

F. Lauritzen—S. Klitenic Wear (eds.), *The Byzantine Platonists, 284-1453*.  
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Frederick Lauritzen and Sarah Klitenic Wear publish the proceedings of a conference held at the Scuola Grande di San Marco in Venice on 3-4 October 2019. It comprises sixteen essays by renowned experts on Platonism in Greek-speaking philosophers and theologians between Plotinus and Marsilio Ficino.

In the introduction, the editors summarise the individual contributions concisely and comprehensibly. However, this reviewer would have liked the introduction to be a little longer. The reasons that led to the organisation of this conference are not illuminated and no outline of the history of research including a bibliography and mention of some current major research issues is offered. There is also no overall conclusion regarding the results of the conference. Then one wonders what the year 284 mentioned in the title, which plays no role in the history of the city of Constantinople and clearly precedes the new Constantinian foundation, has to do with the term “Byzantine”. The key figure Plotinus, who already died in 270 and with whom this volume begins—a decision certainly justified from the viewpoint of the historian of philosophy—is still outside this generously defined time frame, and the question of whether he, in whose thinking Christianity—quite in contrast to the overwhelming majority of representatives of the later Byzantine reception of Plato—hardly plays a role, may be called a Byzantine author is not raised either. An explanation of this in the introduction would have been helpful, especially since this is the first book of the new series Theandrites, whose future volumes are to cover the same period ([www.theandrites.org/about](http://www.theandrites.org/about)). These points aside, the overall impression about the volume is very good.

Plotinus thus makes the beginning, with Lloyd P. Gerson examining the “Personhood of the One” as a challenge for the Christian Trinitarian theology. He shows that in Plotinus the first principle of all does not interact in contrast to the systems of other ancient philosophers and especially Christian theology. Carl O’Brien addresses the “Platonism behind Basil’s Trinitarian Theology” in three case studies of Platonic argumentation strategies in Basil of Caesarea regarding the concept of time, the knowledge of God and the metaphysics of light. O’Brien draws in particular on Basil’s *Adversus Eunomium*, a rebuttal to heteroousian theology. A thought-provoking challenge to established views on “Platonism and Gregory of Nyssa” is presented by Mark Edwards. He contests Gregory’s qualification as a Platonist and argues that there is no more than an affinity between Platonism and Christianity, since the Christian doctrine

of the soul is a priori closer to the Platonic school than to any other, and that in *De anima* Gregory renounces all Platonic concepts that are incompatible with the Christian doctrine of resurrection. Sarah Klitenic Wear compares Cyril's Trinitarian theology with Syrianus' and Proclus' theories on the henads. Whereas according to Proclus the henads exist within the One, which has no being, according to Cyril the three divine principles, above which there is no One, share a being (*ousia*), they are consubstantial (*homoousioi*). The contrast between the tripartite soul in Plato's *State* and the undivided soul in the *Timaeus* already preoccupied Porphyry and Iamblichus, but we cannot fully grasp their solutions because of the fragmentary tradition of their works. John F. Finamore approaches the problem from Proclus' commentary on the *State* and shows that, according to Neoplatonic philosophy, the rational part of the soul could detach itself from the body and ascend to the vision of ideas as an undivided soul, but then had to return to the body, live there in harmony with the other two parts of the soul and direct them according to the four "civic" cardinal virtues. Marilena Vlad examines Damascius' interpretation of Plato's eight hypotheses in the *Parmenides*. Damascius argues that above the One stands the ineffable and that already the One is the first in a series of hypostases as symbols for the ineffable. By focusing on the concepts of *eros/agape* and *epistrophe/apokatastasis*, Ilaria Ramelli presents a rich catalogue of passages in Dionysius the Areopagite that refer to both the Platonic and Christian traditions in a "double-reference scheme". She considers Dionysius as an Origenian Christian who wanted to use the "double-reference scheme" to protect himself from the accusation of arguing against the Greeks with the ideas of the Greeks. Filip Ivanović examines "Body and Soul in Dionysius the Areopagite", who, unlike most other ancient philosophers, emphasises the connection between body and soul. Christ shows that the two can be harmoniously combined, and body and soul will be judged together on the Day of Judgement. Dionysios Skliris gives an overview of Maximus the Confessor's fusion of Platonic philosophy and Christian theology, which Skliris calls "Chalcedonian participation" because Maximus, while negating fundamental assumptions of (Neo)Platonic philosophy, holds on to the core of Platonic philosophy, namely communion with the divine that transcends the sensible world. Skliris points out numerous differences between Maximus and the Platonists, such as his lack of interest in the intellectual forms (*ideai*), which are replaced by God's *logoi* as "speech-acts" through which the world is created. Frederick Lauritzen discusses George of Pisidia's engagement with the first hypothesis in Plato's *Parmenides*. George's view that the highest principle consists of a plurality was condemned as heretical at a later council. "The Cardinal Virtues in the Works of Nicetas Stethatos" are the subject of George Diamantopoulos' contribution,

in which he examines the meaning of the four virtues in Nicetas' work (11th century), the sources used by Nicetas, and Nicetas' position as a "mystic" committed to Christian theology within a controversy with the contemporary philosopher Psellos. The same Psellos examines in *Philosophica Minora* 1,7 the two synonyms *authypostatōn* and *authyparkton*, which are associated with different philosophical terms. Denis Walter shows that John Italos largely adopts the positions of his teacher Psellos on these terms in his own writings. Christian Förstel looks at "Nikephoros Choumnos and Platonism" and finds that this representative of the Palaeological Renaissance knew directly not only parts of Plato's, but also of Plotinus' work. He rejects their viewpoints insofar as they contradict Christian dogma. Timur Shchukin examines Plotinus' influence on the hesychast Gregory Palamas. The problem of the strong Platonic colouring of the Areopagite's theology in scholarly discourse in the mid-15th century is the subject of Denis J.-J. Robichaud's contribution. His source-critical study deals in particular with Bessarion's position, who, although he knew Proclus from his own readings, only allows the Areopagite to be influenced by Plato himself, but not also by Proclus. The volume concludes with "Marsilio Ficino's Debt to George Gemistos Pletho", which Stephen Gersh recognises in particular in Marsilio's series of six "theologians" leading from Zoroaster down to Plato, as well as in Marsilio's stance on the question of harmony between Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy.

Access to the contributions is facilitated by an index. The book has been carefully produced. The only typographical errors I noticed were: p. xvi "Marcus Po" instead of "Mario Po"; p. 33 "*psuhkê*" instead of "*psukhê*"; p. 48 "show" instead of "shows"; p. 50 "of the Hierocles" instead of "of Hierocles"; p. 53, 54, 55, 62 "heands" instead of "henads"; p. 56 "Westerink) Thus" instead of "Westerink). Thus"; p. 58 "in the Porph." instead of "in Porph."; p. 58 n. 35 "*Hypoerousios*" instead of "*Hyperousios*"; p. 59 "*epkeina*" instead of "*epekeina*"; p. 59 "using the infinitive" should better read "using the infinitive *einai*"; p. 68 "καθ >" instead of "καθ" (the same misprint occurs also elsewhere); p. 73 "εἰλικρινές" instead of "εἰλικρινές"; p. 145 "about first" instead of "about the first"; p. 148 "(Pisidia)" instead of "(Pisides)"; p. 148 n. 30 "γὰρ" instead of "εἰ γὰρ"; p. 192 "*hypathos*" instead of "*hypatos*"; p. 192 n. 2 "Process official" instead of "procès official"; p. 220 n. 10 "*toi-meme*" instead of "*toi-même*"; p. 231, 232, 252 "Areopagite" instead of "Areopagus"; p. 234 n. 9 and p. 237 n. 14: incomplete quotations; p. 238 and *passim* "*In Calumniatorem platonis*" instead of "*In calumniatorem Platonis*"; p. 256 "*Commentary Plotinus*" instead of "*Commentary on Plotinus*"; p. 262 "Artapanuss" instead of "Artapanus's"; p. 272 "*Ennead VI ,where*" instead of "*Ennead VI, where*". On p. 58 the terms "supersubstantial" and "hypersubstantial" are treated separately, although Cyril uses only

*hyperousios* and the first seems to come from a translation influenced by Latin. The translation of Cyr. *Dial. Trin.* 516.25-30 on p. 57 seems to be an unsuccessful translation of De Durand's French translation (*Sources Chrétiennes*, 237). The edition of Cyril's *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali trinitate* (CPG 5215) by De Durand cited in p. 58 n. 34 does not exist (despite the entry in the bibliography on p. 283). Instead, this work is cited according to PG 75, p. 9-656.

With this very interesting and pleasantly readable conference volume, which covers the wide range of Platonism in Byzantium, the editors and contributors have succeeded in opening the Theandrites series to an impressively high academic standard.

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