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Cover

Mašhad, Kitābhāna-i Āsitān-i Quds-i Raḡawī 300, f. 1v
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *grec* 1853, f. 186v

Book Announcements & Reviews

Siglas

CDA – Cristina D’Ancona

EC – Elisa Coda

GM – Giovanni Mandolino

MZ – Marianna Zarantonello

VK – Veysel Kaya

n. 66) he refers to the editor of Apuleius' *De Platone et eius dogmate* J. Beaujeau for the remark that "Apuleius' presentation of Platonic Ideas is rather 'thin' and covers only one of their characteristics (i.e., 'as compared to the sensible world'). Alcinous (...) provides their other characteristics (and the more common take on them) in his treatment, i.e., Form is 'in relation to God, his thinking; in relation to us, the primary object of thought; in relation to Matter, measure; in relation to the sensible world, its paradigm; and in relation to itself, essence' (trans. Dillon [1993], 16)". Fowler's note is longer than this, but the rest is devoted to the topic of the Forms as *exempla rerum*, on which more later. Let's pause to observe that the rather surprising *tamen* in Apuleius' sentence "nec corporales tamen" ("yet are not corporeal") is not commented upon. What on earth can it mean that the Ideas are simple and eternal, even though they are not corporeal? This is an intriguing sentence, on which Baltes' remarks shed light. In his exegesis of this passage, that forms *Baustein* 127.3 of *Der Platonismus in der Antike* (volume V, 1998) Baltes writes: "Daß sie [i.e. the Forms] als solche *simplices*, 'einfach' sind, ist konventionell (...). Auch daß die Ideen ewig genannt werden, ist nicht weiter auffällig. Auffällig ist allerdings, daß sich daran anschließt: *nec corporales tamen*, 'und gleichvoll nicht körperlich'. Es scheint, daß Apuleius andeuten möchte, daß die Ideen keine einfachen, ewigen, aber körperlichen Dinge sind – wie di Atome Demokrits oder Epikurs" (pp. 239-40). In a footnote, Baltes calls attention to passages from Plutarch's *Adversus Colotem* and other works where similar attention is paid to keeping apart the first and simple principles of Plato from those of the Atomists, that are equally first and simple, but corporeal. As for the question of the paradigmatic role of the Forms in Apuleius' account, later on in the same note 66 of p. 157 Fowler claims that "While Apuleius doesn't deny the doctrine that the Ideas are the thoughts of God, he is at least silent about it, unless one takes 1.9.8-11 to be an allusion to this idea ('to serve the divine craftsman, and to be present for everything he invents')". However, also the expression *esse autem ex his, quae deus sumpserit exempla rerum, quae sunt eruntve* points to the typical Middle Platonic doctrine of Forms as the "thoughts of God". This becomes evident if one takes into account Baltes' remark that "Wichtig ist dann der folgende Satz (...), der Gott habe unter den Ideen diejenigen ausgewählt, die ihm als Vorbilder für die zeitlichen Dinge dienen sollten. Dies ist eine der ganz wenigen Stellen, an welchen ein Platoniker sagt, das Vorbild des *Timaios*, das alle weiteren Vorbilder für diese Welt in sich birgt, (...) sei nicht identisch mit dem gesamten Kosmos der Ideen, vielmehr sei dieser umfassender als das Vorbild, das nur eine Auswahl darstelle" (p. 240). In other words, the Demiurge makes a selection among the many Forms that are located in the intelligible model, making use only of the *singulae imagines* of the *species* he wants to inform the matter with. The implication is that the Forms that are *exempla rerum* are those which are present to the divine mind for demiurgic purposes. One may obviously disagree with Baltes' interpretation, but it would have been useful to take it into account.

Some mistakes are present in the volume. There are misprints, like *alkētheian* as a transliteration of ἀληθειαν (p. 38) or *supplemendum putant* for *supplendum putant* (p. 73), but the following are not misprints: the claim that Porphyry's *Isagoge* is "transmitted in a Latin translation" (p. 8); *testamentum* for *testimonium* (p. 28 n. 6); "Abū Fārābī" for "al-Fārābī" (p. 49); *Sigla codices* for *Sigla codicum* (pp. 70, 120, 242).

CDA

Ch. Riedweg (ed.), *Philosophia in der Konkurrenz von Schulen, Wissenschaften und Religionen. Zur Pluralisierung des Philosophiebegriffs in Kaiserzeit und Spätantike*, herausgegeben von Ch. Riedweg in Zusammenarbeit mit R. Füchslin u. C. Semenzato sowie Ch. Horn und D. Wyrwa. Akten der 17. Tagungs der Karl und Gertrud Abel-Stiftung vom 16.-17. Oktober 2014 in Zürich, De Gruyter, Boston - Berlin 2017 (Philosophie der Antike, 34), X + 393 pp.

After an Introduction by Ch. Riedweg (pp. 1-2), the opening paper by M. Perkams, "Einheit und Vielfalt der Philosophie von der Kaiserzeit zur ausgehenden Antike" (pp. 3-31) discusses the ways to classify post-classical thought. After a survey from Hegel onwards, Perkams presents his own classification: Imperial Age, Late Antiquity properly speaking, and the 6th century, described as "einen besonderen, dritten Abschnitt der Spätantike" (p. 4). First comes the Imperial age, with its features of traditionalism, i.e. the conviction that

philosophy consists primarily in “einer systematisierenden Erklärung der Lehren der Schule” (*ibid.*), and eclecticism, meaning the attitude of various schools to “Material verschiedener Herkunft amalgamieren” (p. 12). Late Antiquity covers for Perkams the span of time between the 3rd and 5th centuries. The salient trend of this period is the overwhelming importance of the Platonic school over other philosophical allegiances. It is telling that in Perkams’ account Plotinus is only cursorily mentioned, while the characteristic of this period that raises most of his interest is the post-Plotinian systematization and development towards a religiously inspired philosophy (pp. 17-18). The 6th century and its sequel are described as the third significant subset of post-classical antiquity, labelled “Ausgehende Antike”. In Perkams’ view, now the debate between Platonism and Christian theology reaches its peak. On the one side the philosophers – in all the languages old and new, like Syriac and Armenian, in which they express themselves – focus on Aristotle and comment upon his works; on the other, the Christians engage in debate with philosophy (Philoponus), but are also heavily influenced by it (pseudo-Dionysius, Boethius).

The focus of F. Ferrari in his “Esegesi, sistema e tradizione: la prospettiva filosofica del medioplatonismo” (pp. 33-59), is the philosophical stance of Middle Platonism. Far from being mere *philologia* in Seneca’s unflattering sense (*Ep.* 108, 23: *quae philosophia fuit facta philologia est*; cf. also *Ep.* 33, 7: *semper interpretes sub aliena umbra latentes*, both commented upon by Ferrari at p. 41), the exegeses of the Platonists in the Imperial age were significant in themselves and paved the way to the Neoplatonic commentaries. “La pratica esegetica nella quale essi furono coinvolti costituì un’impresa filosoficamente rilevante per la storia del platonismo, destinata a esercitare un’influenza duratura nel corso del pensiero antico. I grandi commentari che hanno segnato la stagione del neoplatonismo presuppongono l’attività esegetica dei commentatori medioplatonici, i quali hanno influenzato in maniera decisiva gli interpreti posteriori, sia sul piano della tecnica esegetica, che ha conosciuto in questa fase uno straordinario affinamento, sia su quello propriamente dottrinario” (p. 41). The analysis of the λέξις that characterizes the Neoplatonic commentaries is rooted in the discussion of Plato’s utterances κατὰ λέξιν or κατὰ ὀνόματα (Calvenus Taurus). The same is true for the hallmarks of post-Plotinian Neoplatonism: the ontological hierarchy of the degrees of being, the increasing importance of theology and the attitude to make philosophy and religion collapse one into the other.

E. Thomassen, “Gnosis and Philosophy in Competition” (pp. 61-74), raises the question “what the Gnostics themselves thought about Greek philosophy”. The answer, Thomassen continues, “is less straightforward than one might think. In fact, reading through the many Gnostic texts that are now available one finds surprisingly few explicit comments on Greek philosophy, and the little one finds is as a rule strongly negative” (pp. 61-2). Condemnations of the philosophical doctrines about the cosmos are attested in the *Tripartite Tractate*, one of the works of the Nag Hammadi corpus. In contrast with the religion of the Jews, “Philosophy is thus inspired by the cosmic powers of passion and materiality, as is the case with all the sciences of the Greeks. This explains two typical features of philosophy: first, the constant conflicts of opinion that exist between the various schools (...); and second, the illusory nature of the philosophical theories, which are only vain imitations of the truth in the same way as the material powers enviously seek to fabricate a simulacrum of the higher realities with their own deficient realm of cosmic creation” (p. 64). This despite the fact that Gnostics made extensive use of philosophical theories to build up their cosmogonies. Thomassen discusses the affinity detected in recent scholarship between the Gnostic groups and the philosophical schools of the same age, and comes to the conclusion that the “Valentinian appropriation of Neopythagorean ideas” (p. 69) consists in an instructional practice meant to produce in the member that “act of superior cognition” that “would go beyond the insights philosophers might be able to offer (...) because the philosophical theories would be integrated and find their true significance in the more comprehensive vision of universal coherence provided by the Valentinian system” (p. 70).

J.C. Thom, “Sayings as *Lebenshilfe*: The Reception and Use of Two Pythagorean Collections” (pp. 75-97) explores the topic of “Philosophy as a Way of Life” from the viewpoint of the advice given to the disciple in the form of sapiential sayings. Pierre Hadot has pointed out that “Philosophy as a Way of Life” pivots on exercises, and for Thom “such exercises include memorizing precepts in order to be able to apply them when the need arises, meditation, predeliberation, and self-examination” (p. 76). The *Golden Verses* and the ἀκούσματα belong to this literary genre, and are examined in their formation, transmission, and use. The origins and date of the *Golden Verses* are famously disputed, even though “it is obvious that older sayings material is

included in this composition” (p. 77); the Hellenistic age, and more precisely “the late 4th or early 3rd cent. BC” (*ibid.*) is favoured by Thom as the date of the creation of the poem. Far from being chaotic, it features a clear psychagogic intent, and as such it was understood by pagan and Christian authors in the Imperial age as well as in Late Antiquity. Quotations and allusions “refer to verses from all parts of the poem” (p. 80), and there are four commentaries on it: two in Greek, by Iamblichus and Hierocles of Alexandria, and two in Arabic. As for the ἀκούσματα, collections “must have begun to circulate and become available to non-Pythagoreans sometime during the fifth century”, if the first known commentary to them is by Anaximander the Younger of Miletus, circa 400 BC, not to mention Aristotle who “is our most important early source” on them (p. 87). These precepts of wisdom in enigmatic form found their way well into the Hellenistic and Imperial ages. While Aristotle explained them in terms of cult, another exegesis initiated by a certain Androcydes (before the 1st cent. BC) and expounded by Iamblichus “interprets the *akousmata* as symbolic utterances with a moral or metaphysical meaning” (p. 88). Both these collections, despite their difference, contributed to the ‘popular philosophy’ that is typical of the age.

The subsequent paper, “Philosophers and the Mysteries” by J.N. Bremmer (pp. 99-126) deals with the parallel topic of the circulation in post-classical philosophy of the Mystery metaphors and terminology, both of Orphic-Bacchic and Eleusinian origin. Bremmer outlines the use of the Mysteries from the 2nd cent. AD to “the last pagan philosophers who no longer had a personal knowledge of the Eleusinian Mysteries as they had been closed down by Theodosius in AD 392” (p. 100). Discussing examples from Plutarch and Numenius, Bremmer observes that “in the course of the second century the term became more loosely used than before (...) In any case, we can see how the expanding landscape of the Mysteries also invited philosophers to come to terms with the newcomers amongst them and to fit these into their own system” (pp. 105-6). As for the 3rd century, the survey of the passages where Porphyry and Iamblichus mention the traditional Greek Mysteries and the new ones makes Bremmer side with P. Van Nuffeln, *Rethinking the Gods. Philosophical Readings of Religion in the Post-Hellenistic Period*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2011, when the latter says that at this time philosophy sees itself as containing a truth higher than religion. Referring to *De Abst.*, 2, 49, where Porphyry favours the philosopher as the priest of the universal God over those of any particular God, Bremmer comes to the conclusion that “Even though Mysteries can be *loci* of truth, it is the philosopher now who possesses the fullest source of truth” (p. 113). For Eunapius “Mysteries were of cardinal importance” (p. 119), but in the last phase of pagan religion a significant shift occurs: “With the disappearance of the ancient Mysteries, their place in Greek philosophy also changed and they no longer occupied the prominent position they had in the time of Julian. (...) Instead of the Eleusinian Mysteries as the focus of pagan attention, we can now observe a growing interest in Orphic literature, although in the Theogonies rather than the Mysteries (...). Syrianus clearly managed to instil some of that interest in his successor Proclus (...). Although Proclus was born after the closure of the Eleusinian Mysteries, he was remarkably well acquainted with their traditions of which he relates several unusual details, as befitted his antiquarian interests” (pp. 120-21).

J. Leonhardt-Balzer deals with “Synagogen als Schulen der Tugenden: Der Ort der Philosophie in der frühjüdischen Tradition” (pp. 127-45). Apart from the two notable exceptions of Aristobulos of Alexandria (2nd cent. B.C.) and Aristaeas’ *Letter* (dated circa 200-150 B.C.), in the Hellenized Jewish communities of Alexandria philosophy cannot compete with wisdom divinely revealed, at least judging from the Jewish texts translated into Greek: “In der *Septuaginta* werden Philosophen nur einmal in LXX Dan. 1, 20 erwähnt, jedoch sind dies kein Juden, sondern heidnischen Philosophen an Königshof Nebukadnezars (...). Es zeigt sich also ein Kontrast zwischen dem gottesfürchtigen Weisen und dem unwissenden Philosophen” (p. 128). Philosophy is often presented as alien to and incompatible with Jewish tradition, even though a more balanced attitude appears here and there, that will become dominant in Jewish Hellenized communities of the Roman age. The difference between philosophy and the revealed Law is maintained, but the Jewish Hellenized culture “aufgrund der Übereinstimmung im Ergebnis, in der Praxis der Tugenden, beide als gleichwertig sieht” (p. 130). Flavius Josephus and Philo are examined as examples of the attitude to favour Jewish thought (τὴν πατριὸν ἡμῶν φιλοσοφίαν, Joseph., *Contra Apionem*, 2, 74) because of its anteriority, not however without acknowledging that also Greek philosophy contains some truths. Flavius Josephus follows in Aristobulos’ footsteps in claiming that the Greek philosophers were inspired by Moses and other wise men from Chaldaea and Egypt. This is true also for Philo: there are many

similarities with Greek philosophy, especially in moral theories, but “stellt das Studium der *Thora* für Philon die höchste Stufe der Philosophie, die wahre Erkenntnis dar, und befindet sich somit auf einer anderen Ebene als die Praxis der anderen Schulen. (...) Die menschliche Vernunft, auf der die Philosophie aufbaut, ist begrenzt, und so kann die Philosophie, insbesondere bezogen auf Gotteserkenntnis, viele Probleme nicht lösen. In diese Bresche springt das Studium der *Thora*, die mosaische Philosophie” (pp. 134-5).

S. Vollenweider, “Barbarenweisheit? Zum Stellenwert der Philosophie in der frühchristlichen Theologie” (pp. 147-60) offers a survey of the ways in which philosophy is compared to theology in the works of Christian writers of the 2nd cent. “Das frühe Christentum artikuliert seine soziale und religiöse Identität im kulturellen Kontext antiker Intellektualität. Dies geschieht besonders in der Rezeption und Transformation von stoischen und platonischen Lehrelementen” (p. 148). Tatian’s *Oratio ad Graecos* provides a case in point for the praise of Christian theology as an instance of a more ancient and truer philosophy, if compared with Greek thought: *νῦν δὲ προσήκειν μοι νομίζω παραστῆσαι πρεσβυτέραν τὴν ἡμετέραν φιλοσοφίαν τῶν παρ’ Ἑλληνικῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων* (*Oratio*, 31, 1, “Now I think it is appropriate that I should prove that our philosophy is older than Greek practices”, trans. M. Whittaker, *Tatian, Oratio ad Graecos*, ed. and trans., Clarendon, Oxford 1962, pp. 56-7). A Syrian, Tatian vindicates the ‘barbaric’ wisdom as superior to Graeco-Roman thought. Vollenweider compares this attitude with that of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and with Iamblichus’ assessment of the superior wisdom of the Egyptians. Tatian’s stance is presented against the background of three foundational texts: Paul’s speech in the Areopagus, the letter to the Colossian, and the first letter to the Corinthians, where the mundane science is set against divine wisdom. “Wir stossen hier das erste Mal auf die Konzeption der drei Völker, der *tria genera*, die wenig später in der apologetischen Literatur weiter ausgebaut wird: Die gesamte Menschheit wird aufgrund ihrer Religionen in drei repräsentative Ethnien ausdifferenziert: Griechen (und überhaupt Heiden), Juden und nun eben die Christen als *tertium genus*” (pp. 158-9).

With the paper by I. Männlein-Robert, “Philosophie als Philologie? Der Platoniker Longin und seine Kritiker” (pp. 161-78) we are in the philosophers’ camp, and more precisely in the Platonists’, where in the 3rd century a divide appears between those who “‘philologisch’ arbeiteten, und denen, die das nicht taten” (p. 161). One thinks obviously of Longinus and Plotinus as the main instance of this divide, but it is the entire Middle Platonism, with the prominence it gives to Plato’s text and its problems, that is usually depicted as a ‘philological’ approach to Plato, whereas Neoplatonism exemplifies a different reading: Plato’s doctrines are “prinzipientheoretisch und metaphysisch mittels ‘philosophischer’ Interpretationen dynamisiert, grundlegend transformiert und theologisch erweitert” (*ibid.*). Männlein-Robert focuses on Longinus, starting from the well-known saying by Plotinus who labels him a philologist, by no means a philosopher (Porph., *Vita Plotini*, 14.19-20). The possibility cannot be excluded that this contrast is Porphyry’s creation, in the wake of Seneca’s criticism of bookish learning: “Somit müssen wir die Möglichkeit in Erwägung ziehen, dass er sich um eine von Porphyrios selbst konstruierte, in jedem Fall aber zugespitzt präsentierte und stilisierte Episode handelt, deren Sinn in der knappen und scharfen Antithetik des Ausspruchs liegt, mit dem Plotin seinem Kollegen Longin jegliche philosophische Kompetenz ab- und allein philologische Kompetenz zuspricht” (pp. 163-4). Against the background of Alexandrine philology and its principles, Männlein-Robert shows that for Longinus the in-depth analysis of Plato’s literary expression is a means “um die philosophischen Texte Platons erklären und erläutern zu können” (p. 173), something that is indirectly acknowledged also by one of the most careful readers of Longinus’ lost commentary on the *Timaeus*: Proclus (*In Tim.*, I, 14.4-20 Diehl, commented upon by Männlein-Robert at pp. 174-5).

G. Reydam-Schils, “Plotinus and the Stoics on Philosophy as the Art of Life” (pp. 179-92) deals with Plotinus’ criticism of the Stoics in V 9[5], where they are depicted as unable to raise themselves to the consideration of the intelligible, thus leaving their own glorification of moral virtue without any solid foundation. According to Reydam-Schils, also Plotinus concurs with the Stoic idea that philosophy is a training in the right kind of life, as is shown by the fact that in this same treatise he lists wisdom (*σοφία*) among the arts (*τέχναι*). At variance with Sextus Empiricus, who had criticised in various ways the Stoic idea of philosophy as the art of life, “Plotinus’ ranking of wisdom among the arts is a co-optation of the idea of philosophy as the art of life that reorients the entire concept towards the intelligible realm, or reorients the soul towards the Intellect and the Forms” (p. 183). Plotinus’ evaluation of Stoicism is unjust in Reydam-Schils

opinion: “It is true that for the Stoics virtue as manifested in *πρᾶξις* may be at the heart of philosophy – and one could retort to Plotinus that the Stoic approach has its own merits – but this does not mean (...), pace Plotinus, that they had no sense of *θεωρία* at all. Moreover, the Stoics do have a very rich concept of rationality, and their sense of a higher realm that reorients human beings away from misguided preoccupations refers to a rational order that permeates and structures the cosmos, as the community of gods and men” (p. 190).

D. Wyrwa, “Philosophie in der alexandrinischen Schule” (pp. 193-215) offers a paper on the notion of philosophy in Clement of Alexandria and on Origen’s only partial reception of it. A survey on the early history of the catechetical school paves the way to a discussion of what ‘philosophy’ means for Clement: “Bei ihm herrscht ein überlegenes Selbstbewusstsein, das sich die Bildung der Alten Welt vollständig angeeignet hat. Kein antiker Christ vor ihm oder nach ihm hat in so hohen Tönen von der griechischen Philosophie gesprochen wie er: die Philosophie ist eine Gabe Gottes, ein Bund Gottes mit den Griechen, wie das Mosesgesetz die *διαθήκη* Gottes mit dem Volk Israel war” (p. 199). Clement endorses the topic of the *ὁμολοίσις θεῶ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν* that is typical of the Platonism of the Imperial Age and has recourse to philosophical topics like the *ἐγκράτεια* in his doctrinal controversies. Like the Platonists of his age, he locates God in the realm of absolute transcendence (Wyrwa, p. 205 n. 61, refers to *Paed.*, 1, 71, 1: *ἐν δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἐνός καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτὴν μονάδα*); as for Philo, the Ideas for him are the thoughts of God. A section of the paper is devoted to Origen, whose teacher Ammonius Wyrwa is not alien to identify with Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus. This is a question where scholars disagree, and Wyrwa sides with those who consider that the teacher of both Origen and Plotinus is one and the same Ammonius, not without mentioning however the chronological difficulties that affect the hypothesis of the identity of this Origen, the Christian writer, with the Origen who was the fellow disciple of Plotinus at Ammonius Saccas’ feet.

The *Contra Celsum* by Origen and the *Contra Iulianum* by Cyril of Alexandria form the focus of the subsequent paper by M.-O. Boulnois, “Païens et chrétiens en concurrence: l’instrumentalisation de la philosophie dans les controverses d’Origène contre Celse et de Cyrille d’Alexandrie contre Julien” (pp. 217-55). Both Celsus and Cyril “recourent à une culture et un langage conceptuel commun, majoritairement platonicien, teinté de stoïcisme et de péripatétisme, soit pour accuser leur adversaire de ne pas y être fidèle, soit pour assimiler ou resémantiser une terminologie technique à des fins d’élaboration doctrinale propre” (p. 219). In his discussion of Julian’s arguments on providence, Cyril has recourse to Alexander of Aphrodisias: the seven passages he quotes are the only Greek remnants of Alexander’s *De Providentia*, a work that has come down to us in Arabic (p. 225). As for Origen, when Celsus attacks the Christian incarnation of God as incompatible with the changeless nature of the divine, he replies “en relevant le manque d’esprit philosophique de Celse. Sur la question de l’immuabilité, il montre non seulement que les Écritures affirment bien que Dieu est immuable, mais qu’elles sont même plus fidèles à cette notion philosophique que d’autres philosophes, qu’il s’agisse des épicuriens pour lesquels les atomes sont sujets à la dissolution, ou des stoïciens pour qui Dieu est corporel. Il en conclut: ‘Ces philosophes n’ont pas su élucider la notion naturelle (*τὴν φυσικὴν ἐννοίαν*) de Dieu, absolument incorruptible, simple, sans composition, indivisible.’” Reformulation of sentences and transposition of philosophical definitions in Christian terms abound in both authors: Boulnois provides several examples, pointing also to the fact that also their pagan competitors had done the same in order to make their theological assumptions and Plato’s texts match with one another (p. 237). Cyril’s explicit comparison between Plotinus’ and Numenius’ doctrines with the Christian faith is also examined. Finally, Cyril’s quotation of a passage of the *Philosophical History* by Porphyry – a work lost to us – provides the opportunity to discuss the question of the exact boundaries of the original text when embedded in the writings of authors who, like Cyril, systematically practised what John Whittaker labelled “the art of misquotation”.

In the paper by P. Athanassiadi, “A Global Response to Crisis: Iamblichus’ Religious Programme” (pp. 257-89) a survey of the facts and aspects that led historians to develop the notion of “the third century crisis” paves the way to a narrative of the background, ideas and intellectual-religious activity of Iamblichus. In Athanassiadi’s view, Iamblichus consciously set for himself the task “to formulate an alternative soteriology of the here and now” (p. 268) meant to replace Christianity with a return to the older true religion. To this end “he turned to the pivotal figure of the Chaldaean revelation – the theurgist – who, as the interpreter of the teachings and the performer of the rites expounded in the *Oracles*, combined the aptitudes of philosopher,

healer, magician and priest” (*ibid.*). Iamblichus’ struggle with Porphyry, his anthropology tainted with the Gnostic-like hierarchy of types of men who are more or less apt to reach salvation, his religious doctrine of the goods’ grace, are described as the background of Iamblichus’ idiosyncratic vision. “The originality of Iamblichus’ soteriological theory consists in his proclamation that divine grace is not the exclusive preserve of the theurgist in action, but a phenomenon of universal relevance: the benefit – the *ὄφελος* – which results for one person’s unitive task is for all to reap. Theurgy is thus another name for perpetual revelation and a reminder of the constant presence of providence as an active agent of universal welfare, at once a proof of the mystic communion (*ἄρρητος κοινωνία*) which binds the cosmos together, and a practical demonstration of the primordial embrace (*μονοειδής συμπλοκή*) that links us all to the gods” (pp. 285-6).

The personification of philosophy in Synesius of Cyrene and Boethius is the focus of the paper by D. O’Meara, “Lady Philosophy and Politics in Late Antiquity” (pp. 291-300). In both authors this personification appears “in conjunction with Plato’s notorious and most paradoxical call, in the *Republic* (473 D, recalled at 487 E), for the union of philosophy and rulership. (...) In both Synesius and Boethius the personification of philosophy stands in a particular relationship to this requirement that she unites herself with political power. The ‘union’ is a tense one: the personification of philosophy shows how philosophy, as an ideal, ought to be related to political power, in the eyes of Synesius and Boethius, as contrasted with the various ways in which she actually relates to power” (pp. 291-2). Synesius’ *De Regno – a speculum principis* – and Boethius’ *Consolatio* provide examples of how the Neoplatonic model set in place by Plotinus apropos the soul applies to philosophy: “The superiority of philosophy to political action corresponds exactly to the way in which the Neoplatonist philosophers, beginning with Plotinus, saw the good which philosophy seeks. The real good, for the human soul, is to live the divine life of knowledge, united with transcendent Intellect. (...) However, when soul descends to the body, she can express her nature as good and wise in managing her life in the body (...) so as to prepare herself for the return to the divine life of Intellect by the practice of the ‘political’ virtues. (...) Philosophy, in Synesius and Boethius, like the soul is both divine and human: she can live united in knowledge with transcendent divine Intellect and she can descend to human bodily, political affairs. She can contribute to these affairs by promoting the political virtues, but this is not her primary or ultimate goal” (pp. 297-8).

Th. Fuhrer, “Erzählte Philosophie: Augustin und das Konzept der ‘Philosophie als Lebensform’” (pp. 301-17), takes as her starting point Augustine’s reception of Cicero’s rendering of *φιλοσοφία* (cf. *Phaedr.*, 278 D) as *studium* or *amor sapientiae*. For the early Augustine, this means “*amor dei*, als Streben im Sinn des platonischen Eros” (p. 302), but later on “in *De Civitate Dei* setzt Augustin den *amor dei* mit der *bona voluntas* gleich. Augustin betont mit seinen Umschreibungen des Philosophie-Begriffs durch *studium*, *amor*, *voluntas* immer wieder und konsequent, dass er darunter das Streben im Hinblick auf ein als höchstes Gut definiertes Ziel versteht, mithin weniger ein Konzept oder ein bestimmtes Lehrsystem als einen mentalen Prozess” (*ibid.*). Philosophy as *τέχνη τοῦ βίου* inspires the narrative of the life of the philosophers as examples (Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Marinus): something that is reflected and imitated in Christian hagiography. Against this background, Augustine’s notion of philosophy as “Strebenstendenz” differs on two counts: human weakness is emphasized, and a “teleological casting” of his own life is introduced (p. 303). Seneca had described the goal of philosophy – the *beata vita* – as within the reach of the man who exercises in self-scrutiny and self-transformation; not so for Augustine. His “Modifikation des paganen Eudaimonismus” (p. 307) does not consist only in the idea that without God’s grace salvation is impossible, but also in the pronounced eschatological perspective: “das Leben in postlapsarischen Leib und der Zustand nach dem Tod bis zur Auferstehung *per se* nicht im philosophisch-eudaimonistischen Sinn ‘glücklich’ sein können” (*ibid.*). Hence, autobiography can only be the narrative of the repeated attempts to reach wisdom in man’s life, always open to failure until time gives room to eternity: it is an “Inszenierung der Fallibilität des Menschen” (p. 316).

In her “Philosophy in Transition: From Late Antiquity to Byzantium” (pp. 319-35) K. Ierodiakonou deals with “the special features which distinguish the Christian philosophy in Byzantium from the ninth to the fifteenth century both from ancient philosophy as well as from the theology of the period” (p. 320). Such features mark in Ierodiakonou’s view the transition between Late-Antique to Byzantine philosophy, and are detected first in a different philosophical and religious allegiance of the Byzantine commentators if compared to Late-Antique ones. “It proves an oversimplification to think of them as generally adhering to Neoplatonism. Rather,

Byzantine philosophers should be seen as advocates of a widespread kind of eclecticism". Second, "the works of the Byzantine thinkers were firmly and deeply embedded in their Christian faith" (p. 321). The second part of the paper is devoted to the figure of the Byzantine philosopher. "The Byzantines were not professional philosophers in the way their counterparts were in Late Antiquity. Byzantine philosophers taught philosophy, and thus they were scholars and commentators, but they were at the same time high officials, clerics, monks and even patriarchs" (p. 325). George Tornikes' funeral oration for the princess Anna Komnena, discussed at pp. 326-7, provides a good example of the different ways of philosophical life in Byzantium at that time. Then, Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197-1272) is presented as an instance of the "dual character of the learned scholar and the ascetic monk" (p. 327), notwithstanding the "weird and strange events" he narrates in his autobiography. To three of these events Ierodiakoniou devotes a commentary which includes a comparison with Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*.

In her "Die beste Religion gleicht der Philosophie': Der Philosophiebegriff im arabisch-islamischen Mittelalter im Streit zwischen Ratio und Offenbarung" (pp. 337-54) C. Ferrari starts with al-Tawḥīdī's *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasa*, a report on the gatherings of a learned circle of 10th-century Baghdad. The topic of the relationship between religion and philosophy was raised more than once in these evening talks, and this is especially interesting in view of the fact that the gatherings were hosted by a vizier, Ibn Saḍ'ān. The period was characterised by political and intellectual struggles: "Traditionalisten bekämpften Rationalisten, zwischen Schia und Sunna gab es Konflikte, unter Juristen, Grammatikern und Philosophen gab es Auseinandersetzungen um die Deutungshoheit" (p. 337). Surprisingly enough, it is the spokesperson of the philosophers, the reputed leader of the Aristotelian circle of the time Abū Sulaymān al-Siġistānī, who voiced a critique of the co-mixing between religion and philosophy: he "wendet sich (...) mit scharfen Worten gegen die Möglichkeit einer Synthese von Religion und Philosophie (...). Abū Sulaimān, flankiert von dem Juristen al-Ġarīrī, wendet sich nicht nur gegen die Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā', die 'Brüder im reinen Glauben', die der militanten Häresie der Ismā'īliya nahestanden, sondern auch gegen andere Zeitgenossen, Zeugen des arabischen Platonismus, die gleichfalls die Idee einer Vereinbarkeit von Philosophie und islamischer Religion propagiert" (p. 338). After having outlined the rise of Graeco-Arabic philosophy in the formative period of the translations of the 9th century, Ferrari focuses on al-Kindī. His harsh criticism of speculative theology (*Kalām*) coexists with the idea that philosophy reaches the same truth as revelation, with the difference that for philosophy to raise the human effort by trial and error is necessary, while prophecy provides immediate intuition of the truth. With al-Fārābī, on the contrary, "hat die Philosophie das Primat der Erkenntnis. Trotzdem ist es die sunnitisch-islamische Herrschaftsform, auf deren Grundlage die Lebensweise beruht, die das Ziel jedes Gemeinwesen sein sollte" (p. 353).

Ch. Riedweg, "Zusammenfassung und Ausblick" (pp. 355-60), concludes this survey of the omnipresence of philosophy in Late Antiquity. "Tatsächlich gibt es kaum ein Autor der Kaiserzeit und Spätantike, bei dem sich nicht zumindest Spuren von platonisch-philosophischem Gedankengut finden lassen. Selbst in Fällen radikaler Exklusion ist stets ein mehr oder weniger starke Partizipation an griechisch-römisch philosophoumena bzw. am philosophischen 'structural skeleton' zu erkennen" (p. 359). Indexes of passages, names, and topics complete a rich and interesting volume.

CDA

R.C. Taylor - L.X. López-Farjeat (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, Routledge, London - New York 2016, XVII + 433 pp.

As the Editors highlight at the outset of their Introduction (pp. 1-3), this collection of thirty-three short essays aims at illustrating all the aspects of Islamic philosophy as "philosophy in its own right", i.e. neither as a subset of Oriental studies nor as later developments of Greek thought (p. 1). The systematic approach favoured by Taylor and López-Farjeat does not prevent them from setting also some chronological boundaries for the volume: the Classical (roughly speaking, between 850 and 1200 A.D.) and post-Classical periods. Hence, only seldom authors later than Averroes are taken into account (see below the papers by M. Elkaisy-Friemuth, C. Bonmariage, and M. Rustom). Preference is given to Sunni Islam: a fact that, together with the chronological boundaries just mentioned, helps explaining why the section on mysticism is shorter than it might have been if ṣūfī thought of the post-Classical age, with its overwhelming interest in theosophy, had been taken into account.