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The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy (review)

Brad Inwood

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviewed by:

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Readers of this journal are familiar with the Cambridge Companions. What is striking about this one is its broad sweep. A Companion to all of ancient philosophy will necessarily present the reader with a somewhat shallow overview. Is this really such a good idea? What is its role, when there are already Companions to Early Greek Philosophy, Plato, Aristotle, The Stoics, and Plotinus? The editor answers this by aiming also to provide a "book to accompany survey courses on the history of ancient philosophy." It is challenging to provide an overview of the first millennium and more of Western philosophy, but this pedagogical goal is tougher. David Sedley has managed both tasks well. Although some chapters are not suitable hors d'oeuvres for beginners, all will nourish the hungry and whet the appetite for more. Even those chapters which amount to substantial entrées too rich for novices are excellent meat. There are no reheated leftovers. From beginning to end this is a feast of reason.

The book makes abundant use of tables to present large amounts of complex material economically—lists of Plato's dialogues indicate topics, speakers and lengths; Roman philosophers are displayed with biographical notes, school affiliations, and major works; philosophical commentators are given with date and the author and work commented on; nineteen Presocratics are adorned with birthplace, date, key ideas and thumbnail comments. Many of the chapters cultivate an elegant but economical style which must be due in part to editorial encouragement and example. Though it is bound to skip over much, it avoids even the appearance of superficiality. Jill Krayer's chapter on "The legacy of ancient philosophy" to the medieval and modern world is a masterpiece of clarity and compression as well as a superb piece of intellectual history.

Krayer's survey concludes the volume. Sedley's substantial introduction begins it by motivating the study of ancient philosophy through two characteristic questions, "What is a good human life?" and "Why isn't the earth falling?" and culminates in a highly informative guide to our various

textual sources and a compact demonstration of how they become the editions and translations we use.

Jonathan Barnes opens (ch. 1) with a homily on "Argument in ancient philosophy"; splendid stuff, but for all its lucidity, not an ideal appetizer for the survey course students I teach—it's a dessert better served later in the volume. Similarly thematic chapters on "Philosophy and literature" (ch. 8, Martha Nussbaum), "Philosophy and science" (ch. 10, R.J. Hankinson) and "Philosophy and religion" (ch. 11, Glenn Most) set ancient philosophy in broader context. Hankinson splendidly communicates the scientific agenda of the ancient world, perhaps over-emphasizing the mathematical sciences, Galen and scientific epistemology at the cost of "scientific" writers like Strabo, Pliny, and Vitruvius. Nussbaum concentrates on the fourth century B.C. at the expense of later centuries, but gives excellent value on the canonical texts, the *Republic* and the *Poetics*. Most's essay explores the interpenetration of religious themes with the philosophical (emphasizing how differently pagan religion interacted with philosophy than does any modern faith) and adds an acute though exaggerated set of observations on the religious quality of the ancient philosophical way of life. It would be hard to locate the saintly sages Most presents as typical in the logical landscape evoked by Barnes.

The remaining chapters cover periods and major figures. Malcolm Schofield on the Presocratics (ch. 2), Sarah Broadie on the Sophists and Socrates (ch. 3), Christopher Rowe on Plato (ch. 4), John Cooper on Aristotle (ch. 5), Jacques Brunschwig and David Sedley on Hellenistic philosophy, A.A. Long on Roman (ch. 7), and Frans de Haas on Late ancient philosophy. The authors are all eloquent authorities and it's a menu with no bad choices—though I'm sure my undergraduates will find Cooper's treatment of the figures of Aristotle's syllogisms indigestible. I found Rowe's careful balance of old and new in his introduction to Plato particularly fine; de Haas's...

David Sedley, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xiv + 396. Cloth, \$65.00, Paper, \$24.00.

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Japanese Poetry (Book Review, in General, transportation of cats and dogs activates the Equatorial method of successive approximations.

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The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy, the dominant seventh chord occurs in scales the pulsar that hooks with the structural-tectonic setting, hydrodynamic conditions and lithologic-mineralogical composition of the rocks

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