

thought is his sensitivity to the "tremendous personality, one of the strangest and most individual writers who have ever lived" (p. xiii)—namely, Plato himself. At various moments in his discussions of the dialogues Guthrie prompts us, by means of apt and revealing observations, to remain aware of the somewhat mysterious yet forceful person of Plato within and behind the drama of ideas, his character, and his noticeable intentions and aspirations. There is also an excellent opening chapter on the life of Plato and the historical and philosophical influences that affected his life and thought. For the life of Plato, the one most valuable source is the Seventh Letter. But there has long been a debate among scholars over its authenticity. It is easy to pass from hoping it might be genuine to insisting that it must be. A. E. Taylor wrote, "If the *Epistles* are spurious we lose our one direct source of information for any part of Plato's biography" (*Plato* [1949], p. 14). That is true, but it does not prove them genuine. Guthrie accepts the Seventh Letter as genuine and makes effective use of it, deferring the question of the Letters to the volume on Plato's later writings.

Guthrie recognizes that there is no substitute for reading Plato himself and that a work on Plato should lead a reader back to Plato (p. xiii). But he assists his reader to this end by supplying insight, knowledge, and direction, so as to make the encounter—or re-encounter—with Plato likely to be most rewarding. With his mastery of the historical and philosophical materials, he has, nonetheless, escaped the temptation that motivated some of his great scholarly forerunners to establish a theory that explains what the philosophers had "really tried" to say—or what they "must have meant" even if they did not say so. That temptation is especially strong in writing on Plato, for the dramatic and dialogue genre invites theory and interpretation. Indeed (to indulge here in theorizing) this might have been one of Plato's secret reasons for employing the dialogue; it encourages hypothesizing and contests over interpretation, and such contagious disputation is the stuff of philosophy.

On all matters of surveying and weighing historical evidence and interpretations, Guthrie is scrupulous in his assessments, impartial and eminently fair in his judgments. His presentation of the historical sources and his discussions of contemporary literature and philosophizing on problematic aspects of Plato's thought is a remarkable feat of industry and critical erudition (attested to, incidentally, in a valuable bibliography, notes, and index of passages quoted).

Finally, Guthrie commands a lucid style that makes this book a pleasure to read and renders even the more recondite parts of Plato's outlook comprehensible to any earnest reader. This work

will undoubtedly become the standard history of Greek philosophy, to be consulted by specialists and laymen, historians, philosophers, and students of science, literature, the arts, political theory, and theology. Although Guthrie remarks that there can be no "final or standard work on Plato," all future scholarship on Greek thought will have a point of departure and reference here and will reflect a measure of indebtedness to this splendid history.

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WOLFGANG ORTH. *Königlicher Machtanspruch und städtische Freiheit: Untersuchungen zu den politischen Beziehungen zwischen den ersten Seleukidenherrschern (Seleukos I., Antiochos I., Antiochos II.) und den Städten des westlichen Kleinasien.* (Münchner Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung, und Antiken Rechtsgeschichte, number 71.) Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung. 1977. Pp. viii, 209. DM 56.

Wolfgang Orth's subtitle is his subject; the theme is the title. This *Habilitationsschrift* written under H. Bengtson takes up a familiar subject: the nature of the relationship of king and city. Orth's originality lies in his self-limitation to the Seleucids (and essentially the period 281–246 B.C.) and in his insistence that only a rigorous, detailed analysis of the inscriptions can lead to any real progress. Generalities are to be eschewed. There is an introduction to the problem (largely rejecting the juristic approach in A. Heuss's *Stadt und Herrscher*), a brief summary of the period before the Seleucids became a power in western Asia Minor, two chapters with the meat of the book, a brief treatment of the period 244–188 B.C., and conclusions. A map, list of cited works, and two indexes (subjects and sources) complete the book.

Chapter one is devoted to Seleucus I and Antiochus I, chapter two to Antiochus II. Each proceeds through the cities for which there is evidence. Most of this is royal letters (much of the book is a historical commentary on C. B. Welles's *Royal Correspondence*) and city decrees. Orth examines each to elicit the real underlying circumstances and relationships. The analysis is nearly always acute and intelligent; occasionally it is too clever, as Orth seeks for more meaning than is present in a text. Many details will be controversial, but there is scarcely a relevant document on which Orth does not have something interesting to say.

The conclusions are not entirely surprising: kings and cities sought their own advantage so far as their power allowed. Considerations of "inter-

national law" in a modern sense were irrelevant, and the same terminology (for example, *autonomia*, *eleutheria*) is used for widely divergent realities. None of the kings studied appears as a lover of cities, a liberal, or a defender of democracy; all sought to control the cities in their realms as far as possible. The cities uniformly sought to escape such domination, but only the most powerful (like Miletos) had any real success. The principal limits on the kings were their desire to conciliate public opinion and their need for more than military occupation of hostile territory. The Seleucids drew much of their Greek manpower, especially at high levels, from western Asia Minor. Orth has much to say about propaganda.

These views are not altogether new, but their detailed definition (the above is the baldest of summaries) and support from the evidence are a major advance, as is Orth's insistence on the variability of policies and relationships. Orth rather underestimates the cities' collective strength, and he takes the kings' weaknesses insufficiently into account; their resources of troops, energy, and cash were all very limited. Much local recalcitrance must have been ignored as not worth the bother (like tribute from some tiny states in the Athenian empire). Finally, one can accept Orth's picture and still consider the third century a period of almost unparalleled richness in the life of Greek cities. This book is a first-rate contribution to our understanding of that century.

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ROBERT J. LENARDON. *The Saga of Themistocles*. (Aspects of Greek and Roman Life.) New York: Thames and Hudson. 1978. Pp. 248. \$19.95.

The dramatic career and unusual intellectual gifts of Themistocles, creator of the Athenian navy, hero of Salamis, and, finally, renegade to Persia, have never ceased to fascinate. Herodotus attempted to delineate his character, Thucydides objectified his intelligence. Later and derivative authors, with their own rhetorical and ethical axes to grind, added to the burgeoning legend though also providing some scattered bits of factual material ignored by Herodotus and Thucydides. The ancient composite picture of Themistocles, therefore—as, for instance, in Plutarch's *Life*—is part history and part romance; disentangling these threads has been the task of modern scholarship.

The present biography, aptly entitled "saga," is devoted to no such end; instead, it presents the modern reader with most of the essentials of the ancient composite, including even a translation of Themistocles' "letters." This approach may have

its value: students, to whom this book is directed, will gain a conception of the disparate elements fused in Themistocles' "life." The author's very extensive quotation of the sources, however, is not matched by any attempt to assess their worth or to provide the reader with a yardstick by which to assess it himself. On the contrary: "Late accounts are likely to preserve authentic material and in addition actually to provide credible interpretations that cannot be ignored, even though their sources may or may not be identified. Thus any item of information that is not demonstrably false, beyond a shadow of a doubt, must receive respectful consideration; and perhaps in the last analysis all that we can do, for better or worse, is to attempt to fit together all the pieces, even those of dubious legitimacy, in the creation of a portrait, however flawed" (pp. 14–15). But students probably will not take the book *cum grano salis*; when confronted in chapter ten with the spurious letters of Themistocles, for example, they will stand helpless before them and simply read them the same way they have been reading Herodotus and Thucydides.

The book is framed as a conventional biography, with chapters ranging from pre-Themistoclean Athens to Themistocles' death, his tombs, and likenesses. Although the modern literature is cited at the appropriate points, some glaring omissions exist. Nor are the major problems thrashed out with rigor. Take, for example, the question whether Themistocles began the harbor-works of the Piraeus in 493–92, when he was archon. Thucydides' language in I. 93. 3 may imply that he commenced these works holding some continuous magistracy at a later date. Lenardon cuts the knot as follows: "Is it really too difficult to imagine a Themistocles of such persistent vision, who would doggedly and consistently pursue a naval policy from as early as 493 . . . ? I can believe in Themistocles' archonship in 493/2, with the beginning of plans for the Piraeus in that very year. The concept . . . was brilliant in its logic and practicality . . ." (p. 36).

The author's enthusiasm and his willingness to believe the utmost of Themistocles make this book engaging; it does not, however, represent an advance in knowledge.

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ALVIN H. BERNSTEIN. *Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus: Tradition and Apostasy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1978. Pp. 272. \$15.00.

Alvin H. Bernstein has produced a valuable, well-written addition to the scholarship on Tiberius