Filip Karfík and Euree Song (eds.)  

This is an inspiring collection of twenty-four essays in German, French, English, and Italian, in honour of an outstanding scholar. The scientific quality of the essays is consistently good, and in several cases excellent, even though the thematic unity is not very strong, as is inevitable in these cases. In the interest of space, given the dense and sizeable nature of the volume, I will necessarily have to be selective in my discussion.

Werner Beierwaltes offers a refined discussion of Plotinus’s theory of art and beauty in an anagogical perspective. Alexandrine Schniewind studies the status of intelligible objects in both Alexander of Aphrodisias and Plotinus, who knew the former philosopher’s works as well as Origen of Alexandria, his fellow-disciple, did.¹ She rightly remarks that, on the one side, for Alexander all the intelligible objects are the same divine intellect, and, on the other, that “Plotin est le premier à soutenir que si l’Intellect contient les intelligibles comme ses seuls et uniques objets, il est nécessairement identique à la somme totale des intelligibles. Or, si tel est le cas, l’Intellect est à la fois un et multiple, il est un-multiple,” ἐν πάντα (36-37). I just add that both the Middle Platonist Clement of Alexandria and the Middle-Neoplatonist Origen conceived the Νόος as unity and multiplicity together, ὡς τὰ πάντα ἐν in Clement’s words, because the Nous—which they identified with Christ/Logos—contains in itself all the Ideas or logoi or thoughts of God.² The unity-plurality dialectic is also in the focus of the following essay, by Pascal Mueller-Jourdan, who, highlighting both similarities and differences, explores Proclus’s principle that every plurality participates someway in unity (*El. Th.* 1) as taken over by Ps. Dionysius, one of the greatest Christian Platonists. Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson draws a comparison between Plato, Plotinus, and Leibniz and argues soundly that probably Plotinus influenced Leibniz’s metaphysics, but indirectly. For the principle that every monad reflects everything (65) I would also suggest a relationship with Proclus’s tenet πάντα ἐν πᾶσι ἀλλ’ σιχείως.


John Dillon revisits the mind-body problem in Plotinus and, as a philosophical background to this, deems it likely that the theory of the pneumatic vehicle (ὄχημα) of the soul took shape in early Imperial Platonism. I only add that this theory was embraced and developed also by the Christian Platonist Origen of Alexandria, not cited here among its supporters. His doctrine of the ὄχημα of the soul and the metaphysical εἶδος of the body was subject to a number of misunderstandings on the part of his Christian followers and critics, such as Methodius.\(^3\) This was both a “pagan” and a Christian Platonic doctrine. But Dillon rightly asks why it was followed by Porphyry (who, by the way, was well acquainted with Origen’s works) and not by Plotinus, apart from a passing reference in Enn. 2.6.26.5. Dillon argues that Plotinus had a substitute for it, better suited for his own anthropology: the “shadow” or σκιά of the soul, which in conjunction with the body could give account of the πάθη. Plotinus, like Gregory Nyssen after him and under his influence, I note, regarded πάθη and the irrational parts or faculties of the soul as unnatural to the “real” (rational) soul. Filip Karfík concentrates on the image of the assembly in Enn. 6.4.22.15, with the opposition between the disordered people and the wise elders, the latter representing the pure soul. The whole assembly represents the composite of the living body and the “trace” of the soul.

Euree Song questions Porphyry’s portrait of Plotinus as ashamed of being in a body (VP 1) and contrasts this statement with Elias’ testimony in Prol. p. 15.31-32 that, according to Plotinus, the philosopher should not entirely neglect the body but care for it in an appropriate way. Just as God cares for us, so ought the philosopher care for his or her body. This position is plausibly associated with Plotinus’s polemic against the Gnostics and his claim that in the product of the Creator there is nothing to be ashamed of (Enn. 3.2.47.3-6). Indeed, in Enn. 3.9.33.6, directed against the Gnostics, Plotinus criticises the latter for blaming the soul for its community with the body. If Narbonne’s thesis—not cited by Song—that even more of Plotinus’s thought than the Großschrift had anti-Gnostic overtones,\(^4\) this would make the connection between Plotinus’s refusal to reject the care for the body altogether and his anti-Gnostic polemic

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Even stronger. At any rate, this connection is very probable and is the same, I note, at work in Plotinus’s fellow-disciple, Origen of Alexandria, who spent his life to argue against Valentinian “Gnosticism” and to construct an anthropology that was too easily misunderstood as entailing the pre-existence of “bare” souls. Song contrasts Plotinus’s thesis that the soul descends into the body to actualise her generous power to benefit the body and perfect the universe, with Porphyry’s view that the cause of embodiment is a certain viciousness, μοχθηρία, of the soul (Abst. 1.30). I would observe that Origen, whose ideas Porphyry knew very well, maintained both that some souls descend into the world without viciousness, to assist the process of salvation, and that most souls descend as a result of a fault. This, however, for Origen does not determine the embodiment of a previously “bare” soul, but rather the transformation of the spiritual, luminous, and immortal body of a rational creature into a heavy, mortal body (or, worse still, into a demonic body). Song concludes that Porphyry himself, and not Plotinus, was ashamed of being in a body, and simply projected onto Plotinus his own ideas and attitude. I find that something very similar happened with Porphyry’s attribution to Plotinus of his own notion and terminology of ὑπόστασις, distinct from that of Plotinus and very likely influenced by Origen’s innovative concept and terminology.

Lenka Karfíková carefully and insightfully investigates the relationship between soul and ratio in Augustine’s De immortalitate animae (387 CE). She convincingly argues that the opinion that the immortality of the soul depends on its relation to ratio is to be understood against the background of Plotinus’s philosophy. I only add that Origen, too, whose ideas Augustine knew through various channels and followed during his anti-Manichaean phase, had the immortality of the soul depend on its relation to the Logos, Christ. “The soul is mortal with respect to the real death”, i.e. spiritual death, caused by evil, but if it sticks to Christ-Logos, who is Good itself (qua God) and Life itself, it remains immortal. The soul, being for Origen—as well as for Plotinus—primarily the rational or intellectual soul, or better the logikon, the rational creature, can exist only in its relation to the Logos. This notion will be taken over

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and developed forcefully by Maximus the Confessor. I would not rule out that Augustine, too, was aware of, and influenced by, it at the end of the eighties of the fourth century.

László Bene studies Plotinus’s ethical intellectualism and the way he sets out his ethics in terms of metaphysics, emphasising that Plotinus’s ethics did not detach the philosopher from solidarity with the others. His tenet that only virtuous actions are viable candidates for (partial) autonomy is rightly traced back to Plato’s assertion that virtue is something that has no master (ἁρετὴ ἀδέσποτον, Resp. 617E3), quoted by Plotinus himself at 6.8.5.31 just as it was repeatedly quoted by Christian Platonists such as Clement, Origen, and Gregory Nyssen. Especially Origen and his close follower Nyssen grounded in this the principle that only virtuous actions are free. Also, Plotinus’s tenet that the Divine Intellect is a model of human freedom, correctly pointed out by Bene, was a principle consistently deployed by Nyssen, who knew Plotinus well.8 Marie-Luise Lakmann analyses the treatise On Old Age, Περὶ γήρως, by Juncus, preserved fragmentarily by Stobaeus, and shows that it reveals a good knowledge of Plato, especially his Phaedo, Timaeus, and Republic, though not a deep grasp of Platonism.

Suzanne Stern-Gillet offers an in-depth, engaging reflection on Enn. 6.8.39 to cast light on the thorny question of Plotinus’s attitude toward suicide and its admissibility, which seems to be defended in 1.4.46 but not in 1.9.16. She convincingly concludes that by the time Plotinus wrote 6.8.39 he had changed his mind from 1.9.16 and admitted that in some circumstances the sage will kill herself as a legitimate way out of external circumstances which would compromise the integrity of the higher self, when no other honourable way out is available. Stern-Gillet’s detailed analysis of Plotinus’s ethical concepts is particularly helpful to make her conclusive point. In this connection, she is right to highlight the interaction between illumination of the intellect and purification of the soul for Plotinus. This close interaction will be at work in a Christian Platonist who was well acquainted with Plotinus as well as with Origen and Gregory Nyssen: Evagrius.9 Daniela Taormina corrects a widespread scholarly

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8 See the forceful use of this principle in Nyssen’s philosophico-theological arguments against the legitimacy of slavery and elsewhere (Ilaria Ramelli, “Gregory Nyssen’s Position in Late-Antique Debates on Slavery and Poverty and the Role of Ascetics”, Journal of Late Antiquity 5 [2012] 87-118).

9 On the interaction between illumination of the intellect and purification of the soul in Evagrius see my Evagrius Ponticus’ Kephalaia Gnostika, forthcoming in Leiden-Atlanta, esp. the introductory essay, “Recovering the True Thought of the Origenian Evagrius”, and the commentary, passim.
opinion that Porphyry wrote a treatise *On What Depends on Us* (Περὶ τοῦ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν) handed down by Stobaeus fragmentarily. She argues that Porphyry in fact tackled the issue of human autonomy within a larger commentary on Plato’s myth of Er in his *Republic*. Taormina does well to remark that recent research on the anthological tradition has indicated how important it is to distinguish the aims of the author of the excerpted texts, in this case Porphyry, from those of the excerptor, in this case Stobaeus (212). This is also what emerges from a recent volume on Stobaeus that is not cited here but is very relevant from the methodological viewpoint.10 Christian Tornau examines Augustine’s Letter 155 to Macedonius and how it reflects the Neoplatonist doctrine of the degrees of virtue.

Irmgard Männlein-Robert illustrates how Marinus in his *Vita Procli* describes Proclus as the personification of Platonism as philosophy of happiness (εὐδαιμονία), especially at chs. 2 and 34. Even in the manuscript tradition, the very title of this bio-hagiography is Πρὸκλος ἢ περὶ εὐδαιμονίας, *Proclus or On Happiness*. On p. 251 βίος τελείος, meaning the perfect life of which Proclus is a paradigm, should be corrected into βίος τέλειος. Rafael Ferber focuses on the paradox of the government of philosophers in Plato’s *Republic, Politicus*, and *Laws*, pointing out both evolution and continuity in Plato’s political thought. He correctly remarks that Plato’s ethics and politics can only be understood on the basis of his metaphysics,11 and he submits that the *Republic* was not conceived utopistically by Plato, but as a real possibility. Cinzia Arruzza discusses the “noble lie” of Plato’s *Republic* 414 BC, a γενναῖον ψεῦδον that is also a myth. The analysis detects three layers of meaning: literal, moral (linked to the value of education), and ironical (to show that true nobility does not depend on birth). The sound conclusion is that one can honestly and nobly tell a factually false story, provided that through it one is transmitting an ethical truth. Ada Neschke-Hentschke provides a detailed analysis and partition of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.10 and Plato’s *Laws* 9.859B5-864C9, two key texts for appreciating Plato’s concept of ἀδικία and Aristotle’s development of it.

Andrew Smith researches the image of Egypt as a source of wisdom in Plato and the “pagan” Platonist tradition. I would contrast the tradition of Egypt as the land of bodily pleasure and death due to sin, supported by Philo of Alexandria and Christian Platonists such as Origen and Gregory Nyssen,

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clearly on the basis of the Biblical story of the Hebrews’ captivity in Egypt.\textsuperscript{12} At the same time, Egypt was sometimes seen as the land in which Plato came into contact with the Hebraic wisdom, expressed in Scripture. This was an apologetic move to show that Greek philosophy, epitomised by Plato, in fact depended on the more ancient “Mosaic philosophy”\textsuperscript{13} Smith correctly notes that Plato’s Atlantis myth was understood literally only by Crantor, while all other Platonists interpreted it allegorically: Numenius, Origen, Amelius, and Porphyry; Syrianus and Proclus posited both the literal and the allegorical exegetical planes. I deem it probable that Origen the interpreter of Plato’s myths, of whom Proclus speaks, is identifiable with Origen the Christian Platonist.\textsuperscript{14} Smith also provides the interesting observation that Plotinus, who was born in Egypt, used ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics to express the notion of transcendental truths (\textit{Enn.} 5.8.6.1-9). I just add that the symbolical interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics was integrated in philosophical allegoresis by the early imperial Stoic Chaeremon of Alexandria, well known to Clement, Origen, and Plotinus himself.

Tatjana Aleknienė insightfully analyses Plotinus’s philosophical prayer to the One, identified with God, in \textit{Treatise} 10 [v.1] against the backdrop of previous texts of Greek philosophers, starting from those of Plato himself. She argues that Plotinus had Philo of Alexandria at the back of his mind. This is quite interesting, also in that the “pagan” Platonic reception of Philo is under-investigated—and sometimes ruled out a priori—in comparison with his staggering and well-researched Christian reception. At 6.8.12 Plotinus speaks of a tension of the soul out of itself toward prayer to God (τῇ ψυχῇ ἐκτείνασιν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς εὐχὴν πρὸς ἐκεῖνον). Now this idea is found only in Philo, \textit{Ebr.} 152, Maximus of Tyre, \textit{Diss.} 2, and in \textit{Selecta in Psalmos} from the \textit{Catenae}, PG 12.1573.21, attributed to Origen. The last passage is, notably, the only other one in which the notion of the soul’s tension toward God is explicitly related to prayer, just as in Plotinus’s passage. Origen certainly knew Philo very well and was exceedingly


influenced by him, so he could have drawn his notion from Philo, and even from Maximus, whose ideas he likely knew. But given the closest similarity between Plotinus’s and Origen’s passages, due to the connection with prayer, Aleknienė hypothesises that, if *Sel. in Ps.* 12.1573.21 is in fact later than Origen, it could contain a response to Plotinus. I suspect that even if the passage should be by Origen himself, who lived until 255/6 ca., it would still be possible to take it as a response to the ideas of Plotinus († 270), Origen’s fellow-disciple at Ammonius Saccas’.

Denis O’Brien criticises the common interpretation of stillness in Augustine *Conf.* 9.10; given the detailed discussion of the text he provides, also with comparisons with Plotinus, it might have been good to print the Latin original and perhaps a translation. Augustine is depicted, with reason, as a man who became again a believer while remaining a philosopher, a Neoplatonist; I would detail that Augustine also absorbed Origen’s Christian Platonism, to the point of espousing Origen’s doctrine of apokatastasis for a while. In the Ostia pericope, as O’Brien shows, Augustine refers to Plotinus’ treatise *On the Three Principal Hypostases*, Περὶ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων. Its title was given by Porphyry to Plotinus’s treatise likely under the influence of Origen’s three υποστάσεις-ἀρχαί, and was indeed copied later by Eusebius, Origen’s follower. Like Origen and Eusebius, Augustine identified the three principal hypostases with the Persons of the Trinity, an operation facilitated by Plotinus’s calling the One “Father”. The same Plotinian passage was also echoed by Basil of Caesarea and Proclus.

Jacques Schamp in a fine, erudite contribution examines Themistius’s *Oration 23, Sophist*, and rightly characterises him—a Platonising Aristotelian—as “de tendance monothéiste” (373). Themistius opposes Iamblichus’s teaching and the “old song” of the Academy and the Lyceum to “the song of the new sirens”, which might be the Christian philosophy. It must be borne in mind, however, that our philosopher-orator lived the peak of his career under Theodosius, the emperor who turned Christianity into the State religion, and was the preceptor of the emperor’s son even though, to our knowledge, he never became a Christian. His attitude toward Christianity seems to have been

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17 See Ramelli, “Hypostasis”.
fairly positive. Alain Lernould supplies a running commentary of Boethius’s hymn *O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas* (Cons. 3, metr. 9), a résumé of the first part of Plato’s *Timaeus*, read—as Lernould argues—through Proclus’s commentary. Lernould agrees with earlier commentators that at vv. 4-6 Boethius attributes goodness to the Creator, but remarks that here Boethius is not following Proclus (380). I think he is following Plato—who called the Demiurge “good” in *Tim.* 29A; *Rep.* 2.379 BC—, also with Christian Platonism on his mind: for Origen God the Creator was “Good Itself”. The volume is rounded off by memories of O’Meara’s inspiring teaching in philosophy, by Alexandre Jollien, and a bibliography of his scholarly works, by Nicolas d’Andrès. This is an engaging collection that in a variety of ways testifies to the vitality, richness, and profundity of the Platonic tradition, “pagan” and Christian alike.

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