

Leinkauf' on Alberti's definition of beauty). While speaking of Ficino's aesthetics, it

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nected. Our multiple reality is a reflection of the single First Principle (the aesthetic theme of 'imitation'), which leads back towards it (the theme of 'pointing', *Verweisung*) and restores 'unity' (yet another theme). The process of becoming aware of this unity is particularly diaphanous (the theme of 'transparency'). The role of beauty is key in this process: the beautiful (*to kalon*) in the (Neo)Platonic tradition is understood as this revelatory characteristic of all reality that allows it to point to its transcendent origin. The artist, who has talent to create a particularly striking example of such revelatory objects (artefacts), acts as a medium in this process. The *aesthetic* moment here is the fact that the anagogical movement to the original unity happens not purely intellectually, but as a result of our immediate interaction with concrete artworks. A particular example of this process is Gottfried of Strassburg's *Tristan*, which presents a concrete demonstration of how transcendence shines forth in immanence (Haug). An example of a different understanding of 'Neoplatonic aesthetics' – when an author of a Neoplatonic orientation uses works of art to convey his ideas – is Cudworth's interpretative reading of ancient pre-Plotinian texts in terms of Neoplatonism (Bergemann).

With its excellent presentation of what constitutes aesthetics in the texts of Plato and Plotinus and its creative interpretations of texts that are seldom read, this volume will provide much food for thought, even if it will not resolve all the issues in Neoplatonic aesthetics.

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THE RECEPTION OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY

D'ANCONA (C.) (ed.) *The Libraries of the Neoplatonists*. Proceedings of the Meeting of the European Science Foundation Network 'Late Antiquity and Arabic Thought. Patterns in the Constitution of European Culture' held in Strasbourg, March 12–14, 2004 under the impulsion of the Scientific Committee of the meeting, composed by Matthias Baltes†, Michel Cacouros, Cristina D'Ancona, Tiziano Dorandi, Gerhard Endreß, Philippe Hoffmann, Henri Hugonnard Roche. (*Philosophia Antiqua* 107.) Pp. xxxvi + 531. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007. Cased, €149, US\$199. ISBN: 978-90-04-15641-8.

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The title of this volume, read literally, does little justice to its scope, which is nothing less than the way in which Greek philosophy was received and shaped by late ancient philosophers (Neoplatonists) and transmitted in this shape to Byzantine, Armenian, Syriac, Islamic and Jewish intellectuals in the medieval period. Read more broadly, the title of the volume indicates the constitution of a philosophical canon and its impact on philosophical cultures in the Eastern part of what used to be the Roman

Empire and beyond. Many of the articles are by leading specialists in their fields and are generally of a high standard. Some provide critical reviews of the present state of research (including up-to-date bibliography), while others propose the results of new research on particular themes. The volume is of exceptional importance in both its scientific quality and in its thematic breadth.

In her introduction, D'A. lists earlier philosophers cited by ancient Neoplatonists, using files prepared by the late M. Baltes, and Greek philosophers given in the catalogue put together in ninth-century Baghdad by al-Nadim. The reception of Greek philosophy in late ancient Neoplatonism is the subject of a general survey provided by R. Goulet, who discusses the material conditions of the survival of texts (libraries, copies and transcriptions), comparing the role of libraries with that of schools in preserving works. In a very instructive quantitative analysis (pp. 50–1), he shows that the *direct* transmission of Greek philosophers was almost entirely determined by what was read and commented on in the late Neoplatonic schools. The Middle Platonic background to the school curriculum of late Neoplatonism is discussed by B. Reis, who argues that the Middle Platonic and Neoplatonic curricula developed as a competitive reaction to an Aristotelian curriculum going back to Andronicus of Rhodes. In a fascinating piece of detective work, H.-D. Saffrey retraces the travels of one of the principal manuscripts of Plato (A), from its place in the 'Collection philosophique' (more on this below) to Armenia and to Avignon (Petrarch). M.-O. Goulet-Cazé provides a full analysis of the evidence relating to the hypothesis that Eusebius, in his extracts from Plotinus, is using an edition other than that of Porphyry (the *Enneads*), concluding that the evidence goes against the hypothesis. C. Luna studies the case of Syrianus' *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, describing its structure (misrepresented by Kroll in his edition) as given in the principal manuscript, C, and retracing its history, which she associates with the 'collection philosophique', pointing out that the Aristotelian lemmata give the text of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as Syrianus himself read it in the fifth century. A second general survey is provided by P. Hoffmann (in an article already published elsewhere), this time with more specific reference to later Neoplatonic schools. Hoffmann considers the place of books in these schools from various angles: libraries, material aspects of books, their curricular use, their philosophical and spiritual significance. He too refers to the 'collection philosophique', which is the object of a survey provided by G. Cavallo. It is a very important corpus of mainly philosophical manuscripts copied in Constantinople in the second half of the ninth century and thought to be derived from manuscripts coming from the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria and perhaps from other sources. Cavallo provides a list of seventeen manuscripts identified as being part of this corpus (pp. 156–7), with indications of the different hands, and discusses critically both L.G. Westerink's thesis of the Alexandrian origin of the corpus and M. Rashed's proposal to associate the corpus with a reorganisation by Caesar Bardas of higher studies in Constantinople. D. Marcotte argues in his article that the origin of the geographical corpus in Heidelberg Palatinus graecus 398, part of the 'collection philosophique', is to be sought in the origin of this 'collection'.

With the 'collection philosophique' we come to philosophy in Byzantium. M. Cacourou provides a general survey of work on the study of Neoplatonic texts in Byzantium, with particular attention to the teaching of logic. Michael Psellos, perhaps the most prominent philosopher of Byzantium, is discussed by E. Delli with regard to his theory of the 'pneumatic body' (linking body and soul) and its relations to his Neoplatonic and Christian sources. The Neoplatonic theory of a hierarchy of

virtues, introduced by Plotinus and developed by Iamblichus and Proclus, is examined by A. Papamanolakis as it was taken up by Psellus and by Eustratius of Nicaea. Finally, P. Golitsis shows in detail how Nicephorus Blemmydes, in his *Epitomê physikê*, used Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, in a text different from that given in the manuscript tradition of Simplicius.

The transmission of the late ancient Neoplatonism of the Alexandrian school to Armenia is surveyed by V. Calzolari, with respect in particular to commentaries on Aristotle's *organon* going under the name of 'David the Invincible', with comparison between David's commentary on the *Categories* and the Greek Pseudo-Elias. Roughly the same period (fifth to seventh centuries) is covered by H. Hugonnard-Roche with regard to Syriac translations of texts and commentaries in the area of preliminary ethical instruction and logic going back to the Alexandrian school. He also gives information about Syriac commentaries on these texts. The question of a possible Syriac intermediary in the transmission of Plotinus to the Arabic world is surveyed by S. Brock, who also discusses libraries of manuscripts, the subject of analysis in the contribution by V. Berti. A remark might be offered here, inspired by a reading of these articles on the Byzantine, Armenian and Syriac reception of the late Neoplatonic curriculum: it seems that on the whole only the first steps of this curriculum were maintained, the higher parts rarely being pursued; perhaps this was due to the lack of a strong school tradition and theological suspicions that Aristotelian and Platonic physics and metaphysics could arouse.

A general survey of the early reception of Greek philosophy in Arabic culture is offered by G. Endress, who stresses the complexity and variety of the cultural, religious and linguistic conditions involved in this reception. For the circle of al-Kindi, where so many important Arabic translations of Greek texts were produced, Endress provides a 'library', which includes Plato, Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus and Aristotelian texts. Al-Kindi and the Kindian school are also examined by P. Adamson, on the subject of the division of the sciences. D. Gutas deals with the Arabic Plotinus and its relation to the Greek manuscripts, providing a very useful stemma of the various Arabic versions (p. 379) and, as a sample of a future edition of the Arabic Plotinus, a passage from *Enn.* 4.7.13, with Greek and Arabic text translated into English. An Arabic version of Palladius' lost commentary on the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* is discussed by its discoverer H. Biesterfeldt with respect to its Alexandrian background, and M. Sebtî presents a manuscript of an Arabic version of a late ancient Alexandrian paraphrase of Aristotle's *De anima*, newly discovered by her, discussing its relation to al-Kindi's circle and its value as a witness to the text. An important manuscript containing extracts from the Arabic Plotinus and from Kindian philosophers, Oxford Bodleian Or. Marsh 539, is analysed by E. Cottrell, and a treatise by the ninth-century theologian al-Gahiz by J. Montgomery (the philosophical interest of this text seems somewhat limited). A philosopher in the Kindian tradition, al-Amiri, made a paraphrase of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* which E. Wakelnig shows to be an early fuller version of an 'Ur-liber de causis'. The chapter on relation in Aristotle's *Categories*, as it was interpreted by Alexandrian commentators, by at-Tayyib, al-Farabi and Averroes, is presented by C. Ferrari. D. De Smet offers a general survey of the use of Neoplatonic sources in Ismaili literature. S. Harvey gives a critical review of the extent to which pre- and post-Maimonidean Jewish philosophers actually read texts of Plato and Aristotle. His conclusions are fairly sobering and concern not only Jewish philosophers; he shows scepticism, for example, as to the extent of Miskawayh's supposed use of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The volume ends with indexes of manuscripts and papyri, and of ancient and

modern names. This carefully edited volume is a major milestone, both in its overall surveys and in detailed research, in the study of the transmission of Greek philosophy to a wide range of cultures in the Medieval East.

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PROCLUS' COMMENTARY ON PLATO'S *CRATYLUS*

DUVICK (B.) (trans.) *Proclus On Plato, Cratylus*. With a preface by Harold Tarrant. (Ancient Commentators on Aristotle.) Pp. viii + 210. London: Duckworth, 2007. Cased, £60. ISBN: 978-0-7156-3674-9.

VAN DEN BERG (R.M.) *Proclus' Commentary on the Cratylus in Context. Ancient Theories of Language and Naming*. (Philosophia Antiqua 112.) Pp. xviii + 239. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008. Cased, €89, US\$127. ISBN: 978-90-04-16379-9.

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Proclus' *Commentary on Plato's Cratylus* is the only ancient commentary on Plato's dialogue that has come down to us. Unfortunately, it is not a running prose commentary (unlike the commentaries on *Parmenides*, *Timaeus* and *Alcibiades*), but rather a collection of 'useful extracts'. These extracts may derive either directly from Proclus' lectures, or (perhaps more plausibly) from student lecture notes on one of his *Cratylus* courses. The process of note-taking and extract-compiling is likely to have condensed and even distorted Proclus' thought on language and naming. Valuable help in tackling this mutilated commentary comes from the two books under review, one of which is a translation of the text (D.), while the other is a philosophical monograph (B.).

I shall begin with D.'s clear and readable translation, the first to appear in English, which contains an impressive set of notes (pp. 109–72), a synopsis of Proclus' theological system (pp. 173–5), a useful glossary of Neoplatonic jargon (pp. 177–83), and a detailed Greek–English index (pp. 197–210). Very helpfully, D. has decided to print the relevant sections of the *Cratylus* before the scholia that comment on them, and adopts Arabic numerals instead of the bulky Roman notation used in Pasquali's Teubner. The extracts themselves are grouped under subject headings, such as the science-fiction-like 'Lower Order Interference in Intra-cosmic Communication: Etymologies of "Hector" and "Astyanax"' for *In Crat.* 80–3 (p. 46).

In his introduction, D. argues that 'the prominence of formal logical schemata in the *in Crat.* is one of the outstanding features suggesting that it is an Alexandrian summary of Proclus' original commentary' (p. 2). Proclus, on the other hand, is supposed to only 'rarely use the formal logical schemata developed by the Stoics and adopted by the Alexandrians in their study of Aristotelian logic' (*ibid.*). From the evidence D. himself produces, however, it seems that at least a significant part of the logical schemata in the extracts must derive from Proclus' commentary directly, in which case it is unconvincing to say that Proclus only rarely uses them. Thus, the excerptor refers to 'the syllogism of Proclus' at *In Crat.* 30, and reports that Proclus objected to a syllogism by Aristotle using a Stoic figure at *In Crat.* 58. D. himself claims a whole series of formal schemata for Proclus at note 64 (pp. 119–20; on *In Crat.* 46), rather than for the excerptor. A. Sheppard has elsewhere listed other