

Heike BOTTLER, *Pseudo-Plutarch und Stobaios: Eine synoptische Untersuchung*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014. 1 vol. 552 p. (HYPOMNEMATA. UNTERSUCHUNGEN ZUR ANTIKE UND ZU IHREM NACHLEBEN, 198). Prix : 100 €. ISBN 978-3-525-25305-2.

In 1879, H. Diels “invented” doxography. In his *Doxographi graeci*, he offered a reconstruction of a lost work on philosophical views by a certain Aëtius, based on the Ps-Plutarchan *Placita*, parts of Stobaeus’ *Eclogae*, and several other minor sources. The challenge of reconstructing Aëtius was taken up once again, more than a century later, by J. Mansfeld and D. Runia in their three volumes of *Aëtiana* (1997; 2009; 2010). Unsurprisingly, it is on the shoulders of these three giants that H. Bottler stands, as is clear from her scholarly apparatus. In this book, a revised 2012 dissertation, she offers a synoptic study of the corresponding doxographical fragments in pseudo-Plutarch and Stobaeus, confining herself to books I (on principles) and II (on the cosmos) according to the arrangement by Ps-Plutarch. First, the author offers a thorough introduction to the several doxographical sources, the hypotheses on their interrelations, the different methods of the doxographers, and the history of scholarship. The introduction is much broader in focus than the study itself, which exclusively encompasses the passages from the first two Ps-Plutarchan books for which we have both Ps-Plutarchan and Stobaeian testimony, but it seems to serve the same purpose: to highlight the fundamentally insurmountable problems, complexities, and inconsistencies involved in studying the doxographical tradition and – ultimately – to question the possibility *an sich* of a reconstruction of Aëtius. In other words: H. Bottler is definitely less optimistic than her predecessors and, throughout this book, she gives good reasons for being so. In the introduction, the author describes the function of doxography in ancient skepticism: the skeptics used doxographies to emphasize the differences between philosophers on certain issues. By doing this, they pointed out the necessity of suspension of judgment. *Mutatis mutandis*, H. Bottler’s own method of discussing doxographical texts is similar to this. Often her commentary on a doxographical lemma consists of a discussion of contradictory solutions advocated in earlier scholarly literature (not infrequently in different works of J. Mansfeld and/or D. Runia). A thorough discussion of the different options ends, more often than not, in a *non liquet*. The analysis usually starts from a specific linguistic discrepancy between two (or more) witnesses. Sometimes these lemmatic discussions are preceded by an “Inhaltsanalyse”, “Strukturanalyse” and/or “Forschungslage”, although the distinctions between these categories are vague to say the least. Generally, the author focusses less on philosophical content than, e.g., J. Mansfeld and D. Runia do: most attention goes to matters of morphology, syntax, and (micro-)structure. Both the very detailed analysis and the limitation of the lemmata to those where both Ps-Plutarch and Stobaeus are witnesses, make it hard to keep track of the bigger picture, i.e. of important questions of macro-structure. Esp. Stobaeus’ rearrangement of the fragments could often have been indicated and presented more clearly. In the same vein, a general comparison of the author’s own approach with D. Runia’s full reconstruction of the second book (included in the second part of the second volume of *Aëtiana*) is sorely missed. But, in more than 500 pages and more than 1500 footnotes, the author offers a wealth of material to

compensate for this. Sources, both primary and secondary, are reported usually *in extenso* and with remarkable accuracy. For the texts of the witnesses, the author understandably reverts to existing editions (esp. Lachenaud for Ps-Plutarch and Wachsmuth for Stobaeus). Fortunately, she shows awareness of the specific limitations of these editions and at several points goes over to an autopsy of the manuscripts in order to resolve editorial issues. The texts of Ps-Plutarch and Stobaeus are helpfully presented side by side, with minor differences being underlined and major differences being boldfaced. The author also offers translations of all Ps-Plutarch and Stobaeus fragments she discusses. Texts of additional witnesses like Theodoret, Ps-Galen, and Eusebius are printed in Greek only, although from time to time translations of these texts are added in a footnote as well. The translations are admirably accurate and stay very close to the Greek in order to reflect the often subtle differences between the texts under comparison. The only significant problem I encountered was at p. 105-106, where ἀπερίληπτα, οὐκ ἄπειρα means something like “indefinite, not infinite” instead of “begrenzt, nicht endlos”. For the opposition of ἀπερίληπτος and ἄπειρος in this context, see Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus* 42. In other places, the consistency of the terminology used in the translation could have been maintained more carefully. Especially the fragments on fate and destiny are problematic in this respect. E.g., on p. 333 τοῦ αὐτομάτου is translated “Zufall”, whereas on p. 275 τύχης is “Zufall” and is explicitly distinguished from αὐτομάτου, “Spontaneität”. This may seem irrelevant to the author’s purpose, but since much of her arguments are concerned with inconsistencies within the doxographical material, attention to consistency or inconsistency in philosophical terminology may be more than mere luxury. As far as the presentation of the witnesses is concerned, the interesting odd one out is undoubtedly Qostā Ibn Lūqā, the ninth-century Arabic translator of Ps-Plutarch. His text is presented in the much-praised German translation by H. Daiber. It goes without saying, however, that even a translation as accurate as Daiber’s falls short when minute linguistic differences between texts are at issue. Fortunately, the author had the occasion to consult with H. Daiber on several issues, thus incorporating some experience on the Arabic text into her treatment. Nevertheless, many questions on this Arabic text and its position within the doxographical tradition remain and the author often finds herself at a loss when trying to pinpoint Qostā Ibn Lūqā’s text within the synopsis of often minor divergences among the witnesses. The general conclusion following the synoptic study usefully readdresses issues from the synopsis in a more thematically arranged fashion: the author summarizes her views on inconsistencies, identifying characteristics of the doxographers’ methods, source indications and the relations between the witnesses (with particularly interesting remarks on possible contamination between the Ps-Plutarchan and Stobaeian texts). The book ends with a brief remark on the pre-Aëtian phase of the doxographical material (which does not receive attention in the study itself), some appendices (a table of inconsistencies in the works of J. Mansfeld and D. Runia, which are discussed throughout the book, and three stemmata tentatively clarifying the relations between witnesses), an extensive bibliography (which unfortunately contains many inaccuracies and thus contrasts with the rest of the book) and two very useful and complete indices (which contain names and themes, but also particular methods used by the doxographers). H. Bottler offers many useful observa-

tions but few conclusions: she discusses the options, casts doubt on most of them, and ultimately seems to invite the reader to lay her/his own puzzle. Her treatment of the Ps-Plutarchan and Stobaeian doxographical material is diligent and cautious. Paradoxically, precisely for this reason it can be unsatisfactory at times. In the end, however, it is clear that this occasional lack of satisfaction is not at all due to the author of this valuable book but to the limits imposed by the complexities and uncertainties of the doxographical tradition.

Bram DEMULDER

Joseph ROISMAN, Ian WORTHINGTON & Robin WATERFIELD, *Lives of the Attic Orators. Texts from Pseudo-Plutarch, Photius, and the Suda*, Introduction and Commentary by J. R. and I. W., Translation by R. W., Oxford, Clarendon, 2015. 1 vol. XX + 381 p. (ANCIENT HISTORY SERIES). Prix : £ 30. ISBN 978-0-19-968767-1.

Throughout their rich intellectual history, the ancient Greeks often showed a remarkable talent for categorizing and sorting all kinds of disordered data. Beginning with Hesiod, they time and again tried to produce order out of chaos. From the Hellenistic period on, that concern with ordering and listing was also felt in the domain of literary studies. Through painstaking literary criticism, the scholars at the famous Library of Alexandria distinguished between the best authors of a certain genre, who soon became canonical, and second rate figures, between the classic models and the epigones, and thus considerably influenced the successive history of Greek literature. Henceforward, there were (only) three major tragedians and nine lyric poets. Also, a canon of Ten Attic Orators was compiled, although its date is still controversial. In fact, several scholars are convinced that this list is post-Hellenistic. In the well written introduction to their new book, Roisman and Worthington briefly touch upon this issue and argue that the canon of the Ten Attic Orators should be traced back to Caecilius of Caleacte, an important literary critic and contemporary of Augustus, and the author of a treatise *On the Character of the Ten Orators*. Roisman and Worthington rest their case on the correct observation that neither Cicero nor Dionysius of Halicarnassus refers to a list of ten canonized orators: such a silence, so they argue, is difficult to explain if the canon already existed in their day. Somewhat later, however, Quintilian appears to know the canon of Ten. The date for the canon, then, “should post-date Dionysius but pre-date Quintilian, which leaves Caecilius as the compiler” (p. 9). Although this conclusion is not implausible, it primarily rests on an *argumentum e silentio*, and this is always risky, also in view of the mere fact that much relevant material has been lost. Caecilius was a major figure, no doubt, yet it cannot be excluded that he was building on an already existing selection. However that may be, we may presume that the canon of the Ten Attic Orators was the result of careful reading and evaluation. Nevertheless, it also rested, at least to a certain extent, on a subjective judgement, and moreover, one of its direct consequences was that much interesting material from other authors soon came to be neglected. Thus, the speeches of many gifted orators were no longer studied and transcribed, and finally got irretrievably lost. Nowadays, we no longer have the speeches of Critias or Demetrius of Phaleron, although in antiquity both had the reputation of being excellent speakers. Many centuries later, Photius correctly saw the drawback to such