Brisson, L.; Pradeau, J.-F. (ed.). 2009. *Plotin. Traités 45-50*. Paris: GF Flammarion, 515 p., Paperback, ISBN 978-2-0812-2328-8, 15.30 €.

Eighth and penultimate of the new French version of the *Enneads*, this volume contains tractates 45 to 50 in the chronological order reported by Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus*. All treatises have been uniformly dealt with: introduction of approximately ten pages, detailed presentation of the structure of the argument, translation and notes. The volume contains a general bibliography of quoted works (with reference to the online bibliography of R. Dufour, one of the translators), a chronology of Plotinus' life with reference to salient contemporary cultural and political events, an *index rerum* and an index of ancient authors.

This series is a handy tool for readers of Plotinus, especially French ones, for whom it presents the result of decades of research following Bréhier's edition (Paris, 1924-1938). The present volume in particular proves to be very helpful, given that it has no recent equivalent in French since the alternative project, initiated by P. Hadot at the Editions du Cerf, so far offers a match only for treatises 49 (V 3) and 50 (III, 5), published respectively by B. Ham (Paris, 2000) and P. Hadot himself (Paris, 1990).

The translations gathered in the present volume are by several authors, each of whom was responsible for one tractate—L.B. and J.-F.P., who lead the project, did not contribute directly to this volume. Yet a measure of homogeneity has been achieved through a review of the volume by the whole team. As a result, there are no significant stylistic variations between the translations, and attention was paid to the harmonization of the translation of Plotinus' technical vocabulary. Editors and translators have succeeded in conveying to the reader the dynamic and dialogical nature of Plotinus' thinking, of a mind engaged in a constant process of self-investigation or, in Plato's words, 'of a mind going through with itself' (*Theaet.*, 189e-190a; see also *Soph.*, 263e-264b).

The translated text is that of the *editio minor* of Henry and Schwyzer (Oxford, 1964-1982), which includes variations from their *editio maior* (Paris-Brussels, 1951-1973), as well as suggestions from later editors and translators. All in all, some fifty slight editorial changes have been brought to the text, some of which are returns to the manuscript tradition.

The volume contains some disparities, which probably result from a difficulty in determining its intended audience: Plotinian scholars, historians of philosophy, undergraduates or educated readers? The editors seem to aim at pleasing them all. As a result, variations in depth and technicality appear in

the notes appended to each translation. Each translator interprets this project as he thinks best, putting more emphasis either on listing parallel passages in Plotinus or on clarifying his thought. For some, such as Matthieu Guyot (45 [III, 7]: *On Eternity and Time*) and Richard Dufour (47 [III, 2] and 48 [III, 3]: *On Providence* I and II), annotation consists mainly in a series of textual quotations designed to put the tractate into context, mostly by referring to earlier authors (Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics) and discussing the translation. Often this results in a plethora of short notes while in the translation of other tractates notes of paragraph length give a full commentary of the passage (see, e.g., Francesco Fronterotta, tractate 49 [V, 3]: *On the Knowing Hypostases and That Which is Beyond*, who frequently refers to B. Ham's work in Hadot's collection and relies on his interpretation on several points). Yet others combine successfully the two approaches, such as Thomas Vidart (tractate 46 [I, 4]: *On True Happiness*) and Jean-Marie Flamand (tractate 50 [III, 5]: *On Love*), whose translation and commentary bear comparison with Pierre Hadot's own magisterial work on the tractate.

Another sign of this perplexity about readership is to be found in the shared notice for both tractates 47 and 48. Although Richard Dufour rightly points out that they originally formed a single work, he does not seek to explain the reasons which prompted Porphyry to split the work into two separate tractates. Admittedly, specialists will know of Porphyry's intention to achieve six *Enneads*, and can therefore easily fill in the reason. Less experienced readers, however, might well have welcomed additional precisions.

I now turn to niggles. In the translation of tractates 47-48, an error of layout (p. 211) affects the presentation of the structure of the argument, thus creating the impression that the five objections against the doctrine of Providence are not considered on a par. This could confuse the reader and make him wonder whether such was Plotinus' intention. A little further down (p. 221: 47, 3, 36-38), R.D. writes: "*Certaines de ces choses* semblent ne participer qu'à l'existence, et *d'autres* à la vie; *certaines* ont davantage de vie, car *ils* ont la sensation, *d'autres* ont déjà la raison, et *d'autres* encore ont la vie totale." All the words underlined translate the neutral *τά*. Why then does R.D. suddenly move from the feminine to the masculine, without explaining why he does so? Still in the same tractate, one wonders whether R.D. should not have pointed out that the objection from the uninterrupted existence of warfare (47, 15, 1-10) probably comes from an earlier philosophical thesis rather than simply resting on a statement of fact. As Plotinus insists on the necessity of war, he must allude to Heraclitus, especially in a context where he also writes about game (15, 51-62—a point this time mentioned by R.D.). Lastly, in 49, 3, 23-24, F.F. writes "«our» intellect" and refers in note 21 to Alexander of

Aphrodisias, thereby interpreting this single pronoun as a quotation: the reader—particularly, if he is not a specialist—would expect more explanation on this point.

In conclusion, this volume announces the end of a fruitful project, which gives easy access to the rich but difficult writings of Plotinus. Even if it is sometimes unclear at which category of readers translations and notes are aimed at, the volume will help most to find their way around the growing scholarly literature on the subject,

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