 191).

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RIVAL PHILOSOPHIES AROUND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

ENGBERG-PEDERSEN (T.) (ed.) *From Stoicism to Platonism. The Development of Philosophy, 100 BCE–100 CE*. Pp. x + 399. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-107-16619-6.

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The papers in this collection arose from a 2014 Copenhagen conference exploring the ascendancy of Platonism over Stoicism during the first centuries BCE–CE, hypothetically facilitating a pathway towards the hegemony of Christianity. The Peripatetic revival during this same period is mostly deferred, while the Epicureans and Cynics are seen *ex hypothesi* as irrelevant to the Platonic/Stoic rivalry. There is a large amount of scholarship on this topic. The present volume contributes to the discussion with seventeen articles, containing thousands of citations spread across several hundred textual references. Sometimes the safe haven of citation can overwhelm narrative clarity.

Historians of ancient philosophy, whether doxographers or contemporary scholars, can fall victim to -ismatic tendencies, conflating authors with -isms. The -ismatic approach detracts from individual philosophers who wrote in their own voices, free from obeisance to authority, especially after their organised schools had closed and become *haireseis* of family resemblance only. Thus, B. Inwood observes in his entertaining excursus how Musonius Rufus was more of a pioneering public intellectual, more Cynic than Stoic, notwithstanding his instructing Epictetus. Being true to your school meant less and less in the first centuries, although historians of philosophy often cling to an illusion of allegiance when categorising Platonist and Stoic rivalries. There may be less here than meets the eye.

Technical terms also have a way of breaking free from their inventors. The work of Stoic wordsmiths entered widely into circulation. Stoic interaction with Middle Platonism is consequently complicated by technical terms turned into common coin. G.E. Sterling highlights this in his study of Platonist and Stoic vocabulary present in the Wisdom of Solomon. The authors of Wisdom ‘subordinated’ words they had borrowed from Stoic and Middle Platonist authors, on behalf of Judaism. By employing such philosophical terminology, they transformed Wisdom’s Judaic identity as well, giving it a wider appeal and a Hellenised dimension.