At long last, another "Green and Yellow" Plato commentary, after Dover's *Symposium* from 1980, which I reviewed Mnem. 36 (1983), 414-418. R.'s *Phaedo* is certainly not inferior: grammatical explanation is more detailed, although I find myself relatively often in disagreement on this score, and the analyses of arguments are decidedly better. There is a good introduction with sections on "Literature and philosophy" and "The aims of Plato's philosophical writing", which show that R. takes the literary aspect of the text seriously. It's a pity that unsuspecting readers are once again told, quite falsely, that the existence of a "middle period" is "based partly on stylistic arguments" (11): this is not true, as I have shown Mnem. 47 (1994), 540-541.

All in all, this would have been an excellent commentary, had it not been rather weak on the linguistic side. R. pays no attention to recent developments in the study of the Greek language, but even for a traditional grammarian he makes too many statements that are imprecise, irrelevant and in one or two cases entirely wrong. The following notes on the first five pages may serve as justification of this verdict, but the most serious error is made just outside that part of the dialogue, in the note on 62a5, where τεθνάναι is said to be either 'to be dead' or 'to die', and the question is asked what 'sense' is more appropriate here and at c3 below. To illustrate the second 'sense', R. adduces the English sentence "Fred has died", apparently without realising that 'has died' is a perfect: he could have made his case only if he had adduced an instance of ὅ δεῖνα τεθνηκεν equivalent to "Fred dies", and of course there are none. R. has been misled by the fact that English prefers the present tense for the translation of τεθνάναι in some of its uses, especially in the optative, imperative and complementary infinitive. The sentences "May I be dead" and "It is better for me to be dead" are cognitively, if in English perhaps not stylistically, synonymous to "May I die" and "It is better for me to die". If Greek prefers the former set of expressions to the latter ones, that is simply a matter of idiom: to ask whether a given instance of τεθνάναι is equivalent to 'to die' or to 'to be dead' is to confuse Greek and English semantics, and in the last resort to distort Greek semantics.

57a6 πῶς ἐτελεύτα: "The imperfect suggests the series of events
leading up to and including his ‘end’. No. If the focus is on the manner, a (punctual) event is regularly put in the imperfect (so too 58c4 ὡς ἄδειως καὶ γενναίως ἔτελεύτα; 58c4). Cf. Ap. 41d7-8 καὶ τοιοῦτα ὑπάρχοντα μου καὶ κατηγόρουν (contrast δὲ καταψηφισμένοις) and my note ad loc. (E. de Strycker—S.R. Slings, Plato’s Apology of Socrates (Leiden 1994)).

a7 R. defends von Bamberg’s deletion of τῶν πολιτῶν. But if indeed someone felt the need to explain Φλειασίων (assuming that this gloss was later inserted into the text), τῶν πολιτῶν was not a happy choice because it doesn’t explain much: the most logical gloss would have been τῶν συμπολιτῶν τοῦ Ἐχεκράτους. R.’s remark “the reference to Phlius seems to be the important one” is perfectly valid, but is no argument either way.

b1 ὅστε ἢ· ἢν ἡμῖν σαφές τι ἀγελάδιοι οίός τ’ ἢ: The dilemma ‘clear’ or ‘certain, trustworthy’ is again largely dictated by English, not Greek semantics. R.’s argument “someone who obviously doesn’t know about a thing…is more likely to be described as unclear than as untrustworthy” confuses the person reporting and the report.

58d1 οὐδαμῶς, ἄλλα παρήσαν τινες, καὶ πολλοὶ γε: R. rightly rejects the division of this line between two speakers (ΦΑ. οὐδαμῶς. ἘΧ. ἄλλα παρήσαν τινες; ΦΑ. καὶ πολλοὶ γε.), but his argument “τινες καὶ πολλοὶ is idiomatic: so at Gorg. 455c τινες καὶ συγγονί” cuts no ice, because the presence of γε here makes all the difference. Had R. been consistent, he would have omitted the comma which he prints after τινες. γε marks an addition to an already complete statement, hence the comma is necessary and the Gorg. passus not parallel. A better argument is that ἄλλα παρήσαν τινες: is an inane question, asking for information that has already been given by οὐδαμῶς.

d2 προθυμήθητι: R. speaks of the “sharpness of the plain (aorist imperative)”. The imperative is certainly ‘sharp’, but the suggestion that the choice of the aorist stem adds to the sharpness is wrong. In general, the present imperative is more urgent than the aorist. Cf. C.J. Ruijgh, L’emploi ‘inceptif’ du thème du présent du verbe grec, Mnem. 38 (1985), 1-61.

e5 “Where a consequence is reported as a fact, we should normally expect to find ὡστε followed by the indicative; this seems to be an exception to the rule”. The rule as cited here and often elsewhere is patently wrong. When a speaker/writer wants to commit himself to the reality of the consequence he uses the indicative; when he does not want thus to commit himself he uses the