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Musonius Rufus, *That One Should Disdain Hardships (The Teachings of a Roman Stoic)*, translated by Cora E. Lutz, with an introduction by Gretchen Reydam-Schils. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020. Pp. 160. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-300-22603-4) \$22.00.

This volume is a reissue of “Musonius Rufus ‘The Roman Socrates’” (*YCS* 10, 1947) by Cora E. Lutz. C. Musonius Rufus (c. 30 - 101 CE) is a fascinating if shadowy philosophical figure. Lutz was not the first to pair the two teachers. In the third century, Origen made the same association; for him, both were “model[s] of excellence of life.” Like the Athenian gadfly, Musonius published nothing; we are left with quotations from other sources, some fragmentary. In her valuable twenty-page “Introduction,” Gretchen Reydam-Schils mentions Origen. He would no doubt have been interested in the second extract here: “That Man is Born With an Inclination Toward Virtue” (7-9) is an argument against what later became known as a doctrine of “Original Sin.”

Reydam-Schils, an expert on ancient Stoicism, sensibly highlights several other aspects of Musonius’ teachings which resonate with current readers: “On Women, Marriage and Sociability” underscores some of the reasons for Musonius’ enduring appeal. The resonance is at least in part a function of Musonius’ ability to speak to multiple communities—religious and areligious; Greek and Roman; ancient and modern. He is also relevant to disciplines from ancient history to classics to philosophy, as well as several subfields among them, most notably social history. The titles of the twenty-one sayings in the Table of Contents stretch from food to infanticide.

By what little we know, Musonius Rufus was at the center of a Stoic circle at Nero’s court (xxii-xxiv). Like several persons affiliated with Nero, Musonius’ life is marked by twists and turns. His biography reveals a life buffeted by the political whimsies of Nero and each of the Flavian emperors. His “That Exile is Not an Evil” is based on personal experience, and it is directly related to the excerpt which Yale University Press chose to make this volume’s title: “That One Should Disdain Hardship” (29-31). There are many delights here, especially if we consider the philosopher’s incomplete biography.

The press’ decision to highlight Stoicism’s famous acceptance of life’s difficulties is perfectly reasonable. Their decision to re-release a mid-century translation is not. None of my students use the word “disdain” in common conversation. Ten out of ten of them have some idea of what “disdain” means. Eight of them think it means what the rest of twenty-first-century native English speakers think—something like “hate” and hence “avoid.” English professors know of the less common meaning; Greek readers know *kataphronein* stretches from “disdain” to “be unafraid of.” The latter is obviously the preferred rendering in this case—and in keeping with the popular understanding of Stoicism. It is worth noting the popular understanding is, after all, the reasons for this book’s publication. So this title is no improvement on the original author’s. There are other words which, in the twenty-first century, deserve the opposite approach. Both

eudaimonia and *aretê* are common enough in college seminars (and some school rooms) that they could probably be italicized and left untranslated. Musonius' argument in the aforementioned excerpt is based upon *eudaimonia*, here rendered "complete happiness" (30). The "virtue" mentioned above is *aretê*.

This is, nonetheless, a welcome publication insofar as it gives prominence to the most popular ancient philosopher about whom few outside the classical studies guild have any familiarity. First-century Stoicism is a burgeoning field at both the popular and academic levels. It is a rare subfield where the former may drive the latter. This work would seem to be something of a coffee-table book, except it is diminutive. Its length and width are barely greater than a Loeb volume. Yale's decision to omit the Greek results in a mini-Loeb where depth is concerned. And so it begs a question of target audience. Is it for scholars? Their students? The masses? A scholar will choose the primary sources every time, so we're left with two options. Our students could certainly benefit from this reasonably-priced book. However, they might be better served by C. King's *Musonius Rufus: Lectures and Sayings* (2011), or J. Dillon's *Musonius Rufus and Education in the Good Life: A Model of Teaching and Living Virtue* (2004). Both of these (and Lutz's original) engage with far more international scholarship than the current volume. That leaves the masses. The only "masses" attracted to this are those of us interested in collecting inexpensive boutique editions from competing Ivy League university publishers. See: Princeton's "Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers" series.

Beyond putting Musonius in the hands of certain readers, this volume's chief characteristic might be its potential to spur much-needed writing. Within this little book there are at least two larger books, both of which I would look forward to reading or reviewing. The first is about the historical figure of Musonius. Again, the evidence is in short supply, but scant sources have not prevented "biographies" of other persons leaving little behind. In some ways there is no good reason for Musonius' shadowy status. He is the prosopographer's dream: teacher of Epictetus and Dio, contemporary of Tacitus and the "Stoic martyrs;" our fragments derive from celebrities, from Plutarch to Aulus Gellius. Earlier this year, a two-hundred-seventy-page biography of Alaric was published by D. Bointo to some acclaim. Musonius' survival under Nero and zig-zag through all three Flavians begs for a book, if not a screenplay. If a biography of Alaric is possible, surely someone can write a proper (if hypothetical) biography of Musonius. A second, more properly academic tome might trace the reception of Musonius: what is the history of his association with Socrates?

A second book could be written on the wide-ranging scholarship of Lutz. A 1935 graduate of Yale and professor at (then all-women) Wilson College, she was a two-time Guggenheim fellow. Lutz was a "scientist" in the library before Library Science existed as a field. She also published across disciplines—an accomplishment more often praised than

practiced these days, in part because of the obvious hyper-specialized nature of our work today. The present republication of her work, some seventy years later, is testament to her scholarly contribution in classics. She spent most of her career, however, in the medieval world. A true archivist, she resurrected several sources, including those published in her *School Masters of the Tenth Century* (1977). Furthermore, she uncovered previously un-read work on Bede and wrote a still-valuable article on the liberal arts in Remigius (1956). Paul Oskar Kristeller reviewed more than one of Lutz's publications. John Marenbon credited her for "bravely stepp[ing] forward to explain obscure and neglected subjects in terms comprehensible to non-specialists." The "text" of this volume is, of course, a collection based primarily on Stobaeus, who flourished in the fifth century. That is fitting: He was an archivist *par excellence*. Both he and Musonius might have appreciated Lutz's work.

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Joseph J. Walsh, *The Great Fire of Rome: Life and Death in the Ancient City*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. P. 192. Paper (ISBN 978-1-4214-3371-4) \$19.95.

Walsh, a professor of classics and history at Loyola University Maryland perhaps best known for his work on Early Christianity, here offers a survey of the fire that destroyed much of Rome under Nero in 64 CE. Like other books in the "Witness to Ancient History" series, it seems aimed at a general audience.

After a brief Prologue, Chapter 1, "Perils of Life in Rome," Walsh describes the myriad dangers of ancient urban living in general by way of contextualizing the fire. Floods, building collapse, crime, pollution, and disease make an appearance—as well as, of course, fire, including the equipment and tactics used by the *vigiles* to fight fire, which are interestingly compared with modern techniques. Using largely literary rather than archaeological evidence, Walsh keeps the focus on how the residents of the city might have been affected both physically and psychologically by the dangers he describes. Noteworthy for his near absence is Augustus, whose large program of urban renewal is largely consigned to one footnote (138 n. 11) and one paragraph on his division of Rome into *regiones* and *vici* (40). Still, the chapter is an engaging description of the perils and discomforts of life in Rome, and could be assigned on its own as a reading on everyday life in ancient Rome for a high school or college class, where material on such perennially fascinating topics as Roman public latrines will enthrall young readers.

Chapter 2, "Inferno," discusses the fire itself and how ordinary Romans might have experienced the destruction, and is based largely on Tacitus' account. Walsh provides