

Book Notes

Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy

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The number and variety of books received since Keimpe Algra's last set of booknotes (vol. XLIX.2, 2004) indicate the current high level of scholarly interest in this area (which I am taking as being Greek and Roman thought from the third century BC to about 200 AD). There are important new contributions on all three main Hellenistic philosophical theories, Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism, as well as some studies on broader or related topics.

The first book discussed here is on Hellenistic-Roman medicine, a volume by Manuela Tecusan on the Methodists.¹ Despite its massive scale (over 800 pages), this is envisaged only as the first of three volumes; the second volume is to provide commentary, and a third volume, a companion to vol. 1, will cover the most important Methodist, Soranus. The present book includes about 100 pages of introduction and supporting material, consisting in part of a list of fragments and their sources and a thematic synopsis of the contents of the material included. The introduction offers a lucid and informative overview of the main features and figures of the Methodist school, and outlines the methodological principles and issues involved in making this collection. As with Stoicism (illustrated shortly), several of the most problematic interpretative questions arise in connection with Galen, who is the most important single source for this volume, though he is often highly critical of Methodism. Tecusan explains (pp. 41-2) that her original plan was to base the collection on an independent study of the manuscript tradition. In the event, she has adopted the policy of using the best or most recent available edition, but with her own textual revisions, highlighted in a selective apparatus. The translations are all her own, aiming where possible at consistency of terminology. The evidence assembled, as indicated in the synopsis of themes, covers the history and approach of the Methodist school, their relations with other schools, the main practitioners, key philosophical concepts, the medical theory and pathology of the school and individual Methodists. Detailed appraisal

¹ M. Tecusan. *The Fragments of the Methodists. Methodism outside Soranus*. Vol. 1: Text and Translation. *Studies in Ancient Medicine* 24/1. x + 816 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2004. ISBN 90-04-12451-9. €138.

of her principles of selection and translation will be a matter for specialists on ancient medicine (she seems to have had the benefit of some expert advice). In broad terms, the publication of this volume – and, one hopes, its sequels – is to be warmly welcomed as part of the larger project of opening up the resources of Hellenistic-Roman medicine to interested readers of all kinds. In particular, this volume contributes by helping to locate Galen's methods and ideas, which, inevitably, tend to dominate our view of medicine in this period, in a larger and more historically grounded context.

Another important study, on Stoicism, is Teun Tieleman's book on Chrysippus' theory of the affections or passions.² This is the first systematic attempt to reconstruct the Stoic theory, and, specifically, Chrysippus' treatise *peri pathôn*. On the basis, especially, of Galen's evidence in *de Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 4-5, supplemented by other sources including Cicero's *Tusculans* 3-4, Tieleman aims to establish the main contents and arguments of Books 1 and 2 and also 4, the 'therapeutic' book (evidence is lacking for Book 3). But Tieleman also has new and radical claims to make about the interpretation of the theory, centring on a critique of Galen's crucial evidence. His approach is based in part on his earlier study of Galen's aims and methods in *PHP* Books 2-3 (*Galen and Chrysippus On the Soul*, 1996), and also on recent work by J. Mansfeld and others in charting the role of doxography in shaping the categories of (especially) later ancient philosophy. He stresses that Galen is far from being a neutral reporter of the Stoic theory. On the contrary, he is a deeply antagonistic, and often tendentious, participant in debate about human psychology. Hence, using Galen's evidence is a matter of critical engagement with his material, testing Galen's claims against (among other things) his own verbatim quotations of Stoic thinkers, taken in the light of Galen's own intellectual objectives and methodology. As well as using this approach to offer a new analysis of Chrysippus' theory, Tieleman offers an even more radical reappraisal of Posidonius' response to Chrysippus' psychology, which goes further than earlier revisionary treatments (notably by Janine Fillion-Lahille and John Cooper). Tieleman's view is in sharp contrast with, for instance, Richard Sorabji's recent book on Stoic (and Christian) thinking on the passions (*Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 2000), which stays much closer to Galen's account.

What picture of the Stoic theory emerges from Tieleman's researches? In his view, there is much more consistency within the approaches of different Stoic thinkers than Galen claims. According to Galen, Chrysippus' theory represents an extreme version of a cognitivist or intellectual account of emotions. It went beyond Zeno in this respect and was criticised strongly by Posidonius,

² T. Tieleman, *Chrysippus' On Affections: Reconstruction and Interpretation*. *Philosophia Antiqua* 94. xii + 346 pp. Leiden: Brill: 2003. ISBN: 90-04-12998-7. €102.

who re-adopted a version of Plato's tripartite psychology. Tieleman provides reasons for doubting that there is any substantive difference in theory between Zeno and Chrysippus. As regards Posidonius' approach, he argues that Galen has fundamentally misrepresented his views. What Galen presents as the root-and-branch critique and rejection of Chrysippus' theory is better understood as a continuation of Chrysippus' own work (in Book 2 of *peri pathôn*) in identifying and resolving problems raised by his theory. Even Posidonius' (apparently) innovative idea of 'affective movements' can be seen as merely supplementing Chrysippus' own ideas about the psychological inertia involved in affections. What Galen presents as the re-adoption of Platonic psychology is better understood as Platonic *commentary*, of a type that seems to emerge in the later Hellenistic period, explicitly exploring the relationship between Platonic and (orthodox) Stoic psychology.

At the same time, Tieleman offers a new, non-Galenic analysis of Chrysippus' – and more broadly the Stoic – theory of the affections. The picture of human psychology offered is not narrowly intellectualist; rather it is unified or holistic, allowing scope both for judgements and for psychophysical responses. Also, the Stoic theory of affections, like that of determinism, gives a role both for occurrent impressions and for long-term psychophysical dispositions. In its psychophysical (quasi-medical) emphasis, the Stoic approach anticipates Galen's own, as he himself acknowledges in *Quod Animi Mores*, ch. 4, an acknowledgment which is in sharp contrast to Galen's negative and contentious treatment in *PHP*. As I have tried to bring out, this is a highly innovative study, whose conclusions run counter to much previous scholarship, especially on Posidonius. Personally, I find Tieleman's treatment of source-criticism and his interpretation of the Stoic theory highly convincing, though of course there is scope for argument about detailed points. Other scholars may find more to disagree with. But, by any criteria, this seems to me a very important study, with far-reaching implications for our understanding of the nature and history of Stoic psychology.

Two other recent books on Stoicism, while less ambitious in their objectives, are also worth noting. John Sellars, in a book based on his 2001 Warwick PhD thesis, examines Stoic thinking on the idea of 'the art of living'.³ Sellars traces the Socratic origins of this idea, especially in Plato's *Gorgias*, before offering a general account of Stoic thinking on the subject, taken alongside a Sceptical critique by Sextus Empiricus. Sellars analyses the Stoic conception by reference to the interrelated concepts of *technê*, *askêsis* and *logos*. He takes the methods of practical ethics developed by Epictetus and Marcus

³ J. Sellars, *The Art of Living: The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Philosophy. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003. x + 228 pp. ISBN 0-7546-3667-4. £45.

Aurelius as exemplifications of Stoic thinking on the art of living. His introduction and conclusion stress the Stoic, and more generally ancient, conception of philosophy as combining theory and mode of life, by contrast with at least some modern conceptions of philosophy. In approach, Sellars draws explicitly on recent scholarship, especially Pierre Hadot's analysis of Epictetus and Marcus in terms of 'spiritual exercises'. His book is lucid and well-documented with primary and secondary references and is a useful contribution to the expanding body of new work on Hellenistic-Roman – especially Stoic – practical ethics.

A collection of essays on Stoic ethics is an indicator of (welcome) increasingly close engagement between English-language and German scholarship on ancient philosophy (another example is noted later).⁴ The overall aim of this collection is presented on the back cover as being to convey the significance of Stoic ethics to a modern (German) philosophical readership, and especially – again – to bring out the linkage between theory and practice, seen here as chiming in with some modern interests. The volume presents German translations of two discussions previously published in English by Geneviève Lloyd and Amélie Rorty. The remaining chapters seem to have been written specifically for the collection. The focus is on the Stoic theory of emotions (four chapters, one focused on *akrasia*), the ethical implications of determinism, and Stoic categories of value. The chapter by Barbara Guckes, the editor, on 'Akrasia in der älteren Stoa' represents a good example of the style aimed at. She offers a philosophically informed treatment of the sense in which the Stoic (unified) psychological theory can be said to accommodate internal division, referring especially to the idea of 'oscillation' between alternating states of belief-emotion and to Chrysippus' use of the Medea-example.⁵ The analysis is thoughtful and conceptually clear; but there is limited engagement with previous scholarship and little to indicate significantly new claims or standpoint. The volume is rather under-edited: for instance, the introduction, while offering a useful outline of Stoic ethics, does not discuss the contents of the book-chapters nor does it define the aims or scholarly contribution of the collection.

⁴ B. Guckes (ed.), *Zur Ethik der älteren Stoa*. 207 pp. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2004. ISBN: 3-525-30143-X. Paperback: €19.90.

⁵ Other contributions: Ch. Halbig, 'Die stoische Affektlenlehre'; K. M. Vogt, 'Die stoische Theorie der Emotionen'; G. Lloyd, 'Leben mit Notwendigkeit'; Ch. Jedan, 'Chrysipp über Determinismus und moralisches Verantwortlichkeit'; A. O. Rorty, 'Besänftigung der stoischen Leidenschaften: Die zwei Gesichter der Individualität'; N. White, 'Indifferenz und der nicht ripatetische stoische Begriff des Guten'.

Four new books bear on Epicureanism, in quite different ways. One is a new edition of Book 1 of Cicero's *de Natura Deorum* by Andrew Dyke.⁶ This is written for a series (the Cambridge University Press 'Green and Yellow' editions), the aim of which is to provide expert and generally helpful commentary in a concise format, an aim which is well realised here. The introduction and, more especially, the commentary provide economical guidance, analysis, and information about the philosophical content and the form or language of Cicero's presentation and critique of Epicurean theology. Dyke is the author of a substantial commentary on Cicero's *de Officiis* (1996); he also acknowledges the help of specialist Epicurean scholars including Dirk Obbink, whose edition of Philodemus *de Pietate* 2 was made available to Dyke before publication. So he is well-placed to guide readers, intended to include undergraduate Classics students, in interpreting an important but (as often in Cicero) rather elusive and problematic philosophical discussion. On major issues, as one would expect, he outlines positions and indicates a preference, rather than offering a full-scale independent argument. For instance, he summarises the recent scholarly debate on whether or not Epicurean gods should be seen as thought-constructs. In ch. 49, he adopts the emendation *a deis*, rather than the *ad deos* of the manuscripts adopted by Long and Sedley (taken by them to support the view of gods as thought-constructs), and defends this reading on textual and philosophical grounds (pp. 124, 128). The introduction discusses the organisation and sources of the work without explicitly addressing the question of Cicero's own philosophical standpoint and emphases; some indications on the latter topic are given in Dyke's commentary, as he introduces each section of the book. This edition looks very useful, particularly for instructors wanting a philosophical prose text for advanced students in Latin.

James Warren's *Facing Death*⁷ offers a systematic analysis of Epicurean reasons for not fearing death. What is sometimes seen as a weak point in Epicurean theory is presented as supported by a cogent nexus of arguments. Warren's aim is to make a strong philosophical case for the Epicurean position, especially in the face of some sophisticated modern objections. The case is supported by specific reference to the full range of relevant Epicurean sources, including Philodemus' *de Morte* (Warren acknowledges use of a draft of David Armstrong's forthcoming work on Book 4). The book opens with two chapters which define different possible types of fear of death and ideas about the kind of 'deprivation' brought about by death. Chapter 3 (partly

⁶ Cicero, *De Natura Deorum 1*, ed. A. R. Dyck. Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. x + 236 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 0-521-00630-9. Paperback: £17.

⁷ J. Warren, *Facing Death: Epicurus and his Critics*. viii + 240 pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. ISBN: 0-19-925289-0. £30.00.

based on his 2003 *Phronesis* article) tackles Lucretius' famous 'symmetry' arguments. This chapter includes convincing discussion of modern work on personal identity, especially by Parfit and Raz, without overstating the sense in which Lucretius is dealing with – what moderns mean by – 'personal identity'. Chapter 4, to my mind the strongest discussion in the book, effectively links Epicurean thinking on death with their distinctive conception of happiness and the ideal of the 'complete life' (that is, a life *completely* characterised by pleasure, regardless of external length). Chapter 5, again partly based on recent articles by Warren, argues persuasively that Epicurus' position on death is compatible with other-benefiting motivation, as indicated in the evidence for Epicurus' own will. Overall, this is a well-grounded and strongly argued book that is likely to have broad appeal to philosophically minded scholars and students as well as to specialists in Epicureanism.

Jacques Boulogne provides a useful and relatively compact treatment of another important topic, Plutarch's response to Epicureanism.⁸ His study is organised around themes rather than offering a reading of the main relevant essays. The book is divided into discussion of 'la nature' and 'le bonheur'. These topics are subdivided into canonique, cosmologie, théologie, and anthropologie, on the one hand, and le souverain bien, le droit, and l'amitié, on the other. The discussion draws widely on Plutarch's large corpus; on ethics, as one would expect, most use is made of Plutarch's polemical treatises, *Against Colotes, That Epicurus makes a Pleasant Life Impossible*, and *Is 'Live Unknown' Good Advice?* Boulogne's main point is that, although Plutarch's anti-Epicurean stance is explicit (particularly in the Academic-style works just noted), this co-exists with a genuine and informed understanding of Epicurean theory. Hence, Plutarch is valuable not just as a source of evidence for Epicurean theory but also as a knowledgeable and sometimes acute critic. This claim is not in itself innovative, and this study cannot be compared with Babut's more ambitious (and still useful) 1969 book, *Plutarque et le Stoïcisme*. But it offers, none the less, intelligent and well-documented guidance on a very important ancient writer on Epicureanism.

One further book on Epicureanism is Martin Ferguson Smith's supplement to his important and substantial 1993 edition of 124 fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda, which was based in part on Smith's own field-work.⁹ The intention of this new book is to bring Smith's *magnum opus* up to date by reference to subsequent research, including a renewal of field-work by Smith and

⁸ J. Boulogne, *Plutarque dans le miroir d'Épicure: Analyse d'une critique systématique*. 252 pp. Villeneuve d'Ascq Cédex: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2003. ISBN: 2-85939-805-8. €27.

⁹ M. F. Smith, *Supplement to Diogenes of Oionanda: The Epicurean Inscription*. La scuola di Epicuro supplement 3. 157 pp. Naples: Bibliopolis, 2003. ISBN: 88-7088-441-4. €40.

others in 1994 and 1997 (reported on pp. 44-6). The main part of this book consists of the text, translation, and comments on the 11 new fragments of Diogenes' inscription found later than 1993, together with new information or comments on the fragments included in the 1993 edition. Of the new fragments, the longest argues that wrongdoers are not deterred by fear of divine punishment and that Stoic ideas about divine providence are misguided (NF 126-7, pp. 74-84). Smith also offers relatively full discussion of a fragment on the inseparability of pleasure and the virtues, which he reads as critical of Stoic views, but which Sedley thinks is directed against the Cyrenaics (fr. 33, including NF 128, pp. 90-6). Further material in the book includes additions to the bibliography and revisions to the introduction of Smith 1993. This book is, clearly, of limited usefulness unless one also has the 1993 edition; the supplement also sometimes refers the reader to Smith's companion volume (1996) and a long article (1998), discussing 10 new fragments. So this is very much a book for specialists on Diogenes. However, the supplement seems to me very carefully prepared and clearly set out; and it reflects Smith's unique expertise on this important piece of Epicurean evidence.

In the area of Scepticism, Roberto Polito's book, based on his 1999 Cambridge PhD, discusses Aenesidemus' appropriation of Heraclitus.¹⁰ In particular, it tackles the puzzle why Aenesidemus, the founder of neo-Pyrrhonist Scepticism in the middle of the first century BC, should present his work as a 'path' towards the philosophy of Heraclitus. This puzzle, though intriguing, might seem to be one of rather narrow interest, an impression not dispelled by the judicious (but rather thesis-like) introduction. But Polito, in the course of his analysis, both offers a persuasive explanation and brings out the larger significance of the enquiry. He suggests that Aenesidemus' presentation of ideas 'according to Heraclitus' represents an indirect way of articulating a positive theory in a way that his official stance of Scepticism would not permit. By close examination of the evidence for Aenesidemus' discussions 'according to Heraclitus' of truth, sceptical argument and psychology, he argues that 'Heraclitus' serves as the vehicle for a relatively coherent set of ideas. This centres on phenomenalism, more precisely, 'the claim that sense-objects are incorrigible data; that undecidable conflict is, therefore, the *ratio* of things; and that we should all stick to this phenomenal truth' (p. 178). In chapter 4, on psychology, for instance, Polito explains Sextus' claim that Aenesidemus placed the mind outside the body by reference to the Sceptic's quasi-Heraclitean phenomenalism, in which thoughts are treated as the product of sensory influence rather than an inner reasoning capacity. On this interpretation, Aenesidemus' practice emerges as a striking deployment of the creative

¹⁰ R. Polito, *The Sceptical Road: Aenesidemus' Appropriation of Heraclitus*. *Philosophia Antiqua* 96. viii + 202 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2004. ISBN: 90-04-13742-4. €95.

appropriation of earlier authority-figures that is a feature of the later Hellenistic period, as highlighted by G. Boys-Stones and others. Whether or not Polito's claims can be sustained will no doubt be debated by experts on this topic; but his book offers a challenging thesis which has suggestive implications for the study of later Hellenistic theory and style of exposition.

A new approach to Hellenistic philosophy as a whole is taken by a collection of essays exploring its relationship to early modern (Western) philosophy.¹¹ The range of modern thinkers discussed is quite wide, including Butler, Descartes, Hume, Locke, Leibniz and Spinoza.¹² So too are the kinds of relationship considered. In some cases, the theme is direct influence and conscious response to one or other (or more than one) Hellenistic theory. Examples discussed include Lipsius' adoption of Stoic ideas, Gassendi's Epicureanism, Locke's Ciceronianism, and Hume's deployment of ancient sceptical strategies. Other essays discuss cases where modern thinkers seem to be developing Hellenistic approaches of which they are aware but do so independently rather than as a conscious response: Spinoza's relationship to Stoicism and Leibniz's to Epicureanism are examined in this light. Elsewhere, the main theme is the modern thinker's stance towards the past: Stephen Menn analyses Descartes's attitude of intellectual *independence* from earlier thought, while Steven Nadler underlines the non-mystical character of Spinoza's ethics, even when he refers to thinkers such as Philo who might seem mystical in approach. Different again is Gail Fine's claim that Cartesian-style thinking about subjectivity is prefigured in ancient thought (in Cyrenaic and Sceptical ideas), which is designed to counter Myles Burnyeat's denial of this point. Terence Irwin, by contrast, evaluates the relative strengths and weaknesses of Stoic theory and Butler's philosophy as expressions of ethical naturalism. As this summary indicates, this is a challenging and wide-ranging collection, with thoughtful and suggestive essays by some leading scholars of Hellenistic or early modern philosophy. J. B. Schneewind's introduction, as well as outlining the approaches represented, also poses further issues not tackled within

¹¹ J. Miller and B. Inwood (eds.), *Hellenistic and Early Modern Philosophy*. xii + 330 pp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. ISBN: 0-521-82385-4. £29.38.

¹² Contents: J. B. Schneewind, 'Introduction'; A. A. Long, 'Stoicism in the Philosophical Tradition: Spinoza, Lipsius, Butler'; M. J. Osler, 'Early Modern Uses of Hellenistic Philosophy: Gassendi's Epicurean Project'; P. Mitsis, 'Locke's Offices'; D. Rutherford, '*Patience sans Espérance*: Leibniz's Critique of Stoicism'; C. Wilson, 'Epicureanism in Early Modern Philosophy: Leibniz and His Contemporaries'; J. Miller, 'Stoics, Grotius, and Spinoza on Moral Deliberation'; S. Menn, 'The *Discourse on the Method* and the Tradition of Intellectual Autobiography'; G. Fine, 'Subjectivity, Ancient and Modern: The Cyrenaics, Sextus, and Descartes'; S. Nadler, 'Spinoza and Philo: The Alleged Mysticism in the *Ethics*'; D. C. Ainslie, 'Hume's Scepticism and Ancient Scepticism'; T. Irwin, 'Stoic Naturalism in Butler'.

the volume. These centre on the question why these early modern thinkers turn to the past at all, and how their response to Hellenistic thought relates to the Christian (or Jewish) doctrines which formed the official basis for their world-view. Overall, this is a stimulating and worthwhile collection, and carefully presented.

I conclude this survey with three books which are worth noting here, although they relate only partly to Hellenistic or Roman philosophy. A volume of essays on ancient, medieval and modern ethics originated from a Bonn conference honouring Ludger Honnefelder, whose scholarly interests embrace all three areas.¹³ The first part of the volume, on ancient philosophy, includes contributions on Plato and Aristotle by Charles Kahn, Anselm Müller and Jan Szaif (who also co-edited the volume).¹⁴ The two essays on Hellenistic thought both centre on the implications of the Stoic theory of development as appropriation (*oikeiôsis*) for understanding the relationship between Hellenistic and later ethical thought. My essay argues that Julia Annas's challenge to the standard 'naturalist' view of Stoic ethics needs to be taken more seriously than it has been so far, particularly for its implications about the relationship between ancient and modern conceptions of ethics. Maximilian Forschner examines Stoic anticipations of the idea of 'conscience' and the elaboration of this idea in medieval thought. The discussions of medieval and modern ideas about value and human nature are interesting both in their own right and as providing a larger intellectual context for consideration of these issues in ancient philosophy.

Finally, I note two books bearing in different ways on Hellenistic philosophy by Jeffrey Barnouw, a Professor of English at Texas whose interests include Classical thought and modern philosophy. *Propositional Perception* (2002)¹⁵ is an exploration of perception in Plato, Aristotle and the Stoicism, centred on the relationship between logical or linguistic concepts and psychological or epistemic processes. The focus is on defining what is new and distinctive about Stoic thinking on perception, which is also seen as anticipating the approach of the American Pragmatist Pierce. Two main features

¹³ J. Szaif and M. Lutz-Bachmann (eds.), *Was ist das für den Menschen Gute? Menschliche Natur und Güterlehre. What is Good for a Human Being? Human Nature and Values*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004. ISBN: 3-11-017206-2. £49.

¹⁴ C. H. Kahn, 'Plato on the Good'; A. W. Müller, 'Aristotle's Conception of Ethical and Natural Virtue: How the Unity Thesis sheds light on the Doctrine of the Mean'; J. Szaif, 'Naturbegriff und Güterlehre in der Ethik des Aristoteles'; C. Gill, 'The Stoic Theory of Ethical Development: In What Sense is Nature a Norm?'; M. Forschner, 'Stoische Oikeiosislehre und mittelalterliche Theorie des Gewissen'.

¹⁵ J. Barnouw, *Propositional Perception: Phantasia, Predication and Sign in Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics*. 383 pp. Lanham: University Press of America. ISBN 0-7618-2341-7. Paperback: £38.99.

are identified: the idea of humans (rational animals) as users of signs, and the view of perception as at once propositional (asserting how facts appear to agents) and practical or goal-directed. A related book (2004)¹⁶ examines the relationship between Homeric models of mind and later ancient (and modern) ones as well as the modern reception of Homeric psychology. The most relevant strand in this book is the linkage seen between Homeric and Stoic psychology. In particular, Homer's *Odyssey* is taken as 'adumbrating a conception of deliberation as mental discourse that is taken further by Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, and elaborated by Pragmatists like Pierce and Dewey'. Deliberation is conceived as an internal process structured 'by concerned purposiveness and by the anticipation of imagined events and acts, [in which] mental discourse is articulated by inferential signs' (p. 2). Barnouw's books offer insights into Stoic psychology from an unusual intellectual standpoint; the most original feature is the analogy with the ideas of the American Pragmatists.

¹⁶ J. Barnouw, *Odysseus, Hero of Practical Intelligence: Deliberation and Signs in Homer's Odyssey*. ix + 377 pp. Lanham: University Press of America. ISBN: 0-7618-3026-X. Paperback: £38.99.