

REVIEW ARTICLE: AN OCTAVE OF STRAW

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J.B. Kennedy, *The Musical Structure of Plato's Dialogues* (Durham: Acumen, 2011), xviii + 318 pp., \$29.99. ISBN 9781844652679.

Kennedy's aim is to show that Plato wrote his dialogues with an underlying musical structure. Kennedy's book was foreshadowed by a 2010 article in *Apeiron* that attracted significant attention and critical comment.² In this review, we want to focus on a slightly different, but related difficulty about Kennedy's general thesis — what expectations it requires us to attribute to Plato as author. Before we turn to this task, we will summarise the content of the book as neutrally as we can for the benefit of readers who have not previously encountered the controversy surrounding it.

Summarise/

The book contains eight chapters and nine appendices. The first chapter is introductory and seeks to show that Kennedy is returning to an earlier Neoplatonic practice of looking for hidden or allegorical meanings in Plato's dialogues. We will review and examine the content of this chapter in some detail below.

Chapter Two introduces the idea of a musical scale underlying Plato's compositions with specific reference to the *Symposium*. This structure is imposed on the number of lines in the dialogue, as determined by the standard line length used to determine the cost of copying a work. Hence, Kennedy's project attends to stichometry — the measurement of works in terms of a *stichos* or line. This feature of ancient books is hidden by the pagination that we find in editions like the Oxford Classical Texts. So Kennedy has used computer technology to re-format Plato's dialogues with 35 character lines that omit punctuation, spaces and indications of speaker. These 35 character lines approximate the hexameter lines that Kennedy claims early copies of Plato's dialogues preserved.

The third chapter seeks to bolster the probability of Kennedy's hypothesis by consideration of independent lines of argument. Kennedy casts a wider net, by attending to the lengths of speeches in various dialogues and by appealing to the idea that different dialogues exhibit parallel passages at the same places in their respective musical structures. The final section of Chapter Three applies the hypothesis of the underlying twelve-part musical structure to the Platonic *spuria* and *dubia*. Kennedy reports that among works that are widely accepted to be spurious, *On Justice*, *Minos*, *On Virtue* and *Eryxias* exhibit no

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²J.B. Kennedy, 'Plato's Forms, Pythagorean Mathematics and Stichometry', *Apeiron*, 44 (2010), pp. 1–31.



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sign of a musical structure. By contrast, *Alcibiades I*, *Cleitophon* and the *Epinomis* do.

Chapter Four argues that there is an emphatic musical pattern in the framing material that precedes the speeches in the *Symposium*. Separated by exactly the same number of lines we have four incidents: Apollodorus *halts* when hailed by his friend; Apollodorus and his friend *start walking* towards Athens; Socrates departs for the party, but *halts* under a porch; Socrates *walks in* late and *seats* himself next to Agathon. Kennedy extracts a theory of music from Eryximachus' speech which he believes corresponds exactly to the features of this pattern.

Chapter Five is among the longest in the book. It goes through, point by point, most of the notes on the scale that Kennedy believes Plato writes to. (We will turn to the question of whether Kennedy's textual division is properly characterized as a scale in a moment.) There are twelve 'whole notes' corresponding to equal twelfths of the length of the dialogue (measured in 35 letter lines). Between each of these Kennedy locates three 'quarter notes' making out a division of each twelfth into four equal measures. Whole notes and quarter notes are marked as harmonious or unharmonious. Finally, there is also a simultaneous division of the dialogue into sevenths corresponding, Kennedy thinks, to the seven strings of the lyre (pp. 39-40). At each seventh Kennedy believes we find extremely dissonant notions involving things that do not blend (e.g. Orpheus is present among the *dead* in Hades while himself still *alive* at *Symp.* 179d2 — the first seventh and one that Kennedy regards as a particularly obvious clue to the structure of sevenths). Kennedy denotes the whole notes by numbers between 0 and 12 and intervening quarter notes by 1.1, 1.2, etc. Chapter Five goes carefully through the notes that occur in the *Symposium*'s speeches with translation on the left-hand page (with notes and themes marked), while the right-hand page contains commentary.

Chapter Six carries out the same programme for Plato's *Euthyphro*. Kennedy claims that the underlying musical structure reveals that this dialogue is not genuinely aporetic. Just as the ninth and most harmonious whole note coincides with the vision of the Beautiful in the *Symposium*, so too in the *Euthyphro* Socrates' suggestion that the pious is a species of justice (12d3) appears at the ninth whole note in this dialogue.

The seventh chapter seeks to show that Aristotle's doctrine that each moral virtue is a mean between two extremes is contained in a hidden manner in Plato's dialogues. The first step in extracting this doctrine from the musical structure of Plato's works is the recognition that Plato has grasped the Golden Ratio. Consider a line divided into two segments, a and b. The division occurs at the golden mean when $a + b : a = a : b$. The numerical value of the Golden Mean to three places is .618 or 61.8% and Kennedy observes that the *Republic*'s doubly divided line occurs at 61.8% of the way through the dialogue when it is measured in his standard lines. Similarly, there is talk of a *mesos*

(mean or middle) at points approximating 61.8% of the way through *Symposium*, *Philebus* and *Phaedrus*.

Alas Kennedy is not very explicit about exactly how allusions to the Golden Ratio in Plato's dialogues vindicate the claim that he was covertly pointing towards the notion that we find in Aristotle that virtue is a mean. It is true, as Kennedy points out, that Aristotle himself introduces the idea that virtue is a state between two opposed vices with a comment about Pythagoreanism (*EN* 1106b28). But beyond this, no very definite connection between the Golden Ratio and Aristotle's moral philosophy is spelled out. We believe that this is a very disappointing conclusion to the book, for throughout we are led to believe that Plato's (alleged) composition in accordance with the twelve-note scale is *allegorical* — that is to say, it is intended to communicate some deeper meaning. It is not mere Pythagorean gamesmanship meant to elicit the admiration of those who can count the lines in the work and appreciate the manner in which arguments, episodes and concepts fall at the various divisions of the canon.

A final chapter summarizes the argument; attempts to forestall certain objections and sets the direction for future research.

Should readers believe the major contentions of this book? Let us consider the expectations that Kennedy's thesis requires that we attribute to Plato. Kennedy argues that Plato expected his dialogues to be copied in such a way that the text would be laid out in regular lines of hexameter; and Plato expected some of his readers — perhaps only an elect few — to count lines as they were reading, and to notice when they had reached one-twelfth of the full length of the text, two-twelfths, three-twelfths, and so on. Indeed, he expected some of his readers to notice when they had reached each quarter of the way through each twelfth. Kennedy also argues that Plato expected some of his readers to be mindful, while reading the dialogues, of a correspondence between lengths of text and lengths of a vibrating string or monochord. If a string is stretched so that its vibrations will create a musical note, and if a movable bridge is placed so that the length of string that vibrates is altered, then you will find that placing the bridge at successive twelfths of the entire length will create twelve different notes. For instance, at a length of three-twelfths of the whole length the note will be two octaves above the note played by the whole string (call that note *ut*). At a length of six-twelfths the note will be one octave above *ut*. At eight-twelfths the note will be the *sol* above *ut*; at nine-twelfths the note will be the *fa* above *ut*, and those are the first moves that the Pythagoreans make in their *solfa* division of the octave. The other twelfths yield notes that are perfectly harmonious 'in themselves' (as it were) — and perfectly harmonious with many of the other notes that can be played at various of the other twelfths on the monochord; but many of these notes are discordant with the *ut* played by the string as a whole.

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Kennedy construes these notes as comprising a twelve-note 'scale'; and indeed he construes equal divisions of twelfths into quarters as creating 'quarter tones' within this 'scale'. In fact, at three-twelfths and six-twelfths we have repetitions of the lowest-note, raised by an octave or two: so Kennedy's twelve notes do not in fact divide the octave into a twelve-note 'scale', but only into a ten-note 'scale'. But let that pass. His theory is that Plato expected some of his readers to be mindful, when reading any given passage within the dialogues, of whether the corresponding note is or is not 'harmonious'; and by this he means that the reader is to be mindful *only* of whether this note is harmonious with the note *ut* that is played by the whole string — Kennedy pays no concern to the question of whether the note is harmonious with any of the *other* notes in the neighbourhood.

Kennedy's theory also assumes that Plato expected some of his readers to use these musical correspondences as a clue to discovering some of Plato's 'unwritten doctrines'. The notion of hidden doctrines requires careful consideration. There are at least two senses in which something might count as an 'unwritten' or 'secret' doctrine. It could be a doctrine that no one has ever articulated before (but Kennedy gives no example of any possible 'secret doctrine' of that kind). Or it could be a doctrine for which the 'secret' is only that *Plato held this doctrine*. Kennedy does give an example of a possible 'secret doctrine' of this kind. In the *Euthyphro* at one point Socrates suggests that 'piety is a species of justice'. Kennedy suggests that readers who were mindful of musical correspondences would see that this suggestion by Socrates corresponds musically to a particularly 'harmonious' note — 'at the ninth note' (p. 246) — and they would conclude from this that this doctrine is one that Plato himself really does endorse. Kennedy concludes (p. 246): 'It seems that, for the first time, we can hear Plato's own voice.'

Kennedy does not give any clear indication of what relevant readers Plato could have had in mind, or why he ~~might~~ have wanted only those readers and no one else to know the secret that he, Plato, believed the doctrine that 'piety is a species of justice'. Kennedy does suggest that for some 'secret doctrines' it might be well to conceal your true beliefs for fear of persecution: but that is not a plausible motive for concealing the belief that 'piety is a species of justice'.

These considerations about Plato's expectations as author make the material in Chapter One particularly salient. We suppose that Kennedy thinks that it is reasonable to attribute these expectations about the audience for the dialogues to Plato because Kennedy thinks that he is *recovering* a way of reading philosophical texts that has now largely been discarded. The first chapter provides something of a literature survey on *philosophical allegory*. Kennedy argues that philosophical allegory has been rehabilitated by a variety of recent trends in scholarship on ancient philosophy.

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We believe, however, that Kennedy uses the phrase 'philosophical allegory' in two importantly different ways. As a result, his first chapter does not show that he is returning to a long-lost way of approaching philosophical texts. First, there is the allegorical *reading* of cryptic, semantically dense poetic texts *by philosophers* so as to show that their deep content coheres with a particular philosophical view. Thus the Derveni papyrus reveals a use of allegorical reading strategies by a philosophically educated author on Orphic texts and traditions. This must be distinguished from allegorical *writing* practised by philosophers in the construction of texts that identify themselves as part of the emerging genre of the philosophical work. Viewed in light of this distinction between allegorical readings by philosophers and allegorical writings by philosophers, the sections of Chapter One look a bit disconnected. Let us examine it in detail.

Chapter One breaks down into eight sections. The first section cites Sedley's work on Plato's *Cratylus* and the evidence of the Derveni papyrus to argue that Plato and his contemporaries took allegorical etymologies to be a potential source of wisdom. The second section reviews the evidence for associating various practitioners of allegorical reading, such as Metrodorus of Lampsacus, with the Socratic circle. Thus far we have only evidence of the utilization of allegorical *reading* strategies by philosophers. Kennedy goes on to argue that Plato's dialogues themselves 'deploy many allegorical devices and explicitly call attention to them' (p. 7). Kennedy's prime example is the cave in the *Republic*. Section three turns to symbols and secrecy in Pythagoreanism. The Pythagorean *akousmata* certainly constitute a precedent for the transmission of a concealed content by means of another content. Section four considers political persecution as a motive for the use of allegory or symbolism for disguising the content of one's views. Kennedy follows this observation up with the claim that the neo-Pythagorean Numenius testifies that Plato used 'allegory and reserve as a result of fear of persecution' (p. 14). This may be, but as we noted, none of the secrets revealed by Kennedy's reading would seem to provide any occasion for persecution.

Section five of Chapter One addresses the question of Plato's connection to Pythagoreanism. Kennedy notes that Plato's immediate successors in the Academy took themselves to be developing Pythagorean lines of thought. Kennedy argues that, in fact, a largely Pythagorean ontology *is* concealed within the dialogues. Thus, like Kenneth Sayre, he thinks that the reports of Plato's 'unwritten doctrines' are in fact ways of describing the doctrines that are actually presented in the dialogues. Where Kennedy parts company from readers of Plato like Sayre and Kahn is in the *manner* in which these doctrines are contained in the dialogues. Kennedy takes them to be concealed by the use of allegorical writing strategies.

Section six presents a history of the notion that Plato communicates by allegorical methods. Drawing on the work of Harold Tarrant, Kennedy claims

that Plato's dialogues were not treated as containing a secret or disguised meaning until the time of Numenius. The tendency to 'read below the surface' in the dialogues came to fruition in Neoplatonism. The decline of the Neoplatonic reading of Plato, documented by Tigerstedt, also saw the rejection of the idea that Plato concealed hidden truths within his works by the use of allegory and symbol. In section seven Kennedy compares this rejection of an allegorical Plato with the Protestant rejection of allegorical readings of scripture. Both are prompted by a sober, scientific approach to the interpretation of ancient texts.

We believe that attitudes towards allegorical *composition* among Plato's near contemporaries are important for Kennedy's claim that Plato was seeking to convey an allegorical meaning through stichometry. His example of the Derveni papyrus shows us that there was a tradition of 'philosophical allegory' in Plato's time. But this meant philosophers engaged in allegorical *readings* of non-philosophical texts — not that they composed philosophical works with hidden allegorical meanings.

The only pre-Platonic precedent that Kennedy can plausibly provide for the composition of philosophical works with deliberately disguised content that must be interpreted symbolically are the Pythagorean *akousmata*. It must be said that the philosophical content that is revealed by the various allegorical readings of these ~~that are provided with~~ antiquity is not very rich. Moreover, these are cases where the surface *semantic content* of the philosophical composition is designed to be given an alternative meaning. One meaning is the clue to a deeper meaning. However, the allegorical method of communication that Kennedy finds in Plato is very different in its nature. Here *broadly syntactic* features of the philosophical work — the number of lines between various episodes within the work — are meant to be the key to a deeper meaning. There is no known precedent for this.

Now, it is true that Plato himself tells us a lot about how he thinks a philosopher *should* communicate. Recall the manner in which his Socrates contrasts philosophical speaking with the speeches and methods of the sophists in dialogues such as *Gorgias*, *Protagoras* or *Euthydemus*. So it is possible that Plato could have sought to *establish* an expectation on the part of his readers that his dialogues should be subjected to allegorical readings even if there were no pre-existing tradition that philosophers may communicate allegorically. Did he, in fact, do this?

It will not do to say, as Kennedy does, that Plato provides us with an allegory in the analogy of the cave in the *Republic* (p. 7). Kennedy uses the notion of allegory very widely. He follows what he regards as the broader usage that is current in classical studies, where it includes 'any language that ~~some~~ meaning beneath, or in tension with, its ordinary or apparent sense' (p. 3). We submit that even this generous concept of allegory does not yield the conclusion that the account of the prisoners chained in the cave is allegory. It is a

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comparison or analogy in which certain features of the prisoners' situation have a direct correspondence with our (alleged) epistemic situation. There is no level of meaning beneath. Rather, Plato tells the reader point by point how the prisoners' situation compares to our own. No decoding is necessary.

Kennedy regards the Neoplatonists as philosophers who read Plato allegorically. In finding allegorical meaning hidden in the dialogues, Kennedy thus takes himself not to be doing something wholly unprecedented, but rather reviving a way of reading Plato that was common in antiquity. We think this is not so.

It is indeed true that the Neoplatonists read Plato allegorically, but there are important differences between their methods of allegorizing Plato and Kennedy's. In discerning an allegorical meaning in a text one comes to grasp a function from surface or apparent semantic values of the text to deeper semantic values. Thus, the Neoplatonists Numenius and Porphyry both allegorized Homer's description of the cave of the nymphs in *Odyssey* 13.112 ff. The allegory takes the form of a mapping of obvious semantic elements (the cave with its two entrances) onto hidden or allegorical semantic values (the visible cosmos and the 'gates' of Capricorn and Cancer through which souls enter and leave the realm of Becoming). Kennedy's allegorical reading of the *Symposium*, however, is not a mapping from semantic values to semantic values. It is a mapping of *broadly syntactic* values to semantic ones.

In the tradition of Neoplatonic allegorizing of Plato there is only one precedent for anything even vaguely like Kennedy's function from syntax to significance and this is in the thought of the eccentric student of Iamblichus, Theodore of Asine (early/mid/fourth century AD). Theodore was the only Neoplatonist associated with the Iamblichean tradition to make use of *isopsōphia* or *gematria*. This interpretive strategy also draws conclusions about the deep meaning of Plato's words from syntactic features. In the case of *gematria*, the relevant syntactic features are not the number of lines in a composition, but the fact that Greek letters can also function as numerals. So, Theodore claimed that the soul is shown to be essentially alive on the basis of the fact that the first and last letters of $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ can stand for numbers that, subjected to certain arithmetic operations, can be turned back into letters that yield the phrase 'it lives'. Thus the letter ψ is used to represent 700. This is the 'third heptad' in the sequence 7, 70, 700. The numeral corresponding to the first number, 7, is the letter ζ . If you combine this letter with the last letter of $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ it yields $\zeta\eta$ — or more precisely $\zeta\eta$ — for 'it lives'.

Now there are many respects in which Theodore's *gematria* does not resemble what Kennedy is proposing. But at a very general level of description, there is a certain continuity. In both cases, *broadly syntactic* features are included in the allegorical function from surface aspects of the text to the text's deeper, hidden meaning. However, it was precisely because of the consideration of syntactic features that Proclus and Iamblichus criticized the

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ideas of Theodore. While Proclus accepted that there was a sense in which names were natural, he also thought that the graphic or broadly syntactic features that Theodore appealed to were not part of the nature of a name, but rather part of its *matter*. Since real Platonists don't meddle with matter, Theodore's reading strategies were regarded as beyond the pale by the mainstream Neoplatonists (who were themselves more than happy to see allegorical significance in many places in the dialogues where we moderns find none).

So while Kennedy seeks to portray his allegorical reading of Plato as a return to ancient traditions for interpreting the dialogues, this is only partly true. It is correct to say that the Neoplatonists took Plato's dialogues to have deep meanings that were concealed below the surface content (e.g. the cosmological significance of the myth of Atlantis). But the mainstream of Neoplatonic exegesis consciously *rejected* the view that Plato hid anything by means of the broadly syntactic features of the dialogues. Their allegorizing attends solely to the semantic features of the work that are not subject to the contingencies of the graphic representation of the surface content — nor, we think, the contingencies of how books are copied. Kennedy might reply: 'Well, so much the worse for the Neoplatonists. They missed what I found.' ~~Al Fine. He can make that reply~~ But then he cannot invoke the Neoplatonists as a historical precedent for the application of allegorical reading strategies to Plato, for what he and they regard as legitimate allegorical methods are very different.

We would like to conclude by considering the vindication of the search for numerological allegory in a Renaissance poet, Edmund Spenser, ~~that~~ Kennedy regards as a parallel to his own case. Kennedy explains how A. Kent Hieatt³ discovered for the first time that there are astronomically significant numbers encoded in the number of lines and stanzas in Spenser's *Epithalamion*. The methodology Kennedy uses to support this theory is, in its abstract form, one that Hieatt used in disclosing hidden calendrical patterns in Edmund Spenser's *Epithalamion*.

Hieatt laid out the 365 'long-lines' of the poem alongside the days of the year, and then superimposed this pattern over the 24 hours of the day. He then pointed out some striking coincidences. It was relatively obvious, for at least some of these coincidences, that Spenser must have deliberately contrived them. Hieatt was somewhat bewildered. He did not know of any other poet who had done anything quite like this; he did not know what audience Spenser ~~might~~ have had in mind; and he could only speculate on what Spenser's motives ~~might~~ have been. In fact, subsequent research has discovered that several poets of this era incorporated mathematical patterns into their sonnet

³ A. Kent Hieatt, *Short Time's Endless Monument: the Symbolism of Numbers in Edmund Spenser's Epithalamion* (Oxford, 1960).

He then asserts (p. 46): 'A sceptic'

sequences.⁴ Thus Spenser could have had a reasonable expectation that some among his audience would see what Hieatt later discovered.

Kennedy argues in a similar way that the patterns he detects in Plato's dialogues, beginning with the *Symposium* and the *Euthyphro*, were probably placed there deliberately. The method is, as he says (p. 46) 'inductive'. He lays out Plato's text, divided into lines of hexameter, and marks the 'twelfths' (and the 'quarters' within each of these) and he points out repeated patterns in the text that align with those 'twelfths'. He then asserts (p. 46) that 'A sceptic must find some repeated fault with the counts or with the observations, or reject the match between theory and evidence as a "mere coincidence". Persistently resorting to the last strategy amounts to "empty scepticism".'

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We are not persuaded. It is quite probable that there will be many patterns that happen to 'match' Plato's text by chance alone. It is quite probable that, after thousands of years of searching, someone like Kennedy will have stumbled on one of these patterns. It is not 'empty scepticism' to resist hasty acceptance of a conclusion that seems, on several indirect grounds, to be extraordinarily unlikely. It can be reasonable to think that (say) an extraordinarily long run of 'black' at a casino *probably was* 'sheer chance' — if you can find no one who had a *motive* for rigging the system in this way, and no credible opportunity for doing so. This is why we have been so insistent on the question of an audience for Plato's (alleged) musical structure in the dialogue.

It is interesting to compare Kennedy's application of Hieatt's method with Hieatt's own application of the method to Spenser's *Epithalamion*. It is not so extraordinarily unlikely for someone to weave *calendrical* patterns into a poem written for a bride on her wedding day. The structure of the calendar is well known to all readers and is recommended by the theme of the wedding poem since one's wedding day is commemorated annually.

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It is much more difficult to believe that Plato matched his texts against the ~~twelve~~ (really ten) note ~~scale~~ comprising the notes that are derived from dividing the monochord into twelve equal parts. Kennedy's twelve note 'scale' is not something of independent Pythagorean (or other) musicological interest. It is relatively remote from the *solfa* scale that Plato describes in his *Timaeus*. Kennedy is not mistaken in thinking that, in practical terms, dividing a monochord into twelfths might be useful in demonstrating the harmoniousness of the Pythagorean ratios for the octave, fifths and fourths. But it is a big jump from this to Kennedy's claim that 'This leads naturally to the idea of a scale of twelve notes produced by lengths of string corresponding to the integers from one to twelve (see Appendices 1, 2)'. However, Appendices 1 and 2 do not help: they furnish no further articulation of the musical properties of this 'scale', nor any reasons for thinking this set of twelve (or ten) notes might be of any musical interest as a 'scale', nor any evidence that anyone else

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⁴ T.W.N. Parker, *Proportional Form in the Sonnets of the Sidney Circle* (Oxford, 1998).

in history has ever found this 'scale' to be of any musical significance. The sole exception seems to be a division of the canon deriving from Thrasyllus that is preserved in Theon of Smyrna. However, this is a very small section of Theon's discussion and the material in Theon's work is directed towards the purpose of affording students the basic concepts to understand the genuine scale that is presented in Plato's *Timaeus*. If there is a musical structure to be found underlying Plato's dialogues, we suspect that it will be this scale — not Kennedy's division of the canon — that provides that structure. h

When Kennedy first published his preliminary study for this book in 2010, the musical wing of his theory received criticisms of this sort from McKay and Rehding.⁵ In his book Kennedy has done little to allay this concern. He just sticks by his argument-from-coincidences for the conclusion that Plato did use the 'scale' Kennedy describes, and he hopes that further scholarship will reveal a hitherto neglected role of this 'scale' (including its 'quarter-tones') in the development of musical theory. Considerations about the potential audience for Plato's (alleged) musical allegory show that the eccentricity of Kennedy's division of the canon is crucial to his case. If Plato were indeed building a musical structure into his dialogues, it would have to be a structure that he could be confident his readers would recognize if they looked for it. There is simply no reason to think that they would be looking for Kennedy's twelve-fold division of the monochord. to

We would like to close this unfortunately negative review with some thoughts about digital humanities and the study of Platonism. It seems not unlikely to us that there will be some conservative scholars who reject the very idea that the utilization of computing technology can teach us anything about Plato and Platonism. Readers of this sort, we fear, may seize upon the shortcomings of this book to dismiss all this newfangled whizz-bangery. We are not those readers and we think it would be terrible if anyone used this case to dismiss the value of digital humanities initiatives. Nor are we positivists or sceptics who snort at the very idea that authors may include many layers of significance in their works. Bigelow is presently completing a project that argues that Shakespeare's sonnets exemplify similar mathematical pattern-making to that which we find in the work of Spenser and the circle of Sir Philip Sidney. Baltzly is a participant in a research project that uses computing technology to generate similarity measures on the use of 'function words' among 2000-word blocks of Plato's text. Preliminary results suggest that there is a distinctive 'mythic register' that Plato utilizes when he is relating a myth.⁶ Thus we are neither sceptics about the notion that well-known texts s/

⁵ J. McKay and A. Rehding, 'The Structure of Plato's Dialogues and Greek Musical Theory: A Response to J.B. Kennedy', *Apeiron*, 44 (2011), pp. 359–79.

⁶ H. Tarrant, E. Benitez and T. Roberts, 'The Mythical Voice in the *Timaeus-Critias*: Stylometric Indicators', *Ancient Philosophy*, 31 (2011), pp. 95–120. Baltzly is a partici- s/

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~~might~~ hide certain rather unobvious features, nor are we Luddites about the possibilities that the digital humanities might hold for ancient philosophy.

We approached the prospect of reviewing Kennedy's book with excitement and optimism, but ~~we've~~ left rather disappointed. The case doesn't hang together, we think, because it requires us to suppose that Plato composed to a pattern that his readers wouldn't be looking for. They wouldn't be looking for it musically, because it is not musically significant. Moreover, if he expected them to be looking for such a pattern in the stichometry, then the evidence available to us suggests that his expectations went wholly unfulfilled. Plato may have been a perverse writer in many ways — for instance, by disparaging philosophical writing in a philosophical text — but we think Kennedy's hypothesis requires us to attribute a touch too much perversity to one of our favourite authors.

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pant with Tarrant *et al.* in an Australian Research Council Discovery Project on this topic.