JYX JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

This is a self-archived version of an original article. This version may differ from the original in pagination and typographic details.

Author(s): Riggs, Timothy

Title: Wisdom, Love, and Friendship in Ancient Greek Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Daniel Devereux. Edited by Georgia Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi – Evan Robert Keeling. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 391. De Gruyter, Berlin 2021

Year: 2022

Version: Published version

Copyright: © 2022 Timothy Riggs

Rights: CC BY-NC 4.0

Rights url: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Please cite the original version:

Riggs, T. (2022). Wisdom, Love, and Friendship in Ancient Greek Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Daniel Devereux. Edited by Georgia Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi – Evan Robert Keeling. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 391. De Gruyter, Berlin 2021. Arctos, 55, 337-341. https://journal.fi/arctos/article/view/121312

DE NOVIS LIBRIS IUDICIA

Wisdom, Love, and Friendship in Ancient Greek Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Daniel Devereux. Edited by Georgia Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi – Evan Robert Keeling. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 391. De Gruyter, Berlin 2021. ISBN 978-3-11-070121-0; ISBN (e-book) 978-3-11-070221-7. X, 351 pp. EUR 119.95.

This volume, edited by Georgia Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi and Evan Robert Keeling, delivers just what its title advertises. It is comprised of fourteen articles on various aspects of the relationships between the rational and non-rational in ancient philosophy. The volume is heavily weighted toward Plato, with nine of the fourteen chapters dealing with problems in Plato's dialogues. Of the remaining five, four are dedicated to Aristotle and one to Epicurus and Epicurean philosophy. The volume is prefaced by a brief introduction, which is largely just a summary of the contents of the book. There is no significant attempt to tie the themes of the essays together, but this is not a defect; rather, the essays' laser focus on the stated subjects speaks for itself. The particular strength of this collection is the willingness of the authors to take on difficult subjects of controversy in ancient philosophy. Whether or not one agrees with their analyses and conclusions, these essays will surely provoke further fruitful thought and discussion. Although it is not possible to discuss each of the essays in detail, I will try, in what follows, to give an idea of the kinds of questions the essays might raise, by focusing only on those essays that seemed to be the most provocative.

In the first essay of the volume, Michael Ferejohn attempts to make sense of a passage in Plato's *Euthydemus* in which Socrates identifies wisdom (*sophia*) with good fortune (*eutychia*). This identification could seem to eliminate the possibility of the occurrence of misfortune. Ferejohn rejects this 'Pollyanna' interpretation as well as a 'Proto-Stoic' one that reads back into Plato the Stoic doctrine that wisdom is the only good, all others being labelled indifferents, a reading which the text of *Euthydemus* does not support. Ferejohn suggests, rather, that the identity claim expresses an identity of practical aim for both wisdom and good fortune. Wisdom is to be pursued since it is within human control and brings good fortune anyway when attained. This is an ingenious resolution of the problem, but one might wonder whether Socrates is just trying to make the point that wisdom allows the wise to make better use of opportunities and goods and that in this lies good fortune.

Andrew Beer examines friendship in Plato's *Gorgias*. He asks why, despite the obvious atmosphere of antagonism permeating the dialogue, Plato makes his characters, particularly Socrates, employ the language of friendship so frequently and deliberately. Beer argues that Plato is aiming at a 'rhetoric of friendship' modelled on Socrates' own approach to conversation, which shows concern for his interlocutor's well-being and the truth. This is in opposition to the agonistic tendencies of the rhetoric taught by Gorgias and employed by Polus and Callicles. Although Socrates' conversations usually focus on a single interlocutor, Beer shows how Plato expands the range of the philosopher's conversational method to take in and improve a whole audience, even a whole city. Beer's essay is an excellent piece and, intended or not, provides evidence for those who see continuity between the accounts of rhetoric in *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*.

Georgia Sermamoglu-Soulmaidi's essay offers a much-needed look at the significance of the often-neglected dialogue *Alcibiades I*. She acknowledges the dialogue's troubled modern history but chooses to side with scholars who regard the dialogue as authentic. She argues that Vlastos was wrong to claim that Plato did not recognize love of the other for the other's sake. Instead, Sermamoglu-Soulmaidi concludes the opposite, that love in *Alcibiades I* is represented as for the beloved's own sake and as leading the lover to improve the beloved's moral character to make him a better politician. I think that this is quite right. However, I think the author has missed an opportunity to consider that Socrates may not be concerned not only with advancing *Alcibiades*' ambitions, but also with *transforming* them, from aiming at personal power to aiming at establishing the good in the city. This is a welcome contribution to the study of Plato's conception of *eros*.

Edith Gwendolyn Nally tackles the question whether or not the Beautiful Itself of *Symposium* and the Good Itself of *Republic* are the same end (*telos*). She asks why the Beautiful Itself should be the *telos* of an epistemic ascent. Nally rejects 'instrumentalist' and 'identity' interpretations of the relationship between these forms, instead proposing a systematic "co-extension" interpretation, which argues the Beautiful and the Good to be independent forms that are present in all of the same particulars. Nally has argued her point cogently, but I do not see that she has refuted the 'instrumentalist' interpretation, which seems the more natural reading and which regards attaining the vision of the Beautiful Itself as for the sake of achieving the Good. It is hard not to read 211e4–212a7 as implying this. Indeed, even the author's description of the attainment of the Vision of the Beautiful as a *shortcut* to knowledge of the Good seems to suggest the same hierarchical relation.

Mary Louise Gill challenges the reader to doubt the seriousness of Socrates' condemnation of writing in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Gill's argument hinges on a sharp distinction between true rhetoric and Platonic philosophy. She argues that Socrates' conversation with Phaedrus (including both speeches and the discussion of rhetoric) is an example of true rhetoric, and may be either truthful or misleading.

Platonic philosophy is represented by the dialogue itself as written by Plato. In opposition to true rhetoric, it is not intended to persuade Plato's readers of his own opinions, but rather to provoke questions and doubts *about* what he has written. In this way, Plato distinguishes his philosophy from that of rhetoricians like Isocrates. Gill's argument is provocative, but raises perhaps more questions than it answers. For instance, rather than compelling us to doubt Socrates' condemnation of writing, might not her argument, in fact, confirm the seriousness of the condemnation, insofar as Plato refuses to put his own views in writing?

Doug Reed counters the arguments of scholars who paint the Socrates in *Phaedo* as a bad friend. He argues that Socrates does, in fact, give his friends the reassurances they seek (63a6) in face of their impending loss (i.e. Socrates' imminent death), albeit indirectly through the ensuing philosophical discussion. The problem seems to arise from reading a single passage in isolation from the context of the whole dialogue. Fortunately, Reed gathers together enough evidence of that context to show that Socrates shows sensitivity to his friends' concerns. He also shows that the order, structure and character of the arguments for the soul's immortality are Socrates' attempt to guide his friends in the philosophical method and, thus, to prepare them to continue in their orientation to the philosophical life after he is gone.

Gail Fine argues against scholars who believe that Plato posits the possession by soul of an 'innate knowledge' in Socrates' argument from recollection in *Phaedo*. Fine's analysis is compelling if one accepts her interpretation of Socrates' use of *episteme* and its verbal cognates. At the least, it does seem to show that Socrates does not need innate knowledge to make his argument for pre-natal *episteme* work. On the other hand, this interpretation requires Fine to dismiss too easily, I think, Cebes' account of recollection at 73a7–b2, in which recollection depends on *episteme* being *in* souls. Contrary to Fine, I do not see anything in 73b3–10 that suggests Socrates is rejecting this account. These and other details could suggest that there is a sense in which *episteme* of the Forms is still with souls after birth – after all, the pre-natally acquired *episteme* has to go somewhere (even if in memory). I think there is still a mystery here to unravel, though Fine's analysis has certainly contributed to a clarification of where that mystery lies.

Robert Bolton explores *phronesis* in Aristotle as the special knowledge pertaining to moral matters. Bolton argues, on the one hand, that Aristotle does not think *phronesis* can be taught, as some have supposed he did, and, on the other hand, that its operation involves a 'discursive rational process', contrary to those who think it operates by "direct rational intuition or the drive of dominant non-rational desire". Bolton substantiates these claims through a dense analysis of *phronesis*, its experiential foundation and its relationship to desire, marshalling a wide range of evidence as support. Fascinatingly, the author claims that Aristotle employs an analogy of the assent of non-rational desire to reason to the assent to father or friends to argue that virtue "involves coming to

trust reason […] like a true benevolent parent or friend." Bolton's position is well-argued and those who delve deeper into his position will surely be rewarded.

Pierre Pellegrin argues against the view that Aristotle considered political *philia* to be "la forme suprême" of friendship and that, by means of it, Aristotle envisages the city as ideally a society of altruists. Pellegrin shows that, in his ethical works, Aristotle distinguishes between political friendship and perfect friendship. The latter is characterized by altruism and lifelong duration, whereas the former is on the level of contractual relationships, of often fixed duration although not legally formalized. Finally, Pellegrin argues that political friendship promotes a feeling of egalitarianism that, outside its function in a power-sharing society, can be used as an ideological tool by the governed to secure their power, by deceiving the governed into believing that there is friendship and equality between them and their governors. This conclusion will undoubtedly ruffle some feathers, particularly his reading of *Politics* 3.5 and 4.13. Nevertheless, his argument is novel, clever, and certainly due further consideration.

T.H. Irwin compares the treatments of friendship in *Magna Moralia*, whose authorship by Aristotle is sometimes doubted, with those in Aristotle's *Nichomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*. He uses the comparison to make a speculative contribution to the position that the *Magna Moralia* is likely an authentic work of Aristotle. In the course of his analysis, Irwin does an admirable job of outlining the differences in treatments of a number of subjects, in each of the three texts: 1) expressed method (missing in *Magna Moralia*; 2) potential vs. prescriptive objects (and the different terminology for them that is used in *Magna Moralia*); 3) intrinsic concern; and 4) self-love, in particular whether the virtuous person is a self-lover. It is the last subject that, for Irwin, shows that *Magna Moralia* is earlier than *Nichomachean Ethics*. Nevertheless, and as he points out, his comparison only focuses on a few passages of the *Magna Moralia*, so that further analysis would be necessary to substantiate his claims about dating and authorship.

Finally, Michael Papazian offers a spirited defence of Epicurus' high estimation of friendship, on a par with Aristotle's, which is contrary, as he points out, to what one would expect from a philosopher who promoted *ataraxia*. After all, there are hardly greater disturbances than the griefs occasioned by the death of dear friends, and this seems to be inconsistent with the pursuit of *ataraxia*. Contrary to earlier attempts to defends Epicurus' self-consistency, Papazian contends that Epicurus accepted that friendship is an external good. He argues that Epicurus countered the grief occasioned by loss of a friend through therapy provided by the support of a network of close, through the reassurance that the deceased no longer suffers, and through the celebration of good memories of the deceased. This is an interesting interpretation, seems to demand an explanation for why friendship is placed on a par (or at least nearly so) with pleasure as a good. Hopefully, Papazian will pursue this position further.

All in all, each of the essays in this collection makes a valuable contribution to the problem(s) it addresses and will, if paid the attention it deserves, provoke further discussion that can only deepen our understanding of ancient philosophy.

Timothy Riggs
University of Jyväskylä

Instrumenta inscripta VIII: Plumbum litteratum. Studia epigraphica Giovanni Mennella *oblata*. A cura di Giulia Baratta. Armariolum – Studi dedicati alla vita quotidiana nel mondo classico 3. Scienze e Lettere, Roma 2021. ISBN 978-88-6687-191-0. X, 519 pp. EUR 75.

Diversamente da tante *Festschriften* nel campo classico, che troppo spesso sono di contenuto molto variegato e sparso, questo volume in onore dell'amico e collega genovese Giovanni Mennella offre una nutrita raccolta di studi su un tema ben circoscritto, vale a dire studi sulla documentazione epigrafica scritta su piombo. Il risultato è un'opera riuscita, in cui si trovano contributi interessanti e con nuovi orizzonti, ma com'è inevitabile, anche articoli meno bene concepiti. Di seguito ne tratteremo alcuni che mi sembrano importanti e che apportano nuove conoscenze o che, al contrario, meritano qualche osservazione critica. In genere la ricerca storia, archeologica e filologica, oltre quella prettamente epigrafica può trarre vantaggio dei vari contributi del volume.

Apre Claude Domergue offrendo una buona analisi della parola massa in autori greci e latini. Seguono le edizioni di lingotti iscritti in due articoli di un gruppo spagnolo-francese (Rico, de Juan, Cibecchini), provenienti da un naufragio di Bou Ferrer (Alicante) e di M. Stefanile su masse da Carthago Nova.

Seguono contributi dedicati alle lamelle e alle etichette plumbee dell'Italia settentrionale (a p. 79 l'a vuole sciogliere ALIIXA in *Alexa(nder)*, perché no? D'altra parte *Alexa* è buon nome maschile greco). Notevoli le testimonianze sulla presenza ebraica nelle Isole Baleari, analizzate da M. Piras. Il risultato più sorprendente: le lamine in piombo ritrovate a Ses Fontanelles (Maiorca), si sono rivelate, grazie alla nuova analisi, essere scritte in lingua ebraica nel IV–V secolo; molto notevole l'uso dell'ebraico. Secondo l'a., i Giudei a Maiorca potevano essere anche proprietari terrieri.

Seguono altri contributi ben documentati con materiale interessante sulle iscrizioni su piombo in Italia: lamelle perforate, fistule acquarie, glandes missiles dal Piceno (G. Paci, S. Marengo, S. Antolini; a p. 113 la lettura della parola CIITINA resta incerta, come pure il suo rapporto con il tonno), una rassegna d'insieme della documentazione epigrafica su piombo nella parte orientale