obvious ones such as Republic, Statesman and Law. While focusing on ideas, S. also takes full account of relevant features of Plato’s mode of presentation, especially the significant use of dialogue form.

What picture of Plato as a political thinker emerges? While not offering an outright defense of Plato, S. helps us to make better sense of Plato’s political thinking both by historical contextualization and by parallels with modern theory. For instance, S. stresses that the Republic’s ideas about the rule of knowledge form a natural continuation of Socratic ideal of personal and political life grounded on other virtues and expertise. He brings out that Plato’s wide conception of politica as a whole mode of cultural life and not simply the organization of political functions has important parallels in contemporary and later ancient thought. S. also highlights suggestive links with modern thought, for instance, with Habermas’s ideas about communicative reason and with Ratt’s thinking on justice as a social good. He also uses the contrasting reactions to Plato of Cicero, Mill and Lessing to define what he sees as the core idea of the Platonic principle of the rule of Knowledge. This is a radical but potent ideal, that of a whole society unified on the basis of the knowledge of the good — an ideal that goes far beyond beyond managerial or technocratic effectiveness. S. does not fudge the darker sides of Plato’s political vision, for instance, the noble lie in the Republic and the paternalistic religious framework in the Laws are discussed fully and analysed as themes of ideology. Yet S.’s reflective and nuanced treatment avoids the caricature and polemics of much earlier writing on this topic, such as the idea of Plato as a precursor of modern-style totalitarianism or neo-conservatism or as someone who simply rationalized the class prejudice of his aristocratic background. In the chapter on ‘Money and the soul’, S. gives full weight to Plato’s attack on the materialism and greed underlying oligarchy. He argues convincingly (against Bernard Williams) that Plato’s use of the state-soul analogy credibly identifies underlying motives that are common to both political and personal life, rather than reflecting idealistic confusion or disdain for the lower classes. S. also handles skillfully the debated question of chronological development in Plato’s political thought, underlining recurrent themes while not insisting on unitary-time-frame consistency.

Overall, this book seems to me highly successful, both in offering a very accessible treatment for readers who come from different backgrounds and in probing new and promising lines of enquiry. S. writes an engaging and lucid style, while also allowing economically to an exceptionally broad range of ancient writings and modern theories. I think that for many readers this book will pretty well the starting point for further work on this fascinatingly topical subject.

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The term ‘culture’ suggests that important relationships between intellectual figures will be discussed. Yet Platonism seems difficult to see as a genuine ‘part’ of any such culture. Indeed Edwards writes (107) of Platonism’s lack of interest in what he wrote: ‘It is because there is so little of the historian about him, so little consciousness of an audience, that the treatises meander so unaccountably from one half-quoted text in Plato’s dialogues to another. This nicely captures one’s worry that the master only communicated with his pupils (and through them with us) thanks to their efforts. The task of writing a book about the intellectual world in which so introspective a philosopher flourished is thus not easy. Hence, in my view, Edwards’s book is less Platonism than his pupil Porphry’s. Platonism is indeed less in need of a new book than is Porphyry. In the volume entitled Arguments Concerning the First Principles and Proclus by their pupils (Liverpool, 2000), P. published a translation of the crucial Life of Platonism, and it is often figures mentioned there who take a high profile here too. P. is especially interested in his teacher’s dialogues with Proclus’s predecessors and friends, able to make Aristotle central to Platonic education thereafter, able to advance the commentary tradition in which philosophy partners with philosophy, able to inspire followers and to provoke hostility. It has become plain to me (as a member of a team translating Proclus On The Timaeus) that Porphry is often more important than Platonists not only to the Latin tradition but also to later Greek Platonism. Hence this book is a significant contribution to intellectual history, filling a gap that usually attracts neither the philosopher nor the historian. E. begins with a chapter on the ‘Platonic Tradition’, in which he emphasizes the importance of Numenius. A slight flaw here is the willingness to regard Apuleius’s De Platonis as an abridgement of Porphyry’s Dialogicae, overestimating the findings of T. Gemark and A. Alzamora and the ideas of Diodorus of Lampsacus (Göteborg 1995). Ch.2 moves on to ‘Four Philosophers’, giving an historical introduction to Longinus, Porphry, and Iamblichus. It is a pity that we have such slips as ‘most rational (logista)’ and To Gauros (both 37). Ch.3 moves on to ‘Platonists on Plato’, looking chiefly at Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus on selected late dialogues, an area where my own views are recorded. I would challenge E. to find me any other ‘obscure who... (the tale of Atlantis) as a bald narrative of facts’ (54), which misunderstands Proclus’s polem historica.

The book then moves to central issues in philosophy, starting in ch.4 with ‘Logic, Number and the One’. It is not true here that ‘Before Plotinus Atticus was, so far as we know, the sole disinterested’ who...’ (27). The view that Plato and Aristotle shared a single philosophy, see Nicostorius. It is even true of Plutarch and Numenius? I doubt that it... generally agreed that the first three antiquities Parvaenitae... the most instructive’ (63-4). Proclus in Parm. 1.63.13-63.9 with Book 6 shows that at least five were always part of the exegetical tradition. Ch.5 is another doctrinal chapter on ‘The Pilgrim Soul’. Ch.6 moves to Literature and Dogma, allowing scope for useful discussion of the genre of the Dios (87-9), and for the return of Longinus (94-101). This can be impressive (e.g. ‘proposed the deletion’ (98) in regard to a passage that Longinus needed not say this). ‘This minor niggling one’s worry that the master only communicated with his pupils (and through them with us) thanks to their efforts. The task of writing...
include material about On the Sublime, but could have said something of its content. There is important material on allegory at 102-6. There are then welcome chapters on 'Philosophy from Oracles', 'Magic and Occult Sciences' and finally 'Platonists and Christians'. These, along with bibliography and index, round off a book that is a useful acquisition in spite of my occasional reservations.

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BYZANTINE AND MODERN GREEK


This jointly authored book by two Byzantine art historians, one of whom has published notably on ceramics and the other on the relation between art and texts, starts with a paradigm: that most see Byzantine art as "an art whose primary function was to serve religion". This is, in fact, how we think about art at the Byzantine period which was "religious, subservient and in many important ways contrary to the dominant ideologies of the church. They want to look at all this art (dating from the eighth to the fourteenth century), which they characterize as "unofficial" or "profane" or "secular". The paradox is of course whether this is a true dichotomy in a profoundly religious society. They undertake the exploration in five chapters: 'Novelties and Innovations', 'In the Wane of the Court', 'Animals, Magic, 'The Nude' and 'Decorum, Men's clothing, and Disorder'. This allows them to focus on a good range of Byzantine productions, some of which were made for use in churches and others for use in domestic environments. The outcome is a wide-ranging and evocative selection of works, many of which have been understudied in Byzantine research, and which often allow the authors to make new observations. Many texts are brought into play which give a context in Byzantine society for understanding meanings of often unusual iconography. But the smoothness of their treatment does, nevertheless, reveal all sorts of rough edges of interpretation. They privilege ceramics in the argument, and while this is a salutary corrective to many surveys of Byzantine art which tend to focus on elite art, yet it is not clear whether one can treat "low" art with the same degree of intensity. So the "famous" twelfth-century ceramic excavated at Cirith (it was shown in the exhibition 'Glory of Byzantium' at the Metropolitan Museum in 1997) is identified here as a plate with a pair of lovers — a crowned woman sitting on a man's lap (he has long curly hair). Doubt is thereby cast on their identification (in the literature) as the epic hero Digenis Akritas and his lover, the Amazon Queen Maximo. The presence of a rabbit or hare depicted on the plate is taken as a symbol of lust, and the figures seen as lovers. But the argument is that whatever the images might represent, every Byzantine artist would have been reminded of the Christian image of the Child seated on the lap of the Virgin Mary. In other words however "profane" the imagery, the scene would be enjoyed as a reminder, if not a parody, of official religious art. If this line of interpretation is pursued, it surely undermines the concept of "profane" art, and while it may be true that this plate's primary mission was not to serve religion, it is seen as serving a deeply Christian morality. My question is also whether the imagery is being taken here with too much solemnity. Perhaps the potter wanted to fit in two figures side by side, but due to lack of space simply elided them. Was an allusion to the Virgin and Child intended? How far is this a viewer's perception?

The treatment of the selected objects in this well-presented and illustrated book leads to a new conclusion on a traditional problem of Byzantine art, the question of how far and in which ways its Medieval art connects with ancient Graeco-Roman art. Byzantine literature and art tell us that Homer and the classics remained part of school education, and that knowledge of antiquity (however "distorted") was part of the educational curriculum. The presentation argued here (160ff) is that Byzantine artists deliberately avoided the dangers of elevating Classical culture by (1) mocking pagan images and (2) avoiding defining any classical imagery they used too closely. This makes pagan imagery the direct opposite of the holy icons, where the figures are always clear and identifiable. This is a provocative idea. At first sight it gives a reason why the pagan imagery on the Veroli ivory casket in the V&A or that on a gilt glass cup at Venice, both made in court circles at Constantinople in the tenth century, looks 'Antique' but eludes identification, in part because of the lack of inscriptions. What is problematic however, is that even in Antiquity the pagan gods were mocked (as in Homer) and the use of ambiguous iconography which makes the decoding of the imagery an intellectual game is already a feature of the art of Pompooi. The persistence of Classical art is a fact in Byzantine art, and is well documented in this book. But the explanation for its values in Byzantine art remains elusive.

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Panagiotis Roilos' Amphoteroslogia - the title derives from the adjective amphoteros ("double-tongued") in John Tzetzes' Oikidiala (7.299) - examines the narrative poems, Byzantine novels dating from the twelfth century: Rhodante and Doulitres by Theodore Prodromos, Drosilla and Charikles by Niketas Eustathios, and Rosinia the Younger by Eustathios Makrembolites and Aristodulos and Kaleitosa by Constantine Manasses. These four texts are written in the ornate language of the time — unlike the novels of the late Byzantine period — and are in verse, with the exception of Makrembolites who chose to write in prose, following the standard practice of novel writers in Antiquity. Current views on the Byzantine novels are at the opposite end of the scale from the derogatory aphorisms so rashly ascribed to them by earlier research. The revised datings and the important literary approaches to the works' narrative styles that were proposed in recent decades, together with new critical editions of the novels, have contributed to a much more realistic approach to this Byzantine genre which has rich intertextual relations with Achilaias Tatius and Iliad. The book's focus on twelfth-century novels contributes to a fuller understanding of the novel in the Komnenian era: earlier scholars such as R. Beaton (The Medieval Greek Romance (1996)) usually examined these texts in the context of broader analyses of the genre.

R. structures his material in four chapters. The first (1-24) introduces the reader to Byzantine intellectual life in the twelfth century and discusses issues pertaining directly to the texts themselves (biographies of the authors, manuscripts, editions, etc.), while also presenting R.'s own views and approach. The next chapter, 'Rhetorical Modulations in the Komnenian Novel' (25-121), constitutes a major contribution to scholarship on the novel; R. examines, in the meticulous and sophisticated way that characterizes his entire book, the enormous influence of Aristotle's influence on the genre (e.g., the pro-gymnosoma on both the composition and the broader appeal of Komnenian novels). He first studies closely the perception of Aristotle's Greek fiction in Byzantium as well as the development of rhetoric, and then goes on to devote many pages to determining the way in which the authors of these novels incorporated rhetorical conventions such as ethopoeia into their narratives. It is worth noting at this point that R. is fully conversant with current critical theory on the "ownership" by the bibliography he draws on but by the way he uses theoretical material in his discussion. The third chapter ('Allegorical Modulations' 125-234) builds on the previous one to examine first the long tradition of allegorical writing in Greek literature from the ancient world to the eleventh-twelfth century. R. then examines with particular emphasis the allegorical interpretations of Homer by Michael Psellus and Tzetzes, and of Hesiod by the Philosopher, without omitting the individual contributions by Eustathios of Thessalonike or by the little-known John Galanos, and reaches some very interesting conclusions about the function of allegory as a rhetorical element in contemporary novels. In the second part of the chapter R. deals with the effect of allegory on the novels, showing that the spiritual poetics of Drosilla and Charikles and Byzantine and Hyrmarien. The handling of the comic element in Komnenian novels is examined in what is perhaps the most attractive chapter of the book (235-301). R. begins by investigating the rebirth of this element in the broader literary tradition of the twelfth century, tracing the phenomena through its rhetorical roots and deriving on appropriate material from references to texts byNikephoros Basilikos, as well as by other eminent masters of rhetoric. The author then goes on to an attractive and admirably precise citation of comic elements in the form of paradox as found in the novels of Prodrimos, and, to a lesser extent, in those of Eustathios. The comprehensive conclusions (302-5), which emphasize the rejuvenation of the genre in the Komnenian era as well as its modernizing function as a new exemplum, are, at first glance, disappointingly few, with the general impression that the book as a whole is somewhat overdone.

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This volume by Anthony Kaldelis launches a commendable project conceived in 2004 at the University of Notre Dame. The idea was to produce reliable translations of lesser-known or, at times, less-known authors as well as to produce Michael Psellus, the most gripping court intellectual in Byzantium, available to scholars of other fields of enquiry and medieval cultures, as well as to provide an Anglophone reader. Indeed, if Byzantine studies are to encourage a wider awareness of Byzantine achievements, then editors of the primary sources need to both challenging and accessible. K. has admirably succeeded on both counts.

The subjects collection under review here are family. Psellus theorizes women in an ecumenism for his mother, a funeral oration for his daughter, and a memoriam about the dissolution of his daughter's engagement (this is translated by David Jenkins). Also anthologized are Psellus' address