

insistence on Greek purity. Animals are a particular concern in the second half of the book and van Eck notes that they are integral to the Empire Style objects that took inspiration from Piranesi. In that style, van Eck understands the zoomorphic elements to imbue the piece with a feeling of life and to show subservience to their masters. A lion-legged table might wander off were it not obeying the wished of its owner to stand still.

This leads to perhaps the trickiest part of the book in which van Eck notes the similarity of these candelabra, with their heaped up animal forms, to totem poles. She does not wish to project an anachronistic understanding onto Piranesi, who had neither seen new world totem poles nor read anthropological works that shaped early understanding of such phenomena. Rather, the comparison addresses what might have been the power of these candelabra both to inspire Piranesi and to be popular with the craftsmen who adopted these approaches in their own work. The final chapter looks at the psychological explanations for the uncanny effect of animation, which might help again explain why humans are disposed to bring the inanimate to life.

The book offers a much-appreciated injection of vivacity to studies of the role of antiquity in neoclassicism. It may be the case that the candelabra themselves rather get lost as the bigger themes are explored, but the final sentences drive home the importance of the approach, as van Eck redefines restoration as ‘a vehicle for the material expression of emotional involvement with objects’ and for using them as a replacement for the dead and absent (179). We might wonder whether the material turn of our own time and the technologies we use to restore traces of lost cities, where we started the review, might not be answering a similar need.

SHELLEY HALES

University of Bristol, UK

shelley.hales@bristol.ac.uk

doi:10.1017/S0017383524000093

Philosophy

Paul Woodruff, who sadly passed away last year (28 August 1943–23 September 2023), left us an extraordinary and timely gift in his book *Living Toward Virtue*,¹ a masterpiece on practical ethics that engages with and goes beyond the Socratic philosophy found in Plato’s dialogues. The book is a tour de force of scholarship, intellectual humility, and philosophical acuity. It offers a neo-Socratic approach to virtue ethics – often contrasting it with neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics – based on the Socratic idea of taking care of our souls, which entails relentless self-examination that maintains us aware of our cognitive limitations and could help us avoid moral injury.

The main question the book tries to answer is one that had bothered Woodruff since his time as a young officer in the Vietnam War: ‘What makes the difference in a human being between acting ethically and not? Specifically, in a soldier, between committing

¹ *Living Toward Virtue. Practical Ethics in the Spirit of Socrates*. By Paul Woodruff. New York, Oxford University Press. 2023. Pp. xviii + 227. Hardback, £22.99, ISBN: 978-0-197-67212-9.

atrocities and holding back?’ (1). Woodruff, who studied philosophy at Princeton and Oxford, laments with debasing honesty: ‘I did not feel that I had learned a single thing that would help me through a moral dilemma or protect me from the effects of fear or anger. I did not feel tempted by the thrill some people find in slaughter, but I did not know what I might be capable of under stress’ (2). Knowing right from wrong, he reflects, is not what makes the difference, since some soldiers enjoy shooting innocent people knowing it is wrong. A moral intellectualist might reply that the soldier does not really know, but Woodruff’s point is that perfect knowledge is either humanly impossible or extremely difficult, and we need a practical strategy to guard against moral failure even if we lack knowledge. To assist in this task, Woodruff suggests following Socrates’ footprints.

The book is divided into seven chapters. At the end of some chapters Woodruff adds brief but important appendixes that dig deeper into crucial concepts including moral injury, moral dilemmas, Socrates on human wisdom, and how elenchus succeeds. The smaller size of the font in these appendixes sends perhaps the wrong message, since they contain some of the best parts of the book.

The first chapter, ‘Practical Ethics’, offers an overview of the book and the author’s motivations. In the second chapter, ‘The Spirit of Socrates’, we read an account of the ten main points Woodruff wants to recover from Socrates, including ‘Aim at Living in Accordance with Justice’, ‘Do Not Rely on a Single Theory’, ‘Never Think You Safely Have Virtue’, ‘Attend to the Virtue of Friends and Community’, and ‘Question Yourself and Others’.

In these first chapters, we discover Woodruff’s version of Socrates. The Socrates he has in mind stems exclusively from Plato’s dialogues and includes not only the *Apology* and the aporetic dialogues, but stretches to include the *Gorgias*, *Republic I*, *Phaedrus*, *Theaetetus*, *Protagoras*, *Laches*, and *Symposium*. This suggests that the subtitle of the book would be best amended to ‘Practical Ethics in the Spirit of Plato’s Socrates’. Woodruff’s interpretation of the Platonic Socrates is careful and knowledgeable, but far from indisputable. He comes close but stays clearly one step away from offering an interpretation that sounds worthy of a member of the sceptical Academy. Although singing a lot of praises to Socrates, Woodruff does not hold back his criticisms of Socrates’ moral shortcomings (see 55–9).

In Chapter 3, ‘The Shape of Virtue’, Woodruff argues that even ideal wisdom (what Socrates knows he does not have) is not sufficient for ideal virtue and that Socrates expresses this by saying that only the god has wisdom (*Ap.* 23a). In Plato’s dialogues, Socrates often leaves the door open to find a teacher of virtue, but Woodruff is more willing to jump to the conclusion that Socrates is hinting at the fact that ideal virtue is humanly impossible. But if so, and added to the fact that Socrates does not know what virtue is, why does he seem so sure about what is required to care for our souls? Woodruff suggests turning to Confucius and Mencius, who seem to set out to do what seems impossible, which Mencius resolves with an agricultural metaphor: ‘[W]e are able to cultivate virtue, even though we are not able to possess it as a stable and reliable trait.’ Since doing this still raises a ‘Why bother?’ question, Woodruff goes back to Plato’s Socrates and the idea that the search for virtue is itself good and makes us better – but this has to make room for virtues of imperfection, degrees of human virtue, bad luck, and a tragic view of human life.

Chapter 4, 'Aiming at Virtue', is designed to offer the tools to answer the practical questions derived from the path traced in Chapter 3, but Woodruff warns us that virtues are not well-defined targets. Virtues call for commitment, but they can also conflict, which could lead to real or apparent moral dilemmas. So, the target metaphor is unhelpful if it means aiming at an ideal life of virtue since 'it is not always good to aim at virtue' (79), and it assumes a mental clarity that we cannot have. Woodruff's proposal is instead 'practising a *commitment* to look after (*epimeleisthai*) the imperfect virtues we all are practising already to some extent' (80–1). Woodruff worries that aiming at virtue is insufficient. Another important notion explored in this chapter is that of 'moral holidays' and why they are wrong and harmful.

Woodruff's next stop is his notion of 'Human Wisdom', which includes a discussion of ignorance, aporia, self-knowledge, and the limits of knowledge in ethics, as well as moral knowledge, judgement, theory, and what the author calls 'the virtues of imperfection'. These virtues are the virtues appropriate to human beings, destined to live with a significant ignorance, making mistakes, and having to make up for those mistakes. This set of virtues includes compassion, reverence, courage, justice, and integrity. Chapter 6, in turn, explores two main resources for making ethical judgements: our communities, including friends and our loving relationships, and our human nature and our orientation to the good that can be brought forward through questioning.

The final chapter links everything with, and develops, the idea of a beautiful soul, which is loving and lovable, insists on the fragility of virtue as analogous to physical health, and emphasizes that virtues are other-regarding, though beneficial to the self, and the idea that we can cultivate virtue throughout our life and repair moral injuries. Despite some quibbles like repeated sentences (e.g. 29, n. 1; 52, n. 49), a couple of typos (e.g. 'I' instead of 'in', 11), and some comments that sound more like moral panic than anything else (e.g. regarding the effects of games and movies), this book offers a compelling case to rethink our teaching of ethics and our approach to virtue theory.

Another excellent book about Plato is Melissa Lane's *Of Rule and Office. Plato's Ideas of the Political*.² It is an expansion and selective development of her 2018 Carlyle Lectures at the University of Oxford on the topic of 'Constitutions before Constitutionalism: Ancient Greek Ideas of Office and Rule', and a metamorphosis of a previously planned book on the rule of knowledge in Plato (411).

In this monumental study, Lane offers a sophisticated and insightful reinterpretation of Plato's political thinking, focusing on the nature of rule, the vulnerability of political officeholding, and the procedural limits imposed to realize the aspiration of accountability and keep rulers oriented toward the good of the ruled. Lane offers a rehabilitation of Plato in this regard and goes against the tradition of interpreting Plato, and especially his *Republic*, as an effort to circumvent any worry about oversight of the ruled on account of their wisdom.

For that purpose, Lane's starting point is what she calls the Juvenal conundrum (6), expressed by the famous tag associated with the Roman Poet: 'Who shall guard the guardians?' (*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*).³ Lane sees this conundrum, which Plato

² *Of Rule and Office. Plato's Ideas of the Political*. By Melissa Lane. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2023. Pp. x + 463. Hardback, £42.00, ISBN: 978-0-691-19215-4.

³ For discussion on this tag, its context, and attribution, see J. Sosin, 'Ausonius' Juvenal and the Winstedt Fragment', *CPh* 95.2 (2000), 199–206.

recognized, as a trio of interlinked vulnerabilities to constitutional order: 1) the design of its roles and the parameters for a given office; 2) the availability and selection process of capable persons for said offices; and 3) the accountability procedures to safeguard the first two aspects. The main aim of the book is to show that Plato has much more to say about these aspects than previously recognized. This, of course, highlights the contributions of the *Laws*, but Lane also argues that both the *Statesman* and the *Republic* address the Juvenal conundrum by positing ‘kings’ that reign over officeholders and safeguard the integrity of the offices under them, and also explore other kinds of limits to keep rulers oriented towards the good of the ruled.

When Lane talks about offices and officeholders, she means that Plato ‘deploys the vocabulary of *archē* and *archein* in ways that his Greek contemporaries would conventionally have recognized as signalling the specific sense of “office” rather than the more general one of “rule” (8). This means that Plato was not only interested in rule but in officeholding as a distinctive kind of rule, one characterized by procedural limits that aim at accountability. Plato’s interest in officeholding is, according to Lane, hiding in plain sight (44). The second chapter makes this case by focusing on two quotations from Plato’s *Republic* 5 (459c9–d2 and 460b6–8). Although Lane offers a guide to skip chapters depending on the interest of the reader, much like Julio Cortázar’s ‘table of instructions’ in *Hopscotch*, all chapters are worth reading.

The book is divided into four parts. The first one is intended as an introduction, where Lane offers a lengthy overview of her project (Chapter 1) and a detailed defence of her interpretation of Plato’s interest in offices and officeholding (Chapter 2). Part two offers five chapters dedicated to detailed accounts of Plato’s contributions to reconfigurations of rule and office, including chapters dedicated to the *Laws*, *Statesman*, *Republic* 1, *Republic* 1–5, and *Republic* 5–7, respectively. Here my personal favourite was Chapter 6: ‘Guarding as Serving: The conundrum of wages in a *Kallipolis*’ (*Republic* Books 5–6). Part three tackles ‘Degenerations of Rule and Office’, with chapters assessing flawed constitutions (*Republic* 8), and flawed souls (*Republic* 8–9). The last part is labelled ‘Thematisations of Rule and Office’, and offers a chapter titled ‘Against Tyranny: Plato on Freedom, Friendship, and the Place of Law’, and ‘Against Anarchy: The Horizon of Platonic Rule’. Some of these chapters draw on and incorporate parts of Lane’s previous publications, but we are now offered an updated and unified account. The book includes a glossary of selected Greek texts, and a general index. The *index locorum*, however, is disappointingly only available online.

Despite De Gruyter’s exorbitant prices, Melina G. Mouzala’s edited volume on *Ancient Greek Dialectic and its Reception*,⁴ is a must-have, at least for those libraries and individuals that can afford it (and, at least, the physical copy comes with all the usual indexes). The volume assembles eighteen chapters by an international team of scholars who initially presented their contributions as part of the conference organized to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Patras (1999–2019). The conference was delayed due to Covid-19 and held online in June 2021. The book is also the tenth volume of the series on Topics

⁴ *Ancient Greek Dialectic and its Reception*. Edited by Melina G. Mouzala. Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2023. Pp. xiv + 525. Hardback, £134.50, ISBN: 978-3-110-74406-4.

in *Ancient Philosophy / Themen der antiken Philosophie*, edited by Ludger Jansen, Christoph Jedan, and Christof Rapp.

Mouzala contributes a valuable introduction to the topic and her own chapter on self-knowledge in Plato's *Sophist*. Her task in the introduction is not an easy one, since dialectic is a mutable, wide-ranging concept and the scope of the book goes from its emergence in classical antiquity with Socrates and Plato (Part I) to its reception, interpretation, and development in late antiquity and Byzantium (Part II). Although some readers might find that, occasionally, Mouzala's prose gets close to a stream-of-consciousness, she offers an outstanding and well-informed overview of the notion of dialectic. However, I must point out that she understands ancient dialectic in a too permissive way when she describes it as 'the process of reasoning and arguing to obtain truth and knowledge on any topic of philosophical inquiry' (2). At the same time, it is surprising that she does not include any mention of questioning in her general description. The advantage of this view is clear. It allows her to incorporate all the contributions of the volume without risking criticisms of a lack of unity in the compilation.

The first part of the volume is dedicated almost exclusively to the Platonic corpus. It begins with a chapter by François Renaud, who argues that the *Gorgias* subtly reveals that the dialectic practised by Socrates coincides with true rhetoric, which corrects and refutes instead of offering flattery as conventional rhetoric does. In a second chapter, Rafael Ferber advances a non-standard interpretation of the *deuteros plous* ('the second voyage' or 'the next best thing') in the *Phaedo*, where mere consistency of the arguments in the hypothetical method seems to suffice for truth. Claudia Marsico contributes with a chapter on the problematic relation between the Megarians and Plato, while Beatriz Bossi tackles dialogue and dialectic in the *Phaedrus*. Part one also includes chapters focused on *Theaetetus* (Kristian Larsen), the method of collection and division (Anna Pavani), and the only chapter exclusively dedicated to Aristotle,⁵ which addresses the sophistical 'demonstrations' that seem to pose difficulties to Aristotle's classification of fallacies in *Sophistical Refutations* (Lucas Angioni).

The second part of the volume begins with a triad of chapters dedicated to dialectic in Alexander of Aphrodisias. First, Gweltaz Guyomarc'h focuses on dialectic and the aporetic method as an instrument for metaphysics, in particular in *Metaphysics* Beta. Silvia Fazzo's chapter also explores Alexander's interest on *aporia* (in the sense of 'philosophical puzzle'), and focuses on those that allow multiple solutions and its lasting legacy. Finally, Inna Kupreeva contributes a lucid chapter on Alexander's reading of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Gamma 4, and the argument 'from signification' against those who deny the principle of non-contradiction. This is followed by Ilaria L. E. Ramelli's chapter on dialectic in 'Origin of Alexandria', and an interesting chapter on exegesis as philosophy in Neoplatonic commentaries by Michael Griffin. This is followed by Dirk Baltzly's chapter 'Proclus on Plato's Dialectic', which centres on the post-Hellenistic discussion of the unity of dialectic in Plato. This part also features chapters on Syrianus' conception of dialectic (Sara Klitenic Wear), on elenchus and

⁵ Although, as it will become apparent, Aristotle is a prominent figure in the background of most chapters in Part II.

sylogistic in Olympiodorus of Alexandria (Harold Tarrant), Simplicius and Aristotle's Dialectic (Han Baltussen), and closes with Graeme Miles' short chapter on Byzantine Platonist Michael Psellos.

In *The Cambridge Companion to the Sophists*,⁶ Joshua Billings and Christopher Moore ensemble a team of mostly US-based philosophers and classicists. Together, they offer an introduction, fourteen chapters divided into three parts (Contexts, Thought, Reception), and an appendix with a catalogue of entries of people of the sophistic period. Billings and Moore introduce us to the 'Problem of the Sophists', the difficult question of demarcating what a sophist is and who counts as a sophist. Although there are traditional answers to these questions, the authors skilfully explain the shortcomings and contradictions of these traditional answers. And they do it perhaps too well, since the reader might be tempted to go a step further than the authors and abandon the category altogether, like many have done with 'Presocratics', in favour of something more inclusive, like 'fifth century BCE Greek intellectuals'. However, the authors still see some family resemblances that offer a weak unity to those we identify as sophists.

The volume differentiates itself from other studies by its attention to contextualizing the sophist into the bigger intellectual culture and emphasizing the themes and methods rather than the individuals and their doctrines. This explains the design of the volume and its chapters. This is an interesting decision, if disappointing for those hoping to find individual chapters on the canonical sophists. But the volume makes up for it with excellent contributions, especially those in Part II, which include chapters on the distinction between nature and norms (Richard Bett), rhetoric and the attention to language (Mauro Bonazzi), the sophists' contribution to ontology (Evan Rodriguez), and the controversial ideas and questions about the gods and the divine (Mirjam E. Kotwick). However, my favourite chapter was Mi-Kyoung Lee's 'Skills of Argument', dedicated to the developments in antilogical argumentation, techniques of refutation and the use of question-answer modes of discussion. A virtue of all contributions is the transparent and well-written prose, which makes this volume an excellent resource for anyone starting studies of the sophists.

I would like to mention the publication of three important commentaries. The first one is the second volume of Paul Kalligas' *The Enneads of Plotinus. A commentary*,⁷ volume 2, which covers *Enneads* IV and V, and was skilfully translated by Nickolaos Koutras from the Greek edition published back in 2009 and 2013. The commentary offers an analysis of the arguments, a discussion of Plotinus' sources, cross-references to other parts of his work, and an evaluation of his philosophical aspirations. The detailed commentary is accompanied by synopses and brief introductions to each chapter, and a short final appendix on Plotinus and the Arabic tradition, a list of variant readings, and an *index locorum*. This book is an indispensable work for anyone working or studying Plotinus. The second commentary accompanies the Greek and Latin

⁶ *The Cambridge Companion to the Sophists*. Edited by Joshua Billings and Christopher Moore. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. x + 509. Paperback, £29.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-79685-9.

⁷ *The Enneads of Plotinus. A commentary*. By Paul Kalligas, translated by Nickolaos Koutras. Volume 2. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2023. Pp. xviii + 402. Hardback, £75.00, ISBN: 978-0-691-15826-6.

Classics edition of *Plato. Republic Book I*,⁸ prepared, commented, and introduced by David Sansone. It is worth noting that, in many ways, Sansone's introduction to Book I can almost serve as an introduction to the *Republic* as a whole. Also of note is his view that, until more convincing investigations are carried out, 'there is no good reason to suppose that existing stylistic studies can reliably tell us that Book One dates to a different period in Plato's career than the other books of the *Republic*' (7). The third commentary is Christopher Rowe's *Aristotelica. Studies on the Text of Aristotle's Eudemian Ethics*,⁹ which accompanies the anticipated critical edition of Aristotle's *Ethica Eudemia*¹⁰ in the Oxford Classical Texts series, also edited by Rowe, and offers the reasoning, line by line, behind the choices of the critical edition. In that regard, it is not a philosophical commentary like the other two, but the philological footnotes to the critical edition. But Rowe's volumes represent a monumental scholarly achievement, given that 'the transmitted text of the *EE* [*Eudemian Ethics*] is in many places highly corrupt' (vii). At the end of *Aristotelica*, Rowe includes an appendix with the full dataset for the four primary manuscripts, which illuminates some of the typical errors occasionally found in them. Although these texts are not for the uninitiated, any serious reader of the *Eudemian Ethics* in its original language will benefit from having Rowe's volumes side by side.

DANIEL VÁZQUEZ

Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

Daniel.Vazquez@mic.ul.ie

doi:10.1017/S001738352400010X

This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the same Creative Commons licence is included and the original work is properly cited. The written permission of Cambridge University Press must be obtained for commercial re-use.

Roman History

We start this survey in Italy during the early first millennium BCE; a context on which Seth Bernard's new monograph offers an exciting, and in several respects transformative, contribution.¹ Its general claim is that, while Rome did not develop a historiographical tradition until Fabius Pictor, there was a keen and pervasive interest in history across ancient Italy, since the early Iron Age, which played out across a wide range of venues and media. The brief of the historian must be to jettison any hierarchical approach to

⁸ *Plato. Republic Book I*. Edited by David Sansone. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. viii + 202. Paperback, £22.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-97047-1.

⁹ *Aristotelica. Studies on the Text of Aristotle's Eudemian Ethics*. By Christopher Rowe. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023. Pp. viii + 255. Hardback, £130.00, ISBN: 978-0-192-87355-2.

¹⁰ *Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia*. Edited by Christopher Rowe. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2023. Pp. xi + 176. Hardback, £40.00, ISBN: 978-0-198-83832-6.

¹ *Historical Culture in Iron Age Italy. Archaeology, History, and the Use of the Past, 900–300 BCE*. By Seth Bernard. Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2023. Pp. xviii + 312. Hardback, £54, ISBN: 978-0-197-64746-2.