we read (p. 266): “It is exciting therefore to realize that the very idea that Aristotle changed his mind is extremely recent.” Does “extremely recent” refer to the period since 1923 (Jaeger) in the perspective of 2000 years of interpretation, or are we to think of more “recent” studies? The select bibliography at the end of the work is also defective in the presentation of essential information (no journal numbers or page numbers for articles, no place names for the publication of books). There are also some puzzles in the area of key terminology. Both in his translations and in the text Lear is sometimes conservative, using terms as ‘substance’, ‘happiness’, ‘virtue’ when better equivalents such as ‘entity’, ‘flourishing’, ‘excellence’ have been widely favoured. But the refusal to translate logos as definition at Phys. 2.7 194b27 is persuasive. Finally we should note that Lear warns us that in an introduction of this kind we cannot expect him to set out and argue against interpretations differing from his own. This is fair but sometimes we do feel cheated. I for one would like to know, in the light of his (rightly) theocentric reading of the Metaphysics, why for the interpretation of ‘the study of being as being’ he chooses for an interpretation in terms of ‘being in general’ (ontology) and not ‘being as highest being’ (theology).

It would be delightful to use this book as a companion to a course on Aristotelian philosophy at the post-graduate or advanced undergraduate level (fortunately it has immediately been made available in paperback). Admittedly students would need more than just this book. On the concrete details of Aristotle’s life and intellectual context it simply assumes too much. But for the task of introducing what Aristotle wanted to say as a philosopher it is excellent. It will give not only the students, but also the person giving the course, plenty to think about.

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According to the preface this edition is meant for English-speaking students who want to be introduced to Hellenistic poetry, but are faced with the fact that many scholarly commentaries on the
subject are written in Latin (sic), French, German or Italian, of which they have no thorough command. Indeed, unless the pressure for students to master foreign languages increases, which with a view to the growing unification of Europe is only to be hoped for, editions such as this one seem to be the best solution to keep classical scholarship as universally accessible as possible. If they are all of the same quality as the one at hand, there certainly will not be much to complain of.

The book starts with a concise introduction, sketching first the historical background of the Greek world from the death of Alexander onward and the role of Alexandria as a cultural centre. Appetizers like Timon’s famous lines on ‘the pedantic cloisterings in the Muses’ birdcage’ (the traditional interpretation of SH 786) as well as classic anecdotes on the way the Ptolemies enlarged the Library’s stock of papyrus rolls are not lacking. Next H. deals with the problems, mainly of a chronological character, which make the composition of a literary history of Hellenistic poetry almost impossible. (For a more extensive discussion see G. O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford 1988), 1 ff.) In trying to characterize Hellenistic poetry, H. argues that earlier Greek poets indulged in playing with words and traditions, too, but that their Hellenistic colleagues did so to a far higher degree, and with greater self-consciousness, seeking to focus the reader’s attention on their own particular place in the age-long literary tradition. On the last point, in which H. is apt to see a prime characteristic of many Hellenistic poems, some elucidation would have been welcome. A few well-chosen examples illustrate the importance of allusion in this kind of poetry and the necessity for the reader to know his ‘classics’. The chapter is concluded with a survey of further characteristics of Hellenistic poetry, especially the love of variation in subject-matter, linguistic and metric form, etc., and a short discussion on the possible reasons for this development in the Hellenistic period, a discussion which in the light of the above-cited problems is considered to be unprofitable. (Less negative here is C. M. J. Sicking, *Hellenistische poëzie*, Lampas 21 (1988), 81 ff.).

The selection of texts offers a wide choice of authors and genres, varying from highlights to the rather obscure. Of Callimachus, there is the *Aetia*-prologue, of course, the story of Acontius and Cydippe, and Hymns 1 and 5 (though H. himself recently published an excellent commentary on Hymn 6); of Theocritus, *Idylls* 2, 10, 11 and 28; some 180 lines chosen from different books of