

lichkeit, mit der der Verlag neue Veröffentlichungen der nachklassischen Autoren für die Forschung herausbringt. Der Band enthält u.a. die Fragmente und die auf Syrisch und Arabisch bewahrten Texte.

Jaakko Frösén

Platon: Die Werke des Aufstiegs. Euthyphron, Apologie, Kriton, Gorgias, Menon. 2. Aufl. — **Die Gesetze.** — [Both:] Eingeleitet v. *Olof Gigon*, übertr. v. *Rudolf Rufener*. Die Bibliothek der alten Welt. Zürich, Artemis Verlag 1974. 454 and XLII, 550 p. DM 48.— and 58.—.

The German Plato of G.Krüger, O.Gigon and R.Rufener is now complete. In the reissue of "Die Werke des Aufstiegs" (orig. 1948) a comprehensive discussion by Gigon of the dialogues concerned has been substituted for Krüger's brief general introduction to Plato, but the explicatory notes are left out. Rufener's translation has been slightly modified. — The last volume in the series, the "Laws", is interesting also as a fresh attempt to make this awkward but important work accessible to modern readers. The introductory essay of Gigon is brief, elegant, personal and not too apologetic. Rufener's translation (posthumously published, revised by Gigon and Laila Zimmermann) tends to avoid the most extreme extravaganzas of Plato's later style. In my opinion Rufener should have gone further, as this is not a bilingual edition nor, primarily, a scholarly work of reference. His German is considerably different from Apelt's (1916), but apparently this is not due to stylistic reasons to quite the same extent as to efforts to approximate to the original. In general, Rufener's translation is a solid and reliable piece of work, but it is not easily read. Contrary to Apelt, this new version has not been provided with explicatory notes, which is a pity.

H. Thesleff

Philip Vellacott: Ironic Drama: A Study of Euripides' Method and Meaning. Cambridge UP 1975. 266 p. £ 6.—.

The aim of this stimulating book is to present a coherent view of the method of dramatic composition used by Euripides. Irony is found to be most important for the correct interpretation of this poet — mostly in the sense that the dramatic characters themselves when expressing their ideas are sincere enough, but the intention of the poet is not that these ideas should be approved by the spectators or readers as acceptable, but, on the contrary, to show their shallowness and injustice. In V.'s opinion, only a small enlightened minority of the spectators did understand the poet's underlying message, and the majority took these ironic scenes at their face value. The poet's ironic message, however, was there, and in this way Euripides conveyed to the enlightened few his critical opinion especially of the treatment of women and the demoralising effect of war apparent in fifth century Athens.

Such an ironic method of writing cannot, as V. points out, be actually proved. There is no doubt that Euripides used irony in many instances; his general way of presenting the heroic persons of the past as human beings liable to the faults of

his contemporaries is in itself a well-known example of his ironic treatment of myths. It is of course impossible to fathom exactly what fifth century Greek audiences thought of Euripides' scenes, but it would be strange if the ironic sense of some of the lines was not apparent to more than a small minority – I refer for example to Apollo's words in the final tableau of *Orestes* 1653f. and Orestes' ready acceptance of the promised bride 1671f., and Admetus' word in *Alcestis* 357ff. V. shows convincingly that Euripides employs irony on a much larger scale than is generally claimed in the interpretation of his works. I mention especially V.'s treatment of *Orestes* (ch. 3, pp. 53–81) and *Alcestis* (pp. 99–106) and his analysis of the motif of sacrifice of victory (pp. 178–204) and of Euripides' comments on war (pp. 153–177). I am less convinced by his view of the Euripidean Helen, whose "proper person, full of charm, honesty, warmth, and wit" (p. 148) he finds revealed in *Helen* and also in the *Trojan women* (her speech 914ff. being interpreted as an ironic comment of Euripides). I do not see why Euripides should not in *Helen* give a different portrait of Helen from that in e.g. the *Trojan women*, as the portrait of Phaedra is different in *Hippolytus* I and II, and in my opinion, Helen cannot be characterized as "a symbol of that world of experience which ignores the lure of adventure, violence, and power" (p. 148), whatever Euripides thinks of the magnitude of her sin of adultery. V. has gone so far in explaining almost everything in Euripides' words as the working of the poet's ironic method that we get a rather schizophrenic impression of the poet, who has quite exceptional insight into the human heart and human conduct and quite an extraordinary breadth of vision and sense of justice and the equality of men, but who, during his career of more than thirty years, cannot express his thoughts publicly much as he would like to, for fear that the magistrates will not grant him his chorus any more if he openly reveals the social and moral wrongs of his society; thus often "the unacceptable truth is expressed early in the action, so that later events may cover the memory of it" (p. 235). I would ascribe less deliberate cowardice to Euripides, and also allow for some inconsistencies of plot and character occasioned by his wish to produce a dramatically effective series of scenes. However, V.'s book offers a fruitful interpretation of all Euripides' plays, and considerably enriches our concept of Euripides as a writer.

Maarit Kaimio

Kaiser Marc Aurel: Wege zu sich selbst. Hrsg. u. übertr. v. *Willy Theiler*. 2. verb. Aufl. Die Bibliothek der alten Welt. Zürich, Artemis Verlag 1974. 347 p. DM 28.—.

This second edition of a very useful work (1951) includes only few changes in the Greek text (9.41.2 is ingenious as Theiler's conjectures often are); though the reviewers of the first edition were not always convinced by Theiler's solutions they did not produce actual refutations (see e.g. D.A.Rees, *Gnomon* 26, 1954, 8–11). In several cases Theiler has evidently improved upon Farquharson (1944). Since his recension is likely to be accepted as a standard text in many countries, the apparatus criticus is unnecessarily brief. The German translation has undergone a