Platonic Stoicism—Stoic Platonism. The Dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in Antiquity, M. Bonazzi, C. Helmig (eds), Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2007, XV + 310 pp.

Platonic Stoicism—Stoic Platonism is a collection of articles (remarkably enough in three languages, French, Italian and English) about the dialogue between Stoicism and Platonism in antiquity, edited by M. Bonazzi and C. Helmig. Most of the articles were first presented at the colloquium on “Stoicismo e platonismo in età ellenistica e imperiale”, held in Villa Feltrinelli at Gargnano (Lake Garda) on April 22-24, 2006.

Thomas Bénatouïl’s article on scholastic life (“Le débat entre platonisme et stoïcisme sur la vie scolastique: Chrysippe, la Nouvelle Académie et Antiochus”) is clearly among the best in the volume. B. agrees with Algra that Chrysippus’ criticisms of the scholastic life (reported in Plutarch, *De stoic. rep.* 1033c) is aimed at Aristotle and Theophrastus, but goes further by including also Plato and the Academy among its targets. In Chrysippus’ view, Plato’s ideal of contemplative life is destroying the association between men, and hence justice itself and even all civic virtues (B. refers to *Republic* VII, 519c-e where it is acknowledged that philosophers, who are enjoying contemplative life, will have to be *forced* to govern the city). Since, according to Chrysippus, there cannot be more than two sorts of *telos* (end) of life, namely virtue or pleasure, Plato’s conception of the good life turns out to be one of pleasure. After recovering Chrysippus’ own doctrine (in his *Peri biôn*) and the rationale of his criticism of Plato and Aristotle, B. finally manages to show how the New Academy appears to have replied to the Stoics.

Francesca Alesse’s article (“Alcuni esempi della relazione tra l’etica stoica e Platone”) is an attempt to show and assess the influence of some of Plato’s dialogues on Stoic ethics. Her study is organized around three important topics: first, the question of the unity of the virtues and the distinction between good, bad and indifferent, with the influence of such dialogues as *Protagoras*, *Laches* or *Gorgias* on the early Stoics (Zeno, Aristo and Chrysippus); second, how for the Stoics of the IInd-Ist century B.C. (Antipater, Panaetius, etc.) references to Plato’s dialogues were a way of challenging the claim of the New Academy to be a legitimate heir to Plato; third, the importance of Plato’s *Republic* in Roman Stoicism (Musonius Rufus and Hierocles).

Sophie Aubert’s study on Stoic laconism (“La lecture stoïcienne du laconisme à travers le filtre de Platon”) is another excellent contribution to a theme (the relation between rhetoric and philosophy) little studied in Stoicism. She starts with a presentation of Plato’s account of laconism in the *Protagoras* and compares it with similar approaches found in early Stoicism (in particular Zeno). She then isolates *suntomia* (conciseness) as epitomizing the Stoic doctrine on laconism

and explains how it differs from Plato's *brakhulogia*. According to A., the Stoic idea of conciseness underwent a remarkable change with Diogenes of Babylon in the IInd century B.C. By making *suntomia* a virtue of discourse, Diogenes changed the relationship between rhetoric, philosophy and truth. Indeed, while Plato had associated conciseness with dialectic (and therefore truth) only, leaving rhetoric defined in terms of *makrologia* (lengthy speech), Diogenes expressed the view that conciseness is excellence for both dialectic and rhetoric, making therefore rhetoric a form a speech also concerned with truth.

Valéry Laurant's article ("L'Éros pédagogique chez Platon et les Stoïciens") is an in-depth investigation of the meaning of eros in Stoicism and its possible Platonic background. L. devotes several very interesting pages on the Stoic understanding of eros as a kind of *epibolè* (in French, "pulsion"), a word he proposes to look at in relation to Stoic *oikeiôsis*. Although eventually different from Plato's account, Stoic eros is better understood, in L.'s view, against the background of Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium* (here, L. parts with Inwood who had suggested connections between Stoic eros and Pausanias' speech). Finally, other Stoic material (SVF 3.397) may be interpreted as echoing a reading of Plato's account on eros in *Phaedrus* and the *Laws* (VIII, 837a).

According to John Stevens' article ("Platonism and Stoicism in Vergil's *Aeneid*"), in the poetic world of the *Aeneid* "we are offered a unique window into how the empire's intellectuals adopted elements of each school to form a coherent whole" (p. 87). S. sees in the three dominant gods of the epic (Jupiter, Juno, and Venus) references to Plato's tripartite psychology, and in Aeneas' journey a progress recalling the erotic ascent of Plato's *Symposium*. S. illustrates the pervasiveness of the passions by recalling the Stoic image of a drop of wine extending to the whole sea. But, *pace* S., the Stoic image is not about a drop of wine that *stains* the whole sea, only an analogy for how, according to the Stoa, two bodies can totally blend without losing their distinguishing qualities. S. is certainly not the first to assume the existence of Stoic elements in Vergil (cf. Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid*), but most of what S. sees as Stoic influences in the *Aeneid* (the Stoic doctrine of the passions, of Fate and of the reservation of the Sage) appear, to say the least, very speculative indeed.

In his article ("Eudorus' psychology and Stoic ethics"), Mauro Bonazzi wants to show that Eudorus was not, as often suggested, a typical case of stoicized Platonist. B. attempts to demonstrate that Eudorus endorsed a dualistic psychology and even contributed philosophically to the study of Platonic psychology. B. sees in Eudorus' account of *hormê* (an initially Stoic concept) an attempt to target the Stoics on their own grounds. According to B., such an attack echoes other similar Platonic attitudes aimed at the Stoics during the early Imperial era. This kind of "combative stance", he says, "reveals a competitive attitude and constantly strives

to effect the subordinate integration of rival school doctrines, thereby emphasizing the pivotal role of one's own philosophical tradition" (p. 127).

According to Teun Tieleman ("Onomastic Reference in Seneca. The Case of Plato and the Platonists"), most of our studies on Seneca are grounded in preconceptions: "[t]oo often the question of his relation to Platonism has been approached on the basis of preconceptions as to how he will have fitted into a larger schema of historical development, involving the eclectic temper of the philosophy of his day and the gradual return of Platonic transcendence" (p. 133). T. has therefore set himself to look at Seneca's relation to Plato from a more down-to-earth perspective, i.e. a study of his onomastic reference to Plato. The picture that emerges is that Seneca was familiar with the Platonic corpus and quotes from dialogues such as the *Republic*, *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus*, and the *Laws*. But Seneca consistently suppresses the titles of the dialogues, a procedure that T. characterizes as that of "leading the reader away from the literary realm into the biographical." Plato is therefore presented by Seneca, according to T., as an *exemplum*, "a philosopher who also led a life that was paradigmatic and invites us to emulate it" (p. 148).

Brad Inwood's article ("Seneca, Plato and Platonism: the case of *Letter 65*") is also putting into practice a new methodological approach on Seneca. I. is concerned with *Letter 65* (and also 58) that have often been used to try to recover some middle Platonic doctrines. According to I., most scholars have been studying only the first half of the letter (where doctrinal content is put upfront), leaving unexamined other important aspects found in the rest of the text. I. proposes therefore to look at Seneca's letters as wholes and to try to connect the philosophical doctrines they display either to Plato's dialogues, or to some other straightforward sources such as Cicero. One of the major finds of I., in my view, is the link he makes between *Letter 65* and the *Phaedo*: the letter is dealing, as is well known, with causation, and does end with Seneca's version of the mind-body dualism, two features that are indeed central to the *Phaedo*. According to I, nothing in *Letter 65* suggests that Seneca was using some now lost middle Platonic textbook: "it seems to me that a knowledge of a handful of important Platonic dialogues and a plausible context of oral discussion (which is the source Seneca actually adduces in the letter itself) seem sufficient to explain the strangely constructed causal theory of his letter" (p. 163).

Robert Sharples, alas since deceased, writes on "The Stoic Background to the Middle Platonist discussion of Fate". His article was prompted by a recent study by G. Boys-Stones ("Middle Platonism on fate and human autonomy") according to which middle Platonic conception of fate is not libertarian but compatibilist (like the Stoics). S. tries to show that one particular example found in both Alcinous and Calcidius—the oracle about Laius being killed by his son *if* he

begets one—was probably taken from a Stoic discussion that may go back as far as Chrysippus. Even though we lack direct evidence for it being the case, S. says that the oracle to Laius was plausibly enough first used by Chrysippus himself, who emphasized the usefulness of the oracle to its recipient (hence the need for precautionary action).

Christopher Gill's article ("Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*: How Stoic and How Platonic?") is concerned with passages in Marcus Aurelius that have led many scholars to depict the philosopher as an eclectic. These passages, on the face of it, run counter to the main and distinctive characteristic of Stoic philosophy, namely "its physicalism or psyche-body holism and its monism or holism as regards psychological functions, such as reason and emotions" (p. 193). According to Gill, Marcus was not concerned with theoretical issues and is often using Platonic-style dualistic language only as a kind of rhetoric to underline ethical stoic ideas. Gill's account appears largely in line with Pierre Hadot who also very much emphasized the ethical purpose of the *Meditations* and dismissed its alleged eclecticism (G. actually presents his view as a refinement of Hadot's own interpretation, see p. 207).

In his article ("Platonismo e Teoria della Conoscenza Stoica tra II e III secolo d.c."), Riccardo Chiaradonna examines the ways Platonists of the IInd and IIIrd century used the Stoic concept of *koinai ennoiai*. He argues that receptions of that concept in Alcinous, Galen, Plotinus and Porphyry are each different and determined by their respective philosophical approaches. According to C., the diversity and richness of the accounts actually reflects a trait intrinsic to the Platonism of the time: "to come back to Plato (*rifarsi a Platone*) meant, first of all, to chose or (for more profound thinkers) to elaborate and defend one version of Platonism that interacted in different ways with other versions and with doctrines elaborated in other philosophical traditions" (p. 239).

Finally, Gretchen Reydam-Schils' article ("Calcidius on God") is a study of Calcidius' conception of God. R.-S. makes a strong case for Calcidius being closer to middle Platonists than to Neoplatonists. Unlike Plotinus, for instance, the three Gods Calcidius is distinguishing are not displaying a "Neoplatonist dynamic, with its hypostases and processes of emanation and returns" (p. 256). Calcidius' way of referring to his second god as the mind of the first god appears to have more in common with middle platonic accounts such as "Philo of Alexandria's notion of god's *logos*, which is both one with and distinct from God" (p. 255). Finally, R.-S. suggests that one can also suspect Stoic influence on Calcidius' conception of God, but it seems to me that she provides little evidence for it.

In conclusion, one can say that *Platonic Stoicism—Stoic Platonism* is a high quality volume that provides the reader with new and sometimes thought-provoking

approaches. Most of its articles are worth reading and all of them show the richness and variety of the interaction between two of the major schools in Antiquity.

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