Narbonne, J.-M.; Poirier, P.-H. (ed.). 2009. *Gnose et Philosophie. Études en hommage à Pierre Hadot*. Paris—Québec: Vrin—Presses de l'Université Laval, 237 p., Paperback, ISBN 978-2-7637-8498-4, 29.95 \$ (CAD).

This volume of proceedings of a conference held at the Sorbonne to celebrate the work of Pierre Hadot and to coincide with the honorary degree conferred upon him by the Laval University illustrates many facets of his work on ancient thought, from the study of spiritual exercises to the analysis of technical questions in epistemology and metaphysics. The editor of the volume, Jean-Marc Narbonne, rightly stresses the relevance of Hadot's work to present day concerns. Due to constraints of space, I can here do no more than briefly summarise each contribution to the volume.

In "Jean Philopon, Commentaire aux *Seconds Analytiques*, 12, 4-20, 2", Martin Achard translates (without a commentary) Philoponus' exegesis of the Aristotelian solution (*Po.A.* I 1) to *Meno's* paradox. The excerpt shows Philoponus at his best as a commentator; his intellectual subtlety and clarity of analysis enabled him, in M.A.'s view, to provide the best possible clarification of the problem according to the terms of Aristotle's epistemology.

Jean-Daniel Dubois ("Utilisation du grec dans le texte valentinien copte du *Traité tripartite*") re-examines the Coptic translation of the Valentinian gnosis and seeks, in the process, to unsettle some outdated philological prejudices. Through aptly chosen examples he shows that the translator knew enough philosophical Greek to find, if not to forge, Coptic equivalents while not hesitating to leave some Greek terms untranslated when no suitable equivalent could be found. So doing, he succeeds in engaging modern reader with the linguistic problems of ancient Coptic speakers.

With "Pensée et souveraineté. La royauté de l'intellect et l'exercice de la pensée dans un passage de Plotin (*Ennéades*, V, 3 [49] 3, 40-44)", Georges Leroux puts Hadot's hermeneutics to the test. By means of a commentary on these lines, Leroux demonstrates the fruitfulness of Hadot's method for understanding the Plotinian text, a text that demands not only to be read but also acted upon. This method, Leroux shows, was the very one that Plotinus used in his approach to the Platonic corpus, in which he saw a paradigmatic way of philosophising rather than a set of doctrines.

Jean-Pierre Mahé attempts to extend Hadot's hypothesis concerning spiritual exercises to the *Corpus Hermeticum* ("Sciences occultes et exercices spirituels"). He shows that the practice of alchemy and astrology could have no other purpose than the thought itself. Through efforts of imagination, the soul is compelled to get rid of itself as body and to become pure intellect, meditating on the infinitely large and the infinitely small. Such practices, which are spiritual exercises of a

kind, can alter the perception that an individual has of himself and enable him to elevate himself to the single source of Being, term of the initiation.

In tractate 51, Plotinus presents an opposition between two absolutely separate principles, good and evil, each of which is responsible for its own effects. In “Une anticipation du dualisme de Plotin en 51 [I 8] 6, 33-34: le *De Iside et Osiride* (369A-E) de Plutarque”, Jean-Marc Narbonne argues that the thesis was a radically novel view, for which there had been no precedent, apart from Plutarch. The two authors differ only on one point: Plutarch considers evil as an independent principle, while Plotinus describes it as a prisoner, limited in its actions by the Good, instead of being the degradation that other Platonists thought it to be.

Paul-Hubert Poirier explores the complex structure of the Gnostic treatise on *Protennoia*, examining its rearrangement of traditional materials (“La triade Son—Voix—Parole/Discours dans la *Prôtennoia* trimorphe (NH XIII, 1) et ses sources”). He unravels its compound structure by setting a correspondence between the triad φθόγγος—φωνή—λόγος, and the scheme of the triple descent of *Protennoia* (a composite figure identified with *Pronoia*), with the addition of some traditional elements. Poirier concludes that there is a need to revise standard opinion on the date of this intricate and complex text.

In “L’âme en fuite: le traité gnostique de l’*Allogène* (NH XI, 3) et la mystique juive”, Madeleine Scopello addresses another aspect of Gnosticism: the taking over of the metaphor of flight in esoteric Judaism. She highlights Philo’s role as a relay and underlines a tendency within Jewish mysticism to seek to turn itself into a living experience. Of this tendency Allogenes, which recalls the character of Abraham conceived as a visionary exile in search of the divine, seems to be a perfect example.

In a long and well documented paper, “Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition”, John D. Turner focuses on the source of the trinitarian theology found in Marius Victorinus and Augustine. The doctrine of the supreme unity-in-trinity is proved to be already at work in Sethian Gnosis and cannot, therefore, be considered Plotinian. Indeed it appears in Middle Platonism, as is shown by the treatises from Nag Hammadi.

Marc-Antoine Gavray
FRS-FNRS (Université de Liège)
Marc-Antoine.Gavray@ulg.ac.be