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discussion of the manuscript tradition for these treatises (“Those Searching for Gold Dig Up a Lot of Earth” – On Contamination and Insertion into the Early Manuscript Tradition of the *Organon*: The Case of the *Topics* and the *Sophistical Refutations*”, pp. 279–311), accompanied by two appendices discussing the manuscript tradition and a new critical edition of *Topics* VIII (pp. 312–338).

College Station, TX

Robin Smith

Victor Gysembergh: *Forgotten Ancient Commentaries on Aristotle’s Sophistical Refutations*. Fragments of Aspasios, Herminos, Alexander, Syrianos and Philoponos. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2024. 171 pp.

Despite recent attempts to restore their philosophical and historical significance, the *Sophistical Refutations* remain a comparatively little-read and little-commented treatise in Aristotelian studies on the *Organon*, in which readers seek a list of the fallacies identified by Aristotle.¹ To a large extent, our modern attitude seemed to reflect that of the ancients, none of whose commentaries have survived, which is probably a sign of the relatively little importance of this text in their eyes. However, Gysembergh’s discovery reveals a different picture, showing that there was a lively exegetical tradition at the end of Antiquity – a tradition which was preserved by Agostino Nifo, an Italian Renaissance scholar.

That said, this book is not intended to be a study of Nifo as an author, a commentary on the ancient tradition of *Sophistical refutations* or a critical edition of his commentary. Rather, it identifies, quotes, translates and briefly explains the fifty fragments of varying lengths that Nifo attributes to the ancient sources he references: Aspasios, Herminos, Alexander, Syrianos (cited under the name Philoxenos) and Philoponos. The fragments are repro-

duced in the order in which they appear, and are listed under several names when a text brings together several authors. What can we learn from this?

Firstly, at the beginning of the 16th century, Nifo was still reading all these ancient commentaries, even though some were, in his own words, badly damaged. He sometimes quotes them extensively and sometimes paraphrases and summarises them, offering Latin translations which seem faithful enough to allow the modern reader to form an idea of the otherwise lost interpretations of Alexander and Herminus, who constitute the vast majority of the fragments.

Secondly, unlike Simplicius, who uses Alexander, Porphyry and Iamblichus to support his reading of Aristotle,² Nifo does not use his sources systematically. He mainly draws on them when a difficulty arises, particularly to establish the meaning of a word (e.g. Herminos 9 = Alexander 9, on εὐθύς in 172b22) or to consider a variant reading (e.g. Herminos 11, on 173b22, which suggests τεχνίτης for τέχνη τις; Herminus 13, on 173b31, which seems to read ἐτι, *etiam*, and not οὖν, *igitur*). However, Nifo does not adopt the same approach towards all his sources. For example, he sometimes follows Alexander and sometimes Herminus. Nevertheless, he does not hesitate to call Alexander the «most learned» (*doctissimus*, Alexander 19) and the «best commentator of Aristotle among the Peripatetics» (Alexander 22).

Thirdly, with regard to the authors themselves, Gysembergh observes that, despite Alexander’s opinion of Herminus, they deserve recognition for their meticulous attention to detail in the text and their diligent exegetical work (see his conclusions on pp. 81–82). They appear to be fully aware of the difficulties associated with mastering these paralogisms, which necessitated rigorous training. This is essentially what emerges from this collection of fragments, which will be of particular interest to

¹ See Aristotle: *Les Réfutations Sophistiques*. Introduction, édition du texte grec, traduction et commentaires par Myriam Hecquet. Paris 2018; Aristotle: *Les Réfutations Sophistiques*. Introduction, traduction et commentaire par Louis-André Dorion. Paris 1995; Sten Ebbesen: *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle’s Sophistici Elen-*

chi. A Study of Post-Aristotelian Ancient and Medieval Writings on Fallacies. 3 vols. Leiden 1981.

² See Han Baltussen: *Philosophy and Exegesis in Simplicius. The Methodology of a Commentator*. London 2008.

specialists in the dialectical practices of philosophical schools at the end of antiquity.

Liège

Marc-Antoine Gavray

Robert Cioffi: *Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Greek Novel. Between Representation and Resistance.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 2024. 304 pp.

Robert Cioffi's book offers a fresh interpretation of the significance of Egypt and Ethiopia in the four Greek novels in which they are featured: Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Xenophon of Ephesus' *An Ephesian Tale*, Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. As already the title suggests, and as the introduction amply explains (pp. 3–11), the author recognizes a tension in the novelistic staging of Egypt and Ethiopia between 'representation', that is, how the countries and cultures are described, especially in connection with Greek ethnographic and paradoxographic literature, and 'resistance', a broad concept that spans from political opposition, namely to Empire, to deconstruction or a refusal to be classified according to Greek and Roman literary parameters, to challenging language itself. In a nutshell, the author identifies «representation» and «resistance» in the perspectives offered by Greco-Roman and Egyptian materials respectively (p. 3). The book is divided into an introduction, six chapters, and an epilogue. It also contains a general index and a useful *index locorum*.

The presentation of the materials is consistently rich, well informed, based on a substantial amount of evidence, and the arguments are interesting and often original. I found the discussion of Xenophon's novel in chapter 1 the most rewarding, in particular the contrast that it draws between the image and function of Isis in this novel and in Apuleius' *Golden Ass*: while the goddess of the Latin author is the Roman Isis, Xenophon's is the Egyptian deity. Cioffi demonstrates this by offering parallels with Egyptian sources in which Isis shows striking similarities with the goddess of Xenophon's novel.

One of the book's strengths is indeed the inclusion of Egyptian literature, especially demotic texts, which shed a novel light on the re-

presentation of Egypt in the Greek narratives and help situate them in the geographical context in which they originated. Another, related strength is the inclusion of the Alexander Romance. The author deserves much praise for having extended his discussion to these materials, and admiration for having learned, as he says, demotic Greek for the express purpose of reading Egyptian texts in the original.

Not all interpretations are equally convincing. For instance, I do not believe that the opening scene of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* stages an apocalypse which looks forward from the dramatic date of the novel (between the 6th and the 4th century BCE) to the desolate conditions of the Alexandrian coast closer to the novelist's time, or that the phoenix in Achilles Tatius, which defies description, «impedes [...] the novel itself» (pp. 79–80). More generally, I find the concept of resistance, defined as broadly Cioffi does, of little hermeneutical help and at times even confusing.

The book would have benefited from a trim. In addition to appearing in the general introduction, many points are articulated several times within a chapter, from its introduction to its conclusion. Otherwise Cioffi writes well, in a clear and precise style, all in all free of jargon, and enriched by forays into modern literature. Scholars and students of the ancient novel, of demotic Egyptian literature and of Egypt and Ethiopia in world-literature stand to learn much from this book.

Baltimore, MD

Silvia Montiglio

Jakob Riemenschneider: *Prokop und der soziale Kosmos der Historiographie. Exkurse, Diskurse und die römische Gesellschaft der Spätantike.* Berlin: De Gruyter 2024. 261 S. (Millennium-Studien 108).

Scholars have tended to read Late Antique classicising historians, so the introduction of this fine monograph argues, in view of expectations of imitation of classical authors such as Thucydides. As a consequence, Late Antique historians have often been lifted out of their own times and studied within a long literary tradition but not from the perspective of contemporary culture. This is the aim that Riemenschneider (R.) sets himself: gaining insight