issue of why, whereas Plato has fairly plainly divided his dialogue into three main sections (the workings of Reason (27d–47e), the workings of Necessity (47e–69a), and the cooperation of Reason and Necessity (69a–92c)), Proclus, in his account, seems to gloss over (L.'s term is 'escamotage') the workings of Necessity, and treats the third section as a mere appendix. L. is doubtless correct that this is due to Proclus' much more radical degree of monism, which makes him uncomfortable with the idea of Necessity as any sort of independent force resistant to the Demiurge. It is probably, he suggests, no accident that the surviving part of Proclus' commentary breaks off at 44d7 (though we have evidence that he covered the whole dialogue in some form, at least); it is likely that, after 47e, his comments became somewhat perfunctory and repetitive, since he made all his main points in the portion that survives to us.

The second, longer section of the work (pp. 115–354), entitled 'La dialectisation du *Timée*', is taken up with an exhaustive analysis of Proclus' exegesis of *Tim.* 27c–31b (covering Book 2 of his *Commentary*), which Proclus discerns as presenting, first, a series of hypotheses (a fundamental one, to the effect that the world is 'generated' [*genêtos*] only in the sense that it possesses its essence in Time, and thus can be said to come to be throughout the whole of time), followed by three pairs of hypotheses; and then four 'demonstrations' (*apodeixeis*). L. deals with the hypotheses in Chapters 6–12 (pp. 115–216), and the demonstrations in Chapters 13–17 (pp. 217–303). This gets him through *Tim.* 29d5.

The third section of the second part ('Le traité de la Démiurgie du Monde en son Tout comme troisième remontée dialectique vers les Causes divines du Monde') covers *Tim.* 29d6–31b4 and Proclus' *Commentary* 1.355.16–458.11 Diehl, and focuses on the final cause of the demiurgic creation, in the form of the 'goodness' of the Demiurge and his providential care for the world, including his assimilation of it to the Paradigm. This he covers in two chapters (18–19) and a conclusion. This, in turn, is followed by three appendices on particular points, a useful bibliography, and an 'Index des notions', confined to the main concepts discussed in the work.

As I remarked at the outset, this work is to a large extent a laborious analysis and formalization of Proclus' own formalization of the *Timaeus*, but in its way it is an admirable piece of scholarship, and a useful addition to our knowledge of Proclus' methods of work.

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A DEFENCE OF ORIGEN

M. J. EDWARDS: *Origen against Plato*. Pp. vi + 191. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002. Paper, £15.99 (Cased, £40). ISBN: 0-7546-0828-X (0-7546-1331-3 hbk).

As Lecturer in Patristics at Christ Church, Oxford, Mark Edwards sets out in this compact and erudite book to set the record straight on the controversial third century Christian theologian, Origen of Alexandria. The title summarizes the theme of the book, which is to restore Origen's philosophical doctrines as consciously constructed against the philosopher rather than being fatally tainted by extra-Christian opinions. To prove his case Edwards discusses the doctrine of Trinity with its traditional problems of hierarchy or subordination, the question of pre-existent souls, allegory as a hermeneutic for scripture, and eschatology. Each of

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these discussions is an illuminating and lively reading of Origen framed by recent philosophical scholarship, often by the author, as well as a broader historical view which includes new work on Gnosticism and Judaism. The Origen we meet here is a faithful man of the Church, critical and creative in his philosophical theology, and therefore ironically mistaken by both friends and foes as a heretic.

Just as Origen was impatient with the 'simple' laity who did not dig deeply enough into the meaning of scripture, so E. finds the philosophical ignorance of most patristic scholarship inexcusable and responsible for a consistent misreading of Origen's doctrine of God. Rather than a close reading of Platonic texts or even of recent scholarship, theologians have often substituted meaningless labels such as 'Hellenistic' or 'Middle Platonic' to understand Origen's thought. E. argues that Origen used philosophical vocabulary, but for his own purpose so that words alone should not be read as evidence of 'influence' or 'contamination', but evaluated within a specific theological context. Equally important, one needs to recover the multiplicity of philosophical choices in Alexandria, including Aristotelian, Stoic, and Pythagorean thought.

For E., as for many apologists for Origen, the lynchpin is the personal integrity of the philosopher:

> . . . what Origen took to be a decree of faith he was obliged, like all other Christians, to cherish as an axiom in the course of all encounters with other systems. No talk of God, whether pagan, Jewish or Christian, could therefore be imported into his own system unless it appeared to him that he was refining inarticulate premises rather than grafting in an alien creed. (p. 56)

Since discerning 'refining' and 'grafting' are the traditional explosion points in discussing Origen, E. proceeds to show how his theology is more consistently in line with scripture and contemporary Christian tradition than any philosophy: incorporeality and immutability can be read out of scripture as testimonies to divine otherness and faithfulness, if communicated by philosophical language. Revelation and theism as well as incarnation are not elements of Platonic thought, and radically shape Origen's theology. Pre-existence of the soul was a commonplace in antiquity; there is no evidence of transmigration. Most of this is drawn from a conservative reading of Rufinus' translation of *De principiis*.

The strength of Edwards's minimalist method is to place Origen most consistently in a stream of scriptural and pre-Nicene theological ideas, and then draw significant distinctions from the emerging Neoplatonism of Porphyry and Plotinus as well as to traditional theological generalizations. The book is extremely helpful here. The weakness is a consequence of the apologetic, so that E. mainly defends Origen by reference to the 'decree of faith' without fully discussing the possible 'inarticulate premises' which are being 'refined' in Origen's reflections. For example, *autotheos* is clearly an original term coined to explain the distinction of divinity in the Johannine prologue, but contrary to E., Origen does discuss participation and divinization in his *Commentary on John 2.2*, so that this reflection on the names and mediation of the Word is not simply the position of '. . . any Christian, that the monad who is God himself is apprehended through the unique theophany of Christ' (p. 72).

Given the overall revisionist tone and original contributions of the book, the lack of historical criticism toward the development of Christianity is disappointing. I find 'Church' as distracting a generic and anachronistic term for the multiple third-century Christian communities as 'Middle Platonism' is for specific philosophical teachings.

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The authorial tone can also be idiosyncratic, offering many opinions which are not necessarily helpful to the task such as to capitalize 'Catechetical School' after discussing its informal nature (p. 18) or a running battle with certain modern theologians (p. 47).

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NONNUS' *GOSPEL OF JOHN*, BOOK 5

G. AGOSTI: *Nonno di Panopoli:* Paraphrasi del Vangelo di San Giovanni. *Canto Quinto.* Introduzione, edizione critica, traduzione e commento. Pp. 559. Florence: Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità 'Giorgio Pasquali', 2003. Paper, €40. ISBN: 88-89051-08-6.

A.'s new introduction, text, translation, and commentary on the fifth chapter of Nonnus' *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* (written after A.D. 431) represents the fifth such volume in a series orchestrated by Enrico Livrea. Livrea (L.) himself already has two commentaries on Chapters 18 (1989)—see J. N. Birdsall in *CR* 40 (1990), 472–3—and 2 (2000). The other two commentaries are by Domenico Accorinti (Chapter 20; 1996) and Claudio De Stefani (Chapter 1; 2002)—see Mary Whitby in *CR* 48 (1998), 17–18 and *CR* 54 (2004), 358–60. The previous volumes in this series have all received high praise, and A.'s contribution hardly falls short of the standard: in over 500 pages he offers one of the most detailed and erudite studies to date on a late antique text. (Each of the volumes in this series is published by a different press, and this reviewer hopes that eventually a zealous editor might collect these new critical texts and apparatus into a single convenient volume.)

A.'s major contributions to the ongoing critical reappraisal of late antique poetry are well known. Most of his authoritative articles can be found in this volume's comprehensive bibliography (including some less well known: e.g. 'L'epica biblica nella tarda antichità graeca', *Stella* [2001], 67–104). Not surprisingly, A. follows L. in attributing the *Paraphrase* (*P.*) firmly to Nonnus and highlights several affinities throughout the introduction between *P.* and the *Dionysiaca* (e.g. pp. 45, 58–64, 175–8). However, these affinities are only noted as he reaches them in his discussion of other topics such as imagery, exegesis, and language, and it might have been better, given the diffuseness of the overarching Italian project on *P.*, to readdress the perennial question of authorship in a more transparent fashion.

The fifth chapter of John's Gospel includes the healing miracle at the pool of Bethesda, an argument with Jews over the ability of the Son to judge, and a discourse by Jesus on the testimony of God and Moses. Nonnus follows this three-part structure closely by devoting fifty-six verses to John 5:1–15, sixty-three verses to 5:16–30, and sixty-one verses to 5:31–47. Given Nonnus' very measured approach to expanding his *Vorlage*, it is surprising that A. gives over so much of his introduction (pp. 37–131) to a discussion of miraculous healing in late antiquity (nevertheless making the sensible argument that Nonnus was influenced in his μεταβολή of John 5:1–15 by

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