summarised Hippias’ position in the previous sentence, and he now asks for a confirmation. “Do you not call such a man able?” is, to my mind, slightly better than “Or don’t you call such a man able?” Περὶ λογισμὸν τε καὶ ἀριθμὸν τε is reported for S² and VAT.gr. 228 (an indirect copy of W for HPE.MI., not related to S, although we know—cf. above—that S and VAT.gr. 228 once were in the same scriptorium); it is absent from TWF, and I don’t see why it is necessary. Even if S is an independent witness, which I have argued it isn’t, S² is just another Byzantine scribe. Β2 Ὄς σὺ ἀρτὶ ὁμολογεῖς ὡς TW: Ὅς F, which is clearly lectio difficilior. 374d9 τὰς μὲν ἀκόντως κακὰ ἐργαζομένας ἄκουσίως Cobet. Throughout the discussion, the opposites ἐκουσίως: ἄκουσίως are used, and ἀκόντως, which seems to mean more ‘reluctantly’ than ‘involuntarily’, looks out of place here.

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In recent years the trend of opinion on Plato’s Politicus or Statesman (Plt.) has shifted from ‘strange and boring’ to ‘strange and fascinating’. An increasing number of scholars are taking up the challenge of achieving an integrated view of this elusive dialogue. The prime mover behind this reappraisal is no doubt C.J. Rowe, who has established himself as one of the foremost Platonic scholars of his generation. Having organized the Third Symposium Platonicum devoted to the Plt. (Bristol 1992) and edited its proceedings (see note 1), he now presents the text together with a translation, introduction and continuous notes. The text printed is essentially that of Burnet’s OCT (1900/1905) but Rowe has introduced some changes, most of them supported or suggested by D.B. Robinson, The new Oxford Text of Plato’s Statesman: editor’s comments (published in the Proceedings of the Symposium Platonicum [note 1], 37–46). The translation is

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Mnemosyne, Vol. LI, Fasc. 5
meant to replace that of J.B. Skemp, which in different versions has been the most widely used in the Anglophone world for the last forty years but which, being somewhat indirect, has become increasingly unsuited to the needs of students of ancient political theory. In addition, Rowe differs from Skemp in the handling over of some key passages and terms. The notes in the commentary are almost always keyed to the translation, although some help is given with difficult aspects of the Greek as well. In sum, this volume is most welcome and timely. Although originally motivated by an urge to respond to the needs of the classroom, this book is in many ways a spin-off of the recent Bristol festival (see above), engaging as it does with many recent attempts to come to grips with the varied and unresolved puzzles presented by Plt. Here the main challenge is to make sense of the painstaking applications of the procedure of division in search of a definition of the statesman—applications which take up the largest part of the dialogue. It is easy to find this large section jejune or even pointless. Modern readers have often been led to concentrate on more appetizing—though in fact no less puzzling—sections such as the great myth of the reversal of the universe. Rowe is fervently opposed to this kind of selectivity, holding that those wretched other passages become truly intelligible in the context of the whole. Indeed, he claims that ‘some of those passages have been radically misunderstood, in a way that has seriously distorted our view of Plato’s later thinking’ (p. v). Even more badly, he calls the laborious search for a definition of the politikos “essential reading for anyone interested in his metaphysics, his ontology or his conception of philosophy in general” (p. v). His methodology seems sound enough: Rowe applies as his working rule that a failure to see how a sentence or passage might fit into the whole will be the fault of the readers. Other Platonic dialogues, too, though complex, have proved a good deal more ordered and organized than they were often taken to be. The extended series of etymological derivations forming the centrepiece of the Cratylus comes to mind as a parallel case: this section too has long been neglected because of a failure to see its real point and purpose within the context of the dialogue as a whole. But Plato is simply too sophisticated an author to deploy so many words to little effect. Rowe argues that the Plt. despite its title is not an exclusively political dialogue but simultaneously a demonstration lesson in philosophical method, and in precision. If we fail to appreciate this purpose—tanti pis pour nous: ‘the degree of tedium which we feel at