

BOOK REVIEW

The Philosophy of Antiochus. Edited by DAVID SEDLEY. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. ix + 377. Hardcover, \$110.00. ISBN 978-0-521-19854-7.

The philosopher Antiochus of Ascalon, influential teacher to leading intellectual lights of 1st-century bce Rome such as Cicero and Varro and companion to dimmer bulbs such as Lucullus, is best known for his revival of the “Old Academy” in a hostile reaction, known as the *Sosus* affair, to the skepticism that had come to reign among the heirs of Plato, including his own teacher Philo of Larissa. Treatments of the man and his thought have not been lacking, though for anything approaching a digestible yet substantial overview in English, nothing surpassed Barnes’ lucid and concise “Antiochus of Ascalon” in *Philosophia Togata I* (Oxford 1989). However, David Sedley has now edited an outstanding collection of papers on Antiochus, and even though he explicitly denies any attempt to produce a “Cambridge Companion to Antiochus,” this comprehensive volume featuring a stellar cast of contributors all but renders one unnecessary (or, at least, even more unnecessary). A product of the Cambridge-based project on “Greco-Roman Philosophy in the First Century bc,” the collection begins with coverage of Antiochus’ biography and intellectual background, proceeds through his philosophical positions and arguments, and ends with his influence—a natural arrangement that allows free and fruitful overlap, which is one of the strengths of this volume: rather than redundant and repetitious revisitations of the same ground, the internal engagement among individual contributors sounds a stimulating polyphony.

Little about Antiochus’ life and teachings rises above controversial conjecture, since, with only one verbatim quotation surviving from Sextus Empiricus for sources, we are left with interpretative quagmires such as Cicero’s *Academica* and Philodemus’ *Index Academicorum*. Yet even though this pivotal figure of late Republican intellectual culture remains enshrouded in hermeneutic murk, every contribution in this volume offers its own insights, always based on close engagement with the sources. In fact, a notable feature that alone makes this book a valuable resource is the collection of *testimonia* (and fragment) with translations

at the end of the book, including David Blank's new readings of the *Index Academicorum*. (The longer speeches from Cicero are not reproduced in full, but neatly summarized.) A thorough reading of the book thus paints the most complete portrait one could hope to have of Antiochus at present, without offering the illusion of settled conclusions.

After Sedley's introduction sets the stage for the volume as a whole, the next three chapters contextualize Antiochus' life and teaching: Hatzimichali ("Antiochus' biography") and Polito ("Antiochus and the Academy") give thorough accounts of what is known of his life and career, not without challenges to the *status quo*, while Flemming in "Antiochus and Asclepiades: medical and philosophical sectarianism at the end of the Hellenistic era" makes a welcome comparison of intellectual networks. The chapters that focus on Antiochus' philosophical thought open with Sedley's "Antiochus as historian of philosophy," an examination of Antiochus' evolution in his (mis)use of philosophical history, which serves as a useful introduction to the chapters on epistemology and ethics that follow: "Antiochus' epistemology" (Brittain), "Antiochus on contemplation and the happy life" (Tsouni), "Antiochus, Aristotle and the Stoics on degrees of happiness" (Irwin), and "Antiochus on social virtue" (Schofield), all notable for a clarity of exposition in their wider discussions of Antiochus and Greco-Roman philosophy than the plain-spoken titles suggest. The next three chapters cover physics and, if not logic strictly speaking, at least argumentation: Inwood ("Antiochus on physics"), Boys-Stones ("Antiochus' metaphysics"), and Schofield again ("The neutralizing argument: Carneades, Antiochus, Cicero") all present closely argued challenges to the other readings of Antiochus. Blank leads off the final chapters on Antiochus' influence with "Antiochus and Varro," a fine portrait of the Roman polymath's intellectual debt to Antiochus, while Lévy ("Other followers of Antiochus") treats the question of influence more broadly, including a convincing reading of *Brutus*. Bonazzi's "Antiochus and Platonism," while more speculative than the others, is a comprehensive and sympathetic reading of Antiochus' efforts at philosophical reconciliation and a fitting conclusion to the collection.

Antiochus' troublesome claim that the doctrines of the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Academics differed only in terminology, not substance, underlies much of the more technical discussion: What does *apatheia* really mean? If *katalepsis* itself can constitute knowledge, what then is knowledge? Can *ennoiai* be understood as Platonic Forms? There's a *vita beata*, a *vita beatior*, and a *vita beatissima*—seriously? For Antiochus, these questions had important consequences and lit-

erally defined philosophical identity: what did it really mean to be a Stoic, or a Peripatetic, or an Academic in the 1st century bce? It is a virtue of this collection that the detailed engagement with the philological and philosophical technicalities is likewise never unmoored from larger intellectual issues, making it a significant advance in the study of post-Hellenistic philosophy. Well-produced and remarkably accessible, *The Philosophy of Antiochus* will remain a standard for scholarly reference and engagement for a long time to come.

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