plies the influence of Pythagorean mathematics. Further, I agree with G. that Parmenides’ cosmology must not be rejected as completely false, but if it was intended as a serious contribution to scientific knowledge, how should we explain its «intentional use of ambiguity» that makes it unreconstructable?

3) G. distinguishes between strong Eleaticism that denies plurality and weak Eleaticism that is compatible with pluralism and thus with cosmology (165f). His Parmenides endorses rather the strong version, but leaves room for the weak version as well (243). Accordingly, Anaxagoras and Empedocles see Parmenides as advocating weak Eleatic theory and themselves as Eleatic pluralists, whereas Zeno and Melissus follow and advance the strong Eleatic monism. This is a very ingenious solution that reconciles both Parmenides’ two ways and the opposite ways of his followers. Still, one problem remains: in addition to plurality, cosmology presupposes change of place that was ruled out by Parmenides (28 B 8.41), as G. himself admits (164). Thus, Anaxagoras and Empedocles had to reject at least some of Parmenides’ views, even if they did not criticise him explicitly. If, however, weak Eleaticism is compatible with pluralism and change of place, it is quite weak, indeed.

4) To be philosophically coherent and dialectically relevant, the atomists had to counter the arguments of Zeno and Melissus. «Instead, they assume without justification what their critics have already denied» (255). Since such a move is «dialectically indefensible», G. himself constructs the atomist’s case against the Eleatics and concludes: «It seems consistent with the principle of charity to attribute to them something like the argument that makes sense of their responses to the Eleatics» (269). It may be consistent with the principle of charity, but is inconsistent with G.’s approach to Anaxagoras and Empedocles. They also assume plurality and change denied by Parmenides, instead of explicitly criticising his position, yet in this case G. does not try to make an argument for them but interprets the lack of criticism from their side as a sign of their positive attitude towards Parmenides (188).

Though such an ambitious revisionist work as G.’s cannot satisfy every reader, it certainly deserves attentive reading and serious consideration as an original attempt at better understanding the Presocratics.

St. Petersburg

Leonid Zhmud

Detlef Thiel: Die Philosophie des Xenokrates im Kontext der Alten Akademie. München/Leipzig: Saur 2006. 511 S. (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 231.)

This weighty tome (the «unveränderte Druckfassung» of the author’s doctoral dissertation, completed under the aegis of Jens Halfwassen in Heidelberg) is, I believe, the first full-dress study of Xenocrates in German since that of Rudolf Heinze in 1892 – a much slimmer volume, which contained also a collection of


the fragments.\footnote{Xenokrates, Darstellung der Lehre und Sammlung der Fragmente, Leipzig, 1892 (repr. Hildesheim, 1965).} There has of course also been, more recently (1982), the most useful Italian collection of fragments, with commentary, by Margherita Isnardi Parente, and Hans-Joachim Krämer has given considerable attention to Xenocrates in various of his works, particularly 'Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik'.\footnote{Senocrate-Ermodoro, Frammenti, Napoli, 1982. Among many other contributions from her pen, one should mention 'L’Accademia antica: interpretazioni recenti e problemi di metodo', RIFIC 114 (1986), pp. 350–378.} However, this book constitutes an advance on, as well as a summation of, all previous work.

Thiel, then, has been able to profit from a good deal of scholarship on Xenocrates and the Old Academy over the last twenty years, including some speculations of my own.\footnote{The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 B.C), Oxford, 2003, ch. 3.} The first half of the book, in fact, does not primarily concern Xenocrates, but rather 'the context of the Academy', as specified in the title. It might, indeed, be churlishly suggested that the book would have benefited from being somewhat more radically 'verändert' from the thesis, in the direction of pruning; but in fact all that T. includes in the first part is sound and valuable: such topics as the physical, social and intellectual situation of Plato's Academy (pp. 31–62), the Pythagorean background, with special reference to Philolaus (79–113), and the question of Plato's 'unwritten doctrines' (137–225), are certainly relevant to the proper appreciation of Xenocrates. It is just that T. surrenders from time to time to the temptation of discussing topics for their own sake, rather than with explicit reference forward to his main theme.

On the question of the physical situation of the Academy, he takes on board all recent research, such as that of Gaiser, Krämer, Lynch, Glucker, Baltes and myself, accepting the simplicity and informality of the arrangements, and the distinction between activities in the Academy park and at Plato's adjacent villa.

One point that he might perhaps have acknowledged, à propos the curious tale of the circumstances of the setting up of the Academy (pp. 33–5), is that the Spartan admiral Pollis, in conveying Plato back from Syracuse in the spring of 388, may not in fact have wished to have had him sold into slavery, but simply left him off at Aegina because that was as far as he, as a Spartan, could safely go at the time. He need not have known about the recent anti-Athenian law passed by the Aeginetans. The story about the enraged Dionysius wishing Plato to be sold into slavery may well have been concocted subsequently, to enhance the reputation of Plato while blackening that of Dionysius. As for his rescue by the Cyrenean Anniceris, it is bizarre, certainly, but not impossible.

His discussion of the significance of Philolaus for the later 'Pythagoreanizing' of the Academy, and the substantial initiation by Speusippus and Xenocrates in particular of the tradition of Neopythagoreanism, is most useful. It does seem reasonable to assume that a system involving \textit{peras} and \textit{apeiron}, with number as their first product, is essentially his contribution.

On the Unwritten Doctrines, T. essentially accepts the position of the 'Tübingen School' of Gaiser and Krämer, as do I, so I have no substantial quarrels with him on that score. It is indeed, I believe, essential, for the appreciation of Xenocrates' relation to Plato, that it be accepted that Xenocrates is relating,
not primarily to the dialogues (though the *Timaeus*, in particular, is of central importance to him), but to decades of oral teaching and discussion within the Academy. T. sets out as clearly as can be done what we know of Plato’s first principles of the One and the Indefinite Dyad, or Great-and-Small, and then of the derivation of the system of Form-Numbers (and of the three dimensions) from those, while fully recognising how much remains obscure on the latter question.

On the old chestnut of the public lecture ‘On the Good’, he sets out all the evidence very well, while still, I think, falling under the influence of those who set altogether too much store by this event. No doubt, something of the sort happened – not one of Plato’s better ideas, as it turned out – and a number of disciples, including Aristotle, would seem to have written it up, but it is surely absurd to treat this as anything like the one source of our knowledge of Plato’s ‘unwritten doctrines’, or first principles. T. does not indeed do this, but he does devote a whole chapter to the incident (pp. 166–181).

Another issue of interest that he raises is that of the degree of monism or dualism characteristic of Plato’s system (pp. 197–206) – a question that relates to Xenocrates as well. The best answer to the problem, I think, is actually that provided by Plato’s follower Hermodorus, to which he alludes (p. 203), that really the Indefinite Dyad, as material principle, is not to be regarded as a force positively antithetical to the Monad, so that Plato is not really a dualist in the accepted sense.

And so, at last, to Xenocrates himself (p. 226). Here T. begins very soundly, with chapters on Xenocrates within the framework of the Academy and on his ontology (of Monad and Indefinite Dyad), but in the following two chapters (§ 3, ‘Die Theologie des Xenokrates’ and § 4, ‘Von der Theologie zur Dialektik’) things, in my view, begin to come a little unstuck, simply because T. cannot divest himself of the position of his mentors (Krämer, Halfwassen and Baltes), in regard to the interpretation of Fr. 15 Heinze/ Isnardi Parente, the so-called ‘theological fragment’ from Aetius.

The fact that this doxographical summary «makes sense as it stands» is not an adequate reason for leaving it unamended, because the ‘sense’ that it makes is still nonsense in terms of Xenocrates’ otherwise attested metaphysical system. There is simply no way that the Indefinite Dyad can also be a world-soul, ‘ruling below the Moon’. T (and his mentors) must resort to supposing that X.’s ‘theology’ somehow concerns a different (lower) level of reality than his metaphysics; but there is no indication that Aetius intended his report to concern anything other than ultimate first principles. I still stick to my conviction that the report is lacunose and/or confused, and that the Dyad and World Soul are quite distinct, the latter being the offspring of the union of the former with the Monad. T. makes valiant efforts to patch the accounts together, but his efforts are, in my view, misdirected.

However, when we reach the level of the Forms and Numbers in ch. 5 (‘Die mathematisierte Dialektik des Xenocrates’), all is well again. Admittedly, the precise mode of derivation of the Forms/Numbers remains obscure, but there was certainly a special status for the *tetraktys* and for the Decad, and the first four numbers were also seen as generating the dimensions, Point, Line, Plane and Solid. The Soul, as ‘self-moving number, embraces all the numbers, and projects them upon Matter to generate the sensible world.
In chs. 6 and 7, T. turns to the protracted analysis of the important and intriguing passage of Sextus Empiricus, *AMX* 248–283, which presents an account of ‘Pythagorean’ first principles. I was hesitant about the provenance of this myself (‘Heirs of Plato’, 203–4), but I agree now that in all probability Xenocrates has a lot to do with it, albeit worked over by a late Hellenistic source. Here, however, I fear, T. comes unstuck once again. The problem centres on the aligning of the metaphysical scheme presented in §261 with that of Fr. 15H, as interpreted by T., and also with his assumption that Xenocrates must have postulated also a more transcendent One above the Monad, on the lines of Plato and Speusippus. These positions involve him in much superfluous twisting and stretching of the evidence.

All we really need to postulate for Xenocrates is a pair of principles, Monad and Indefinite Dyad, the first product of which are numbers (and geometricals), the secondary product, with the addition of Motion and Rest, being Soul. The Monad is, as well as a Unity, also an Intellect, its contents being at least prefigurations of the totality of Forms (a demythologized version of the Essential Living Being of the *Timaeus*). This Monad is ‘transcendent’, inasmuch as it is prior to all that derives from it, but it is a much more positively characterized entity than the One of Speusippus (whatever about that of Plato himself).

If we accept that, what *AMX* 261 gives us is a most valuable account of how the Monad may be viewed both as an absolute unity ‘in itself’ and as generating the Dyad through ‘otherness’ from itself – this being, in all probability, a creative interpretation of the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides*, and an assertion of Xenocrates’ interesting version of monism. All this T. expounds perfectly well, while yet wrestling with the unnecessary problems posed by his understanding of Fr. 15H.

His last chapter pursues a comparison between the systems of Xenocrates and the 2nd-century C.E. Neopythagorean Numenius, an idea first developed by H.-J. Krämer. I am not sure that this really achieves its purpose. Doubtless Numenius knew, and approved of, Xenocrates, but in fact what the effort at comparison brings out is rather the differences between the two. Numenius is definitely a dualist (as seems to have been the tendency of his age, cf. Plutarch and Atticus), and his development of the Demiurge as a second god is something quite alien to Xenocrates (despite T.’s valiant efforts to assimilate him to Xenocrates’ world-soul).

However, all these strictures should not be allowed to detract seriously from T.’s fine achievement in setting Xenocrates properly in the context of the Old Academy, and giving due attention to his distinctive philosophical position, as well as to his role in the creation of Platonism as a system (not to mention Neopythagoreanism!) Only this troublesome matter of the correct interpretation of Fr. 15H is at issue between us, and there I am conscious of being distinctly in the minority.

Dublin

John Dillon