

Book Reviews



Vladislav Suvák (ed.)

Antisthenica Cynica Socratica Mathésis, 9. Praha: OIKOYMENH. 2014. Pp. 437,
2014. €17.21 Kč ISBN: 978-80-7298-194-6.

This interesting collection of papers is one of the latest in a long series of studies on ancient philosophy published by the prolific Czech publishing house OIKOYMENH, a non-profit organization aiming at the diffusion of philosophical and theological literature. The latter was founded and edited for many years by the eminent dissident philosopher, the late Aleš Havlíček, who also initiated the Czech Plato Society, overseeing the publication of its *Symposium Pragense*. Expanding on the Platonic interest of the series, the present volume now examines the thought of another Socratic writer: Antisthenes of Athens (henceforth: A.). However, as the editor (Vladislav Suvák) states in its Forward, A.'s thought is often compared not only to that of Plato, but also to that of the Cynics. Hence sections of this volume are also devoted to thinkers of the early Hellenistic period as well as the Classical. With these themes in mind, he here assembles—and contributes to—a collection of papers, written by scholars noted for previous their work on A., the Cynics and the Socratic writers. While the main focus throughout the volume is on various aspects of Antisthenean studies, it also concludes with a section on the Cynics' *rezeption*. Although the volume's appearance shortly preceded Susan Prince's definitive work, *Antisthenes of Athens* (2015), she herself contributes to its section on A.'s rhetoric and logic. Each paper has been generously allotted space for detailed discussion not only for its opening theme—A.'s anecdotal relationship with Diogenes of Sinope—but also for its second theme—A.'s role as an independent thinker. While there are appended a full bibliography and an excellent *index locorum*, the volume unfortunately lacks an index of subject matter.

For its opening theme, it raises the question of whether A. should be primarily characterized as a Socratic thinker—or as a precursor of Cynic thought. Although an old problem, it is here examined afresh focusing on the doxographic, anecdotal and biographical evidence:

1. Pedro Pablo Fuentes Gonzáles, who has written widely on Teles and his sources, here reassesses A.'s philosophical and anecdotal relationship with the Cynic movement ('En defensa del encuentro entre dos perros, Antístenes y Diógenes'), where he argues for a distinction to be drawn between the historiographic component of the traditional biographies that is often intertwined with the fiction of the anecdotes. The author concludes with a denial that A. should be ascribed any place as a proto-Cynic at all (pp. 70-71).
2. The editor, Vladislav Suvák, has written extensively on both Plato and the Cynics, and, in this contribution ('Antisthenes between Diogenes and Socrates'), places A. squarely in the Socratic camp. He finally argues that A.'s philosophy was nonetheless not truly 'commensurate' with the speculative approach to philosophy emphasized by Plato and Aristotle. He concludes that A. understood philosophy as practice (pp. 119-120) and, in this sense, Diogenes was, in retrospect, closer in spirit to A.'s way of life.

The second theme of this collection underlines the extent to which A.'s rhetorical fragments and *exegetis* of poetry mark him out as an independent thinker:

1. Giuseppe Mazzara, known for his research into Plato and rhetoric, examines the logical method of A.'s surviving speeches ('La logica di Antistene nell '*Aiace* e nell '*Odisseo*'), here appended in a fresh translation into Italian (pp. 158-163). Taking into account Aristotle's assessment of A. in order to understand the latter's ontology, the author draws a distinction between the One and Being in A.'s ontology, but here examined from the perspective of the rhetorical language of his surviving speeches—and only indirectly from Plato *Theatet.* (pp. 156-157).
2. Susan Prince ('Words of Presentation and Words of Action in the Speech of Antisthenes' Ajax') examines A.'s understanding of *logos* in his *Ajax* speech, whereby a distinction is to be drawn between representative *logos*, standing in contrast to *pragma*, and the rhetorical delivery of *logos*, standing in contrast to *ergon* (168-199). This two-tiered distinction of *logos* reflects the logical meaning of things in contrast to their conventional description.
4. Aldo Brancacci, who has written extensively on A. and the anecdotal tradition, here examines: 'Filosofia e retorica in Antistene'. The author distinguishes between A.'s understanding of rhetoric as the art of human *polytropa* and the theory of *logos*. While both forms of wisdom are comparable to the description of the Homeric Odysseus, only