

becomes it. The issue is quite complex, but the overall impression is that K.'s reading goes too far when holding that 'intelligibility is a creature of intelligence' (p. 22) and even that 'everything intelligible is also intelligent' (p. 131): the latter is an undesired consequence, an *aporia* (*De an.* 3.4) Aristotle clearly wants to avoid. It is true that essences are 'separated' from matter only by the mind and, *qua* so separated, they are related to an intellect (not a scandalous result); but this does not mean that they are *intelligent*. Besides the fact that species as essences of living beings are causally relevant in generation and are an objective part of the metaphysical arrangement of Nature quite independently of our minds, it is hard to see how the essence of [tree] or of any other natural kind, or even the abstract content of a geometrical theorem could be not only always-grasped-by-an-intellect (*qua* separated) but also *intelligent* on their own. While providing a reading of the relation between intelligence and its objects, K. misses an opportunity in opting to disregard *De an.* 3.5 and to keep silent about the enigmatic relation between 'passive' and 'active' intellect.

It is impossible to do justice to the richness of this proposal in a short space such as this. In any case, this book is likely to become a point of reference – perhaps a polemical one – for those who choose to focus their research on the topic with which it deals.

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THEOPHRASTUS THEN AND NOW

DIGGLE (J.) (ed.) *Theophrastus: Characters*. Pp. x + 250. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Paper, £24.99, US\$32.99 (Cased, £74.99, US\$99.99). ISBN: 978-1-108-93279-0 (978-1-108-83128-4 hbk).

BEATTY (L.) *Looking for Theophrastus. Travels in Search of a Lost Philosopher*. Pp. 352. London: Atlantic Books, 2022. Cased, £16.99. ISBN: 978-1-83895-436-9.

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Two centuries ago distances separating Classicists, literary critics and novelists were narrower. The pseudonymous George Eliot was well versed in Greek and Latin, a widely read critic of books on Graeco-Roman antiquity and a moralistic novelist of her own invention. Her final work of fiction, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, had as its narrator an eponymous Theophrastus, who vents acutely perceptive criticisms towards assorted social ills and offensive personalities Eliot had confronted during her lifetime. Some caricatures are reminiscent of bad behaviours that the historical Theophrastus had cited in his *Characters*. Writing in a different style and format than the ancient Theophrastus had employed, Eliot nevertheless felt comfortable alluding to the historical Theophrastus, to lend a certain classical continuity for satirising the coursing social currents of her final days.

Today distances have widened, notwithstanding efforts by the two books under review to bridge that growing gap between ancients and contemporaries. Few Classicists, even

fewer literary critics, and merely a handful of philosophers have read what Theophrastus wrote. Most contemporary readers would not know or even care who Theophrastus was.

Diggle's 2004 edition, translation and commentary of Theophrastus' *Characters* was the *ne plus ultra* of classical scholarship when it first appeared: establishing and examining a text riddled with massive accretions, interpolations and textual corruptions, what Diggle claims 'is probably the most corrupt manuscript tradition in all Greek literature'. Nearly two decades later, he has produced a more accessible second edition, half the length and at a fraction of the price. Much of his introductory essay is retained, but footnotes are eliminated from the commentary. The index of passages is eliminated and the index of words and phrases condensed. The bibliography is updated and expanded to encompass items of a more general, though related interest. Instead of appearing on the facing page with the Greek, translations are more usefully relegated to the linear entries of the commentary, with its enhanced emphasis on grammatical construal and historical context, deleting extended discussions of alternative, niggling interpretations of lines and terms that Diggle perforce acknowledges but summarily dismisses. *Quot homines, tot sententiae*.

Diggle's economies of scale come at a cost. By condensing and even eliminating discussions from his more extended commentary, readers miss out on Diggle's previously expansive expositions, demonstrations of ingenuity and the pure delight his readings pose for the philologically devoted.

When Theophrastus expounded upon his list of 30 unsavoury character types, familiar to himself and the readers of his day, each portrait exposed considerable detail about daily life. By cutting back his commentary, Diggle pares back the depth of that detail. For example, Theophrastus' portrait of the 'repulsive man' obstinately standing his ground at crowded fruit stands in the marketplace had allowed Diggle to produce a disquisition on various words and definitions for fruit among Greek authors, an excursus shortened by more than half in the second edition. So too, his previously expansive discussion of 'the superstitious man' is severely retrenched. These cutbacks are painful to witness and must have been painful for its author to excise, since readers are deprived of Diggle's digressive erudition. Nonetheless, in what remains, his commentary provides sufficient philological scrutiny for portraying and explaining the ephemera of fourth-century Greek society, delineating how personality traits came into play in social contexts.

The second edition abides as it was originally conceived: a traditional text and commentary designed to be of specific use for scholars. Perceptive and useful as this edition is, Diggle admittedly leaves out larger issues that might have proved of interest to others. He recognises that Theophrastus' character portrayals are not designed simply to go over the same ground that Aristotle had engaged upon in his ethical writings, with its lists of personal vices representing extremes exceeding the golden mean. But readers would also like to know more about the social and moral causes for these bad behaviours in Theophrastus' world as well as the community standards against which such social transgressions were implicitly measured. Theophrastus' *Characters* is, after all, a map of antisocial behaviour.

Diggle rightly connects Theophrastus' character types with both old and new Greek comedy and its stereotypical comic figures. Yet, Diggle agrees that Theophrastus was not simply composing a kind of typesetting chapbook for comic playwrights to employ. These caricatured figures were clearly drawn from closely observed details of daily life, in much the same way that Eliot had drawn her critical materials from personal observation of her contemporaries' social lassitude and antisocial bigotries from academic hubris to anti-Semitism. As with Eliot, there is a greater moral purpose going on with Theophrastus. Although such speculation goes well beyond the intended goal of so superb a text and commentary, its self-containment and constraint remain moribund unless those who employ this text and commentary can add to it some greater philosophical or literary

dimension, a deeper anthropological understanding concerning all too human interactions in the daily life of imperial Greece.

The Theophrastus Project got underway at Rutgers in the Spring of 1979, thanks to the generosity of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This led to a flood of scholarly editions and publications, rehabilitating the legacy of that oft forgotten research partner of Aristotle. To date there has been little carry-over into the general reading public's knowledge of Theophrastus, who remains nowhere near as widely known as Plato or Aristotle.

A British novelist, memoirist and master of poetic prose, Beatty has taken up this challenge in *Looking for Theophrastus*. While scholars might dismiss her book as the well-informed effort of an amateur, they ought to treasure it, and the reading public should welcome it wholeheartedly. Beatty accomplishes with astonishing aplomb what the Theophrastus Project aspired to achieve: to gain public appreciation for a long-forgotten parent of science and philosophy.

Beatty approaches her subject obliquely, as if she were Orpheus bringing Theophrastus back from the dead by looking ever forward, connecting him with us. Gazing at a photograph of a street scene in Paris, taken by Louis Daguerre in 1838, Beatty sees the picture is a lie, since the street appears almost deserted, when it was not. The moving images of people going to and fro could not transfer to the photographic plate except as noise. Beatty reflects: 'Because sometimes the conscientious telling of the events of a man's life, and the happenings of history, will make only the flat and cautious and vitally inaccurate picture of a background. It will present the life as a noun rather than bringing it back as a verb. It will take a faithful picture of the empty street where he passed. So there must be another way' (p. 159). Beatty constructs her myth of Theophrastus in response, as one who is constantly moving around, looking and noticing detail.

She initiates her journey as part of a travel narrative beginning with places where Theophrastus and Aristotle lived and were active: Lesbos, Athens, Assos, Stagira, Macedonia, the Lyceum. As Beatty comes to focus on Theophrastus' *Characters*, she extends her whirlwind tour into Chaucer, Casaubon, Ben Jonson, George Eliot, Dickens, G.K. Chesterton, Virginia Woolf, Elias Canetti; John Steinbeck also has a role to play. All those authors and so many others had taken up scrutinising human nature and the various traits of characters we live with. Either wittingly or unwittingly responding to Theophrastus' little golden book, each subsequent author over ensuing centuries read their literary predecessors variously, like the readers of any text: 'Men and women sink under time's waters and are lost but their words bob to the surface like paper boats and continue, carried on by the current, for as long as there are eyes to read them or the paper itself allows' (p. 234).

If we stay a while on Lesbos in those early years, we can visualise how Aristotle and Theophrastus first began collecting sense-based evidence together. They gathered what was available, dissected specimens and consulted local people who knew living specimens more intimately from working with their hands, fishermen or farmers. They kept correspondence with others who had reported witnessing marvellous things. They observed the ways in which plants, animals and human beings lived in communion with each other, establishing the first phenomenology of an ecological, interconnected science. They came to recognise patterns in their observations, whether it be seeds slowly unfolding, the impulses of dogs or birds or bees, the eccentricities of human beings and the societies they formed and flawed.

Beatty shows us something of the history these two scientists were living through, as Philip and then Alexander made enemies, foreigners in the minds of a jealous Isocrates, Demosthenes and Athenians in general, forcing Aristotle and Theophrastus to keep their research projects always on the move. Social hostility would prove a continuing

conundrum over the centuries, as when St Jerome's sexual obsessions pilloried Theophrastus' satirically detailed observations on marriage. Then Chaucer took the story up in 'The Wife of Bath'. Our first scientists lived perilous lives in a troubled world.

Theophrastus was not merely a name given to his many books, most of which were lost, but his infectious influence survived them. His was 'an appetite for life as it is experienced, rather than just for its laws or mechanisms; an eye for the oddness, the variety and whimsicality of forms, or processes, that is irresistible' (p. 168). Beatty continues: 'If all of this is correct, it makes our mania for recording, for books and libraries, appear backward looking and even dead – as if they were just different types of cupboard' (p. 186). Materialising the past made Orpheus tragically look back.

Beatty spins her myth of the life of Theophrastus with an eloquence and literary allusiveness unique to her considerable talent. It proves easy to fall in love with her sentences, her way of painting a prose picture, reminiscent of the late W.G. Sebald who, like Beatty, used old photographs to give his stories a local habitation and a focus.

What then are the patterns of human social conduct, in particular traits of bad character that continue to speak to us from the very creation of communities and of time itself – 'something halfway between science and story' (p. 204)? Theophrastus captured what is common to us all. He achieved this, by the same sort of close observations he practised first on Lesbos. It was not Aristotle's ethics he was dutifully subscribing to in writing his *Characters*, but facts and facets of daily life, our human failings of breaking faith with our neighbours.

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HELLENISTIC ELEGY

GALLÉ CEJUDO (R.J.) (ed., trans.) *Elegíacos helenísticos. Introducción, edición y traducción*. Pp. xc + 838. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2021. Cased, €35.58. ISBN: 978-84-00-10890-8.

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The collection contains editions with introduction, critical text, translation and explanatory notes of all Hellenistic elegists except Callimachus. It is divided into three parts. The first contains *testimonia* and fragments of those judged to be, with reason, the five most important Hellenistic elegists, namely Philitas, Hermesianax, Alexander of Aetolia, Phanocles and Parthenius. The second includes *testimonia* and fragments of seventeen further authors, including poets known to have written in a variety of genres such as Eratosthenes, Posidippus and Simias. The third is devoted to elegiac *adespota* of varying size and interest, some known for some time to Classicists, such as the so-called Tattoo elegy (Hermesianax fr. 13 Lightfoot) and the Pride of Halicarnassus (*SGO* 01/12/02), others likely to be familiar only to the smaller community of papyrologists.

G.C. acknowledges in the introduction that the collection does not include astronomical poems or works of scientific character. But philosophy is also tacitly excluded; consequently, Crates of Thebes, who employed elegiacs for hymns (*SH* 359–61) shortly before