Critical Notice

Philosophy and Thought in the Twilight of Antiquity

Lloyd P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* vols. 1–2 (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1284 pp. ISBN 978-0521-876421, £150.00.

This latest addition to the authoritative *Cambridge History of Philosophy* series concludes its examination of the development of philosophical thought in the Greco-Roman world. In contrast to CUP's *Companion* series, where the volumes focus on individual thinkers—*Plato*, *Aristotle* and *Plotinus*—their history of philosophy series is devoted to specific periods. The series began long ago with W.K.C. Guthrie's multi-volumed *Cambridge History of Greek Philosophy* (*GrPh*), followed recently by the *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (*HelPh*) and now completed by Lloyd Gerson's *Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (*LAnt*). The two handsome volumes of the *LAnt* come as a long needed replacement for the late A.H. Armstrong's single volumed *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (*LGrMed*), first published in 1967. Both projects encompass similar themes within roughly the same chronological limits—viz. the development of philosophical and theological thought between 120 AD and 860 AD. However, as its predecessor, the *LAnt* devotes independent sections to the periods that preceded Plotinus as well as to the roots of medieval thought, thus extending its time scale from the 1st century BCE to the 11th century CE. Some may feel that such a long stretch of time in both editions is not really a viable chronological continuum suitable for any single study. Indeed the first volume of the *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (*HMedPh*) takes up its cue not from the closing chapters of the *LAnt* on the 11th century, but from the 8th century—not to mention the *Cambridge History of Christianity* (*HChrPh*) whose first volume ends with Constantine.

The first volume (sections I–V) examines late Hellenistic and Roman thinkers down through Augustine; the second (sections VI–VIII) continues with the development of philosophy and theology from Plutarch of Athens down through Byzantine, Scholastic and Islamic thinkers at the turn of the first millennium. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser contributes three indispensable historical introductions to the main sections: “Philosophy in the Later Roman Empire” (vol. 1 pp. 11–24), “Philosophy in a Christian empire: from the great persecution to

Theodosius I" (pp. 376-396) and "From Constantine to Justinian" (vol. 2 pp. 583-615). Since the other entries naturally concentrate on philosophical issues, her contributions put them in their historical, political and social perspective. Her first introduction devotes much space to the dialogue between Christians and pagans and unfortunately somewhat less to the historical background of the controversies between different schools of pagan thinkers. The second follows the absorption of Platonist doctrine by early Christian writers and the ideological and physical pressure put on them and their pagan counterparts in a rapidly changing world. Her third introduction deals with the political events that led to the closure of the pagan schools and the social and theological reasons for changes in Christian theology following Constantine.

Although the main body of this edition chiefly addresses the scholarly world, the general reader will also find much of interest concerning a wide range of philosophical, historical and scientific issues discussed during this lengthy period. Written by contributors who have researched and published widely in the multifaceted interests of this field, the *LAnt* is at the cutting edge of scholarship examining discoveries less known to the non-scholarly world. The editor was correct not to confine this work within the narrower frame-work of the *LGrMed* and included contributions such as Gnosticism, Ptolemy and Second Sophistic alongside the stricter philosophical aspects of theology and theosophy of this period. Thus although formally entitled a 'History of Philosophy', the *LAnt* is much wider in scope embracing scientific and theological issues in addition to philosophy proper. With such a scheme and methodology, it obviously required a multi-level exposition of its subject matter from the very start. Thus while there is naturally much emphasis on the reception and interpretation of Plato in the sections on "Plotinus and the new Platonism" (section 3) and "Late Platonism" (section 6), there is interwoven an examination of the encounters between Christianity and Greek philosophy in the first, fifth and seventh sections with this theme continued in the final eighth section on the early medieval period.

However, in spite of this justified diachronic framework, the subject matter of the *LAnt* is nonetheless organized as a single historical continuum that is said to be in contrast to the approach employed in Armstrong's *LGrMed*. In her semi-polemical introduction, E. DePalma Digeser takes Armstrong to task for not conceptualizing "this era as a coherent historical period", understanding it merely as "intended to bridge classical and medieval thought" in accordance, it is said, with "nationalist paradigms" based on outmoded western concepts of "classical Athens and republican Rome" (vol. 1, pp. 13-14). To all who are acquainted with Armstrong's writings, such an assessment of his genuine love of late antiquity for its own sake is paradoxical to say the least. Another surprising criticism leveled at Armstrong is that he "minimizes the contribution of Latin philosophical texts except as

initiating a break with the classical paradigm” (p. 13). While it is true that the shorter *LGrMed* is necessarily more selective than the two volumed *LAnt*, there was no perceptible shortage of discussion of Latin philosophical and Christian texts.

On the positive side, the principal reason for a new history of late antiquity must surely be not these contingencies, but because our knowledge and understanding of this period has undergone a radical change in the last forty years. Consequently, Gerson has correctly opted for a completely different approach in allocating the topics. The material in hand has now grown beyond the scope of any single expert and even beyond the limits of a single expertise. Thus, while the *LGrMed* was a joint project contributed by a small group of eight scholars who examined the thought of late antiquity thematically, each topic clearly organized according to its philosophical and theological context, the two volumes of the *LAnt* comprise 48 separate discussions written by individual scholars, or pairs of scholars, whose projects are arranged chronologically within the confines of each thematic section. The employment of separate contributions does have the advantage of allowing each subject to be researched by an expert of note in a particular field. Although each is admirably written with the expected high standard of scholarship, my immediate remarks relate to the organization of the contributions within the publication as a whole. Since the topics are arranged linearly in chronological order, the *LAnt* is in the end not strictly a replacement for the *LGrMed*'s survey of philosophical ideas, but more of an encyclopedic introduction to the thought of individual thinkers and their immediate pupils. By contrast, the examination in the earlier edition by philosophical theme permitted a truly diachronic discussion of common ideas prevalent in the schools and thinkers of late antiquity. The *LGrMed* was able, for example, to devote separate sections to such themes as “The Philosophy of Icons” or “The Reaction against Proclus”, largely overlooked in the new edition. In fact only seven of the forty-eight entries of the *LAnt* are devoted to developing philosophical issues diachronically while the remainder discusses individual authors from Cicero to Eriugena, examined within their own circle or that of their coevals. Possibly, it was for this reason that the new edition no longer saw itself as a continuation of Guthrie's *GrPh* (cf. the remarks in *LAnt* I. p. 13)—although chronologically and contextually speaking it should be seen as following the recent *HelPh*. We should note, however, that the editors of the *HelPh* organized the entries according to philosophical themes—such as “Logic and Language”, “Epistemology” etc. The non-thematic and holistic approach of the *LAnt* somewhat contradicts Gerson's well-justified argument for unifying the study of the history of philosophy with the analysis of its thematic content (vol. I, p. 7). The *LAnt*, although divided by era in its sections, thus presents us with a series of separate encounters with thinkers and theologians. In principle, each thinker is allocated the same length of discussion

(25–32 pages) whether he is Plotinus or Marius Victorinus. As a result the readers may feel some disorientation from their accustomed perspective of the focal points of this “chronological continuum”. In particular, thinkers such as Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus and Augustine are allocated the same space as thinkers of much lesser note.

Since the *LGrMed* first appeared there have come and gone two whole generations of scholarly research. We are now blessed not only with better scientific editions and commentaries on our known texts, but also the welcome addition of whole libraries of new and previously unknown texts. The *LAnt* happily takes into account this entirely new codicological and papyrological treasure trove much of which is directly relevant to the study of Middle Platonic, Neoplatonic, and neo-Pythagorean thought during this period. Best known is the recent and on-going publication of the Nag Hammadi library and other cognate material, but also of note are the translations and publication of new Neoplatonic texts recovered from Arabic and Armenian in recent years. All of this new material impinges not only on our understanding of the history of Gnostic and Christian ideas directly, but also on the history of Neoplatonism albeit with differing degrees of relevance.

However, because of constrictions of length, contributions such as Gnosticism (E. Moore—J.D. Turner) in vol. 1 are all too briefly examined. The authors of the entry make a valiant attempt to set forth the new material of this abstruse subject within their allotted 24 pages, but as a result much may be lost not only to the general reader, but even to experts in other aspects of ancient thought. As growing sciences—especially that of Gnosticism—many readers may regret that the contributors were not allocated more space to set forth this new material for the non-expert more clearly. This after all is a new field at the cutting edge of scholarship. As a result of these constrictions, the cognate topic of the Hermetic corpus receives less than half a page as a mere appendix to the entry on Gnosticism (p. 194). In view of the importance of Hermeticism in western thought from the period of Humanism down to the modern period, it would have been useful for a discussion of the Hermetic corpus to have been allocated either an entry of its own, or even better, a longer and more detailed assessment of its relationship with the new Gnostic texts. The sections of the entry on Sethian Gnosticism will be of particular interest to those wishing to place it in a Platonic and neo-Platonic milieu in regard to the material dyad and the monadic source.

In addition to newly discovered texts, *LAnt* also takes into account our reappraisal of the Platonic and Aristotelian contribution to pre- and post-Plotinian thought. The development of pre-Plotinian thought is discussed in the first two sections (vol. 1). However instead of the traditional organization of the various

philosophers under the admittedly nebulous titles of “Middle Platonic” and “Neoplatonic”, Gerson has banned these divisions “by editorial fiat” (vol. I, p. 3). Most of the contributors either ignored the editor’s prohibition, or elegantly side-stepped the issue by adopting an almost identical division of pre- and post-Plotinian philosophy. This is no mere semantic quibble as parts of the first section leave the reader somewhat perplexed as to the common interests of this period. As the contributors correctly saw, the key to understanding the thought of this period stands in close relation to ideas promoted by earlier philosophers. The reception and rejection of their thought during the late Hellenistic and early Roman period mark the contributions of the first section:

1. Gábor Betegh (“The transmission of ancient wisdom: texts, doxographies, libraries”) discusses the preservation and evaluation of philosophical works between the 1st century BCE and the second century CE. Some discussion of popular works outside of the school structure could also have been considered. Transmission of texts was in fact a complex process of epitomizing and re-editing often disseminated in the popular market of ancient times.
2. In “Platonism before Plotinus”, Harold Tarrant traces the interpretation of Platonic philosophy during this same period. His section on ‘Varieties of Platonism’ examines the relationship between leading thinkers often loosely classified as “Middle Platonists”. These, it is argued, should no longer be characterized by their level of interest in philosophy outside of Plato, but rather by their specific interest in different Platonic texts. The final section is a diachronic discussion of the development of such themes as epistemology, logic, physics, psychology and ethics by pre-Plotinian thinkers. Although previous scholarship has been more interested in separating Platonic (chiefly Old and New Academic) thinkers from Stoic and Aristotelian beliefs, Tarrant saw such “a wide range of precedents” at Plotinus’ disposal that his choice for favouring any specific view for discussion should now be considered “idiosyncratic” rather than of allegiance to previous systems.
3. In “Cicero and the New Academy”, Carlos Levy discusses two other aspects of this period: the division of the skeptical New Academy in the late Republic and Cicero’s manipulation of its ideas in his dialogues. He concludes that “the boundary between Hellenistic philosophy and Middle Platonism was much more permeable than was generally thought”. It would have been nice if this interesting conclusion could have been further expanded although admittedly Levy’s task was limited to the relationship of late Academic skepticism and Greco-Roman society.

There next follow separate entries on the other major schools and movements during this early period (Stoics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans and Platonists):

4. In “Numenius of Apamea”, Mark Edwards explains Numenius’ use not only of Plato, but also of Judeo-Christian and pagan sources for his compositions with particular emphasis on the Good, the soul and cosmos. In conclusion, it is argued that Numenius should be regarded more as “an eccentric Platonist” and an independent thinker rather than a plagiarizer of ideas as often proposed.
5. Because of constrictions of length, Brad Inwood’s entry on “Stoicism” is a general and non-particular discussion of this school in the later Greco-Roman world, the reader being referred to the *HelPh* for greater detail.
6. R.W. Sharples (“Peripatetics”) includes an indispensable introduction to newly examined sources that shed light on their work during this intermediary period—notably, the Archimedes palimpsest and fragments preserved in Arabic. Alexander of Aphrodisias, discussed in the previous entry on the Stoa, is now examined in his true Aristotelian colors rather than as a “renegade Platonist”.
7. It is refreshing to see included “The Second Sophistic” (Ryan Fowler) alongside the other philosophical schools. Too often this topic is relegated to rhetoric and literature. Fowler closes with an interesting discussion of the Third Sophistic and Plato although his conclusion that the final “Hellenistic philosophical schools were moribund” even at this period (p. 113) may raise some eye-brows.
8. In “The *Chaldaean Oracles*”, John F. Finamore and Sarah I. Johnston view the Oracles’ philosophical ideas as “a variation of the Middle-Platonic schema” with precedents in Pythagorean and Platonic writers. In the following section, there is a fascinating discussion of the ritualistic system for animating statues, the concept of calling down (*anagoge*) of the gods and the link of man to the thoughts of the heavenly Father. The contributors conclude with a discussion of the importance of theurgy and ritual for an understanding of pre-Plotinian thought that naturally prepares us for the later entries on Porphyry and Iamblichus. If more space could have been allocated, recent experimentation in reconstructing temple machinery to move statues and sacred objects by magnetic and Heronic, steam-powered means could have been taken into account. Although these are merely the banausic aspects of animation, they explain how theurgy and temple worship gained their following.

A point, however, must be made concerning one important topic overlooked in this section of the new edition. In these discussions of Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean and Platonist thought in the late Republic and early Empire, mention of

Epicurus is only sporadic and Epicureanism, whether Greek or Roman, is not included as a theme of its own. Given that the edition is not a history of Neoplatonism, but of philosophy in late antiquity, some may feel that the contribution to philosophical thought of this period by figures like Lucretius, Philodemus and even the slightly later Diogenes of Oenoanda should have warranted an independent entry on late Epicureanism itself.

Nonetheless, each of the contributions included in this section will prove of paramount interest to both general and professional readers although their arrangement may give the impression that this early period of late antiquity was merely a dislocated potpourri of ideas floating around and standing in no connection with each other. This is in fact part of the editorial policy under which the accepted divisions are to be “abolished” although apparently the even more nebulous term, “Second Sophistic”, is chosen to remain. To an extent this is ameliorated by the Gerson’s brief introduction and Elizabeth Digeser’s first introduction on thought from the Antonines to Constantine.

The revival and examination of Plato’s thought during this period are discussed in the next section on “Plotinus and the new Platonism” (pt. III) with articles on: “Plotinus”, “Porphyry” and “Iamblichus”:

1. In the first of these, D.J. O’Meara admits from the start that it is “not possible, in one brief chapter, to do justice to the breadth and depth of Plotinus’ philosophy” (p. 306). His discussion is divided into sections on: Plotinus’ thought on first principles, reality, knowledge and the Good with a brief conclusion on Plotinus and later Platonism.
2. Andrew Smith’s illuminating entry on “Porphyry and his School” is beset by similar problems of fitting him into the allocated length. Students will find Smith’s systematization of his thought, especially the Intellect (pp. 334-338), particularly useful. The controversial issues of Porphyry’s relationship to Christianity, speculation on a Porphyrian school and the disputed relationship of the *Commentary on Parmenides* to it are examined in the final section.
3. In “Iamblichus of Chalcis and his School”, John Dillon clearly sets forth this thinker’s complicated philosophy in relation to the earlier Chaldaen Oracles, Plotinus and the later Proclus. He closes with an account of Iamblichus’ school and a note on theurgy.

Each of these three thinkers, considered by many to be the jewel in the crown of Neoplatonic philosophy, was allocated the same space as lesser known thinkers and these limits may alter the general reader’s understanding of the traditional foci of thought during this period. As the kernel of much that came after and the culmination of much that preceded them, they should surely have merited longer and more detailed discussions than 24-30 pages. Moreover, the

fragments of Porphyry and Iamblichus have been substantially augmented and the former recently re-edited, which alone would require a comparatively longer discussion.

The first volume closes with "Philosophy in the Age of Constantine" (pt. IV), where leading figures of the schools of Constantinople and Alexandria are examined:

1. Inna Kupreeva discusses Themistius' philosophical ideals and the extent of his originality, a field little noticed by the general reader;
2. In "The Alexandrian school. Theon of Alexandria and Hypatia", Alain Bernard tackles the problem of the philosophy and Ptolemaism of Hypatia and her father, the final section dealing with the mathematician Pappus and Ptolemy's heritage in general;
3. In "Hierocles of Alexandria", Hermann Schibli argues for Hierocles' Platonic, rather than Middle Platonic metaphysics. His view of the One, the Demiurge and created order are compared to the thought of Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus. The examination of his concept of "Divine likeness" in relation to previous philosophers could also have included *homoiosis theō* in Plato and Philo.

Late Platonism and especially the Athenian Neoplatonic schools are the themes of the first half of part VI (vol. 2):

1. The entries, "Plutarch of Athens" (pp. 608-615) and "Syrianus" (616-629), are two brief contributions by Angela Longo summarizing the Platonic and Aristotelian exegeses of these two thinkers and endeavoring to underpin the organization of their thought;
2. Carlos Steel examines Proclus' religiosity and "theological projects". Although not always described sympathetically (p. 651), Proclus' originality in matters of cause and self-causation is clearly set forth despite the brief space (23 pages) allocated to this central figure;
3. In "Ammonius Hermeiou and his School", David Blank opens with a detailed and fascinating account of Ammonius' life, followed by a reconstruction of his Aristotelian and Proclan interests, raising the unusual suggestion that he deliberately espoused a particular variety of Platonism suitable for conciliation with Christianity (p. 666);
4. Gerd van Riel's valuable contribution on Damascius opens with the vexatious problems of reconstructing his biography, followed by an illuminating analysis of his methodology and thought on first principles, the intelligible world, soul, matter and place and pleasure and happiness, and followed by a discussion of how Damascius moved from severe critic of Proclus to Iamblichus' metaphysics;

5. Jan Opsomer discusses the authenticity and dating of Olympiodorus' works, the problems in distinguishing his thought from that of the subjects of his commentaries—and *inter alia*, the unusual idea that his pupils Elias and David were not necessarily Christians as widely supposed;
6. Han Baltussen's "Simplicius of Cilicia" makes an eloquent case for treating Simplicius' commentaries as a means to present his personal philosophy rather than that of the philosopher under discussion. After examining his life-time—tantamount to the last days of pagan teaching in Athens—Baltussen suggests that we read these commentaries as discussions on Simplicius' philosophy of language, logic, physics and cosmology. The perplexing question of his interest in Stoic ethics (Epictetus) is also examined;
7. In "John Philoponus", Koenraad Verrycken argues against recent interpretations of his works solely in a Christian context and makes a sound case for reviving the older two-tiered understanding of Philoponus' career. His early philosophy is seen as a Platonic interpretation of Aristotle where his theology is much influenced by Ammonius but purified of its Proclan complexity. His early theory of the soul and the sensible world is seen as incompatible with his later Christian abandonment of the Ammonian harmonization between Plato and Aristotle in the spheres of the soul and the sensible world;
8. In "Priscian of Lydia and Pseudo-Simplicius on the soul", F.A.J. de Haas argues that the physics of Priscian's *Solutiones* should be seen as a confirmation of his Platonic metaphysics. Similarly, his psychological work is described as a late-Platonic, if not an Iamblichan, interpretation of Aristotle. Since this is also a feature of the Pseudo-Simplicius commentary, the contributor accepts the suggestion that the thought of either author belongs to the same Damascian milieu, but differ from the psychological theory of the genuine Simplicius and that much further research is needed.

One important aspect of this volume is, however, missing: Julian the Apostate and Sallustius are scarcely mentioned and then mostly in relation to their political activity. Since the next sections are devoted to Christian dialogue with pagan thought, a separate entry on Julian and Sallustius could easily have been included in this section.

All of the entries in this section make fascinating reading although the place occupied by Proclus in the history of philosophy would surely have justified more than the same 24 pages assigned to lesser figures. Even the *LGrMed* saw the 'Reaction against Proclus' as a key theme to understanding John of Scythopolis (mentioned only in passing in the *LAnt*) and Philoponus (cap. 31). One cannot help wondering at this stage whether a division of the entire edition into three independent volumes may not have been preferable: one on Middle and Pre-Plotinian philosophies (Gnostic, neo-Pythagorean etc.), one on Plotinus and his

contemporaries, and one on the post-Plotinian and Neo-Platonic schools. By thus allocating more space to the discussion in parts III and VI, the contributors would have been able to give a more balanced and diachronic view of the subsequent period.

As in Armstrong's *LGrMed*, the new project examines the absorption of ancient philosophy by Christianity, but here treated as three separate encounters with ancient Greek philosophy. The "First Encounter of "Judaism and Christianity" (vol. I pt. II) includes the following contributions:

1. David Winston ("Philo of Alexandria") examines "the virtually ignored" uniqueness of Philo's exegetical technique. The contributor derives it from pre-Socratic authors barely remembered in Philo's time, while he rejects the more contemporary Stoic and proto-midrashic models. His discussion of Philo's theories of creation, freedom and determinism, the soul and its passions includes interesting and important comparisons with Aristotelian, Stoic and Middle Platonic interpretations of the *Timaeus*. Far-reaching analogies are made between Philo and later Hasidic, Sufi and medieval Jewish sources while the more relevant Qumran and Nag-Hammadi exegeses are unfortunately left unexamined in this entry.
2. Denis Minns ("Justin Martyr") discusses Justin's theory of divine *logos*, revealed not only in the Old Testament, but to a lesser extent to philosophers like Numenius although the only useful philosophy is, in Justin's opinion, that of Christianity. Divine and spermatic *logos* connect the human mind to God and, although the soul survives death, it remains sensate.
3. Catherine Osborne ("Clement of Alexandria") disentangles the logical structure of Clement's writings too often described as eclectic and disorganized. From this she extracts his epistemology, metaphysics, cosmology, ethics and even a "metaphilosophy".
4. Emanuela Prinzivalli's examines "Origen" the Christian, here distinguished from his pagan homonym although both are still associated with Ammonius Saccas (p. 284). In this stimulating contribution, the author discusses Origen's understanding of Platonic philosophy in his biblical commentaries and his dialogue with the Gnostics.

The second encounter (vol. 1 pt. V) bridges the period of the late fourth century down to 430 CE:

1. In "Basil of Casesarea", Lewis Ayres and Andrew Radde-Gallwitz) discuss Basil's thought on creation and providence, as well as his logical analysis of the concept of trinity.
2. Anthony Meredith contributes "Gregory of Nyssa" examining the connection between his rhetoric, theology and Platonic philosophy.

3. In “Gregory of Nazianzus”, John A. McGuckin examines his reaction to Julian and the Arian crisis in his role as a religious philosopher.
4. G. Reydam-Schils examines Calcidius’ hermeneutic method and the vexed question of his dependency on Porphyry.
5. Man’s place in the universe and freedom of will are examined by Beatrice Motta in “Nemesius of Emesa”, including his rearrangement of philosophical concepts for Christian use.
6. In “Synesius”, Jay Bregman examines Platonic and Neo-Platonic influence on the hymns and his concept of incarnation, concluding that Synesius’ thought was a syncretism of Hellenic Platonism and Christianity.
7. S.A. Cooper discusses Marius Victorinus’ Platonistic-Plotinian understanding of ontology, the trinity and the soul.
8. Giovanni Catapano examines Augustine’s thought on the soul, knowledge, ethics, politics, the trinity and creation.

Volume 2 takes up “The third encounter of Christianity” (pt. VII) covering:

1. “Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite” (Eric Perl) where the Platonic-Plotinian background of the Hidden God is examined as well as the concept of causation as manifestation, procession and reversion, and hierarchy, including a discussion of his mysticism and symbolism.
2. In “Boethius”, John Magee explains his philosophy of science and the question of his adherence to Plato or to Aristotle or to both.
3. In “Maximus the Confessor”, David Bradshaw sets forth his ontology and perception of the intelligible in the realm of the sensible, time and eternity and his theory of Will.
4. In “John Scotus Eriugena”, W. Hankey and L.P. Gerson discuss his thought on the first principle, anthropology and epistemology.

All the entries in this section will be of paramount importance to those interested in the absorption and transformation of philosophical ideas by early Christian writers as well as their criticism of pagan thought. In this case, the *LAnt* was able to afford much greater space to Pseudo-Dionysus, St. Basil, St. Gregory and Eriugena than Armstrong’s *LGrMed* whereas the latter, on the other hand, was able to grant Augustine his accepted focal position in western Christian thought.

The second volume closes with “Philosophy in transition” (pt. VIII) concluding with separate articles on the legacy of ancient philosophy in Byzantine (K. Ierodiakonou—G. Zografidis), Islamic (C. d’Ancona) and mediaeval Latin thought (S. Gersh). This being the last section, it intends to explain the final development of ancient philosophy during that era and its absorption by mediaeval Christianity and Islam. Nonetheless, there are some surprising omissions.

There are less than two pages devoted to the role of Syriac philosophy (pp. 870-871), in spite of its important contribution, not only to Arabic translations and understanding of Greek logic, but also to Christian philosophy and theology during the preceding period. Moreover, if Christianity and Islam are to be included as independent sections, one wonders why Jewish philosophy is examined only in the article on Philo, with no discussion of Jewish thought of late antiquity. Yet the latter's use of Neoplatonic ideas is well attested even for the earlier period—and examined at length in the *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy* as well as in the *HMedPh*. Even if one does not accept the traditional early dating of the Zohar and the Kabbalah, the influence of Neoplatonism on later sections of the Talmud and early Midrash (both largely contemporary with many of the Christian and Islamic texts examined in vol. II) would warrant some inclusion of Jewish philosophy alongside them. As several scholars have noted, encounters between Rabbis and Greek philosophers are developed and discussed as early as the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods. Imaginative discourses between theologians of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are the themes of Hebrew writings coeval with the texts discussed in the final section. Neoplatonic and neo-Aristotelian elements in Jewish thought influenced much in early Medieval Christianity and Islam even if we discount Rivitsky's theory of Aristotelian influence on early Rabbinic thought. Yet, the fact that these topics are being widely aired today would warrant some mention here.

By contrast, the theme of "Early Byzantine Philosophy" (K. Ierodiakonou—G. Zografidis) was only briefly examined in Armstrong's *LGrMed*. The detailed discussion in the *LAnt* will provide much help to the general reader since the less frequently examined topic of Byzantine thought is fast becoming a leading subject of scholarly research.

The second volume closes with an ample appendix listing works and authors of late antiquity (pp. 915-965) as well as a useful *index locorum* (pp. 1183-1248) for those seeking discussion on specific texts. The massive bibliography is unhappily organized partly by section and partly by chapter, but will nonetheless prove of great help as the most comprehensive list on modern scholarship of this period. There is no doubt that the *LAnt* will occupy an authoritative position although as an edition in two large volumes, its price may lie beyond the reach of the average student.

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