

Debra Nails and Harold Tarrant, eds., (2015) *Second Sailing: Alternative Perspectives on Plato*. Commentationes humanarum litterarum, 132. Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters. xi + 366 pp. ISBN 9789516534094.

Like the work of its honorand Holger Thesleff, *Second Sailing: Alternative Perspectives on Plato* consists of a collection of wide-ranging, probing, and philologically grounded studies both of particular Platonic dialogues and of Platonic philosophy more broadly conceived. What holds them all together, and constitutes the volume's character as a second sailing, is a shared commitment to offer, as its Preface describes, 'critical revisitations of various Platonic themes' in light of Thesleff's sustained effort to consider them in the historical, material, and political contexts in which they arose. The 20 contributions to the volume are organized by their engagement with different strands of Thesleff's research trajectory – the styles of Plato's writing, the question of chronology, the importance of revision, for example – or, in some cases, by admiration for a particular publication. It is a testament to Thesleff that such a wide variety of approaches and interests find inspiration in his work. In the spirit of honoring the breadth of the volume as well as its depth, I will offer brief discussion of each of its 20 chapters, organized in a manner that, I hope, highlights some of methodological and substantial connections (and in some cases, disagreements) between them.

A number of contributions focus upon tropes that were particularly dear to Thesleff, our understanding of which he deepened profoundly. For instance, both Phillip Horky and Harold Tarrant highlight Thesleff's contribution to broadening what is read as and considered a significant contribution to ancient philosophy. Horky examines the fragments of pseudo-Archytas' *On Wisdom* and the use Iamblichus makes of them, in order to better understand protreptics in the Pythagorean pseudepigrapha. Exhortative writing lends itself to the task of clarifying what its author finds the value of philosophic thinking to be, and while Horky concludes that *On Wisdom* is not protreptic *per se*, he demonstrates that its lengthy, sustained account of theoretical reasoning rewards analysis by contributing to our understanding of what philosophy came to mean in the Pythagorean thinking of the Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic ages.

Tarrant takes up Thesleff's notion of semi-authenticity and amplifies his call to take spurious works seriously for their contribution to philosophy (even if not to Platonic philosophy) by focusing on *Alcibiades II*. He offers a suggestion for emendation that significantly changes, and improves, understanding of an important passage pertaining to the potentially deleterious effects of knowledge if it is not accompanied by knowledge of the good, bringing it more clearly within the trajectory of thought leading to the New Academy.

Several other contributors turn our attention from Thesleff's work on *what* should be read as ancient philosophy to his recommendations for *how* to read it. For instance, Gerald Press offers a concise survey of the impact Thesleff's work has had in shifting the contemporary trajectory of Platonic study from a dogmatic orientation to a dialogical one. In response to recent work by K.A. Morgan and David Murphy, J.J. Mulhern contributes to the question of authorial practice in Plato by cataloguing every instance in which a character in the dialogue attributes action to Homer. He concludes that, 'the practice of Homer, as reported in the dialogues, is not to use protagonists in the epics as if any were his, Homer's, mouthpiece, and so this practice does not provide a presumption for the view that the author of the Platonic dialogues was using the interlocutors in the dialogues as if they were his mouthpieces or that the author of the dialogues expected his audience to think that he was' (pp. 270-271).

Thomas Szlezak focuses upon the question of Plato's unwritten doctrine, reprising his extensive body of work on the subject by contending against recent examples of the scholarly tendency, inspired by Schleiermacher's approach to the Platonic dialogues, to argue away the deliberate gaps Plato leaves in the dialogues, singling out work by Christopher Rowe, Luc Brisson, Wolfgang Wieland, and Mario Vegetti.

Francisco Gonzalez attends to the question of the chronology of the Platonic corpus and makes a compelling case against the value of this question. He does so by way of a careful examination of the conception of philosophical writing advanced in a dialogue that has proven particularly vexing to efforts to ascribe to it an early, middle or late status: the *Phaedrus*. For Gonzalez, a focus on the roles of *erōs* and dialectic in this dialogue reveals that the order in which Plato wrote the dialogues is 'irrelevant to their interpretation' (p. 170).

Finally, Necrip Fikri Alican returns to Thesleff's contribution to the two-world debate – via the positing of two levels rather than two worlds – in order to query the very motivation that inspires scholars to pick sides in this debate, that is, 'to explore the basic intuition that would inspire a reader of Plato to favour one view over another' (p. 308). Alican's use of intuition here is not accidental; rather, he attempts to discern what inclinations, intellectual or otherwise, draw one toward one side or the other, including his own sense that the forms are a heuristic device Plato constructs for us which 'making it easier for us to understand our world, not as requiring us to postulate another, which we would likely understand even less' (p. 308).

On the question of how to read Plato in particular, a number of contributors offer probing and compelling examples of what a Thesleff-inspired reading of particular dialogues and/or passages looks like. One particularly rich vein of thinking in the volume is found in the return by three authors to one of the