John F. Finamore, Robert M. Berchman (eds.), *Conversations Platonic and Neoplatonic: Intellect, Soul, and Nature*; Papers from the 6th Annual Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2010), pp. 224, €44,50, ISBN 9783896655189.

This collection, compiled from papers given at the 6th Annual Conference for Neoplatonic Studies held in 2008 in New Orleans, provides a picture of the variety of subjects pursued in the current renaissance of Neoplatonic studies. Indeed, the volume gives a glimpse into the whole range of the Platonic tradition, with papers on Plato, Middle and late antique Platonism, the influence of Platonic ideas on various Christian authors (Augustine, Clement, Grosseteste), and the 19th and 20th century inheritance of Platonic ideas.

As with any collection of conference papers, even a selection as in this volume, the quality of the papers varies somewhat; each however repays attention and reflection.

The volume begins with several papers focusing on Plato. Andre Archie ("Method and Decisions in Plato's *Phaedo*") argues that Socrates' arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo* are not fully demonstrative, nor are they intended by Plato as such. In support, Archie cites *Phd.* 84c4-6 and (a bit bizarrely) 61d8-e4. Archie's case is not fully compelling as stated however, and would be stronger if he had given an account of Socrates' words at *Phd.* 107b which, upon first glance, do seem to suggest that the final, long argument of 95b-107a is intended as demonstrative.

Miriam Byrd ("The return of the exile: the benefits of mimetic art in the *Republic*") turns to the longstanding problem of reconciling the accounts of mimesis of *Rep.* 2-3 and 10. Holding that Plato's discussion of the Divided Line includes the idea that contradictions can act as 'summoners' (παρκαλοῦντα, 523b9) for further thought, Byrd suggests that the apparent endorsement of some mimetic poetry at *Rep.* 2-3 and their banishment in *Rep.* 10 functions as just such a summoner. Byrd concludes that for Plato the mimetic art is both broader than mimetic poetry, and that this allows for a distinction between good and bad forms of mimesis. In this, Byrd shares some affinities with recent suggestions by Jessica Moss.¹

Other papers on Plato include the distinction by Siobhan McLoughlin ("Three Forms of Freedom in Plato") between three senses—political, psychological, and metaphysical—of ἐλευθερία in the *Republic*; an exploration by Laetitia Monteils-Laengs ("Destinée [*Moirai*] et naturel [*phusis*] chez Platon: quelle place pour la liberté humaine?") of the possibility of human free will in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*,

¹ J. Moss, "What is imitative poetry and why is it bad?" *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. Ferrari (Cambridge: 2007), 415-444.

Republic, *Timaeus*, and *Statesman*; and the suggestion by Aron Reppman ("The relevance of soul: how and why the soul comes up for discussion in Plato's *Phaedo*, *Meno*, and *Phaedrus*") that the topic of soul is typically introduced by Socrates as a protreptic device when things are at a standstill with his interlocutors.

Some of the most interesting papers were those which sought to show the fruitfulness of reading Plato and Aristotle in light of their ancient interpreters. Sebastian Gertz's piece ("Do Plato and Aristotle agree on self-motion in souls?") examines the controversy engendered by Aristotle's contention in the *Physics* (257b2-6) that the Platonic notion of self-motion gives rise to the paradox of soul as simultaneously undergoing and initiating motion. Gertz finds a development of interpretive strategies, first a strong opposition and defense of the Platonic position from Aristotle's attacks (Plotinus, Macrobius, Porphyry), followed by conciliatory attempts to argue that the differences between the two are linguistic only (Syrianus, Hermias, Themistius, Philoponus, Simplicius).

Marilynn Lawrence ("The Place of Chance or Fortune in Platonic Fate") and John Finamore ("The Tripartite Soul in Middle Platonism: Plutarch, Apuleius, and Alcinous") chart similarly sophisticated accounts of the development of central Platonic topics in the later tradition. Lawrence attempts to tease out some of the doctrines of Plutarch's lost *On Fate* by looking at several disparate passages from his extant treatises, coming to the conclusion that Plutarch's view of chance has more in common with Aristotle's notion of spontaneity than either the view of fate in Plato's dialogues or a multi-layered notion of providence typical of other Middle Platonists.

Finamore, the volume co-editor, focuses on a puzzle which has vigorously motivated Plato's ancient and contemporary interpreters: the conflict between Plato's alternating descriptions of the soul as tripartite and simple. Whereas later Neoplatonists (Porphyry, Iamblichus) rely on a metaphysical distinction between part (*μέρος*) and power (*δύναμις*) to reconcile Plato, Finamore notes that Middle Platonic solutions to this puzzle were wide-ranging and diverse. Plutarch collapses tripartite and bipartite theories of the soul and shows no interest in distinguishing parts from powers, Apuleius similarly correlates parts and powers but holds that only the rational part of the soul is immortal (consistent with the *Timaeus*), while finally Alcinous makes the somewhat radical suggestion that even the souls of the gods have a *latent* tripartite structure.

Remaining with late Platonic notions of the soul, Bernard Collette-Dučić ("On becoming a part: The case of attachment in Plotinus") distinguishes the closely related concepts of embodiment from that of attachment to external and bodily goods in Plotinus. This distinction, Collette-Dučić argues, provides Plotinus with the basis for philosophy as the means by which the soul is able to free itself from bodily concerns, despite the occurrence of this process in an embodied state.

Brian Keady ("Action and Intellection in Augustine's *De Trinitate*"), Anna Zhyrkova ("Reconstructing Clement of Alexandria's Doctrine of Categories"), and Enrica Ruaro ("Lovers of the Body': The Platonic Primacy of Soul vs. the Christian Affirmation of the Body") provide examples of the ways in which late antique philosophical themes were incorporated and explored by Christian authors. All three are interesting, though Ruaro's examination of Celsus' claim that Christians are lovers of the body is particularly fascinating. Anna Zhyrkova's attempt to reconstruct the logical theory of the categories of Book VIII of Clement's *Stromata* however would have been aided by the work of Jaap Mansfeld on the same topic.²

The volume closes with several pieces on the reception of Platonism after antiquity. John Hendrix ("Neoplatonic Influence in the Writings of Robert Grosseteste") makes a case for the transmission of Plotinian doctrines of light, concept formation, and imagination on Grosseteste through the influence of intervening Arabic commentaries. Sandra Dučić-Collette ("Turning point in the reception of Plato's *Symposium*: Hölderlin's Diotima in *Hyperion*") describes the fusion of Fichtean, Platonic, and Christian themes in Hölderlin's account of love. Sinclair Scott ("William James as American Plato?") explores the intriguing case of Whitehead's classification of William James as the 'American Plato'.

Finally, volume co-editor Robert Berchman ("Intellect, Sense Perception, and Intentionality in Brentano, Husserl, Aristotle, and Plotinus") argues that, despite the Aristotelian influence on Brentano's and Husserl's accounts of intentionality, there are clear differences between ancient theories of intentionality like those of Aristotle and Plotinus which admit only mental or noetic objects, versus the modern theories of Brentano and Husserl which also include a role for intentionality in the physical and aesthetic spheres. Berchman declines to comment whether such differences are the result of the intervening role played by medieval theories of intentionality.

In all, the volume displays the enduring legacy of Platonism as a tradition. A final minor point: I counted at least three different forms of Greek citations throughout the various contributions. One standard format would be welcome in future volumes in the series.

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² Cf. J. Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context* (Leiden: 1992), 62-66, 80-84.