the part published in this volume covers Volume II, pp. 246.1–322.14 in Ruelle's edition.

This edition is well done and supersedes its predecessor—which is not surprising, since from 1959 onwards Westerink has provided us with a modern edition for each of the extant works of Damascius, except *Vita Isid*. The input of Segonds, Combès, and Luna is, where it is acknowledged, usually felicitous.

The translation is overall accurate, although one cannot fail to notice that it is born out of almost thirty years of exegesis of these texts, in which Combès seemed sometimes to dominate the field, and thus to shape the recent view on Damascius' *de Princ*. and *in Parm*., while carrying, not at all concealed, the philosophical legacy of J. Trouillard.

There are several objections and quibbles I have against the introduction (to the first volume), the translation, or the Greek of this edition, but the space of this review is too limited for such an endeavour. Moreover, the scholarship on Damascius is still young and thin, and there is plenty of opportunity and room for dissent or approval. Nevertheless, I would like to point out here at least three instances where I have such quibbles: *in Parm*. 4.22.17–18: *Ἔτι δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις τὰ χείρω κρείττω φανεῖται, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐφίστησιν ἐν τῇ ἕκτῃ ὑποθέσει*. I am not convinced that *αὐτὸς* here refers to Proclus and not to Parmenides (i.e. Plato), since it is he who speaks *in* the hypothesis while Proclus might have a point to make *about* it, in which case *ἐν . . . ὑποθέσει* would be superfluous. *in Parm*. 4.94.20–1: *ἤδη γὰρ καὶ τοῦτό που οἶδεν ὁ Πλάτων, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἄλλοις ἐπισημαίνεται*. I cannot accept that the editors are right in taking *αὐτὸς* to refer again to Proclus and not to Plato. The point Damascius is making is that he believes (*που*) that Plato knows (a certain thing) as it is shown in another work than the *Parmenides*, namely in the *Timaeus*. I cannot see why W. & C. would refer to Proclus 'in parte *Comm. in Tim.* nunc deperdita' when the reference to Plato's dialogue is at hand, the passage puts forward Damascius' theory, and there is no trace of it in the extant Proclus.

Last but not least, I can only regret that the *marginalia*, some of which are in Bessarion's hand, have not been considered important enough to include in this edition, even in the format of an appendix, as W. did in his edition of Damascius' *in Phaed*.

That said, the joint enterprise of W. & C. (with the help of A.-Ph. Segonds and C. Luna) has produced a most useful edition with a rich and learned body of notes and which is already the reference edition of this text and, beyond any doubt, the result of genuine *ἀληθείας ὠδῖνας* (to use Damascius' terminology). It is sad that neither of the editors lived long enough to see the whole work in print.

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AVICENNA AND ARISTOTLE

R. WISNOVSKY: *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*. Pp. xii + 305. London: Duckworth, 2003. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-7156-3221-3.

An adequate understanding of Arabic philosophy is now generally acknowledged to require an intimate understanding not only of Aristotle, but also the Neoplatonists, and especially Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle. The work under review represents a major advance in our grasp of how late ancient commentators, beginning with Alexander, influenced Arabic philosophy.

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Though the ultimate focus of the book is Avicenna, the opening four chapters are devoted to tracing the concept of perfection from the works of Aristotle through Neoplatonic commentators, by way of the Peripatetics Alexander and Themistius. These chapters are important reading for anyone who works on late-antique thought, whether or not they are interested in the Arabic tradition. They tell the story of how commentators tried to resolve two uses of *entelechia* in Aristotle: in *De Anima* 2.1 the *entelechia* of thinking explicitly does not involve change, but in *Physics* 3 he calls *kinêsis* itself an *entelechia*. Peripatetic commentators addressed this through the concept of 'perfection', exploiting the double meaning of the term *teleiotês*. A change or *kinêsis* is a progression towards 'perfection' in both the senses of completion (the change is finished) and finality (the end-state is the goal of the change). Likewise, the actualization of the ability to think is a realization of the final cause of the human intellectual faculty. Wisnovsky emphasizes that new philosophical positions grew out of interpretive problems: their project was above all what W. calls the 'lesser *sumphonia*' of making Aristotle agree with himself. The 'greater *sumphonia*' is making Plato agree with Aristotle. With this end, Neoplatonists gave a new twist to the Peripatetic terminology. The identification of the soul as a 'perfection' allowed them to argue, with Plato, that the soul is separate from the body, for final causes are separate from their effects. Furthermore, the soul's relation to the body involves efficient as well as final causality. In one sense, the exercise of what is 'perfect' is to be a cause of existence for its effect. In another sense, the 'perfect' is the final cause of the effect: the effect tries to imitate its cause. And in yet another sense, the cause itself achieves perfection by pursuing a still higher final cause. Thus, the notion of perfection is central to the Neoplatonic idea of procession and reversion.

These ideas were adapted by Avicenna, especially in his handling of the soul. He sees soul as the *entelechia* of the body: it comes to exist together with the body. Yet it is separate from body as its final cause, and strives for perfection through its relation to the Active Intellect. In light of Avicenna's careful engagement with the Ammonian commentators on the soul, W. draws the broader conclusion that Avicenna was the culmination of 'the Ammonian synthesis', and that it was with Avicenna that 'the late-antique era ended and the medieval began' (p. 266). This seems to me a deep and important insight, with far-reaching consequences for the history of philosophy in the Islamic world. But W.'s own account complicates this picture considerably, by noting also the impact on Avicenna of the currents of early Islamic thought. First, there were the translations of Greek philosophical works, which were themselves philosophically innovative, and which affected the way Avicenna and others read Aristotle and the Neoplatonists. (For purposes of full disclosure, I should mention that my own book on this theme regarding the Arabic Plotinus appeared recently with the same publisher.) Secondly, there were the thinkers of Islamic theology, or *kalâm*.

The second half of W.'s book is devoted to analyzing the origins and evolution of Avicenna's famous distinctions between essence vs. existence, and the necessary-in-itself vs. the possible-in-itself or necessary-through-another. These distinctions were a response to both the Arabic versions of Aristotle and to *kalâm* disputes. (I strongly recommend any student of Arabic thought to read at least Chapter 13, which is one of the clearest expositions I have read about *kalâm* discussions of eternity and divine attributes.) Among other things, W. shows how Avicenna is able to move from an understanding of the necessary as what is eternal—the 'statistical' interpretation that we find in Aristotle and in early *kalâm*—to the idea that the necessary-in-itself is that whose essence implies its existence. This means that Avicenna is able to articulate what it would mean for something to be both eternal and contingent.

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The point about *kalâm* influence is particularly important because it underscores the fact that 'philosophers (*falâsifa*)' in Islam were not pursuing an isolated intellectual program, but rather engaged directly with the contemporary theological disputes of the 'theologians (*mutakallimûn*)'. One outcome of W.'s book should be that historians of Arabic philosophy will realize the need to learn more about *kalâm* as well as more about late-antique philosophy. Indeed, W.'s approach epitomizes what I see as the three most fruitful avenues for the study of the first few centuries of Arabic philosophy: taking late-antique thought (especially the commentators) into account, being attentive to details of the Arabic translations of philosophical works rather than imagining Avicenna and others as engaging directly with Greek sources, and recognizing the interplay of philosophical and *kalâm* arguments. W.'s outstanding book should serve as a model for future research on Avicenna, and on the formative period of Arabic philosophy in general.

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EUSEBIUS' LIBRARY

A. J. CARRIKER: *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea*. (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 67.) Pp. xvi + 358. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003. Cased, €97/US$121. ISBN: 90-04-13132-9.

Andrew Carriker's scholarly tome stands in welcome contrast to an ostensibly similar book whose title it echoes.[1] Robert Ogilvie's study of *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford, 1978) was a slender volume of careless and too often borrowed learning. Ogilvie constructed his picture of what Lactantius had read almost exclusively from the *index auctorum* of Samuel Brandt's edition of Lactantius in the Vienna corpus (*CSEL* 27 [1893], 241–69), and he failed to take proper account of Antonie Wlosok's fundamental study *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis* (Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1962, no. 2), which he cited only at second hand (p. 79 n. 2, cf. E. Heck, *Gnomon* 52 [1980], 572–4). Ogilvie belonged to a generation where the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was not obligatory for university teachers, and he consciously cultivated the image of a gentleman-scholar, whereas C. informs his readers in his very first sentence that his book 'is a revision of the dissertation by the same name that [he] completed at Columbia University'. It is indeed a professional piece of work whose author is fully cognizant of the relevant modern scholarship.

C. first sets out what is known of the library at Caesarea from the early third century, when Origen settled in the city to the decline of Caesarea between the Muslim conquest and the arrival of the Crusaders in 1101 (pp. 1–36). He concludes quite reasonably that 'it seems unlikely that the library at Caesarea survived the vicissitudes of the seventh century' (p. 29). He next offers a brief chronology of Eusebius' life and

[1] J. Bryce, *The Library of Lactantius* (New York and London, 1990), which reproduces unchanged the text and notes of a Harvard Ph.D. dissertation of 1973 with an updated bibliography, has a very different focus: not what Lactantius had read, but how his thought was influenced by Cicero, Lucretius and Virgil. Bryce's treatment of Lactantius' debt to these three authors is superior to Ogilvie's.

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