Margaret J. Osler, ed. *Atoms, Pneuma and Tranquillity: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. Pp. xii, 304.

This volume of fourteen essays on the historical influence of Epicureanism and Stoicism grew out of a conference sponsored by the Calgary Institute for the Humanities in 1988. The great majority are focused on the period from 1400-1700. Attention is given about equally to Stoicism and Epicureanism, with two papers discussing the influence of both, while five each are exclusively devoted to either Stoicism or Epicureanism. Stoicism was most influential in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with Epicureanism coming into its own in the following century. Accordingly, discussion of Stoicism dominates the first half of the volume, being gradually overshadowed by studies of Epicurean influence.

The work begins with a helpful introduction by Margaret Osler and Letizia Panizza, outlining the fundamental elements of classical Stoicism and Epicureanism. It is followed by an insightful analysis of the relationship between classical Stoicism's ideas on ethics, logic and physics by Gerard Verbeke. Verbeke explains that Stoic ethics were based on knowing the underlying principles that governed nature. Accordingly, a logic appropriate to determining these principles was essential. As it turned out this logic was of an associative and symbolical kind.

Stoicism if not Epicureanism was an important influence on philosophy and theology in the Middle Ages. But only Calvin Newmore's discussion of medieval logic reflects this impact. Letizia Parizza starts off the discussion of Renaissance philosophy with a paper intriguingly entitled "Stoic Psychotherapy in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Petrarch's *De Remediis*." In it she studies Petrarch as a practitioner of what she refers to as Stoic psychotherapy trying to provide counsel on, among other things, the Renaissance equivalent of what we today refer to as mania, depression and anxiety. Nicolas Pound follows with a comparative essay on the fifteenth-century Castilian scholar Alfonso de Cartagena's and John Calvin's commentaries on Seneca's *De Clementia*, fascinating in the way both men face the problem of philosophical truth speaking to political power. Pound's treatment of Calvin is too compressed and deserves further elaboration. There follow two papers on Epicureanism: Maristella De P. Lorch studying Valla's *De Voluptate* as a dramatic work while Louise Fothergill-Payne shows the way Seneca's work paradoxically became a source for learning about Epicureanism during the Renaissance.

Peter Barker's essay on Stoic contributions to early modern science focuses especially on the importance of Stoic physics as an alternative to that of Aristotle. By the mid-sixteenth century Aristotle's notion of a qualitative difference between the superlunar and sublunar spheres began to be seriously questioned. Barker shows that the Frenchman Jean Pena was the first European to provide an intellectual alternative by fixing on the Stoic notion of the *pneuma*, out of which he claimed both heaven and earth were composed. Tycho Brahe, it appears, employed a modified version of Pena's conception.

No less than seven out of the fourteen essays discuss the influence of Epicureanism on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science and philosophy. Here the central figure is Pierre Gassendi, who was instrumental in offering Epicureanism as an alternative to both Aristotelianism and skepticism. Margaret Osler's paper on Gassendi's treatment of fortune, fate and providence helps one understand the way in which Gassendi made Epicureanism acceptable to Christians by modifying its determinism, making way for ongoing divine intervention into nature and leaving room for human free will as well.

Lisa Sarasohn's study of Gassendi's attitudes towards politics and the active life distinguishes her essay from the others, which are concerned with metaphysics and natural philosophy for the most part. She makes clear that Gassendi's preference for the private life was based on the teachings of Epicurus. On the other hand, she quite rightly relates this preference to Gassendi's distaste for the restrictions of public life under an increasingly absolutist monarchy. Sarasohn's insights on this point coincide with other recent scholarly work which links the growing appreciation of private life to the increasing rigidity of the social and political order during the *grand siècle*. The relationship between philosophical Epicureanism and libertinism needs further exploration.

One would think that the influence of classical metaphysics would have come to the end with the appearance of the elaborate metaphysical system of Descartes. Yet J. T. Dobbs is able to demonstrate that a modified conception of the Stoic *pneuma* lay behind Newton's notion of immaterial ether. Loath to accept the idea of action at a distance, Newton found the resistance of Descartes' material aether incompatible with his own laws of planetary motion. In its place he redefined the Stoic *pneuma* as an immaterial force which bound the universe together.

Gassendi's Epicureanism played its part in the development of Locke's conception of the soul, as John Wright makes clear. Likewise, it played a role in the elaboration of Boyle's and Newton's corpuscular theories. Thomas Lennon, indeed, makes a connection between Gassendi's Epicurean atomism and the development of Locke's and Berkeley's conception of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

This collection of essays establishes beyond a doubt the ongoing influence of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies during the early modern period. They had an important role in undermining the institutional orthodoxy of Aristotelianism. Yet the mention of such luminaries as Descartes, Boyle and Newton forces one to recognize that by the seventeenth century systems of natural philosophy and metaphysics were created which surpassed those of classical antiquity. Stoic and Epicurean elements survived and even remained an influence, but only as a kind of residue among much stronger philosophical systems. Stoicism in particular appears to assume the role of the philosophy of the *bien-pensants* in eighteenth-century Scotland, where it became a kind of establishment ethic in Scottish academe. Thus, M. A. Stewart in the concluding essay shows how difficult it was for David Hume to set his corrosive modern skepticism against this orthodoxy.

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