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Mark Joyal, *The Platonic Theages. An Introduction, Commentary, and Critical Edition*. Philosophie der Antike 10. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2000. 335 pp. ISBN 3 515 07230 6.

Joyal (henceforth = 'J.') has produced an admirably sound and sober edition of the pseudo-Platonic *Theages* which includes a detailed introduction (9-172), critical text, and commentary (195-294).

J. is convinced that BTW are the only primary witnesses for the *Theages*.¹ Because these mss. appear to change their affiliations from dialogue to dialogue (164), and sometimes even within a single dialogue (*RHT*, 1 n. 3), one cannot generalize from this to any other Platonic work. All three, he thinks, descend independently from a single 9th century minuscule supplied with variants and glosses (contrast D. Murphy, *CW* 95, 2001, 93f.). He also claims to have distinguished the various correcting hands of B: not only the corrections introduced by the scribe (John the Calligrapher) and those of a second contemporary hand (usually thought to be that of Arethas; 160 n. 3), but some later hands as well (*RHT*, 4-6), including the 10th-11th century hand (vet. b) noted by Allen. Unfortunately, J. has not stated the criteria by which these hands have been distinguished, though this question has been subject to controversy.² The text is based on a fresh collation of all the available evidence. All three primary witnesses, plus several others, were examined in their entirety both *in situ* and by photograph, while all of the other manuscript evidence known to J. was collated by photograph (*RHT*, 3 n. 12). Given the problems with Burnet's reporting — especially of W, where Burnet relied on the faulty and incomplete collations of Král — such efforts are valuable.³ This statement of which manuscripts have been collated and how, thus relegated to a footnote in a supplementary paper, calls attention to a point of real importance. A great deal of effort has been expended over the past 15 years (and more) on the study of the manuscript tradition of the Platonic corpus. While some of these studies are excellent and have much intrinsic interest, the fact remains that they have added very little to a proper understanding and appreciation of Plato's thought. As Shorey said long ago, in reacting to the excesses of Wilamowitz, when it comes to Plato, textual criticism is a game that is played (though admittedly it *has* to be played) largely for its own sake.⁴ Indeed, it is highly unlikely that many entirely new readings will be found, and those variants which we *do* possess cannot, in any event, be evaluated mechanically since the tradition as we have it is certainly contaminated and the archetypes themselves were probably supplied in most cases with scholia, glosses, variants, and the like.⁵ But what is of

¹ M. Joyal, 'The Textual Tradition of [Plato], *Theages*', *RHT* 28, 1998, 1-54 is supplementary and should be consulted together with the relevant section (159-72) of J.'s book. For what follows, see W.A. Heidel, *Pseudo-Platonica* (Baltimore, 1896), 53-6; J. Souilhé, *Platon. Oeuvres complètes*. T. 13.2, *Dialogues suspects* (Paris, 1930), 129-60.

² Cp. A. Carlini, *Studi sulla tradizione antica e medievale del Fedone* (Roma, 1972), 153 n. 7; L. Tarán, *Gnomon* 48, 1976, 767f. (= *Leonardo Tarán, Collected Papers [1962-1999]* [Leiden, 2001], 289); D. Murphy, 'The Manuscripts of Plato's *Charmides*', *Mnem.* 43, 1990, 317f.; C. Brockmann, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung von Platons Symposium* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 42; E.A. Duke — W.W. Hicken, et al., *Platonis Opera*, T.I (Oxford, 1995), xi n. 17; S. Martinelli Tempesta, *La tradizione testuale del Liside di Platone* (Firenze, 1997), 8f.

³ For Burnet's reporting of W (which he never collated or even saw), see H. Klos — L. Minio-Paluello, 'The Text of the *Phaedo* in W and in Henricus Aristippus' Translation', *CQ* 43, 1949, 126f.; R.S. Bluck, *Plato's Meno* (Cambridge, 1964), 133 n. 1; cp. M. Menchelli, 'Collazione dell' *Ippia Maggiore*', in *Studi su codici e papiri filosofici. Platone, Aristotele, Ierocles* (Firenze, 1992), 96 n. 3; Martinelli Tempesta, 132 n. 51. The poor quality of Král's collations of F (bemoaned by Dodds and others) has recently been confirmed by S. Tsitsiridis, *Platons Menexenus* (Stuttgart und Leipzig, 1998), 93 n. 181.

⁴ P. Shorey, *Plato. The Republic* (Cambridge, 1935-1937; rev. ed.), I: xlvf; also rev. Robin, *CP* 21, 1926, 265 (= *Selected Papers*, ed. L. Tarán [New York, 1980], I: 465).

⁵ Even papyrological finds, often indispensable for the study of other authors and other genres (not least for their ability to 'confirm' the conjectures of later scholars; see, e.g., G.J. De Vries, *A Commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato* [Amsterdam, 1969], ad 245C5 ἀεικλήτων / αὐτοκλήτων; also 251A5-6), will have a somewhat more limited value for the study of Plato, since the papyri undoubtedly preserve an inferior and more popular text as compared with that of the medieval manuscripts, which latter far better reflect the Academic school tradition: see De Vries' notes *passim*, and Tarán, 764ff. (= *Coll. Pap.*, 284-7); also J. Irigoin, *Tradition et critique des textes grecs* (Paris, 1997), 73f. [orig. 1971-1972]; S.R. Slings, 'Remarks on Some Recent Papyri of the *Politeia*', *Mnem.* 40, 1987, 31f.; Martinelli Tempesta, 248f.,

permanent value — because it is still lacking in so many cases — and what later generations will appreciate most, are sound and thorough collations of all the existing manuscripts, especially of those primary witnesses of which we are certain.

The question of *spuria* is an important one, and there can be no doubt that judgments tend to be made on purely subjective grounds (see Shorey, *Sel. Pap.*, II: 267). Heidel complained about the dialogue's 'eclectic character' (53), its clumsy handling of quotations ([*Thg.*] 127E-128A → *Apol.* 19E2-20A2; J. 37 n. 63) and of other Platonic or pseudo-Platonic material (*Theaetetus*: Souilhé, 140f.; J. 82ff.; [*Alc. J.*]: J. 154f., 225f.). Certainly, purely linguistic considerations, as J. rightly notes, are of limited value for determining the authenticity of a dialogue whose Greek is actually quite elegant (cp. Souilhé, 141: 'Le style est bien attique et imite assez heureusement celui de Platon'; J.'s defense against Shorey of the opening sentence [121A1-3], however, is forced: it is a peculiar feature of this otherwise excellent book that the author more than once [15 n. 17, 27, 115f.] indulges in a surmise regarding Demodocus' interior state of mind). But the dialogue's claim that Socratic education proceeds best by means of physical contact, a notion condemned in the *Symposium* (cp. [*Thg.*] 129E-130E, esp. C7-E4, with *Symp.* 175CE; J. 92-6, 289 ad D5-E4), is thoroughly unplatonic, as is also the treatment of τὸ δαιμόνιον which occupies so prominent a place in the architecture of the dialogue (see Souilhé, 130-7, which is still valuable; also J. 65-103, 128-30). In the *Theages*, the Socratic δαιμόνιον (though apotropaic) predicts the future, directs the activities of others apart from Socrates, and reduces Socrates to the role of a mere intermediary — features commonly associated with Xenophon's δαιμόνιον, but which J. (100) would himself refer to a common source. But the decisive feature for J. (82ff., 130) is the dialogue's misinterpretation of the μαευτική of the *Theaetetus* and its unplatonic identification of τὸ δαιμόνιον with ὁ θεός which (J. believes) turns Plato's vaguely undefined and often ironical (67 n. 7) δαιμόνιον into the personal daemon of traditional piety, and which thus anticipates, and is actually formative of Middle Platonic demonology (102f.). It is not simply a question, then, of a few unplatonic elements scattered about here and there; rather, the whole conception of the δαιμόνιον is unplatonic (99ff.). And this is more than enough to condemn the dialogue as spurious.

J. places the dialogue firmly within the opening years of the Old Academy. Noting the absence of Stoic and other hellenistic material (139ff.), J. thinks that the dialogue's preoccupation with demonology points in the general direction of Xenocrates (141-4), while certain literary peculiarities (such as the heavy use of biographical anecdote; see Souilhé, 134ff.; J. 264f.; also Pease ad Cic. *de Div.* 1.54 [I: 316f.]) points to the post-platonic dialogue and to the likes of Heraclides Ponticus (144-7, with n. 52). Then, rejecting any possible allusion to the career of Alexander (147-50), J. dates the *Theages* to c. 345-335 (at the latest; 154f.). Many will no doubt suspect that this is still too early.

Far more problematic is the intricate and lengthy discussion of the unity and purpose of the dialogue (9-63). J. claims that a preoccupation with questions of authenticity has prevented scholars from appreciating the quality of the work itself. Although the author uses Platonic and other material, the *Theages* is hardly a cento, and it is not sufficient simply to list the *topoi*; one must evaluate why these *topoi* have been used and how they are woven into a conceptual or literary whole. This is sound advice, but it must be said that the specifics of J.'s argument — while often ingenious, and always learned — are sometimes forced. The dialogue falls into two unequal parts (121A1-128C8 and 128D1-131A10). But this division, and the sudden, seemingly abrupt introduction of Socrates' appeal to the erotic arts (128B1-6), are not signs of faulty composition. Rather, 128B stands as the carefully prepared transition (see 125D10-E3, where τὰ τυραννικά, used in connection with Kallikrate, is taken [30f.] as a reference to *erotic* tyranny) between these

with n. 172; for specifics regarding the Platonic papyri, one may now consult the relevant sections of the *Corpus dei papyri filosofici greci e latini* (CPF) I.1 (Firenze, 1999).

two unequal parts. While the opening section of the dialogue shows that neither sophists nor politicians can render Theages σοφός, the final section gives as an alternative Socratic συνουσία, which — working not with dialectic, but simply by proximity and contact — can at least *improve* him (i.e., make him ὡς βέλτιστος). This is accomplished, as we saw, largely through the operations of τὸ δαιμόνιον, which works independently of Socrates' will and which (as in the *Alcibiades* of Aeschines [fr. 11 Dittmar; J. 42f.]) is closely connected or even identical (97n.80) with *Eros*. As such, Socrates (in contrast with his sophistic rivals, who accomplish nothing) is the ἐρωτικός ἀνὴρ (11) 'concerned for the welfare of his young associate[s]' (cp. *Phdr.* 248D3f. and 249A1-2 ἢ [sc. ψυχῇ] τοῦ φιλοσοφήσαντος ἀδόλως ἢ παιδευαστήσαντος μετὰ φιλοσοφίας, not cited by J.). In other words, the dialogue is not really 'about' the divine sign in any strict sense at all; it is primarily concerned with education.

Despite the criticisms offered above, this is certainly an important book and will be of enormous interest to students of Plato, regardless of their views on *Theages*. The commentary in particular contains an astonishing wealth of valuable material on various Platonic idioms. If J.'s edition thus offers any hint of the future of Platonic studies (especially in the English-speaking world), then students of the dialogues can count themselves quite fortunate indeed.

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