

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity comprises over forty specially commissioned essays by experts on the philosophy of the period 200–800 CE. Designed as a successor to *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (ed. A. H. Armstrong), it takes into account some forty years of scholarship since the publication of that volume. The contributors examine philosophy as it entered literature, science and religion, and offer new and extensive assessments of philosophers who until recently have been mostly ignored. The volume also includes a complete digest of all philosophical works known to have been written during this period. It will be an invaluable resource for all those interested in this rich and still emerging field.

LLOYD P. GERSON is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto. He is the author of numerous books including *Ancient Epistemology* (Cambridge, 2009), *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (2005) and *Knowing Persons: A Study in Plato* (2004), as well as the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (1996).

The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity

Volume II

EDITED BY
LLOYD P. GERSON



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PART VI

LATE PLATONISM

INTRODUCTION TO PART VI

In this section, we turn to the last phase of pagan ancient philosophy. The date 529 CE when the Emperor Justinian officially closed the Academy in Athens is conventionally taken to be the terminus of non-Christian philosophy. Of course, this is something of an overstatement. The philosophers Olympiodorus, Damascius and Simplicius all lived up to a generation beyond this date. They were apparently, however, not allowed to teach in public. We have no record of any openly non-Christian philosopher in the ancient world after the last quarter of the sixth century CE. Nevertheless, ancient Greek philosophy itself did live on within the Church and in the seventh century, within the early schools of Islamic philosophy. The history of ancient philosophy as intellectual infrastructure for religion as opposed to autonomous enterprise will be canvassed in the last two sections.

Here we are concerned with those philosophers, mainly in Athens and Alexandria, who sought to articulate and defend the Platonic inheritance. Scholars in the early part of the twentieth century sometimes maintained that the Alexandrian and Athenian ‘branches’ of Platonism differed in their focus on either religion or metaphysics. This view is generally regarded today as mistaken or greatly oversimplified. Modern research has led to the view that the interchanges between Athens and Alexandria were frequent and fruitful during this period. The supposed emphasis on religion among the Alexandrian Platonists is probably to be accounted for by the strong Christian political domination. The contemporary pressing issues faced by philosophers there were principally those raised by Christian opponents. By contrast, in Athens, the Academy, beginning with Plutarch and ending with Damascius, seemed to be focused on the more or less traditional philosophical issues that we can trace back to the Old Academy itself. Such work in metaphysics, for example, did not exclude Proclus’ efforts to systematize a theological version of Platonism.

In this period, we also see the great flowering of commentaries by Platonists both on the dialogues of Plato and on the works of Aristotle. Unfortunately, most of the former are lost. There still exists, fortunately, a mass of detailed philosophical commentaries on those central works of Aristotle that were suitable as preparation for the study of Plato. Since it was universally believed that Aristotle's philosophy was in harmony with Platonism despite his occasional lapses, it was held that the study of Aristotle was the correct preparation for appreciating the Platonic higher 'mysteries'. Not only do these commentaries represent a serious philosophical dialogue between Platonists and Plato's greatest disciple, but they contain an invaluable record of debate among the Platonists regarding the correct understanding of Plato.

John Philoponus is in a way the key transitional figure in our period. Whether he was once a pagan who converted to Christianity or always a Christian of some sort, it is clear especially in his philosophical and scientific as opposed to strictly theological works that Platonism as it had been understood for more than 800 years provided the armature for all his intellectual work. His later disputes with orthodox Platonism concerning the eternity of the world on behalf of Christian creationism represents one enormously influential episode in the gradual self-understanding of Christianity among its theologians. It is also no doubt in part owing to Philoponus' Platonism and his suspicion that an authentic Peripatetic philosophy was actually inimical to Christianity that the assumption of the harmony between these two central figures would be abandoned.

FROM CONSTANTINE TO JUSTINIAN

ELIZABETH DEPALMA DIGESER

I THE HEIRS OF THEODOSIUS I: CONSTANTINOPLE
VERSUS RAVENNA

In the fall of 394, as his entourage – victorious after fighting along Istria’s Frigidus River – moved steadily toward Milan, the southwestern imperial capital, Theodosius I (378–95) could have been excused for thinking that heaven had amply rewarded his piety. His sons had outlived the heirs of Valentinian I (364–75), so his family alone held claim to the throne. He had successfully put down not one but two usurpers, Magnus Maximus in the 380s and most recently Eugenius at the Frigidus River. And the emperor’s recent edicts nourishing the now officially orthodox Nicene form of Christianity aimed to stifle, if not extinguish, all other forms of religious expression save Judaism, which was still tolerated, despite events in Callinicum (*CTh.* 16.1.2; 16.10.10–12). Certainly, Augustine saw the entire history of the Christian message as culminating triumphantly in this period (*Comm. in Psal.* 6.10–12). Nevertheless, in the time he took to travel between the battleground and the capital city, Theodosius, now in his late forties, became gravely ill. He sent for his son Honorius, residing in Constantinople with his older brother, Arcadius, ruling as eastern Augustus in his late teens under the watchful eye of his praetorian prefect. The nine-year-old arrived, and Theodosius appointed as his guardian Stilicho, his *magister utriusque militiae* (*Zos.* 4.59). By 17 January 395 the emperor was dead.

With the reigns of his two young sons, Honorius (395–423) in the West and Arcadius (395–408) in the East, Theodosius reaped a harvest much different from what he had intended to sow. For example, the goal of his settlement with the Visigoths, a pact born of necessity after Valens’ stunning defeat at Adrianople, was a mutually beneficial relationship between the Roman state and the Germans now living within its frontiers, fighting for Rome as *foederati* under their own commanders. That Theodosius considered Germans to be worthy soldiers and potentially good citizens is amply demonstrated by his treatment

of the Visigoths and his trust in Stilicho, the half-Vandal general whom he had married to his niece even before his designation as Honorius' guardian (Zos. 4.57–9). Unfortunately, after Theodosius' death, Germanic commanders, no longer held in check by Theodosius' *auctoritas* and patronage, could exact demands from eastern and western courts simply by rallying their followers who, living and serving only with their own people, had still only a thin conception of Roman culture and institutions. Indeed, the Visigoths, perhaps under pressure from the Huns, started raiding Greece under the leadership of Alaric around the time of the emperor's death (Claud. *In Rufin.* 2.186–96). Moreover, while it diminished the threat of usurpation from generals rallying around a figurehead prince, Theodosius' determination to keep the throne within his own family yielded an empire prematurely divided between two children. His own experience with Gratian and Valentinian II had surely illustrated the weakness of regency governments and the ease with which young emperors could be isolated both from the troops who ensured their safety and from their imperial colleagues. Accordingly, Theodosius might have done better to have built upon Diocletian's model, grooming two senior men to follow him as eastern and western Augusti, and then naming his young sons as their Caesars. Together, then, the unintended consequences of these two policies became a slow-moving, perfect storm that undermined the western Empire and alienated East and West.

Across the next three centuries this rolling sea change saw the West fall away from the empire in the East, and although Roman infrastructure, institutions and culture continued to be the substrate of society, politically the rule of Germanic kings replaced that of Roman emperors. The East withstood the reverberations of the fall of the West rather well, so much so, in fact that a vigorous intellectual life continued in the philosophical schools of Athens and Alexandria, a thought culture in which some westerners continued to engage and that provided some of the participants in and the background against which several heated theological debates played out. Indeed, by the sixth century the East was so affluent and confident that, under the emperor Justinian, it attempted both a reconquest of the West politically and of certain dissident eastern provinces theologically – a struggle that ironically helped lay the groundwork for the conquest of Italy by the Lombards and of the Near East and north Africa by the Muslims. With these two conquests ensued political and cultural changes that would transform the Mediterranean Sea from a connecting artery to a repellent barrier, as three different cultural zones took shape: a Roman Catholic north-west, a Greek Orthodox north-east, and an Islamic south, geographic contours that can still be discerned today.

The interplay of the centrifugal factors that Theodosius' policies unintentionally and perhaps unavoidably set in motion can first be seen clearly during the early days of Arcadius' and Honorius' reigns. Claiming authority as the senior member of the Theodosian family, a tie reinforced with the marriage of his daughter to the younger Theodosian heir in 398 (Zos. 5.4), Honorius' guardian, Stilicho, was determined to contain the Visigoths in the East. But the equally resolute refusal of Arcadius' handlers to accommodate the western general led to increasingly bitter east–west relations and the empowerment of the Visigothic leader, Alaric, when the eastern court named him *magister militum*, settling and provisioning his followers in Dacia and Macedonia. Constantinople soon abandoned the policy of accommodating Germans, however, after the Visigothic general, Gainas, was suspected of colluding with the Ostrogoths whose revolt the eastern court had commissioned him to suppress (Zos. 5.13–22; Socr. *HE* 6.6; Soz. *HE* 8.4). One of the staunchest advocates of this new policy was Arcadius' wife, Eudoxia (d. 404). But it also found expression in a pamphlet *On Kingship* written by the Platonist, Synesius.¹ Recently returned from Alexandria, Synesius had studied with Hypatia, leader of the city's Platonic school. Between 397 and 400, Synesius resided in Constantinople as a representative from the *boulē* of his native Cyrene, a province needing tax-relief after barbarian predations. That Arcadius did not control policy is suggested by the philosopher's critique of him as an 'ignorant' man who 'lived like a jellyfish', i.e., spinelessly (*De regno* 14d).

The eastern court then repudiated its agreement with Alaric. Denying the Visigoths their sustenance and encouraging them to move west stabilized the Constantinopolitan government and brought peace to the East, particularly the Balkans where the Germans had been most active. One beneficiary was the city of Athens. Although the city's Academy had been dormant for centuries, it had revived under the direction of Plutarch (c. 350–430), a descendant of Nestorius, the city's first known Platonist in generations (Marinus, *Vit. Procl.* 12, 28; *Procl. In Rep.* 2.64.6). A member of a prominent Athenian family which had long played an important role in the traditional religious life of the city (*IG* iv² 436–7), Plutarch's own participation in the city's cults earned him and his Academy the support of friends and clients (e.g., *IG* ii² 3818). Despite Theodosian edicts outlawing all forms of traditional piety, legislation that nevertheless required citizens to bring a suit in order to be enforced, Plutarch's Academy quickly became the premier school for Iamblichaeon Platonism, attracting a series of gifted students from across the eastern Mediterranean: from Alexandria Hierocles and

¹ For Synesius' preoccupation with the Visigoths, see Heather 1988, *contra* Harl 1997.

Syrianus (Plutarch's successor) and Proclus from Constantinople (just before Plutarch's death).² Historians used to see Plutarch as a 'moderate' Iamblichaeon, little interested in theurgy or Platonism's religious aspects, but it is important to note that according to Marinus' *Life of Proclus* (28), Plutarch's followers learned Chaldaean rituals (i.e., theurgy) from his daughter Asklepigenia.

However beneficial for the eastern Empire were Constantinople's anti-German policies, they nevertheless proved exceedingly costly to the West. For Alaric's predations in northern Italy – driven by lack of recognition and food – forced the court to move from Milan to the easily defensible lagoon city of Ravenna (401). They compelled Stilicho permanently to withdraw troops from the Rhine and Britain (facilitating its loss to the Angles and Saxons by mid century), and ultimately they undermined the general's grasp on power when he failed to contain these groups. Problems intensified during the winter of 406/7 when groups of Vandals, Alans and Sueves, pressed from behind by the Huns, took advantage of the army's withdrawal from Gaul to cross the frozen Rhine at Magontiacum (Mainz). Stilicho was unable to combat the Germanic advance. Attempting to capitalize on the western government's weakness, Alaric continued to press for compensation at the same time. Ironically, however, Stilicho's demise came with Arcadius' death that same year (408). Desiring to travel to Constantinople and secure the eastern throne for Arcadius' seven-year-old son, Theodosius II (408–50), Stilicho triggered fear in Honorius' court that he aimed at something higher. In short order, Honorius declared him a public enemy, and he was executed (Zos. 6.2).

Despite the influx of Germans in the West, the eastern court of the new child emperor Theodosius II kept the focus on domestic affairs and their own frontiers, especially since the Huns, always aware of opportunities from imperial weakness, continued to threaten provinces south of the Danube. With virtually no help from the East, the western court in the immediate aftermath of Stilicho's death was both unable to expel the Germans who had crossed the Rhine and unwilling to deal with Alaric. As a result, the Visigoths attacked and sacked the city of Rome in 410, still looking for what they considered their rightful compensation. As with the attack on New York's World Trade Center nearly 1600 years later, news of this event quickly and widely ricocheted, sparking soul-searching and deep despair. These catastrophes quashed the optimism Augustine had felt under Theodosius' 'Christian era'. 'We live in bad times, hard times, this is what people keep saying', the bishop sermonized, 'but let us live well, and times will be good. We are the times: such as we are, such are the times'

² Hierocles, *On Prov.* 214.173a; Dam. *Phil. Hist.* 56 (Athaniassiadi); Dam. *Vit. Isid.* Ath. 59e; Phot. *Library cod.* 214 p. 173a37 Bekker vol. III, p. 130 Henry; Marinus, *Vit. Procl.* 12.

(*Sermones* 80.8). The Visigoths' attack on Rome also drove a deeper wedge between Christians and advocates of traditional piety who noted how soon the empire had become vulnerable after Christianity's promotion as the sole legal religion (Aug. *De civ. Dei* 1.praef.). In answering these charges, Augustine's *City of God* not only came to divorce the tight connection that Platonist philosophers had drawn between ideal justice and the rule of the sovereign guided by the enlightened philosopher (*De civ. Dei* 19.24–5). But the bishop of Hippo, writing in an Africa besieged by the Germanic Vandals, had also shed his Christian triumphalism for a more sober assessment of Christian history.

Five years after the sack of Rome, tensions in the city of Alexandria between the city's Christian and Hellene citizens broke out in the open when a Christian mob attacked and murdered Hypatia, the Platonist and Synesius' teacher some twenty years earlier. According to the ecclesiastical historian Socrates (*HE* 7.15), Hypatia had inherited the school 'of Plato and Plotinus' from her father, Theon. The *Suda* says that she 'was not satisfied with' the mathematical instruction to which he had devoted himself, but also 'embraced the rest of philosophy with diligence', seeing mathematics, algebra and astronomy as preparatory subjects. According to the Byzantine source, 'those who were appointed at each time as rulers of the city at first attended her lectures', and it was the popularity of her instruction that incited the Alexandrian bishop, Cyril, 'to plot her death'. She appears to have found herself in the middle of a quarrel between Orestes, the local governor, and Cyril, a contest for authority that turned violent and resulted in her death and dismemberment. According to the church historian Socrates, who may have the official version, she was rumoured to have 'prevented Orestes from being reconciled to the bishop'. Historians, ancient and modern, have downplayed the religious undercurrents of the philosopher's killing – indeed the *Suda* says that Christians treated 'their own bishops' in similar fashion. But it was her profession as a Platonist that had put her in the public eye, making possible the attack on her person and its particularly vicious character. The support that Cyril received from the Empress Pulcheria, elder sister of the still minor Theodosius II, is further evidence for the religious character of the conflict; she had just assumed the regency in 414 (Theoph. *Chron.* a.m. 5901, 5905; Soz. *HE* 9.1). Having endorsed Cyril's efforts to rid Alexandria of its Jewish population the year before (Socr. *HE* 7.13),³ Pulcheria was a Christian zealot eager to promote policies that would lead to religious homogeneity.⁴ Moreover, the Coptic church clearly came to memorialize the event as a legitimate religious

³ See also *CTh.* 16.8.22 issued the next year which banned the construction of new synagogues and sanctioned their destruction if not being used.

⁴ The eastern court that same year (415) issued *CTh.* 16.10.21 which excluded pagans from holding office and from the military. This was later repealed.

execution, for the seventh-century bishop John of Nikiu portrays her murderer, Peter as 'a perfect believer in Jesus Christ' (*Chron.* 84.87–103), so the tradition of her death, at least came to symbolize, as he claimed, the destruction of 'the last remains of idolatry in the city'.

The effects of Pulcheria's militant Christianity can be seen as an eastern counterpart to the vigorous defence of Christianity in the face of pagan critics that Augustine, writing the *City of God*, was making in the West. Although the chronology of the philosopher Hierocles' life and activity is frustratingly vague, it is possible that this student of Plutarch in Athens and friend of Olympiodorus, diplomat and historian,⁵ also ran afoul of the empress in Constantinople during this period. According to the sixth-century philosopher, Damascius, Hierocles, 'offended the party in power, was dragged into court, and was beaten up'. The philosopher, 'covered with blood', was condemned to exile.⁶ What was his offence? A likely answer is that as an Iamblichaeon Platonist, an advocate and practitioner of theurgy, he was probably exiled on a charge of 'magic'. The religious character of Hierocles' offence is especially likely if the period of his rehabilitation corresponded to the waning of Pulcheria's influence. For at some later date the philosopher returned to his native Alexandria where he was allowed to teach.⁷ Although no immediate successor to Hypatia is known for Alexandria (Synesius having become a bishop and probably pre-deceasing her),⁸ her interest in 'occult subjects', her father's writings on divination, and Synesius' interests in the *Chaldaean Oracles* suggest that a teacher promoting an Iamblichaeon Platonism would have found a certain welcome in Alexandria, if he could steer clear of its bishop, Cyril.

Despite her power and influence during the emperor's minority, Pulcheria's grip on Theodosius II and the religious life of the eastern empire waned as the emperor reached the age of majority and became open to a wider range of opinions. Evidence for his changed perspective is especially apparent after 421 when he married Eudocia. Called Athenais before her conversion to Christianity, she was a daughter and student of Leontius, a philosopher who had been appointed to the sophistic chair at Athens with the backing of Olympiodorus the historian and diplomat (*Socr. HE* 7.21).⁹ In the first two decades

⁵ Although Hadot 2004: 4 is coy about this identification, Schibli 2002: 3 presents a solid case for the identification of the dedicatee of Hierocles' *On Providence* with the Olympiodorus of Thebes who led a successful embassy to the Hun.

⁶ Damascius, *Vit. Isid.* fr. 106, p. 83, 5–11 Zintzen = fr. 45B Athanassiadi.

⁷ Damascius, *Vit. Isid.* 54, p. 80, in Photius, *Library*, cod. 242, 338b28–339a7 Bekker, vol. VI, p. 18 Henry, fr. 45A Athanassiadi.

⁸ He became bishop of Ptolemais in 409 or 410, and since his letters never mention his mentor's death, it is likely that he died before she did.

⁹ Leontius 6, *PLRE* 668; *Olymp.* fr. 28.

of their marriage, Eudocia's influence on her husband and the Roman world was profound. In 425, she persuaded Theodosius to create a university at Constantinople, an achievement that made the eastern capital an educational centre on a par with Athens and Alexandria. Comprising over thirty chaired positions, the university boasted instruction in Greek and Latin grammar and rhetoric, law and philosophy. By 429, Eudocia had also encouraged her husband in another signal achievement, the creation of the *Theodosian Code*, a monumental endeavour which collected, organized and published all laws issued by the Roman emperors after and including Constantine I. Issued nominally by both emperors East and West (*CTh. praef.*), this magisterial work not only made uniform the implementation of Roman law in the East, but it also served as the foundation from which the rulers of the new Germanic kingdoms in the West would issue their own legal codes.

The difference between East and West could not have been more striking in these years. Where the East was developing vital new institutions, the West became increasingly fragmented politically. Before 420, the western court had agreed to settle the Visigoths in Aquitania, finally granting them the support and recognition for which they had hungered after they had agreed to help suppress the Vandals. Led by Theoderid (d. 451), they established a capital at Tolosa and were probably sustained by local tax proceeds (Hydatius *Chron.* 150); it is likely that the western court thought of the Visigoths as ruling 'for' them in this area, a polite fiction that would be replicated with other Germanic kingdoms. With Visigoths living alongside Gallo-Romans, the province of Gaul entered a period of greater stability, a circumstance that contributed to the rise of monasticism. Imported to Marseilles from Egypt by John Cassian, it also began to flourish near Tours under the direction of St Martin.

The western 'empire' was further weakened in 423, however, when the emperor Honorius died, leaving no heirs. After a few years of scuffling for control, Valentinian III became emperor in 425 with the backing of the eastern court, as well as Aëtius, the most powerful general in the West. Valentinian had the dynastic claim, as Honorius' nephew by his sister Galla Placidia. But, as Valentinian III was only four years old, the true powers behind the throne were Aëtius and his mother. Valentinian's reign (425–55) brought a modicum of stability to Italy, perhaps, but the western court proved incapable of preventing the capture of Africa by the Vandals in the 430s (Hydatius *Chron.* 90). Under the leadership of Geiseric, the Vandals had taken Hippo as its bishop Augustine lay dying, and using the city as a base cemented their victory with the capture of Carthage in 439. By 442, Geiseric had signed a treaty with Valentinian III (which Theodosius II did not recognize), in which the Vandal king governed

Africa 'for' the western sovereign and was probably, like the Visigoths, supported by local taxes.

As the invading Arian Vandals were striking fear into the hearts of the Nicene population in Africa and bishops, following Augustine (*Ep.* 228), painted the assault as a 'persecution', a different theological dispute was beginning to simmer in the East. Like the Arian controversy of the previous century, the Nestorian controversy involved some of the best intellects of the era whose ideas drew on the broader philosophical culture in which they took shape. The crisis began in 428, when Theodosius appointed Nestorius of Antioch to be bishop of Constantinople (Socr. *HE* 7.29). Where Alexandrian theologians had been promoting the idea that Jesus Christ had two natures, human and divine, in one person, Antiochenes in the early fifth century had started teaching that he had two persons and two natures. This position implied that only the human Jesus had suffered during the Passion, thus diminishing the significance of the sacrifice in the eyes of its opponents. In Constantinople, Nestorius advocated these teachings, deeply offending Cyril of Alexandria, Pulcheria's ally. In response, Cyril declared Nestorius a heretic and wrote *Twelve Anathemas* to make his case, earning the support of the bishop of Rome. To clear his name, Nestorius asked Theodosius to call a council at Ephesus in 431. The council was a disaster. Cyril, who worried that his views would not prevail given the emperor's support of Nestorius, started the proceedings before the Antiochenes arrived; those who had managed to assemble, predominantly Cyril's Egyptian colleagues, unsurprisingly condemned and deposed Nestorius. When the Antiochenes arrived, they held their own meeting, condemning Cyril's *Twelve Anathemas* and deposing its author (Socr. *HE* 7.34). In response to the mess, Theodosius deposed both Nestorius and Cyril, and unhelpfully urged all concerned to support the doctrine of the Council of Nicaea.

Thanks to Pulcheria's support, Cyril ultimately regained his see, but the controversy continued to fester, as arguments in answer to Nestorius continued to circulate. For example, Eutyches, an abbot in Constantinople, began to teach that Christ had only one nature, even after the incarnation, and thus that the son of God had always existed in one person and one nature. This position, the root of Monophysitism, found wide support in Egypt where it was endorsed by Dioscorus, who succeeded Cyril as bishop in 444. It was also a theology attractive to Chrysaphius, a eunuch who had risen to a position of influence in the court by successively engineering exile from Constantinople for both Pulcheria (441) and Eudocia (443), the latter of whom never returned. In 449, he persuaded Theodosius to call another council at Ephesus which approved the doctrine, but came to be known as the 'Robber Council' since both the bishops of Constantinople and Rome refused to recognize the outcome

(Evagr. *HE* 1.10). Indeed, Leo, the bishop of Rome wrote at length against the outcome, arguing in his aptly titled, *Tome*, the Christological position that Jesus, incarnate, had two natures – human and divine – united in one person. The disastrous outcome of the Council led to the eunuch's ouster and Pulcheria's return facilitated by Aspar, the Gothic *magister militum*. When Theodosius died soon after (450), the empress claimed her brother's dying wish was that she marry Marcian (*Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 450; Malalas 14.28), an officer serving under Aspar. Wanting Marcian's rule of the East (450–7) to be recognized by the West, for Valentinian III could have claimed the throne, Pulcheria dropped her support for the Monophysite bishop of Alexandria, and adopted the doctrinal position of Leo, bishop of Rome. In 451, with her encouragement, Marcian called the Council of Chalcedon, which decreed as orthodox Leo's statement that in Jesus there existed two natures in one person.

Despite the theological rapprochement between East and West that culminated at the Council of Chalcedon, the ensuing decade was turbulent. Attila's Huns, once pacified by imperial handouts, began to challenge first the eastern and then the western frontiers as Constantinople ended its policy of appeasement. Forced out of Illyricum by Marcian, Attila then moved to Gaul where he suffered his only defeat at Châlons against Aëtius fighting with Franks as *foederati* and allied Visigoths. After moving into Italy in 452, Attila soon abandoned Roman territory, whether due to the diplomacy of Leo, bishop of Rome, or because famine and plague assaulted his troops. Within the following two years, Attila, Pulcheria, Aetius and Valentinian III were all dead (John Malalas 14.14). Although East and West no longer feared Hunnic attacks, both regions faced a period of increasing uncertainty. In the West, the end of the Theodosian dynasty prompted a squabble for the throne involving even the Visigoths and the Vandals, with Geiseric invading Italy, sacking Rome and capturing Valentinian's daughter who had been forced to marry a pretender to the western throne, but had been betrothed to his son Huneric. The year 457 saw regime change in the West and in the East with Marcian's death ending the Theodosian dynasty there. Although Marcian's son-in-law, Anthemius could have claimed the throne, Aspar, still *magister militum*, backed another high-ranking officer, Leo, who became emperor instead (457–74). That year in the West, the Visigothic general, Ricimer, emerged as power-broker in Italy. Unable to become emperor himself, a circumstance indicating the vestigial influence of the Roman Senate, Ricimer backed a series of men as emperors across several decades (one of whom was actually Anthemius, 467–72), each serving at the convenience of the *magister militum*.

The turbulence that beset the courts in Ravenna and Constantinople after 450 was ironically of great benefit to what might be called renegade

populations. For example, both Visigothic and Vandal kingdoms flourished in the West. According to the Gallo-Roman aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris, the Visigothic court under Theoderic (453–66) combined ‘Greek elegance, Gallic plenty, Italian briskness; the dignity of state, the attentiveness of a private home’ and ‘the ordered discipline of royalty’ (*Ep.* 1.2). Keeping Roman tax collecting procedures intact, the Visigoths assessed their Gallo-Roman subjects, sustaining themselves with part and the cities of Gaul with the rest, thus maintaining Roman infrastructure to some degree. In 475, Theoderic’s successor Euric (466–84) declared the independence of his kingdom from Ravenna, thus ending the polite fiction that the Visigoths were *foederati*, serving at the behest of the western emperor; he also issued the first written Visigothic law-code, the *lex Euricanus*, Germanic in character, but strongly influenced by the *Theodosian Code*. His son, Alaric II (484–507) would issue a companion code, the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, which set out the law for his Roman subjects. Much less is known about the Vandal kingdom in Africa, but the strong influence of Rome on this successor state is clear enough. Ruling from Carthage as his capital, Geiseric (428–77) also seems to have left the tax collection structure in place and issued laws that copied Roman rescripts in form.¹⁰

In the East, the renegade population that flourished were the adherents of the Academy in Athens. By 440, Proclus had taken the helm of the Academy from Syrianus, Plutarch’s successor. Proclus’ career is actually a good indicator of what was and was not possible for a Hellene living in the East under the Theodosian dynasty. His parents were Hellenes, living in Constantinople in the early fifth century where his father was a lawyer. But they relocated with Proclus to their native Lycia – a disadvantageous move for a lawyer that may be associated with the anti-Hellene activities associated with Pulcheria’s rise in 414: Hypatia’s murder, the edict excluding pagans from imperial service and the army, and perhaps the trial of Hierocles. From Lycia, Proclus went to Alexandria where he studied rhetoric, Aristotelian logic, mathematics,¹¹ and Roman law, intending to take up his father’s profession. He quickly attracted the attention, not only of his instructors (Marinus, *Vit. Procl.* 8), but also the governor of Alexandria who invited him to travel to Constantinople with him. He would have arrived in the capital just as the new university was getting underway, in an intellectual climate that had changed considerably with the ascent of Eudocia. Here Proclus had a vision of Athena, according to his biographer and successor, Marinus, who told him to abandon law, to take up philosophy, and to go to

¹⁰ Cf. Huneric’s edict in Victor of Vita 3.3–14 and *CTh.* 16.5.5–6.

¹¹ His instructor, Heron, also taught him religion. It is thus likely that Heron was not only a Pythagorean, but was also following in the steps of Theon and Hypatia.

Athens (*Vit. Procl.* 6.9). Evidently Proclus had encountered some philosophers in the capital – perhaps associated with the university – who nurtured a desire in him to study Iamblichaeon Platonism with Plutarch and Syrianus. In 430 at the age of nineteen, he went to Athens. ‘He was sent there’, Marinus claims, ‘by the gods of philosophy to preserve the school of Plato in its truth and pureness’ (*Vit. Procl.* 10). And indeed, within five years, Plutarch and Syrianus had both died, leaving Proclus as head of the Academy. As with Plutarch, students came from far and wide – indeed, they included Anthemius, Marcian’s son-in-law and sometime occupant of the western throne. During his long tenure until his death in 485, Proclus taught and lived the Iamblichaeon ideal: he practised the political virtues as well, encouraging men like Plutarch’s grandson to involve themselves in politics, advising them during the course of their careers (*Vit. Procl.* 14–15). And he applied his analytical mind to the prolific writing of treatises as well as to mystical inspiration; he lived piously as a vegetarian and an open worshipper of the One in all its many forms (*Vit. Procl.* 19). Proclus’ long tenure and his conspicuous religiosity are evidence for the flourishing of Iamblichaeon Platonism in fifth-century Athens; they also indicate that the emperor in Constantinople faced serious problems closer to home.

2 ZENO AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE WESTERN EMPEROR

The eastern emperor Leo I (457–74), had attained his throne – not because of any blood connection to the Theodosian dynasty, but because he had the support of the Germanic *magister militum*, Aspar. Leo, in turn, had solidified his position by patronizing Isaurians, an ethnic group from south-central Asia Minor long stigmatized in the East and so useful and loyal recipients of his patronage. Indeed, he had married his daughter, Ariadne, to an Isaurian officer, Zeno (Evagr. *HE* 2.8–17). Although Leo had intended for the succession to pass directly to their son, Zeno (474–91) instead inherited the throne when the seven-year-old heir and his grandfather died within months of each other. Zeno’s identity as an Isaurian was enormously destabilizing, and he spent the first ten years of his reign putting down usurpers, most of them supported by Verina, Leo’s widow and Ariadne’s mother. First, she threw her support to her brother, Basiliscus (475–6), almost as soon as Zeno had been installed (Evagr. *HE* 3.1–29). The existence of a usurper further factionalized the East, as Monophysites and Ostrogoths – two disgruntled parties – supported the renegade, and the Chalcedonian bishop of Constantinople remained with the legitimate emperor. Zeno ultimately got the upper hand against Basiliscus, thanks in part to the help of Daniel, a local pillar saint and emulator of Simeon Stylites whom the bishop

of Constantinople had persuaded to descend from his perch in order to mediate the conflict.¹² Four years later (479), Verina supported Marcian, the husband of her other daughter, in a revolt that was also unsuccessful, and five years after that, she threw her support to Leontius (484–8), a pretender whom Illus, the Isaurian *magister milium per Orientem*, had backed. In this usurpation, a number of Hellenes, including Pamprepius, an Alexandrian Platonist and discredited follower of Proclus,¹³ threw their support to Illus and Leontius, convinced by certain signs that the effort would not only be victorious, but that their religion might be reinstated.¹⁴ Zeno put down this rebellion as well, and in its aftermath set about breaking up the pagan circles in Alexandria.¹⁵ His officers forcibly disbanded schools and tortured pagans in the hopes that they would inform on one another.¹⁶ One result of this episode of repression is that Ammonius, who had inherited the Alexandrian chair in philosophy from his father Hermeias – father and son both having been students of Proclus – was persuaded to refrain from openly supporting pagan ritual. This appeasement of the Christian authorities earned Ammonius the disgust of his student Damascius (*Vit. Isid.* 250.2; 251.12–14), even though he could count as his students all the most eminent Platonists of the next generation, including Damascius himself and Olympiodorus in addition to the Christian John Philoponus (Simplicius, *In Cael.* 462.20).

One group that had contributed to the instability of the Eastern Empire during the revolt under Basiliscus was the Ostrogoths. Settled in Pannonia as *foederati* they were now under the rule of Theoderic, a man educated as a Roman while ten years a hostage at the Constantinopolitan court and who now saw in the upheaval of Basiliscus' revolt an opportunity to press for advantages to himself and his people. In response to the Ostrogoths' pressing into Moesia and Thrace, Zeno had first made Theoderic *magister militum*, then consul, then citizen. Ultimately, he decided to solve several festering problems at once. Twelve years earlier, the Germanic general, Odovacar, had deposed Romulus Augustulus, the last Roman emperor in the West (476; Anon. Valesianus 8.38). Before the emperor had taken up residence at a monastery, he had returned the imperial regalia to Constantinople, along with a letter stating that the empire was only in need of one emperor, namely, the one ruling from Constantinople. (Accordingly, the Eastern Roman Empire might properly be called the 'Byzantine Empire' from this point, Byzantium being the original name of Constantine's

¹² Cf. the *Lives* of Simeon Stylites the Elder and Daniel the Stylite.

¹³ Damascius, *Vit. Isid.* frs. 288–9; Malchus fr. 20, Müller *FHG* iv 131–2 (=Blockley fr. 23).

¹⁴ Zach. *V. Sev.* 40 and frs. 294–5.

¹⁵ *Epitoma Photiana* 190; Dam. *Vit. Isid.* frs. 330, 331, 277.

¹⁶ Zach. *Vit. Sev.* 19–35; Dam. *Phil. Hist.* 76e, 117a–c.

capital.) As unsatisfactory as this situation was to Zeno – for he had no influence at all with Odovacar – he was unable to install a better claimant to the throne. By 488, however, Zeno realized that sending Theoderic West with the Ostrogoths would solve both the problem of western governance and would provide the Goth with the recognition and stability he sought. In 489, Theoderic entered Italy with 120,000 of his people, and killed Odovacar himself. By 493, he was the undisputed master of Italy, ruling from Ravenna as king of the Ostrogoths and representative of the emperor in Constantinople (Procop. *Wars* 5.1.9–15, 24–9). Calling himself ‘Flavius Theodoricus Rex’, Theoderic made no attempt to replace the institutions of Roman government in Italy. Indeed, the letters of Cassiodorus, the king’s legal advisor and then *magister officiorum* show clearly that the Ostrogoth upheld Roman law, held great respect for the Senate of Rome, did what he could to invest in Roman infrastructure, and even treated the Nicene Christians in his realm with respect, despite his own attachment to Arianism. Evidence for the stability that Theoderic brought to Italy in the early years of his reign is abundant in the careers of the senator Symmachus whom Cassiodorus considered to be a ‘Christian Cato’, and of Boethius, his adopted son and son-in-law, who was deeply educated in Greek philosophy; indeed, he was among the last of his age in the West to be able to read Plato and Aristotle in the original Greek, and devote himself to writing treatises on the mathematical arts, Aristotelian logic and various theological topics.

As Theoderic was consolidating his grasp over the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy, the Franks, under their king, Clovis (481–511), were expanding into Gaul, ultimately pushing the Visigoths into Spain. Until the middle of the fifth century, the Franks had fought alongside the western Romans as *foederati*, but the disappearance of imperial rule in the West ended this association. Clovis took advantage of the crumbling authority in Ravenna to lead the Franks in campaigns that brought all of northern Gaul under his control by 494.¹⁷ He extended his influence further by marrying the Burgundian princess Chlotild and consolidated his gains further still by converting to Nicene Christianity, becoming the only major Germanic sovereign to eschew Arianism, gaining the enthusiastic support of the Gallo-Roman bishops by doing so. Ultimately Clovis was accepted by the eastern court as ‘consul’ and ‘Augustus’, and – like his Germanic colleagues – ruled Gaul through the pre-existing Roman infrastructure. According to Sidonius Apollinaris, the roads, towns and economic structure – including taxation – remained more or less intact. Like other Germanic kingdoms, too, Clovis ruled his subjects under two forms of law: Germanic (in this case, Salic) for his Frankish subjects, and Roman for those of Roman heritage.

¹⁷ For Clovis’ achievements, see Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, book 2.

With the establishment of a stable Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy and the rise of the Nicene kingdom of the Franks, Zeno's immediate successors could turn their attention to military and religious problems in the East. From the north-west, Constantinople faced increasingly frequent raids from the Bulgars, a Turkic tribe that had united the remnants of Attila's Huns, and in the East, Persia grew increasingly restive, seizing Amida briefly in 506. Tensions between Monophysites and Chalcedonians also continued to fester. Zeno had not helped matters much by issuing the *Henotikon* (482), a doctrinal statement upholding the canons of the Council of Nicaea and Cyril of Alexandria's statement against Nestorius while condemning both Nestorius and the Monophysite Eutyches (Evagr. *HE* 3.12). Upon the death of Zeno, who had left no heirs, his widow Ariadne – the daughter of emperor Leo I – chose as successor the imperial chamberlain, Anastasius, and married him to secure his claim (3.29). Anastasius (491–518) was a staunch Monophysite, although he had had to promise to uphold the theology of the Council of Chalcedon in order to stake a claim to the throne. Although Anastasius recognized Theoderic the Ostrogoth as king in Italy (497), and he recognized Clovis the Frank as 'consul' and 'Augustus', both ruling 'for' Constantinople in their respective areas, he did not recognize the authority of the bishop of Rome in doctrinal matters. Accordingly, his effort to appoint Monophysite bishops to important sees incurred the wrath of the Roman bishop at the time, Gelasius (492–6). Having already excommunicated the bishop of Constantinople for supporting Zeno's *Henotikon*, Gelasius asserted in a letter to Anastasius that two powers ruled the world, 'the priesthood and royal power', and that in matters of doctrine, the emperor should defer to the judgement of the 'bishop whom God wished to be prominent over all'.¹⁸

3 THE AGE OF JUSTINIAN

When Anastasius died unexpectedly in 515, a widower without an heir, the Senate of Constantinople and the emperor's chief ministers nominated the head of the imperial bodyguard to fill the post (Evagr. *HE* 3.44–4.1). Justin was a Latin-speaking Illyrian with little to commend him apart from a very talented nephew, Justinian, who wielded considerable influence during his uncle's reign and inherited the throne after his death (Procop. *Arc.* 6). Educated at the university of Constantinople, Justinian, whose first language was also Latin, was Roman to the core (Iust. *Nov.* 13). He was well schooled in Roman history, had a profound respect for Roman legal traditions, but most of all, he felt that it was his responsibility (and opportunity, for Anastasius had left a sizeable treasury) to

¹⁸ Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Collectio* 8.31.

recover the 'usurped' provinces of the West and return the Roman Empire to its erstwhile glory. Profoundly religious, he also believed his duty was to stamp out heresy. These two passions complemented one another for the emperor: by enforcing orthodoxy, he hoped to gain God's favour in war; by his reconquest, he hoped to free the West from the rule of heretics. Nevertheless, in seeking to return to the old order, Justinian, quite unintentionally, helped to usher in a new one.

Justinian's first goal was to establish a stable, eastern frontier so that he could safely turn his attention West. War had broken out with Persia in the last years of Justin's reign, but the death of the Persian king and the accession of his successor, Khusro I helped both empires come to terms, signing the 'Eternal Peace' in 532 (Procop. *Pers.* 1.22). Justinian's ambitions for the West were almost derailed that same year by the Nika Riot, when both Blue and Green circus factions united against the emperor and used the power of popular violence to demand the removal of several ministers. Although Justinian complied, a usurper was installed with the support of Constantinople's senate. The emperor did not regain control until Belisarius, a general who had distinguished himself in the Persian campaigns, led his soldiers into the hippodrome and massacred thousands of civilians (Procop. *Arc.* 7.1–42). By the following year, imperial armies had sailed to Africa where they easily unseated the Vandals and reorganized the territory as a province once again (Procop. *Vand.* 1).

Italy was the next objective, and superficially it looked like the success that met Justinian's armies in Africa could easily be duplicated further north. Theoderic's grip on power had weakened in his final years, a development clearly evident in the circumstances surrounding Boethius' death. In addition to his active scholarly life, Boethius had also served Theoderic as consul and as *magister officiorum*. In 522 the court accused a senator, Albinus, of treasonable correspondence with people close to the emperor in Constantinople. Perhaps because of his official position, Boethius defended Albinus and found himself facing accusations that he himself was implicated in the effort against the king and for having engaged in magic (Anon. *Valesianus* 14.85). Although the Anicii, his birth family, and the Symmachi were both Christian families and there is no evidence that Boethius was interested in theurgy, his deep dedication to Platonism clearly made him vulnerable to such a charge. Sentenced to death, the philosopher wrote his *Consolation of Philosophy* while awaiting execution. The swirl of rumours about treasonous groups shows the deterioration of Theoderic's position toward the end of his reign. At the same time, his designated successor had died, leaving him without an heir. Accordingly, the king suddenly found himself vulnerable and suspicious that the Constantinopolitan government – which had long supported him – was looking for a way to remove him. When Theoderic died in 526, his

daughter Amalasantha acted as regent for her young son Athalaric, but with his death in 534, there was no clear heir to the throne. Since Constantinople had recognized no Ostrogothic ruler after Theoderic, Justinian had the excuse he needed to involve himself militarily in Italian affairs. In 536, Belisarius invaded. Ravenna and Rome fell quickly, but then a series of setbacks – from Frankish support for the Goths to the onset of plague (Procop. *Bel.* 2.22.1–23.16) – forced the conflict to drag out for two decades. Justinian's armies won in the end – in fact they went on to Spain where they were able to wrest the southern shore from the Visigoths. Nevertheless, the victory in Italy was a hollow one, so severely had the eastern armies weakened the economy, infrastructure, morale and health on the peninsula.

Like his military exploits, Justinian's secular reforms show him wanting to rule in traditional Roman style, yet poised at the beginning of a new era. In the tradition of emperors from Augustus to Theodosius II, Justinian sought to make his mark in stone across the Empire. One testament, both to his zeal for construction, and to the sophisticated state of engineering and architecture in the capital is the great church, Hagia Sophia. The first structure to support a dome on a square foundation, this church still stands in Istanbul today where it is now a museum (Procop. *Aed.* 1). As was also appropriate for an emperor who wanted to restore the greatness of the Roman Empire, Justinian determined to reform the legal system, a project last attempted a century earlier during the reign of Theodosius II. The emperor appointed the jurist Trebonian to lead a commission charged with collecting and organizing Roman law. In 529, they published their work as the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. Written in Latin, still the language of state, this compendium strove to organize and explain the vast tradition of Roman law. In so doing it moved well beyond the goals of Theodosius' code which had simply arranged various edicts under prominent categories. The *Corpus* included the *Institutes*, a legal text-book based on the work of Gaius, a second-century CE Roman jurist, the *Digest*, a collection of Roman jurisprudence from 30 BCE to 300 CE, and the *Codex Constitutionum*, a collection of all imperial legislation the editors could gather, one source of which was the *Theodosian Code*. Unlike the *Theodosian Code*, Justinian's project also had a mechanism for keeping the compilation up to date: all new legislation was collected as *Novellae*; yet, tellingly, these edicts came predominantly to be written in Greek. Accordingly, the growing language differences meant that – unlike the *Theodosian Code* – Justinian's project would not immediately be embraced by peoples in the West, such as the Franks. Indeed, over five centuries would pass before the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* became well known to western legal scholars.

In the religious sphere, Justinian, like his predecessor Theodosius I, strove energetically to achieve religious uniformity. Despite earlier efforts at forcibly

repressing Monophysitism – an attempt the failure of which testifies to the strength of the resistance, by the 530s, Justinian tried to bring about change through a more conciliatory strategy. He first tried to issue a statement of faith to which all parties might agree. To do so, he arranged for six Chalcedonian and six Monophysite theologians to meet. During the meeting, Monophysites asserted that ‘there is one nature of God the *logos* after the union’, the first extant reference to the works of the mysterious pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.¹⁹ The group ultimately drafted a statement of faith that condemned Nestorians and extreme Monophysitism. It did not take a stand on the number of natures belonging to Christ, but said instead that he was ‘made man and crucified and belongs to the holy, consubstantial trinity’. Although the bishop of Rome at the time approved the statement (*Cod. Iust.* 1.1.6–8), his successor rejected it, leaving Justinian much where he had started.

Justinian’s second attempt to reconcile the Chalcedonians and Monophysites occurred in the 540s. Monophysites had rejected the Council of Chalcedon in part because it had approved of the writings of three fifth-century theologians (Theodoret of Cyrhus, Ibas of Edessa and Theodore of Mopsuestia) whose ideas, they thought, were Nestorian in character. Accordingly, Justinian decreed as heretical three books (or ‘Three Chapters’), one by each of these three theologians. He hoped that this compromise would appease the Monophysites, and that they could then accept the rest of Chalcedon. But western bishops were aghast at Justinian’s statement, since it implied that the Council of Chalcedon had erred (*Vig. Iud.* apud Mansi 9.181). And instead of resolving doctrinal conflict, the Three Chapters controversy only fuelled passions on both sides. Despite forcibly pressuring two bishops of Rome to agree with his position, Justinian never achieved reconciliation with the Monophysites. Indeed, the emperor’s actions only alienated the bishops of the West and strengthened in Syria and Egypt the resistance of Monophysites who now comprised the majority population.

Toward other religious groups, Justinian was far less accommodating in his quest for doctrinal unity. He launched persecutions of those he deemed heretics, such as the Montanists in Phrygia who committed mass suicide in response. He dictated legal penalties against Jews who could no longer hold major office, could not be lawyers or other professionals, and were deprived of their civil rights (*Cod. Iust.* 1.5.18). In this vein, too, the emperor in 529 issued a series of edicts against Greek philosophy and traditional religion. All pagans were told

¹⁹ *Innocentii Maronitae epistula de collatione cum Severianis habita, Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, 4, II: 172. For the argument that pseudo-Dionysius should be identified with Severus of Antioch, leader of the six Monophysites, see Stiglmayr 1928, and for its refutation, see Lebon 1930.

to come to Church with their families to receive instruction in Christianity and be baptized; those who refused would lose their property and be exiled. In Constantinople alone, a number of prominent people were convicted and executed for not adopting Christianity. And Justinian closed the Academy at Athens (*Cod. Iust.* 1.11.10). This institution had been in operation since Plutarch revived it at the end of the fourth century and for the past nine years had been under the leadership of Damascius. A student of Isidore (whose biography he wrote) and Ammonius in Alexandria, Damascius' tenure in Athens shows the ties that had continued to link the eastern empire's two philosophical centres. Hopeful that they might find refuge in Persia, Damascius, together with Priscian, and Simplicius – all then in residence at the Academy – journeyed to Persia in 531, where they hoped to find intellectual freedom (*Agath. HE* 2.30–1). Disappointed, they returned to the Empire under the Roman–Persian treaty of 532, having been promised freedom of religion – a guarantee that probably allowed them to philosophize, but not in public. Where they settled is not known.

Although Alexandria was also the site of a prominent philosophical school, its operation was not interrupted during Justinian's reign. After Ammonius' role as leader of the school waned before 520, John Philoponus emerged as its most prominent figure (*Philop. In Phys.* 703.15–17). A Christian, John in this period was strongly influenced by Platonism and was an active spokesperson for Ammonius' teachings. Nevertheless, in 529, the year that Justinian shuttered the Athenian Academy, John distanced himself 'drastically from pagan philosophy' in an attack on the philosophy of Proclus (*De aeternitate mundi*). Traces in other sources suggest that the dramatic change in John's philosophy was driven by a certain opportunism, given Justinian's hostile attitude toward Platonism. In subsequent years, John was a strong advocate for Monophysite Christianity, delving into problems that were key to current theological debates. That John did not Christianize the Alexandrian school is clear from the career of Olympiodorus the Younger who continued the tradition of Platonism in the city.²⁰ During the reign of Justinian, such a career required being 'politically aware, but uninvolved'.²¹ Indeed, thanks in part to Olympiodorus' sensitivity, the Alexandrian school was able to continue in existence even after the rise of Islam.

Justinian's goals and projects showed him to be a typical late-antique sovereign; nevertheless, he planted the seeds of change that would help bring about the

²⁰ For the argument that John saved the Alexandrian academy by means of a Christian manifesto, see Saffrey 1954.

²¹ Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Plato's Gorgias*, trans. Jackson, Lycos and Tarrant 1998: 17.

end of the era. Certainly, his reign was marked by the continuity of Roman culture and some degree of Mediterranean unity as evidenced by his public works, legal reforms, aggressive stance as head of the church, and his vigorous efforts to rule over East and West. But he bankrupted the Empire in striving to achieve his goals, and left both East and West much weaker than he had found them. Immediately after his death, his successors faced the loss of Italy to the invading Germanic and Arian Lombards, the continued disaffection of Monophysite Egypt and the Near East, and the opportunism of an aggressive Persia, eager to capitalize on Constantinopolitan weakness.

4 CENTRIFUGAL FORCES

At the cusp of the seventh century, the once united Mediterranean began to experience pressures that would culminate in its fragmentation into three different cultural, religious and linguistic zones, all of which had roots in Roman tradition; all abetted in part by Justinian's fruitless effort to achieve Mediterranean unity: an orthodox, Greek-speaking eastern or Byzantine Empire in the north-east; a Roman Catholic, Latin- and German-speaking Frankish Empire in the north-west; and an Islamic, Arabic-speaking Empire across the whole stretch of the south. In the West, under the leadership of King Alboin (d. 572), the Lombards began their invasion of Italy in the year of Justinian's death, 568 (*Paul Lomb.* 2.8). Too weak to resist the Lombards completely, the eastern armies occupying Italy managed to retain the areas around Rome and Ravenna. As the Lombards advanced, the bishop of Rome grew increasingly nervous about the possibility of living under Arian rule. In 590, the Roman monk Gregory became the city's bishop (590–604). As the Lombards continued to press their advantage, and the emperor in Constantinople – hard pressed by war against Persia – proved incapable of providing for Rome's defence, Gregory began to organize the defence of the city himself. Collecting taxes, provisioning arms, organizing the training of soldiers, repairing buildings and fortifications, Gregory was the first bishop of Rome – or pope – to combine secular and ecclesiastical powers in one office. By 593, he had extracted a treaty with the Lombards, the terms of which Constantinople recognized in 598.

As the political and religious situation in Italy was temporarily settling down toward the end of Gregory's papacy, new religious currents were beginning to circulate in Arabia. Always a frontier zone between Rome and Persia, late-antique Arabia was not unfamiliar with Judaism or Christianity since people from both groups had migrated into the peninsula during times of Roman oppression. In about 610, Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (c. 552–632) began preaching a new monotheistic faith called 'submission to God', or Islam.

Over several decades, Mohammad's teaching energized thousands of followers who gained territorial control over much of Arabia at the same time as they spread their new faith. By the year of Muhammad's death, Arab armies were ready to move out of Arabia and challenge the two emperors of Persia and Constantinople.

The expansion of Islam could not have come at a worse time for the Emperor Heraclius in Constantinople (610–41). Seizing the throne after several usurpations, Heraclius gained an empire beset by invasion and fractured by religious controversy. In the Balkans, Avars, Slavs and Bulgars had been a constant pressure on the Danube frontier; during Heraclius' reign the emperor effectively lost control of this territory. To the East was Persia. Heraclius had taken power while the Byzantine Empire was already engaged in a war with Khusro II (590–628). As evidence for Heraclius' initial weakness, the Persians between 613 and 617 were able to take Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria and even the Bithynian city of Chalcedon; by 619, they occupied Egypt and Libya. By 622, Heraclius felt himself finally ready to engage Persia directly. Funded by the treasure from the bishop's church in Constantinople, Heraclius trained his army in new tactics – adopting the light-armed mounted archers that the Persians used so successfully, and, with the army, left the capital, dressed as a penitent, carrying a sacred image of the virgin, and vowing to reconquer Jerusalem. In short, he turned the conflict against the Persians into a kind of holy war. By 628, although not before the Persians had laid siege to Constantinople, Heraclius had achieved complete victory over the forces of Khusro, who was condemned to death. The peace treaty between the two Empires signalled the end of Persian glory, as Heraclius was named protector of the Persian heir and conquered Byzantine territory was returned.

Once the East was recovered, Heraclius tried to turn his attention to the festering problem of Monophysitism. After the abortive efforts of Justinian, Constantinople had for the most part left the Egyptian church alone, leaving any efforts at conversion in the hands of the local bishops.²² With Heraclius' encouragement, Sergius, bishop of Constantinople then attempted a new compromise position, monoenergetism, a view conceding the Chalcedonian formula that Christ had two natures, but maintaining that he had one, divine energy. Sergius' doctrine found the support of the papacy and some Monophysite bishops, but the lines hardened again when Sophronius, the bishop of Jerusalem, rejected it. Next, Sergius tried again with a new compromise position, monotheletism. In this view, Christ had both human and divine natures as

²² Cf., e.g., Leontius, *Life of St. John the Almsgiver*. John is a Chalcedonian bishop in a largely Monophysite community, trying to bring people into his fold through giving alms.

the Council of Chalcedon had stipulated, but only one, divine will. In 638, Heraclius declared Sergius' pronouncement official doctrine in a statement entitled the *Ekthesis*, publicly posted in front of Justinian's great church, Hagia Sophia. The West reacted vociferously against it, led by Maximus, a monk who had fled Constantinople during the Persian siege and now lived in Carthage, still under Byzantine control.²³ Deeply erudite, a testament to the quality of education still possible at Constantinople's university in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, Maximus rallied the western Church against Sergius' theology. The controversy lasted well after Heraclius' death, with the Lateran Council in 649 ruling against it. Maximus' views and involvement with the council led to his torture (earning him the designation 'Confessor'), incarceration, exile and death.

A world-shattering event that seemed to testify to the righteousness of the opposition to monotheletism was the Byzantine Empire's dramatic loss of the Near East and Egypt to victorious Muslim armies, now under the leadership of Umar. Arab armies began to advance into Byzantine and Persian territory after 633. With both Empires exhausted after their mutual conflict, and Egypt, at least, perennially unhappy about Byzantine religious policies, stopping the Islamic advance proved excruciatingly difficult. By the time of Heraclius' death, the Byzantine Empire had conceded virtually all of its territory south of the Taurus mountains to Umar's armies. Within ten more years, Persia had completely capitulated. These defeats would not have happened, argued Sophronius of Jerusalem, 'if we had not first insulted the gift' of the true faith.²⁴ Maximus the Confessor agreed.²⁵ On the contrary, Monophysites living under Islamic rule believed that their liberation from Constantinople was a just punishment on the Byzantine Empire for having persecuted them. As Monophysite theology and institutions flourished, Islamic armies continued to press ever westward, taking north Africa and Spain until their European expansion was halted at the Battle of Tours (732) by the Frankish warlord, Charles Martel.

5 ROME'S THREE HEIRS

In the aftermath of Islamic expansion, the Mediterranean was no longer the means of communication that kept the lands linked around its shores. It became instead a frontier delimiting a Christian North from an Islamic South, and a Catholic West from an Orthodox East. Problems with the succession plagued

²³ On Maximus the Confessor, see the tenth-century *Life* by Michael Exaboulites.

²⁴ Sophronius, *Logos eis to hagion baptisma*, *Analekta Hierosolymitikēs Stachuologias*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1898: 166–7.

²⁵ Cf. *Ep.* 14, *ad Petrum illustrem*, PG 91.540.

the Byzantine Empire after Heraclius' death in 641, problems only exacerbated by the extraordinary pressures on the frontiers for which Constantinople was responsible. By 655 the Byzantine army was fighting Islamic armies off the coast of Asia Minor, pressure that continued more or less steadily through to the middle of the eighth century, at which point the Lombards had also seized most of the remaining Byzantine territory in Italy. As the beleaguered Byzantine Empire dealt with these challenges, a series of emperors, beginning with Leo III, turned to the theology of iconoclasm. Icons had been deeply revered in Byzantine culture: Heraclius had taken them into battle; Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, had used them to defend the city walls. Many of Leo's soldiers, however, thought that the practice was idolatrous, and so, over the objection of Constantinople's bishop, in 730 Leo ordered all icons to be destroyed, a position that profoundly alienated the papacy and the Frankish court.

As the Byzantine Empire struggled to stay alive in the early eighth century, the Germanic Franks saw their monarchy strengthen and their control over Europe expand. Charles Martel's signal victory over Islamic armies at Tours in 732 drew attention to an anomaly in Frankish politics that his son, Pippin, aimed to solve: the Merovingian Frankish kings – descendants of Clovis – had become very weak, but Charles Martel, as mayor of the palace, had the skill and acumen to serve as king. When Charles died, Pippin – who had inherited his father's position – determined to become king himself. Unwilling to usurp power, for he would lose the support of the Frankish nobility, Pippin wrote to the pope, asking if it were wise to have kings who had no power of control. When the pope responded that kings should be able to govern, Pippin had the support he needed to be crowned by his nobles. For his part, the pope, still surrounded by Arian Lombards, hoped that the new Frankish king, a Nicene Christian, would return the favour. And, after a series of campaigns in Italy, Pippin was able to push the Byzantines out of northern Italy, delivering those lands to papal control. Pippin's son Charlemagne went further, defeating the northern Lombards as part of his campaigns to bring most of northern Europe under his rule.

The era of late antiquity quietly came to an end when the Mediterranean became a frontier zone separating the people ruled by the Islamic, Byzantine and Frankish Empires. Paradoxically, the Emperor Justinian prepared the way for the new topography of the Mediterranean with his arduously fought campaign to regain for 'Roman' Constantinople the provinces that had become Germanic kingdoms. Although his reconquest of Africa from the Vandals was relatively easy and his foray into Visigothic Spain more of a gesture than a significant gain of territory, his efforts to wrest Italy away from the Ostrogoths destroyed centuries of infrastructure, devastated the economy, and alienated the populace. It was

no coincidence that the Germanic Lombards were able so easily to penetrate the Italian peninsula within a year after the emperor's death. Justinian's western conquests also bankrupted the treasury and military, circumstances that in the East smelled enough of Byzantine weakness to motivate a resurgent Persia to challenge the Romans for control of Syria, Palestine and Egypt across the century after Justinian's death. So exhausted had the two superpowers become that when Islamic forces crossed into Persian territory, the ancient Empire quickly fell. The late-antique Byzantines survived the struggle with the Islamic Arabs, but lost their Empire in the process. All the same, the Islamic rule of the south-eastern Mediterranean under the Umayyads centred at Damascus sat very lightly atop an essentially Mediterranean, Roman infrastructure – much as the Germanic kingdoms in the West had once done.

By the eighth century, however, these ancient patterns of life finally ebbed. A new Islamic dynasty, the Abbasids, moved the imperial capital to Baghdad. And while scholars working under this dynasty became deeply interested in late-antique philosophy, the court itself became much more Persian in character. At the same time, the split between East and West was dramatically illustrated by the Frankish Synod of Frankfurt in 794, held in a new spirit of western confidence. Rejecting the Platonist theology of the recent Council of Nicaea, called by the Byzantine Empress Irene in an attempt to end the Iconoclast controversy, the Synod illustrates a rupture between eastern and western thought that signified the end of the ancient world.

PLUTARCH OF ATHENS

ANGELA LONGO

LIFE

Plutarch of Athens (d. 432 CE), son of Nestorius, was the philosophy teacher of Hierocles of Alexandria, Syrianus and the young Proclus. The story of the meeting between Plutarch, now advanced in years, and Proclus, who had not yet reached his twenties, is touching. It was Syrianus who introduced the young man to Plutarch, who immediately had such a favourable impression of him that he wanted, without delay and despite his advanced age, to give the new disciple some lessons in philosophy.

Plutarch made Proclus read Aristotle's *De anima* and Plato's *Phaedo*, and talked to him about these works. He encouraged the young student to take notes, in order to produce a commentary on the *Phaedo*. This fact, transmitted to us from Marinus (who in turn was Proclus' pupil and biographer, cf. *Proclus* 12 pp. 14, 1–15, Saffrey and Segonds = Fonte 2 Taormina), might imply that Plutarch had already composed his own written commentary on the *De anima* (which, as we shall see, is confirmed by several sources), but this was not the case for the *Phaedo*, for which Plutarch wanted a new commentary to be composed by his ambitious disciple.

In any case, this information confirms Plutarch's interest in the study of the soul, that is, in Platonic and Aristotelian psychology. The evidence which we have about his position with respect to two passages in the *Phaedo* (Plato, *Phd.* 66b2 and 108c6) confirms his exegetical activity on this text, but it does not explicitly refer to a written commentary (Damascius, in *Phaedonem* §100, p. 67 and §503, p. 255 Westerink = Fonti 59–60 Taormina).

From that first meeting onwards, it seems that Plutarch, Syrianus and Proclus established a strong bond in studies and in life, with Plutarch calling Proclus his 'son', and Proclus in his writings referring to Syrianus as his 'father' and to Plutarch as his 'grandfather'. The three also lived in the same house in Athens, which was close to the temple of Asclepius and that of Dionysus,

near the theatre. This house could be glimpsed from Athens' acropolis (once again according to Marinus, *Proclus* 29.35.32–9 Saffrey and Segonds = Fonte 9 Taormina).

In addition to psychology, Plutarch cultivated and transmitted theurgic knowledge. In this he seems to have been heir to a family tradition, since his grandfather Nestorius had performed theurgic practices. Nestorius, according to Proclus' testimony, seemed to be able to perceive, by reading the sky, the names of the various gods and to show their corresponding powers, and in particular, to determine the astrological sign predominant in a given year (Proclus, *In Remp.* 2.64.5–66.3 Kroll = Fonte 3 Taormina). The theurgic art had been handed down to Plutarch by his family; he in turn handed it down to his daughter Asclepigenia, who finally taught it to Proclus. Marinus seems to imply that the knowledge of theurgy, or hieratic art, was becoming increasingly rare in Athens (because of the Christian presence) and that Asclepigenia was its last custodian (Marinus, *Proclus* 28.33.10–15 Saffrey and Segonds = Fonte 4 Taormina).

Proclus must have felt encouraged in the study of texts of hieratic art by the memory of Plutarch. Indeed, Marinus tells us of a dream that Proclus had during the five years in which he devoted himself to collecting the major commentaries on the *Chaldaean Oracles*, one of which he wrote himself. In this dream, Plutarch prophesied to his old disciple that he would live for as many years as the quaternions that he would write on the *Oracles* (Marinus, *Proclus* 26.30.23–31.32 Saffrey and Segonds = Fonte 15 Taormina).

There is also an amusing anecdote handed down by Damascius, from which we can conclude that Plutarch was neither Jewish nor vegetarian, and that he also had a great familiarity with the gods and their statues. According to Damascius, Plutarch, who was suffering from an unspecified disease, consulted Asclepius' oracle in Athens and received the therapeutic advice to eat a lot of pork. But Plutarch, although he was neither Jewish nor vegetarian, could not stand this diet and asked the god: 'What would you give me as a cure if I were a Jew?', and it seems that the god agreed to his request, suggesting another remedy (Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, fr. 218 Zintzen = *The Philosophical History*, fr. 89A Athanassiadi = Fonte 5 Taormina).

In addition to philosophy and theurgy, Plutarch must also have had strong literary interests, if it is true that he commented on the works of Homer (Tzetzes, *De comoedia graeca*, in *Comicorum Graecorum* fr. 1.23.20.29–32, and 2. 3, 25, 14–17 Kaibel = Fonti 16–17 Taormina). The source that gives us this information points also to a *lignée* of three Platonic philosophers who were commentators on Homer – Porphyry, Plutarch of Athens and Proclus – and also connects them to an illustrious predecessor, Aristotle.

THE SCHOOL

From another testimony in Damascius we learn something about Plutarch's way of teaching, namely, that he would devote considerable time to students' questions, to the point that sometimes an excessive debate between students and teacher would interrupt the orderly development of the lesson. For example Damascius refers to a certain Oedematus of Syria who would continually raise objections and prevent Plutarch from continuing his discourse (Damascius, *Vit. Isid.* fr. 142 Zintzen = *The Philosophical History*, fr. 65 Athanassiadi = Fonte 12 Taormina).

When Plutarch, died in old age (432 CE), he entrusted the direction of the Platonic school of Athens, to which he had greatly contributed (including financially), to Syrianus. He also entrusted to Syrianus the care of his own nephew Archiada and of Proclus (cf. Marinus, *Proclus* 12.15.28–31 Saffrey and Segonds = Fonte 2 Taormina). We know that Proclus always honoured Plutarch's family members, and in particular, that after having been a classmate of Archiada under Syrianus' instruction, he then became his teacher (cf. Marinus, *Proclus* 17.20.21–21.31 Saffrey and Segonds = Fonte 6 Taormina).

According to Photius (who reports the view of Hierocles of Alexandria, another student of Plutarch), Plutarch of Athens was one of the series of philosophers who took Plato's teachings back to their original purity. In chronological order, they were Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus and Origen, who marked the beginning of this Platonic restoration, up to Plutarch (Fozio, *Bibliotheca Cod.* 214, 173 a, vol. 3.129.34–130.40 Henry = Fonte 11 Taormina).

The intention of this source seems to be to distinguish, within the tradition of the Platonic reception, a branch (commonly called 'Neoplatonism') that would have restored the genuine message of Plato – one that would have provided the correct interpretation of it and would have recognized and acknowledged its substantial agreement with the doctrine of Aristotle. The controversy, although implicit, seems to be directed to Platonists before Plotinus (those whom we call 'Middle Platonists').

Finally, we should remember that Damascius identifies Plutarch and Iamblichus as those philosophers whom Proclus advised Isidorus to respect (Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, EPITA. Phot. 150 Zintzen = *The Philosophical History*, fr. 98C Athanassiadi = Fonte 14 Taormina).

Studies on Plutarch, while not very numerous, have undergone a radical change of interpretation. Originally Plutarch was presented as totally unrelated to Iamblichus' teachings, but rather as dependent on Alexander of Aphrodisias and on Platonism before Plotinus, but subsequently he was regarded as a follower of Iamblichus in Athens, and his relation to Alexander, whose works he knew well, was downplayed.

WORKS

We have information about Plutarch's exegesis of Plato's *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, and *Parmenides*, but we have no conclusive evidence to show that Plutarch composed written commentaries on these Platonic dialogues; it is certain, however, that he wrote a commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* (cf. *en tōi hupomnēmati*, Stephen of Alexandria, *In De anima*, p. 531.25 Hayduck = Fonte 39 Taormina; *hupomnēmatizōn*, Stephen of Alexandria, *in De anima*, p. 575.7 Hayduck = Fonte 49 Taormina; *oudamou* [*scil.* at least in the commentary to the *De anima*] Stephen of Alexandria, *In De anima*, p. 465.23 Hayduck = Fonte 29 Taormina).¹

THE PLATONIC EXEGESIS

Based on the current state of ancient evidence, the greatest contribution of Plutarch of Athens in the context of Platonic exegesis is without doubt his interpretation of the structure of the *Parmenides*, preserved in its broad outlines by Proclus. In Proclus there is an explicit mention of Plutarch, accompanied by the epithet 'our grandfather' (*In Parmenidem* 6.1058.1 Cousin), but there is no reference to a written commentary. In the sixth book of his commentary on the *Parmenides* (*In Parmenidem* 1058.21–1061.20 Cousin = Fonte 62 Taormina), Proclus reports that Plutarch gave a comprehensive reading of the Platonic dialogue, identified nine hypotheses, and articulated them in a succession of 1 (first hypothesis) + 4 (second to fifth hypotheses) + 4 (sixth to ninth hypotheses).

The first five hypotheses had, according to Plutarch, an affirmative form, while the last four had a negative form. For Plutarch this logical-argumentative articulation of the dialogue corresponded to the ontological articulation of reality. In particular, the first hypothesis concerned the One; the following four hypotheses concerned the intelligible transcendent principles and the corporeal immanent ones. More specifically, the second hypothesis concerned the intellect, the third concerned the soul (intellect and soul being the intelligible principles of reality), the fourth hypothesis concerned sensibles and the fifth hypothesis concerned matter (the sensibles and matter constituting the principles inherent in the world).

Those first five hypotheses have a positive form: that is, they assume the existence of the One and they derive from it the other degrees of reality and their respective attributes. The last four cases (from the sixth to the ninth), however, retrace the steps taken in previous hypotheses but in negative form:

¹ The comment on the third book of Aristotle's *De anima* should be attributed not to Philoponus, as are the two previous books, but to Stephen (cf. Ioannes Philoponus, *In Aristotelis de anima*, ed. M. Hayduck (CAG XV) 1897, *Praefatio* p. V).

that is, they assume that the One is not, both in a relative and in an absolute way. From the denial of the existence of the One follows the negation (considered absurd) of the existence of any other order of reality, from the intelligibles down to matter; the corresponding cognitive faculties of the soul are also denied – that is, in descending order, intelligence, imagination and sensation. These consequences, presented as manifestly absurd, are such as to confirm, although in a negative way, what was positively affirmed by the first five hypotheses.

From Proclus' point of view, the specific contribution of Plutarch is to have imposed order on the data that were transmitted in such a confused way by previous Platonic interpreters, clearly articulating these nine hypotheses and precisely defining the object of each of them.

It is worth noting that, from what emerges from Plutarch's interpretation, he took the *Parmenides* to be concerned not merely with the One, or with both the One and the intelligibles, but with the whole of reality, including the sensibles and matter, although they are inserted in a descending hierarchical structure and considered in their dependency on the One. The existence of the One is indeed what grounds every other existent, without exception.

On this issue Damascius transmits to us a point of convergence between Plutarch and Iamblichus, in that Iamblichus connects some hypotheses of the Platonic dialogue (not specified in our source) to the sensible individual objects, which, in Plutarch, would be covered by the sixth hypothesis – that is, the hypothesis which, by assuming that non-being is relative to the One, states the existence of sensibles alone (Damascius, *In Parmenidem* 4.84.5–9 Combès and Westerink = Fonte 63 Taormina). Iamblichus (like Porphyry) had already listed nine hypotheses of the *Parmenides* (see Proclus, *In Parm.* 1053.36–1055.25).

A question of psychology on which Plutarch also shows himself to be in agreement with Iamblichus concerns the immortality of the soul. In fact, both of them considered that immortality concerned not only the rational part of the soul, but also the irrational part. In this they were tracing their position back to the 'ancient' Platonists Xenocrates and Speusippus, while at the same time distancing themselves both from Plotinus, who also considered the vegetative part of the soul to be immortal, and from Porphyry (and Proclus), according to whom only the rational soul is immortal (cf. Damascius, *In Phaedonem* 177.107–9 Westerink = Fonte 65 Taormina).

THE ARISTOTELIAN EXEGESIS

Plutarch not only led the young Proclus into the reading of Aristotle's *De anima*, but also drew up a written commentary (see above). From the evidence we have, which comes for the most part from subsequent commentators on this

Aristotelian treatise (Stefan, Ps.–Simplicius and Priscianus Lydus), we know that Plutarch provided both the explanation of the Aristotelian *diction* (the *lexis*) and the explanation of the *meaning* (*nous*), as well as some information on its main theme (*skopos*). Indeed, several times the exegesis of our author (referred to as ‘the philosopher Plutarch’ or ‘Plutarch, the son of Nestorius’) is mentioned in connection with the syntax of some problematic phrases of the treatise in question, or with respect to the use of individual terms.

With regard to the doctrine, Plutarch took a stand on some important and much-discussed issues of the Aristotelian exegesis: on the nature and function of (the) common sense, on the intellect and imagination, and on whether or not the celestial bodies possess the faculty of sensation. In many cases where Plutarch is mentioned, he is mentioned along with Alexander of Aphrodisias, also author of a written commentary on the *De anima*.

Plutarch and Alexander appear as the established authorities among commentators on the Aristotelian treatise. It is also clear that Plutarch knew Alexander’s commentary well, and sometimes disagreed with it. Indeed, on several occasions two solutions, reported as those of Alexander and Plutarch, are divergent and explicitly presented as such by various sources.

A significant case of the divergence between the two is that Plutarch, unlike Alexander, claims that according to Aristotle celestial bodies possess the ability to perceive sensibles. According to Plutarch, this would be a special sensation which, unlike what happens in human beings, does not imply any passivity. Thus Plutarch claims that on this question Aristotle is in agreement with Plato. In this context it is also interesting to see how Plutarch *borrow*s and modifies a comparison introduced by Alexander.

The latter, in fact, had compared sensation to a chatterbox who drowns out every acquaintance whom he encounters, meaning that sensation, with all the data that it transmits about the sensibles, would only distract the souls of the celestial bodies from knowledge of the universals, which is why it would not be convenient for them to have sensation.

According to Plutarch, by contrast, although sensation is indeed comparable to a garrulous neighbour, it also has some usefulness since the soul rises smoothly from the sensibles to knowledge of the universals, and thus it is not regrettable that celestial bodies perceive sensible things. Indeed, Plutarch adds significantly, within the stars, there is not that interference from the rebellious, evil horse (cf. Plato, *Phdr.* 246a) which is found within human souls (Stephen of Alexandria, *In De anima* 596.9–36 Hayduck = Fonte 56 Taormina).

On the other subjects of psychology, and in particular on the question of how human beings are ignorant of the activities of the five senses, Stephen provides us with two Plutarchean positions that are in disagreement with each other. In

the first mention, Stephen says that Plutarch (unlike Alexander) said that for Aristotle (the) common sense (*koinē aisthēsis*) is able to grasp the common sensibles, but not the activities of the five senses, for these activities are not objects of sense-perception, whereas they are objects of an awareness attributable to a higher faculty, namely, the rational faculty of the soul (Stephen of Alexandria, *In De anima* 464.23–30 Hayduck = Fonte 29 Taormina).

On the other hand, in a second mention, Stephen says that Plutarch never claimed that the awareness of the sensory activity is the work of the rational soul (*doxa*), but that he agreed with Alexander in saying that it was (the) common sense that realizes this awareness (Stephen of Alexandria, *In De anima* 465.22–6 Hayduck = Fonte 29 Taormina). The puzzle of clarifying the true position of Plutarch still remains unresolved because of the lack of further evidence and because of the division of opinion among scholars in this regard.²

The fact remains that sensation, in addition to perceiving the sensibles, sets in motion the imagination (φαντασία), whose proper role, according to Plutarch, is duplicitous, an intermediate faculty between sensation and discursive thought. In itself, imagination is a unique reality, but its two-fold function stems from its ability to interact with these two faculties, playing a pivotal role between the two.

(Stephen of Alexandria, *in De anima* 512.9–14 and 515.12–29 Hayduck = Fonti 33–4 Taormina)

With regard to the intellect (*nous*), Plutarch, like Alexander, distinguishes three meanings of the word ‘intellect’ in Aristotle, but he identifies those three meanings differently from Alexander. According to him the first meaning of ‘intellect’ means the intellect *in habitu*, that is, the intellect that possesses an understanding (*logoi*) of things, but without explicit knowledge and awareness, as in the case of children. The second meaning of ‘intellect’ indicates the intellect which is both *in habitu* and in actuality, which in addition to possessing an understanding of things also possesses knowledge as a result of recollection. Finally, the third meaning of ‘intellect’ refers to an intellect in actuality that is also perfect, and which comes to humans from the outside (Stephen of Alexandria, *In De anima* 518.8–32 Hayduck = Fonte 35 Taormina). With this interpretation of the *De anima* (3.3, 429a10–13), Plutarch succeeds in linking what Aristotle says with the Platonic conception of knowledge, according to which the human soul has always possessed an understanding of things, but reactivates knowledge

² Indeed Lautner 2000, following Beutler 1951, considered the second position (the one in which Plutarch shows his agreement with Alexander) to be the authentic one, while Blumenthal 1975, followed by Taormina 1989, regards both positions as Plutarch’s, but assigns the first (the one which shows disagreement with Alexander) probably to the end of his career.

through a process of learning which is simply recollection of experience prior to the soul's descent into the body.

Plutarch thus rejects the idea of the human soul as a *tabula rasa* on which nothing is yet written, an idea which Alexander had developed in his commentary in terms of intellect in potency (which he regarded as the first of the meanings of 'intellect' in Aristotle). Stephen, however, in rejecting the interpretations of both Alexander and Plutarch, notices however that the latter in this case is simply attributing Plato's doctrine to Aristotle (Stephen of Alexandria, *In De anima* 519.37–520.3 Hayduck = Fonte 35 Taormina).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can say that for Plutarch of Athens the reading of Aristotle was fundamental and that he knew the exegesis of Alexander of Aphrodisias well. We find the same phenomenon in Syrianus, who did with Aristotle's *Metaphysics* what his teacher had done with the *De anima*. It should be noted, however, that in current scholarship there is no evidence in Plutarch of the impetuous polemic against Aristotle that we find in Syrianus on certain topics (mainly the Ideas and the Numbers).

Moreover, both Plutarch and Syrianus made substantial and respectful use of the exegetic texts of Alexander of Aphrodisias, without, at the same time, denying themselves the right to disagree with him when necessary. Both then provided a structural and comprehensive reading of the *Parmenides*, whose methodological principle is that of a correspondence between the phases of the arguments in the dialogue and the hierarchical levels of reality; this principle was also adopted and developed by Proclus (whose approach excluded the reading of *Parmenides* as a mere logical exercise). Finally both Plutarch and Syrianus show the influence of Iamblichus' teachings in their treatment of theurgy, the theological reading of the *Parmenides*, and psychology, and in their close comparison between Plato and Aristotle.

SYRIANUS

ANGELA LONGO

I SYRIANUS' LIFE AND WORKS

Information about the life of Syrianus, son of Philoxenus, is scarce, and is limited to what can be deduced from what we know about the life of Proclus, Syrianus' disciple, who became much more famous than his master. Nevertheless, one date is certain: Syrianus became head of the Platonic school at Athens in 432 CE, after the death of his master, Plutarch. As to Syrianus' own death, the date which is often given, of 437 CE, is only conjectural, if probable, but it is certain that he died before 439 CE, when Proclus wrote his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*; the past tense verbs in this text indicate that Proclus' master had already passed away.

Among Syrianus' numerous works, only his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has survived, and that in an incomplete form comprising only books 3, 4, 13 and 14. A commentary on two treatises by Hermogenes of Tarsus, an orator of the second to third century CE, *On Types of Style* and *On Argumentative Stances*, has also been transmitted under Syrianus' name. However the most recent editor of these commentaries, H. Rabe, has expressed doubts concerning their authenticity.

But we know that Syrianus gave lectures, not only on works by Aristotle other than the *Metaphysics*, but also on Platonic dialogues. As regards the latter, we have a commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus*, written by Syrianus' disciple Hermias: he wrote this commentary on the basis of notes taken during his master's lectures. In addition, Syrianus is known to have produced exegeses of poetic and theological works such as the *Orphic Poems*.

Again, we know that Syrianus did not confine his writing to commentaries; he also wrote systematic treatises such as *The Agreement Between Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and the Chaldaean Oracles*, a work consisting of ten books.

To understand Syrianus' written works correctly, we must place them in the context of his teaching in the Platonic school at Athens. The curriculum here was organized into three distinct stages: (a) the reading of Aristotle's works,

(b) the reading of Plato's dialogues, and (c) the reading of Orphic and Chaldaean theology. The study of Aristotle's works, which would culminate in study of the *Metaphysics*, considered as a theological treatise, was deemed preliminary to the study of Plato's dialogues. These had already been selected and arranged in a pedagogical reading order some centuries before, in the so-called 'Iamblichaeon canon' which culminated in reading of the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*, works considered to be the highest synthesis of Plato's physical and theological doctrines respectively.

The extant works

(1) Portions of the *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, namely those on books B, Γ, M and N. At present the standard edition is Syrianus. In *Aristotelis 'Metaphysica' commentaria*, ed. W. Kroll, G. Reimer, Berolini 1902 (CAG VI.1), but a new edition is planned by Les Belles Lettres, Paris.

The commentary consists of four books. The first book (pp. 1–53) expounds *Metaphysics* B. Here Syrianus concerns himself with the aporetic nature of the Aristotelian text, not only underscoring this characteristic, but also with some confidence assuming the position of arbiter, dispensing his judgement on how the *aporiai* should be resolved. His declared purpose is to supply a succinct answer for each of the various *aporiai* which Aristotle presents but fails to resolve, and this purpose he duly fulfils. Most of these *aporiai* concern the identity of the primary science and its objects.

The second book (pp. 54–79) is devoted to *Metaphysics* Γ, and consists of a short introduction, three main sections and a short concluding *précis*. Of the main sections, the first discusses the claim that the 'first philosopher' studies being *qua* being; the second discusses the claim that he studies *per se* attributes of being *qua* being; the third discusses the claim that he studies the principles of demonstration. At the beginning of the book (Syrian. *In Metaph.* 54.12–15), Syrianus warns that he does not intend to provide continuous commentary of *Metaphysics* G, since Alexander of Aphrodisias has already done this so thoroughly. Accordingly, the second book does not read as continuous commentary. Rather, Syrianus' purpose is to provide detailed discussion of the three above-mentioned central claims only. Thus he gives us only straightforward paraphrase of the rest of the text, where it deals with other matters. In this way, he guarantees a certain continuity of exposition, but, of course, sets aside some of Aristotle's arguments.

The third book (pp. 80–165) expounds *Metaphysics* M and the fourth *Metaphysics* N. Both books deal with the ontological status and epistemic value of Forms and Numbers, together constituting a continuous whole. (Exactly at

what point Aristotle's book M ends and his book N begins was a matter of controversy; Syrianus adopts the division proposed by Alexander, 165.22–3.) The third book is crucial because it contains Syrianus' testimony concerning Aristotle's *peri ideōn* (from p. 103.13 onwards).

On this matter, Syrianus' polemic against Aristotle is fiery, since he is determined to defend the status of the Forms and the Numbers as intelligible substances existing separately from sensible things and as knowable by human beings through discursive thought. Here, where agreement between Plato and Aristotle seems impossible, Syrianus chooses loyalty to Plato and the Platonic tradition.

(2) The *Commentary on Plato's Phaedrus* has been transmitted under the name of Hermias of Alexandria, but it seems to consist of lecture notes taken by Hermias during lessons given by Syrianus on Platonic dialogue. The question of how much originality there is in this work remains open. The standard edition is *Hermiae Alexandrini in Platonis <Phaedrum> scholia*, ed. P. Couvreur, Paris 1901.

The *Commentary on Plato's Phaedrus* consists of three books. The first book (pp. 1–81) expounds *Phaedrus* 227a–243e (the opening encounter between Socrates and Phaedrus, 'Lysias' speech', Socrates' first discourse and the introduction to the 'palinode'). The second book (pp. 83–172) provides a thorough interpretation of *Phaedrus* 244a–249c (Socrates' second speech up to but excluding the discussion of erotic madness, comprising the division of madness into four kinds; the proof of the immortality of the soul; the comparison of the soul to a chariot pulled by two horses and guided by a charioteer; the description of the ascent and descent of souls – their gaining and losing of wings, their ascents and their falls and incarnations, their ways as ways of gods characteristic to them, their contemplation of Forms at the apotheosis, their choice between nine types of earthly lives). The third book (pp. 173–266) is devoted to *Phaedrus* 249d–279c (the definition of the erotic kind of madness, the contrast between the lover who uplifts and the one who degrades, the further development of the chariot metaphor to explain the love relationship, the suggestion that Lysias also should compose a 'palinode' and the prayer to Eros, the dialectical discussion of rhetoric, the final evaluation of Lysias in contrast to Isocrates, the closing prayer to Pan and the gods of the place). All three books are of roughly the same length but, as the above details of Platonic subject matter show, the ratio of Platonic text to Hermian explication varies widely. In particular, Hermias' second book considers in great detail a very short section of the *Phaedrus* which, despite its brevity, he considers of paramount importance and deserving of full discussion. By contrast the third book contains a rushed discussion of the largest portion of the dialogue, while the ratio as regards the first book is intermediary.

Syrianus' influence

Syrianus had a significant influence on his pupil Proclus, especially concerning the elaboration of his theology, as is testified by the evidence in Proclus' own works (see above on the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides* commentaries). Concerning Aristotelian exegesis, Syrianus is, along with Alexander of Aphrodisias, the other source of Asclepius' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. However, reading Asclepius one gets the general impression that he lacks Syrianus' depth. He does not display the same problematic relationship to Aristotle's doctrine; unlike Syrianus he does not waver between an attitude of respect and a polemical tone. This milder approach might suggest that the assimilation and conciliation between Plato and Aristotle had further progressed in the school at Alexandria by his day.

On the other hand, the author of the pseudo-Alexander *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* is committed to Aristotelian doctrine – the pseudo-Alexander *Commentary on Metaphysics* E–N follows upon Alexander's *Commentary on Metaphysics* A–D in the manuscripts – but most likely Syrianus is his source as well (and not *vice versa*). According to the convincing reconstruction developed by C. Luna, which rehabilitates a thesis of K. Paechter (with the addition of much new material), this pseudo-Alexander should be identified with Michael of Ephesus (twelfth century).¹ Be that as it may, Syrianus' interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* certainly went on to have an important influence on the theology of his disciple, Proclus and, through him, on much later metaphysical philosophy.

2 SYRIANUS' DOCTRINES

(a) *Theology*

Although there has been no direct transmission of Syrianus' theological teaching, most of it can be read in Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* and his *Platonic Theology*. In these works, Proclus often mentions the teaching he received from Syrianus, indicating this with the expression 'our guide' (*ho hēmeteros kathēgemōn*).² It was indeed under Syrianus' 'guidance' that Proclus was introduced first to Aristotle (the 'little mysteries') and then to Plato (the 'great mysteries'). With regard to the latter, a correct understanding of Plato's *Parmenides* was of prime importance because this dialogue was considered to express the apotheosis of Plato's theology, just as the *Timaeus* was considered to express the

¹ See Luna 2001.

² Proclus acknowledges his debt to Syrianus in several places, as in *In Parm.* 618.3 ff., 1061.20–31, *Theol. Plat.* 83.10–18. On the expression *ho hēmeteros kathēgemōn*, see now the remarks by Luna and Segonds 2007: lxvi–lxviii.

apotheosis of Plato's physics. Thanks to Proclus, it is possible to reconstruct Syrianus' exegesis; he saw the second part of the *Parmenides* not merely as a logical exercise, but as a representation of the descending pattern of different levels of reality.

The crucial passage is to be found in the sixth book of Proclus' commentary (*In Parm.* 6.1061.20 ff., above all 1063.20–1064.13 Cousin). Here Proclus tells us that, according to Syrianus, the first hypothesis of the Platonic dialogue (137c4 ff.) concerns the transcendent One, about which it is possible to speak only in negative terms. In this hypothesis, all possible characteristics of the One are examined and rejected as properties of the One.

The *Parmenides*' second hypothesis (142b1 ff.), by contrast, concerns the One-which-is, and it introduces the henads, the causes of the intelligible world. Here we move from negations to affirmations: each of the pairs of attributes considered (e.g., 'equal' and 'unequal') is said to belong to the One-which-is.

However not all the fourteen pairs of attributes are to be regarded as being on the same level: they correspond, in a hierarchical descending pattern, to different levels of the intelligible world. Thus, according to Proclus, in the second hypothesis Syrianus identified the following levels: the intelligible gods, the intelligible-intellectual gods, the intellectual gods, the Demiurge, the hypercosmic gods, the encosmic gods, the universal souls, and finally the class of angels, *daimones* and heroes.

The hierarchy is arranged according to movements from causes to effects, where the cause is always more uniform than its product(s), and there are more, and more multiple, products the further away we move from the One. Here the notions of the henad and the triad play an important role. The henad is the unitary and transcendent cause of each level of intelligible reality which is distinguished.³ The triad is the internal organization proper to each level of intelligible reality, which is accordingly articulated into Unity, Potency and Being.⁴

Finally, the third hypothesis (*Parm.* 155e4 ff.) concerns the souls assimilated to gods, the fourth (*Parm.* 157b6 ff.) forms in matter, and the fifth (*Parm.* 159b2 ff.) matter, which is the last effect we reach in descending from the One.

So if you would like to hear the subjects of the hypotheses in order according to this [scil. Syrianus'] theory also, the first he declares to be about the One God, how he generates and gives order to all the orders of gods. The second is about all the divine

³ 'The way Syrianus sees it (cf. Proclus, *in Parm.* 1049.37 ff.), the uniform premiss, "If there is a One", symbolizes the henad at the head of each order of gods, while the conclusion, which varies in each case, represents the particularity (*idiotēs*) of the class of gods (or superior beings) envisaged in each case,' Dillon 2009: 236.

⁴ This corresponds to the triadic way of organizing the intelligible world, from Porphyry onwards, in Being, Life and Intellect.

orders, how they have proceeded from the One and the substance which is joined to each. The third is about the souls which are assimilated to the gods, but yet have not been apportioned divinized being. The fourth is about Forms-in-Matter, how they are produced according to what rankings from the gods. The fifth is about Matter, how it has no participation in the formative henads, but receives its share of existence from above, from the supra-essential and single Monad; for the One and the illumination of the One extends as far as Matter, bringing light even to its boundlessness.

(Proclus, *in Parm.*, 6.1063.18–1064.12, trans. Morrow–Dillon)

There are four further hypotheses in the Platonic dialogue, but Syrianus does not say that, or how these hypotheses discuss further levels of reality; it is left to Damascius to make these further connections.

Now it is a fair assumption, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, and given his explicit acknowledgement of a doctrinal debt, that Proclus has taken over the substance of his master's teaching. But of course we cannot assume that Syrianus would have systematized his doctrines in exactly the same way as Proclus does. The only indisputably authentic Syrianian work we possess, the incomplete commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, is in a style quite different to Proclus'. Here Syrianus employs vivid and polemical language and cuts straight through to the crux of each question or problem. Unlike Proclus, he does not become embroiled in the detail of an answer or a solution, nor does he pause to embroider his ontological hierarchies. Thus, even if, as is quite likely, Syrianus and Proclus were in substantial agreement on central matters of doctrine as regards interpretation of the *Parmenides* (at least), it is unlikely that they would have extracted these from the text in quite the same way.

Syrianus' interpretation of the *Parmenides* as outlined above develops and elaborates upon a pattern that Iamblichus had already pioneered.

(b) *Physics and theology*

The shadow which Syrianus casts over Proclus' work is especially evident in the Proclean *Commentary on the Timaeus*. Proclus was only twenty-eight years old when he wrote this work, and Syrianus had died only a few years previously, doubtless leaving behind a vivid memory of his teaching. So it is unsurprising that we find in this commentary explicit references to Syrianus' lectures and to his own *Commentary on the Timaeus*, which has been lost to us (cf. Proclus, *In Timaeum* 2.96.6–7; 273.23–6; 3.35.25–6 Diehl). On many occasions Proclus mentions Syrianus' position on various controversial issues, so we are able to infer that Syrianus did not only give a physical interpretation of the Platonic *Timaeus*, but also gave a theological one, here following Iamblichus' exegesis. Moreover Syrianus' position was in agreement with the theologians (Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus, the *Chaldaean Oracles*). Syrianus would begin with a literal

explanation of Plato's text, but he would usually then go on to find a more profound meaning buried in it, which is to say a theological meaning.⁵ For example, he thought that the division of time into day and night was to be interpreted according to the phenomenal reality that we perceive daily, but he also saw in these phenomena the image of a higher reality, so that Day and Night belonged to the class of demiurgic entities and were the criteria for measuring not only the visible world, but also the invisible one (Proclus, *In Tim.* 3.35.25 ff., cf. 3.318.13 ff. also on Time).

Among the more important aspects of Syrianus' exegesis of the *Timaeus*, one in particular is worthy of mention. This is that he considered that there was only one Demiurge of the world, who occupied the last level among the intellectual Gods and used his power to create the world (Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.310.4–15). This Demiurge, identified with Zeus (Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.314.22–315.4), acts in agreement with a model placed above him, yet which he can see inside himself (Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.322.18–323.22).

The World Soul, however, Syrianus described as existing and acting on many different levels. Its highest faculty is hypercosmic and transcendent (this is the faculty which keeps in touch with the Intellect, what Plato calls 'head' in *Phaedrus* 248a3). The rest of the World Soul's multiple faculties run through all the world in such a way as to be appropriated by each different portion of the world as they animate it (Proclus, *In Tim.* 2.105.26–106.9). Again, the World Soul contains in itself the copy of all divine classes above it (Proclus, *In Tim.* 2.273.23 ff.).

As to human souls, Syrianus maintained that they had (1) an eternal vehicle (*ochēma*), produced by the Demiurge himself; (2) a pneumatic vehicle, produced by recent gods (this vehicle had a life longer than that of the sensible body, but it was nevertheless destined for dissolution); (3) a sensible body. When the sensible body dies, the pneumatic vehicle survives to undergo punishments in Hades meted out for the person's past wrongdoings, or to choose a form of life at the beginning of a cycle of embodiments. But when the human soul arrives at the end of such a cycle and is totally purified, it abandons its pneumatic vehicle and retains only its eternal vehicle. The soul needs the pneumatic vehicle only in order to have a position in the world and, especially, to descend into the sensible world. Such a vehicle is strictly bound to the soul's irrational life, which is why when the soul has been completely purged, there is no reason for it to persist.

⁵ Cf. Syrianus' opinion concerning the claim that the number of listeners diminishes as the discourse treats of higher themes (Proclus, *in Timaeum* 1.20.27–21.8); Syrianus' dual literal and allegorical explanation of Atlantis' war (Proclus, *in Timaeum* 1.77.26 ff.); Syrianus' agreement with the theologians, in looking at things from above when he interprets the mixing-bowl (Proclus, *in Timaeum* 3.247.26–248.5); Proclus' presentation of his master as the most theological among the Platonic interpreters (Proclus, *in Timaeum* 3.14.18–19).

Attempts to reconstruct Syrianus' interpretation of the *Timaeus* encounter the significant problem that in any given case, whereas it is easy to identify where Proclus begins to present his master's opinions – expressions like 'according to our guide' or 'according to our master' usually settle the matter – it is by contrast quite difficult to decide when he has finished reporting Syrianus' position and begun developing it or presenting a view of his own. We might go so far as to say that distinguishing Syrianus' position from that of his (at the time of writing) young pupil, or distinguishing their different developments of an existing position, is a somewhat moot exercise simply because there is such extensive general agreement between the two.⁶

(c) *Ontology*

In his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Syrianus formulates his doctrine of the three levels of substance: (1) intelligible substances, (2) dianoetic substances, and (3) sensible substances (see especially the prologue to the exegesis of book M).

The divine Pythagoras, and all those who have genuinely received his doctrines into the purest recesses of their own thought, declared that there are many levels (*taxeis*) of beings . . . They declared that there were, broadly,⁷ three levels of being, the intelligible, the dianoetic, and the sensible, and that there were manifested at each of them all the forms, but in each case in a manner appropriate to the particular nature of their existence.
(Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 81.31–82.2; trans. Dillon 2006: 32–3)

In maintaining this doctrine of three levels of reality, Syrianus presents himself as a disciple of Pythagoras and Plato. On his version of Pythagoreanism/Platonism, sensible substances are not the only substances, nor the most important. In fact they belong to the lowest level of reality, below not only the intelligible but also the 'intermediate' substances (the dianoetic ones). All reality is derived from the intelligible world by a dynamic process of descent (the *proodos*) and the action of otherness, but in the course of this process, the derived entities gradually lose their unity, until we finally arrive at the sensible world. The whole of reality is thus ordered and continuous, but, at the same time, multiple and separated into different levels.

⁶ However Proclus at least once says explicitly that he disagrees with Syrianus; unlike his master, he does not believe that Eternity rests in the Good, considering instead that Eternity rests in the Being-One. But Proclus does his best to downplay the disagreement with his master and accompanies it with a fulsome compliment; this is where he calls Syrianus the most theological interpreter (Proclus, *In Tim.* 3.14.18 ff.).

⁷ Syrianus elsewhere presents more sophisticated versions of his doctrine of the levels of substance where reality has more than three levels.

Yet according to the principle that ‘all exists in all, but in a way appropriate to each’,⁸ Ideas are everywhere, even in the sensible world; they exist at all levels, but in each level they have peculiar characteristics and functions. There are Ideas in a divine world superior to the psychic world, including that of human souls, and here they play a causal role in relation to all the other things that exist. These are the intelligible Ideas, the Ideas strictly so called. But there are also Ideas in the psychic world, in particular in human souls. Here they have no power to cause things, but only to know those that already exist. These are the dianoetic Ideas. Finally, there are Ideas immanent in the sensible world. These ideas are married to and inseparable from matter, except by an act of abstraction in thought. These Ideas belong to the third level.

Let us consider, in turn, the status of the Ideas at these three levels, beginning with the Intelligible ideas at the first level.

And the intelligible forms are at the level of the gods, and are efficient and paradigmatic and final causes of what is below them . . . [they are the] best causal principles of all things, which are productive of all things by reason of their generative and demiurgic power, while by reason of the fact that their products revert towards themselves and are assimilated to themselves they are models (*paradeigmata*) for all things; and since they create of themselves also their own goodness, as the divine Plato says [*Tim.* 29e], how would they not manifest also the final cause? The intelligible forms, then, being of this nature, and being productive of such great benefits to all things, fill the divine realms, but are most generally to be viewed in connection with the demiurgic level of reality, which is associated with Intellect proper (*peri tēn demiourgikēn taxin tēn noeran*).

(Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 82.2–13)

First, then, intelligible or first-order Ideas are productive causes, paradigmatic causes and final causes⁹ of derived entities, and all other reality is derived from intelligible Ideas in this way. That is, Ideas in the intelligible world in their demiurgic role produce all reality, in their paradigmatic role are the model of all reality, and in their role as final causes attract all reality, thus beginning the process opposite to the *proodos*, namely the ‘reversion’ (*epistrophē*) to the origin.

The discursive forms (*ta dianoēta*) on the one hand imitate what is above them and assimilate the psychic realm to the intelligible, while on the other they embrace all things in a secondary way, and those of them which are viewed by the divine and daimonic

⁸ Syrianus affirms that the Ideas (= ‘forms’ in Dillon’s translation) are present at all levels of reality (cf. above *In Metaph.* 82.2–4), but in a way appropriate to each level. The general claim that ‘all exists in all, but in a way appropriate to each’ is explicitly made by Proclus (*Elements of Theology*, prop. 103).

⁹ For Syrianus, Ideas are ‘final causes’ in that, being the best things in the world, they are also, in virtue of their most superlative goodness, the highest objects of desire. He mentions a passage of Plato, probably *Tim.* 29e.

souls are demiurgic, whereas those of them which are found among us [humans] are only capable of cognition, since we no longer possess demiurgic knowledge, by reason of our 'moulding' (*pteroorrhūēsis*).

(Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 82.14–18)

Next, then, the dianoetic or intermediate/second-order ideas of the psychic world below the intelligible world are discursively apprehended by rational souls. In general, their function is to mediate between the intelligible and psychic worlds, thus imitating the intelligible Ideas and thereby assimilating rational souls, including the lowest rational souls, human souls, to them. However, when apprehended by the World Soul, they retain a derivative demiurgic power, whereas when apprehended by human souls, they cannot produce things, but only allow us to know them.

For the great Hephaistos inserted all things also in the sense-world, so far as that was possible, as the divine Poem asserts [Homer, *Iliad* 18.400–2] . . . and these are the third level of forms, which the Pythagoreans considered to be inseparable (*akhōrista*) causes of sensible objects, being the ultimate images of the separable forms, and for this reason they did not think it improper to call them by the same name as these latter. It is by these that the soul which is fallen into the realm of generation is roused and stirred up. And thus comes to reminiscence of the median [*scil.* the *dianoētic*] forms, and raises its own reason-principles to the intelligibles and primary paradigms. And thus do sight and hearing contribute to philosophy and the conversion of the soul.

(Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 83.1–11)

Finally, then, at the lowest level Ideas are immanent in sensible things and not separable in existence from them. This last notion is Aristotelian in origin: each sensible thing is composed of matter and form (*eidos*), the matter and form being (in the case of natural, sensible things) inseparable. Immanent third-order Ideas organize nature from within and act on individuals with residual demiurgic powers (the *logoi*). Their function is to awaken human souls to recollect the second-order or intermediate Ideas, by recollecting which they will finally recollect the first-order or intelligible Ideas. From this perspective, even perceptions can be useful, in that they begin the process which will transform a simple human being into a philosopher, that is, someone whose soul has the capacity to rise from the sensible to the intelligible world.

(d) *Epistemology*

Syrianus' epistemology is tightly bound together with his ontology. In particular, the second-order or dianoetic Ideas in rational souls play a crucial role in producing the sciences. These Ideas are the universals that exist in human

souls prior to their incarnation and which constitute the object and basis of all scientific knowledge. Thus Syrianus agrees with Aristotle that there can be no science without universals, and that individuals can be apprehended only by reference to universals.

Since however he [*scil.* Aristotle] frankly admits that it is not possible to acquire knowledge without universals, we must seek to learn from him what universals he has in mind.

(Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 161.4–5)¹⁰

However, Syrianus' universals are fundamentally different from those of Aristotle. For Aristotle, the universals that constitute and are the basis of scientific knowledge are obtained by abstraction from observation of sensible things. In Syrianus' terms, this would mean that we get at universals that produce and guarantee scientific knowledge when we extract the formal or Ideal constituent of sensible things (i.e., when we grasp third-order Ideas). But in fact, Syrianus thinks, the universals that produce and guarantee scientific knowledge are *second-order* dianoetic Ideas, those which exist eternally in human souls and, in particular, which exist prior to any incarnation. Human souls possess such universals from eternity and continue to possess them during their embodiment.

Why does Syrianus think science-generating universals must be second-order dianoetic Ideas? On the one hand, first-order Ideas are beyond the capacity of discursive thinking in human souls to grasp and therefore cannot be used in producing human science. They may be contemplated, but only momentarily, and they are not articulated by successive stages, i.e., discursively, but rather grasped, if at all, only by direct apprehension.

On the other hand, Syrianus takes it that science-generating universals must not only have a special logical status, but also a special ontological status; they should be substances with causal power and principles that are prior and with a nature intrinsically appropriate to their effects, namely the knowledge of the conclusions drawn from them by demonstration. But this means that the Ideas immanent in sensible things lack the necessary credentials.

For while immanent Ideas possess an essential unity, they are present in an unlimited number of individuals, and so are themselves, to that extent, multiple; they are, so to speak, divided among individual entities, becoming themselves individual by this 'division into a thousand pieces in enmattering'. Hence, when it comes to immanent Ideas, individuality prevails over universality as the Idea becomes merely a part of an individual sensible thing. It is thus no longer a genus overarching specific differences. Again, immanent ideas do not produce nature but are, rather, posterior to nature. But, Syrianus thinks, if they are ontologically

¹⁰ Cf. also Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 53.2–3 and 163.1–2.

posterior, then they must be logically posterior as well. But the principles of demonstrations must not be posterior to the conclusions drawn from them, otherwise the demonstrations are not sound. Thus for Syrianus immanent Ideas have neither the causal power nor the ontological priority necessary for them to be the type of universal that can produce and guarantee scientific knowledge by demonstration.

Does he [Aristotle] mean inseparable [universals] ones? But these are mere parts of sensible objects, and fill the role of matter in relation to them, and are neither prior nor posterior to them; but we have emphasized the fact that demonstrative proofs and scientific knowledge arise from causal principles which are both prior and more general . . . that which is predicated universally [*scil.* the separable universal] is something different from what pertains to individual [*scil.* the inseparable universal] as part of it, and could not ever become identical with it. If, then, all proofs are derived from universal predicates, they would not then derive from what inheres in particulars.

(Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 161.7–16).

But are we to make the means of proof separable on the one hand, but ‘later-born’ (*husterogenēs*) and devoid of substance on the other, like the concept of man which derives its existence in our imaginative or opinative faculties on the basis of abstraction from sensibles? But in this case once again proofs will derive not from prior entities nor from causes, but from posterior bones and from effects, and furthermore it will result that we will come to know beings on the basis of non-beings, which is of all things the most irrational.

(Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 161.24 ff.)¹¹

As regards *Metaphysics* M and N, then, it is appropriate to speak of a genuine dispute between Syrianus and Aristotle or the Aristotelian tradition concerning certain key theses. This dispute is essentially centred on two issues: (a) that of the eternal existence of axioms in human souls, and the reception of these universals from Intellect; (b) that of the existence in human souls of Ideas and mathematical substances that exist separately from and independently of sensible things. (Ideal Numbers, of course, also exist in the intelligible world separately from and independently of human souls, but, as previously noted, being intelligible Ideas they will not be used in producing scientific knowledge.)

The first point of contention concerns the status of the axioms of science, (a). Syrianus is certainly opposed to the thesis that human beings themselves produce the axioms by induction from observation of sensible objects. For Syrianus, human beings do not cause axioms to exist, but receive them from Intellect by nature; their rational souls have been, by their very essence, eternally suitable for receiving these axioms from Intellect. There was never a time at which human souls did not possess such axioms directly. Rather than producing

¹¹ See also Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 91.20–9.

the axioms, induction and abstraction merely allow human beings to recollect the axioms they already possess in their own souls.

For Syrianus, of course, this origin of the axioms has important epistemic consequences, for the axioms' eternal existence in souls and their derivation from Intellect guarantee the necessary logical priority of the axioms over the conclusions derived from them by scientific demonstration. This, in turn, guarantees that the axioms, *qua* premisses in demonstrations, really are the causes of the conclusions derived from them; they are immediate, true, prior and clearer than the conclusions inferred from them. As far as Syrianus is concerned, one who denies the ontological priority of this type of universal also denies that it can really fulfil the logical function it is supposed to. For if such universals were not ontologically prior, then they could no longer be principles of demonstration, since the conclusions derived from them would no longer be posterior to them.

Moreover, with the axioms' ontological priority and their truth established, it now becomes possible for Syrianus to take on the second point of contention with Aristotle or the Aristotelian tradition, (b). If an axiom is true, this means that it is true of something in a primary way; that is, it is true of that thing first and foremost and true of it in every case without exception. But according to Syrianus, an axiom is not thus true of sensible things, but of *logoi* in souls, which are universal entities, existing independently of sensible things. Hence, since there are mathematical axioms, there are mathematical substances in human souls which exist independently of sensible things, namely the *logoi* of which true mathematical axioms are true. (As noted earlier, mathematical substances will also exist independently of human souls, but only in the intelligible order above the psychic-dianoetic order.)

In the context of this polemic regarding mathematical substances, Syrianus speaks directly to Aristotle using the 'you' form. This may perhaps indicate that a certain tension surrounded this particular dispute, because of its important consequences for the viability of Platonism. In keeping with the high stakes, Syrianus' strategy is subtle: he tries to use Aristotle against Aristotle, purporting to show that Aristotle's denial of the existence of independent mathematical substances is incompatible with each of two of his own theses: (a) that a cause of demonstration (a starting-point of demonstration or something which guarantees a demonstration) is about something which has the same extension as the cause; and (b) that a science and its object coincide. From (a), as Syrianus interprets it, it will follow that an axiom, being a cause of demonstration, is, in a primary way, about some reality that is equally universal, and this must be a mathematical substance. From (b), as Syrianus interprets it, it will follow that if the axiom represents the science, then it must have an object with which to coincide. But the only available candidate is a universal that has existed

eternally in human souls, i.e., a dianoetic universal, and this will have to be a mathematical substance independent of sensibles. Thus Aristotle is inconsistent with himself as regards both (a) and (b), if he denies the existence of independent mathematical substances.

In sum, then, Syrianus tries to establish that if Aristotle is to have a coherent philosophical system, in which ontology and epistemology are well coordinated, he must accept that there are intermediate substances that exist separately from and independently of sensible things, namely dianoetic ones. It will be these dianoetic Ideas, images in human souls of corresponding intelligible Ideas, that produce and guarantee human scientific knowledge. We have seen in Syrianus, then, an attachment to the doctrine of independent Ideas and a related critique of abstraction as a method of generating axioms, and here we may doubtless recognize the influence of Iamblichus. In his *On General Science on Mathematics* Iamblichus had already criticized the Aristotelian method of abstraction and defended the existence of Ideal Numbers. Iamblichus is also Syrianus' intermediary for Pythagoreanism, especially in his exegesis of *Metaphysics* M and N.

(d) Logic

Three times Syrianus refers explicitly to some principles (plural) of non-contradiction, indicating that he did not recognize only one such principle.¹² In one of these passages (where he is commenting on Aristotle's introduction of the principle of non-contradiction in *Metaphysics* Γ), Syrianus indicates that he counts two 'principles of non-contradiction'. One of these principles states that it is impossible for two contradictory propositions both to be true ('it is impossible that both parts of a contradiction are true at the same time'); the other states that it is impossible for two contradictory propositions both to be false ('it is impossible that both parts of a contradiction are false at the same time'). This mention of more than one principle of non-contradiction is quite exceptional – thus far I have not found a single parallel in ancient philosophy¹³ – the more so when we recall that not only does Aristotle himself not mention any such plurality,¹⁴ but other ancient commentators of *Metaphysics* do not either.

¹² Cf. Syrianus, *In Metaph.* 71.13–15; 78.22–5 and 79.15–17.

¹³ For a comparison between Syrianus and Łukasiewicz on the principles of non-contradiction see Longo 2005.

¹⁴ Aristotle mentions several *versions* of *one* principle of non-contradiction, but this does not mean that he thinks that there is more than one such principle.

PROCLUS

CARLOS STEEL

I LIFE AND WORK

Proclus was born in 412 in Byzantium in a Lycian family, still faithful to the old Hellenic religion in a society already dominated by Christianity. The talented young man did not opt for a career in the imperial administration as his father had done, but decided to devote his life to philosophy. After completing his studies in Alexandria, Proclus arrived in Athens in 430 where he joined the Platonic Academy and was first educated by the elderly Plutarch. Under Plutarch the Athenian Academy had turned to the new form of Platonic philosophy that was initiated by Plotinus and propagated by Porphyry. Under the influence of Iamblichus, this Platonic philosophy had become more and more linked to the old beliefs and rites of paganism, of which it offered a rational justification. This tendency increased when Syrianus became the new head of the Academy in 432.¹ During more than fifteen years Proclus not only followed Syrianus' courses, but was also initiated by him in theurgic rituals. Proclus was deeply influenced by his master and he often praises him lavishly (cf. *In Parm.* 1.618.2–9). After Syrianus' death (around 437), he became the head of the school and thus 'successor (*diadochos*) of Plato', a position he held for almost fifty years until his death in 485. Notwithstanding the hostile ideological climate – which even forced Proclus to go to Lydia for one year – the Academy still continued to enjoy

¹ The strong connection between pagan religion and Platonic philosophy is characteristic of the Athenian Academy from Syrianus on and sets it apart from the Alexandrian school. There were certainly close relations between members of the schools, even family relations, and all were educated in the same philosophical tradition (cf. I. Hadot 1978 who tends to minimize the differences between the schools). However, the Alexandrian philosophers were less occupied with the defence of pagan beliefs and even seemed to avoid discussing them. Their main interest was explaining Aristotle in harmony with Plato (whereas Syrianus and Proclus are often very critical of Aristotle). The different development of both schools may be explained by the different socio-cultural context. Athens was in the middle of the fifth century a small provincial capital with a relatively important pagan community cherishing the old reputation of the city, whereas Alexandria was a flourishing metropolis with a large population and a dominant Christian community, which did not hesitate to attack pagan philosophers: see Watts 2006.

an intellectual prestige in Athens and in the Greek cultural world, also having the financial resources for its members and their families to live independent lives. We are well informed about the daily life in the Academy thanks to Proclus' biography by his successor Marinus.² It is a sort of pagan hagiography celebrating Proclus' attainment of supreme happiness by the practice of the whole scale of virtues, culminating in the theurgic virtues. According to Marinus, Proclus worked day and night with tireless discipline, studying, lecturing, discussing and writing, as is shown by his impressive list of publications.

So immense was his love of labour that he gave five courses of exegesis, sometimes even more, in the course of a day, and generally wrote about seven hundred lines, went on conferring with the other philosophers, and in the evening held further seminars that were not written up. And all this besides his nocturnal devotion to worship and his prostrations to the rising, midday, and setting sun.

(*Vit. Procl.* 22.29–37)

As Marinus' last comment indicates, Proclus was not merely an academic philosopher, but a deeply religious person, who started his day with rituals and prayers. He even composed hymns to the gods. In the community of the school, Proclus and his intimate disciples and relatives continued to perform the sacrifices and prayers of the old Hellenic religion, which could no longer be practised in public in the temples. Like Iamblichus, Proclus was convinced that theoretical philosophy is not sufficient to connect us with the gods. Only the correct performance of theurgic acts using the power of ineffable symbols and sacred words could warrant the salvation of the soul. In his view, it was impossible to dissociate philosophy from the Hellenic religious tradition, as the Christians tried to do. Proclus' religious conviction is also evident in his commentaries on Plato, which often mix remarkable philosophical insights and technical explanations of the text with abstruse considerations about different classes of gods. For Proclus, Plato was more than a philosopher, intent upon the search of the truth; he was a divinely inspired prophet, a 'hierophant of divine doctrines' having come down on earth for the salvation of souls; and so were all true interpreters of Plato, and, in particular, Syrianus (*In Parm.* 1.618.4–9).

² Marinus was born around 440 in Neapolis in Palestine. Though of Samaritan origin, he converted to paganism (Damasc. *Vit. Isid.* 97A) and entered the Academy in Athens around 460, where he soon became a close collaborator of Proclus (Proclus dedicated to him his commentary on the myth of Er (*In Remp.* 2.96.2–4)). After some hesitation – Isidore was first approached, but declined the offer – Proclus designated Marinus as his successor, though he was concerned about his bad health. He died a few years after Proclus' death, leaving the school in a deep crisis. Marinus had a keen interest in mathematics and astronomy, but was not a speculative mind as was his master. He even did not follow his theological interpretation of the *Parmenides*. On Marinus, see Saffrey and Segonds 2001.

Proclus was convinced that the divine truth had been revealed in different types (*tropoi*) of theological discourse: (1) divinely inspired poets, such as Homer, Hesiod and Orpheus, narrate mythological stories filled with symbols about the generation of gods, their sexual relations, their fights and betrayals, the eating of their children and castrating of their fathers; (2) prophets inspired by the gods reveal in an oracular language the different classes of gods, the creation of the sensible world, and the means by which the soul may escape fate and find its salvation; (3) Pythagoreans use mathematical and geometrical images to expound the different classes of the gods; (4) finally, philosophers use dialectical terms such as ‘one’ and ‘being’, ‘whole’ and ‘parts’, ‘same’ and ‘other’, define and divide, and develop demonstrations (*PT* 1.4; *In Parm.* 1.646.16–647.15). Plato practised with brilliance each of these modes of discourse; he composed wonderful myths, occasionally used oracular language (as in the myth of the *Phaedrus*), and exploited mathematical and geometrical arguments, particularly in the *Timaeus*. But above all he was a dialectician, who attempted to explain what is encoded in obscure oracles, myths and symbols. ‘He easily penetrated the whole theology, that of the Greeks and that of barbarians, clouded as it was by mythical fictions, and brought it to light for those who were willing and able to follow it, expounding everything in an inspired manner and bringing it into harmony’ (*Vit. Procl.* 22.15–21). Proclus saw himself as the interpreter whose task it was, under Plato’s guidance, to reveal the hidden truth of the venerable oracles and myths and to expose in a systematic way their doctrines about the gods in a civilization in which their cult was threatened. He devoted a massive commentary to the *Chaldaean Oracles*, which enjoyed in the Athenian school almost the same authority as biblical texts had for Christians. He also annotated and edited Syrianus’ comments on the Orphic poems (*Vit. Procl.* 26–7). Like Syrianus, he wanted to demonstrate the harmony between Plato and the other sources of divinely inspired wisdom, the mathematical tradition from Pythagoras, the Orphic theogony and the *Chaldaean Oracles*. In his view, only a philosophical approach could offer the concepts and arguments needed for such a scientific synthesis of doctrines, beliefs and practices. His rational approach to theology is evident from the first chapters of his *Platonic Theology*:

Everywhere we shall prefer the clear, distinct and simple, to the contraries of these. What is conveyed through symbols, we shall transfer to a clear doctrine, what is communicated through images, we shall refer to their exemplars, what is written in a more categorical way, we shall examine by causal arguments, what is composed through demonstrations, we shall investigate, and we shall explain the mode of truth which they contain, and render it known to the hearers, and of what is enigmatically proposed, we shall discover the clear meaning starting not from foreign suppositions, but from the most genuine writings of Plato.

(*Theol. Plat.* 1.2, p. 9.20–10.4)

If Plato is his supreme guide *in theologicis*, Proclus is also well acquainted with the whole tradition of ancient philosophy and his predecessors in the Platonic school in particular, 'having gone through all their treatises'. 'If anything was fertile in them he made critical use of it, but if he found anything worthless, he rejected this entirely as an absurdity, and if anything was contrary to sound principles, he refuted it polemically with severe examination' (*Vit. Procl.* 22.21–7). This polemical attitude is particularly manifest in his encounter with the works of Aristotle. During his studies in Alexandria he had already 'learned by heart' Aristotle's logical works (*Vit. Procl.* 8.33–6) and later commented on them. In Athens, he read with Plutarch Aristotle's treatise *On the Soul* alongside Plato's *Phaedo* (*Vit. Procl.* 10.8–10) and later continued with Syrianus his Aristotelian education: 'In less than two years Syrianus read with him the entire works of Aristotle, logical, ethical, political, physical and the science of theology which transcends these [i.e., metaphysics]' (*Vit. Procl.* 13.1–4). However, the reading of Aristotle was only seen as a preparation, the 'lesser mysteries' before being initiated in the 'greater mysteries', which are revealed in the Platonic dialogues. If Aristotle is an indispensable master in logic and theory of demonstration and has developed a detailed explanation of physical and biological phenomena, he falls back from Plato's achievements in his search for the first causes. Like his master Syrianus, Proclus does not hesitate to criticize Aristotle whom he often accuses of not having properly understood Plato. Of course, this polemical attitude does not prevent him from integrating whatever is valuable in his philosophy.

Proclus also learned much from his great predecessors in the Platonic school, Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, the 'exegetes of the Platonic epoptics' (*Theol. Plat.* 1.1, p. 6.16). He highly appreciated Plotinus and even devoted a commentary to the *Enneads*, but had problems with many of his provocative views and always tried to bring them down to a more acceptable level within the system. Thus he rejected his doctrine about the One as cause of its own being (see below), his claim that a part of the human soul never descends from the intelligible, but always remains 'above' (*In Tim.* 3.334.3–27), his explanation of time as originating from the discursive motion of the soul (*In Tim.* 2.21.6–24.30), and his identification of matter and evil (*De mal. subs.* 30–5). In this critique he mostly follows Iamblichus as also in his rejection of the possibility of salvation through theory alone without the practice of rites and sacrifices. Proclus' religious Platonism is undoubtedly Iamblichaeian in inspiration and many of his seminal doctrines lead back to the Syrian philosopher. Proclus, however, succeeds in translating Iamblichus' divine intuitions, often expressed in an inflated style, to intelligible principles explaining the procession of all reality. But Proclus owes most to his master Syrianus, in particular in his interpretation of the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides*. As most works of the Platonic

tradition before him are lost, it is difficult to assess Proclus' originality. Even Marinus, who wants to stress Proclus' own achievements, has difficulty in finding doctrines 'that were not known before' (*Vit. Procl.* 23).

Proclus worked and wrote indefatigably throughout his career. Although much of his huge production is lost, the extant work remains impressive. He wrote commentaries on the logical works of Aristotle and on all dialogues of Plato that constituted the curriculum of the Platonic School since Iamblichus. The course started with the *Alcibiades I*. This dialogue about self-knowledge was in fact considered as an introduction to philosophy, offering in outline 'the complete plan of all philosophy'. Since it reveals what a human being truly is and exhorts each of us to turn towards ourselves, we may discover by self-reflection the fundamental principles of all philosophical disciplines (*In Alc.* 14.3–5; 11.3–12). The curriculum culminated in the explanation of the two supreme dialogues of the whole Platonic corpus, the *Timaeus* about the creation of the physical world and the *Parmenides*, which, as we will see, was considered to offer Plato's doctrine on the first principles. Proclus' commentaries on the *Alcibiades*, the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides* have partially survived. Of the commentaries on *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium* and *Philebus* we only have testimonies. The commentary on the *Cratylus* survives in excerpts of students' notes, but sufficient to reveal an original philosophy of language. Proclus connects semantics with Platonic dialectic, shows the 'generative and assimilative power' of the human soul in name giving and how it imitates the creative activity of the divine Intellect, and examines what one can learn about the gods through an analysis of the divine names. Also preserved is a large collection of interpretative essays on various topics in the *Republic*, a dialogue outside the curriculum. It contains *inter alia* a defence of the Homeric myths against Plato's censorship, making a valuable distinction between three forms of poetry, a discussion of the celebrated comparison that gives indirect insight into 'the Idea of the Good' and an explanation of the subsequent Allegory of the Cave, a defence of Plato's 'communist' state against Aristotle's critique in *Politics* 2, a mathematical explanation of the nuptial number, and a commentary on the final myth of Er.

The ancient commentaries are not just scholarly works of interpretation in the modern sense, subservient to the text, but also offer an opportunity to expound one's own philosophical views starting from the text. Proclus' commentaries are masterpieces in their genre, and give us not only insight into his own views, but also a wealth of information about the hermeneutical discussions in the Platonic tradition. In particular, the great commentary on the *Timaeus* with its many quotations and named sources is invaluable for the reconstruction of centuries of interpretation of this dialogue and the history of

natural philosophy and cosmology. The commentary on the *Parmenides* is also an important document on the history of the interpretation of this enigmatic dialogue, though it is difficult to sort out the different positions here as Proclus does not identify his sources, apart from the omnipresent Syrianus. Books 3–4 contain a remarkable discussion of the different problems on the doctrine of the Forms, starting from the *aporiai* raised by Parmenides (and later employed by Aristotle). The general preface and the introduction to book 6 give a survey of the different interpretations of the final part, the hypotheses on the One.

Proclus also wrote a remarkable commentary on Euclid's *Elements*. The two prologues of this commentary offer the best introduction to the philosophy of mathematics in antiquity. Proclus examines here the ontological status of mathematical objects: they are neither empirical objects nor abstracted entities derived from them nor pure intelligible forms, but *logoi* projected in the imagination of the soul, where they become extended and divisible. Another important scientific work is the *Exposition of Astronomical Hypotheses*, which offers a critical assessment of the hypotheses proposed by the astronomers, and in particular Ptolemy, to explain the apparent anomalies in the planetary motions, which are supposed to be regular and uniformly circular. As Proclus shows, instead of saving the phenomena, the introduction of epicycles and eccentric motions only leads to more confusion and disharmony in the system. Proclus also composed monographs on diverse subjects, as on the eternity of the world, on the immortality of the soul, on providence and fate, on free choice, on the existence of evil. In the last treatise he defends the view that evil, when understood as privation, cannot exist in its own right and has no proper cause to explain it, as all agents act for the sake of some good. If, then, the contrary effect occurs, it must be unintended and uncaused, and only has a parasitic existence (*par-hupostasis*) supervening upon beings and their activities. Absolute pure evil does not exist. This doctrine, which enables Proclus to explain the existence of evil in a universe proceeding from an absolute first Good, became for centuries the dominant view on evil in philosophical and theological debates, because it was adopted by a Christian author writing under the pseudonym of Dionysius the Areopagite in his treatise *On Divine Names*.

Besides his commentaries Proclus owes his reputation mainly to his two great systematic works, the *Elements of Theology* and the *Platonic Theology*. Proclus uses the term 'theology' for a scientific systematic investigation into the first causes and principles of everything, which in the religious tradition have always been called 'gods' (*Theol. Plat.* 1.3, p. 13.6–8). From its very beginning, philosophy has been a theology in that it always attempted to identify those first causes. Thus, Aristotle's metaphysics, which culminates in the doctrine of the divine intellect, the unmoved mover of the universe, was considered by late-Platonic

commentators as a prominent example of a theological discipline, appropriately named ‘theology’. In Proclus’ view, however, only Plato developed the perfect form of theology because he recognized a cause beyond the intellect and beyond being, the One from which all things including even matter have their existence. It was Proclus’ ambition to develop a comprehensive theology, based upon premisses taken from Plato’s dialogues and in particular the *Parmenides*. The *Platonic Theology* is not just his last work, it is also the culmination of a whole life of research as philosopher and commentator of Plato and as interpreter of the authentic religious tradition. Proclus laid down the foundations and principles of this theology in his *Elements of Theology*. In his work, he demonstrates in a geometrical manner the fundamental theorems of his metaphysical theology. The work is composed of 211 propositions, each followed by a demonstration. They discuss the general principles governing the procession and reversion of all things from the First cause, the One, and apply them to the three hypostatic levels of reality, the gods or henads, the intellects and the souls. One has the impression that Proclus kept revising and perfecting the *Elements* throughout his career.³ It is undoubtedly his most original composition, not so much because of the content – most of the principles were formulated in some form by his predecessors – but because of its highly innovative form, imitating Euclid’s celebrated *Elements*. It had a tremendous influence for centuries thanks to the Arabic adaptation made of it in the ninth century, which was translated into Latin in the twelfth century. Under the title *Liber de Causis*, the treatise circulated at the medieval universities as a work of Aristotle, complementing his *Metaphysics*. This gave Proclus’ doctrine an enormous, albeit anonymous, authority and contributed to the Platonic interpretation of Aristotle’s metaphysics in the Middle Ages.

Since Proclus’ ambition was primarily theological, my presentation of his doctrine will focus on his theological metaphysics, leaving aside many other

³ Since Freudenthal (1881) the *Elements of Theology* is usually considered as one of the earlier works of Proclus. Proclus, it is said, stands closer in this work to Plotinus and Porphyry (presenting basically the doctrine of the three principal hypostases) and seems not yet to have developed some further elaborations, such as the introduction of an intermediate class between the intelligible and the intellectual gods. Best discussion of the arguments remains Dodds 1933: xiii–xviii, who concludes that the *Elements* is a relatively early work, but warns that one should not regard it for that reason as ‘the prentice essay of an undergraduate who has not yet developed his own system’ (p. xvii). In fact, the system articulated in the *Elements* is substantially the same as in Proclus’ last work, the *Platonic Theology*. Another problem concerns its relationship to the *Elements of Physics*. This latter work, which is almost entirely based on passages from Aristotle’s physical works without any original contribution, is undoubtedly a work from Proclus’ earlier career. Though in style and purpose similar, the *Elements of Theology* display a much more mature speculative thought. In my view, the uncertainties and incoherence in its composition as noticed by Dodds and the often disordered state of the argumentation, as manifested also in the divergence in the manuscript tradition (see Günther 2007) could be explained by the supposition that Proclus continued improving and rewriting this work throughout his career.

interesting issues, such as his doctrine of the soul, his discussion of intelligible Forms and psychic reason-principles (*logoi*), his theory of knowledge and philosophy of language, his natural philosophy, his contributions to mathematics and physics and his ethics. In my presentation I shall refrain, however, from commenting on Proclus' various attempts to interpret the pagan divinities, to understand oracles and myths and to justify religious practices. I realize that this rationalistic approach goes against Proclus' own wish to keep together religious piety and learning, but I will follow as my main inspiration the *Elements*, this superb monument of theological metaphysics, wherein Proclus himself is surprisingly sober and rational, and never introduces proper names of gods. The edition and translation of the *Elements* by E. R. Dodds is, after seventy-five years and an ocean of scholarship, still the best introduction to Proclus.

2 ELEMENTS OF A THEOLOGICAL METAPHYSICS

2.1 *The One and the multiple*

Like Aristotle's metaphysics, Proclus' theological project is an investigation into the first causes of whatever exists. 'For the task of science is the recognition of causes, and only when we recognize the causes of beings, do we say that we know them' (*El. theol.* 11). In this search for causes, one must ultimately reach 'a single first cause' of all that exists. The existence of a first cause is required to explain the system of causality. If there were no first cause, there would no longer be a universe where all things are held together in 'a sequence of primary and secondary, perfecting and perfected, regulative and regulated, generative and generated, active and passive'. If we were to continue the causal explanation to infinity, and always posit yet another cause behind the causes already found, we would obtain no explanation at all, for an infinite series of causes would be equivalent to no cause at all. It is also impossible to admit circularity in causation, for the same things would then be at once prior and consequent, cause and effect. If there is no infinite series of cause, and no circularity in causation, there must be a first cause of everything, and only a single one. To exclude the possibility of a multiplicity of first causes, Proclus invokes the basic axiom of Platonic philosophy, which is, fittingly, the first proposition of the *Elements of Theology*: 'every manifold participates in some way of unity'. Without some form of unity holding it together, a manifold, whatever it may be, could not subsist, as it would fall apart into an infinity of infinites. It cannot, however, be itself the unity it participates in, for it is not the One itself, but a unified manifold, which is 'affected' by unity. Hence, the manifold will always be posterior to the One upon which it depends. A multiplicity of first

principles is for that reason impossible. The absolute One must be the first principle.

2.2 *The One and the Good*

The One is not only the first cause from which all beings proceed, but also the Good that all desire. Proclus' main argument for the identity of the One and the Good is the fact that both principles have the same effects, namely, the preservation of whatever exists. Plato in the *Republic* defined the good as 'that which preserves and benefits' and evil as 'that which destroys and corrupts' (*Rep.* 5.462a–b). Thus, the good of the state is to be found in whatever gives it coherence and unity, whereas civil war and partisan fights and opposition tend to destroy it. If it is proper to the Good to maintain everything, it is in fact a principle of unification, for that which keeps each thing together is the cause of its unity. If, then, the effects of the Good and the One are identical, the two principles themselves must be identical: 'Every good tends to unify what participates in it, and all unification is good; and the Good is identical with the One' (*El. theol.* 13; cf. *In Parm.* 6.1043.9–24). This identity is also evident from the fact that things desire unity as their ultimate good. If the One and the Good were different objects of desire, then (1) either the One would be superior to the Good or (2) the Good superior to the One (a third possibility that the Good and the One are co-ordinate principles is excluded as there can be no ultimate multiplicity of principles). If, however, the One were beyond the Good (1), then we would desire the One more than the Good. Hence, the One would be more desirable and 'better' than the Good, which is absurd. For if we desire something, we want it because it is good. There can be nothing-better-than-good, since 'better' is precisely what participates more fully in the good. What, then, if we put the Good above the One (2)? But it is not possible to conceive something that is superior to the One; 'for everything else is called "better and worse" in virtue of its greater and lesser participation in this cause; and indeed the very concept of being better is so through participation in the One'. A Good above the One would in fact be a not-One, and thus a not-Good (*El. theol.* 12; *In Parm.* 7.1144.16–20; 511.63–70). Therefore the One–Good is the first cause, as is also shown by the fact that its causality reaches further than that of any other principle, such as Being or Life or Intellect. In fact, not all beings participate in thought or life, and not everything within the universe is a being, as there is also matter, but all desire unity, even things that barely exist, such as matter (*El. theol.* 57; 72). As the aspiration for the Good is more comprehensive and more fundamental than the desire for being, the Good must be beyond being as is also the One. The Good, the ultimate *telos*

towards which all beings strive, beyond all other desirable objects and even beyond being itself, turns out to be the One, the *archē*, the absolute principle from which all things proceed. For that reason every aspiration is consciously or unconsciously a return to the origin of a being: 'Everything reverts upon that from which it originated' (*El. theol.* 34). Therefore, the One is not just One but both the origin and the end of a circular movement of procession and reversion.

In order to designate somehow the ineffable nature of the First we dispose of two names, the most venerable of all, 'One' and 'Good', which correspond to two different approaches to it (*Theol. Plat.* 2.5–6). We do not call the First itself by these names, as it is beyond all discourse and knowledge, but use them to express our own concept (*ennoia*) and apprehension of it, in our impossible attempt to reach it. We call it the 'One' because it is the origin of all procession, the cause of all plurality. Here the negative theology of the *Parmenides*, in which we deny of the First whatever proceeds from it, is appropriate. The term 'One' remains fundamentally a negative term conveying no proper meaning; it is the negation of all multiplicity. The second name, the 'Good', is given to the First insofar as it is the ultimate term of all desire. To discover its meaning, analogical reasoning is needed, whereby we ascend to ever higher forms of perfection, the soul beyond the body, the intellect beyond the soul, being beyond the intellect, until we reach what is the absolute Good beyond everything. The double name we use does not introduce a duplication in the First. 'We transfer those names to it considering what comes after, that is the processions from it and reversions to it in a circular way' (*Theol. Plat.* 2.6.41.2–5). Without this circular movement coming from and returning to it, we could never say anything about the One.

2.3 Procession and reversion

Since the One is also the Good, it will not only be a principle of unification, but also the origin of all multiplicity coming forth from it. For whatever is perfect and complete, as is the Good and what participates in it, is by nature productive (*El. theol.* 25; *Theol. Plat.* 1.22). If it were infertile, it would be the most inferior degree of reality, which is only produced and does not produce anything lower than itself. It is, however, impossible that the utmost multiplicity would proceed immediately from the first cause. Since every agent tends to produce something similar to it, all procession is accomplished through a likeness of what is produced to its producer (*El. theol.* 29). Of course, this likeness cannot lead to an identity with the cause, for otherwise the product could not be distinguished from its producer. The effect will preserve the character that its

cause had primitively, in a derivative and inferior sense, and so come down in the procession of beings. This secondary being will itself produce something similar to it, though inferior, and so on. The superior cause, however, remains the cause of whatever comes forth, though it can exercise its causality only through the secondary causes. At the end of the procession, we reach a reality which is almost in all aspects dissimilar to the first principle, yet derives from it through a series of intermediates. Therefore, notwithstanding the decline and weakening of the original character, there is continuity between the generative and the generated, the primary and the secondary. To preserve this continuity, the procession of reality cannot contain discontinuity, but has to pass through mean terms bridging the extremes (*El. theol.* 28, *De prov.* 20.16–17). Plotinus had already argued that from the One comes first the Intellect, and through the Intellect proceeds the Soul, and from the Soul the physical world. For Proclus, this understanding of the procession is unsatisfactory, in particular regarding the second level, the Intellect, which is for Plotinus identical with true Being and Life. If we respect the ‘law of continuity’ which governs the procession of all things along the ‘chain of being’, we cannot admit that the Intellect (which already contains the specific forms of all things) comes forth immediately from the absolute One. There must be ‘mean terms’ connecting the extremities. After the One comes first absolute Being, from this comes Life, and finally Intellect. In Proclus’ interpretation, Being corresponds to the intelligible paradigm (*noēton*), Life to the intelligible and intellective level (*noēton kai noeron*), whereas the Intellect stands for the properly intellective (*noeron*). Of course, Life also is being, though in a secondary way and the Intellect is also Life, but in a secondary way, as it also contains the intelligible being in the many objects of its thought.

Because the effect is in a derivative manner (*kata methexin*) what its cause is in a primary manner, it can be said to pre-exist on the higher level ‘causally’ (*kat’ aitian*) (*El. theol.* 65). The effect acquires, however, its proper existence (*huparxis*) when it proceeds from its cause and becomes distinguished from it as another being. Yet, this procession does not cancel its pre-existence in the cause. As Proclus says, while proceeding, everything ‘remains’ in the cause whence it ‘proceeds’. Therefore, it can also revert upon the cause from which it proceeds, and it must do so because no procession can be infinite. Through this ‘reversion’ (*epistrophē*), as it were ‘feed-back’, the effect strives to be connected again with its cause and to become similar to it. If things have their being through procession, they attain their well-being or perfection through reversion. For the cause of their ‘well-being’ can only come from where they had the origin of their ‘being’. The final cause being identical with the efficient, all things desire as ultimate end what is the principle of their procession. As Proclus formulates it:

‘All that proceeds from something reverts upon that from which it proceeds’ (*El. theol.* 31). And since ‘all that is produced by a cause both remains in it and proceeds from it’ (*El. theol.* 30), we may conclude that ‘all that proceeds from a principle and reverts upon it has a cyclical activity’ (*El. theol.* 33). We find this triadic dynamic structure of remaining, proceeding and returning on all levels of reality, Being, Life, Intellect, Soul.

2.4 Causation and self-causation

In the procession of all reality from the One, first come beings that are cause of their own being, the so-called ‘self-constituted’ beings (*authupostata*), such as intellects and souls, and after them, at an inferior level, beings that are entirely produced from external causes, as is the sensible world and whatever it contains. Proclus defines a ‘self-constituted’ being as ‘something that brings itself forth (*paragon heauto*)’, ‘that has the power of providing its own being’, ‘that is generated by itself’ (*autogenētos*), ‘that is self-sufficient (*autarkēs*) in respect of its existence’ (*El. theol.* 40). Such a being is self-constituted because it does not need anything outside itself to exist, neither an external cause, nor a substrate or matter, nor a place. As ‘cause of its own existence’, ‘it proceeds itself from itself’. Yet ‘it remains in itself’ and ‘is contained in itself by itself’, since it exists ‘as its own product in itself as in its own cause’ (*El. theol.* 42). Since such a being is perpetually ‘conjoined with the cause of itself, or rather exists in itself as cause of itself’, it lacks nothing to come to be. It is always self-sufficient (*autarkēs*) and complete in itself. Therefore, it can have no origin in time nor can it cease to be, as it is ‘at once cause and effect’. Things perish when they are severed from their cause. ‘But the self-constituted, being its own cause, never deserts its cause since it never deserts itself.’ It is therefore a perpetual and necessary being (*El. theol.* 46).

It was Plotinus who first introduced the provocative notion of a ‘*causa sui*’ when discussing the freedom of the first principle in *Enn.* 6.8 [39]. As there is no cause explaining the First, it may seem, Plotinus observes, that it just ‘happens to exist’. Even if we admitted that the First ‘makes itself’, it somehow had to exist already before, if it is supposed to produce itself. Whence, then, did it receive this existence before being made by itself? Plotinus replies that the One has no being apart from its activity: it is a pure and absolutely free activity, ‘not enslaved to substance’. ‘In this way he [i.e. the first god] himself is himself from himself. For indeed, if he was kept in being by another, he would not be first self from himself; but if he is rightly said to hold himself together, he is both himself and the bringer of himself into being (*paragōn heauton*)’ (6.8.20.19–23). In the case of the One, the ‘self’ is not an effect coming after the ‘making’, but the

'self' and its 'making' are concomitant, since he himself makes himself in an act of 'eternal generation'. Proclus, however, criticizes Plotinus for considering the One as a self-constituting principle. The notion of self-constitution introduces a distinction between cause and effect, which cannot be applied to the First itself, which is absolutely simple (*In Parm.* 7.1146.8–11). Therefore, self-constituted beings must come immediately after the One, imitating its absolute simplicity in their self-sufficiency. The One is beyond self-sufficiency, as it is also beyond willing and desiring.

But how is it possible to admit a multitude of self-generating principles coming after the First? If the One is really the first cause of whatever exists, how can there be a 'spontaneous causation' in the universe? Proclus' doctrine seems to go against the basic principle of all scientific explanation, as formulated by Aristotle: 'everything which is produced is produced by a cause other than itself' (cf. *In Parm.* 7.1145.28; Aristotle, *Phys.* 7.1, 241b34; 242a49–50). To defend his view Proclus refers to the existence of self-moving beings, which stand between the immobile movers and things that are moved only by an extrinsic cause. As Plato demonstrated in *Laws* 10, without self-moved movers there would be no motion in the universe. For a similar reason one has to admit that there exist not only beings produced by an external cause, but also beings which constitute themselves and which stand between the externally produced things and the first principle. That there exist self-constituting beings, can also be shown by the fact that some beings have the capacity to revert upon themselves. Self-reversion is precisely the case when 'the reverted subject and that upon which it has reverted become identical' (*El. theol.* 15). That reversion upon oneself is possible, is most evident in the process of knowledge. In every act of knowledge the knower not only grasps an object, but also knows himself as knowing the object. This is already the case on the level of perception: for we do not only perceive coloured objects, but are also aware that we perceive them. This reflexivity is more evident on the level of rational knowledge, where the object is assimilated to the subject knowing it. The reversion upon oneself is 'complete',⁴ when knowing subjects not only know their own act, but also know themselves as knowing. If, then, some beings manifest this capacity in their activities, they must also be capable of reversion in their own essence (*ousia*), from which the cognitive activity proceeds. Reflexivity is therefore much more than an act of introspection, as the later empiricists thought, it is primarily a movement constituting the very being of the soul as self-movement. 'Everything that is primarily self-moving is capable of reversion upon itself' (*El. theol.* 17).

⁴ Cf. *Liber de causis* prop. 15: *omnis sciens qui scit essentiam suam est rediens ad essentiam suam reditione completa*. This proposition is based upon *El. theol.* 83 and 44.

Only incorporeal beings have this capacity, as it is not the nature of a body to revert upon itself. If, then, the rational soul knows itself, and if whatever knows itself reverts upon itself, is neither a body nor dependent upon a body, 'it will follow that soul is neither a corporeal substance nor inseparable from body' (*El. theol.* 186).

The analysis of self-reflection thus contributes to an understanding of what self-constitution means. As we have seen, every being reverts upon the principle from which it originates, because it finds its own 'well-being', its own good, precisely in the return to its origin. If, then, there are beings with a capacity of reverting upon *themselves* – as are the intellect and the soul – they must find their well-being in themselves. However, the well-being of a thing comes from the very source of its being. Therefore, beings that revert upon themselves to find in themselves their own good must also be the origin of their own being. 'If, then, a being is the source of its own well-being, it will certainly be also the source of its own being and master of its own subsistence.' As Proclus formulates it, 'All that is capable of reversion upon itself is self-constituted'; or conversely 'All that is self-constituted is capable of reversion upon itself' (*El. theol.* 42–3).

Contrary to what is commonly believed in modern philosophy,⁵ the fact that a being produces its own being does not exclude that it also depends upon a superior cause, and ultimately upon the first principle. What is *authupostatōn* is for Proclus not a being that exists only from and by itself, but a being that constitutes itself in its procession from a superior cause. As Proclus says, 'they subsist in a self-generated way from their own causes' (*In Parm.* 7.1151.17–18). Therefore, the role of the first principle cannot be understood in the Christian sense as a divine creator. Only the demiurgic intellect can be said to have made the reality below it, the physical universe (*In Tim.* 1.261.19–28). The One, however, does not 'create' being or the intellect or the soul. They proceed from the One in producing their own form of being. Therefore, they are truly self-subsistent beings, *hupostaseis*, and not just products resulting from an external causality, as are the physical phenomena. Only self-constituted beings are true 'substances' as they do not find the cause of their existence in something outside themselves, in an 'alien seat' as matter or substrate.

⁵ Descartes considers God, and only God, as 'cause de soi-même', but observes that 'cause' should not be taken here as an efficient cause exercising a real and positive influence. The expression only indicates that God's essence is such that it is impossible that he does not exist (*Meditations*, Responses to the first objections (Adam and Tannery 7.109; French: Adam and Tannery 9a.86) and Response to the fourth objections (Adam and Tannery 7.236 and 242; French: Adam and Tannery 9a.182 and 187)). Cf. Spinoza's opening definition of the *Ethica*: 'per causam sui intelligo id cuius essentia involvit existentiam'. Later philosophers criticized the notion of a 'causa sui' as contradictory.

2.5 Real causes and subsidiary causes

Causes in the proper sense can never be constitutive parts or intrinsic elements of the things they produce but must transcend them. Therefore, the material and the formal cause, on which the Aristotelians mostly rely in their explanation of the physical world, cannot be considered as true causes. In Proclus' view, they are nothing more than what Plato in the *Timaeus* (46c–d) called 'concurrent causes' (*sunaitia*), 'subservient to the proper causes in the generation of things', as is said in the *Philebus* (27a8–9), tools or instruments used by the real producers of things, as we learn from the *Politicus* (281c–e).

If a cause were immanent in its effect, either it would be a complementary part of the latter or it would in some way need it for its own existence, and it would in this regard be inferior to the effect. That which exists in the effect is not so much a cause as a concurrent cause being either a part of the thing produced [sc. matter or form] or an instrument of the producer. . . . Therefore every cause properly so called. . . . transcends the instruments, the elements [matter and form] and in general all that is described as concurrent cause.

(*El. theol.* 75)

Such are indeed the three primordial causes which Plato introduces in the *Timaeus*, the efficient or productive cause (i.e., the Demiurge), the paradigmatic cause (the ideas) and the final cause (the Idea of the Good). Therefore, the *Timaeus* presents the most accomplished form of *phusiologia*. To be sure, Aristotle, too, makes use of final and efficient causality in his natural philosophy and he introduces nature as principle of movement and change. But in Proclus' view nature, as Aristotle understands it, cannot really be a productive or creative principle, because it is devoid of all formative principles (*logoi*), which proceed through the Soul from the immaterial Forms in the Intellect. By rejecting the Platonic Forms as paradigmatic causes, Aristotle abolishes the creative character of nature, reducing it to nothing but an intrinsic moving force in material things. Following Plotinus, Proclus places nature between the material form and the soul (*In Tim.* 1.10.13–12.25). As a creative and productive principle, it must somehow transcend the body it organizes through its inherent *logoi*. It is, however, inferior to the soul, because it is divided in the body, cannot detach itself from it and has no capacity of reflexivity. Nature is thus the last of the really creative causes, the ultimate limit of the presence of the incorporeal in this sensible world, informing all things with the reason-principles and powers received from above. In this sense, it may be said to be the 'instrument' (*organon*) of the Demiurge in the creation of the world, whereby the Demiurge works in a transcendent manner, nature as it were being 'submerged in bodies' (cf. *In Tim.* 1.143.19–22).

According to Proclus, Plato is the first to have introduced the properly efficient cause, namely the demiurgic Intellect. As Aristotle did not accept the paradigmatic Forms, he was forced to abandon the creative causality of his first cause, making the divine Intellect only a final cause of the universe (*In Parm.* 3.788.8–19; 5.972.29–973.11; 7.519.2–14; *In Tim.* 1.266.21–268.24). As Proclus argues, such a position will force him to admit either that the world has the capacity to produce itself or that it owes its origin to chance. However, to admit that this universe is self-constituted will lead to numerous absurdities, for only incorporeal beings have the capacity to act upon themselves, to move themselves and to generate themselves. But how could this sensible world be self-constituted? Although the physical world is eternal – on this point Proclus fully agrees with Aristotle – it cannot find the cause of its being in itself, as no body is capable of receiving at once its infinity of being. Therefore, Plato was right in considering the world as generated (*genētos*), as it depends for its existence on another superior cause, which cannot be a body. Proclus carefully distinguishes between eternity in the sense of everlasting existence without a beginning or an end and eternity in an absolute sense as having its being all at once without being spread over time. The physical universe is eternal in the first sense, whereas the intelligible Forms have eternity in the absolute sense (*In Tim.* 1.252.11–254.18 and 294.28–295.19).

2.6 Participation

To explain the relation between the Forms and the many things that are similar to them, Plato introduced the metaphor of ‘participation’. Participation, however, raises as many problems as it solves, as Plato shows in the aporetic discussion of the *Parmenides* (which offered ammunition for Aristotle’s subsequent criticism). The metaphor seems to suggest that the many things that ‘share’ in the same Form, take ‘parts’ of it. But how could a Form still preserve its universality if it is present in the many things and therefore also divided? To solve this problem Proclus introduces a distinction between the participated and the unparticipated (*amethekta*).⁶ What is participated by many particular things of a same type is not the ideal Form itself, but a form that comes forth from it and is present in them. These immanent forms serve the same function as the Aristotelian forms in matter. But whereas Aristotle rejected the transcendent Forms as an unnecessary duplication, Proclus argues that the unparticipated Forms are necessary to guarantee the universal character of the forms in matter. For the participated form entirely belongs to the particular by which it is participated,

⁶ This distinction was first introduced by Iamblichus: cf. *In Tim.* 2.313.15–23 (fr. 60 Dillon).

and to all things of a similar nature. In order to explain that the different particulars participate in the same common principle, there must be a form prior to all participated, which is 'common to all that can participate in it and identical for all'. This common form cannot itself be what is received by the participant and subsists in it, as it would then give something away of itself. On the other hand, it cannot remain purely in itself 'fixed in sterility and isolation'. Therefore, 'the unparticipated brings forth out of itself the participated; and all the participated hypostases are linked upward to the unparticipated' (*El. theol.* 23; 24).

Strictly speaking, participation only exists between the intelligible Forms and the sensible particulars in the physical realm. Proclus, however, interprets the principle in such a way that it can be used on all levels of reality, the Soul, the Intellect, and even the One. Within each realm (or *diakosmos*) we have to distinguish between the unparticipated monad and the 'series' or multiplicity of beings of a similar nature co-ordinated with it. Thus, besides the many souls that are participated on different levels by different bodies – the human soul, the souls of demons, the planetary divine souls – there must also exist an unparticipated Soul, which is as it were the monad of that co-ordinate series. In fact, 'every monad gives rise to two series, one of self-complete hypostases, and one of radiations which have their subsistence in something other [than themselves]' (*El. theol.* 64). Thus, from Soul come forth not only, as its 'radiations', the different forces of life subsisting within the living beings, but also the whole series of self-sufficient souls. Those souls are not just illuminations of the one universal Soul but have their own existence as souls. When taken in this sense 'participated' does not mean an immanent shared property – this would be a radiation – but a principle that is self-subsisting and transcendent vis-à-vis the participating entities (cf. *El. theol.* 81; 82).

Similarly, besides the many intellects participated by human and divine souls in different ways, there also exists the absolute unparticipated Intellect, which comprehends in itself the totality of all Forms. The many intellects proceed from this absolute Intellect and form together with it a co-ordinate series of a similar intellectual nature. The intellectual powers present in the souls participating in these intellects are as many illuminations from them. Following the same line of reasoning, we must also posit after the One, which is absolutely transcendent and can in no way be participated by the inferior levels, a manifold of 'ones', 'units' or 'henads' consequent upon the primal One, wherein the different classes of being participate. Those henads are not the modes of unity acquired by beings, but self-subsisting unities which remain transcendent above the beings that depend upon them. Like the primal One, in which they remain co-united, they are themselves beyond being and beyond knowledge, but their

distinctive properties can be inferred indirectly from the different classes of beings dependent upon them. 'For differences within a participant order are determined by the distinctive properties of the principles participated' (*El. theol.* 123). The henads are the different self-subsisting forms of unity manifested in the different grades and characters of being that come forth from the One. In view of the different classes of beings dependent upon them, we can distinguish them as intelligible, intellectual, hypercosmic or encosmic henads. This doctrine of the henads is of crucial importance for understanding Proclus' theology.

2.7 God and gods

When the term 'God' is used in a strict sense, it has the same meaning as the term 'One'. With the term 'God' we indicate the supreme principle in reality; nothing, however, can be superior to the One; therefore the One and God are identical. The Good, too, is identical with God, since 'God is that which is beyond all things and that which all things desire', and the Good is 'the whence and the whither of all things' (*El. theol.* 113). As we have seen, the first One is not just the origin of all beings in a descending order, but also the monad of a horizontal divine series, a plurality of henads resembling it, co-united in and around it. Therefore, there is not just one God, but a plurality of gods. Every god is a self-complete henad, subsisting on itself as a unity, not as a unified being, such as are the lower hypostases. As the first One, the henadic gods all transcend being, but only the first One is imparticipable, whereas every god is participable (*El. theol.* 116). Insofar as they are gods and united to the One, the henads remain one and undifferentiated, but they can be distinguished through the various classes participating in them. In fact, the different classes of being participate, each on their own level, in a distinctive form of unity, which is the measure of their being. As henads, the gods are ineffable and unknowable as much as the One itself, yet their distinctive properties may be inferred and known 'from the beings which participate in them' (*El. theol.* 123).

Plato not only speaks of gods, but also of divine beings, and sometimes even calls those beings, for example divine souls, 'gods'. Thus the Athenian visitor in the *Laws* calls the divine soul a god (*Leg.* 10. 899a7-c1), and in the *Phaedrus* (248a) Socrates speaks of a procession of the divine souls around the heaven as 'the life of gods'. In some places Plato calls even the demons 'gods', though they are by nature posterior to the gods. Therefore, in a systematic theology, we need to make a distinction between the gods in the strict sense, which are self-sufficient henads, and the different classes of divinized beings, ending with the divine souls and the three superior classes, the angels, demons and heroes.

Next to all the classes of gods we should also consider the classes of souls which are divinized and have been distributed among the gods. For in the ultimate processions of the gods also the first class of the souls appears which is conjoined with the gods. . . . We finally reach the terminus of the whole organization of the superior beings: the classes that follow upon the gods and are divided in a three-fold manner [i.e., angels, demons, heroes] by the three parts of time.

(*Theol. Plat.* 2.12.71.13–17; 72.4–7)

3 A PLATONIC THEOLOGY

It is Proclus' ambition to give under the guidance of Plato a systematic exposition of all classes of gods and divinized beings proceeding from the One–Good. But where in Plato's work do we find the principles of such a scientific theology? Theological questions do not seem to occupy a primordial place in Plato's philosophy, nor have they been developed by him in a systematic way, but only make an episodic appearance and are developed not for their own sake, but to confirm or illustrate other doctrines, mostly ethical (cf. *Theol. Plat.* 1.6). There are many mythical stories dispersed all over the dialogues, but they are difficult to interpret and are always a function of the main subject of the dialogue. What Platonists call a Platonic theology seems nothing but an artificial construction, resulting from the manipulation of texts, taking theological doctrines out of their original context, nothing but an amalgam 'heaping together different parts from different dialogues, as if we were eager of collecting together many streams into one mixture, which do not derive all from one and the same source' (*Theol. Plat.* 1.6.27.4–7). Why then turn to Plato for a theological doctrine? Is it not better to follow the guidance of some philosophers posterior to Plato, as Aristotle or the Stoics, 'who have composed a unique and perfect form of theology and transmitted it in their writings to their disciples' (*Theol. Plat.* 1.6.28.9–12). Yet it is Plato, Proclus argues, who developed the most perfect form of theology, but in a dialogue one would not expect, namely in the *Parmenides*. If one knows how to interpret this sublime dialogue, one finds here the fundamental axioms and the concepts (such as one, multiple, limit, unlimit-edness, to be in oneself or in another) needed for the development of a scientific theology.

In the second part of the dialogue, Parmenides examines in a dialectical exercise his own hypothesis about the One, considering the consequences following both from the position of the One and from its denial, both for the One and for what is other than the One. If we posit the One, only negative conclusions follow: the One has no parts and is not a whole, it is not in something nor in itself, it is not similar and not dissimilar, it is not in time. One cannot even

say that it 'is' or 'is one': in short, no names, no discourse, no knowledge of it is possible. Parmenides therefore has to restate his original hypothesis, now emphasizing that the One 'is'. Of this One—that-is all possible attributes can be predicated that were denied in the first hypothesis. The interpretation of the different hypotheses of the *Parmenides* (of which we only mentioned the first two) gave rise to a lively controversy in the Platonic school, as we know from Proclus' commentary (*In Parm.* 6.1051.27–1064.14). Following his master Syrianus, Proclus defends a theological interpretation of this dialectical exercise. Such an interpretation of the hypotheses is not evident, as the term 'God' or 'divine' is not even mentioned in the whole discussion. If, however, one takes the terms 'One' and 'god' to signify both the first cause of everything, then the overall meaning of the dialectical discussion on the One and the other than the One becomes clear (*In Parm.* 1.641.6–8). The first hypothesis is about the absolute One of which it cannot even be said that it 'is', the second considers the One—that-is and deduces from it the different attributes of being one.

That the first hypothesis reveals by means of negations the ineffable first principle, the One beyond all being and beyond all discourse, was a view circulating already in Middle Platonism. But it is Syrianus who deserves the credit for having developed a coherent theological interpretation of the second hypothesis, which since Plotinus was usually understood as referring to the second hypostasis, the Intellect. Proclus repeatedly praises his master for having discovered the true meaning of the correspondence between the negations in the first and the affirmations in the second hypothesis (*Theol. Plat.* 1.11; *In Parm.* 6.1085.10–1086.7; 7.1142.9–15). Whatever is denied in the first hypothesis of the One, namely that it is not a whole, has no parts, is not in itself, is not in another, is not similar nor dissimilar, etc., is affirmed of the One in the second hypothesis. It seems at first that the dialectical discussion of the hypothesis of the One leads to a series of mutually contradictory conclusions, making thus the hypothesis itself impossible. But Syrianus had a ingenious idea for solving what seemed to be a contradiction. If one accepts the identification of the One and God, one may easily recognize in the different attributes of being one (such as being similar, being a whole) the properties of the different classes of the gods. Considered in themselves, all gods are henads beyond being, unknowable and ineffable. We can infer, however, indirectly their distinctive characters through the diverse classes of being depending on them. The series of attributes, which are demonstrated in a series of deductions from the hypothesis of the One—that-is, 'show the ordered procession of all the divine classes, their difference from one another, the properties that are common to whole orders and those that are particular to each' (*Theol. Plat.* 1.4.20.20–3]. The corresponding series of negative conclusions in the first hypothesis demonstrate that the absolute

One or first God is above all the divine orders proceeding from it. The first hypothesis thus offers a negative theology of the ineffable absolute One, the second a positive theology of all henadic gods and all divinized beings following upon them.

In reading the second hypothesis in this way, we can demonstrate the procession of all the divine classes from the highest, which are revealed in the first deduction, to the most inferior, which are indicated at the last. The superior order, the intelligible gods, Limit and Unlimitedness, come close to the absolute One itself, the subject of the first hypothesis, whereas the lowest divine classes, i.e., the divine souls and the superior classes (angels, heroes and demons), which always follow the gods, make the transition to the subject of the third hypothesis, which is about the human souls which only intermittently follow the gods. We can thus admire how Parmenides, in his logical deduction of all the divine orders from the One-that-is, follows the most fundamental principle of procession, the law of continuity. There can be no sudden and sharp transition from one level to another. In each order the highest classes are connected with what precedes them, and the lower with what follows them (*El. theol.* 122).

If then Plato begins from the One-that-is but ends in that which participates in time, he proceeds downwards from the first to the last degree of true being. Hence, the first conclusions are to be referred to the first orders, the middle, for the same reason, to the middle orders, and the last, as is evident, to such as are last. For it is necessary, as our discourse has evinced, that different conclusions should be assigned to different natures, and that a distribution of this kind should commence from such things as are highest. But likewise, the order of the hypotheses, as it appears to me, is a sufficient argument of the truth of our assertion. For the hypothesis about the One which is exempt from all multitude, is allotted the first order, and from this the development of all arguments originates. But the second order after this, has the hypothesis about true beings, and the henad in which these participate. And the third order in succession has the hypothesis about soul.

(*Theol. Plat.* I.II.49.3–18)

The *Parmenides* thus offers a unique opportunity to compose a scientific theology, employing concepts and demonstrations regarding the different divine orders with an almost geometrical precision. This does not mean that the *Parmenides* is the only source for this theology. Plato reveals his views about the gods in many other dialogues, for instance, in the celebrated tenth book of the *Laus*, or in the second book of the *Republic*, and in the *Timaeus*. Scattered over all dialogues are references to gods and divinities often in a mythological context. However, it is only within the framework of the *Parmenides* that all those arguments and references can be systematized. The same holds for the mathematical *theologoumena* of the Pythagoreans, the theological revelations

from the *Chaldaean Oracles* and from the Orphic theogonies, the many stories told by Homer and Hesiod; only when connected to the deductions of the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, can they be properly interpreted.

In his *Platonic Theology*, Proclus thus offers the very first and also ultimate ‘*summa theologiae*’ of the complex religious tradition of late antiquity that Christians too easily amalgamated and designated under the simple term ‘paganism’. The *Theology* is divided in three parts (see the plan announced in *Theol. Plat.* 1.2.9.8–19). In the first part (book 1.13–29), Proclus assembles from all dialogues of Plato the common notions about the gods, which apply to all divine classes without distinction. It is a treatise on the divine attributes or the divine names, as pseudo-Dionysius will later call it. Thus, from the *Laus* we learn that the gods exist, that they exercise providence, that they are inflexible in their providential care; from the *Republic*, that they are causes only of what is good, immutable, simple and true, and so on. In the second part (books 2–6), Proclus examines the procession of all the classes of the gods from the first God, the absolute One (book 2). After a transitional section on the henads (3.1–6), which play a crucial role in this theology, he discusses subsequently the intelligible gods (3.7–28), the intelligible-intellective gods (book 4), the intellective gods (book 5), the hypercosmic gods (book 6). Missing in this systematic exposition are the inferior classes of the gods (encosmic gods) and the divine souls and the ‘superior beings’ following upon the gods. Lacking is also the third part of the *Theology* that would have dealt with the individual gods who are mentioned occasionally by Plato, and would have interpreted them in accordance with the general notions about the divine established before. Did Proclus leave the *Theology* unfinished or did he change his original plan at the end?

A modern reader not sharing the religious convictions of Proclus will probably not very much regret that we have lost what was supposed to come after the sixth book. And even someone with a real interest in ancient religion will remain perplexed by this extravagant attempt to give a full rational justification of all divinities and posit them within a metaphysical system. He will like to quote the famous comment of E. R. Dodds: ‘That Homer’s Olympians, the most vividly conceived anthropomorphic beings in all literature, should have ended their career on the dusty shelves of this museum of metaphysical abstractions is one of time’s strangest ironies’ (1933: 260). Much could be said to defend Proclus against this ironic comment, most of all that Proclus’ attempt to justify metaphysically what the gods are did not exclude that he worshipped them with an authentic personal devotion, neither did Thomas Aquinas’ five ways to prove the existence of a first cause make his God a metaphysical abstraction. It should also be noticed that in Proclus’ theological system Homer’s Olympians only appear on a lower level, where there is a multiplicity of divinities. They

do not correspond to the highest metaphysical principles, the One, the Limit, the Unlimited, Being.

CONCLUSION

Proclus' explicit theological motivation makes much of his work difficult to appreciate for moderns, though they may admire his grandiose, even heroic attempt to establish on premisses taken from Plato's philosophy the complex tradition of pagan religion, falling apart and threatened in a culture dominated by Christianity. They will also resent his attempt to systematize beyond measure the philosophical tradition and for that reason prefer Plotinus among the later Platonists, less systematic to be sure, sometimes even chaotic in his writing, but philosophically more authentic and provocative. Even Dodds, Proclus' best modern exegete declares: 'Proclus is not a creative thinker but a systematizer who carried to its utmost limits the ideal of one comprehensive philosophy that should embrace all the garnered wisdom of the ancient world.'⁷ However, no philosopher in late antiquity (including Plotinus) wanted to be original, but all tried to be faithful to a tradition of wisdom they inherited. The way Proclus 'systematizes' the tradition, by formulating and demonstrating the fundamental principles that were often implicit presuppositions of his predecessors is in itself a remarkable example of philosophical 'creativity' and it set the agenda for centuries of philosophical and theological speculation, as Dodds recognizes. Systematizing and articulating with an unsurpassed clarity and rigour the innovative Platonism that had started with Plotinus, Proclus' philosophy possesses speculative power that reaches far beyond its connection to Hellenic religion. Therefore, his philosophy is much more than an ideology in defence of pagan polytheism. Otherwise, one could not understand why so many authors sharing in no ways his religious convictions have been fascinated and inspired by his thought and have developed it in a creative way, such as the Christian author writing under the pseudonym Dionysius the Areopagite and the Arabic Muslim, who used the *Elements* to compose what would become known in the Latin Middle Ages as the *Liber de causis*. Through the mediation of these two anonymous authors Proclus contributed much more to the formation of the Platonic tradition in the Middle Ages than Plotinus. In the Renaissance, Ficino found inspiration in Proclus' theology to compose his own Christian Platonic theology on the immortality of the soul. Thanks to Ficino, Proclus also became for centuries the leading commentator on Plato and thus contributed to the standard Platonic interpretation of the dialogues until the early nineteenth

⁷ Dodds 1933: xxv.

century. Proclus' speculations on the triadic circle of remaining, procession and return fascinated Hegel. Even if we have taken some distance from this interpretation, Proclus' commentaries remain of invaluable help for anyone trying to understand the dialogues as they were read and discussed in antiquity.

Ammonius of Alexandria summarizes excellently what he and we owe to our divine teacher Proclus, successor to the chair of Plato and a man who attained the summit of human nature both in his ability to interpret the views of the ancients and in his scientific judgement of the nature of reality.

(In De int. 1.7–11)

AMMONIUS HERMEIOU AND HIS SCHOOL

DAVID BLANK

I LIFE

Ammonius the son of Hermeias (c. 435/45–517/26) was the most important – at times, perhaps, the only important – pagan teacher of pagan philosophy in Alexandria from the late fifth into the early sixth century. He numbered among his students Asclepius of Tralles, John Philoponus, Simplicius and probably Olympiodorus, all known at least in part for their commentaries on Aristotle, and the first two of whom published commentaries said to be ‘from the voice’ or ‘from the lectures’ of Ammonius, while Olympiodorus considered himself, and perhaps was also officially, Ammonius’ successor in the Alexandrian chair of philosophy. In the concrete, personal sense, at least, Ammonius was the founder of an ‘Alexandrian’ school of Aristotelian interpretation.

Whether and in what sense Ammonius also made significant alterations in the philosophical system he inherited from his own teacher Proclus in Athens, and thereby originated an Alexandrian variant of late Platonism, has been widely debated. This question, forcefully raised by K. Praechter in 1910, hangs closely together with the conditions of Ammonius’ life and teaching in Alexandria.

After the murder of Hypatia by a mob of Alexandrian Christians in 415, the most authoritative professor of philosophy in Alexandria was Hierocles. But Athens’ older philosophical school headed by Hierocles’ teacher Plutarch and Plutarch’s young Alexandrian pupil Syrianus was apparently more attractive for ambitious Alexandrians. Accordingly, Hermeias, among others, left his native Alexandria for Athens to study with Syrianus, who was head of the school there from 429 until 436. Syrianus, a bachelor, had intended that Proclus marry his young relative Aedesia, presumably as a way of designating Proclus as his successor; but Proclus was warned against the match by a god, and Aedesia was given away to Hermeias instead (Damascius, *Vit. Isid.* 56 Athanasiasiadi), perhaps an indication that Hermeias too, who was a hard worker though

not an exceptional philosophical talent (*Vit. Isid.* 54), was a favoured pupil of Syrianus.¹

Hermeias returned to Alexandria with Aedesia, where he was given a publicly funded professorship of philosophy. The couple had three children, the first of whom died aged seven. Ammonius was born between 435 and 445, his brother Heliodorus soon thereafter (*Vit. Isid.* 57b). Damascius, our main source for Ammonius' life, very much admired Aedesia, whose eulogy he spoke at Horapollon's rhetorical school. He praised her piety and her charity, by which she actually put her family into debt. He also praised her arrangements for her sons. When Hermeias died, around 450, Aedesia took steps to ensure that her sons could follow in their father's profession. She arranged for her husband's salary to continue to be paid to her for her sons until they began to teach philosophy, which Damascius finds unprecedented (*Vit. Isid.* 56), and she brought them herself to Athens to study with Proclus, who took a special interest in them out of respect for their parents (*Vit. Isid.* 57b). Heliodorus was not a good student, but his elder brother Ammonius was far superior and took up a position, presumably the public professorship vacated by his father,² teaching philosophy upon the family's return to Alexandria around 470.

Alexandria was an important centre both of Christian culture, and also, still, of pagan education. The chief pagan educational institution of the city was Horapollon's rhetorical school, housed in the same place where Ammonius gave his own lectures on Fridays.³ Ammonius' classes were attended by pagans and Christians alike, some firm believers in their faiths, some leaning in one direction or the other and some who might be converted. Christian students attended in order to acquire the famous Hellenic culture, or *paideia*, knowledge of which was expected of members of the upper stratum of society. Philosophy represented the highest part of this cultural formation, alongside and even above rhetoric. At the same time, philosophers had been involved in the promotion of pagan rites, such as those of the Serapeum which provoked the lynching of

¹ The main primary source for these paragraphs is Damascius' *Life of Isidore*, 54–7b Athanassiadi.

² Damascius says that Hermeias' public salary was paid to Aedesia's children 'until they began to teach philosophy'; it is natural to assume that the position Ammonius held was that for which he was already being paid. Watts 2006: 209 and n. 35 is wrong to translate *hōs* . . . *ephilosophēsan* ' . . . as if they taught philosophy', which is ungrammatical: *hōs* is here equivalent to *hēos*.

³ A Polish archaeological team recently discovered an apparent complex of about twenty lecture rooms, which could have been those of Horapollon and his school; each could hold up to eighty students; each room had a sort of throne in the middle of one end, presumably for the teacher, and a raised stone in the centre, from which a student could recite: Majcherek 2007. On Friday mornings, the rhetors were free to hold lessons in their homes, and the philosophers held their lectures in the school (Zacharias, *V. Sev.* 23 Kugener). For further information, see the contributions gathered in Derda *et al.* 2007.

Hypatia. In the later fifth century, after the turmoil of Hypatia's time, the atmosphere around the Alexandrian philosophers was relatively quiet, with Christian intellectual circles largely confined to monasteries, following the prescription of Athanasius. Monks of Henaton, a group of monophysite monastic communities outside Alexandria, were especially active in providing an intellectual setting in which Christian students of the pagan philosophers could ask questions and be reinforced in their faith, and they had ties to a group of upper-class Christian students called *philoponoi* who, themselves, promoted Christian reading and discussion among their fellow students.⁴

Between 485 and 487 Zacharias of Gaza, subsequently Bishop of Mytilene, arrived in Alexandria and studied with Ammonius. Later,⁵ he wrote a book called *Ammonius or On the Creation of the World* in which he portrays discussions between himself ('The Christian') and Ammonius, and again between himself and the medical philosopher (*iатrosophistēs*) Gesius. Zacharias manifests a distinct contempt for Ammonius and for his teacher Proclus, whom he refers to as 'the philosopher, or rather the unphilosophical and unwise one' (2.19–24). The debates end with an embarrassed silence on Ammonius' part. These 'dialogues in the Platonic manner' (1.7–18) were written when Zacharias' fellow law students at Beirut asked him for help after one of them, who had recently studied with Ammonius and was inclined toward Hellenism, had begun to regale them with accounts of Ammonius' pagan arguments about the world (1.1–4). It is not clear to what extent the manner and tenor of these discussions reflect the reality of Ammonius' school, and many remarks are indebted to old anti-sophistic points made long before by the Platonic Socrates and to anti-philosophical polemics: for example, that Ammonius boasted of being wise and making others wise too (cf., e.g., Plato, *Prt.* 310d), and that in his lectures on the *Physics* he explicated Aristotle's wisdom and the principles of existing things to his students in the manner of those who interpret oracles, very sophistically, and sitting pompously on a high stage (2.96–9; cf. Plato, *Rep.* 10.617d and Themistius 21.243ab). What Zacharias does make clear, however, is his perception of Ammonius' classroom as a battleground for the souls of students, both Christians and pagans. Thus, Ammonius, 'clever at corrupting the souls of the young and dislodging them from God and the truth' (2.31–2; much the same charges, of course, as were levelled at Socrates), and 'having already filled' some of the students 'with his nonsense and wickedness, told

⁴ This background of the troubles between pagan professors and Christians which began in 486 is narrated in Zacharias' *Life of Severus*; see Watts 2006: 210 ff. The troubles themselves are mostly known through the partial reports of Damascius' *Life of Isidore*, especially section 117 Athanassiadi.

⁵ Watts 2005: 451, 453, 460, 464 suggests that the book was written during or shortly after Zacharias' time in Beirut (487–91) then revised close to the time of Ammonius' death.

them to leave and not to listen to the discussions, so that, in my opinion, they would not be affected by the argument and demonstration and be persuaded to profess Christianity again' (2.998–1002). Zacharias also claims that many of the students were even converted from philosophy, Aristotle and Plato, so that they 'assented to and cast their vote for our arguments, or rather those of the holy truth dear to Christians; and they went home with admiration for Christian demonstrations and remarkably desirous of hearing much of the discourses of truth' (2.354–61).

The uneasy peace recalled by Zacharias was shattered when a pagan student, Paralius, sent by his family to study with Horapollon, fell under the spell of Stephanus, a fellow monk of Paralius' older brother at Henaton, and followed Stephanus' advice to ask the pagan teachers to rebut the doubts Stephanus sowed in him; these teachers were Horapollon, Heraiscus, Asclepiodotus, Ammonius and Isidore, the last three all pupils of Proclus. A series of events ensued, in which Paralius defamed a shrine of Isis frequented by some of the pagan teachers and was beaten by a group of students. Complaints to the Patriarch Peter Mongus and thence to the Prefect Entrechius about this incident resulted in widespread hostility to the pagan teachers, including Ammonius, and the temporary departure of some of these pagans from the city. Late in 487 or early in 488, an investigation into the pagan schools was launched, perhaps at Peter Mongus' instigation, by the imperial envoy Nicomedes in the aftermath of the revolt of Illus (484–8) in which Illus and his ally Pamprepius appear to have promised the toleration of pagan religious practice in return for the support of pagan circles; the philosophers would later blame Pamprepius for bringing persecution upon them. At some point Nicomedes ordered that teaching in the pagan schools be suspended, and he discovered information which made first Ammonius, then all the philosophers, a particular target of his investigation (*Vit. Isid.* 117). In the course of later investigations by Nicomedes, Damascius and his mentor Isidore escaped to Athens, while Heraiscus and his brother Asclepiades, a philosopher and Horapollon's brother, died in hiding.

Ammonius, then, was the only prominent philosophical teacher in Alexandria after these investigations, or persecutions, and he continued to teach until his death many years later. How can his survival as a teacher be explained? Damascius, who has no love lost for Ammonius, whose tuition he had abandoned in favour of Isidore's, states (*Vit. Isid.* 118b=Photius, *Bibl.* 242.352a11–14) that Ammonius, who was 'wickedly greedy and always on the lookout for any kind of profit, made a compact (*homologiai*) with the then overseer of the dominant doctrine', i.e., with the Patriarch Peter Mongus. It is to this deal, for whose existence Damascius is our only source, that Ammonius' continuing ability to

teach in Alexandria is usually attributed. Damascius' emphasis on Ammonius' greed is carefully prepared by the contrasting picture he draws with the character of Ammonius' parents. Damascius emphasizes Hermeias' virtues and even reports that he would correct sellers who priced their wares too low (*Vit. Isid.* 54). He also says, as we have seen, that Aedesia's generosity to the poor left her family in debt; she considered it a 'treasurehouse' for the next life to contribute unstintingly to the poor from her compassion for human vicissitudes, but she also provided for the philosophical education of her sons, wanting to hand down to them their father's knowledge as if it were an 'inheritance of their ancestral wealth' (*Vit. Isid.* 56=*Suda* 1 79), transferring the terminology of wealth from the worldly to the spiritual sphere. Damascius does not explicitly connect, so far as we can tell, Ammonius' 'shameful greed' and his 'compact' with the debts he inherited from his mother, so that we are left to think Ammonius simply vicious. In reality, Ammonius would have needed a good cushion to survive the loss of income from both the public professorship and the tuition of his students if he was barred from teaching for long.

Damascius also builds another generational contrast into his account, to Ammonius' detriment. Aedesia's response to criticism of her charity, he reports, caused even the wickedest of her fellow citizens to love her. In the *Suda's* excerpt from Damascius, this praise is immediately followed by Aedesia's attention to her sons' education and her unprecedented success in getting the public salary for them, which is presumably to be interpreted as a reward from those fellow citizens, since 'she received no little honour and respect from everyone'. This is followed again by the family's reception in Athens, where the whole 'chorus of philosophers', and not least its leader Proclus, are said to have admired her virtue. The tacit moral of this contrast seems to be that, if Ammonius had shared his mother's virtues, he too would have been admired by both philosophers and his fellow citizens, and perhaps the later troubles, which forced Damascius to leave the city, could have been avoided.

The rhetorical construction of Damascius' account thus casts doubt on his claims to knowledge of a 'compact', the details of which Damascius in any case does not give, and no other evidence of which exists. The story may simply be an inference from the fact that Ammonius alone continued to teach, an inference presumably influenced by Damascius' antipathy and by gossip in Alexandrian philosophical circles. Various attempts have been made to explain this deal as giving Ammonius the right to continue teaching philosophy, provided he made one or another doctrinal compromise, such as Praechter's suggestion that Ammonius agreed to continue a supposed 'Alexandrian' policy of making the Platonist gods one by collapsing the One and the Intellect; but recent work has

tended to undermine this and other reconstructions of the alleged deal.⁶ Nor is it possible to show that Ammonius' teaching changed around 490 in any way: for example, he continued to teach Plato in addition to Aristotle, for Olympiodorus says he heard Ammonius lecture on the *Gorgias*, c. 515 (*In Gorg.* 199.8–10).

Sorabji⁷ has argued that Ammonius' agreement may have committed him not to promote pagan religious rites openly in his teaching, a move which might be seen as responsible for his neglect of theurgy and the lack of works by him and his successors comparable with some of those written by the Athenian school, such as Iamblichus' *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians*, Proclus' *Platonic Theology* or Damascius' *On First Principles*; nor did Ammonius and his students write commentaries on the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Hermeias, in his commentary on the *Phaedrus*, spoke very favourably of theurgy, and that is likely to reflect the view of his teacher Syrianus. Ammonius' teacher Proclus was also not averse to theurgy. Despite his dependence on Proclus' commentary on the *Cratylus*, when commenting on Aristotle's statement (*Int.* 16a19 ff.) that names are 'significant by convention' and his consequent rejection of the thesis that names are 'by nature', Ammonius (*In Int.* 34.10–39.10) does not mention the doctrine stressed by Proclus in his own discussion of the *Cratylus*, that the theurgist chooses divine names in imitation of secret marks implanted in us by the gods, so that these names are naturally correct for what they name, and their use establishes an efficacious link between the one who uses them and what they name, for example by naming a god in a prayer. Instead of citing this theurgic argument for the naturalness of names, Ammonius briefly brings up an argument that our own names must be natural, since their use in prayers and curses has an effect on the person named; indeed, as Sorabji points out, Ammonius attributes this argument to Dousareios of Petra, not a philosopher, and so avoids bringing up a subject which might lead him to discuss theurgy and Proclus' espousal of it.

But it is not clear that Ammonius simply passes over the theory of divine names out of a sense of caution in the face of Christian objections. Rather, Ammonius and Proclus had different conceptions of what names were, and Ammonius did not follow Proclus in believing that we give names on the basis of our knowledge (*logoi*) about metaphysical realities, entities on higher metaphysical or hypercosmic levels being named according to insights implanted in us by higher powers. In Ammonius' commentary names referred to particular

⁶ On the thesis of Praechter 1910 and 1912, see Verrycken 1990 and Hadot 1978 and 1990, along with Sorabji's discussion of Ammonius' 'deal' 2005a: 21–5.

⁷ Sorabji 2005a; 2005b: 23–4.

things in the world and could not serve to instruct us about philosophical or theological realities. Therefore, he could not have a special class of divine names – he actually denies that the gods had any role in the giving of names (*In Int.* 38.26–8; *In Cat.* 11.8–17), and his silence on the issue and transference of the argument for the naturalness of names from the efficacy of divine names, an argument which he could have ascribed to Proclus, to the efficacy of human names, which he assigns to Dousareios, might be due to a desire not to point up his disagreement with Proclus. We do not know whether in other contexts Ammonius would have maintained the same view of names as he did in his interpretation of Aristotle’s famously conventionalist text. Even if we did, we should require a separate argument to show that rejection of Proclus’ theory of names entailed rejection of theurgy altogether. In fact, we do not know that Ammonius and his school actually rejected theurgy: Olympiodorus adds theurgy to an account of the highest, paradeigmatic level of virtue (cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.2.7.2–6; Porphyry, *Sentences* 32; Damascius, *In Phd.* 143), saying that Philosophy’s task is to make us Intellect, but theurgy’s to unite us with the intelligibles, so that we act paradeigmatically (*In Phd.*, Lect. 8, sec. 2, lines 1–20 Westerink), and he notes that ‘not even the souls of theurgists can remain in the intelligible always, but they must also descend into becoming’ (*In Phd.* Lect. 10, sec. 14, lines 8–9). Finally, it is not entirely satisfying to see Ammonius’ deal as involving the rejection of theurgy, as there is no evidence that Ammonius ever taught theurgic doctrines or practised theurgic rites himself, before 488. Of course, it is possible that if Ammonius de-emphasized theurgic practice and even its place in Platonic theory, he could have done so either for his own philosophical reasons or in order not to give offence to his Christian surroundings, with or without a ‘deal’ being made, and that such a de-emphasis played a role in Ammonius’ survival as a teacher; but we cannot say anything with certainty at this point.

Attempting to explain Ammonius’ compact in a different way, Athanassiadi has suggested that Ammonius agreed to betray to Peter the hiding places of the other philosophers during Nicomedes’ first investigation,⁸ which would certainly explain Damascius’ antipathy towards Ammonius. This view, however, seems too willing to follow Damascius’ construction of the story and assassination of Ammonius’ character, which are clearly intended to implicate him. All in all, the explanations of Ammonius’ infamous agreement with Peter Mongus seem too problematic to shed much light on Ammonius’ teaching or his life, and I am inclined to doubt the very existence of such an agreement.

⁸ Athanassiadi 1999: 31.

2 THOUGHT

In any event, the content of Ammonius' teaching is likely best explained through his own particular concerns. Photius reports (*Bibl.* 181.127a5–10 = *Vit. Isid.* 13) that Damascius says that one of his teachers of philosophy was Ammonius, 'who, he says, far excelled his contemporaries in philosophy and especially in the mathematical sciences. Damascius also lists him as having been the one who explained to him Plato's works and the *Syntaxis* of Ptolemy's books.' Again according to Photius, Damascius (*Vit. Is.* 57c=Photius, *Bibl.* 242.341b22–8) also says that Ammonius was 'very hard-working, and he helped more than any of the interpreters who ever lived; his speciality was Aristotle, and moreover he excelled not only those of his own age but also the contemporaries of Proclus – I almost said anyone who ever lived – in his work on geometry and astronomy.' Thus, although Ammonius taught philosophy and the works of Plato, Damascius' emphasis is on Ammonius as an interpreter of Aristotle. Zacharias introduces his dialogue by asking about 'the interpreter of the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle' (2.19–20).

For us, Ammonius is indeed most important as a commentator on Aristotle and as the founder of the tradition of Aristotelian commentary in Alexandria which continued through his pupils Asclepius, Philoponus, Simplicius and Olympiodorus, who were in turn followed by Elias, David, Ps.-Elias and Stephanus. Of his writings, the only one which survives in the written form he himself published is his commentary (*hupomnēma*) on the *De interpretatione*, which is based on Proclus' lectures on that text, with the addition of other material, especially from Porphyry's huge commentary.⁹ Ammonius tells us that he put the lectures of Proclus into shape himself:

Now, we have recorded the interpretations of our divine teacher Proclus, successor to the chair of Plato and a man who attained the limits of human capacity both in the ability to interpret the opinions of the ancients and in the scientific judgement of the nature of reality. If, having done that, we too are able to add anything to the clarification of the book, we owe great thanks to the god of eloquence.

(1.6–11)

Ammonius' lectures on other books have come down to us in the form of notes written up by his students: those on Porphyry's *Introduction*, on the *Categories* and on the *Prior Analytics* were written up by anonymous students 'from the voice of Ammonius'; those on *Metaphysics* A–Z by Asclepius; those

⁹ Ammonius agreed with Porphyry and Proclus that chapter 14 was spurious, but he decided to comment on it anyway, basing his work on that of Syrianus (254.22–31).

on *Prior Analytics* 1, *Posterior Analytics* 1, *On Generation and Corruption* and *On the Soul* by Philoponus.¹⁰ Of course, these students may also have added to or changed what they heard in Ammonius' lecture-room. Beside commentaries, there are also mentions of monographs written by Ammonius on *Phaedo* 69d4–6, defending Plato against the charge of being a sceptic (Olympiodorus, *In Phd.* 8.17.6–7), one on hypothetical syllogisms (see *In An. Pr.* 67.32–69.28) and one on the fact that Aristotle made god not only the final but also the efficient cause of the whole world (Simplicius, *In Cael.* 271.13–21).

Ammonius is the first to provide us with a version of the ten preliminary points which Proclus (cf. Elias, *In Cat.* 107.24–27) thought necessary to begin the study of Aristotle. From this we know that the Aristotelian curriculum in Ammonius' school began with logic, which was followed by ethics, physics, mathematics and theology (Ammonius, *In Cat.* 5.31–6.8). Apparently, lectures on works by Plato and Aristotle in Ammonius' school lasted about an hour, as in Proclus'. Each lecture covered one passage, discussing first its doctrine (*theōria*) and then its wording (*lexis*) soberly and with much learning. The exegesis covered the sense of the text and its philosophical importance, including its relation to other texts of Aristotle and Plato, who were held to be consistent in themselves and with one another (e.g., Simplicius, *In DA* 1.3–21). Elias (*In Cat.* 122.25–123.11), following Ammonius,¹¹ says the exegete should at the same time be a knower, the first to explain the difficulties in his text, the second to judge its truth or falsity, whether it is a wind-egg or a real offspring (cf. Plato, *Tht.* 151e). He ought not to insist on the correctness of his author against the truth, and should neither sympathize with one sect, as Iamblichus did by allowing that Aristotle did not contradict Plato on the ideas, nor oppose one, as did Alexander in rejecting the immortality of the rational soul. He also ought to know all of Aristotle and of Plato so as to be able to show that each agrees with himself at all points and to make Aristotle's works an introduction to Plato's. Simplicius makes similar points (*In Cat.* 7.23–32), adding that the good interpreter ought not to look at the mere text of Aristotle's criticisms of Plato and condemn the disagreement of the philosophers, but should track down their agreement in most things by looking at the sense. These remarks are surely inspired by Ammonius (cf. Ammonius, *In Cat.* 8.11–19). In contrast to the criticism of Aristotle by Syrianus and Proclus for differing from Plato on the Forms, when on his own principles he ought to have agreed with him, Asclepius (presumably representing Ammonius) says that although Aristotle

¹⁰ The commentary on *De anima* 3 transmitted with those on the first two books by Philoponus is of disputed authorship.

¹¹ See Ammonius, *In Cat.* 7.34 ff. and Tarrant in Jackson *et al.* 1998: 11 and notes on 32.1 and 42.2 for the Ammonian inspiration of Elias' remarks.

seems (*dokei*) to attack Plato's Forms in *Metaph.* A 8, 990b3, that is explained by his purpose (*skopos*); rather, he agrees with Plato, since he praises (*De an.* 3.4, 429a28) those who make the soul the place of Forms, and his actual disagreement is with certain Platonists ('the Plato in one person or another') who supposed that the Forms subsist on their own and are separate from Intellect (*In Metaph.* 69.17–27). The length of his treatment of names is attributed by Ammonius to a desire to show the agreement *sumphōnia* of Plato and Aristotle (*In Int.* 39.11).

In contrast to his views as an interpreter, Ammonius' own positions and contribution to philosophy are difficult to pinpoint, for a number of reasons: the loss of important texts, especially the monographs on theology and hypothetical syllogisms; the fact that what we have of his work is devoted to the explication of Aristotelian texts, which was only a preliminary to the study of Plato and the late Platonic system of philosophy; our frequent inability to discern how much of what is in the works we have derives from Proclus; and our frequent dependence on the writings of Ammonius' pupils, in which it may be difficult to separate out Ammonius' views. The best course, given these limitations, is to try to gather together Ammonius' views from the commentary on *De Interpretatione*, explicit attributions of statements or positions to him by later commentators, and the notes of lectures of Ammonius which were published under his own name or which, if under a student's name, show at once few signs of having altered his teachings and great devotion to him, as is true especially of Asclepius on the *Metaphysics* and of Philoponus' early works. Originality and philosophical importance are another matter: sometimes, even when we have detailed studies of Ammonius' views on a particular subject, it is difficult to say how much in them is original with Ammonius. A good example is his famous discussion of Aristotle's rejection of determinism in *Int.* 9, where there is clearly a debt to Alexander of Aphrodisias in the doctrine that sentences about future singular contingent events 'divide the true and false' (that is, they obey the principle of bivalence) in an indefinite and 'not in a definite manner', but we cannot say exactly how innovative Ammonius' own account is.

Recent studies, especially Verrycken 1990, have shown the difficulty of determining the extent of Ammonius' acceptance of the system he learned from Proclus: in particular, does a neglect of the henads constitute a conscious rejection of them? Ammonius' task is generally to explicate how Aristotle's texts are to be understood within a Platonic framework, and unless he thinks that Aristotle is at some particular point opposed to the Platonic system, Ammonius will think that what Aristotle says there must be compatible with that system – i.e., with the truth. But that does not mean that an explanation of every ramification of every Aristotelian text throughout the Platonic system,

especially in the complex structure of the Proclan intelligible world, is always required. Ammonius may well have had a policy of explicating texts in a manner appropriate to their subject matter as that is understood in his own specification of their different aims or *skopoi*, and this may be responsible for apparent differences in the reports we have of Ammonius' interpretation of the same doctrines. Elias (*In Cat.* 120.23–30), for example, may represent an Ammonian stance when he raises the question why Aristotle says that Intelligence is the very first principle, rather than the Good, as in Plato. He notes that in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle recognized that Intelligence was rather a natural (i.e., not a supernatural) principle, since he too knew that the good was the sole principle of being, the goal of every action and every inquiry, etc., as in the first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle, he says, is always doing natural philosophy when he does theology, while Plato is always doing theology when he does natural philosophy.

An example of such different approaches may be found in Ammonius' conception of the Aristotelian God. The intellectual Unmoved Mover of Aristotle seems ill suited to be the demiurgic craftsman and creator of Plato's *Timaeus*, as Proclus points out (*In Tim.* 1.266.28–268.24): while 'the Peripatetics say there is something separate [from the physical world], it is not creative (*poiētikon*), but final (*telikon*); hence they both removed the exemplars (*paradeigmata*) and set a non-plural intelligence over all things'. Yet, Aristotle's own principles, according to Proclus, ought to have committed him to the position that God was a creator. Simplicius reports that some Peripatetics, including Alexander of Aphrodisias, held that Aristotle's God was a final cause of the whole world, that his moving the heavens made him indirectly the efficient cause of sublunar motion, and that he was also the efficient cause of the heavens' motion but not of their existence as a substance. Showing that – contrary to what these Peripatetics claimed – God was final and efficient cause alike of both the movement and existence of the whole world, sublunar and supralunar, Simplicius tells us, was the point of Ammonius' entire book on this subject, and it allows the harmonization of Aristotle with Plato (*In Cael.* 271.13–21; *In Phys.* 1360.24–1363.24). There is an apparent contradiction between Asclepius, who in his *Metaphysics* commentary (e.g., 28.26–32, 148.10–11) has Ammonius identify Aristotle's God with the Platonic One, the highest principle, and, on the other, this assertion of Simplicius'. Recalling Elias' distinction, however, we may infer that theology, when approached from within the philosophy of nature, may not give as fully developed a picture of the intelligible world as when done from the point of view of metaphysics. At the metaphysical level, then, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is primarily thought of as the Good or final cause of all being, while as a matter of natural philosophy Aristotle's God, while still the Unmoved Mover and final

cause, is primarily thought of as an efficient cause, that from which change originates (361.11–14).

Much of the debate around Ammonius' own system has focused on the possibility that he accommodated his position to that of his Christian environment and students. Certainly, as Verrycken shows¹² Ammonius did accept the most important parts of the late Platonic system: the One or first principle and cause; the demiurgic Intellect of Plato's *Timaeus*, the second principle; the World Soul or third principle. He certainly did not combine the Intellect and the One, and so *a fortiori* did not do so in an accommodation with Christian monotheism.¹³ Also, Ammonius never abandoned the Aristotelian thesis that the world was eternal, despite the fact that Zacharias thought that important enough to make it the basis of his attack on his erstwhile teacher.¹⁴ Again, while some passages of Ammonius' commentary on *De interpretatione* can be taken to point to Proclus' theory of henads, this theory does not play a major role in Ammonius' interpretation, and perhaps not in his thought either: indeed Verrycken argues that he dropped the henads later.¹⁵ But this sort of simplification need not point to any kind of tendency toward 'monotheism', although the henads were the locus of the pagan gods within Proclus' system. Further, as we have already noted, when he had the opportunity of following his master Proclus (*In Crat.* 71.31.24–32.5 Pasquali) in expounding the causes and theurgic efficacy of the nature of divine names, Ammonius did not do so, perhaps pointedly so, and spoke rather of the efficacy of human names. While a rejection of theurgy would certainly have been welcome to Christian students and their bishop, it is not clear whether Ammonius actually rejected it, or rather felt that it was out of place in the interpretation of Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, with its well-known conventionalist theory of language.

What is clear is that Ammonius was felt to be first and foremost an interpreter of Aristotle, and that his view was that such an interpreter had a duty to show the underlying agreement of Aristotle with Plato. Removing the impression of the disagreement (*diaphōnia*) among philosophers was no accommodation, but rather an anti-Christian move, as Christians would point to such disagreement as *prima facie* evidence of the falsity of the philosophers' views. That was certainly

¹² 1990: 203–10.

¹³ There is also nothing to indicate that Ammonius ever addressed issues of the relation between various hypercosmic levels in a way which would lend itself to the resolution of the Christological disputes of his day; Peter Mongus was a Monophysite but accepted the *Act of Union* (*Henōtikon*) promulgated by the Emperor Zeno to reconcile the Monophysites with the Chalcedonians.

¹⁴ The arguments in Zacharias' *Ammonius* were largely drawn from the earlier dialogue *Theophrastus* by Aeneas of Gaza; the inclusion of Ammonius as a speaker and the setting in his classroom were Zacharias' own innovation.

¹⁵ 1990: 215 and 230–1.

Zacharias' view, since when the subject of the Forms arose during a lecture on Aristotle's *Ethics*, he raised Aristotle's 'contradiction of Plato's theory of Forms and other many other doctrines' against Ammonius, who 'tried to hide the conflict' (*Ammonius* 2.942–52).

Thus, we cannot postulate that Ammonius espoused a particular variety of late Platonism because of a desire to conciliate Christians. But perhaps he in fact founded a particularly Alexandrian form of late Platonism. The affinity of Ammonius and his students for Aristotle, and the fact that they did not write commentaries on the most important dialogues of Plato, might be taken to support the view that they did not espouse the same complex Platonic system as did Proclus and Damascius. Despite the possibility that Ammonius' teaching of Plato's philosophy might have revealed him a more faithful follower of Proclus, it seems reasonable to consider the possibility that Ammonius concentrated his energies on Aristotle because his approach to philosophy through the world of both form and matter was congenial to him.¹⁶ What Ammonius did find in Alexandria was a long-lived and extremely productive and useful tradition of late-Platonic commentary on Aristotle, and this was an accomplishment important enough to guarantee his place in the history of later ancient philosophy.

¹⁶ Verrycken 1990: 230–1; van den Berg 2004: 199–200, suggests that Ammonius' focus on interpreting Aristotle's text may also have led him to different philosophical theories than those to which his teacher Proclus was trying to relate the text of Plato.

DAMASCIUS

GERD VAN RIEL

I LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DAMASCIUS
(AROUND 462 – AFTER 538)1.1 *Biographical data*¹

The chronology of the Platonic Academy in later ancient times is relatively well known, owing to the description Damascius furnishes in his *Vita Isidori* (a biography of Damascius' beloved teacher, who was probably also one of his predecessors as the head of the Academy). Concerning Damascius' own life, however, we do not have very detailed knowledge. One of the few facts that are known with certainty is that he originated from Damascus (as we know from Simplicius, *In Phys.* 624.38 Diels, and from Damascius' own *Vita Isidori* 200 Photius). The only dates that are certain are circumstantial to Damascius' life: the closing down of the pagan schools by the Emperor Justinian in 529, which led to Damascius' exile; and the date of a stele, found in Homs (Emesa, Syria) in 1925 and dated 538 CE. It bears an epitaph that was known from another literary tradition (the *Anthologia Palatina*), to be attributed to Damascius:

Zosime, who has been a slave only in body, has now found freedom even from her body.
(*Anthologia Palatina* VII, 553)

The stele quotes the verse in the first person ('I, Zosime . . .'), which suggests that this is the original version of the text, written for this occasion. If that is true, then it is more than probable that Damascius was living in Syria around 538 CE.

According to his own *Vita Isidori*, Damascius had been in Athens already before 485, when Proclus died. He had been studying rhetoric in Alexandria, and then came to Athens as a teacher of rhetoric. On this basis, one estimates

¹ This survey essentially takes over the facts and dates from Hoffmann 1994, which is the best *status quaestionis*, and the furthest one can get on the basis of the scarce material (another recommendable biography of Damascius is offered by Combès and Westerink 1986–91: 1, ix–xxvi).

that Damascius was born around 462 (or in any case between 458 and 465), and that he came to Athens as a teacher around 482. He came in close contact with pagan philosophical circles, and was deeply impressed by the figure of Isidore. Around 491/2, the influence of Isidore led him to prefer philosophy to a career as a rhetorician, and under the supervision of Marinus (Proclus' successor as the scholarch of the Athenian Academy), he studied mathematics, arithmetic and other sciences. He was initiated in philosophy by Zenodotus. When Marinus became severely ill and weakened, Isidore may have become the head of the school,² but during the next spring, upon the death of Marinus, Isidore left Athens and went to Alexandria (*Vita Isidori* 229 Photius). Damascius, too, left the Academy, possibly together with Isidore, and headed towards Alexandria, where he studied the works of Plato and Ptolemy under Ammonius and Heliodorus. A number of years later, maybe around 515, Damascius returned to Athens and became the scholarch of the Academy (a fact that is only known from the epithet given to Damascius in one of the ninth-century manuscripts).

The *Vita Isidori* informs us that the Academy was in decay after the death of Proclus. Under the headship of Hegias (around 490), who reputedly preferred theurgy to philosophy, it had a particularly bad reputation. It was most probably Damascius' own merit as a scholarch, to have put philosophy back in place, as a reaction against theurgy, and also against Christianity.³ To Damascius' mind, Christianity was a villainous transitory phenomenon, advocating the lower desires of the soul over reason (*Vita Isidori* 22 and 238 Photius).

The school suffered increasing hostility and violence from Christians. Upon the decree of Justinian in 529, the Academy closed its doors, and Damascius chose to go into exile, accompanied by Simplicius of Cilicia, Priscian of Lydia, Eulamius of Phrygia, Hermias of Phoenicia, Diogenes of Phoenicia and Isidorus of Gaza. As the historian Agathias (around 570 CE) relates, they came to the court of king Chosroës of Persia (who became king in September 531), and they were soon to be disappointed by the harshness of the Persians and of the so-called 'philosopher-king'. They required and obtained permission to return to their country in 532, and Chosroës even persuaded Justinian

² The evidence is not clear on this matter: in his *Vita Isidori* (226 Photius) Damascius writes that 'Marinus persuaded Isidore to accept the vote on the succession; and he was elected *diadochus* of the Platonic school in honorary rather than in real terms' (*ep' axiōmati mallon ē pragmati*, tr. Athanassiadi). This may mean, either that Isidore was only chosen as a stand-in for Marinus, who remained in function as the actual leader (in that sense 'not in real terms'), or that Isidore took over the full function, but that, due to his age, he was elected to the office without being able (or expected) to take care of the management of the Academy. Besides, we do not know how the management of the Academy would generally have appeared, or what would have been the function of the office of 'diadochus'.

³ See Trabattoni 1985.

to allow them freedom of thought, as long as they remained ‘in retirement’ (*eph’ heautois*), meaning, probably, that they did not have the right to teach philosophy any longer. After their return to the Byzantine Empire, we lose track of the Academicians. Perhaps all or some of them returned to Athens. The aforementioned stele suggests in any case that Damascius eventually went back to his original homeland, maybe after a stay in Athens, or immediately upon his return from Persia.⁴

1.2 Damascius’ works

Most of Damascius’ works are lost. Some of them are known by occasional self-references (in which case we know little more than the title), like the commentaries on Plato’s *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Timaeus* and *Laus*, on rhetorical works, and on the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Other works are known by excerpts and quotes, like the *Paradoxa* (a writing on natural marvels, on apparitions of souls after death, on *daimones* and other marvellous things; the work was described by Photius), a treatise *On Number, Place and Time* (quoted by Simplicius), a commentary on Plato’s *First Alcibiades* (quoted by Olympiodorus in his own commentary on this dialogue) and commentaries on Aristotle’s *Categories* (which are probably referred to by Simplicius in his own commentary on the treatise), *Meteorologica* (the existence of which can be deduced from Philoponus’ reference to Damascius in his own commentary on the *Meteorologica*) and *De caelo* (which, according to L.G. Westerink, served as a basis for Simplicius’ commentary on the first book of the treatise: Combès and Westerink I, xxxviii).

The *Vita Isidori* presented a general historical survey of the Athenian Academy from the early fourth century CE onwards. The contents of about one-third of the work are known by excerpts and fragments in the *Suda* and Photius. It was written between 497 and 526 (during the reign of Theoderic in Italy).⁵

Apart from those, there are four more or less fully extant works, the fate of which has not been extremely fortunate either. Two of them (*In Phaedonem* and *In Philebum*) have been transmitted under the name of Olympiodorus, while the other two, *De principiis* and *In Parmenidem*, have been transmitted together, after

⁴ This return of the Platonists to Athens opens a debate on whether the Academy was really closed down in 529 CE. On the basis of, among others, the testimony of Olympiodorus, who (around 565 CE) writes that the Academy still existed in his time, and that its property (the endowment, *ta diadochika*) was not entirely confiscated (Olymp. *In Alcib.* 141.1–3, p. 92 Westerink), Cameron 1969: 25 asserts that the closing down of the Academy in 529 was only temporary, and that it was basically due to lack of funding rather than to the decree of Justinian. According to Cameron, pagan teaching of philosophy went on until the Slavic siege of Athens in the late sixth century. On this debate, see also the *status quaestionis* in Hoffmann 1994: 556–9.

⁵ The extant parts have been reconstructed by Zintzen 1967 and Athanassiadi 1999.

the loss of the last part of *De principiis*, and of the first part of *In Parmenidem*. In fact, the lost part of *In Parmenidem* dealt with the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, whereas the extant part of *De principiis* (the Greek title of which translates *Questions and Answers on the First Principles*) does not go far beyond a discussion of the first hypothesis. This has given rise to the hypothesis that the two works actually belong together, as one single treatise. However, this is impossible for several reasons, both philological and methodological. The main reason is that the approach of *In Parmenidem* is entirely different from *De principiis*. While the commentary on the *Parmenides* is a critique of Proclus' interpretation, built up around a number of questions and answers, the *De principiis* presents itself as a philosophical treatise, albeit an aporetic one, consisting of questions and answers on the principles of reality (and not specifically on the contents of the *Parmenides*, let alone on Proclus' interpretation of the dialogue).

The commentaries on the *Phaedo* (which actually consist of two separate versions of Damascius' lectures on the dialogue) and on the *Philebus* were transmitted together. After the loss of the first pages (and thus of the reference to their author), these texts were included in a collection of commentaries by Olympiodorus. Thus they were ascribed to the latter for many centuries, until L.G. Westerink in 1959 adduced evidence to reattribute the two works to Damascius.⁶ Yet Damascius is not the 'author' in the strict sense: the commentaries as we have them are reported lecture notes, written down by Damascius' students. This peculiar situation provides an insight into how the Platonic dialogues were read in class: the dialogues themselves were read in large lemmas, followed by a reading of Proclus' commentary (and possibly commentaries by others as well). Damascius' own comments, then, are mostly reactions to the previous commentators. His own answer, typically introduced by the words 'But it is more in accordance with truth to say the following', is mostly an attempt to 'return to Plato', beyond the scholastic discussions that to his mind had concealed the original problem.⁷

On the basis of the doctrines (particularly on the soul) elaborated in the extant works, one may tentatively establish a relative chronology, for which see below (n. 20).

1.3 *Doing philosophy in the shrinking circles of pagan thought*

Damascius' works display a number of characteristic traits, which allow one to appreciate his particular position among the other late Platonists. First of all, as

⁶ R. Beutler had already argued for Damascius' authorship of the *Phaedo* commentaries in 1939.

⁷ See, e.g., my *In Phil.*, introduction, clxxiii–clxxvi.

intimated above, Damascius' commentaries are not so much commentaries on the classical authors, Plato and Aristotle themselves, as they are 'commentaries on the commentaries', especially those of Proclus. Thus, Damascius' commentaries consist of discussions with earlier positions that were themselves aimed at integrating older discussions. This often makes it difficult to uncover what Damascius is hinting at exactly in particular discussions, especially since in nearly all cases, the commentaries that he uses as a starting-point are no longer extant. On the other hand, this means that Damascius' work is often the only source for the interpretation of certain dialogues in later Platonism, or even in antiquity as a whole (as is the case with the *Philebus*).

This feature not only makes Damascius into a precious source for later ancient thought, but it also reveals a fundamental point of methodology. Damascius' way of arguing is always to start from what others have said as a stepping stone to arrive at a precise grasp of the philosophical problem at stake. Thus, Damascius' method is aporetic more than anything else.⁸ He wants to get hold, not just of the answers given in the Platonic school, but first and foremost, of the questions and the realities at stake, and of Plato's original intentions.

In this sense, Damascius is doubtless the most original thinker of late-ancient Platonism, more original than Proclus, whose endeavour lay in the first place in systematizing the doctrines of the Platonic school. Damascius profited from this systematization, which allowed him to pinpoint the problems inherent in the system. The first and most important problem to tackle in this respect is that though the Platonic system articulates the structure of human thought, and up to a point, of reality itself, it cannot be a precise rendering of a reality that is beyond conceptualization.

This aporetic nature of Damascius' method reveals yet another fundamental trait of his thought. Although, as we shall see, he disagrees with his predecessors on the nature of the first principles, on the nature of the soul, and on a vast number of related issues, this profound disagreement typically is hidden, so to speak, behind a sophisticated discussion of the arguments of others. More often than not, in the discussion of a specific issue, Damascius first quotes, and then reaffirms, the standard view of the school, established principally by Proclus. Yet in the subsequent discussion he subtly turns this view upside down, pondering the problems at stake, until he comes up with a new version that is in fact irreconcilable with the view from which he started. The disagreement is not explicitly stated, but the outcome of the discussion reveals that the previous view has become untenable. This is most characteristic of Damascius' method, and it can be amply exemplified (we shall discuss some samples below). Thus,

⁸ Cf. Combès and Westerink 1986–91: I, xxv.

it appears that Damascius deliberately chooses not to present his doctrines as a thorough innovation, no matter how innovative and even revolutionary they in fact may be. The question then is: why does Damascius do this? To his listeners and pupils, the dissidence must have been clear enough. Why then not venture to proclaim the originality of those views? The point seems to be that the ever shrinking minority of pagan philosophers in an increasingly hostile Christian culture wanted to present a unified front at any cost.⁹

In this circumstance, it does not come as a surprise that Damascius did not have a substantial legacy. In fact, apart from references to him by his colleagues who joined him in exile, and by one or two Byzantine authors,¹⁰ his works disappear from the scene for many centuries. The manuscripts that contained four of Damascius' extant works (*De principiis* and *In Parmenidem* in one manuscript, *In Phaedonem* and *In Philebum* in another) were part of the so-called *Collectio philosophica*, brought together by a Byzantine scholar in the second half of the ninth century. The collection disappeared, and there are no traces of it until the fifteenth century. Cardinal Bessarion came into possession of the manuscript containing *De principiis* and *In Parmenidem*, in which the Cardinal's annotations can still be read. The manuscript was thereafter copied several times. The manuscript containing *In Phaedonem* and *In Philebum* reappeared around the same time, and was copied, among others, for Marsilio Ficino, who also quotes from it (under the name of Olympiodorus). Despite this renewal of interest, which entirely relied on one single copy of each text, Damascius had to wait until the nineteenth century (by the editions and works of Charles-Emile Ruelle) to regain the place he merits in the history of philosophy.

2 THOUGHT

Even if little is known about Damascius' life, it is clear that the most important feature of his intellectual development is his conversion, so to speak, from rhetoric to philosophy. The circumstances in which this took place are not clear, but it is obvious that the contacts with Proclus in his old age, and even more so with Isidorus, deeply influenced Damascius' life choice. Surprisingly enough, though, Damascius' rhetorical education did not render his style or his way of arguing easily accessible. As opposed to many other Platonists, and to Proclus in particular, Damascius' writing is deeply obscure and the arguments

⁹ Cf. Westerink 1971: 255.

¹⁰ Michael Psellus (eleventh century) mentions Damascius' name, and calls him an Aristotelian; he also refers to a Dapsamius, according to whom 'God is a simplicity that has absorbed the universe' – which is clearly a mistaken reference to Damascius. Other Byzantine texts may be relying on Damascius without mentioning him (see my *In Phil.*, introduction, clxxxi–clxxxiii).

are difficult to follow. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to call him the most difficult author of later ancient times – or maybe even of antiquity as a whole. In this sense, Damascius-the-philosopher did not really profit from Damascius-the-rhetorician. Yet in another, less obvious way, there is an influence of rhetoric on Damascius' philosophy. For his interest lies primarily in the adequacy of linguistic and rational tools for grasping reality. More often than not, his insights are presented in combination with a warning that the analysis is justified only by way of an indication (*kat' endeixin*), which points in the direction of where the final answer is supposed to lie, without, however, stating the truth itself in a definitive way. This also means that Damascius is prepared to consider the analyses of different (though exclusively pagan) traditions as equally true statements about a reality that remains hidden. Any apparent contradiction between them must be due to a lack of understanding, and thus, it would have to be smoothed away by means of interpretation. Thus, Plato, the Pythagoreans, the Egyptians, the *Chaldaean Oracles*, Orphism etc., all use a terminology that hints at the same principles of reality (see *Princ.* 2.24.1–24). This feature includes a number of important presuppositions, which reveal the nature of Damascius' own purposes. Of course, in doing so, Damascius reaffirms the principle of eclecticism prevalent in Greek culture. Yet Damascius adds an important point of his own; he takes the equivalence of all traditions as a token of the inadequacy of any expression to convey true reality (*Princ.* 2.10.3–12; cf. *Princ.* 1.96.20–3). Even Platonic terminology falls short of truth in this respect, although of course the statement of the transcendence of principles is seminal in Plato's own work. This means that Damascius' main purpose is to bring rational analysis to its own limits, by climbing up the ladder of reasoned arguments in order to detect a reality that is beyond our reach. This is true, according to Damascius, not only of the first principle, but of the entire intelligible realm. We shall have occasion to elaborate some examples below: the emphasis on the ineffability of the first principles, as well as the idea that we should not 'count the intelligible things on our fingers' (*Princ.* 3.136.8–9, quoted below), are expressions of this typically Damascian approach.

This approach is not essentially 'mystic' or 'irrational'; on the contrary, although Damascius displays a keen interest in mystical and mythical traditions, he integrates them into an account of reality that is thoroughly rationalistic. This integrative work relies on an enormous confidence in the capacity of reason to detect the articulations of reality. As far as Damascius is concerned, the way of reaching truth, even beyond the grasp of reason, runs via the full development of rational insight. In that sense, too, Damascius is a rhetorician, who acknowledges the power of *logos* (rational discourse), even while recognizing its limits. Thus, Damascius reunites two currents of late Platonism, one stressing

the importance of philosophical reason, the other seeing hieratic practice as the way to purifying the soul. In his commentary on the *Phaedo*, Damascius expounds a clear view on this. At *Phaedo* 69c–d, Socrates states that those who are called ‘Bacchuses’ by the mystic authors, i.e., those that have reached the stage of purification and have come to dwell with the gods, are in fact people who have practised philosophy in the right way. Commenting on this passage, Damascius refers to the discussion among the members of the Platonic schools, while pointing out that Plato actually reunited philosophical reason and hieratic practice – and, hence, that a correct version of Platonism would consist in combining the two rather than picking only one option:

To some philosophy is primary, for example, Porphyry and Plotinus and a great many other philosophers; to others hieratic practice, for example, Iamblichus, Syrianus, Proclus, and the hieratic school generally. Plato, however, recognizing that strong arguments can be advanced from both sides, has united the two into one single truth by calling the philosopher a ‘Bacchus’ (*Phaedo* 69d1); for by using the notion of a man who has detached himself from genesis as an intermediate term, we can identify the one with the other.

(*In Phaed.* 1.172.1–5)

Yet in the end, Plato points out that philosophy only gains this honourable place by its inherent reference to an unspeakable truth, and thus, that through philosophy, we come to a mystical experience. In that sense, Damascius does cherish the hieratic science and practice alongside philosophy, as in the following text:

Just as the other arts and sciences appeal to philosophy for corroboration, philosophy resorts to hieratic science to confirm her own doctrines.

(*In Phaed.* 2.109.1–3)¹¹

This confirmation of the role of hieratic science does not have to mean that Damascius entirely chooses the side of Iamblichus on this matter,¹² who (*De myst.* 96.7–10) describes a contrast between his own ‘theurgic’ views and the ‘philosophical’ or ‘rational’ stance represented by Porphyry. Although of course Damascius will have been actively involved in hieratic and theurgic practices, the whole enterprise of his philosophy, at least as far as we have it, is imbued with the spirit of rational inquiry into the limits of reason. Moreover, as we saw already, Damascius reinstalled philosophy as the core business of the Academy, as

¹¹ This is also made clear in the lines that continue the analysis at *In Phaed.* 1.172.6–7: ‘Still, it remains evident that he intends to honour the philosopher by the title of Bacchus, as we honour the Intellect by calling it God, or profane light by giving it the same name as to mystic light.’

¹² This is the view, e.g., of Westerink, who in his edition of *In Phaed.* (ad 1.172. 104) notes that ‘Damascius, in spite of his attempt at impartiality, evidently prefers the “hieratic school”’.

a reaction against his predecessors' emphasis on theurgic practice. That should be taken as evidence to the fact that Damascius did try to find a good equilibrium between theurgy and philosophy.

2.1 *The first principles*

Damascius' struggle with the Platonic tradition brings him to question a large number of points, among which is the analysis of the first principle of reality. Damascius' main work opens with a dilemma that immediately sets this matter in sharp relief (*Princ.* 1.1.4–2.20): is the first principle to be thought of as transcending all things (*epekeina tōn pantōn*), or should it be seen as part of the whole universe, as the summit that heads all things proceeding from it? If the principle is situated outside everything, then 'everything' is not everything any longer – hence, on this horn of the dilemma, the principle must be seen as part of the whole. Yet, on the other hand, if the principle is to be situated within the whole, then the existence of the whole as such remains unaccounted for: it would be without principle or without cause (*anarchos kai anaitios*), as there must be a point at which the causal connection of all things has its first beginning. If the principle is seen as part of the whole, then one must always look for a cause by which the whole is produced – unless one is prepared to accept an infinite regress of ever preceding causes, which would be inconceivable.¹³ Hence, on this horn of the dilemma, the first principle of all must be situated outside the whole. The only possible solution to this dilemma is to accept that there is a principle before the universe, which cannot be called 'principle' in the way we are used to, nor 'One', nor even 'the First'. All those names include a reference to a kind of inclusion of other realities, which are somehow contained in the principle and will emanate from it. This way of speaking is always referring to the principle as if it would be a unitary 'whole', introducing a contamination that should be avoided when talking about the highest principle: it cannot be a 'whole', nor even 'one', as this would always imply the development of plurality out of it. Even if this 'principle' would be thought of in its purest form, detached from the plurality that will emanate from it, it would in any case be contrasted to the division of things, and thus, it would not be thought of as really standing apart. Hence the only thing one can do about this principle is remain silent, and suspend all positive determinations (*Princ.* 1.4.13–5.17).

¹³ This impossibility of an infinite regress of causal connections is an ancient idea, which Damascius just takes for granted in the passage referred to. The idea underlies Plato's and Aristotle's arguments for the necessity of accepting a first cause of movement (Plato, *Laws* 10.893b–895c; *Phaedr.* 245c–246a; Aristotle, *Met.* 12.7; *Phys.* 8.5–6 and 10).

Characteristically, however, Damascius does not explain this answer in a straightforward manner. He elaborates on a number of different questions and answers before coming to a solution, and even those answers are not clear cut. In any case, Damascius here displays sympathy with Iamblichus' views.¹⁴ The latter had introduced a strict distinction between the Ineffable and the One, considering that even the name 'the One' would ascribe too much determination to the first principle, and that even if one would adduce arguments to safeguard the unity of the One, its very notion implies a contrast, and thus an undeniable relation, with multiplicity. That is all too much said about the first principle, the ineffability and transcendence of which must be established beyond doubt. Damascius takes over those objections, thus reacting against Proclus' attempt to conflate the One and the Ineffable. According to Proclus, the One is the cause that contains everything, while at the same time transcending all things.¹⁵ Damascius argues that this cannot be an adequate account of the nature of the first principle. The first part of his main work, *De principiis*, is entirely devoted to this issue. Damascius argues for the acceptance of an ineffable principle beyond the One, on the basis of 'that which is better known to us', i.e., on the basis of the contents of the terms and definitions we use. For in the first place, in reality as we experience it, that which is not related to other things (the absolute) is always to be situated at a higher level than the relative (as for instance the life devoted to theory is considered higher than the political life) – hence, as the highest conceivable reality, the first principle should be thought of as entirely transcendent, absolute and unrelated. Secondly, in our experience, that which is a unity or a simplicity is ranked higher than a plurality or a multiplicity – hence, the one, which is a whole containing all reality in a unitary way, i.e., without any differentiation (it contains the whole as a unity), must be ranked higher than the multiple beings that proceed from it. Yet, as the notion of 'the whole' always includes a reference to multiplicity (or at the very least includes an opposition between the one and the many), the first principle must transcend this One that is the whole. The first principle must be detached from all opposition and all hints to multiplicity. Thirdly, in our experience, those things that escape from our conceptualization are seen as more venerable than the things we can easily grasp. In this sense, our notion of 'the One' is the result of a purification of our thought: by concentrating on the most simple and the most comprehensive of all of our concepts, we

¹⁴ Cf. Simplicius, *In Phys.* 795.11–17 Diels: 'As far as Damascius is concerned, by his commitment to his work, and because of his sympathy towards the ideas of Iamblichus, he did not hesitate to contradict Proclus' doctrines on many occasions.'

¹⁵ Proclus, *In Parm.* 6.1108.19–29; 7.517.43 Steel (= 68.10–11 Klibansky–Labowsky); *Theol. Plat.* 2.5.37.24–5.

are advancing towards that which is more venerable. Yet we should extend this purification one step further, as even the notion of ‘One’ remains a well-circumscribed notion with a well-determined content. As the first principle escapes all notional determination, it should be called ‘nothing’ rather than ‘one’ (*Princ.* 1.6.16–8.5).

All of those arguments are variations on a theme: even if strictly minimal, the determination implied in the name ‘the One’ is too much to be attributed to the first principle. It is even impossible to name this principle ‘a principle’, as that would already jeopardize its transcendence. And even the name of ‘the Ineffable’ (*to aporrēton*), by which we could give an empty place to the First in our system, implies too much (*Princ.* 1.8.12–20). Hence, one cannot even say about the First that it is ineffable, as terms like ‘unspeakable’, ‘inconceivable’, etc., only refer to the way in which we speak about it. In no way do they reveal the nature of the First in itself – that would require a standpoint that we are absolutely unable to attain. Or, as Damascius would have it:

Perhaps the absolutely ineffable is ineffable in the sense that one cannot even state of it that it is ineffable.

(*Princ.* 1.10.22–4, tr. Opsomer)

Thus, the ineffability of the First is not just a token of our ignorance, it is rather an expression of our ‘super-ignorance’ (*hyperagnoia*, *Princ.* 1.84.18): an ignorance for the description of which even the terms of ignorance or ineffability are deficient.

As intimated before, this analysis constitutes a return to Iamblichus, over against Proclus. Damascius does not, however, just restate the Iamblichaeon viewpoint. He reintroduces the distinction between the Ineffable and the One, as the latter did, while at the same time remaining sensitive to the ineffability that is inherent in the notion of ‘the One’ (below the Ineffable) as well – a feature that was emphasized by Proclus. On this basis, Damascius will eventually introduce a new distinction within the system, at the level of the One.

If one carefully considers the notion of ‘the One’, Damascius argues (*Princ.* 1.94.13–98.27), one must recognize that we can never call the One ‘one’ in a real sense, since a real unity can only be a unity that is contrasted with plurality, or that unifies an underlying plurality (*Princ.* 1.98.11–15) – and again, the One in itself should be thought of as detached from any reference to plurality. Thus, the One must be seen as different from the one in the genuine sense of the word, which, again, leads to a recognition of the ineffability of the One in itself. Damascius elaborates a terminological distinction between the ‘undifferentiated One’ (*adiakriton hen*), as opposed to the ‘differentiated’ (*diakrimenon*) or ‘formal

one' (*eidētikon hen*),¹⁶ which is thought of as rendering the notion of unity in terms of the Platonic Forms. The undifferentiated One is so singular that it cannot be called 'one', for we do not find any determination on which we can ground the attribution of a name. Hence, the best we can do is leave out the name of 'the One' (*Princ.* 1.98.20: *dioper oude hen auto klēteon*).

Thus, a thorough analysis of the One below the Ineffable principle gives rise to the recognition of its ineffability: the One is darkened by the presence of the first, the Ineffable, and 'remains so to speak within the inner sanctuary (*aduton*) of that silence' (*Princ.* 1.84.20–1). Yet at this level, the ineffability is no longer absolute:

There still is a great deal of ineffability or incomprehensibility in the One, as well as the impossibility of bringing it together with other things or of positing it at a determinate place, but then with the suggestion of their opposites; for those characteristics are higher than their opposites.

(*Princ.* 1.56.8–11; cf. 2.22.11–23.6)

This means that the very negation of attributes of the One refers to the existence of these attributes at a lower level. This does not mean that the One would be a relative notion after all, as if it were in opposition to plurality; that remains excluded (see, e.g., *Princ.* 2.15.1–20; 2.28.14–16). But it does imply that the things that are effable, or knowable, are entering the stage. Damascius essentially takes over Proclus' (and Syrianus') analysis that the negations regarding the One in the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* generate the affirmations of the second hypothesis. The negations have no value in determining the nature of the One *in se*, but they do indicate that that which is negated has a real meaning at a lower level: the negations only have a sense if there is something to be denied, and thus, the kernel of a negation always is a positive notion of high value. The denial that the One has being or is one only makes sense if unity and being are conceived as positive notions of extreme importance. In that sense, the order of the negations is hierarchical, and the most important attributes are the last ones to be denied (see *Princ.* 1.22.15–19). Thus, the negations do tell us what the lower realms should look like, even if they do not determine the One in itself. Ultimately, they only reveal the logic and hierarchy of lower reality (including our notions), without any repercussions on the One *per se*.

In any case, this analysis allows us, according to Damascius, to consider the One as the first genuine principle of reality (whereas, as we saw, the Ineffable principle could not be called a principle in the true meaning of the word).

¹⁶ Other terms to indicate this opposition are 'the indeterminate One' (*to adioriston hen*) versus 'the determinate one' (*to diōrismenon hen*); see, e.g., *Princ.* 1.94.15–96.9.

Of course, in itself, the One is nothing but One, but as a principle, it must encompass everything, and all things will gradually be developed from this initial unity. This means that the One is everything, but each and every time *qua* one (*kata to hen*). Thus, it is the true and first cause, as the word ‘cause’ indicates this peculiar relationship between the One that encompasses everything, and the plurality of things that come out of it (*Princ.* 1.5.2–17). In the most elaborate terminology, which Damascius attains only in the course of the analysis (*Princ.* 2.39.8–25), this principle is called ‘the One-Everything’ (*to hen panta*). Yet, again, this name is only an indication (*endeixis*), as the One remains ineffable. ‘One’ and ‘Everything’ are just symbols expressing our way of conceiving the causal force of the One (*Princ.* 1.81.8–11; 2.23.7–22). Seen in itself, the One cannot be the cause of anything but the One itself – even saying that the One unifies (*henizei*) requires a duality that is inconceivable (*Princ.* 1.107.3–18). Thus, the One can only produce the One, or rather: the One does not have an offspring (*Princ.* 2.19.8–9: *to hen, ho estin hen, oudamōs proienai pepyken*; see also 2.20.12). Even when we see it – and rightly so – as the cause of the universe, it produces nothing but oneness.

Thus, the One is not a cause in the sense that it would produce reality in all details. Rather, it produces ‘everything at once’, within the One itself. The further elaboration and articulation of plurality is not due to the One itself, but to the self-development of lower reality (*Princ.* 1.91.17–92.10). The first ‘other’ than the One posits itself immediately below the One and transmits the otherness to the lower realms (*Princ.* 1.106.23–107.3). Thus the principle of distinction (*archē diakriseōs*) comes to be a principle that is needed to explain how the products of the One are different from it. As all distinction is due to plurality, the principle of distinction will be the principle that causes multiplicity (*pollopoios archē*, *Princ.* 1.100.15–101.11). Yet as the first thing below the One, this principle can itself be nothing other than one. It is plurality, seen as a unity, or, in the most elaborate terminology, it is ‘Everything-One’ (*panta hen*), as opposed to the previous ‘One-Everything’. This second principle is virtually identical to the former one, but in the description of it, the emphasis lies more on the aspect of plurality than that of unity (*Princ.* 2.15.15–20; 2.38.8–17). Thus, there is no real plurality at the level of the first principles. The subsequent stages of the One (‘One-Everything’, which is the cause of unity, and ‘Everything-One’, which is the cause of plurality) are *aspects* of the One,¹⁷ rather than distinct principles. The question of how plurality is produced by the One is not yet solved, but postponed to a lower level of reality (cf. *Princ.* 2.98.11–18).

¹⁷ Cf. Dillon 1996: 125.

Thus, Damascius introduces a distinction (albeit a symbolic one) at the level of the One, in a way parallel to the introduction of three stages of the intellect (the intelligible / the intelligible and intellective / the intellective) by Syrianus and Proclus, after Iamblichus' introduction of the intelligible and the intellective as two different layers of the intellect. What we see here happening in the Platonic tradition is an ongoing movement of sophisticating the explanation of higher reality by introducing ever more intermediary stages between the first principle and the reality we know and experience.

2.2 *The intelligible world*

At a third level of reality, the principles of unity and of plurality are combined in the 'Unified' (*to hēnōmenon*). This third principle is one and many, without any distinction (*Princ.* 2.17.17–20). It is the One again, but this time as participated in by the lower levels (*Princ.* 2.17.3–8; cf. 1.76.3–77.8). Obviously, it gets the unity from the first stage of the One, and the (unitary) plurality from the second one, but as a combination of both, it occupies a separate place, and has its proper causal operation in the universe (*Princ.* 2.17.21–18.25; 2.43.20–45.12): all possible combinations in lower reality are dependent on this third principle.

This *hēnōmenon* is Damascius' rendering of the 'one being' (*hen on*) that underlies the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* – or, more precisely, the highest stage of this *hen on* (*Princ.* 2.57.6–11), the principle of Being, which, as such, precedes being itself. It transcends the distinction between 'one' and 'being' that is implied in being (*Princ.* 2.94.19–26). Thus, this principle represents a unity of being and one (*Princ.* 2.88.1–97.7; esp. 90.14–91.5 and 96.6–17), as a whole with parts that are as yet undistinguished; it is 'something plural' (*polu ti*) rather than 'things plural' (*pleiō tina*: *Princ.* 2.48.17–49.22).

Since there are not yet real distinctions at this level, the Unified will be everything, just as much as the One-Everything and the Everything-One encompass all things. The Unified is a third 'entire universe' (*holos kosmos*) that is essentially identical to the previous principles. The differences between them are conceivable only if one looks at the principles from below.

Damascius takes over the Proclean outlook that the 'one being' is the highest level of intelligible reality (i.e., the Intelligible or *noēton* in itself: see *Princ.* 2.51.9, and the entire elaboration of this notion in 2.100.1–214.20). Starting from this principle, reality will emanate from it in a gradual triadic way, on the basis of the Platonic triad Being / Life / Intellect. Damascius reaffirms his predecessors' point that the distinction is still latent at all those levels, although the succession of the principles reveals a steady growth towards real multiplicity. Only at the lowest level of the intellectual world, the 'intellective intellect' (*noeros nous*) are

‘one’ and ‘being’ truly separate entities, because of the ‘difference’ (*heterōtēs*) that occurs here for the first time (*Princ.* 3.120.1–17; 3.122.21–124.20). From there onwards, the difference will reign over all subsequent levels of reality. This means, ultimately, that the intelligible world is one in itself and many only as thought of by intellect, or to be precise: that intellect needs the distinctions it attributes to the intelligible world, in order to understand how reality comes to be as an emanation from the One.

Notwithstanding his reliance on his predecessors concerning the structure of the intelligible world, Damascius disagrees with them on a very important issue: the acceptance of Limit and the Unlimited as opposite principles, immediately below the One.

Damascius cannot accept a duality of principles at a level where there is no real distinction. Proclus’ (and already Iamblichus’) system was to be read as a procession headed by a scheme of four principles, taken from Plato’s *Philebus* (23c–31b): the Cause (*aitia*), Limit (*peras*) and the Unlimited (*apeiron*), and the Mixture (*to mikton*) that results from the combination of those two. They identified the cause as the One, and posited the duality of principles (Limit and Unlimited) immediately below the One.

Damascius provides a lengthy discussion (*Princ.* 2.15.1–39.27) of the question of how many principles precede the intelligible triad (i.e., the Unified in his system). His main argument is that it is impossible to accept a real distinction (*antidiairesis*) of two principles at a level where ‘distinction’ cannot possibly mean anything. Iamblichus and Proclus thus made a serious error regarding one of the basic premisses of the system: the acceptance of the unity of the highest levels of reality. Instead of taking over Proclus’ and Iamblichus’ reading of Limit and the Unlimited, Damascius repeatedly states that the *Philebus* offers only deficient names of the principles, which are equivalent to any other set of names, like ‘unity and plurality’, or ‘Aether and Chaos’, ‘the Monad and the Indefinite Dyad’, and so on (*Princ.* 2.24.1–24; 2.2.11–18; 2.10.3–12). The terminology is not decisive here, for any name would fall short of determining the principles. The doctrines taken from the *Philebus*, which were essential for Proclus’ system, have lost their privileged position, and can only serve as an indicative terminology, which, by the suggestion of a distinction, is even less apt to indicate the principles than other possible terms.

The same holds true for the ‘Unified’: it cannot be seen as a truly separate entity, apart from Limit and the Unlimited, as that would presuppose the existence of distinction. The names we attribute to this principle can only be acceptable as an indication (*kat’ endeixin*): if we call it ‘Being’, we actually transpose a characteristic of lower reality as a tentative description of the principle

from which being is derived. Thus, the Unified can be seen as the ‘source’ (*pēgē*) or the root (*rizā*) out of which the lower reality stems, and which in itself is not really distinct from the One (*anekphoitētos tou henos*): *Princ.* 2.63.9–65.2 (cf. also 2.32.5–6).

Hence, it is impossible to accept the analysis of Proclus (and Iamblichus), that Limit and the Unlimited form two series in reality, the combinations of which constitute ‘mixed’ beings at all different levels. Instead, one must accept a gradual development of the identical principle, in a steady procession. The Proclean version of the system is rejected, because it introduces too large a number of principles (the duality of which is inexplicable) immediately below the One.

Within this framework, Damascius also took over the Proclean doctrine of the henads. In fact, he uses the Proclean terminology in exactly the same context as Proclus himself would have it, describing the henads as units that all coincide with the first One; they are distinguished as ‘henads’ on the basis of their effects, i.e., the classes of being that depend on each of them. Thus, the henads are the divinities that lead the classes of intelligible beings (i.e., the reality described in the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*). As such, they are imparticipable (*amethektōi*), but they are combined with *ousia* at all different stages of the intelligible realm. Within the classes of beings that depend on those intelligible beings, the henads are present as participated (*metechomenoi*) unities.¹⁸ There is, however, a difference between Damascius’ and Proclus’ views of the henads, in that Damascius considerably changes the interpretation of their causal chain. In a series of comments on Proclus which opens Damascius’ commentary on the *Parmenides* in its present form, he specifies that the characteristics of all supra-essential henads are preserved and transmitted through a number of intermediary divinities, down to the particular things that ultimately participate in them (*In Parm.* 1.7.10–9.7), thus revealing the presence of gods everywhere in reality, even down to matter (*ibid.*, 15.7–16.15). The idea itself that the gods (i.e., the henads) are everywhere, is not different from what one finds in Proclus, but the analysis is different. Damascius specifies that, after a long period of pondering, he finally decided to reject the Proclean explanation of the One-Being as a combination of a one that rides upon a vehicle (*ochēma*), and thus, of elements that remain external to each other, and for which a medium is needed to tighten the two together. In reality, however, one never finds the one without being, which is a clear token that the combination of one and being has a proper existence, and

¹⁸ See, e.g., Dam., *Princ.* 1.123.1–10; 3.80.6–81.22; *In Parm.* 1.19.19–27; 2.5.13–7.17; 65.5–68.10. Cf. Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* 3.4–6; *El. Theol.* 123.110.4–9, 162.140.28–142.3; *In Parm.* 6.1048.11–1051.33; Van Riel 2001.

that, as a principle, this combination sets itself forth in lower reality (*In Parm.* 1.3.14–5.23). Thus, a larger role is attributed to the combination of one and being in the transmission of characteristics to lower reality, whereas Proclus was inclined to attribute the causal role to the one in itself, on every level of the existence of One-Being. This is not a minor change, as it modifies the causal function of the henads themselves. Their causal operation is no longer seen as the effect solely of the summit of the combination (that is, of the one that drives upon being), in which process the ongoing specification is given by the specific being upon which the henad rides; rather, the combined existence of one-and-being sets itself as a cause on every level. Hence, in Damascius, the specificities of the beings that depend on a henad are not the result of the element of ‘being’ in the combination (the henad in itself remaining identical with the One), but they are caused by the previous One-Being as such. If, for instance, the material gods (which is a class of the encosmic, sublunary gods) operate in matter, then their characteristic of being ‘material’ is not derived from the being on which they operate (as Proclus would have it), but from their very own characteristic as a henad. For everywhere in reality, every characteristic stems from the divinity (*In Parm.* 1.16.5–10). So it is the henad that brings forth the characteristic of being, and not vice versa, the being that specifies the nature of the henad.

As we saw, Damascius accepts the Proclean analysis of the intelligible world as consisting of three triads, each of which is further subdivided into triads. Yet his criticism of that analysis returns in his denial of any genuine plurality at the level of the intelligible. The description of the intelligible triads must be seen as the breaking of a colour through a prism:

It is as the uniform colour of the sun appears in cloud with three mirroring dimensions in the rainbow which appears multicoloured.

(*Princ.* 3.142.4–6, tr. Sorabji)

Thus, despite our descriptions, all principles in the intelligible world are actually expressions of one single reality. Each one of them is ‘everything’, without distinction – or, as Damascius has it:

Let us not count the intelligible on our fingers (*mē epi daktulōn arithmōmen to noēton*) . . . Let us look in that direction with an eye like that, and see, even from afar and as it were from the outermost limits, that the intelligible is everywhere undifferentiated and everywhere uncounted.

(*Princ.* 3.136.8–9 and 14–17, tr. Sorabji)

One can represent this analysis of the highest principles and of the intelligible world in the following scheme:

The Ineffable

The One

One-Everything

Everything-One

The intelligible realm

The Unified = Intelligible Being (1st triad) (one, i.e., henad, and being without distinction)

2nd triad: Life (henad + being)

3rd triad: Intellect (henad + being)

Subsequently Damascius posits (in line with Proclus) a smooth development of plurality, through the stages of the ‘intelligible and intellective’ realm (three triads, in which one and being are getting separated), and of the ‘intellective’ realm (three triads which produce a real distinction between one and being).

2.3 *The soul*

After Plotinus, the Platonic theory of the soul underwent a number of important changes. Starting with Iamblichus, the later Platonists all reject Plotinus’ dual scheme, according to which the essential part of the soul remains fixed in the realm of the intellect, while the lower parts descend into the material world.¹⁹ The new view is that the soul is one and indivisible. It descends in its entirety, even though it maintains its own identity and lasting existence. Yet among those who maintained this position, a new disagreement arose concerning this lasting identity. The core of the question was whether the soul is impassible, i.e., whether it can or cannot be affected by the things with which it is mingled in the material world. Proclus adhered to the traditional view that the soul is unaffected; thus, it has a never changing substance, even though its activities may involve change. Damascius, on the other hand (taking up an idea of Iamblichus), has a different and revolutionary view. According to him, the soul does indeed undergo alteration by the outside world, and as a result, coupled with the activities by which the soul got involved with the material world, undergoes a change *in its substance* – without for that matter jeopardizing the soul’s numeric identity.

This revolutionary view is not spelled out in such a way as to be a radical departure from what Damascius’ predecessors had held. Strangely enough, Damascius rather elaborates it as a comment on Proclus’ views, although he displays a definite awareness of the radical nature of his own account. Moreover, from the way he introduces his point, we may suppose that Damascius only

¹⁹ Plotinus, *Enn.* 4.8.8.2–3 and 12–13. See also 1.1.3.23–4 and 2.9.2.4–18.

reached this view after a lengthy struggle with the difficulties attendant upon the alternative positions. For indeed, Damascius' doctrine of the soul only gets its final shape in the *Parmenides* commentary, whereas the earlier works reveal a continuous hesitation, after an initial agreement with Proclus' views. Thus, at *De principiis* 1.34.1–8 and 59.20–3, he assumes the Proclean viewpoint as his own, accepting the impassibility of the soul and the impossibility of substantial change. At 3.76.2–14, one witnesses a certain hesitation: the bottom line remains that there is no change in the soul, but Damascius adds that *maybe* the soul's substance is part of becoming.²⁰ He promises a fuller exploration of this point in another work. This must have been what he did in his commentary on the *Timaeus*, as in his *In Parmenidem*, Damascius refers to the latter work and adds the following conclusion:

Perhaps we should now venture to speak out on the things we have been longing to give birth to for a long time, namely that there might well be a change touching our substance. For that it is not eternal, that is the clear teaching of *Timaeus*.

(*In Parm.* 4.13.1–4, tr. Opsomer)

In order to explain his uncommon doctrine, Damascius compares the soul to a sponge, which swells or shrinks depending on the circumstances of its environment, while remaining the same sponge all over:

When the soul unites with higher reality, she becomes more perfect and more unified than she normally is, but when she unites with the lower, then she divides and pluralises herself around those things, like a sponge that, without losing its being, merely swells and tightens up.

(*In Parm.* 4.16.23–17.4)

Thus, the soul is radically affected by her environment: she will be able to perform certain activities, or will be prevented from performing others, by the outer circumstances, just as the faculty of sight is enabled by light, and hindered by darkness. Damascius hastens to add that this is not just circumstantial or accidental to the soul's being, or that it would only concern the soul's activity: by her unity with those external beings, the soul's own substance is changed. What is changed in this process, is not the soul's form or number (*kat'eidos kai*

²⁰ A similar hesitation can be found in the commentary on the *Philebus* (§ 155), where Damascius expresses his doubts as to the existence of an unchanging substance of the soul. On the basis of the interpretation of the principles of Limit and the Unlimited, the *Philebus* commentary certainly predates *De principiis* 1.94.13–106.22, as what we read here contradicts the essentially Proclean interpretation elaborated in *In Phil.* 97–112. Thus, the relative chronology of Damascius' works is probably the following: *De princ.* 1 (first part) – *In Philebum* – *De princ.* 1 (second part) – 3 – *In Timaeum* – *In Parmenidem* – *In Phaedonem*. The posteriority of *In Parm.* vis-à-vis the *Timaeus* commentary is beyond doubt, on the basis of the references to *In Tim.* in the *Parmenides* commentary.

arithmon, *In Parm.* 4.17.24) nor the soul's capacity of self-movement, but rather the specific nature of the substance (*to toionde tēs ousias*, 4.18.3).

This means that the *ousia* (substance, or essence) of the soul fluctuates along with the way in which it relates itself to the outside world. This happens as a result of the bond between the soul and the body, by which the soul has a kind of 'sympathy' and orientation in a certain direction:

If the soul remained unaffected, the inclination to the worse would not occur in its activities. No, activities assimilate themselves to substances and are engendered by them, as even before the body the soul itself inclines. And the body would not hinder it, if the soul did not tie itself to it. Indeed, how could a body and the life of a body be a barrier and an obstacle to an incorporeal and transcendent kind of being? Those things have no influence on a soul that has no inclination towards them, not any more than generation has an influence on the heavens. But the bond is sympathy, which the soul has from the very beginning and from its own, that is to say from its substance which is somehow affected and inclines towards the worse.

(*In Parm.* 4.13.8–19, tr. Opsomer)

If the soul were totally transcendent, it could not be affected by lower reality. Yet as the soul is present in the lower world, it cannot avoid being affected. The influences from the part of the lower world reveal themselves in the inclination of the soul, to the better (by nature) or to the worse (by acquired sympathy). In the wake of this inclination, the soul undergoes a change: it can become entirely determined by irrational desires, or entirely rational, or occupy any stage in between those extremes. The different parts or functions of the soul that played a major role in Plotinus' account,²¹ now are modified into the different levels on which the soul finds a substantial determination, that is to say: into the different possible substances of the soul. Those substances entail their own activities:

When the soul descends towards generation it projects some thousands of different lives, and, of course, substantial lives precede the active lives; but when the soul ascends again, it dispenses with them, annihilates and destroys them, establishing itself as much as possible in the unified and the undivided.

(*In Parm.* 4.14.13–17, tr. Opsomer)²²

²¹ See, for instance, *Emm.* 1.1.4.1–13. For those functions, Plotinus does not use an unequivocal vocabulary: he uses both the Platonic and the Aristotelian division, although in practice, he seems to prefer the Aristotelian account, making a distinction between the following psychic functions: *phutikon* (also called *auxētikon*), *aisthētikon* and *dianoētikon* (also *logizomenon* or *logos*). For a more detailed account, see Blumenthal 1971: 44, who also demonstrates (1971: 100–5) that there is no difference between *dianoia* and *logistikon* or *logos*: all these terms indicate discursive reason, which is 'part' of the incarnate soul.

²² See Steel 1978: 97 n.21.

Thus, the soul is reaffirmed to be a 'wanderer of the metaphysical world' (as W. R. Inge characterized the Plotinian soul),²³ but in the case of Damascius, this wandering is seen as a temporal succession of substantial changes that the soul undergoes in the course of its life:

And it is our substance, apparently, that is the first to cause a fissure in time, inaugurating change over time. And, to be more explicit, by change I mean change according to the substance itself; when this fissure has come about, generation and corruption through change immediately follow.

(*In Parm.* 4.37.5–9, tr. Opsomer).

As the soul is the principle of self-motion, the substantial change that goes along with the soul's movements is to be seen as self-inflicted: self-motion and numeric identity are the basic elements that remain intact during the entire process of substantial change. Thus, the soul changes itself, rather than that it would be a passive player who undergoes the game.

This description does not entail the view that all possible substantial states of the soul are equally valuable. Quite the contrary; there is a clear hierarchy underlying the different stages on which a soul settles herself. As is the case with all Platonists, Damascius estimates the life according to the intellect as the highest form of psychic life (see, e.g., *In Phaed.* 2.143, or *In Phil.* 136 and 155).

Within the process of substantial change, the soul does not lose her identity. Damascius argues for this 'identity within change', stating that the change does not concern the substance as such, but its participation. This means that any change in the soul's substantial nature cannot do away with the basic formal determination of a soul as 'soul'. Without this fixed formal determination, the soul would cease to be a soul if she undergoes any substantial change. Damascius calls this fixed identity the 'specific form of the soul's existence' (*eidōs tēs huparxeōs*). What is changed, then, is the 'form of its substantial participation' (*to [eidōs] tēs ousiōdous methexeōs*; both formulae in *In Parm.* 4.47.6–7). In this way, the soul undergoes a substantial change, as her substance comes to participate in a different substantial form. This change is radical, in that it affects not just accidental determinations, but also the soul's very essence. Thus, Damascius holds a subtle position that tries to combine the essential identity of the soul with its essential change. Despite the difficulties resulting from this position,²⁴ it is safe enough to say that Damascius really meant that the substance of the soul is wholly affected by change, and that the form of existence that remains fixed is the formal determination that makes the soul a soul, i.e., that specifies the place of the soul as an intermediary being between the intellect and the

²³ 1929³: I, 203. ²⁴ See Steel 1978: 111–16.

material world. Thus, a soul may be fluctuating between an intellectual life and a life of irrational passions, and undergo substantial changes between those two levels, yet it will never trespass beyond the boundaries of its existence: it will not become ‘intellect’ itself, nor ‘body’.

2.4 Matter and place

Damascius’ view on matter is elaborated in close connection with Proclus’ doctrine. Within the Platonic universe, the Demiurge brings order in a pre-existent substrate, in which he has to imprint the Forms. In the interpretation of this substrate, Proclus and Damascius (like other Late Platonists) combined the Aristotelian notion of prime matter with the Platonic account. Yet they remained truly Platonic in that, on the basis of a literal reading of Plato’s *Timaeus* (30a; 52d–53b), this substrate is seen as a recalcitrant Receptacle, with its own dynamic power.²⁵ This ‘first substrate’ is not the same as the matter one finds in the combination with the forms, as a result of the Demiurge’s intervention. The material forms (*enula eidē*), constitute the Aristotelian hylemorphic unity. This level is preceded, however, by other substrates, in which the determination is ever decreasing. At the ‘lowest’ level we find the sheer darkness of totally undetermined matter. It is the Receptacle itself, deprived of any form whatsoever. In the constitution of the physical universe, this first substrate is superseded by a second one (*deuteron hupokeimenon*). It has motion and rest, sameness and otherness, and it is quantitatively, though not yet qualitatively determined. It is sheer bulk, having size and extension. This unqualified body (*apoion sōma*) is moving in an inharmonious and disorderly way (*kinoumenon plēmnelōs kai ataktōs*, cf. *Tim.* 30a), thus resisting the imposition of form. According to Proclus, this second substrate is followed by a third, which is still in a disorderly movement, and which the *Timaeus* (30a) refers to as ‘all that is visible’ (*pan hoson horaton*). This substrate bears in itself the ‘traces of the forms’ (*ichnē tōn eidōn*, *Tim.* 53b), thus immediately prefiguring formed (Aristotelian) matter on the level above it.²⁶

The recalcitrant nature of the substrate does not, for that matter, entail that matter would be evil, or a principle opposed to the One Good. In a subtle analysis, Proclus points out that the different levels of the substrate are brought about by different causes. The highest principle, the One, constitutes the lowest level of the substrate, whereas the ‘second substrate’ is caused by the Demiurge’s

²⁵ Cf. Sorabji 1988: 214–15.

²⁶ See my ‘Proclus on Matter and Physical Necessity’ (van Riel 2009). The main passages in which Proclus elaborates his theory of material substrates are *In Parm.* 2.735.18–736.6; 6.1119.4–1123.18; *In Tim.* 1.325.10–328.12; 383.1–22; 385.17–388.28.

'Model' (*to paradeigma*), the operation range of which does not extend to the lowest level. Thirdly, the material forms are brought about by the Demiurge, whose power is again limited to this (Aristotelian) level of the material substrate. Hence, the lowest stage of the procession of the universe is caused by no other principle than the One Good itself, the indeterminacy of which is reflected (and reversed) in the indeterminate potency of the Receptacle. The receptivity of the different levels of the substrate varies along with the creative agency of the causes that operate on them.²⁷

Damascius takes over the basic principles of this doctrine, but not without thorough modifications. He agrees on the overall structure, that the highest principle causes the lowest substrate, that the second substrate is caused by a lower principle, and so forth (Dam., *In Parm.* 4.66.7–17). As we have seen, however, in Damascius' system the One is no longer the highest principle. The Ineffable takes pride of place, and hence, in the procession of matter, the lowest substrate must be caused by the Ineffable rather than by the One.²⁸ In his exegesis of the fifth hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, which according to all later Platonists had unformed matter as its object, Damascius points out that the negation of the one in this part of the text (*Parm.* 159e–160b) parallels the negation of the one in the first hypothesis (*Parm.* 141e–142a). This means that, as in the first hypothesis the One is negated and transcended by the Ineffable, the lowest matter (*eschatē hulē*) is below all oneness (*In Parm.* 4.72.9–73.22). In fact, the first substrate is as ineffable as the first principle itself (*In Parm.* 4.68.1–69.23). It is its last dregs and sediment (*trux kai hupostathmē*, *In Parm.* 4.66.17), and cannot be grasped in itself by any notion whatsoever. Yet it does display a potentiality by which it can serve as a substrate. This receptivity (*epitēdeiotēs*, or *peponthēsis*)²⁹ is the result of a primordial operation of the henads, which all need a substrate for their individual existence, and thus impart the traces of their own characteristics upon what thus becomes their proper substrate (*In Parm.* 4.95.6–15). Thus, the substrate receives a preliminary imprint that specifies it and makes it receptive to the imposition of the henads. In this process, the

²⁷ See Proclus, *In Parm.* 4.844.11–845.15 and *Theol. Plat.* 5.16.

²⁸ *In Parm.* 4.72.3–8; cf. 78.1–3 and 70.1–71.6.

²⁹ *Peponthēsis* is a neologism of Damascius' (derived from Plato's *Sophist* 245a–b: *to peponthos to hen*), which indicates the imprint of the characteristic of the one to that which undergoes it, but which also implies the preliminary active movement of the substrate towards the forming principle. In his commentary on the *Philebus* (136.1–5), Damascius points out that the imposition of the form is preceded by a certain progression towards it from the part of the material substrate. In this sense, 'undergoing' becomes an active operation of a substrate that inclines towards the form (cf. *Princ.* 2.81.1–26, where Damascius elaborates on this 'passive activity': receptivity is the activity of that of which the operation consists in undergoing). It is prepared to undergo precisely this form or unit, by the receptivity which was installed in it by the form or the unit itself.

creativity of the higher is mirrored by the receptivity of the lower (*In Parm.* 4.71.11–19).

At the lowest level, ultimate matter receives its primordial receptivity from the operation of the first henad, the One-in-itself. Thus, the ‘second substrate’ is brought about, which has become potential (*dunamei*) towards further determination (*In Parm.* 4.95.15–25). As Damascius explains, this second substrate thus gets the ‘traces of the traces’. In the next stage, it will be further determined by the forms, which send out their traces, thus ultimately preparing the material substrate to be taken up within the hylemorphic unity (*In Parm.* 4.71.19–72.2).³⁰

In his concluding remarks on the fifth hypothesis, Damascius emphasizes that this does not mean that matter would lose its own nature, or that it would be transformed by the imposition of the form. Matter undergoes the form, but retains its own dynamic (*In Parm.* 4.77.21–5). Thus, Damascius again lines up with Proclus, elaborating a Platonic rather than an Aristotelian concept of matter.

There is, however, another point on which Damascius disagrees with Proclus: Damascius refuses to accept the separate existence of a ‘third substrate’, i.e., the level of the ‘traces of the forms’, which would be moving in an inharmonious and disorderly way. According to Damascius, the receptivity of matter does require the acceptance of the presence of ‘traces’ of what is going to be imprinted, but this does not mean that the traces of the forms should be hypostasized, as occupying a separate layer of the procession of matter. Moreover, as Damascius points out, the ‘inharmonious and disorderly motion’ must be placed at the level of the second substrate (as Proclus himself also maintains: *In Tim.* 1.326.5–10), and cannot be restated at a level above the second substrate (which Proclus does: *In Parm.* 4.844.25–6; *In Tim.* 1.270.12 and 19; 1.387.14). What Proclus discusses as a third substrate (and obviously he did so explicitly in his lost commentary on the fifth hypothesis, on which Damascius is commenting), should rather be seen as a transition between the second substrate and the formed body. It indicates an intermediary stage, and not a hypostasis (*In Parm.* 4.82.13–83.11).

Damascius’ doctrine of place comes in close connection with his analysis of the nature of matter. The basic claim is that place is a measure (*metron*) that provides a good arrangement of the different parts of natural things, like the right organization of the limbs and organs of a body, or the proper good arrangement of the different parts of the cosmos (see Simplicius, *In Phys.* 625.13–17 and 626.4–27 Diels). Thus, ‘place’ is not just referring to the three-dimensional

³⁰ See also other instances of this understanding of *ichmē* as part of the receptivity: *DP* 1.97.7–8 and 102.1–3.

position of things (for which Damascius uses the word *thesis*), but to the right position, not only of the parts (like the right ordering of a body, with the head on top and the feet down), but most importantly of the whole of the universe. Parts of the universe that in themselves are well ordered (like the earth with all the beings it contains, or the body that is well structured), can still be shown as ‘out of place’ when their position in the universe is not well ordered (like when the earth would no longer be located in the middle of the universe, or when a human being would be located up in the air, *Simplic.*, *In Phys.* 627.17–628.2).

In this way, Damascius reinterprets the Aristotelian theory that all things natural have their own proper place, within a Platonic system, i.e., along with the acceptance of the proper dynamic of the Receptacle of becoming. For, according to Proclus (and also Damascius), extension (*diastasis*) has come into existence as the effect of the loss of unity in the procession. It is the effect of the inharmonious and disorderly movement of the unqualified body which constitutes the second material substrate (Procl., *Theol. Plat.* 5.31.114.1–10, *In Parm.* 2.735.25; 6.1119.10). Damascius adds that extension, at least as far as it is attributed to things having size and bulk (*megethos kai onkos*), provides a position (*thesis*) to the things it determines. Place, then, as the measure of the right position, predisposes the three-dimensional structure of the material world. More precisely, the role of place is that of a flexible mould (*tupos*), or a preliminary outline (*proūpographē*):

It is clear that he [Damascius] says that place is the measure of position, well disposing what is situated there. But he defines it not only as the measure of this but also of magnitude *qua* magnitude. For he says shortly afterwards: ‘It is like a preliminary outline (*proūpographē*) of the whole of position and of its parts and, as one might say, a mould (*tupos*) into which that which is situated there has to fit, if it is to be properly situated and not be muddled up in an unnatural state. Examples would be a whole larger or smaller than the proper size, or situated in the whole where it is not seemly, or whose parts do not have their proper position like a man with his brain in his heels, as they say.’

(*Simplic.*, *In Phys.* 645.4–13 Diels, tr. Urmson)

Therefore, everywhere in the universe, place sets the natural borderlines of any corporeal thing. It displays a prefiguration of the body that will occupy it, and is flexible enough to allow this body to be in different positions. Not only does it predetermine the measure of the position, by prefiguring a shape, but it also determines the measure of any magnitude, *qua* magnitude: it provides the right size to all things. This means, conversely, that if anything grows out of its natural size, or lies in an unnatural place, it fails to meet the norm set by place itself. Things that are located outside their natural place (like fish outside the water) are not in place, and will lose their life because their position is not adjusted

to the measure of the right arrangement (i.e. the place) of the whole universe (Simplic., *In Phys.* 628.7–11).

2.5 *Pleasure and happiness*

Thanks to the survival of the *Philebus* commentary, we are well informed about Damascius' views on pleasure and happiness, and in particular about his (implicit) reaction to the Platonic tradition on this matter. Plato identified pleasure as the restoration of a previous lack (cf. *Phil.* 31b–32a; *Tim.* 64c7–d3).³¹ The central issue in the Platonic definition is the notion of a 'natural condition', the perfect harmony that is disturbed when we experience lack and pain. Pleasure, then, occurs in the return towards this condition. Although another lack will always interfere, which implies that we will never fully attain the natural condition, the natural condition surely will be the final term to which our pleasure is directed.

In his commentary on the *Philebus*, Damascius takes over the Platonic wording, but pushes it in a specific direction. First, he adopts the view that pleasure can only occur in the movement towards the natural condition (e.g., *In Phil.* 143.1–4). Concerning the natural condition itself, too, Damascius agrees with Plato: life in its natural state does not imply movement, because it remains steadily within this condition. So *by definition*, there is neither pleasure nor pain in this life.³²

Although the definition of pleasure implied here is clearly Platonic, a thorough change has occurred in comparison with the *Philebus*, and particularly concerning the 'natural condition'. In the *Philebus*, this condition (the final term that directs our striving for pleasure) was defined only in a negative way, as the 'restoration of all lack'. As such, this state is unattainable for human beings, as there will always be a new lack, interfering with the restoration of a previous one (*Phil.* 42c–43a). The condition that transcends both pleasure and pain is the privilege of the gods, who lead a life of pure thought, without pleasure (*Phil.* 33b2–9). Since Aristotle, however, the perspective has changed. The natural condition has become an accessible ideal: it is the unimpeded performance of an activity of a natural substance. And this counts for every single vital function: body, soul and intellect have their own natural conditions and their own activity, and hence, their own pleasure. Aristotle argued that happiness lies in the perfect performance of our highest activity, which of course entailed the necessity to

³¹ In my *Pleasure and the Good Life* (Van Riel 2000), I adduce evidence to the view that the paradigm of lack and restoration is in fact the only paradigm Plato uses to describe pleasure.

³² *In Phil.* 144. The same idea is expressed at 151 (the divine life has no pleasure or pain), 154 (no pleasure in the life of the intellect).

argue for the existence of a kind of pleasure with which we welcome this highest state. Earlier Platonists had argued that this state can be called 'pleasure' only in a metaphorical sense. In this light, they took over the Aristotelian definition of pleasure as that which is supervenient on an unimpeded activity. But they remained Platonists in that they reserved the term 'pleasure' itself to the affect that is attendant upon the movement towards the natural state. Pleasure in the true sense of the word cannot occur in the natural state itself.

At first sight, Damascius is in full agreement with this theory of pleasure of his Platonic predecessors. At *In Phil.* 13 and elsewhere (e.g., 210), he strictly limits the Platonic definition of pleasure to lower (i.e., corporeal) forms, whereas for higher 'pleasure', other terms are required (such as *eupatheia* and *euphrosunē*). Yet Damascius does not agree with this traditional interpretation. On the contrary, he wants to attribute pleasure to both the movement and the state of rest, and he accepts that in both cases, a *genuine* pleasure is involved. Almost everywhere when he quotes the Platonic terms of the definition of pleasure, Damascius immediately adds qualifications that allow for the existence of pleasure in the natural condition itself after all. Thus, Damascius actually accepts two kinds of pleasure, one in the movement towards the natural state, the other in the natural state itself:

For in intellect there also is a natural condition and the progress towards it, but one that is essentially completed progress; the pleasure that attends it is constant. The natural condition, indeed, is nothing else than the essence the activity of which is attended by the sensation of pleasure, and activity is movement towards being, from which it has detached itself and to which it is therefore impatient to return.

(*In Phil.* 136.8–12, tr. Westerink)³³

Despite this thorough modification, Damascius acts as if his view of pleasure, and particularly of pleasure in a state of rest, would just be about making explicit what is present in Plato's *Philebus*. This veil of orthodoxy sometimes requires a huge elasticity of hermeneutics. At *In Phil.* 206, Damascius even corrects Plato himself – without, of course, saying that he is actually doing so. He dwells on the notion of 'true pleasure' from the *Philebus* (51a–53c) to argue for a fundamental distinction between pleasure and pain, and between the activities from which each of them stems. Such will allow him to actually modify Plato's definition: in its 'highest', paradigmatic form, pleasure is not linked to any previous lack, and its existence is not dependent on a movement by which a lack is restored:

It is better to put it like this: when the natural conditions prevail, replenishment is afforded by something that is somehow of a higher order than the natural, and of this

³³ See also *In Phil.* 94.4–5; 138.1–3; 185.1–2.

we are entitled to say that the organism has need, not because anything has been lost, but because it was not present.

(*In Phil.* 206.9–11, tr. Westerink)

So, true pleasure does not imply the repletion of a lack, but the gift of something that was not present before, and that, accordingly, did not cause any lack. The dissent from Plato is manifest: the typical correction of a provisional explanation is used here against the explanation *Plato himself* had given.

This analysis of pleasure plays a major role in Damascius' views on happiness. As can be expected, happiness will be accompanied, first and foremost, by *pure* pleasure. Damascius tends to link this pure pleasure (or *eupatheia*, in the Stoic terminology) to the sole activity of the intellect (see *In Phil.* 87.1–4, and the hierarchy of pleasures at 155). Hence, again with some elasticity, Damascius can now attribute a distinct pleasure to what Plato had called the neutral life:

In the neutral state, in which there is neither pleasure nor pain, we are evidently not subject to any violent affection; but there may be a pleasant state of well-being (*eupatheia*), especially as nature carries on its own activity without disturbances. But even supposing that we experience a pleasure of this kind, it is attended by a perception equally devoid of violence; and so, if you take changes that cause no perception at all, you will have the life that is here called 'neutral' in a very appropriate way.

(*In Phil.* 190.1–6, tr. Westerink)

By this interpretation, the name *mēdeteros bios* (a life without any pleasure or pain) becomes a paradox. As Damascius reads it, this condition is not exempt from pleasure and pain; his aim is precisely to show that there is pleasure in this condition after all (differing in kind and in degree from the pleasure of restoration).

Damascius discusses pure pleasure in 203–14 of his *Philebus* commentary. The list of examples includes the sight of the Evening Star, a view of a fine pasture, seeing a light of well-proportioned intensity, pleasure that goes with contemplation and with grasping an intelligible thing, pleasure caused by health, in which reason also shares, pleasure in a movement from the soul to the body (which may be explained as a reference to corporeal states like a nervous excitation on the expectation of a friend's arrival: the agitation of the soul is passed on to the body), and pleasure in learning. This is a peculiar list, which at first sight is almost identical with the list provided by Plato himself (*Phil.* 51b–52b). For Plato, pure pleasure is confined to the experience of beautiful colours, sounds, smells and forms, and pleasure in learning (*en mathēmasin*). There is, however, an important difference compared to the original Platonic list. It is striking that, although Damascius explicitly states that pure pleasures can be psychic as well as corporeal, the pure pleasures all imply an intellectual element,

or a kind of contemplation. This is obvious for the pleasure in contemplation itself, and the pleasure in learning. But also the *thea* or *prosopsis* of the first three examples implies a mental activity. The pleasure it yields is dependent, not on the perception alone, but on the recognition of the beauty of the situation. The pleasure caused by health is of the same kind: in Plato, the state of health would just be seen as a neutral state, without any pain, but also without any pleasure. The pleasure Damascius reads in it is a pleasure of reflection (and the *logos* is explicitly mentioned): the pleasure of the recognition that I am healthy, and that it could have been otherwise. The pleasure in the movement from the soul to the body, finally, can be explained on the basis of *In Phil.* 155–6, where Damascius states that there is reflection and imagination involved in this kind of movement. Hence, again, the pleasure of this kind is due to mental activity.

There is yet another striking feature involved in this enumeration of pure pleasures. If pleasure is defined in Aristotelian terms, as the state that is supervenient on the unimpeded activity of a substance, one would expect every pleasure to be a pure one. Moreover, the Aristotelian pleasure is produced by the perfection of the activity. The act of seeing is pleasurable, if it is performed without any impediment, and if the things seen are actually pleasant to look at. So the object to which the activity is directed plays a certain role. In Damascius, one can infer that the same criterion is applicable. Yet, on the other hand, the qualification of ‘purity’ of a pleasure requires something more. Seeing something nice would be pleasurable, but seeing the Evening Star yields a pure pleasure. Seeing a landscape would be pleasant, whereas seeing a beautiful pasture involves a pure pleasure. The difference between them lies in a subtle, but highly important distinction. The objects that yield a pure pleasure are of a very specific kind: the pasture is said to be beautiful – a qualification that also applies to the Evening Star. The light is well proportionate (*summetron*), and the intelligible things, and learning, imply truth. Thus seen, pure pleasure is the effect of the presence of three characteristics: beauty, proportion and truth. It is not a coincidence that these are exactly the representatives of the Good in the *Philebus* (65a1–5). Plato introduced those characteristics as the criteria appropriate for judging whether a mixture is good – the good itself being unavailable to cognition. And indeed, Damascius uses these three criteria to identify the nature of pure pleasure:

The pleasures and the kinds of knowledge that he admitted were beautiful and true and proportional, that is to say, they were *pure* and generally fit to coexist.

(*In Phil.* 234.2–3, tr. Westerink)

The shift of emphasis that reveals itself here is that the pure pleasures are linked to an activity, as Aristotle would want them to be, but to an activity of a certain kind: the contemplation of objects that bear in themselves the trace of the

Good, in the Form of beauty, truth and proportion. Thus, despite the enormous influence of Aristotle on Damascius' doctrine of pleasure, the final result is not an Aristotelian theory. Damascius displays an unmistakable predilection for the occurrence of pleasure as the result of the sudden, and maybe even unintended, presence of something that perfects the activity from the outside: the Good, unattainable in itself, but revealing itself through the attraction of beauty, truth and proportion. So, however intellectualistic Damascius' position may be, the intellect always is superseded by this element of an ungraspable presence of the Good, laying the criterion of true happiness outside the agent's own activity. It is a happiness that depends on the transcendent nature of the Good.

CONCLUSION

When considered in its entirety as well as in detail, Damascius' philosophy presents itself as original (though of course embedded in Late Platonic tradition) and extremely critical. The aporetic and ever searching nature of Damascius' thought is the result of a constant uneasiness with the very fundamental principles of Late Platonic doctrine, and with its systematization offered by Proclus – even though Damascius seems to conceal this dissidence under the veil of providing nothing but a commentary on Proclus.

As a consequence, we find in Damascius dissident opinions and severe criticism on almost all aspects of Proclus' system, with a clear sympathy towards Iamblichus' views, which had been overshadowed by the doctrines of Proclus and his teacher Syrianus.

Thus, the last schoolmaster of the Academy really was up to giving the school a new dynamic, renewing the original inspiration of Plato's philosophical quest. Due to historical coincidences, which caused the decay of pagan Platonism in the sixth century CE, this renewal did not get the direct posterity it deserved.

OLYMPIODORUS

JAN OPSOMER

LIFE AND WORK

Not much is known about Olympiodorus' life apart from what we can derive from the surviving works. A student of Ammonius the son of Hermias, but probably not his direct successor,¹ he was active in Alexandria² in the sixth century. If Olympiodorus heard Ammonius lecture³ his year of birth can hardly have been later than 505. He was still lecturing in March/April 565, the date of the passing of a comet mentioned in the *Commentary on the Meteorologica* (52.31).

The commentators David and Elias are held to be the pupils of Olympiodorus, because their works display the formal peculiarities of Olympiodorus' commentaries; in addition their texts reproduce entire passages from Olympiodorus; David occasionally mentions him by name. The names David and Elias suggest a Christian background. This would make Olympiodorus the last representative of the non-Christian Platonic tradition. It is, however, not so clear whether David and Elias were really Christians: their works do not betray a commitment to specifically Christian doctrines, even where one would have expected this, and their names could also be mere parts of a disguise that allowed them to continue practising philosophy in an intellectual environment that was no longer hospitable towards non-Christians.

EXTANT WORKS

Olympiodorus' surviving commentaries are all *apo phōnēs*, i.e., lecture notes by students. We have commentaries on two works of Aristotle and three Platonic dialogues (the latter are all transmitted through *Marcianus gr.* 196), more precisely commentaries on: *Categories*, *Meteorologica*, *Alcibiades I* (henceforth *Alcibiades*,

¹ He calls him 'ancestor' at *In Meteor.* 153.7.

² He refers to Alexandria as 'our town' in *In Meteor.* 169.34; see also *In Alc.* 2.80–2.

³ This is probably implied by *In Gorg.* 39.2, 199.8–10.

considered genuine by the later Platonists), *Gorgias*, *Phaedo* (incomplete, the extant lectures are on *Phaed.* 61c–79e). The commentary on the *Categories*, the first work of the Aristotelian leg of the curriculum, is as usually preceded by a short text, *Prolegomena*.⁴ It comprises introductions to Aristotle, logic and the *Categories*. The commentary to *Alcibiades* incorporates in its first pages a biography of Plato, published as a separate work by several nineteenth-century editors (*Vita Platonis*).

The *Alcibiades* commentary contains some clues as to its date. It refers to a certain Anatolius celebrating Hephaestus, the governor of Alexandria (2.80–2) and mentions the endowment funds of the Academy that lasted ‘until the present day, despite the many confiscations that are taking place’ (141.2–3).⁵ There are good reasons to put Hephaestus’ office in the years 546–51. The encounter between Anatolius and Hephaestus is described as having taken place in a not all too near past. That would put the commentary close to 560. The implication is that the expropriation of the estate of the Athenian Academy was not concluded with its closure (even if the proposed date is not correct, it cannot possibly be prior to 529).

The *Commentary on the Meteorologica* can be dated after March/April 565 (see above). The commentaries on the *Phaedo*, *Gorgias* and *Categories* cannot be dated. L.G. Westerink has suggested an early date for the *Gorgias* commentary – around 525 – based on its perceived immaturity, but that argument is inconclusive.⁶ The *Gorgias* commentary appears to be earlier than the *Alcibiades* commentary, though, for it contains a crucial interpretation that he has abandoned in the latter.⁷

The extant commentaries, with the exception of the *Categories* commentary, are characterized by the pedagogical division in *praxeis* (‘lectures’), each starting with a systematic discussion of a text section, the *theōria*, and followed by observations on single phrases and words, the *lexeis*. This exegetical technique was foreshadowed in the work of Olympiodorus’ predecessors (Proclus), but as time proceeded its features became more rigid and scholastic, as can be seen

⁴ The title *Prolegomena to logic* is probably spurious.

⁵ Olympiodorus claims that the wealth of the Academy goes back to Plato, but this view is rejected by Damascius (*Vit. Isid.* 265, 213.8–14 = 158, 212.1–5).

⁶ Westerink 1990: 331. See also Jackson, Lycos and Tarrant 1998: 3–4; Tarrant 1998: 418, n. 3.

⁷ When discussing the expression ‘the itself itself’ (*auto to auto*, *Alc.* 130d4) in the *Gorgias* commentary (18.2, 103.26–104.2) but also the *Phaedo* commentary (8.6.10–12) Olympiodorus adopts Proclus’ solution without mentioning him. At *In Alc.* 209.15–21 he says that Proclus’ used to be the prevailing interpretation but is now superseded by Damascius’. Yet he also says that Proclus’ solution is closer to the letter of the text, while Damascius has in mind the larger picture (204.15–205.7, 210.9–11). The only authority ever referred to in *In Gorg.* is Ammonius, whereas in the two other commentaries on Plato Olympiodorus regularly, and also in this case, quotes Proclus and Damascius. For the interpretations of ‘the itself itself’, see Gill 2006: 346–51.

in the commentaries of Elias, David and Stephanus.⁸ Especially in the Plato commentaries Olympiodorus bestows meaning on each and every detail of the text, often amounting to over-interpretation. A course usually consisted of between forty and fifty lectures. Originality was not the aim of the lecturer. He copied freely from his predecessors.

TRACES OF OTHER WORKS

The *Vaticanus Urbinas graecus* 35 (by hands from the thirteenth or fourteenth century) has preserved excerpts from a commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione* in the form of scholia. They are explicitly credited to Olympiodorus. They are included in L. Tarán's edition of another, anonymous commentary on *De interpretatione* transmitted by the *Parisinus graecus* 2064. Another excerpt from Olympiodorus' commentary is possibly preserved in the introduction to a Syrian translation of *De interpretatione* by 'George of the Arabs'.

Arabic sources mention commentaries by Olympiodorus on Plato's *Sophist*, Aristotle's *De anima* and *De generatione et corruptione*.⁹ A small excerpt of the *De anima* commentary, consisting of a clever rebuttal of an interpretation by Alexander, is possibly preserved in the Ambrosianus Q74 Sup. The existence of a commentary on the *Sophist* is confirmed by Olympiodorus' own promise to lecture on it (*In Alc.* 110.8–9).

There must also have existed lecture notes by Olympiodorus on Porphyry's *Isagoge*. These were the source of the extant commentaries on the same work by David and Elias. Apart from that, David and Elias have preserved various remarks made by Olympiodorus on different topics and two hexameter couplets composed by him.¹⁰

Olympiodorus' output probably included commentaries on more texts than those mentioned above. It is sometimes claimed that Olympiodorus restricted his lectures on Plato to the first dialogues of the curriculum, and for political reasons refrained from teaching the ontological or theological dialogues. This would be contradicted by his lecturing on the *Sophist* and thus on

⁸ Festugière 1963: 77–80 (= Festugière 1971: 550–4). In the *lexis* section Olympiodorus sometimes literally repeats what he said in the *theōria*, which is appropriate from the didactic point of view, but would be less so in a published work.

⁹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 246.11–12 (trans. Dodge 1970: 593): 'I read what was written in the handwriting of Yahyā ibn 'Adī, Ishāq [ibn Hunayn] who translated the *Sophistes*, with the commentary of Olympiodorus'; 215.13–14 (trans. 604): 'Olympiodorus wrote a commentary, which I read written in Syriac in the handwriting of Yahyā ibn 'Adī.' The reference to the *Theaetetus* in Dodge's translation (1970: 593) is mistaken. At 251.5 (trans. Peters 1968: 37) *Fihrist* mentions a commentary on *De gen. et corr.* 'There is a commentary by Olympiodorus in the version of Aštāt'; see also Skowronski 1884: 30–1; Westerink 1976: 21–2, nn. 32 and 33.

¹⁰ Dav. *In Porph. Isag.* 31.34–32.2; 65.1; El. *In Porph. Isag.* 14.8–10.

Platonic ontology, for which there are some indications. Moreover, Olympiodorus deals with theological issues in the surviving commentaries. And the anonymous *Prolegomena* (see below) suggest that Plato was still taught at the advanced level (chs. 24–6).¹¹ It is true, however, that the *Parmenides*, which had been so important in the Athenian school, seems to have played almost no role and was treated as a dialogue on logic by his successors. Even so, the political situation probably did not prevent Olympiodorus from teaching advanced courses on Plato, yet could explain why these activities have left so few traces.

DUBIOUS AND SPURIOUS WORKS

Olympiodorus could very well be the author of a commentary on an astrological manual by Paulus of Alexandria (*Eisagōgika*). The commentary is falsely credited to Heliodorus, the son of Hermias and brother of Ammonius.¹² The text refers to observations that can only have been made between June 492 and April 493, which would fit the attribution of this lecture course to Heliodorus, but in fact the lectures were held more than seventy years later. We know this because the teacher – who apparently does not regard himself as an astrologist (25.22) – tells us not just where he is teaching – in Alexandria – but also, on two occasions, when: on 24 June and 1 July 564,¹³ which is probably not much more than a year before Olympiodorus' lectures on the *Meteorologica*. Also the division of the text into *praxeis* comprising *theōria* and *lexis*¹⁴ points to Olympiodorus and his school. Other arguments consist in close stylistic parallels between this work and the commentary on the *Meteorologica* and a possible cross-reference to this work (33.20–1, which could refer to the treatment of the winds in the *In Meteor.*). The lecturer probably made use of earlier material, which would explain the references to observations from the years 492–3, very likely made by Heliodorus indeed. These are strong arguments for attributing these lectures, or at least the bulk of the extant text,¹⁵ to Olympiodorus or someone close to him. There are also, however, arguments against the attribution to Olympiodorus himself, as we shall see (p. 710).

¹¹ Other extant works of the later school are: Elias, *In Porph. Isag.*; *In Cat.* (also credited to David, henceforth cited as Elias/David), *In Anal. pr.*; David, *In Porph. Isag.*; anonymous *In. Isag.* (ps.-Elias/ps.-David); Stephanus, *In De Interpr.*, *In De an. III*, *In Ptolemaei canones*.

¹² Boer, Neugebauer and Pingree 1962. For Heliodorus, see Saffrey 2000a.

¹³ Some other lectures are datable through the positions of the heavenly bodies discussed: cf. Westerink 1971: 16.

¹⁴ And larger sections or *tmēmata*, as in the *Alcibiades* commentary.

¹⁵ Lecture 14 consists of different strata and contains later material: cf. Westerink 1971: 14–16.

The *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, long held to be the work of Olympiodorus,¹⁶ constitutes a special case. This work is nowadays considered spurious, but is certainly a product of his school.¹⁷ It consists of lecture notes that are posterior to Proclus – they have been shown to depend upon Proclus' *Prolegomena*, now lost – and appear to be Alexandrian (they display no influence of Damascius). The attribution to Olympiodorus was based on the striking similarities between two *Lives* of Plato: in the *Prolegomena* and in the *Alcibiades* commentary. Similarities do not prove much, however, since authors in the prolegomena genre shamelessly copy from one another. There are, moreover, striking discrepancies that make the attribution to Olympiodorus implausible. The *Prolegomena* (19.5–9), for instance, explicitly rejects as misguided a subdivision of the *Gorgias* that is central to Olympiodorus' interpretation of that work (*In Gorg.* 4.6, 5.12–14, and *passim*). The most probable hypothesis is that the *Prolegomena* reflects lectures held by one of Olympiodorus' Alexandrian successors. Some doctrinal differences notwithstanding, they give a good idea of what Olympiodorus' own introductory lectures to Plato must have looked like.

The manuscript through which all of Olympiodorus' extant commentaries on Plato are transmitted, *Marcianus gr.* 196, contains two anonymous sets of notes on the *Phaedo* and a commentary on the *Philebus*, that were previously claimed for Olympiodorus¹⁸ until L. G. Westerink proved conclusively that they are not by Olympiodorus, but by Damascius.¹⁹ Other clear cases of erroneous attribution are that of a commentary to the *Nicomachean Ethics* credited to Olympiodorus in two late manuscripts (Vat. 272 and 273, sixteenth century) and attributed to Heliodorus by G. Heylbut (*CAG* XIX.2),²⁰ that of a commentary to the *Prior Analytics* in Jerusalem (Taphos 150),²¹ and that of the aforementioned commentary on *De interpretatione* preserved in the *Parisinus graecus* 2064. The latter had been credited to Olympiodorus by A. Busse,²² but this attribution is rejected by L. Tarán based on the absence of the division into *praxeis* and more importantly on doctrinal inconsistencies with the genuine fragments.²³

¹⁶ An identification made as early as 1675 by Lambecius and defended by Skowronski 1884.

¹⁷ Beutler 1939: 219.58–220.4; Westerink 1962: xli–l; Westerink, Trouillard and Segonds 1990: lxxxvi–lxxxix.

¹⁸ For the notes on the *Phaedo*, see Norvin 1913 and his edition of them together with the authentic commentary, Norvin 1915. Norvin's attribution was refuted by his teacher J. L. Heiberg (Heiberg 1916) and by Beutler 1939: 211–18.

¹⁹ Cf. Westerink 1959: xv–xx, 1977: 15–17.

²⁰ According to Barnes 1999: 13, n. 45, a commentary by the Emperor John Cantakuzenos (c. 1360) apparently derives from Olympiodorus.

²¹ Westerink 1976: 21.

²² Busse 1897: xxiii–xxxvi.

²³ Tarán 1978: xii–xiii. See also Hasnaoui 2003: 135–7.

Olympiodorus the Platonic commentator is sometimes identified with his namesake the alchemist, author of a commentary on Zosimus of Panopolis, *Kat'energeian* (*On Operation*). This identification seems very unlikely as the alchemist is clearly a Christian, was probably active in the fourth century and writes in a completely different style. Neither the explicit attribution of the commentary on Zosimus to the Platonic Olympiodorus nor the references to the Platonist in alchemist literature carry much weight, given the propensity to pseudepigraphy in these milieus.²⁴

THOUGHT

Scholars in the past have often belittled Olympiodorus' philosophical acumen and exegetical skills. Recently, however, some kind of rehabilitation has set in, as scholars started to study the content of his commentaries more closely. Surely not the work of an exceptional philosopher in his own right, they testify to the activities of an outstanding teacher presenting his pupils with state of the art exegesis, reliably guiding them through the late-Platonic school curriculum and occasionally making original contributions. The laments about the lack of philosophical depth usually tell more about the mindset of their authors than about the subject matter. It is true that Olympiodorus is not the metaphysician that Proclus or Damascius were, at least not in his surviving works. But his commentaries show an increased sensitivity to ethical questions and to the dramatic context of the dialogues. A good deal of the inaccuracies and errors that can be found occasionally in Olympiodorus' commentaries can be put down to their being student notes. Errors may be due to a lack of clarity on behalf of the teacher, to the sloppiness of the recorder, or to the transmission of the text. The note takers are probably to blame for the garbled syllogistic reconstructions of arguments. The alleged superficiality can be explained by the classroom situation and the target audience. Olympiodorus' works are an important witness to the culture of his day. This professor had a pedagogical and cultural mission. He was a defender of classical *paideia* and Hellenic philosophy (hence the tendency to emphasize agreement rather than disagreement), teaching the young, predominantly Christian, elites of the Empire about to enter public life.

The state of Hellenic philosophy was precarious, yet the Alexandrian environment in the middle of the sixth century seems to have been somewhat less

²⁴ Recently Cristina Viano (Viano 1995: 99–102, 2002: 76–9, with extensive *status quaestionis*) has tried to bolster the case in favour of the identification with the Platonist, arguing that the alchemical commentary is dependent upon the theories of the *Meteorologica* commentary. Even if the latter is the case – the evidence seems insufficient – the thesis of the identity of the two Olympiodori is not needed, as Viano herself admits.

intolerant than Athens at the beginning of that century. Probably paganism was seen as less of a threat. Olympiodorus still endorsed the Platonic theory of metaphysical principles and its connection with the Greek pantheon, though it is hard to tell, for lack of evidence, to what extent he endorsed the complex hierarchies characteristic of the late Athenian school. Olympiodorus certainly did not hide his Hellenic religious convictions from his Christian students, but explained them while at the same time avoiding provocation.

A striking example of this can be found in the *Gorgias* commentary. The passage starts by outlining the causation of the first principle. But then Olympiodorus suggests that this can be understood in such a way that it is acceptable also to others (46.2, 243.16–244.15). One should know, he says, that ‘the philosophers’ believe that there is one principle of everything and a unique first cause. This cause is nameless and above the grasp of intellect, i.e., it transcends the realm of intellect. It produces everything, but *not without intermediaries* (*ouk amesōs*), for otherwise the creation would be in disorder. According to the late-Platonic system, the hierarchy of causes indeed warrants the hierarchy of products. Since not all creatures are of the same rank, there must be a hierarchy of causes:²⁵ a gapless ‘golden chain’. *Qua* humans we are not the immediate product of the highest causes, but of powers produced by these. Olympiodorus now names these powers (i.e., not the first cause or causes, but those involved in our production): ‘First there is the intellectual power, then the life-giving power and the healing power, and so on’ (46.2, 244.6–7). The divine names Cronus and Zeus refer symbolically to these powers. In Proclus, these powers belong to the first intellectual triad, that plays an essential role in the demiurgic process and consists of Cronus, the life-giving power, and Zeus; the ‘healing powers’ are situated at a much lower level (*In Remp.* 2.3.18–23). The powers Olympiodorus mentions are all related to the creation and protection of humankind. Olympiodorus now addresses his audience directly: ‘Do not be confused by names, when you hear of powers of Cronus and Zeus and suchlike, but think of the reality for which they stand’ (8–11). Not the Hellenic pantheon, but the underlying metaphysical picture is essential. He goes even further: ‘If you wish, you may take it that these powers have no being of their own and are not distinct from one another, but that they are contained in the first cause, to which you may ascribe intellectual and life-giving powers.’ Olympiodorus does not say that this is his way of seeing things, but suggests it is a compatible alternative. Strictly speaking it is not, of course: these powers are *either* separate entities *or* aspects of a single first cause. The reply that whatever is produced by the first cause must also be implicit in it

²⁵ Cf. Iambl. *In Tim.* fr. 60 Dillon (= Procl. *In Tim.* 2.313.19–21); Julian *Contra Galileos* 10.28–34 (65e–66a) Masaracchia.

is not sufficient. Its presence should be 'hidden', at most, and even that would constitute a threat for a true henology. Christian theologians, on the contrary, can perfectly well claim that God has these aspects as positive powers. In short, the passage shows, on the one hand, Olympiodorus' circumspection, which is markedly different from the militant paganism of the Athenians, and on the other, his commitment to the late Platonic ontological-theological system.

Another striking example of Olympiodorus' willingness to avoid offending can be seen in his discussion of the 'allotted daimon' in the *Alcibiades* commentary (21.15–21.17). The commentator starts by saying that in fact it also figures in 'common parlance' (*sunētheia*), where it is called 'one's angel', the kind that guards 'people who live a life that is pleasing to god'. Olympiodorus briefly discusses the Platonic doctrine on daimons, but then accomplishes an about-face, announcing he will 'try to give an interpretation adapted to the present circumstances'.²⁶ For, he says, already Socrates had been condemned to the poison-cup for introducing new daimons and not honouring the gods of the city. The word 'daimon' had of course a bad ring for Christians (cf. Aug. *Civ. Dei* 8.14). The ensuing interpretation is ideologically safe, but also interesting: the daimon is nothing but conscience (*to suneidos*).

A passage copied almost literally from Proclus is further evidence for Olympiodorus' desire to avoid trouble. Both he and Proclus discuss agreement as being not necessarily a sign of truth. Proclus' example is the agreement among his contemporaries in denying the existence of the gods (*In Alc.* 264.4–8). Olympiodorus refrains from this stab at the Christians by substituting the harmless example of the Democriteans unanimously affirming the existence of the void (*In Alc.* 92.4–9).

Olympiodorus' attitude is not so much one of reconciliation or compromise, but rather seems to be inspired by the kind of caution characteristic of those living under an adverse regime. Occasionally he laments the plebeian confusion and the lack of deeper philosophical understanding of his times.²⁷ As we have seen, in his courses he offers alternative interpretations that should be more agreeable to the Christian part of his audience. Yet in core issues he sticks to the classical Platonic position. He upholds the everlasting nature of the world (*In Gorg.* 11.2, 65.26; *In Meteor.* 118.10–119.8), argues that suicide is sometimes permissible (*In Phaed.* 1.9), adopts the transmigration doctrine (*In Phaed.* 7.4, 10.1) and rejects the theory of eternal punishment, arguing that

²⁶ This is a code phrase. Cf. Cameron 1969: 15.

²⁷ *In Gorg.* 46.4, 238.16–19; *In Alc.* 149.1–3, with Saffrey 1992: 431 (= Saffrey 2000a: 216–17). According to Westerink 1990: 335, Olympiodorus 'seems to have accepted Christianity at least as a creed for the uneducated'.

punishment should be corrective.²⁸ Nevertheless, Olympiodorus is not blind to the substantial agreement between Christianity and Platonism, grounded, he believes, in shared – while innate – common notions, from which our most important metaphysical and moral principles derive (*In Alc.* 131.12–14, 114.11–12).

Olympiodorus' views on ontology are fairly standard (see also *Procl. in Plat. phil.* 12). The first principle is the One/the Good. Below that are the hypostases (intelligible) Being, Life and Intellect (*In Alc.* 103.10, 109.18–111.2). The triad consisting of the intellect of Cronus, the life-giving power and the demiurgic power of Zeus, presumably belongs to the intellectual hypostasis. The various levels are linked to gods from the Greek pantheon. Olympiodorus also refers to lower godheads and angels, demons and heroes. Nothing he says seems incompatible with the metaphysical structure elaborated in the late Athenian school.

These ontological principles are causes. The precise nature of causal efficiency was a matter of debate, a fact of which Olympiodorus was well aware. At *In Gorg.* 243.27–244.1 he simply states the principle that greater causes have greater, i.e., better, effects. In the *Alcibiades* commentary (109.18–111.2) he relates the difference between Iamblichus' and Proclus' position: according to the 'Proclean rule' the higher causes have effects further down the ontological scale, whereas Iamblichus claims that all the causes operate down to the lowest level, the better causes being however 'more penetrating'. Olympiodorus' own view on the matter is unclear.

Like his predecessors, Olympiodorus incorporates Aristotelian theology into the Platonic system. He acknowledges that *Metaphysics Lambda* teaches the existence of a single first principle (*In Cat.* 9.14–30), yet criticizes Aristotle for considering this principle, the unmoved mover, to be Intellect rather than the Good (*In Alc.* 122.13, 145.6–9).²⁹ Olympiodorus adopts the Aristotelian expression 'first philosophy'. Its subject matter is defined as 'things (*pragmata*) qua things' (*In Alc.* 21.6); its method characterized by the use of non-hypothetical principles, namely, our infallible common notions (*In Alc.* 40.18–41.4). We have them through our participation in intellect, whereas the One causes us to be 'possessed by a god' (*enthousiasmoi*, *In Alc.* 18.1–5, 217.18–19). By failing to appeal to the highest cognitive states Aristotle once again remains second to Plato.

The 'common notions' play a fundamental role in Olympiodorus' epistemology and philosophical method. Once they have been brought to light

²⁸ *In Gorg.* 50.2–3, 263.17–264.26, *In Meteor.* 146.8–13, *In Phaed.* 10.14.

²⁹ See also Elias/David *In Cat.* 120.24–30.

in maieutic conversations and critically examined they supply principles for demonstration (*In Gorg.* 3.1, 23.15, 44.7, 231.5–10). Commenting on Plato's arguments for the immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*, Olympiodorus explains that the argument from recollection does not rest on the proof of the existence of transcendent forms, but on that of innate forms, i.e., concepts in the soul. Olympiodorus thus propounds an innatist epistemology and criticizes the Peripatetic naturalistic theory of concept formation (12.1–2, referring to the perceptual *kritikē dunamis* of *An. post.* 2.19, 99b35; see also *In Cat.* 19.30–5).

Olympiodorus' commentaries can be assigned to well-defined slots in the school curriculum. His commentary on Porphyry's *Introduction to the Categories* (*Isagoge*), the starting-point of the Aristotelian curriculum containing a standardized introduction to philosophy, has not survived. The extant *Commentary on the Categories*, the next work in the curriculum, is another set piece. The *Prolegomena* to that commentary contains the traditional introductions to the *Categories*, to logic and to the philosophy of Aristotle. Olympiodorus' commentary in part derives from Ammonius, as does Philoponus'. Elias/David in turn derives partly from Olympiodorus. There are of course passages for which there is no parallel in the other surviving commentaries. Olympiodorus is the only commentator, for instance, actually to quote (22.38–24.4) concrete arguments against the authenticity of the *Categories*. Most of the problems and solutions are, however, traditional. Concerning the question of the status of logic Olympiodorus claims it is both an instrument and a part of philosophy (14.12–18.12). The *skopos* is defined as being 'words, concepts and things in their mutual relations', more precisely '(single) words signifying (single) things through (single) concepts, according to their first imposition' (18.23–22.2).

Olympiodorus probably lectured on the other parts of the *Organon*, too, but no commentaries of his are extant. The curriculum continued with ethics and then physics.³⁰ The physics part of the curriculum would consist of *Physics*, *On the Heavens*, *On Generation and Corruption*, *Meteorologica*, *On the Soul*, *On Plants* and *On Animals* (*In Meteor.* 3.34–4.15). Only the commentary on the *Meteorologica* is extant. Olympiodorus defends the authenticity of the whole work and its unity. He explains that it concludes that part of physics that is concerned with causes, on the one hand, and with the elements, on the other, 'its target (*skopos*) being to study, from the perspective of the material cause, the affections of the elements having the same [i.e., corruptible] matter in the upper region' (1.18–20). The proximate material and passive cause of sublunary

³⁰ *In Cat.* 9.5–13 (trans. in Sorabji 2004: 15(a)6). Ethical works like Pythagoras' *Golden Verses* or Epictetus' *Encheiridion* were probably read as a preparation to the Aristotelian curriculum. Cf. *In Alc.* 101.7–12, *In Gorg.* 17.2–4, 26.25.

bodies consists of the two exhalations – the smoky and the vaporous – (3.10–14), which according to Olympiodorus are intermediary, transitory states between the elements (16.15–20). Olympiodorus manages to systematize and categorize the various atmospheric, astronomic and geologic phenomena of books 1–3, as well as the chemical processes discussed in book 4. Olympiodorus attempts original solutions, corrects Alexander (6.19–30, 298.18–35) and even Aristotle himself (5.16–32, 75.19–76.5).

Olympiodorus follows Ammonius in emphasizing the harmony between Aristotle and his master, as we have already seen him do in the case of theology. He calls him a true disciple of Plato (*In Alc.* 5.29–32). Whenever possible he resolves apparent contradictions and says that in the rare instances where Aristotle diverges from Plato he is still indebted to him (*In Gorg.* 41.9, 214.13–215.11). Olympiodorus is not blind to the divergences, and in those cases he usually,³¹ though not always, agrees with Plato. He is, however, convinced that they are fundamentally committed to the same principles.

The three surviving commentaries on Plato constitute the beginning of the first cycle of the higher, Platonic curriculum (*In Gorg.* 0.6, 6.1–6). They would normally be followed by *Cratylus*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Philebus*. The final cycle consisted of the two ‘perfect’ dialogues, *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*. It is not clear whether Olympiodorus lectured on all these dialogues (see above). The biography of Plato included in the *Alcibiades* commentary would normally be a part of a more general introduction to Platonic philosophy, such as we find it in the *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*. Presumably the anonymous *Prolegomena* gives us a good idea of Olympiodorus’ own introductory classes. The *Prolegomena* consists of discussions of life and work of Plato, literary and philosophical style³² (the dialogue form, different aspects of the dialogue to be studied, Plato’s didactic methods and purposes), exegetical techniques (rules for determining the *skopos* of single dialogues and for recognizing the main divisions), and the reading order of the dialogues.

³¹ E.g., *In Gorg.* 144.7–14: Olympiodorus calls Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s description of Tartarus in the *Phaedo* myth misguided, because it fails to appreciate the peculiarities of mythical narrative. Then, however, Olympiodorus adds that Aristotle is not really criticizing Plato, but warning against misguided interpretations. *In Alc.* 204.8–12, 210.11–12: Olympiodorus reports Proclus’ criticizing the Peripatetics for failing to recognize the priority of the universal and for conceiving of individuals as conglomerates of accidental properties. Olympiodorus quotes a passage from Porphyry’s *Isagoge* (7.19–27), which he presumably took to represent not Porphyry’s own view but that of the Peripatetics (cf. Amm. *In Isag.* 106.4–5). David discusses a debate between Porphyry and the Peripatetics on this issue (*In Porph. Isag.* 167.18–169.17). Probably David, too, understood the debate as being between different interpretations of the Peripatetic view (cf. 139.14–16).

³² It includes a discussion of Plato’s alleged scepticism (*Prol.* 10–11). See also Ol. *In Phaed.* 8.17 (Ammonius), 10.15, El. *In Cat.* 110.12–30. Bonazzi 2003: 13–95.

Olympiodorus sketches a clear pedagogical progression accomplished in the first three dialogues. The *Alcibiades* shows us what we are, souls, and more particularly, rational souls making use of the body as an instrument. The *Gorgias* teaches how to attain the constitutional virtue of the soul and the *Phaedo* allows us to attain the level of purificatory, cathartic virtue. The Platonic curriculum is interpreted along the lines of the Platonic scale of virtues. The scale of virtues is sketched at *In Phaed.* 4.3 and 8.2–3: at the pre-rational level there are (1) natural virtues and (2) moral virtue (reached through habituation); the rational virtues are (3) constitutional virtue, consisting in moderation of the passions (*metriopatheia*), (4) purificatory virtue, consisting in freedom from passions (*apatheia*); (5) contemplative virtue, consisting in the return to intellect and attained through philosophy; and (6) paradigmatic virtue, consisting in the ascent to the intelligible accomplished by theurgic means. It is worth noting that constitutional, i.e., ‘political’ virtue, the supposed object of the *Gorgias*, pertains to the inner constitution of the tripartite soul ruled by reason, and only secondarily to what we call the political (politics is considered to be a mere extension of the care of the self: *In Alc.* 187.1–4). The underlying idea is of course the parallel between soul and city in the *Republic*.

Olympiodorus’ *Alcibiades* commentary draws on a commentary by Damascius and, probably through the latter, on Proclus. In determining the *skopos* Olympiodorus follows Damascius (3.3–5.1, 177.8, 215.10–12), whom he generally considers to offer the best interpretations, superseding those of Proclus (209.15–21), although he is inclined to reconcile the two positions where he can (e.g., 5.17–6.1, 204.15–205.7). The overarching *skopos* of the *Alcibiades*, that consists of an elenctic, a protreptic and a maieutic section, is to know oneself *constitutionally* – i.e., as a rational soul making use of the body as an instrument (208.8–9). This knowledge of the constitutional self paves the way for the attainment of constitutional virtue in the next dialogue. The soul’s three-part ‘constitution’ is the consequence of its directedness toward the body. On Olympiodorus’ view, knowledge of the universal ‘human’ precedes knowledge of the individual and both are required for self-knowledge (205.8–11, 210.8–16). It implies reverting to ourselves, so that we become self-movers, i.e., autonomous agents (9.6–7, 37.8–10, 41.5–8); yet the soul that has accomplished this return towards its true rational self, understanding itself as separate from the body, has already reached the next level, that of cathartic virtue. There are even higher forms of self-knowledge, corresponding to contemplative and theurgic virtues, that are attained by our turning toward the intellect and the divine in us (8.5–12, 224.3–8; cf. *In Phaed.* 4.1–4). The *Alcibiades*, however, addresses the rational soul in its relation to the lower soul parts and the body.

Olympiodorus' *Commentary on the Gorgias* is the only surviving commentary on this work. It often refers to Ammonius' interpretations. The *Gorgias* is said to deal with the ethical principles that lead to constitutional happiness. Constitutional virtue consists in the harmonious ordering of the parts led by reason, be it in the soul or in the state (cf. Procl. *In Remp.* 1.11.24–8). The principles of constitutional happiness are analysed according to the late Platonic theory of causes: the matter of constitutional happiness is the soul; the formal cause consists in justice and temperance, not in injustice as propounded by Polus; the efficient cause is philosophy, not rhetoric, as Gorgias thinks; the paradigm is the cosmos; the instrumental cause consists in habituation and education; and the final cause is the good, not pleasure, as Callicles believes (0.5–6, 3.21–5.22). Through the debate with Socrates' three interlocutors, then, Plato exposes three mistaken views about happiness, and shows, to those able to understand, the true principles of constitutional happiness. The three interlocutors are held to represent the three parts of the soul. Olympiodorus' approach is quite subtle. He argues, for instance, that Callicles mistakenly situates virtue at the level of natural virtue, whereas civic virtue is usually understood as positive morality (*nomos*); Socrates wants to see it in the light of the tripartite soul, i.e., at a superior level. Callicles' identification of pleasure and the good is the result of his mistaken view of virtue. Now Socrates does not just point out that there are levels of virtues superior to the natural, but also shows Callicles to be inconsistent *at his own level*. In the final myth Plato is said to show the paradigmatic cause of virtue in the form of a well-governed universe, ruled according to law and order. While Olympiodorus rejects the Iamblichean view according to which the *overall* target of the work is demiurgy (*In Gorg.* 0.4, 3.14–17), he incorporates the cosmotheological lessons of the myth into the encompassing goals of the work.

The *Gorgias* commentary contains an interesting criticism of astrology,³³ which, however, does not amount to an outright rejection. What Olympiodorus condemns is the view that our lives are completely determined by the stars, for that would abolish providence, free choice, law and justice. That cannot be right, as providence encompasses destiny, and not the other way round; moreover 'what is up to us' (*to eph'hēmin*) is not subject to destiny, since we are self-moving, autonomous agents (*autokinētoi*). If this were not the case, there would be neither virtue nor vice (as all Platonists, Olympiodorus is a staunch incompatibilist). Olympiodorus invokes the authority of Ammonius and Plotinus, but also Aristotle's defence of contingency in *De interpretatione* 9

³³ For the distinction between science of the heaven, astronomy and astrology, see *In meteor.* 19.20–7.

(*In Gorg.* 48.5, 253.26–254.14; also 39.1, 197.26–198.18). In the surviving fragments from his commentary on that work Olympiodorus interprets the passage on the future contingents as giving support to the argument against astrology understood deterministically.³⁴ It is worth noting that the author of the commentary on Paulus Alexandrinus, while leaving room for human choice and responsibility,³⁵ fails to name a part of our being that would not be subject to destiny.³⁶ The author even explains that the time and manner of our death are predestined and can be known by consulting the stars (*In Paul.* 127.6–23; 140.10–14), something which Olympiodorus explicitly denies in *In. Gorg.* 48.4 (252.17–253.25). The astrological commentary, moreover, abounds with references to evil influences from above, which again constitutes a doctrine rejected by Olympiodorus (48.5, 25.8–13, paraphrasing Plot. 2.3 [52] 2). While this constitutes an important argument against the identification of the two, it does not rule it out either. One could argue that the astrological commentator is merely concerned with technical advice and avoids philosophical issues.

The ‘purificatory’ happiness envisaged in the *Phaedo*, i.e., that of rational soul unimpeded by the ‘chattering’ body (*In Phaed.* 4.3) consists in passionlessness. As in the *Alcibiades* commentary Olympiodorus in the *Phaedo* commentary discusses the views of Proclus and Damascius explicitly, and tends to favour the latter (4.1, 8.9). Whenever he mentions Ammonius, he adopts his views (7.5, 8.17, 10.7). Iamblichus is mildly derided for his high-flown claims that disregard the text, more particularly for his view that each argument in favour of the immortality of the soul constitutes an independent proof (10.1, 11.2, 13.4). The surviving part of the commentary contains, among other things, a long discussion of suicide, a defence of the immortality of the soul and of the reincarnation of the rational, not the irrational (9.6), soul (10.1).

³⁴ Tarán 1978: xxx–xxx1. This interpretation also features in an anonymous scholion in *Ambrosianus L* 93 sup. edited by Busse 1897: xxxiii, but is absent from other extant commentaries on *De interpretatione* (Ammonius, Stephanus, the anonymous in *Paris. gr.* 2064).

³⁵ E.g., *In Paul.* 65.27–66.4; 127.5–9. Stars are sometimes called (merely) accessory causes of evils: 68.9, 74.2, 138.7–8, 27.

³⁶ *In Paul.* 57.3–5 even makes the Daimon of Helios master (*kurios*) of our soul, character and thinking, and assisting (*sunergei*) our practical deliberation.

SIMPLICIUS OF CILICIA

HAN BALTUSSEN

I LIFE

The few facts we have about Simplicius' life come from his own works and a few other sources. He came from Cilicia (south-eastern Anatolia) as Agathias tells us (*Hist.* 2.30). He was educated by Ammonius in Alexandria (fl. 490 CE, cf. *In Cael* 26.18–19) and Damascius (fl. 520 CE) in Athens (*In phys.* 601.19). Among influential figures on his philosophical outlook are Porphyry, the learned pupil and biographer of Plotinus (245–320), Iamblichus (fl. 300 CE, referred to as 'the divine Iamblichus', *In phys.* 60.7; 639.23 etc.), and Proclus ('the teacher of my teachers', *In phys.* 611.11–12, cf. 795.4–5). The expulsion of Platonists from Athens in 532 CE after Justinian's ban on pagan teaching ended school activities in 529 CE (Malalas *Chronicle* 18.47), the cross-references between the extant works, and the lack of evidence after 540 CE suggests that his life-span comes roughly to 480–560 CE. Allusive comments in a discussion of the role of the philosopher in the city in his commentary on Epictetus (*In Epict.* 32.65.30–9 D. with reference to Plato *Rep.* 496d) make it probable that he wrote that commentary before the others while still in Athens, as does his mention of the oppressive situation in Athens (*ibid.* epilogue). His personal note on friendship (*In Epict.* 87.39–44/354 Hadot) indicates that he experienced help from friends who looked after his family while he was away, but we cannot establish the nature and date of this event.

There has been much debate and speculation about where he might have gone after the trip to Persia with Damascius and other colleagues (531 CE), when the hope of an ideal state under a 'philosopher-king', the enlightened ruler Chosroes I (Kushrau), was not fulfilled, but the issue has not been resolved so far. The treaty of 532 with Justinian apparently had a clause added to guarantee the safety of the pagan philosophers,¹ but it is not easy to see how guarantees could have

¹ Against Hadot 1987a: 7–10 Foulkes 1992 reads Agathias 2.31 as only allowing them to continue their religious practices in private. Hällström 1994 suggests the exile was self-imposed as a result of Justinian looking to reform and control the education system.

been given. Simplicius may have stayed in Harran (i.e., Carrhae) in Syria near the border of, and inside, the Persian Empire as a safe haven for non-Christians. Tardieu (1987) has made a strong case to this effect on the basis of references to local features (rafts made of inflated animal skins typical for Euphrates and different types of calendars found in Harran). The Harranians certainly received special treatment from Chosroes for retaining their paganism (Procopius *Wars* 2.13.7). Others have suggested he may have returned to Athens and worked there in isolation (Alexandria has been ruled out because of its volatile political conditions). Wherever he was, his richly sourced works suggest he had access to a sizeable library.² Tardieu's further thesis, argued with great ingenuity, that Harran had a continuing presence of a Platonic school into Arabic and medieval times cannot be proven fully beyond the seventh century and has met with objections.³ The account of their travels by Agathias is clearly biased and some details of the Persia episode have raised suspicion about this tale of Greek missionary zeal and Persian enlightenment. There are also three epigrams in praise of Simplicius confirming his reputation as rhetor and philosopher (180), and acknowledging his elucidations of the *Categories* (181), and the *Physics* (182) of Aristotle. Finally, a distich found in a manuscript (codex Ambrosianus 306) confirms his authorship of the *In Cat.* and seems to have been added by a scribe as an apotropaic since he had accused the 'divine Iamblichus' of inconsistency.

2 WORKS

We know of at least seven major works written by Simplicius: four or five commentaries on Aristotle, on the *Categories*, *Physics* and *On the Heavens*; possibly on *Metaphysics* (lost) and on *De anima* (authorship disputed, hence not discussed in this chapter), one on the *Handbook* (*Encheiridion*) of the Stoic Epictetus (c. 55–c. 135 CE), and a summary version of Theophrastus' *Physics* (*In De an.* 136.29). A commentary on Iamblichus' *On the Pythagorean Sects* is listed in early modern bibliographical sources (Harles based on Gesner), going back to manuscripts owned by one of the Renaissance's great patrons of learning and book collector Basilios Bessarion (c. 1403–72). Although this work is not considered a fiction, no trace of it has been found to date.

It should not be overlooked that the late Platonists also had broader scientific interests, and Simplicius was no exception. We know of some works in science (e.g., mathematics), which provide important material regarding earlier writers

² Hoffmann 2006: 616 presents some unusual but compelling evidence for the use of microscript ('micrography') and marginal commentary which could make a large private and portable library possible.

³ This part of the thesis has been rejected by Lameer 1997, Gutas 1999, Lane Fox 2005.

(for astronomy and mathematics on Eudoxus, Eudemus, Sosigenes, Ptolemy; for meteorology on Posidonius from Geminus' summary), some in Greek but most through Arabic sources. At one point, Simplicius even mentions the use of an astrolabe by his teacher Ammonius (*In Cael.* 462.20–1). Two mentions of a commentary on a medical work also survive, but they are dubious. One is found in the *Fihrist* (288.5), a bio-bibliography by Ibn al-Nadīm (tenth century CE), which simply lists Simplicius along with several other names as 'commentators on Hippocrates up to the time of Galen' (*sic*), although it is not said which work the commentary was on. A second passage in Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (864–930 CE) *Comprehensive Book on Medicine* (*Kitāb al-Hāwī fī al-tibb*) names Simplicius as the author of a commentary on the Hippocratic work *Kitāb al-Kasr*, presumably the *On Fractures* or *Peri agmōn* (also known in Arabic as *Kitāb al-Jabr*, 'On Setting [Bones]'). The attribution seems erroneous, because it stands alone as a work on a medical topic in the Platonist tradition (it also seems a rather implausible undertaking to write a commentary on such a practical treatise: in the case of Galen medical commentaries are mostly confined to theoretical works).⁴

Of these works five commentaries are extant in full. It is striking that Simplicius only wrote commentaries on Aristotle, not Plato,⁵ but we should remember that Damascius had written several commentaries on Plato, while recent work has shown that Simplicius was obviously familiar with Plato's works and expresses coherent views on them, albeit in passing. To some extent this focus on Aristotle can be explained by the school's early interest in Aristotle, starting with Plotinus, but given a greater impetus by his learned student Porphyry (c. 234–c. 305 CE).

Simplicius' scientific works were known to Arabic scholars and philosophers in translation (we have evidence from the tenth century onwards) and he is highly regarded as a mathematician (al-Qifti mentions his work on Euclid; for his discussion of Hippocrates of Chios, see below). The report in Ibn al-Nadīm suggests that the commentaries known to the Arab scholars were those on *Cat.* and *De an.*, but the mathematician Abū al-Abbās an-Nayrīzī (ninth century CE) wrote commentaries on Euclid making use of (what he thought was) Simplicius' commentary on that author. Arabic authors seem to have adopted this view that there is agreement between Plato and Aristotle (e.g., al-Fārābī, who mentions Ammonius, wrote *Harmonization of the Philosophies of Plato and Aristotle*).

Until the Greek originals came to the West in the late fifteenth century, only his commentaries on *Cat.* and *In Cael.* were known from the Latin translations

⁴ It is possibly a work of a different Simplicius. Praechter *RE* lists ten individuals s.v. 'Simplikios', showing the name is not unique.

⁵ Hadot 2001a: xxxvii–xxxviii considers a commentary on the *Phaedo* (after Westerink).

produced by the prolific translator William van Moerbeke (the first Latin translation has been traced to Robert Grosseteste, who lived 1168–1253). Relying on these, Thomas Aquinas in the twelfth century used Simplicius' commentary on the *Categories* for his own work on language. During the revival of Platonism, mostly due to the work of Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), Simplicius' works were rediscovered (e.g., by Jacopo Mazzoni) and translated into Latin. The commentary on *De anima* (then considered genuine by most scholars) was hugely influential on the debate over the unity of the soul and Simplicius was seen as the champion of the harmonization of Plato and Aristotle (*concordia*).

3 METHODOLOGY

Before looking at Simplicius' works, we should consider the methodology of his vast output. His role in the transmission of Greek philosophy and science, his commentary style, and his ardent attempt at harmonization of all of Greek philosophy are inextricably linked to his overall agenda and deserve separate treatment.

Simplicius' importance as a source for ancient Greek philosophy and science has long overshadowed his contributions as an independent thinker. In the nineteenth century, when the German scholar Hermann Diels proposed to the Berlin Academy the first modern (and still standard) edition of the Greek commentaries, Simplicius was known mostly as a source author for the edition of Presocratic fragments. Quotations do play a significant role in his work: he uses them to substantiate paraphrase (*In Cael.* 140.32–3, 298.21–2), to clarify statements containing technical or other obscure terms he has rephrased (25.26–30), or to provide proper evidence (*In Phys.* 331.10). But it is rather myopic to view him primarily, if not solely, as an uninspiring 'conduit' of earlier thinkers, from the Presocratics to Damascius, or else a 'mere commentator' whose prolixity and scholasticism are an unoriginal reflection of an exegetical school tradition that started with Plotinus (c. 204–70 CE). Published in 1903, Diels' epoch-making *Die Vorsokratiker* is a typical example of German *Quellenforschung* in the service of fragment-hunting. His special interest in recovering early Greek philosophy led him to edit Simplicius first, since he provides access to the fragmentary remains of Presocratic thought which had become scattered across a vast range of sources – from Hellenistic text-books (the so-called *placita* literature) to the late commentaries on Aristotle. Diels' choice led to a narrow and neglectful view of Simplicius, which lasted up to the middle of the twentieth century.⁶

⁶ On the flaws of the *CAG* edition see Tarán 1987.

Simplicius' principles of Aristotelian commentary still strike us as sound: he combines close reading with explanatory comments. As a rule, he aims to spell out the Aristotelian train of thought in great detail with the help of every possible commentator before him (these include Aristotle's students and immediate successors as well as the Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias and the late Platonists up to his own day). But the frequent philosophical and polemical digressions from a Platonist perspective provide good reasons for thinking that the modern term 'commentary' does not cover his activities adequately. Rather than view them as poor or biased philosophical treatises, we should regard his works as text-books informed by pedagogy and ideology.

Simplicius' concern with the preservation and transmission of insights from Greek thought permeates his commentaries. His work covers the full span of Greek philosophy (550 BCE–550 CE). He shows considerable skill in handling the impressive (and potentially oppressive) body of existing literature. This careful study of texts often based on teacher–pupil interactions is a typical feature of the late-Platonist school tradition. Simplicius' modesty regarding his own contribution is an understatement, showing he is well aware of his place in a long tradition, which he helps to reproduce and develop. A reminder of his thoughtful craftsmanship in writing his commentaries is that he acknowledges and quotes earlier contributions to the debate (e.g., *In Cat.* 3.10–13), a distinguishing feature which also marks a change from the rather cavalier attitude towards source referencing common in antiquity. How he negotiates the possible tension between the authority of established doctrines and new insights emerges from a passage in which he gives his 'mission statement' describing a commentator's qualities and tasks (*In Cat.* 7.23–9): 'The worthy exegete of Aristotle's writings . . . should [not] obstinately persist in trying to demonstrate that [Aristotle] is always and everywhere infallible, as if he had enrolled himself in the Philosopher's school.' No doubt Alexander of Aphrodisias was one of his targets here.

In their meticulous attention to detail the commentaries may seem rather unbalanced, but this is the result, on the one hand, of Platonist teaching practices, which consisted of close reading and rereading of the text, and, on the other, to his objective to preserve the cumulative elaborations given by earlier scholars. The isolation Simplicius found himself in after the Academy had to cease teaching activities may have contributed to the size of the works. Thus both historical and ideological reasons provide us with probable explanations for the size and approach of his works. Similar reasons suggest that he attempted to counter Christian accusations of perennial disagreement among Greek philosophers, to come up with convincing strategies to create a unity among pagan

thinkers. He is not always successful, but at least we can see why he is doing what he is doing. Thus the Presocratics are presented as sharing ground with Aristotle and Plato (*In Phys.* 28.32–29.5), but without ignoring the differences (*ibid.* 7.19–27).

His interpretive methods range from the philological to the semantic and the metaphysical: well versed in Alexandrian scholarly methods, he is adept at evaluating different manuscripts (familiar with two, he considers *Phys.* 7 genuine, but superseded by *Phys.* 8) or (re)defining concepts, while Platonist physical and metaphysical principles are assimilated to other perspectives and vice versa (Aristotelian or earlier ones, 7.7–15). He also formulates a principle of charity, when contrasting the letter (*lexis*) and ‘spirit’ (*nous*) of the text (*In Cat.* 7.30–2). Ironically, he will accuse others of rewriting the text (Alexander, *In Phys.* 526.16–18) or of being verbose (Philoponus, *In Cael.* 25.29). Furthermore, certain exegetical tricks give him room to manoeuvre in his quest for harmony (*sumphōnia*): whenever it may assist his case, he will consider the views of thinkers under discussion as ‘obscure’ (7.3) or ‘riddling’ (written in enigmatic form, *In Phys.* 36.30), thus allowing himself to offer his own as the better interpretation. While Presocratic archaic language could generate real linguistic problems, this conceit is also a traditional ploy to take liberties with the text.

Formal influences on his commentary style reflect the pioneering activities of earlier figures, from Alexander of Aphrodisias, Porphyry, Syrianus and Iamblichus to his personal teachers Ammonius and Damascius. Iamblichus’ influence is noticeable especially in the commentary format as it develops further the Porphyrian approach of running commentary on *lemmata*, the format Alexander started using consistently. Iamblichus also introduced a singular objective (*skopos*) for each work studied, which could be very restrictive and even misleading, yet at the same time it would streamline the interpretive process and encourage the exegete(s) to think in terms of overall consistency. Simplicius treats the topic as a matter of fact in all his extant commentaries on Aristotle, either reporting the range of views when there is a dispute (*In Cat.* 1.8ff., 8.15, 9.5–11.1; *In Cael.* 1.1–3) or simply presenting the purpose as ‘easy to grasp’ (*In Phys.* 1.1–3; cf. 3.13ff.). It is instructive to see how Simplicius refers to his own works. As a rule he labels them *skholai* (‘learned notes’, *In Phys.* 393.13; 461.15 referring back to *In Phys.* book 1; 1326.39; 1328.11), but uses the more common term *hupomnēmata* (notes to remind oneself, ‘aide-mémoire’) for the works of others (e.g., for Porphyry *In Cael.* 503.34, *In Cat.* 2.12, 435.24; cf. *In Phys.* 60.8, 332.20; *In Cael.* 168.18, 530.16). The former were normally considered less well-organized notes (*In Cat.* 18.25–6), the latter scholarly writings for an audience.

The overall strategy to give a sentence by sentence clarification of Aristotle's text does not mean the commentators were unable to differentiate or prioritize between important and unimportant passages, or between philosophically interesting or less interesting material. Simplicius writes mostly for a student audience and his works are intended to be read (*In Cael.* 377.32, 653.9; *In Phys.* III.17, 762.29). There is always a clear grasp of the overall scope and aims of Aristotle's works, based on extensive rereadings of the works. His strategy includes formalizing arguments into syllogistic form to ensure they are valid (after the example of Aristotle's logical works, *Analytics*, *Topics*). His commentaries therefore reflect long established strategies raised to a new level of complexity and comprehensiveness, combining two existing types of explication: question-and-answer discussions and the running commentary. Both forms have their origin in teaching, which occasionally shows in the alternation between broad discussion of the text (*theōria*) and linguistic detail (*lexis*) – a structure found in Proclus and common in the Alexandrian commentaries.

His harmonization of Greek philosophers goes significantly further than Platonists before him in trying to bring Plato and Aristotle closer together on important issues. To us it may seem misguided, but the intended *sumphōnia* is not a naïve claim to full agreement on everything, but a sustained effort to eliminate superficial contradictions. Differences of opinion, so Simplicius argues, can be useful (e.g., *In Cat.* I.22–2.3) and allow reconciliation by close study of the text and eliminating apparent disagreements (*In Phys.* 36.24–31, cf. *In Cael.* 159.3–9). It was of course already Aristotle himself who saw agreement among all or most of the experts as a sign of the truth. Yet the unified view of the Greek philosophical tradition as a whole is a more extreme stance probably intended to counter the hegemony of Christian doctrine, which boasted of its own doctrinal unity and was responsible for the dwindling influence of pagan theology. Simplicius does show awareness of the potential risks of such a strategy, but remains convinced that the similarities outweigh the differences. He may well have aimed to compete with the Christian sacred texts, trying to offer, as it were, a 'pagan gospel'.

4 THOUGHT

Commentary as philosophy, philosophy as commentary

It is not easy to present a summary of Simplicius' philosophical views. They are woven into his commentaries, which serve several agendas, explicating Aristotle being the most important one. By Simplicius' time doing philosophy meant responding to works of Plato and Aristotle in the form of philosophical

commentary. In short, the teaching was scholarly in its method, philosophical in its approach and spiritual in its outlook: philosophical exegesis and doctrinal instruction go hand in hand. Late-antique Platonism came to the study of the world with deeply religious motives as well as certain technical skills of a scholarly nature that accompany their philosophical activities. Spirituality and philosophy were crucially linked and the writing of commentary was a form of teaching and contemplation all at once. The latter has been linked to the psychagogic effect of copying (*In Cat.* 3.5) and explicating texts (*In Epict.* p. 1 Hadot). Therefore the account given here cannot claim to be comprehensive, as much remains to be done to extract Simplicius' views from among his elucidations and elaborations on Aristotle's text. Originality was certainly not his priority, and given the daunting volume of writings used, a considerable challenge. Further constraints on philosophical innovation were the well-defined curriculum and to some extent the Platonist habit of self-effacing restraint. After Plotinus, the Platonist curriculum evolved into a fixed reading programme of Platonic and Aristotelian works executed in close teacher-student discussions, while following a didactic method many commentators employed (a fixed set of questions, more recently dubbed *isagogical issues*, e.g., subject, authorship, book division, order of reading).

Simplicius' works reflect this practice. Plotinus studied Aristotle, perhaps because he saw the value of his analytical and conceptual skills and to understand Plato better, but he also often criticizes Aristotle. Porphyry's *Introduction* (*Eisagōgē*) secured the foundational role Aristotle's work would play, especially by choosing *Categories* and *De interpretatione* as the first works to be read in the curriculum (and in that order, *In Cat.* 15.14–18). This attitude, continuing earlier syncretistic tendencies in the Academy, gave Aristotle a role in the explication of Platonic thought, leading to the transformation of both.

The commentaries aim to clarify Aristotle comprehensively in order to show how his philosophy explains the external world, both sublunar (*Physics*) and supra-lunar (*On the Heavens*), in all its splendour, offering testimony to the order and all-pervading influence of the One and enhancing the student's respect and awe for the creation. The works on logic (*On Interpretation*, *Categories*) study the linguistic forms that represent the sensible and intelligible realities. His careful scholarship on *In Cat.* shows that his account is a compressed representation of the ancient authorities that confirm the continuity of his views, while his selections favour comments which assist his exegesis. Still, when Simplicius himself seems to suggest that he is but a conduit for earlier views (*In Cat.* 2.30–3.4, 11–16), this is a qualified judgement in light of a long exegetical tradition. Nor is it an admission of uncritical deference: traditionalism did not exclude

critical judgement and disagreement (e.g., Damascius against Proclus, *In Phys.* 795.15–17; Simplicius against Alexander, *In Cael.* 526.16–17; 559–60).

Simplicius thus combines instruction in physics and cosmology with a keen interest in moulding the spiritual outlook of aspiring Platonists, since the uneducated soul needs guidance from someone who has seen the truth (*In Cat.* 12.26–8). For moral instruction he made the remarkable choice of clarifying the so-called *Handbook* (*Encheiridion*) of Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher of the first century CE. Stoic ideas had already found their way into the general philosophical discourse in the early imperial period, and into Platonist thought from the fourth Academy onwards, but they were heavily criticized for their materialism and extreme position on the moral perfection of the wise man. Simplicius' choice served a pedagogical purpose of helping the soul reach its moral and intellectual perfection, which Plotinus and Porphyry (*Sent.* 32) had outlined as a gradual ascent to assimilation with God (Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b). Overall, his aim to annotate Aristotle's work and preserve Greek philosophy with its exegetical tradition makes for a truly polymathic programme driven by different, and sometimes competing, agendas. His own views will therefore always seem reactive, taking their cue from doctrine and earlier debates, but it is crucial to remember that his aim is to serve a higher purpose (exegetical synthesis in clarifying Aristotle), not to be original. When he does contribute an original point, he is almost apologetic about it (e.g., *In Phys.* 946.24–6). However, his stance is as a rule respectful and critical.

Ethics

Simplicius' enthusiasm for Epictetus' *Handbook* is an unexpected, but not inexplicable, aspect of his writing activities in ethics. It stands alone in its attempt to absorb a complete work from another school of thought and allows us to extract interesting details about their curriculum and about their views on the role of philosophers in society. He probably had access to a fuller version of the *Discourses* which he claims overlaps with the *Handbook* (our current text does not confirm this). He also speaks of a letter by Arrian, the student responsible for publishing the *Discourses* (p. 192 Hadot). It is possible that he wrote the commentary while still in Athens, when pressure on pagan ways of life from the Christian authorities was increasing; Epictetus could serve as a model for a philosopher living under the rule of a tyrant or evil ruler, which Simplicius could easily have considered an analogue to his own situation under Emperor Justinian (531–79 CE). This reading is supported (as noted earlier) by contemporary allusions to the role of philosophers in society and to tyrannical times

(*In Epict.* 32 and epilogue).⁷ It would not be the first time that a ‘historical’ study served the purpose of veiled criticism for those in the know.

In the introduction Simplicius explains that the Stoic manual recommends itself because its ethical guidelines are conveniently succinct and emotionally powerful, mostly through vivid imagery and examples from real life. This makes it a useful ethical primer for students of philosophy in their personal development. It also offers guidance for *self-improvement*. The Stoic doctrines become subordinated to the Platonist framework of virtue ethics inspired by Plotinus (*Enn.* 1.2 [19]) and chosen to fit the needs of the Platonist curriculum. It has been surmised that Simplicius may not have fully grasped the extent to which Platonist ethics was incompatible with Stoic ethics. The Stoic doctrine of the mortality of the soul, for one, is a clear obstacle to the Platonist position. But Simplicius holds firm and merely expresses surprise that the work can teach virtue despite this false view (*In Epict.* 194). Whatever the reason, his commentary offers a fascinating insight into his exegetical and philosophical approach of trying to blend late Platonist and Stoic ideas on god, evil, human psychology and appropriate action, even if elsewhere he attacks the Stoics for their materialism and flawed analysis of metaphysical concepts. His admiration for Epictetus is clear from his praise for the practicality of the work (e.g., *In Epict.* 264, 305, 367) and even from his criticisms of Epictetus, where an emphasis on the discrepancies between the Platonic and Stoic doctrines (soul, god, evil, appropriate action, friendship, providence) succeeds in limiting the damage such an approach might have produced.

Simplicius divides the manual into four parts according to Epictetus’ general philosophical principle to be concerned only with what is ‘up to us’, that is, within our control (1–21), the educational stages of student progress in moral capabilities (22–8), the more technical advice on appropriate action (30–3), and Epictetus’ use of precepts (48–53). This division frames the whole work; he is keen to explain the ethical principles for the benefit of students unfamiliar with this kind of work and to show his grasp of the work. The rational understanding of ethics also requires metaphysics (theology), psychology and a theodicy. Simplicius provides these elements by sketching the Platonist framework within which he wants to consider the handbook. The nature and role of God follows the teachings of Plotinus and Proclus (but they disagree on the origin of evil, see below): as the highest entity in a hierarchical universe God is an omnipresent force that creates and sustains the world, and is a providential

⁷ O’Meara 2004: 89–90, 94ff. Hadot 2001b remains sceptical that these allow us to date the commentary. Verbeke 1975: 442 infers that such an allusion must mean he wrote it *after* he left Athens. This seems to ignore the gradual process of growing tensions leading up to the closure of the school.

force over and above fate. God's absolute transcendence complicates human interaction with the divine, but Simplicius suggests that prayer and repentance can still be effective in changing *us* (390). In addition, theurgy and ritual may allow the purified souls to connect with the divine, resulting in the much coveted state of illumination.

The psychology underlying the ethical instructions is an uneasy blend of Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic notions. Starting, like Damascius, from the definition of the *First Alcibiades*, which claims the body as mere instrument of the soul, the dual nature of human beings is reformed into one of dependence and hierarchical ordering. This position clearly devalues materiality and thus also material goods as factors in ethical conduct; readers are encouraged to strive upwards, away from matter and towards the Good. The rational soul will be able to do this by purifying itself, which means freeing itself from irrational elements of the flesh and the emotions, first, in the pursuit of appropriate virtues, and second, by leaving the sublunary existence behind. The soul's capacity to rise upwards relies on the Platonic doctrine of souls as self-movers by way of desires, impulse, belief and choice. The last aspect is crucial to all psychic motions, but it forces Simplicius to mediate between the Platonic and Stoic notion of choice to allow for degrees – more or less Aristotle's position. Here we see how Plotinus' model of degrees of virtues (cathartic, political, ethical) partly defuses these tensions and creates a moral development from Stoic *apatheia* (transcending the body) to *metriopatheia* (moderate suppression of passions, Plato, *Phaedo*; Aristotle). When the rational soul 'surrenders to bodies and to irrational and bodily movements, it too is pulled about like a marionette and shoved, and it no longer has its motions readily up to it' (4.48–50); at such times the rational soul is not fully self-determined. But he insists that choice can only be moved from within, even if the object of choice is external (4.8–10), thereby placing the responsibility for controlling irrational motions with us. In this context, it is worth noting that Simplicius seems unaware that Aristotle's term for 'choice', *prohairesis*, is different from Epictetus' use, the former signifying the process of coming to a moral decision, the latter a disposition.

Moral development towards the Good is thus dependent on making the right choices, but one of the major difficulties encountered is the temptation of the body, emotions and other bad influences. Simplicius' position on evil follows Proclus (but both may be following Iamblichus): evil does not have a real existence, but is either an illusion or a genuine absence of goodness. He refers to it as *parhupostasis* ('derivative subsistence'), in which the prefix *par(a)* signifies a departure from being (342 Hadot / 81.26–8 Dübner; cf. *In Phys.* 250.21, 1262.8; *In Cat.* 416.32, 418.17). This attempt to deny evil a proper ontological status (going against Plotinus' view of matter as evil, *Enn.* 1.8 [51])

is of course intended to save God from the responsibility of having created evil (see esp. *In Epict.* 8 and 27; cf. Proclus, *On the Existence of Evils* 35). When humans go wrong, they fail to use their ability of self-determination for the good. Simplicius' theodicy is thus compromised by the insistence on human responsibility for good behaviour in combination with God's omniscience and omnipotence. It implies that humans are created with the potential to veer away from the path to virtue. The cause of the soul's 'turning away' seems to lie in its contact with the sensible world (203), but it is not clear why it fails to resist, given that Simplicius endows it with a natural ability to do so (195).

Language and logic

Simplicius' commentary on the *Categories* presents a rich scholarly discussion of the text and its exegetical tradition since Porphyry, who was probably the first Platonist commentator on Aristotle. His interpretation of the *Categories* is influenced by Alexander (whose commentary is lost in Greek), Porphyry's *Ad Gegalium* and *Commentary by Questions and Answers* (who used Alexander and is a major source for many earlier views rehearsed in Simplicius), and Iamblichus, whose commentary he tries to boil down to its essentials (*In Cat.* 3.2–10). He also speaks highly of Boethus of Sidon (1.18), an Aristotelian (probably accessed via Porphyry), who wrote a 'word-by-word exegesis' (30.2). A striking misconception inherited from Iamblichus is his belief that Aristotle depended on a work by the Pythagorean Archytas, a contemporary of Plato. This leads him to criticize Aristotle (300.9 ff.) for a defective treatment of the categories, compared to Archytas' more systematic treatment (especially of the last six) – even if the work in question was written much later and is in fact dependent on Aristotle, not the other way around. Such confused judgements, easy to correct from hindsight, resulted from the attempt to re-emphasize the Pythagorean influence on Platonism – another attempt to offer a more venerable origin for their philosophical beliefs. Competitive motives could easily blind them to historical and doctrinal realities.

In the opening pages Simplicius gives the reader a justification for his own approach. He wants to get an accurate understanding of the work by way of writing about it (3.5). He also reproduces Iamblichus' elevated explications in a clear form, but at the same time 'reduce[s] the vast multitude of variegated writings; not, as the most philosophical Syrianus did, to an absolute minimum, but as far as was compatible while leaving out nothing necessary' (tr. M. Chase). Simplicius' introduction (*In Cat.* 3.4–11) thus outlines his approach in a clear and purposeful way and marks a mediating stage between expansive and summative approaches in the exegetical tradition.

Considered a fundamental component of the early stages of philosophical training, the *Categories* and *On Interpretation* became the starting point of the late-Platonic curriculum (and in that order, *In Cat.* 15.14–18). Their new role was to be a guide to Aristotle's philosophy as a whole, but their interpretation remained a point of debate. Formal analysis, intent on justifying their nature and number, created tensions between the logical and the metaphysical requirements of late Platonism. Aristotle's rather informal presentation of these concepts (arrived at discursively in class) shows cracks under methodical scrutiny (especially because the order of the categories is not consistently presented).

In his *Categories*, Aristotle set out a conceptual breakdown of reality in broad terms. It divides roughly into three parts, introductory chapters (1–4), the actual 'categories', and the so-called post-*praedicamenta*. The usual preliminary issues take up the first twenty pages, starting with the subject (*skopos*, 9.4–13.26), which looks at what *katēgoriai* mean ('ten simple things', 'genera of being') and noting that they are unlike the common usage (17.29) and the original rhetorical meaning of 'accusation' (17.1–4). In enumerating the different kinds of things/words Aristotle tried to clarify which entities could be subsumed under general headings. Simplicius' review of existing opinions informs us about attacks and arguments in favour – judiciously using one commentator's solutions to solve another's queries (*In Cat.* 21.1–21). In addition, he discusses the choice of title, its place in the corpus (part of logic), its chapter division, and its authenticity. On the last point, Simplicius employs many criteria similar to other commentaries on the *Categories* (Greek and Arabic), giving sound reasons for its genuine Aristotelian nature (e.g., density of concepts and phrasing, cross-references in other works, accepted as genuine by his associates).

In his overall interpretation of the categories, Simplicius follows Porphyry and Iamblichus, taking into account some of the debates on important issues such as the role of differentiae, substance, matter, and the relative (including relative change). He agrees with Iamblichus that one needs knowledge of homonyms and synonyms first before going into the categories proper. But he thinks there are limits to how much the work can be Platonized, so that critical engagement with previous commentators occurs regularly. He mounts a sustained polemic against Plotinus who maintained (*Enn.* 6.1–3) that they do not apply to the intellectual realm of Forms in the way that Plato's Great Kinds of Being in the *Sophist* could; that only the first four categories can be applied to the sensible world (substance, quantity, relation, quality); and who reformed action and affection into a category of motion, and rejected the remaining categories (when, where, being-in-a-position, having). Simplicius believes that Plotinus fails to distinguish actual instances of acting and undergoing from the *principles*

of acting and undergoing (312.10–11); instead, he holds that in composite things both processes can be at work, so that there is no need for them to be conflated. Plotinus cannot account for cases such as the Unmoved Mover (302.5 ff., 306.13 ff., 322.13 ff.) and ‘objects of thought and sight’ (312.22 ff.). Several other cases of criticism are found. He raises objections against Iamblichus’ ‘intellective theory’, the name for a ‘higher’ interpretation of how according to him the categories do apply to the intelligible world (*contra* Plotinus). Simplicius criticizes him for inconsistency on the category of place (364.7 ff.), arguing that time and place are needed for the intelligible world as well as the sensible world. Regarding time and place, Simplicius wants to argue that there is a special relation between time and place on the one hand, and what is *in* time and place on the other (being in a place belongs to bodies). Plotinus and his followers refused to accept that this warrants a separate category. He also argues against the Stoics (in particular Cornutus) that the categories are not just linguistic phenomena, but sides with Porphyry that they are significant words (*lexeis*) informing us about the world because they refer to real things (*pragmata*).

Simplicius’ comments on parts 5–8 deal with substance, quantity, relative and quality. In earlier discussions the order of these had been debated. The ordering is important for reasons of consistency and proper ontological organization. He agrees that substance should go first, but prefers quality in second place (with ‘Archytas’, 157.26). Quality is considered closer to Platonic Form, hence more important than quantity (second in Aristotle). He derives the importance of Relative from the fact that it will come into existence third, as soon as two categories have been postulated. Another concern is the definition of the categories: because they are fundamental kinds, the usual definition by (higher) *genus* and *differentia* cannot work. Quantity is associated with the sensible world and matter (extension), so that it is rightly given a place after the others. Simplicius’ own contribution here emerges clearly in at least three instances: by positing, against Iamblichus, the *differentia* as ‘substantial quality’; by proposing a compromise on essential predication; and by raising a fine point against Iamblichus on the natural order in words when pronouncing them (138.25–139.10).

The last part of the commentary deals with the categories as distinguished by Aristotle (*Cat.* 9: acting, undergoing, being-in-a-position, when, where, having) and with the so-called post-*praedicamenta*, a discussion of certain types of opposition, considered spurious by Andronicus of Rhodes (379.8–12; Simplicius disagrees). Aristotle’s incomplete text complicates the exegesis and an interpolation at 11b10–16 offers a blanket statement that no more need be said about the remaining categories. Much of Simplicius’ remaining discussion goes through *aporiai* and problems, with both positive and negative comments on Iamblichus’ contribution to the debate.

Natural philosophy

In his interpretation of Aristotle's *Physics*, Simplicius presents a comprehensive and detailed running commentary that aims to show the coherence of the work as a whole and its importance for Platonic (meta)physics. He expounds Aristotle's doctrines, motives and arguments throughout, adducing additional materials, either to fill in gaps (e.g., the *divisio* of first principles in Aristotle), or to connect 'the dots', making sure that unity (as he sees it) and coherence of the Greek philosophical tradition is established. The overall metaphysical structure of reality follows that of Plotinus with few adjustments; the sensible world is a watered down, materially embedded reflection of the intelligible upper realm; thorough knowledge of nature assists in reaching one's goal (God) and can be considered a form of worship; evil is not an independent entity, but an absence of goodness.

Aristotle provided pioneering discussions of fundamental principles by identifying and defining important concepts such as cause, change, motion, place, time, bodies and the prime mover. His successor Theophrastus saw the work as falling into two parts (*In Phys.* 923.7–8; cf. 1358.8–10): books 1–5 dealt with principles (also attributed to Adrastus, *In Phys.* 6.4–10), while books 6–8 are on 'motion' (in the generic sense of 'change'). This book division was a matter of some dispute in the tradition, and Simplicius knows of a second division into four books *On Natural Principles*, and four *On Motion* (*In Cael.* 226.19–20, *In Phys.* 802.8–11, attributed to Porphyry).

To Simplicius and some of his Platonist predecessors (Plotinus, Porphyry, Ammonius (Asclepius *In Metaph.* 69.24–7)), Greek philosophers seemed in agreement with Plato and Aristotle on fundamental philosophical problems. For instance, he makes the (uncontroversial) claim that the *physikoi* are in agreement regarding the *need* for inquiring after the basic principles of nature (*In Phys.* 21.13–14), but he goes too far in claiming there is agreement *about* the first principles, as can be gleaned from his use of *harmonia* (182.10, 188.13, 188.16, 204.27). The Presocratics represent ancient wisdom that needs to be taken on board as irrefutable (77.11). Here Simplicius probably took up the interpretive direction of Plotinus, Porphyry and Syrianus regarding the relevance of the Presocratic doctrines, but he clearly uses better and richer sources to do so, often illustrating his claims with lavish quotations from Presocratic works, Theophrastus, Eudemus, Alexander and Porphyry (he verifies information on Hippocrates of Chios in Alexander: *In Phys.* 60.22–68.32). In some cases we would have very little (Parmenides, Empedocles) or no (Anaxagoras) *verbatim* material without him.

It would be imprudent to try and present a comprehensive picture of Simplicius' assessment of the Presocratics, but a few salient points may be highlighted

in order to show how he often constructs early Greek thought as an anticipation of Platonism. He sees Parmenides as a precursor to Plato on the interpretation of reality as a duality: what used to be the distinction between the perceptual and the conceptual of human cognition is, from a Plotinian perspective, transported onto a vertical plane, so that truth and reality belong to the upper realm in line with the Plotinian hierarchical scheme. Parmenides is also praised for his rigour in argument (*In Phys.* 116.2–4, from Eudemus). Both these characteristics make Parmenides the perfect anticipation of Plato (I note that Syrianus already claimed Plato and Parmenides agree, *In Metaph.* 13–14, 171.11–14). Regrettably, Simplicius also tends to identify Plato's Parmenides of the dialogue with the historical figure – a reminder of the ahistorical approach common in late Platonism.

His interpretation of Empedocles may take its cue from the (Platonizing) interpretation initiated by Porphyry, in which the cosmic cycles in Empedocles are read as a non-literal representation of the emanations of the One. Simplicius claims how Plato in his cosmology follows Empedocles (31.24–8), assimilating the idea that Love and Hate cause the basic elements to gather or disperse. He does, however, get it wrong on the interpretation of Empedocles' cosmos which is, as Aristotle claims, at rest. With regard to other thinkers, Anaxagoras is of particular interest because of his thesis that the universe is ruled by a rational force (Mind). The pattern is clearly one of seeking antecedents for Platonist views by way of similarities that allow Simplicius to expound and defend Platonist doctrines with the help of past authorities. Aristotle's teleological view of intellectual history is thus reinforced and updated to the early sixth century.

In terms of doctrines, Simplicius will often closely follow Aristotle, but with numerous adjustments, either his own or inspired by his teachers (Damascius, Ammonius). The harmonizing tendency often leads to unusual outcomes in this account of natural philosophy; this requires him to smooth out discrepancies or 'adjust' particular doctrines: he will claim that Plato has six, not four principles (*In Phys.* 3.18–19) and in its terminology the discussion is reminiscent of Plotinus and Damascius (*In Phys.* 1.7–8); he will label the circular motion of the fiery sphere not natural or counter-natural, but 'supernatural' (*In Cael.* 35.12–13 = fr. 12 Wildberg); his interpretation of the causality of the Unmoved Mover (*In Phys.* 1361.11–1363.12) shows direct dependence on Ammonius, who argued that Aristotle's God was an efficient cause sustaining the universe. A similar view is found in Plotinus (*Enn.* 5.3.15.28–30) and, if we accept Simplicius' testimony, Alexander, who even defends its Aristotelian origin (*In Phys.* 258.14–25). These interpretations show that Simplicius is 'Platonizing' the material, but it is always clear when this happens, not least because he gives his source text before presenting his own interpretation of them.

His digressions on the concepts of *place* and *time* (the *Corollaries*, appended to *In Phys.* 4) are two clear examples of Simplicius' own philosophical position because he clearly speaks in his own voice. In his account, he evaluates existing views on, and criticisms of, Aristotle, including those of Theophrastus, Proclus and Damascius. Proclus defended the interval as place after arguing against the views that it was either matter or form, and against Aristotle's view since it produces absurdities. Simplicius raises objections to the position of 'incorporeal interval' (615.13 ff.), arguing that immateriality can still produce an impression and thus make it visible (616.26–8). Despite his original contribution, Proclus is in for some criticism. It is Damascius, building on Theophrastus, who is given credit for a better account, even if he too is not immune to critique. On place, a two-dimensional surface for Aristotle, Simplicius follows the criticism of Theophrastus who prefers a more dynamic concept, and with Damascius, who defined place as 'good ordering' (644.10–11), he gives place the power to arrange the parts of the world which is viewed as an 'organism'. Iamblichus already had postulated that place holds things together, giving each thing a unique place which moves with it. Simplicius and Damascius agree that the power to arrange members of an organism is assigned to place (e.g., 636.8–13, 637.25–30). Thus Simplicius accepts the dynamic understanding of place as advocated by Iamblichus, Syrianus and Damascius, but disagrees with the notion that place is the measure of positioning and size for things (*In Phys.* 625.28; 627.2 and 14–15). Simplicius moves away from Theophrastus' position regarding the control of an organism's parts which is left to form, not place (as Damascius would have it). The excursus on time responds to Aristotle's rejection of the paradoxes on whether time exists at all. Aristotle argued that if its parts do not exist, neither can time itself, and whether an instance can cease to exist. Beginning with Iamblichus, the late Platonists had posited higher and lower time, the former being 'above change' and therefore immune to paradox, while the lower kind is considered a stretch of time between two instants. Simplicius agrees that time exists as something which continuously comes into being, and is divisible in thought only. He provides his own solution that time is infinite, if viewed as a cycle (i.e., without beginning or end) in his discussion on the continuum (*in Phys.* 6).

Cosmology: Aristotle's On the Heavens

Simplicius' commentary on *On the Heavens* was probably written before those on *Physics* and *Categories*, since internal cross-references (e.g., *In Phys.* 1118.3; 1146.27; 1169.7 etc.) allow us to establish a relative chronology. It seeks to explicate Aristotle's work on cosmology in a way that harmonizes it with Plato's

cosmology as found in the *Timaeus*. The study of the cosmos also involves metaphysics and theology, representing the spiritual outlook of late Platonism on the causes and nature of the universe. The commentary follows Aristotle's text closely, but Simplicius significantly alters the cosmological account of Aristotle with full use of post-Aristotelian reactions inside and outside the Peripatos. For instance, Simplicius resorts to earlier commentaries and acknowledges that post-Aristotelian authors have improved earlier accounts in astronomy (e.g., Hipparchus, Aristarchus, Ptolemy 471.9–10; cf. 506.5–10), so he acknowledges scientific progress. Famously, he defends Platonic (meta)physics against the Christian Philoponus (see below). In achieving both objectives, he runs into serious problems, but it is interesting to see how he tries to overcome them. He also makes elaborate and critical use of Alexander's comments on the work.

In *On the Heavens*, Aristotle presents a systematic, though not always clearly organized, study of the universe building on the principles of his physics. He sets out the structure of the cosmos and the nature of the heavenly bodies, including types of motion and shape, the (relative) position, location and distances to the fixed sphere and to the earth (books 1–2), and the generation and transformation of elements and the notion of weight (books 3–4). Striking positions are the natural motion of the four terrestrial elements (earth and water tend to fall, air and fire rise), the controversial claim that there is a heavenly fifth element which causes fire to have circular motion (*aether*, book 1 chs. 2–4), refutation of the Pythagorean idea of a harmony of the spheres (2, ch. 9), and critical comments on Plato's *Timaeus* (e.g., *Cael.* 300b17–19) and earlier philosophers.

The harmonizing tendency in this commentary comes up against some significant obstacles. The Plotinian picture of reality is a hierarchical structure from the upper level of the ineffable One in the intelligible realm to the sensible realm of enmattered forms. Its core aspects are the goodness and eternity of the first, and the evil nature and temporality of the latter, while the One serves as an efficient as well as final cause (e.g., *Enn.* 3.8.11.40, 5.3.15.28–30). Within this metaphysical framework and using Plato's views on the universe in the *Timaeus* Simplicius is trying to accommodate Aristotelian physics and cosmology. But Plato's cosmology contains several elements which (to modern eyes at least) resist harmonization with Aristotle's cosmology. Plato's creation of the universe by a creator God clashes with Aristotle's view that the cosmos is uncreated and eternal, making the highest divine Being merely a source of admiration and emulation (*Cael.* 2.12) with no direct causal connection to the world. Plato has a Creator God (Demiurge) impose order and form upon already existing matter by looking at a 'model' – evoking the analogy of a craftsman using an ideal Form as a perfect exemplar; Aristotle sees nature as having an internal formative principle with a purposeful trajectory (teleology) – a way of thinking

grounded in biology, procreation and the regeneration of species. In his *Physics* commentary (see below), Simplicius approvingly cites Ammonius' theory that Aristotle's Mind-God is an efficient cause working as a sustaining force for the conservation of the universe.

In the prologue's review of standard introductory questions, Simplicius already adds minor polemical notes regarding the work's subject, which according to Alexander was the world (*In Cael.* 1.1, or the world and the simple bodies, 2.9–10), according to Iamblichus and Syrianus the whole cosmos (1.24–2.1, 5–7), but according to Simplicius the heavens and the sublunary four elements (4.25–7). Again, Simplicius proceeds by carefully evaluating previous claims while giving his own balanced assessment of Aristotle's and reported views. In the remainder of the first book he continues to give meticulous expositions of Aristotle's arguments and motives for his account regarding the work's subject, its relation to physics, and how it contributes to divine worship. In book 2 he tries to settle several fundamental claims of Aristotelian cosmology: the eternity of the heaven, its circular motion, and its spherical shape (2.1–4), its preferred direction (2.5, includes a critique of the Pythagoreans), heat and light in the stars (2.7), which are carried by something and produce no sound (2.8–9). He even claims that Aristotle in his *On Prayer* clearly stated that there is a transcendent intellect (*In Cael.* 485.21–22 *ho theos ē nous esti ē kai epekeina ti tou nou*). During his elaborate discussions he often reports from, and takes issue with, Alexander's views – providing us with important information on the Peripatetic's lost commentary.

Starting from criticisms by the Peripatetic Xenarchus in his *Against the Fifth Element* (*In Cael.* 13.21, from which Simplicius produces some important fragments) and a suggestion by Origen (a third-century Platonizing Christian), Simplicius makes fire in the heavens rotate according to the natural inclination of the fifth element, giving the cosmos its eternal existence. He also refers to an objection from Alexander of Aphrodisias (who adopts it from his teacher Sosigenes: *In Cael.* 32.1–11), that their rotation on transparent spheres could not explain the occasional closeness of some planets. Such scientific details show his wide reading and knowledge of astronomy, which became incorporated into the commentary, preserving important and sometimes unique materials from Ptolemy (e.g., *On the Elements* and *Optics* at *In Cael.* 20.11; *On Hypotheses* at 456.23–7; *Geographia* at 549.10). On occasion, Simplicius may introduce alien elements (celestial soul, *In Cael.* 78–80) or show inconsistency as when the second hypostasis, the first and absolute Being (*In Cael.* 93.16–17) does not (yet) have determination (*diakrisis*), because this would give non-being existence (this differs slightly from that which he relates in his *In Epict.* 75.50–76.11 D/333 Hadot). But overall deviations from cosmological doctrines of the late fifth

century occur because of conflicts in the copious materials he collects or on the basis of new scientific discoveries. Simplicius often notes that advances are being made, in scientific, astronomical (e.g., *In Cael.* 471.9–10; *In Phys.* 625.2, 795.33–5) as well as mathematical issues (*In Phys.* 60.21–69.34, Hippocrates of Chios and the quadrature of the circle, from Alexander and Eudemus' *Researches in Geometry*). Innovation and progress were not considered impossible.

At the heart of the cosmological dispute lay the question of the eternity of the world. Here we see Simplicius put up a defence of pagan theology and the Aristotelian claim that the world is uncreated and indestructible. We get a rare glimpse of his otherwise unobtrusive personality from the unusually fierce polemic regarding this question aimed at the Alexandrian Christian Platonist Philoponus, a slightly younger contemporary who attacked Proclus' account of the eternity of the world (*Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World*, dated to 529 CE), a work Simplicius probably did not read (*In Cael.* 135.29–31). He is basing his comments on Philoponus' *Against Aristotle*, a later work surviving only in fragments (in part extant in the earlier treatise). Several episodes of invective aim to discredit the plausibility of the philosophical arguments Philoponus offered in support of Christian cosmology. The polemic is therefore as much an advertisement for Platonism as it is an attempt to preserve the pagan spiritual perspective for future generations. His aversion to the Christians shows in his prickly descriptions of them as 'godless', 'superficial', 'weak-minded', believers of a passing whim. He argues against Christians in different places, concerning God's forgiveness (*In Epict.* 271), the heaven as a seat or home of God (*In Cael.* 370.29–31), or possibly on the existence of gods (117.24 ff.), but he is most agitated and abusive against Philoponus. He must have thought the latter's work to be quite influential if not dealt with appropriately, which implies a well-informed audience. Simplicius' vocabulary abounds with rude and dismissive vignettes, calling him vainglorious, a novice, a dissenter, impious, emotional, a madman – in short, the opposite of a learned and sophisticated person interested in the truth. We are informed about this debate mostly by Simplicius' works, although he never refers to him by his real name (Philoponus is probably an adopted name, meaning 'lover of hard work'), but only as 'that man' or 'the Grammarian' – perhaps an attempt to condemn him to oblivion, but certainly to present himself as 'dispassionate' and only concerned with the truth.

To Simplicius, Philoponus was a renegade and traitor. He was also trained by Ammonius in Alexandria (though they never met, *In Cael.* 26.17–19), which made him a more knowledgeable and dangerous opponent, in particular since his main strategy was to turn his opponents' arguments against themselves. In his attack on Proclus and Aristotle, Philoponus had argued for an absolute beginning of the universe (including matter) and an ending. He abandoned

Aristotle's position of an indestructible upper realm, making it as perishable as the lower part of creation. Philoponus' attack on Aristotle extended to many aspects of his natural philosophy. He also denied the existence of the fifth element (*aether*), which Aristotle had declared part of the outermost ring of the universe, having a natural circular motion (*Cael.* 1.2–4).

Simplicius' actual defence of an eternal universe (1326.38–1336.34) consists of long quotations and detailed refutations. Regarding the heavens, he insists Aristotle's view (it is both uncreated and indestructible) is correct, construing the heavens as a mixture of elements, dominated by fire of the highest gradation (e.g., 66.33–67.5). His defence of aether is a brave, but somewhat desperate attempt to salvage the Aristotelian world view, for even Theophrastus and Strato had tried to adjust or diminish its role. The issue involves technical points such as finite bodies having finite capacity, its dependence on matter (naturally perishable), matter is divisible – points from which Philoponus used to infer perishability. Simplicius' reports of Philoponus' arguments have been criticized for inaccuracy, though this is most likely the result of his partisanship rather than deliberate obfuscation. No response from Philoponus survives.

Simplicius ends his commentary with a sincere prayer to the creator-intellect (*In Cael.* 731.25–9). Together with the prayer at the end of *In Epict.* (454) this confirms the broader religious purpose of his work, which he views as a contribution to the dissemination and preservation of the pagan spiritual outlook.

EPILOGUE

Until recently, Simplicius' views were hardly studied and understood by few. The late nineteenth century cast him in the role of intermediary, a 'source' for Greek philosophy. This strongly classical outlook reinforced the view that late Platonism, by now labelled NeoPlatonism, was a strange and inferior form of philosophy, because after Plato and Aristotle nothing could live up to the classical ideal. Such a judgement seems to rest on the kind of 'decline-and-fall' narrative Edward Gibbon made fashionable in his famous *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (six vols., 1776–89). Thus Simplicius' achievement was customarily measured against inappropriate criteria.

The volume and style of his works make them difficult to categorize. He is neither a Plato or Aristotle, nor a Plotinus or Proclus, but *sui generis*. Unprecedented in its scope and size, and characteristically modest in presenting a personal view, his commentaries contain judicious philosophical analysis, sound scholarship and a wealth of source material on other thinkers and philosophies. From his writings a broadly consistent picture of late-Platonic doctrines emerges,

but also one that illustrates lively debate, controversy and dissent. Despite its tendency to appear unified *intellectually*, late Platonism was never monolithic *philosophically*.

Heir to a long-standing philosophical and spiritual tradition, Simplicius had the misfortune of living in a time which saw Christianity consolidate its power base at the expense of Hellenic paganism, of which Platonism was the main intellectual representative. Simplicius aimed to offer an *apologia* and protreptic in combining philosophical analysis and historical survey of encyclopaedic proportions. Measured by his own aims and ambitions, he succeeds well in implementing this agenda, balancing authorities and accumulated research.

The past three decades have seen considerable progress in Simplician studies. What remains to be done in order to assess his real legacy is a fuller examination of his own philosophical contributions to the debates he reported both copiously and responsibly, even if he was partisan in his thought and sometimes flawed in his method. Further study can help to tease out his own views from his cautious criticisms and discreet suggestions (often introduced with 'maybe'). With the tools now available (translations, modern analyses) we can extend the emerging picture. He deserves a place in the history of Platonism which goes beyond nineteenth-century preoccupations of *Quellenforschung* and the prejudice of purists. In view of his ardent harmonizing effort and his fierce defence of the eternity of the world, his work can be seen as an impressive last stand against Christian intellectuals, marking the end of an era, while also prefiguring medieval scholarship and scholasticism. In offering an authoritative compilation of the main theological teachings known to date primarily intended for students, Simplicius effectively produced a *summa* of late antique Platonism.

JOHN PHILOPONUS

KOENRAAD VERRYCKEN

LIFE AND WORK

There are no reasons to doubt that Philoponus bore the Christian name of John from birth, and that he was born in Alexandria. Simplicius informs us that John called himself ‘the Grammarian’ (Simpl. *In Cael.* 119.7). As regards the surname ‘Philoponus’ (literally ‘the lover of labour’), it is often considered to mean that John was at a certain moment a member of a group of *philoponoi*, i.e., a militant Christian brotherhood. Probably, however, it only refers to the author’s diligence as a writer. He was born c. 490 or a few years earlier, and first studied philology before engaging in philosophy. His master in philosophy was Ammonius. Somehow Philoponus succeeded in becoming the principal editor of Ammonius’ commentaries on Aristotle, and we may assume that this was his main philosophical activity before 529. In 529, the year of Justinian’s decree prohibiting the teaching of pagan philosophy, Philoponus published *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, a violent attack against the Platonic (and his own earlier) doctrine of the eternity of the world. After 529 he probably taught philosophy for some time, without, however, being the head of the Alexandrian school himself. In this period he revised his earlier commentaries on the *Posterior Analytics*, the *Physics* and the *Meteorology* in the light of his new Christian philosophy. Philoponus’ Christian about-turn, however, did not involve the Alexandrian school in its entirety. Even before 529, the scholar Ammonius had been succeeded by the mathematician Eutocius, and Eutocius himself was later succeeded by Olympiodorus, who made no secret of his paganism. This indicates that during the 530s opportunities for pagan philosophy opened up again in Alexandria, after the dangerous year 529. By the end of the same decade Philoponus seems to have vanished from the philosophical scene properly speaking. In the late 540s or early 550s the author comes to the fore once again, this time as a participant in theological controversies, among other things on the nature of Christ and the nature of the divine Trinity. This period

of theological production in Philoponus' life extends at least as far as the late 560s. Philoponus probably died in the early 570s.

Work

Philoponus' work includes four groups of writings: philosophical works (commentaries and treatises), theological writings, grammatical works and miscellaneous scientific works. Several of his writings are lost. For some of the titles attributed to him it is unclear whether they existed at all or still exist in manuscript. A certain number of works (or parts of them) that have been attributed to him are probably or certainly spurious. I will first give a survey of the extant philosophical writings attributed to Philoponus, and then mention the most important other extant or partly preserved works.

The series of philosophical commentaries includes:

- *In Categoriais*
- *In Analytica Priora*. The editor M. Wallies was probably right in considering book 2 of this commentary as spurious.
- *In Analytica Posteriora*. The editor M. Wallies advances good reasons for doubting the authenticity of book 2.
- *In Meteorologica I*
- *In De generatione et corruptione*
- (*In De generatione animalium*). This commentary was wrongly attributed to Philoponus.
- *In De anima*. The editor M. Hayduck already questioned Philoponus' authorship of book 3, and thought Stephanus might be the real author. Many later scholars followed this view. Recently, W. Charlton has made a strong case for the attribution of book 3 to Stephanus.¹ By contrast, Philoponus is certainly the author of *In De intellectu*, a commentary on *De anima* 3.4–8 of which we possess William of Moerbeke's Latin translation. Fragments of Philoponus' Greek original of *In De intellectu* are to be found in Sophonias' paraphrase of the *De anima*.
- *In Physica*. Only books 1–4 have come down to us in their entirety. H. Vitelli also included a number of fragments from books 5–8 in his edition. In books 3 and 4 Philoponus refers three times to his lost (anti-eternalist) commentary on *Physics* 8 (*Phys.* 458.30–1; 639.7–9; 762.7–9). Since the preserved Greek fragments of book 8 are eternalist, we have to conclude either that the author produced two different commentaries on *Physics* 8, or that his commentary on book 8 included an early, eternalist version and a later, anti-eternalist one.²
- (*In Metaphysica*). The Greek original of this text, a Latin translation of which was published by F. Patrizi in 1583, is attributed to Philoponus in a Viennese codex.

¹ Charlton 1991: 6–12; Charlton 2000a: 1–12; Charlton 2000b: 1–16.

² Cf. the anti-eternalist Arabic fragments of books 5 and 8 in Lettink and Urmson 1994: 38; 135.

Meanwhile, however, it has been clearly shown that Philoponus cannot be the author of this work.³

- *In Nicomachi Introductionem Arithmeticae*. This commentary of Philoponus is a revised version, either directly or indirectly, of Asclepius' commentary, which itself reproduces lectures of Ammonius on the *Introductio Arithmetica* of Nicomachus of Gerasa.

In the titles of four of Philoponus' commentaries on Aristotle (*In Analytica priora*, *In Analytica posteriora*, *In De generatione et corruptione*, *In De anima*) it is mentioned that they are based on Ammonius' lectures, yet, except in the case of the *In Analytica priora*, include personal observations of the author.

The series of Philoponus' philosophical treatises includes:

- *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, Philoponus' most famous philosophical work, in which he attacks Proclus' treatise *De aeternitate mundi*. The beginning and end of Philoponus' work, including Proclus' first Argument, are lost.
- *Contra Aristotelem (De aeternitate mundi contra Aristotelem)*. This lost work of Philoponus can partly be reconstructed on the basis of the extensive polemic against it in Simplicius' *In De caelo* and *In Physica*. The *Contra Philoponum* passages in Simplicius are: *In De Caelo* 25.22–38.5; 42.17–49.25; 56.26–59.23; 66.8–70.19; 70.34–91.20; 119.7–144.4; 156.25–201.10 and *In Physica* 1117.15–1118.11; 1129.29–1152.19; 1156.28–1169.9; 1171.30–1182.39; 1326.38–1336.34. Philoponus' *Contra Aristotelem* consisted of at least eight books.
- Modern research has shown that Philoponus wrote still another lost treatise on the temporal beginning of the world, which is sometimes given the title *De contingentia mundi*. It was an attempt to demonstrate that the world had a beginning, and served as a positive counterpart of Philoponus' polemical works against Proclus and Aristotle. In the last *Contra Philoponum* passage of his *In Physica* (1326.38–1336.34) Simplicius appears to argue against this third work, and no longer against the *Contra Aristotelem*. An Arabic text has been identified as a summary of the third work, which probably consisted of three books.
- *Tractatus de totalitate et partibus ad Sergium presbyterum*. This text, which survives in a Syriac translation, is usually ranged among Philoponus' theological works, but is primarily philosophical.

Philoponus' most important surviving or partly surviving theological works are:

- *De officio mundi*. A commentary on the cosmogony of Genesis, which in certain respects can be regarded as representative of the last stage of Philoponus' philosophical development.

³ Lohr 1991: XI–XIII; Ebbesen 1981: III, 86–7.

- *Diaitētēs seu arbiter*. An account of Philoponus' monophysite doctrine, which has survived in Syriac translation. Fragments of the Greek original have been preserved as well.
- *De trinitate (De theologia)*. In this work, of which some fragments are extant in Syriac translation, Philoponus expounded his tritheistic views.
- *De resurrectione*. In this writing Philoponus rejected the idea that it is our earthly body that will resurrect from the dead at the end of time. Only Syriac fragments of it survive.

Of the grammatical works attributed to Philoponus I mention *De vocabulis quae diversum significatum exhibent secundum differentiam accentus*, and of his other scientific works *De usu astrolabii*.

Chronology

Philoponus published his *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* in 529 (*Aet. mund.* 579.14–15). The *Contra Aristotelem* was written somewhere between 530 and 534, after *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* (*Aet. mund.* 258.24–6 etc.; Philop. *apud* Simpl. *In Cael.* 135,27–8.) but before Simplicius' *In De caelo*. The third, non-polemical treatise on the eternity of the world was written after the polemical works against Proclus and Aristotle (*Aet. mund.* 9.20–6). Its *terminus ante quem* is the date of composition of Simplicius' *In Physica*, for which the *terminus post quem* is 538. *De opificio mundi* was written between 546 and 560, probably towards the end of that period. The other theological works date from 552 and later.

As regards Philoponus' commentaries on Aristotle, it is generally agreed now that the *In Meteorologica* (in its present form, one should add) was composed after 529, probably even after *Contra Aristotelem*. Accordingly, Philoponus' activity as a commentator on Aristotle went on after 529, and this conclusion applies to his *In Physica* as well. Traditionally the *Commentary on the Physics* is dated to 517 (*In Phys.* 703.16–17). However, the commentary appears to contain inconsistencies and contradictions with respect to the eternity of the world, the definition of place and the existence of void, which indicates that an older version was partly superseded by a later one or later ones. There are good reasons to assume that the anti-eternalist passages in the present text⁴ were written after 529. As a consequence the date of 517 can no longer be maintained for the commentary in its entirety, but only as the date of its first version. The criteria on the basis of which we can distinguish earlier and later texts in the *In Physica* (eternity of the world, definition of place, reality of the void) also allow us to consider

⁴ *In Phys.* 54.8–55.26; 191.9–192.2; 428.23–430.10; 456.17–458.31; 467.1–468.4; 762.2–9.

In Categorias, *In De generatione et corruptione* and *In De anima* and *In De intellectu* as representative of the same philosophical system as *In Physica*₁, i.e., the Platonic system of the early Philoponus. The *Commentary on the Prior Analytics*, too, appears to belong to the same group of works. The *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*, by contrast, seems to have elements of both Philoponus' early and later philosophy.

Two different philosophical systems

Under the influence of Évrard's article on Philoponus' religious convictions there has been – and still is – a strong tendency in the research on Philoponus to understand his work in its entirety against the background of his Christian 'convictions', and to speak of 'the' philosophy of Philoponus.⁵ Meanwhile, however, it may have been demonstrated that we have to distinguish two different systems in Philoponus' philosophical work. The first of these systems (Philoponus I) can be called an 'Alexandrian' form of Platonism. It does not constitute, as Praechter and others thought of Ammonius' and Philoponus' philosophy as a whole, a return to a pre-Plotinian form of Platonism.⁶ Neither is it identical without qualification with contemporary Athenian Platonism. The philosophy we find in Ammonius, Asclepius and the early Philoponus can rather be described as a form of Platonism that has been simplified in comparison with the system of Proclus, Ammonius' master. From 529 onwards, by contrast, Philoponus' philosophical work is based on the Christian idea of creation, and rejects the basic tenets of his own earlier philosophy (Philoponus II).

One must realize that the distinction of two systems in Philoponus' work is entirely independent of any biographical or chronological hypotheses. I think it is just impossible to overlook the countless contradictions between, e.g., the *Commentary on De anima* on the one hand and *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* on the other. Whatever the author's convictions were when he wrote these two works respectively (and this applies to both works), or whenever Philoponus wrote the *In De anima*, at the level of philosophical doctrine they represent two different systems, which on a number of crucial issues are incompatible with one another, as may be shown in what follows.

Most of the research on Philoponus so far has been done in the areas of his philosophical-cum-theological Christian thought and his natural philosophy (theory of space, void, impetus, ether etc.). In the present chapter I have to leave aside the author's dogmatic theological views. As regards his philosophy

⁵ E.g. Évrard 1953; Saffrey 1954; Böhm 1967; Sorabji 1987; Scholten 1996 etc.

⁶ Praechter 1910: 151–4.

properly speaking, my emphasis will be on the distinction of the two systems and on their respective internal coherence or lack of coherence. This means that the cosmological topics which traditionally dominate the research on Philoponus' philosophy will receive less attention here, with the exception of the eternity of the world. My outline of the two systems will focus on exegetical policy, metaphysics, psychology and cosmology as a whole.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE EARLY PHILOPONUS

Platonic interpretation of Aristotle

The first prominent characteristic of the philosophy of Philoponus I is its attempt to harmonize Aristotle with Plato on the basis of Platonic metaphysics. As a result the texts of the earlier Philoponus show traces of the 'Platonizing' approach to Aristotle which was typical of Ammonius, as we know from Simplicius and Asclepius. One of the intentions of this approach was to upgrade Aristotle in comparison with Plato and to put their respective metaphysics at the same level.

The best-known instance of Ammonius' Platonizing interpretation of Aristotle was his view that for Aristotle God was both the efficient and final cause of the universe.⁷ In his *In De generatione et corruptione* Philoponus, without mentioning Ammonius, agrees with his master's interpretation. On two occasions Aristotle is said there to accept implicitly that God is also the efficient cause of the world (*In De gen.* 136.6–137.3; 152.23–153.2.). Elsewhere in the same work Philoponus even detects explicit evidence for this interpretation in Aristotle's text (*In De gen.* 50.1–5; 297.15–24). Crediting Aristotle's First Unmoved Mover with both an efficient and final causality was not, as is often thought, an attempt to Christianize Aristotle as much as possible. The underlying harmonization of Aristotle with Plato was, on the contrary, an element of the opposition to the Christian doctrine of creation. According to Philoponus, the 'efficient' causality of Aristotle's God is his power to eternally produce forms and matter (*In Phys.* 189.13–17). Taken together, the eternal efficient and final causality attributed to the Unmoved Mover is easily recognizable as the double nature of the Platonic One or Good, which is both the source and goal of all reality. At the same time, however, Aristotle's God is also an Intellect. The resulting paradox can be solved by assuming that Ammonius and Philoponus implicitly introduced the Platonic distinction between the One and the

⁷ Simpl. *In Cael.* 271.13–21; *In Phys.* 1360.24–1363.24; Asclep. *In Metaph.* 28.20–2; 103.3–4; 148.10–13; 225.15–17.

divine Intellect into Aristotle's God. Anyway, the early Philoponus understands Aristotle's divine Intellect as eternally creative, and this means that our author credits Aristotle with the doctrine that the *universalia ante res* are *logoi* within the demiurgic Intellect.⁸ In other words, he makes Aristotle an adherent of Plato's theory of ideas. Consequently, he considers Aristotle's criticism of the theory of ideas as a criticism, not of the existence of the ideas, but only of their being hypostasized outside the demiurgic Intellect (*In De gen.* 285.25–286.16; *In Phys.* 225.4–226.11).

The emanationist interpretation of Aristotle's theology is not the only instance of the early Philoponus' Platonic exegesis of Aristotle. In the *In De anima* and *In De intellectu* Aristotle's psychology, too, is harmonized to a certain extent with Plato's. For instance, there is no difference of opinion, Philoponus says, between Plato and Aristotle on the problem of the souls of the spheres. Philoponus is following Alexander of Aphrodisias here, according to whom Aristotle is convinced that the immanent nature which causes the motion of the heavenly bodies is identical with their soul (Alex. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 380.29–381.2; *In De an.* 101.34–102.31; 138.21–3). As a consequence, the early Philoponus can give a harmonizing interpretation of Aristotle's criticism of the psychogony in Plato's *Timaeus*. Aristotle's argument, he says, is directed only against the literal meaning of Plato's text, not against its real content.⁹

The early Philoponus offers a Platonic and harmonizing interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine on the human rational soul as well. Aristotle, Philoponus says, considers the human intellect as a substance which is separate from the human body, immortal and eternal *a parte ante*.¹⁰ Moreover, the fact that Aristotle accepts the soul's pre-existence also means that he accepts Plato's doctrine of innate ideas (*In De intell.* 16.90–6; 38.84–90; 57.62–9).

Philoponus' eternalist interpretation of Plato's psychogony and his harmonizing reading of Aristotle's objections against it would make no sense without a corresponding approach of Plato's cosmogony and Aristotle's reaction to it. Traces of such an approach are to be found in the *In De anima* (*In De an.* 76.22–77.1; cf. *In Phys.* 56.1–5). From Asclepius we know that Ammonius gave a non-literal interpretation of the cosmogony in the *Timaeus* (*In De an.* 76.22–77.1; cf. *In Phys.* 56.1–5). By contrast, the later Philoponus' literal interpretation of both Plato's cosmogony and Aristotle's understanding of it will mean a clean break with his original exegetical policy.

⁸ *In De an.* 37.19–31; cf. Simpl. *In Cael.* 87.3–11; Asclep. *In Metaph.* 44.32–7; 69.17–27; 167.14–34 etc.

⁹ Plat. *Tim.* 35a–37c; Arist. *An.* 1.3, 406b25–407b12; *In De an.* 115.22–121.10.

¹⁰ Separation: *In De an.* 10.16–11.29; *In De intell.* 49.55–68; immortality: *In De an.* 11.7–8; 11.27–8; 159.7–18 etc.; *In De intell.* 6.20–5; 39.1–3; 39.21–7 etc.; pre-existence: *In De intell.* 38.90–8.

A Platonic theology

Whatever 'religious convictions' (Évrard) Philoponus had when he wrote his early works, as far as philosophical doctrine is concerned he expounded or followed for the most part the ideas of Ammonius. As regards his theology, we have to rely on occasional utterances scattered over the mass of his commentaries. Yet the available information seems sufficient for a broad outline.

The early Philoponus obviously adheres to the orthodox Platonic doctrine of the One. The first cause, the one and only principle of all reality is called the First, the One or the Good.¹¹ The Good is the principle of all being: only that which participates the Good also participates being (*In Phys.* 187.6–13). At the same time it is the *telos* of all being, since everything longs for its own origin (*In De gen.* 296.17–21). Philoponus compares the One to the sun: just as the sun is superior to all 'encosmic' beings, so also the One is superior to all beings, and just as the sun illuminates what is beneath, so also the One makes all things to participate its own goodness according to their place in the ontological hierarchy (*In Phys.* 163.2–12). He emphasizes the necessary and eternal character of 'God's' creative activity (*In Cat.* 145.8–11). Neither the use of the term *ho theos* nor the attribution of will to this God involve the idea of a personal God (*In Cat.* 144.28–146.8). Only a negative theology, Philoponus writes, is appropriate for describing the highest principle (*In Cat.* 51.29–52.2). As a consequence, there is what Philoponus calls a 'dissimilar similarity' between the One and matter. Both for the supreme principle and prime matter we have to abandon all affirmative predicates, in an upward direction in the case of the One, and in a downward direction in the case of prime matter.¹²

The second hypostasis in Philoponus' early metaphysics is the demiurgic Intellect (*dēmiourgikos nous*) (*In De an.* 58.9; *In De intell.* 57.53 etc). It is also called the universal, first or divine Intellect.¹³ It is the sum of all forms (*plērōma eidōn*), it contains the *logoi* of all things within itself (*In De an.* 56.28–9; 126.29–32; cf. Procl. *El. prop.* 177 (156.1 Dodds)). When the divine Intellect contemplates itself, it contemplates at the same time all the forms, in one act of timeless and intuitive thinking (*In De an.* 56.26–8; *In Meteor.* 12.25–6; intuitive thought: *In De an.* 132.29–33 etc.). The ideas are 'reasons' (*logoi*) or forms (*eidē*) in

¹¹ First cause: *In Cat.* 6.7; *In Anal. post.* 308.18–19; *In Phys.* 162.9; principle of all reality: *In Cat.* 5.34–6.2; 6.14; *In Phys.* 22.14–15; 56.7–8; 56.14–18 etc.; *In De an.* 7.14–16; 73.30–1; 74.9–10 etc.; *In De gen.* 296.19–29; the First: *In Phys.* 16.28; 162.13–7; 163.2–3 etc.; *In De an.* 7.15; 119.23–4; 265.31–2 etc.; the One: *In Anal. Post.* 283.17–20; *In Phys.* 22.14; 24.6; 192.31–193.1; *In De an.* 119.23; the Good: *In Phys.* 187.6–9; *In De gen.* 296.19–21.

¹² *In Phys.* 72.13–16; 162.4–20; *In Cat.* 52.2–8; cf. Ammon. *In Int.* 213.8–10; Simplic. *In Phys.* 205.7–15.

¹³ Universal: *In De intell.* 51.6–7; first: *In De an.* 126.27; 132.30; divine: *In De intell.* 19.49–50; 82.31–2; *In Meteor.* 12.25; *In Anal. post.* 47.25–6; for *In De an.* cf. Hayduck's index s.v. *nous*.

the Demiurge's thought.¹⁴ They are called causes, prototypes, archetypes or paradigms of the materialized forms.¹⁵ The concepts in our rational soul are merely cognitive images of these original creative forms (*In De an.* 58.7–17; 120.10–12). The demiurgic *logoi* are the *universalia ante res*, 'the genera and species before the many' (*An.* 37.19–20).

The third level in Philoponus' early system, after the One and the divine Intellect, is formed by a plurality of lower transcendent intellects, which, as far as their ontological status is concerned, are comparable to Aristotle's plurality of unmoved movers (*In Phys.* 192.24–193.4; cf. *Simpl. In Phys.* 257.23–4). In contrast, however, to Aristotle's unmoved movers, these intellects are no moving causes for Philoponus. Their function seems mainly to fill the ontological gap between the demiurgic Intellect and the World Soul, since according to Philoponus the motion of the spheres is caused by celestial souls. They are referred to as separated forms (*chōrīsta eidē*), intelligibles (*ta nōēta*) etc., not in the sense of ideas (the ideas are no substances but only *logoi*), but of independent hyperpsychic and hypercosmic substances.¹⁶ They are divine entities, pure immaterial forms, pure acts (*autoenergeiaī*), pure intellects.¹⁷ Philoponus remains very vague about their hierarchy and functions. Angels (*angeloi*) seem to be considered as intermediate between these divine intellects and souls.¹⁸

In the philosophy of the early Philoponus, the ontological hierarchy is based on the idea of substance. Substances, Philoponus argues, are either simple or composed out of matter and form. Simple substances are either superior to composite substances (which is the case with souls, angels and intellects) or inferior to them (which is the case with form and matter) (*In Cat.* 49.23–51.21; 67.7–10; *In De intell.* 22.21–8; 25.6–9). Among composite substances

¹⁴ *Logoi*: *In Phys.* 240.4–5; 402.5–8; *In De gen.* 85.12; *In De an.* 37.25–6; 38.14–15; 58.8–9 etc.; *In Nicom.* 1.35.1–2; 1.36.4; *eidē*: *In Phys.* 225.23–4; 240.1–2; 300.29–301.1 etc.; *In De an.* 37.19–20; 58.13–7.

¹⁵ Causes: *In Phys.* 402.7–8; prototypes: *In Phys.* 403.3–4; archetypes: *In De an.* 58.16–17; *In Nicom.* 1.36.4; paradigms: *In De an.* 126.30–1.

¹⁶ Intelligible substances: *In Cat.* 52.9–10; 52.31; *In De an.* 56.23–4; divine substances: *In Anal. post.* 48.2; *In De an.* 63.12–3; *In Phys.* 347.17–18; incorporeal substances: *In Cat.* 6.7; intelligibles: *In Anal. post.* 300.4–6; *In Phys.* 22 *passim*; 56.13–14; 57.8–9 etc.; *In De an.* 2.27–9; 23.28–9; 24.22–3 etc.; *In De intell.* 35.19–20; 51.1–2; 114.29–30 etc.; *In Nicom.* 1.1.10; 1.3.22; 1.18.1; divine (entities): *In Anal. post.* 332.5–12; 332.21–2; *In Phys.* 57.8–9; 300.6–7; 301.11–12 etc.; *In De an.* 3.11; 23.30–2; 25.23–6 etc.; *In De intell.* 61.85; *In Nicom.* 1.1.10; 1.1.41; 1.3.22 etc.; (entities) above soul: *In De an.* 118.8–9; hypercosmic (entities): *In Phys.* 476.17–18; *In De an.* 121.9; *In Nicom.* 1.1.41–2; 1.1.55–6; 1.5.1–2.

¹⁷ Immaterial: *In Anal. post.* 300.4–6; 332.11–12; pure acts: *In De an.* 35.1–3; 63.11–14; 216.33–5; cf. *Arist. Int.* 13, 23a23–4; Ammon. *In Int.* 248.17–249.1; pure intellects: *In De intell.* 35.19–20; 42.81–2; 84.64–7.

¹⁸ Angels are intelligible (*In Cat.* 52.9–10), immortal (*In Cat.* 159.8; *In Anal. post.* 209.20–1) and simple (*In Cat.* 49.24–6) substances, different both from intellects and souls (e.g., *In De intell.* 25.6–9; *In Nicom.* 1.15.24; cf. Asclep. *In Metaph.* 57.8–9).

the second (universal) substance is superior to the first (individual) substance (*In Cat.* 50.6–14).

The highest ranks in the metaphysical hierarchy are, as we have seen, the One or the Good, the demiurgic Intellect and the lower divine intellects. The level next to the hypercosmic intellects is that of the disembodied human rational soul, i.e., before birth and after death. Apart from its necessary connection with the astral body, the rational soul in this condition is a substance in its own right, engaged in the perpetual intuition of intelligible objects.¹⁹ Among composite substances, heaven holds the highest rank. The heavenly bodies are composed of the fifth essence and celestial souls. These souls are characterized by a mode of thought which is discursive, yet superior to the discursive thinking of the embodied human rational soul (*In De an.* 138.6–8; 260.18–25). In the metaphysics of the early Philoponus heaven is intermediate between the purely intelligible substances and the sublunary world (*In Meteor.* 11.34–7; *In Nicom.* 1.3.45–54).

Soul

In the area of psychology I will concentrate on three items: the early Philoponus' definition of soul in general, his theory of the human rational soul, and his view of human intellection.

According to the early Philoponus, soul is by its very essence a moving principle. He adopts Proclus' idea that each level of soul (the vegetative, irrational and rational soul) necessarily animates a corresponding body (the coarse, pneumatic and astral body (e.g., Procl. *In Tim.* 3.298.2–299.9)). The coarse and pneumatic body are subject to generation and corruption, and this equally obtains for the vegetative and irrational soul. The human rational soul, by contrast, is both ungenerated and immortal, and the same holds true for the astral body it eternally animates.²⁰ In the philosophy of the early Philoponus the idea that it belongs to the essence of soul to be a principle of motion for body of any kind is also applied to the World Soul. The body animated by the World Soul is heaven (*In De an.* 137.29–138.9). Since for the early Philoponus heaven is eternal, its soul is eternal as well, and it is impossible for this soul not to move the corresponding body. In line with this view, Philoponus, in his *In De anima*, gives an allegorical interpretation of the psychogony in Plato's *Timaeus* (*In De an.* 115.22–121.10).

¹⁹ *In De an.* 50.9–11; 111.10–11; 132.29–33; 155.10–17; 164.26–165.2; 306.26–8; *In De intell.* 19.67–20.69.

²⁰ Pneumatic body: *In De an.* 162.2–27; 255.11–15; astral body: *In De an.* 18.26–31; 49.4–10; 138.8–9; *In De intell.* 24.58–65.

Soul necessarily moves a body, and does so by moving itself. Philoponus adopts Plato's doctrine that soul, pre-eminently rational soul, is the self-moving principle, and claims that this is Aristotle's view as well.²¹

The self-motion of the human rational soul is the cause of its deliberate descent from its transcendent pre-existence into the pneumatic and earthly body (*In De an.* 18.18). For the early Philoponus, our rational soul is not only immortal, but indeed pre-existent as well: it is an eternal intelligible substance.²² In contrast to the vegetative and irrational soul, the rational soul is in principle, although not in reality, separable from all body (*In De an.* 15.9–16.10).

Did Philoponus in his first period accept metempsychosis? Apparently the issue was problematic. On the one hand, metempsychosis is part of the logic of his Platonic system. For if the world and rational soul are eternal on both sides, and if it is impossible for an actually infinite number of souls to exist, then a finite number of souls must successively animate an infinite number of bodies (*In De intell.* 16.85–7 (about Aristotle)). If, on the other hand, metempsychosis is a necessary process, the descent of the pre-existent soul is inevitable, again and again, and this means that it cannot be the result of a free decision of the self-moving soul. On one occasion Philoponus considers the possibility of metempsychosis (*In De an.* 48.30–49.1), but in general he is, understandably, rather cautious about the issue.

The early Philoponus' theory of human intellection is based on the doctrine of innate ideas. Any intellect, Philoponus says, including the human rational soul, contains in itself the totality of all forms (*In De an.* 58.21–2; 126.29–32). Before its incarnation in the earthly body our rational soul is in a state of continuous but successive contemplation of intelligible objects (*In De an.* 164.26–165.2; cf. 132.29–33). At this level there is no discursive thought yet (*In De an.* 155.10–17; *In De intell.* 19.67–20.69). The heavenly bodies, by contrast, are engaged in a mode of discursive thought which is superior to that of the human rational soul in its earthly condition. Human reasoning, Philoponus says, is inferior to the thinking activity of celestial souls: it proceeds laboriously by searching and finding, whereas the propositions and syllogisms of celestial souls are produced without any effort (*In De an.* 138.6–8; 260.18–25). The intuitive basis of human discursive thought consists in our knowledge of universal terms (*In Anal. post.* 332.24–5; cf. *In De intell.* 64.52–4). In its undescended condition the human intellect contains all the *logoi* in a 'dispositional' knowledge, i.e., a

²¹ Plat. *Phdr.* 245c–e; *Leg.* 10.895e–896a; Arist. *De an.* 1.3, 405b31–406b15; *In De an.* 2.3–6; 92.27–95.35.

²² Intelligibility (or incorporeity) of the rational soul: *In De an.* 14.28–15.7; its eternity: *In De an.* 16.10–25; 46.28–34; *In De intell.* 34.5–35.19; cf. *In De an.* 25.8–10; *In De intell.* 30.15–17; 53.65–54.81.

state of permanent readiness for actualization. However, when our rational soul descends into our earthly body, it passes from science to ignorance. It no longer has a dispositional knowledge (*hexis*) of its innate *logoi* then, but only a capacity (*epitēdeiotēs*) for actually knowing them (*In De an.* 4.30–2; 306.26–31). This does not mean, however, that our intellect is initially empty, for the capacity at issue is different from pure potentiality. A new-born child's capacity for the intellection of universals resembles, Philoponus says, the state of geometrical knowledge of a sleeping geometer, not that of someone who never heard of geometry (*In De intell.* 33.82–91; 38.99–39.15; 40.42–3). The sum of all the universals is present in our intellect from the beginning (*In De an.* 306.36–307.5), but it is impossible for the intellect to obtain dispositional knowledge of them on its own. The intellect has to recover its innate 'treasure' with the help of something external, i.e., either by contact with sensible things or by the agency of an intellect which is already dispositionally knowing the universals itself (*In De an.* 306.31–3; *In De intell.* 33.82–91).

The sensible world

The Platonic philosophical system that can be traced in Philoponus' Aristotelian commentaries includes a natural philosophy which on some crucial points is incompatible with the Christian cosmology of his later philosophical treatises. First of all, according to the early Philoponus the world is obviously eternal. The doctrine of the eternity of the sensible world can be divided into the doctrines of the eternity of motion, time and the world as a substance. In the *Commentary on the Physics*, including the fragments from books 5–8, Philoponus affirms on several occasions that motion is eternal, despite his well-known attacks against the eternity of the world in the same work.²³ In the commentaries on *De generatione et corruptione*, *De anima* and *Categoriae* too the eternity of motion is accepted without any reservation.²⁴ The same holds true for the infinity of time in *In De generatione et corruptione* and *In De anima* (*In De gen.* 45.5–6; *In De an.* 133.1–2). The eternity of the world itself is of a double nature. The heavenly bodies are numerically eternal, while the sublunary substances are only specifically eternal. These two ideas are repeatedly affirmed by the early Philoponus.²⁵

²³ *In Phys.* 298.6–12; 302.26–303.5; 438.5–6; 556.27–8; 747.1–3; 812.22–3; 820.30–821.4 etc.

²⁴ *In De Gen.* 49.12–14; 50.1–10; 288.18–289.22; 300.1–4 etc.; *In De an.* 21.1–2; 132.31–133.3; *In Cat.* 50.23–8.

²⁵ Eternity of heaven: *In Phys.* 1.17; 1.23–4; 152.6–7 etc.; *In De gen.* 1.9–12; 3.1–4 etc.; *In De an.* 18.27; 141.2–4; *In De intell.* 78.2–4; eternity of the sublunary world; *In Anal. post.* 135.11–15; *In Phys.* 236.29–237.4; 303.18–25; *In De gen.* 296.14–298.8; *In De an.* 7.11–19; 228.16–18; 265.30–4 etc.; *In De intell.* 52.21–3; 59.21–4.

It is well known that the later Philoponus vehemently opposed Aristotle's doctrine of the fifth essence. However, in his Aristotelian commentaries he appears to be a supporter of the same theory, which is another proof of his initial eternalism.²⁶

Finally, let us have a look at the early Philoponus' theory of matter. He regards matter as being eternally produced by the first principle, and ascribes the same view to Aristotle (*In Phys.* 189.10–17). Just like Ammonius (Ammon. *In Cat.* 54.4–9), he emphasizes the difference between prime matter or the first substrate, which is formless and incorporeal, and three-dimensional matter or the second substrate, which is quantified body without any quality.²⁷ In the texts of the early Philoponus there is no doubt that prime matter is eternal (*In Phys.* 189.10–26; *In De gen.* 50.18–21). Nor does he evince any doubt about the correctness of the principle *ex nihilo nihil fit*, which the later Philoponus will reject on the basis of his doctrine of a divine *creatio ex nihilo*.²⁸

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE LATER PHILOPONUS

The philosophical landscape one discovers in *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* and the fragments of *Contra Aristotelem* is entirely different from that of, e.g., *In De anima* or *In De generatione et corruptione*. Although the new philosophy is primarily focused on the problem of the eternity of the world, it also includes elements of a new theology and doctrine of intelligible reality. In the last mentioned areas, too, the later Philoponus tries to break away to a certain extent from his earlier Platonism in order to provide a more or less adapted setting for his new anti-eternalist cosmology. I will primarily discuss here those views of the later Philoponus which contrast with corresponding views of his Platonic period.

The end of the Plato-Aristotle harmonization

As we have seen, the early Philoponus gave a non-literal interpretation of Plato's cosmogony and psychogony, and of Aristotle's criticism of them, in order to harmonize Aristotle with Plato as much as possible. In *De aeternitate mundi* 6,

²⁶ *In Phys.* 9.29–30; 219.19–22; 220.20–5 etc.; *In De gen.* 129.6–14; 147.19–25 etc.; *In De an.* 9.6–7; 9.14–15; 56.2–4 etc.; *In De intell.* 32.67–8; 36.57–9.

²⁷ Second substrate: *In Cat.* 65.17–19; 65.27–9; *In Phys.* 156.16–17; 225.14–16; first substrate or matter: *In Cat.* 65.10–11; 83.14–17; *In Phys.* 190.22–5; 190.29–31; *In De gen.* 75.8–12; 84.19–85.5; 151.5–6 etc.; *In Nicom.* 1.3.17–18; 1.7.3–4.

²⁸ *In Anal. post.* 35.22–3; 41.11–42.4; *In Phys.* 51.25–52.4; 169.20–8; 184.24–5 etc.; *In De gen.* 43.29–44.25 etc.

by contrast, Philoponus goes to great lengths to prove that Plato did *not* consider the sensible world to be eternal *a parte ante*, and that accordingly the cosmogony of the *Timaeus* must be understood literally. In this way he tries to secure Plato's authority for his own current Christian view of creation. As a consequence, his entire earlier effort at the harmonization of Plato and Aristotle is turned into its opposite. Aristotle, the later Philoponus argues, understands both Plato's cosmogony and psychogony literally, and criticizes them accordingly.²⁹ In *De aeternitate mundi* 6.27 Philoponus quotes several texts of Aristotle in order to prove that Aristotle had a literal understanding of Plato's cosmogony, and that therefore no reconciliation is possible between Aristotle's own eternalism and Plato's supposed belief in a beginning of the cosmos. Philoponus' former Alexandrian Platonic perspective of agreement (*sumphōnia*) between Aristotle and Plato is replaced now by that of disagreement (*diaphōnia*) between the two *coryphaei* of pagan philosophy (*Aet. mund.* 26.24–6; 29.5–6; 31.7–9; 32.8–13).

The later Philoponus also refuses to harmonize Aristotle with Plato on the issue of the ideas any longer. Aristotle is said now to oppose the very existence of the ideas, not just their being hypostasized outside the divine Intellect, which means that Aristotle's divine Intellect is no longer considered to be a creative principle (*Aet. mund.* 2.2). Obviously the later Philoponus has abandoned Ammonius' emanationist interpretation of Aristotle's theology. He himself rejects the possibility of an 'eternal creation' now, and the exegetical consequence of this position is double. On the one hand, Plato is regarded now as an advocate of the idea of creation. According to Philoponus, this involves that for Plato the world cannot be eternal *a parte ante*. For Aristotle, on the other hand, the world is eternal, and this means, Philoponus says in 529, that he rejects the idea of creation.

A Christian theology and doctrine of creation

In *De aeternitate mundi* the Platonic theology of the early Philoponus has been replaced by a Christian theology centred around the idea of creation. The first prominent characteristic of this new theology, that is, new in Philoponus' work, is its implicit identification of the two first Platonic hypostases. If 'God' was free to create the world or not, He must be the highest principle, which is at the same time the supreme Intellect. The contingent existence of the created world cannot be produced by a divine Intellect in the Platonic style, which derives its being and its own creative activity necessarily from the Good. On one occasion Philoponus mentions the distinction between the Demiurge and the supreme

²⁹ Cosmogony: *Aet. mund.* 6.27; psychogony: *Aet. mund.* 6.24; cf. Verrycken 1997b.

principle, but he explicitly attributes it to others there, without endorsing it himself (*Aet. mund.* 90.24–91.2).

The rejection of the world's eternity *a parte ante*, which was Philoponus' main objective in *De aeternitate mundi*, inevitably involved accepting that the world's existence is contingent, and consequently that God was free to create the world or not. The early Philoponus already conceived divine creativity as the product of volition, a volition (*boulēsis*), however, which was clearly to be distinguished from human freedom of choice (*prohairesis*) (*In Cat.* 144.28–146.8). The later Philoponus also distinguishes *prohairesis* from *boulēsis*. *Boulēsis* is the dynamism of incorporeal rational substances towards the good, whereas *prohairesis* is the choice of the embodied human soul for either good or evil (*Aet. mund.* 567.5–7; cf. *In De an.* 5.24–32). The contingency of God's creative act cannot be the product of a divine freedom of choice, while on the other hand God does not create the world necessarily either (*Aet. mund.* 78.11–16). From all eternity God wanted the existence of the sensible world. This does not mean, however, that the world exists from eternity (*Aet. mund.* 566.4–6; cf. *An.* 5.24–32). An additional element of contingency is needed in order to bring the world into real existence.³⁰ But Philoponus apparently fails to give a *theological* explanation of the relation of that element of contingency to God's eternal will to create the world. Instead he tries to justify the compatibility of God's eternal creative will with the fact that the world is not eternal on a merely *cosmological* basis. The world's finite nature itself, Philoponus argues, rules out the possibility of it being co-eternal with God's creative will (*Aet. mund.* 79.6–11; 81.1–3; 81.10–12; 563.14–16 etc.). But this does not solve the problem that a separate divine volition, distinct from God's eternal will to create the world, is needed in order to bring about the real existence of the world, which would be incompatible with the immutability of God's willing activity. Therefore, Philoponus only implicitly postulates such a second divine volition, as a necessary and sufficient condition for the beginning of the world.

The later Philoponus replaces the Platonic concept of emanation by the Christian notion of an instantaneous creation act.³¹ 'Before' the creation of the world the Demiurge is potentially its creator, and the act of creation, Philoponus says, is the actualization of this potentiality. The potentiality at issue is a disposition (*hexis*), which is the second potency and first act.³² When a cause has this first degree of actuality, it does not necessarily involve the reality

³⁰ Cf. the use of the term *prosdiorismos* ('further determination') at *Aet. mund.* 567.2.

³¹ For the notion of creation Philoponus uses different terms, like *paragein* (*Aet. mund.* 3.3; 5.6; 6.3 etc.), *dēmiourgein* (*Aet. mund.* 4.6; 5.18, 50.3 etc.), *poiein* (*Aet. mund.* 4.21; 7.1; 64.14 etc.) or *huphistanai* (*Aet. mund.* 6.15; 6.22; 12.17 etc.).

³² Cf. Arist. *De an.* 2.5, 417a21–b2, quoted at *Aet. mund.* 69.13–70.1; above, pp 743–4.

of its effect, e.g., when a builder has the disposition to build a house this need not mean that he actually builds a house (*Aet. mund.* 47.18–48.13; 49.9–50.25). Moreover, God's actualization of His disposition to create the world is not a motion: it is a sudden and complete manifestation (*athroa probolē*) of the habitus, comparable to, e.g., the immediate sensation of something sensible (*Aet. mund.* 62.11–65.26). God's 'transition' from His creative disposition (which consists in His eternal possession of the demiurgic *logoi*) to actual creation is not a transition from an imperfect to a perfect condition: the creative disposition is perfect in itself (*Aet. mund.* 76.21–77.3; 93.11–13). If there is any motion at all involved in the creation of the world, it is on the side of that which is created (*Aet. mund.* 4.5 (cf. 615.27–616.13)).

For obvious reasons the Christian idea of creation Philoponus adopts in his later philosophy also involves a new view of divine eternity, compared to the view we find in Philoponus' Platonic texts. The early Philoponus distinguishes at least three modes of eternity: simultaneous eternity at the level of the demiurgic Intellect, supertemporal successive eternity at the level of the plurality of transcendent intellects, and infinite extension of time at the level of the material world.³³ In Philoponus' later philosophy, only the second mode is left. It is true that in *De aeternitate mundi* 16.4 the author, rather unsuccessfully, tries to stick to the concept of a simultaneous divine eternity without succession. In 5.4, by contrast, he abandons this Platonic view and takes the position that God's eternity is not simultaneous but has a linear structure. Just as time, Philoponus argues, is the measure of the motion of heaven, so also eternity is the measure of the being of eternal beings. It is impossible, he continues, to conceive the measure of eternal life as one point. We have, on the contrary, to think of it as a certain breadth (*ti platos*) or extension (*parataxis tis*) that stretches out alongside the being of what is eternal (*Aet. mund.* 114.19–116.1).

It is this linear conception of divine eternity which allows Philoponus to accommodate the creation of the world and time to eternity, or rather the other way round. If divine eternity is linear, it is possible that the point at which time begins is preceded by a duration which is no time, but is rather a supertemporal succession. The beginning of time is only a qualitative change then in an already existing succession of, let us say, moments in eternity (*Aet. mund.* 116.1–117.14). Needless to say, Philoponus' construction of a supertemporal succession is not very convincing. For contemporary recognition of this, I refer here to Simplicius' criticism of Philoponus' idea of a non-temporal succession (*Simpl. In Phys.* 1159.28–1161.29).

³³ Simultaneous eternity: *In De an.* 126.26–7; 132.29–33; supertemporal successive eternity: *In De an.* 126.3–34; infinite progression of time: *In Phys.* 486.1–4.

As I said before, Philoponus bases his proposition of the non-eternity *a parte ante* of the world ultimately on the cosmological argument that the world is finite. The world's necessary non-eternity *a parte post*, by contrast, is deduced from a theological consideration. From a purely cosmological point of view the world is as finite *a parte post* as it is *a parte ante*. And it is impossible, Philoponus says, for God to give it a supernatural imperishability, as Plato's Demiurge does (Plato, *Tim.* 41a–b). God is the creator of all perishable beings. Ultimately, He is also responsible for the fact that they perish, without this taking away anything from His goodness. We do not know the creator's reasons for dissolving the world, but we know He will do so for the benefit of His rational creatures (*Aet. mund.* 128.13–131.25). We are certain that God will dissolve the world one day, since otherwise He would possess in vain the potency to do so, and be eternally imperfect in this respect (*Aet. mund.* 131.26–132.28).

The early Philoponus had a hierarchic conception of being and of the relations between the different levels of reality. The later Philoponus, by contrast, tends to a dual conception of reality, with God on the one hand and all created beings on the other, a dualism which threatens to level out the hierarchic differences between created beings. It is Simplicius who finds this general tendency in Philoponus' argument towards the homogeneity of heavenly and sublunary reality, since three-dimensional extension is their common matter. This way of concluding to a homogeneity of substances on the basis of identical predicates, Simplicius replies, might as well lead to the proposition that the sublunary world is homogeneous with intelligible reality or even with God, given the fact that existence is common to all beings (*Simpl. In Cael.* 89.22–90.9; 134.9–136.1).

If both God and the world are 'existing' beings, a 'subordination according to existence itself' of the world is needed in order to secure the superiority of the cause over its effect in this respect too. The creator's superiority according to each moment of the Platonic triad of *ousia*, *dunamis*, and *energeia* is no longer sufficient: God's existence (*huparxis*), too, has to be superior to the existence of the world, which was 'preceded' by a state of 'non-existence' (*anuparxia*).³⁴

The Christian God of the later Philoponus 'precedes' the existence of the created world, including matter; otherwise, there would be no 'subordination according to existence itself' of the world and matter compared to God. Nothing created, Philoponus claims, can be co-eternal with the creator, which means that God must have created the world *ex nihilo*. The earlier Philoponus' obvious acceptance of the principle *ex nihilo nihil fit* and the eternity of matter is replaced now by an argument in two parts for the necessity of a *creatio ex nihilo*. On the one hand, the later Philoponus tries to prove that it is possible for something to

³⁴ *Aet. mund.* 14.15–20; for *anuparxia* cf., e.g., 182.5.

originate from absolutely nothing.³⁵ On the other hand, he tries to demonstrate in *De aeternitate mundi* 9.11–17 that the old principle *ex nihilo nihil fit* is necessarily false, and that every being, insofar as it comes to be, comes to be out of nothing.

Soul

The comparison of *De aeternitate mundi* with *In De anima* shows that Philoponus' new doctrine of creation has important consequences for his view of soul and its relation to body.

According to the later Philoponus, it is no longer the essence of soul to be a moving principle. Moving a body is a capacity (*dunamis*) of soul, and this capacity becomes an actuality (*energeia*) when soul animates a body, but it does not belong to the essence (*ousia*) of soul (*Aet. mund.* 253.9–254.12). Consequently, even if the World Soul is regarded as eternal, this need not mean that the world is eternal as well. If the World Soul displays only one activity which is independent of corporeal reality, its essence, too, Philoponus says, must be independent of the body it animates (*Aet. mund.* 251.12–252.27). Moreover, Philoponus argues, no activity of soul is eternal, and this holds true for its kinetic activity as well (*Aet. mund.* 254.19–255.13). And even if the World Soul's kinetic activity were eternal (which it is not), there need not be an eternal body as an object of this activity, no more than the light-emitting activity of the sun is dependent on the presence of illuminated objects (*Aet. mund.* 7.12).

In the system of the earlier Philoponus the necessity for the soul to be the actual principle of motion for a body was based on its self-motion. The later Philoponus uncouples the actual existence of the material world from the World Soul's essence or even kinetic activity.³⁶ If, however, actually moving the world does not belong to the essence of the World Soul, it is no longer necessary to regard self-motion as its essence either. At one place in *De aeternitate mundi* Philoponus indeed expresses his doubts about the definition of soul in general as that which moves itself (*Aet. mund.* 248.19–27).

Also in *De aeternitate mundi* Philoponus introduces, as we have seen, the principle that an efficient cause must have temporal priority over its effect. Accordingly, no created being can be eternal *a parte ante*. With regard to transcendent intellects (angels) the author draws this conclusion in *De officio mundi* (*Opif.* 17.20–18.6; 26.21–27.6; 34.21–35.10). With regard to the human rational soul the same conclusion seems already to be suggested in *De aeternitate mundi*.

³⁵ *Aet. mund.* 12.1; cf. also *In Phys.* 191.9–192.2; (Philop. apud) Simplicius. *In Phys.* 1140.11–1142.28 (frs. 114–16).

³⁶ On the evolution of the later Philoponus' view of celestial souls cf. Verrycken 1990b: 267–71.

The human soul, Philoponus writes, is subject to 'ruin' (*kakia*), and nothing subject to ruin can be eternal *a parte ante* (*Aet. mund.* 468.26–469.5; cf. 9.6). While he remains rather vague on the issue of the eternity of the soul properly speaking, Philoponus goes to great lengths to refute his own earlier view that the human rational soul has an eternal astral body as its vehicle (*Aet. mund.* 7.14–21).

The sensible world

The dominant issue in Philoponus' later philosophy is the problem of the eternity of the world. This was the subject he chose in 529 in order to dissociate himself from the Alexandrian Platonism of Ammonius, which in his first period had been the foundation and background of his commentaries on Aristotle. Philoponus' new and aggressive position that the world is not eternal includes a complex of arguments, which can be organized into a systematic whole on the basis of *De aeternitate mundi*, *Contra Aristotelem* and *In Physica*₂. I must limit myself to a brief and selective outline of the entire complex here.

Philoponus distinguishes the problem of the eternity of motion and time from the problem of the eternity of the world strictly speaking. In each of the three parts of the theory we have to distinguish Philoponus' demonstration of the *possibility* that motion, time and the world are not eternal from his demonstration of the *necessity* that they are not eternal.

The argument for the proposition that motion is not necessarily eternal consists itself of three parts. First, Philoponus opposes Aristotle's rejection of the possibility of a first motion.³⁷ Next, he tries to refute Aristotle's proof that motion is eternal on the basis of the nature of time.³⁸ Finally, he rejects Aristotle's argument against the possibility of a last motion.³⁹

Not only is motion not necessarily eternal, Philoponus says, but an eternal motion is even impossible. In *De aeternitate mundi* 7.6 the author emphasizes that no corporeal motion, either substantial, quantitative, qualitative or local, can be eternal. Significantly, however, he limits locomotion to rectilinear local motion here, whereas it is precisely the eternity of circular motion he should prove to be impossible. For the demonstration of the impossibility of the latter he refers in *De aeternitate mundi* to his future *Contra Aristotelem* (*Aet. mund.* 258.22–259.6; cf. 399.20–400.3). In *Contra Aristotelem* 6 Philoponus indeed expounded at least one argument for the proposition that the circular motion of the heavenly bodies

³⁷ Arist. *Phys.* 8.1, 251a8–b10; Philop. apud Simpl. *In Phys.* 1130.7–1131.7 (fr. 108); 1133.16–1135.15 (frs. 109–11); 1135.28–32 (fr. 112); 1140.4–8 (fr. 113); 1147.10–1149.4 (frs. 117–18).

³⁸ Arist. *Phys.* 8.1, 251b10–28; Philop. apud Simpl. *In Phys.* 1156.28–1159.7 (frs. 121–2).

³⁹ Arist. *Phys.* 8.1, 251b28–252a5; Philop. apud Simpl. *In Phys.* 1171.30–1177.26 (frs. 127–31).

cannot be eternal *a parte ante*. This eternity, he says there, would involve the multiplication of the infinite: if the sphere of Saturn already rotated an infinite number of times, the sphere of Jupiter rotated nearly three times this infinite number etc., which is impossible (Philop. *apud* Simpl. *In Phys.* 1179.15–26 (fr. 132)). This argument is part of a demonstration of the impossibility of the eternity *a parte ante* of motion in general on the basis of the concept of infinity ((Philop. *apud* Simpl. *In Phys.* 1178.7–1182.39 (frs. 132–3)).

With respect to the non-eternity of time, Philoponus adopts the same double strategy he uses for his view of the non-eternity of movement. On the one hand, he tries to refute Aristotle's arguments for the eternity of time.⁴⁰ On the other hand, he attempts to show, in three of his later works, that the eternity of time is even impossible (*Aet. mund.* 619.1–620.7; *In Phys.* 428.23–430.10; 467.1–468.4, Pines 1972: 325–30). I just mention as an example one of his arguments in *In Physica*₂. It is impossible, the author contends there, that time had no beginning. For there cannot be an actually infinite number, and the actually infinite cannot be traversed. Moreover, nothing can exceed the infinite in quantity, nor can the infinite be multiplied (*In Phys.* 428.23–430.10).

In the third place, Philoponus wants to prove that the world as a substance cannot be eternal either. First, he argues for the possibility of the non-eternity of the world, both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*. In order to show that the world need not be eternal *a parte ante* Philoponus has to specify what kind of an origin the world, if it was not eternal, had when it was created. First of all, the author claims that the origin of the world does not presuppose the existence of something 'outside the world', as Proclus maintains in his *De aeternitate mundi* (Procl. *apud* Philop. *Aet. mund.* 294.2–295.21; Philop. *Aet. mund.* 8.2). Neither does the ordered world necessarily originate from its contrary (*Aet. mund.* 8.3): theoretically, as Philoponus explains in his *Contra Aristotelem*, it may have been generated from its privation (Philop. *apud* Simpl. *In Cael.* 131.17–132.17 (fr. 69)). According to Philoponus, we can even go a step further, and affirm that the world as a substance (i.e., form and matter of it taken together) may have been generated from absolute non-being. If we deny that God can create from nothing, we put him on a level with nature, which was itself created. Accordingly, it is possible for God to create both form and matter of the world from nothing (*Aet. mund.* 9.9). Such a creation act is not a process of generation, as in nature's production of individual beings, but an immediate and timeless concreation of matter and form of the world.⁴¹ This means, Philoponus adds,

⁴⁰ Arist. *Phys.* 8.1, 251b10–28; Philop. *apud* Simpl. *Phys.* 1156.28–1159.7; 1164.7–30; 1166.32–1169.5 (frs. 121–6).

⁴¹ Simpl. *In Cael.* 137.16–19 (fr. 74); Philop. *apud* Simpl. *In Phys.* 1141.5–1142.28 (frs. 115–16); 1150.16–25 (fr. 119).

that the principle *ex nihilo nihil fit* does not apply to the world as a whole (*Aet. mund.* 9.10).

Not only is it possible for the world to be non-eternal *a parte ante*, but it is possible for it to be non-eternal *a parte post* as well. Philoponus' separate demonstration of the latter possibility includes three different propositions. First, the author tries to show that the world as a whole is not necessarily imperishable. Since the world is a finite body, it does not have by its own nature the capacity to last forever. Consequently, it is possible for it to perish without any external cause (*Aet. mund.* 300.3–303.25; 9.6). Further, Philoponus writes, the sublunary elements as wholes are not necessarily imperishable either (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Phys.* 1332.3–26). Finally, the same holds true for heaven: it is not indestructible.⁴²

The aporias resulting from the notion of an infinite past are used by Philoponus in order to prove that motion and time, and also the world as a substance (*Aet. mund.* 8.27–11.23), must have had a beginning. As we have seen, Philoponus' proofs that neither motion nor time can be eternal are focused indeed on the necessity of a beginning of motion and time. Apparently he did not try to demonstrate separately that they will come to an end one day. It seems that we have to draw the same conclusion with regard to the necessary non-eternity of the world *a parte post*. Philoponus does not infer this necessity from the finiteness of the world as a body. Instead he gives a theological reason for the world's necessary perishability. Does this involve a complete destruction of the world, including matter? Philoponus appears to have given a negative answer to this question. On the one hand, he says that it is possible for God to destroy matter (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Phys.* 1177.22–6 (fr. 131)). On the other hand, however, he emphasizes that the end of the present world will only be a transition to a more perfect world (Simpl. *In Phys.* 1177.38–1178.5 (fr. 132)). Accordingly, there is no symmetry in Philoponus' view of the beginning and end of the world: the world's *creatio ex nihilo* has no counterpart in the future.

The second major issue in Philoponus' later philosophy, and one closely connected with his rejection of the eternity of the world, is his attack against Aristotle's theory of aether. This attack was first launched in *De aeternitate mundi*, and was continued in *Contra Aristotelem* and *In Meteorologica*. In *De aeternitate mundi* 13 Philoponus' rejection of Aristotle's theory is focused on its incompatibility with the principles of Plato's cosmology. In *Contra Aristotelem* 1–5, by contrast, the author tried to refute *De caelo* 1.2–4 and *Meteorology* 1.3 with arguments of his own. In book 1 Philoponus claimed, e.g., that bodies with

⁴² *Aet. mund.* 10.5; Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 73.4–15 (fr. 45); 141.11–19 (fr. 78); 142.7–25 (fr. 80); Kraemer 1965: 325–7 (fr. 79); Simpl. *In Phys.* 1329.19–24 etc.

a different motion need not have a different nature (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 26.31–31.6 (frs. 1, 4, 5)), that heavenly motion is not simple (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 31.6–32.11 (frs. 6–7)), and that circular motion is not perfect (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 42.17–49.25 (frs. 18–32)). In book 2 he attacked Aristotle's view that heaven is neither light nor heavy, and that this proves the existence of the fifth essence (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 66.8–80.23 (frs. 37–51)). Book 3 of the *Contra Aristotelem* opposed Aristotle's argument (*Meteor.* 1.3, 339b30–340a3) that heaven cannot consist of fire ((Philop. apud) Simpl. *In Cael.* 80.23–91.20 (frs. 52–61); cf. *Aet. mund.* 13.14). Philoponus himself says he agrees with Plato that heaven is made up of the four elements, and predominantly of the purest and most subtle fire.⁴³ In book 4 of the *Contra Aristotelem* Philoponus, among other things, claimed that heaven is subject to generation and destruction even though it has no contrary, and that first matter is common to heaven and the sublunary world (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 119.7–136.1 (frs. 63–72)). Book 5 was devoted to a refutation of Aristotle's position that circular motion has no contrary, and to a demonstration of the proposition that celestial motions and celestial substances are heterogeneous among themselves (Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 156.25–201.10 (frs. 81–107)). Finally, in the *Commentary on the Meteorology* Philoponus criticizes Aristotle's theory of the production of solar heat by the motion of the sun (*Meteor.* 39.24–53.27).

A third important element of the later Philoponus' cosmology is his view of matter, which differs radically from his earlier view. For the early Philoponus prime matter and three-dimensional extension were not the same, whereas in *De aeternitate mundi* 11 the author identifies them. He argues elaborately now against the existence of an incorporeal prime matter (*Aet. mund.* 428.26–445.18). The first or ultimate substrate of material things is identical, he says, with corporeal extension that has no qualities yet (*Aet. mund.* 412.15–414.5). This substrate, of course, does not exist on its own: it is always the subject of quantity (*Aet. mund.* 408.25–409.3) and quality (*Aet. mund.* 409.10–12), matter cannot exist without form (*Aet. mund.* 409.12–18). Philoponus emphasizes that it is extension as such, and not a further, incorporeal matter, which is the immutable substrate of all change (*Aet. mund.* 417.17–419.16). One obvious objection is that in this way prime matter is not completely formless, but always endowed with the form of corporeal extension. To this objection Philoponus replies that matter itself, like any other being, necessarily has an *eidōs*, without, however, being for that reason a *compositum* (*Aet. mund.* 11.7).

⁴³ Philop. apud Simpl. *In Cael.* 84.15–22 (fr. 56). Philoponus discusses the relevant texts of Plato in *Aet. mund.* 13.13–18.

In the system of Philoponus I there was a ‘dissimilar similarity’ between incorporeal prime matter and the One, the supreme principle beyond all being. Philoponus II telescopes the One and the demiurgic Intellect into the Christian creator God. In the same way he telescopes prime matter and three-dimensional matter, and as a result there is a ‘dissimilar similarity’ between the supreme principle and matter in his new system as well.

In *De aeternitate mundi* II.10–12 Philoponus argues for the possibility and even necessity of a *creatio ex nihilo* of matter in its new definition: *if* matter was ever created, it was created from nothing. This hypothetical necessity is then transformed into a categorical one on the basis of the non-eternity of the world (*Aet. mund.* 458.5–7; 469.6–10).

Beside the problem of the eternity of the world, the theory of aether and the definition of prime matter, there are other important issues in Philoponus’ natural philosophy, such as his concept of three-dimensional place, his defence of the existence of void and his impetus theory. From our point of view, the question arises whether Philoponus’ innovative ideas on these points rather fit in with his earlier or with his later system. The author expounds his views on place and void in the *Corollarium de loco* and *Corollarium de inani*, two digressions in the present text of his *Commentary on the Physics*. As already noted, the *Corollaria* are contradicted by other passages of the same commentary, which suggests that they were written later than *In Physica*₁, although not necessarily together with the anti-eternalist passages (*In Physica*₂). Whether there is any relation between the later Philoponus’ ideas on matter and the concept of a *creatio ex nihilo* on the one hand and the corollaries of the *In Physica* on the other, is open to further research, just as the possible relation between the theory of impetus and the later Philoponus’ doctrine of creation.

PRISCIAN OF LYDIA AND PSEUDO-SIMPLICIUS
ON THE SOUL

F. A. J. DE HAAS

Little is known of the life of Priscian of Lydia (born late fifth century CE), who is not to be confused with his older namesake Priscian of Caesarea (fl. c. 500 CE), the famous Latin grammarian. Priscian of Lydia is one of the six philosophers listed by Agathias *Histories* 2.30–1 to have accompanied Damascius on his journey to the Sassanian king Chosroes I (reign 531–79 CE). Agathias suggests they came of their own accord guided by the false impression that Chosroes' reign resembled a Platonic state; he does not connect their journey to the famous closure of the Athenian school in 529. The philosophers soon discovered that Chosroes was far from the ideal king and resolved to leave quickly. Because Chosroes was well disposed towards them Priscian and the others were able to leave Chosroes under the safeguard of a treaty the Persian king concluded with Rome in 532, which comprised a clause that 'these men should be allowed to return to their own country and live there henceforth in safety, without being forced to adopt opinions which they did not hold, or to change their own faith'.¹ Whether they settled in Athens, or perhaps in Carrhae (Harran), where over a century later a centre of Platonic philosophy was flourishing, is still a matter of controversy.²

SOLUTIONES AD CHOSROEM

Priscian is credited with a work apparently written for King Chosroes, and known to us in Latin translation³ under the title *Solutiones eorum de quibus dubitavit Chosroes Persarum rex*. The text does not give us any indication about the circumstances in which it originated. The topics discussed derive from

¹ Trans. Cameron 1969–70: 169.

² See Tardieu 1986, Hadot 1987a, Athanassiadi 1993, Thiel 1999; *contra* Luna 2001, Lane Fox 2005, Lameer 1997.

³ Esposito 1918, Cappuyns 1933, and Wilmart 1937 ascribe the translation to a sixth- or seventh-century scholar; d'Alverny 1977 defends the attribution to John Scot Eriugena or his circle first proposed by Quicherat 1853; Gersh 1986: 769–70 n. 9 prefers to leave the question open.

the tradition of natural history and meteorology, for which Pliny's *Quaestiones naturales* and Porphyry's *Summika Zetemata*⁴ are the most famous examples. The *problēmata* tradition as exemplified in the *Quaestiones* of Alexander and his school seems less directly relevant, although the questions on the soul and the animal kingdom have themes in common. The work starts with a brief introduction on the order and brevity of the text, and provides an impressive list of sources. Priscian names Plato's *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus* and *Politeia*; Aristotle's *Physics*, *De caelo*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *Meteorologica*, *De somno et insomniis*, along with *De philosophia* and the probably spurious *De mundo*; various works or passages from Theophrastus; Hippocrates *De aere aquis et locis*; Strabo *Geographia*; Albinus and Gaius on Plato; Geminus on Posidonius' *De meteora*; Ptolemaeus *Geographia* and *Astronomica*; Marcianus *Periegesis*; Arrian *Meteora*; Didymus, Dorotheus, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius on Aristotle; Theodotus from the *Collectio Ammonii scholarum*; Porphyry *Commixtae Quaestiones*; Iamblichus' *De anima*;⁵ Plotinus *Enneads*; and finally Proclus' *Tres sermones* on the immortality of the soul. If Priscian did not have a library at his disposal, he may have used earlier collections of natural questions, handbooks or doxographies which may account for this plethora of sources. Further research on the rather neglected *Solutiones* and its provenance will have to show whether it testifies, as the title suggests, to Chosroes' acquaintance with Greek scholarship, or mainly to the range of learning available to Priscian. It seems unlikely that we should credit Chosroes with this set of traditional questions, even though Priscian may have seized on the occasion of his visit to Chosroes to compose the work.

The *Solutiones* discusses the following issues:

(1) What is the nature of the human soul? Is it an essence that exists independently from the body, incorporeal, capable of reversion and self-knowledge, and immortal; or is it accident of the body? Is the soul in any way affected by its relation to the body? If not, what is its mode of unification with the body? The answers comply with the view that the self-subsistent soul verges towards the body in *compassio* and *similitudo* without giving up anything of its incorruptible essence and activity (42.25–52.22).⁶

⁴ Dörrie 1959 uses Priscian along with Nemesius of Emesa *De natura hominis* as sources for three Porphyrian questions on the nature of the soul, otherwise lost.

⁵ Finamore and Dillon 2002 use the *Metaphrasis*, but not the *Solutiones*, in the reconstruction of Iamblichus' text.

⁶ *Per hoc igitur anima corpori miscetur salvans sui essentiam et operationem incorruptibilem* (52.21–22, cf. 53.5–7). Gersh 1986: 770–5 has shown that Priscian depends heavily on Proclus in this chapter. For the significance of this statement for the discussion about the authorship of Pseudo-Simplicius *De anima* see below pp. 760–1.

(2) What is the nature of sleep? What happens to the soul when the body is asleep? Is it partly active, partly inactive, and hence of a double nature? Is sleep an affection of the soul, the body, or the composite of both? Is sleep associated with hotness or coldness? All of Priscian's answers closely follow Aristotle (52.25–58.29).

(3) How does vision relate to dreams and prophecy in dreams? During sleep the soul is undisturbed by the body and therefore more receptive of divine activity, in the same way as the cleansed soul is more receptive of intelligibles. Here the Aristotelian discussion lends support to late Platonic psychology (59.3–63.21).

(4) How does the solar year cause the four seasons and different climatic zones? This chapter is indebted to Geminus, Ptolemy and Strabo (63.24–68.11).

(5) How can doctors successfully apply drugs with contrary effects in different patients? Here it is Hippocrates who lends support to late-Platonic physics: like any intelligence the doctor's art provides him with a keen eye to provide to the ever-fleeting matter of the body whatever it needs in the circumstances (68.14–69.16).

(6) How do lunar phases and lunar activity affect tidal variations throughout the waters of the late-ancient world, but especially in the Red Sea? Answers explicitly rely on Strabo, Posidonius and Aristotle (69.19–76.20).

(7) How can air receive weight and fire humidity as in the mutual transformations of the elements? The discussion of weight and lightness, the four elements and their essential qualities and movements largely depends on Aristotle *De caelo* with additional material from Theophrastus (77.3–88.7).

(8) Given that individuals of the same species differ according to the places and climatic conditions they live in, do they differ in form or not? Such variations belong to the irrational and corporeal aspects of living beings, caused by differences in e.g., Hippocratic airs, waters and places, or food, and do not affect their immutable and imperishable form. This is not unlike the adoption of various laws and customs which one learns from one's parents. However, in many instances the natural form limits the range of possible habitats (88.10–93.27).

(9) Why do snakes have venom which is fatal to other living beings (in some seasons and in some regions more so than in others)? In general, why did the creator of this universe (94.9 *huius universitatis constitutor*) compose the world of both opposing and harmonious powers? Such conception of order is surely too much for a partial intellect to fathom (94.3–98.23).

(10) Where does the wind (*spiritus*) and its motions come from? How is it that the magnitude of its power is manifest everywhere, whereas its body, provenance and destination are not apparent? In his discussion Priscian relies on Aristotle *Meteor.* with its theory of exhalations (*inflationes*), and on Theophrastus

De ventis. Then Priscian suddenly breaks off his discussion of even more kinds of wind, and the work ends rather abruptly (98.26–104.6).

Apart from being a display of traditional ancient learning, this survey may serve to show that Priscian seems to have designed at least part of his *Solutiones* as a confirmation of Platonic metaphysics from commonplace physics: throughout unity prevails over plurality, and forms, souls and intellects are carefully kept aloof from the material or corporeal conditions over which they preside.

The *Solutiones* enjoyed some attention in later times. It has been mentioned as a source for the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mirabiles auscultationes*. The work was well known to the medieval encyclopaedist Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1190–1264)⁷ and was still copied in the fifteenth century.

PRISCIAN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL WORK

An undisputed work on psychology by Priscian that has come down to us is his so-called *Metaphrasis on Theophrastus*. It is a Platonic adaptation of Theophrastus' *De anima*, which constituted books 4–5 of a larger work called *Physics*, otherwise lost (cf. Them. *In DA* 108.11–12). The transmitted text is incomplete, and covers the equivalent of most of the discussion of sense-perception, and partial accounts of imagination and thought. Priscian provides a thoroughly late-Platonic interpretation of the Peripatetic material, prompted by the critical questions of Theophrastus. It is noteworthy that in this context Theophrastus' questions to Aristotle's text serve to introduce Platonic solutions, in much the same way as the commentary tradition on the *Categories* was fuelled by the critical remarks of Lucius and Nicostratus, which prompted Porphyry and others to develop Aristotle's philosophy in new directions (cf. Simpl. *In Cat.* 1.18–2.2).

The work received ample attention in later times, and was translated by Ficino and Dalechampius as part of the revival of interest in Theophrastus.

The doctrinal content of the *Metaphrasis* is best discussed in connection with a commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* which all manuscripts attribute to Simplicius. Francesco Piccolomini (1582–1651)⁸ already noted stylistic differences between this commentary and other Aristotelian commentaries by Simplicius. On the basis of his observations he denied Simplicius' authorship. In our times this suggestion was taken up and developed by Bossier and Steel,⁹ noting differences in vocabulary, style, and doctrinal content between these works. In

⁷ Albeit under the name of Priscian of Caesarea.

⁸ *Commentarii in Libros Aristotelis De caelo, ortu et interitu; adiuncta lucidissima expositione, in tres libros eiusdem de anima*, Mainz 1608, 1001–2.

⁹ Bossier and Steel 1972, Steel 1978 *passim*, Steel 1997: 105–40. Their view has been defended by Perkams 2005, cf. Luna 2001: 504 n. 54.

addition, they claimed Priscian of Lydia to be its author. An important argument is a reference to an epitome of Theophrastus *On the Soul* which they regard as a self-reference to Priscian's *Metaphrasis of Theophrastus* (*In DA* 136.25–9).

This two-fold proposal has been received in various ways. I. Hadot has repeatedly disputed the correctness and/or conclusiveness of the arguments against Simplician authorship, as well as the arguments supporting the attribution of the commentary to Priscian.¹⁰ H. Blumenthal and others were prepared to reconsider Simplician authorship, but did not find the evidence adduced in favour of Priscian decisive.¹¹ Since Priscian and Simplicius shared the same milieu around Damascius for some time it was proposed that the commentary is a *reportatio* by a pupil in contact with this circle. There is general agreement, however, that the work is to be situated in this milieu. The discussion continues as the study of the works of Simplicius and Priscian yield new arguments and further insights into the complex development and character of the ancient commentary tradition. Until the question is resolved (if ever), it seems wise to respect the unanimous attribution of the manuscripts, and to consider the commentary as a work by Simplicius.

This discussion has been important for the understanding of both Priscian and the *DA* commentary in that it has made us more aware of the intricacies of the commentary tradition. To give an example: Iamblichus taught that the human soul completely descends from the intelligible realm. This descent causes a change in both the soul's activities and its essence. Since the soul holds a middle position between the intelligible and material realms as a continuously self-developing process, Iamblichus can affirm that the soul remains in itself and is identical to itself as a whole, *and* simultaneously proceeds outside of itself and changes as a whole (*Simpl. In DA* 6.14; 90.4, 20; 95.1, 24). Proclus shrank back from essential change, and ruled that only the soul's activities are affected by the descent.¹² As Steel has shown, the *DA* commentary is full of references to Iamblichus' doctrine.¹³ In the *Solutiones* Priscian seems to state

¹⁰ Hadot 1978: 193–202, Hadot 1987, Hadot 2002; her argument has been adopted by, e.g., Thiel 1999 and Athanassiadi 1993. She has stressed Bossier and Steel did not take Simplicius' commentary on Epictetus' *Handbook* sufficiently into account. Her argument is weakened insofar as she relies on two highly controversial claims, namely that Priscian and Simplicius continued to work at Carrhae (see above), and that Byzantine manuscripts confirm that Simplicius wrote a commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* which is mentioned at *In DA* 28.17–22 and 217.23, cf. Hadot 1987a; see Rashed 2000 for an opposing view.

¹¹ Blumenthal 1982, Blumenthal 1996: 65–71, Blumenthal 1997: 213–14, Blumenthal 2000: 1–7, Lautner and Urmson 1995: 2–10, Finamore and Dillon 2002: 18–24, Perkams 2003: 84–89.

¹² Cf. Procl. *In Tim.* 3.335.24–5, 338.6–7, 340.14–15. This doctrine is reflected in the structure of *El.* 191: 'every participated soul has an eternal substance but a temporal activity'.

¹³ Steel 1978, *passim*. He did not find it anywhere in Simplicius; Hadot has argued that Simplicius accepted it in the commentary on Epictetus, see Hadot 1978: 201–2, Hadot 1982, and in full detail in Hadot 1996: 70–102; her interpretation is rejected by Steel 1997: 118 as showing merely Damascius' influence.

half of Iamblichus' position when he claims that the union with the body leaves both the soul's essence and activity intact (cf. Prisc. *Solut.* 52.21–2; 53.5–7). This statement suffices as a rejection of Peripatetic and Stoic alternatives to the soul-body relationship which would be harmed by expounding the soul's change. In the *Metaphrasis* he takes Iamblichus as his point of reference, and we find him writing for a philosophically more sophisticated audience. He accepts a wholesale change in Iamblichaeian terms, and uses it to accommodate Aristotle *De an.* 3.4, 429a24 '[intellect] is nothing in actuality before it thinks', and 429b5ff. on the separation of intellect (cf. Prisc. *Metaphr.* 29.26–30.15; 31.15–16; 32.13–14). Even so, elsewhere in the *Metaphrasis* Priscian explains that although the separate human intellect has descended from the unity of separate intelligibles, it has at the same not entirely gone out from the intellect in actuality to which it remains joined. This allows even the separate intellect to be 'affected', namely by receiving its perfections from prior intelligibles. If so, Aristotle's mention of the blank writing tablet makes sense after all, and so do Theophrastus' queries about the nature of the 'affection' of intellect. The separate intellect is 'potential' in the sense of allowing for precisely this type of perfection (cf. Prisc. *Metaphr.* 26.29–28.4).

With a different point of reference and a different audience come a different technical vocabulary and style, even more so when Priscian takes on Theophrastean or Iamblichaeian turns of phrase. Such changes of context may occur between works or even between sections in the same work. Hence the usual criteria of vocabulary, style and doctrine are very difficult to apply; only an exhaustive grammatical and stylistic investigation including philosophically neutral terms may provide some ground for an argument. At the same time the discussion has shown the close proximity between the *Metaphrasis* and the *De anima* commentary, which can be explained from common sources (Theophrastus, Iamblichus or Damascius), from the proximity in place and time (roughly, the same decade of the sixth century CE), and the personal acquaintance between the main philosophers at work at the time. Again, within such parameters it is difficult to find conclusive evidence for any position.

The *DA* commentary is famous for a peculiar interpretation of Aristotle's two types of actuality of the soul, to wit in terms of the possession, or in terms of the exercise of knowledge. Aristotle's definition of the soul as the actualization (*entelecheia*) of an organic natural body (*De an.* 2.1, 412a26–7) contains the remark that 'in the order of becoming' capacity comes before the exercise, although the actuality is logically prior. But is there any becoming in the case of the immortal (part of the) soul? And can the Peripatetic doctrine that the soul is the *entelecheia* of the body, and hence inseparable from it, as Alexander of Aphrodisias chose to emphasize (cf. Alex. *DA* 17.9–15), be reconciled with the

Platonic conviction that the soul does not in any way mix with the body?¹⁴ In commentaries on *De caelo* and *Physics*, Simplicius paraphrases Aristotle in such a way that only the irrational parts of the soul are inseparable as the *entelecheia* of the body, whereas the rational part is truly separable (cf. *Simpl. In Cael.* 279.16–20, 380.16–19; *In Phys.* 268.6–269.4 against Alexander). The *De anima* commentary, however, accepts the claim that the soul is the *entelecheia* of the body, and develops it in a different way. In its role of formal i.e., *defining* cause (*kath' ho*) the soul actualizes the potentialities of the body, which is constituted by nature, by making it a *living* body. Next, the soul utilizes the living body thus constituted and fulfils its potentialities in order to be able to operate in the sensible world. This is presented as a different aspect of the formal causation of soul by which it actualizes the potentiality for motion in the living body (*huph' ho*).¹⁵ On this view, the two aspects of the soul's formal actualization of the body are present on all levels of the soul, and concern all its parts or functions, including thought.¹⁶ If, for instance, strong impressions harm the sense organ, this is to be regarded as the organ losing its 'defining life'.¹⁷ However, there is something stronger than any of these soul powers in us, which exists in us without *entelecheia*. This is the Peripatetic *nous poiētikos* of *De an.* 3.5, which is truly separate (cf. *Simpl. In DA* 109.2–11). Despite the convergences between the texts noted above, the *Metaphrasis* does not seem to contain any of the terminology of the double *entelecheia*.

Finally, the topic of consciousness has drawn the attention of recent scholarship. The starting-point for any discussion of consciousness is Aristotle's query, at *De an.* 3.2, 425b12–13, how we perceive that we see and hear. For Aristotle this awareness is given with the activity of each sense, which is perceived as such by the common sense. This view is reflected in a report of Theophrastus in Priscian's *Metaphrasis* (cf. *Metaphr.* 21.32–22.1, with reference to Arist. *Somm.* 2, 455a13ff.). Priscian and Simplicius seem to agree in following Damascius. Damascius had distinguished between awareness of thought, especially recollection of intelligibles, and awareness of sense-perception. In the case of thought, he granted the rational soul a special faculty of attention (*prosektikon*); for sense-perception he used con-science (*suneidos*) to designate the awareness

¹⁴ Hence Plot. *Enn.* 4.7.8.5 argues against the *entelecheia* interpretation of the soul.

¹⁵ Cf. *Simpl. In De an.* 4.12–34 which combines Arist. *Part. an.* 1.7, 641a14–20; *Phys.* 8.4, 254b30–3, 255a12–18; *De an.* 1.3, 407b24–5 (itself a reminiscence of Plato, *Alc.* 129c–130c). One of the prepositional phrases, which Steel considered non-Simplician, Hadot also found in *Simpl. In Phys.* 283.6, see Hadot 1978: 196–8, also for a different assessment of the passages referred to here.

¹⁶ Cf. *Simpl. In De an.* 71.24–30, 86.1–7 (vegetative soul); 111.24–5, 125.12–36, 128.22–9, 167.22–32 (sense-perception); 205.32–9, 77.5–8, 57.23 (imagination and discursive thought).

¹⁷ *Simpl. In De an.* 168.8–15, commenting on Arist. *De an.* 2.12, 424a28 'the *logos* (sc. of the organ) is resolved'.

of perception in the irrational soul (cf. Dam. *In Phaedo* 1.271–3 Westerink; *In Phaedo* 2.19–22 Westerink). This distinction between faculties was for the most part respected in both the *DA* commentary (cf. *In DA* 187.27–188.14; 289.40–290.6; cf. *In Epict.* 40.23–8, 43.15–17 Hadot) and Priscian's *Metaphrasis*. Priscian seems to add to Damascius' *sunesis* of the senses the self-awareness which comes with their unity in the common sense, called *sunaisthesis* (cf. *Metaphr.* 22.1–23 with 5.10–19). According to Hadot, the *DA* commentary differs from Priscian by attributing to the higher ontological level of common sense a purer awareness than the senses achieve, as a prerogative of human reason, which sets humans apart from animals which lack reason and have only the awareness of the senses.¹⁸ No such distinction is envisaged in the *Metaphrasis*. Pseudo-Philoponus *In DA* seems to have chosen a special position in this debate. Perhaps on the basis of a late reception of Plotinus (cf. *Enn.* 4.4 [28] 8.9–16 and 5.1 [10] 12.5ff.), he seems to have disregarded Damascius' distinction and attributed the task of perceiving perception to the rational soul's *prosektikon*, to the detriment of the common sense (cf. Ps.–Philop. *In DA* 464.18–465.12).

In the first edition of this *Cambridge History*, Hilary Armstrong mentioned Priscian and the *DA* commentary attributed to Simplicius only once, in passing.¹⁹ Since then the *De anima* commentary tradition has been discovered by scholars. The above survey of existing scholarship on the work of Priscian and (Pseudo?) Simplicius shows both that the situation has dramatically improved and that much more research is needed before we fully understand this difficult but fascinating part of the history of philosophy.

¹⁸ Hadot 1997: 71. ¹⁹ Pp. 317 and 489 respectively.

PART VII

THE THIRD ENCOUNTER OF CHRISTIANITY WITH ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION TO PART VII

In the sixth century CE, Christian theology matured both in the eastern and western parts of the Empire. In the East, the works of the unknown and pseudonymously named Dionysius the Areopagite aimed to transpose into a Christian theological context the systematic version of Platonism found in Proclus. In the West, the three hypostases of Platonism are transformed into the persons of the Trinity, gods become angels, and salvation becomes resurrection rather than permanent separation from a body. Boethius undertook a re-evaluation of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition from a refined Christian theological perspective. Boethius seems to have a clearly articulated vision of what can and cannot be accepted from Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Academic sources. His most influential work, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, acknowledges the feasibility and even perhaps the inevitability of a Christian philosophy. Writing in Latin, Boethius provided a bridge for the renaissance of Christian thought in the West in the ninth century. Maximus the Confessor refined further the Christianized Platonism of Pseudo-Dionysius. He wrote not only on narrowly theological problems, but on the full panoply of ecclesiastical and spiritual issues. The idea of Christian philosophy as a way of life explicitly in opposition to the ways of life recommended within the ancient Greek philosophical tradition comes to the fore in Maximus. The last philosopher treated in this section, John Scotus Eriugena, brings us to the Carolingian Renaissance. His translation of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius into Latin was to become a

fundamental source for the early and indirect access to ancient Greek philosophy within the Scholastic tradition. His attempts to integrate the eastern Greek Christianized Platonism with the western Latin theological tradition running through Augustine and Boethius is one of the more remarkable synthetic efforts in our period.

PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE

ERIC PERL

In the late fifth or early sixth century, a Christian writer, most likely a monk, probably from the Syrian region of the eastern Roman Empire, composed a body of works in which the philosophy of Plotinus, Proclus and other thinkers in the Platonic tradition is united with Christian belief. The works appeared under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, and in them the author apparently identifies himself as this first-century figure, who is named in the Acts of the Apostles as an Athenian converted to Christianity after hearing St Paul's sermon on 'the unknown God' (Acts 17.34) and who is said to have become the first bishop of Athens. The author is now generally referred to as 'Pseudo-Dionysius', or, in order to avoid the pejorative connotations of the prefix 'pseudo-', simply as 'Dionysius' or 'Denys'. Attempts have been made to discover his true identity, but none has received general acceptance, and in the absence of any solid evidence such efforts necessarily remain merely speculative and inconclusive.¹ What seems clear, however, is that the author's concealment of his own name is related to the philosophical content of his works. Like the God of whom he writes, the author remains nameless, inaccessible, hidden behind his works and knowable only as he is manifest in them. His choice of pseudonym, moreover, links him both with the idea of 'the unknown God' and with the integration between Greek philosophy and Christianity which is at play in Paul's sermon.

The surviving works of Dionysius include four treatises (*On Divine Names*, *On Mystical Theology*, *On the Celestial Hierarchy*, and *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*) and ten letters. In these works, the author refers to various other treatises, but in the absence of any external evidence, there is no way of determining whether these were actually written but have not survived, or are merely part of the author's pseudonymous self-presentation. Dionysius' philosophical metaphysics is found principally in the *On Divine Names*. *On Mystical Theology* describes the

¹ For a survey of proposed identifications (many of them patently impossible, as the *corpus Dionysiacum* cannot have been composed before the later part of the fifth century), see Hathaway 1969: 30–5. But there is no reason to suppose that the author must be any figure who is otherwise known to history at all: see Saffrey 1982: 65 and Balthasar 1984: 146.

ascent to 'the divine darkness', the divinity beyond all knowledge and being, by the removal of all things. The *On the Celestial Hierarchy* consists mostly of an interpretation of the scriptural presentations of angels, but the opening sections outline a theory of symbolism that holds considerable philosophical interest. The *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* is a description and explanation of a number of Christian sacramental rituals.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the *corpus Dionysiacum* was accepted with little question as having been written by the first-century Athenian. It was first translated into Latin in the ninth century, and exercised a tremendous influence on both Byzantine and medieval Latin thought. The author's identity was first seriously questioned in the fifteenth century, and was definitively proven to be pseudonymous in the 1890s, principally on the basis of the corpus' extensive borrowings from the work of Proclus. Other evidence, both internal and external, dates the corpus between 476 and 528. More recent scholarship has shown that Dionysius draws not only on Proclus but also on other Athenian Platonists such as Damascius. His work also shows direct familiarity with Plotinus, and with the earlier Christian traditions of Alexandria, the Cappadocian Fathers, and eastern monasticism.

I THE HIDDEN GOD

In *On Divine Names*, Dionysius sets out to explain how the unknowable, hidden, 'nameless' God is hymned by many names in the Christian Scriptures and traditions. He does this by means of a version of Platonic metaphysics, in which God, who as beyond being is unknowable and unnameable, is hymned by the names of all things because, as cause of all things, he is all things in all things. The idea that God, the first principle of reality, is 'hidden', i.e., inaccessible or unknowable, has a widespread background both in classical Greek thought and in the Christian tradition (notably in Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nyssa). For Dionysius, God is beyond the reach of thought and knowledge because he is not any being. 'For if all knowledges are of beings and have their limit in beings, that which is beyond all being also transcends all knowledge' (*DN* 1.4.593A). This statement reflects a line of philosophical argumentation stemming principally from Plotinus. The Platonic doctrine that the One or Good, the first principle of reality, is beyond being and knowledge, follows from the fundamental identity of being and intelligibility which is central to this tradition. If to be is to be intelligible, then every being is finite and is dependent on the identifying determination in virtue of which it is intelligible and thus is a being (e.g., Plotinus, 5.1 [10] 7.19–27). Consequently, the first principle cannot be any being. If it were a finite being, it would be intelligible,

determinate, dependent, and therefore not the first principle. Moreover, it would be one distinct member of the totality of beings, rather than the source of that totality. Plotinus' conclusion, then, is that the source from which all things derive is beyond intelligibility and beyond being, and he carefully explains that this 'beyond' is purely negative in meaning, signifying only that the One is *not* anything, not included within the whole of reality as any member of it, precisely because it is the source of that whole (e.g., Plotinus, 5.5 [32] 6.2–14).

Dionysius adopts this line of reasoning from the Platonic tradition, declaring that God is unknowable, unable to be grasped by thought, inexpressible, nameless, above being, not any being. It is not merely the case that God is inexpressible by language, beyond discursive reason, or inaccessible to human thought (as though some 'other' kind of thought could reach him). Rather, God is beyond the reach of thought as such, because all thought is, necessarily, the apprehension of being, of what is intelligible, finite and hence not God. Dionysius' 'negative theology', therefore, like that of Plotinus, does not consist merely in negative propositions about God. Negation, no less than affirmation, is a form of determination, and would limit God by declaring what he is not. Thus Dionysius says not merely that God is beyond all affirmations, but that he is 'beyond every negation and affirmation' (*MT* 1.2.1000B; cf. *MT* 5.1048B). It is no more correct to say that God is not anything than to say that he is anything. Likewise, for Dionysius, God is not simply unknowable or ineffable, for this would implicitly identify him as an unknowable or ineffable being and ascribe an attribute to him, but rather beyond ineffability and beyond unknowing (*huperarrētos, huperagnoston*; *DN* 1.4.592D). Just as Plotinus says that to attain the One 'you will not think (*ou noēseis*)' (5.3 [49] 13.33), so Dionysius says that the union of the mind with God 'comes about in the cessation of every intellectual activity' (*DN* 1.5.593C; cf. *DN* 1.4.592CD) and 'in the inactivity of every knowledge' (*MT* 1.3.1001A), for every intellectual activity, every knowledge, is the apprehension of some being and therefore not of God. Negative theology ultimately consists not in any speech or thought, however negative or superlative, but in silence, 'honouring the hidden of the divinity, beyond intellect and being, with unsearchable and sacred reverence of intellect, and ineffable things with a sober silence' (*DN* 1.3.589AB). Since to be is to be intelligible, or, in other words, to be given to thought, to be manifest, God is hidden, not manifest, in that he is not any being.

In developing his Platonic understanding of the Christian God, Dionysius carefully avoids assimilating the persons of the Trinity to the Plotinian hypostases of the One, intellect and soul, or indeed to any of the other triads that abound in later Platonism. For Dionysius, all three persons together, not the Father alone, stand in the place of the Platonic One or Good, beyond intellect and being, and

all the names of God, with the exception of the names ‘Father’, ‘Son’, and ‘Holy Spirit’, are common to all three persons (*DN* 2.1, 636C, 637C; 2.3, 640B). On this point the difference between Dionysius’ and Augustine’s Christian versions of Platonism is instructive. Augustine assimilates the Son or Word, eternally begotten by the Father, to Plotinus’ intellect, eternally generated by the One. But since, for Augustine, the Son is in no way subordinate but fully equal to the Father, God as the Father is God, this has the effect of bringing God down to the level of intellect. Augustine’s God is fundamentally pure intellect, pure form, pure being, and the Platonic idea of the first principle as beyond all these is to a large extent lost. For Dionysius, on the other hand, God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is beyond intellect, form and being, in the position of the Platonic One. Thus Dionysius often refers to the Son as *huperousios* (e.g. *Epist.* 3.1069B; *Epist.* 4.1072B), and the opening prayer of the *Mystical Theology* begins, ‘Trinity beyond being [*Trias huperousie*] . . .’ (*MT* 1.1, 997A). Hence the trinitarian distinctions, although discussed in *DN* 2, do not enter into Dionysius’ philosophical understanding of God as the principle of all things.

2 CAUSATION AS MANIFESTATION

Dionysius explains that while God is ‘nameless’ because he is not any being, he is named, or better, hymned, as all things because he is the cause (*aitia* or *aition*) of all things. ‘Cause’ here signifies not that God is a being, but, on the contrary, in that he is the cause of *all* beings, he himself is not included among all beings as any one of them. ‘It [i.e. God] is cause of all beings, but is itself nothing, as transcending all things in a manner beyond being . . . But since . . . it is cause of all beings, the beneficent providence of the Thearchy² is to be hymned from all the effects’ (*DN* 1.5.593CD). But in what sense is God the ‘cause’ of all things, if he is not any being, and why does this justify naming him as all things? Dionysius interprets God’s making of the world³ in terms of the distinctively Platonic kind of causation in which, for example, beauty is the cause of all beautiful things’ being beautiful or life is the cause of all living things’ being living (see Plato, *Phd.* 100d–101c). For Dionysius, then, God is the cause of all things in that he is present to all things as the constitutive determinations in virtue of which they are what they are and so are beings. Thus he is, for example, ‘the life of living things and being of beings (*tōn ontōn ousia*)’ (*DN* 1.3.589c). He is the cause of living

² Dionysius frequently uses this term (*thearchia*) and the adjectival form ‘thearchic’ (*thearchikos*), apparently meaning something like ‘the divine principle’, God as the principle of all things. The term is sometimes taken to have a specifically trinitarian significance (e.g., Marion 2001: 173, 187), but there is no textual warrant for this reading.

³ Dionysius avoids using the word ‘create’ (*ktizein* and its cognates) except in Scriptural citations.

things in that in all living things, he is the life by which they are living; he is the cause of beings in that in all beings, he is the being by which they are beings: God ‘neither was nor will be nor came to be nor comes to be nor will come to be; rather, he is not. But he is being to beings (*autos esti to einai tois ousi*)’ (DN 5.4.817D). And this principle extends to all the determinations of all things: ‘In the cause of all things the paradigms of all beings pre-exist . . . Paradigms . . . are the being-making determinations (*ousiopoious . . . logous*) pre-existing unitarily in God, of beings, which theology calls predeterminations, and good wills, determinative and productive (*aphoristika kai poiētika*) of beings, according to which the beyond-being both predetermined and produced all beings’ (DN 5.8.824C). These ‘paradigms’ or *logoi* contained without distinction in God, then, are the defining or determining principles which make beings to be. All the features of all things, therefore, are God-in-them, making them to be by making them what they are, so that God is not only being in beings and life in living things but ‘all things in all things (*ta panta en pasi*)’ (DN 1.7.596C).⁴ Dionysius variously refers to these differentiated presences of God in all things as the ‘powers’, ‘participations’, ‘processions’, ‘providences’, ‘manifestations’, or ‘distributions’ of God, and all these terms express God’s productive presence in beings as their constitutive determinations. ‘If we have named the hiddenness beyond being God, or life, or being, or light, or word, we are thinking of nothing other than the powers brought forth from it to us, which are deifying, or being-making, or life-producing, or wisdom-giving’ (DN 2.7.645A). And this is the justification for the naming of God: since whatever is found in any being is God-in-it, God is truly named and hymned as all things in all things.

Conversely, then, all the intelligible determinations of all things, and hence the whole content of reality, are contained without differentiation in God. As Dionysius says, articulating a universal Late Platonic principle, ‘the things that belong to the effects pre-exist in the causes’ (DN 2.8.645D), and God ‘is not only the cause of holding together or of life or of perfection, so that the goodness above name would be named only from this one or another providence, but simply and indeterminately pre-contained in itself all beings’ (DN 1.7.596D–597A). All reality, then, is the unfolding, the differentiated and therefore intelligible presentation or manifestation of God, and God is the enfolding, the undifferentiated containment, of all things.⁵ Thus, as Dionysius says, God is not any one being, but ‘all beings and none of beings’ (DN 1.6.596C),

⁴ Dionysius is here citing 1 Cor. 15.28, which is his principal scriptural justification for attributing to God the names of all things and claiming that all these names are found in the Scriptures.

⁵ Although this schema of enfolding-unfolding, or *complicatio-explicatio*, is often associated with medieval Latin Platonism, it is in fact a central principle of Platonic philosophy from Plotinus onward.

or, better, 'all things in all things and nothing in any' (*DN* 7.3.872A). He is all things in all things, in that the whole intelligible content of any being, and thus the whole being itself, is God-in-it in the differentiated way that constitutes it as that being; and he is nothing in any, in that he is not himself any one being, distinguished from others as one member within the whole. God is nothing (*ouden*, *DN* 1.5.593C), we may say, not by privation but by concentration, the whole content of reality without the differentiation that constitutes beings as beings. Consequently, like the One of Plotinus, God is at once and identically transcendent and immanent: transcendent, in that he is not any being, not included within the whole of reality as any member thereof; immanent, in that he is immediately present to all things as their constitutive determinations and thus as the whole of what they are. Dionysius articulates this coinciding of transcendence and immanence in his discussion of God as light: 'The goodness of the Godhead which is beyond all things extends from the highest and most venerable substances to the last, and is still above all, the higher not outstripping its excellence nor the lower going beyond its containment' (*DN* 4.4.697C). Thus God is truly named and hymned as all things, because all reality is the differentiated presentation of God.

If God is the undifferentiated containment of all things, then the differentiation of beings from one another is what distinguishes all beings from God and thus constitutes them as beings. It follows, for Dionysius, that God himself is the very differentiation by which beings are beings. Thus Dionysius says that God is named 'the different, since God is providentially present to all things and becomes all things in all things for the preservation of all things' (*DN* 9.5.912B). He continues, 'Let us consider the divine difference . . . as his unitary multiplication and the uniform processions of his multiple-generation to all things' (*DN* 9.5.913B). God, then, is not a 'simple monad', set over against beings in their differentiated multiplicity, but is the very principle by which beings are different from each other and so are beings. Since all determination is differentiation, God is thus the source at once of the differences between beings and of their unity and identity: 'From this [i.e., God as the Good] are all the substantial existences of beings, the unions, the distinctions, the identities, the differences, the likenesses, the unlikenesses, the communions of opposite things, the unminglings of united things . . .' (*DN* 5.7.704B).⁶

⁶ Significantly, Dionysius does not attempt to assimilate the Christian trinitarian distinctions to Platonism by interpreting the Trinity in terms of Platonic triads or any principles of late Platonic metaphysics: see Balthasar 1984: 156, 184–5. All the names attributed to God from beings are common to all three Persons (*DN* 2.1.636C, 637C; 2.3.640B), and all three Persons together, not the Father alone, stand in the place of the Platonic One or Good. Like the One of Plotinus, the God of Dionysius, as beyond being, is neither one nor many (*DN* 13.2.977CD), neither monad nor triad

One of the principal ways in which Dionysius integrates Christianity and Platonism is by interpreting the incarnation in terms of this Platonic understanding of being as the manifestation of God.

Concerning the love for man in Christ, even this, I think, the theology suggests: that out of the hidden the beyond-being has come forth into manifestation according to us, becoming a being in a human way. But he is hidden even after the manifestation, or, that I may speak more divinely, even in the manifestation. For even this of Jesus is hidden, and the mystery in him is brought forth to no reason or intellect, but what is said remains ineffable and what is thought, unknowable.

(*Epist.* 3.1069B)

The incarnation of Christ is thus assimilated to the Platonic vision of the whole of reality as the manifestation and presence of hidden, transcendent divinity, while at the same time all of reality, as the manifestation of God, comes to be seen as ‘incarnational’ in nature.

3 PROCESSION AND REVERSION

Fifth-century Athenian Platonists such as Proclus interpret causation, thus understood in terms of enfolding and unfolding, as the cyclical metaphysical ‘motion’ of remaining, procession and reversion (*monē, proodos, epistrophē*). In Proclus’ words, ‘Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts to it’ (*El. theol.* 35). This is one of the principal concepts that Dionysius adopts from Proclus. ‘Remaining’ refers to the undifferentiated containment of the effects in, or better, as, the cause. ‘Procession’ refers to the dependence of the effects on the cause considered as causal activity, the ‘going forth’ of the effects from their cause and of the cause to its effects.⁷ Procession, then, is the differentiation whereby the effects are distinct from each other and therefore from the cause, and thus exist at all as themselves, as effects.⁸ The effects proceed from the cause in that they are differentiated presentations of it. ‘Reversion’, in turn, refers to this same dependence as a ‘turning back’ of the effects to the cause as their end or good.⁹ Since what gives unity, identity, intelligibility to any being is its end or good, the end for a thing is its cause of being. For any

(*DN* 13.3.980D). The trinitarian distinctions, although discussed in *DN* 2, thus do not enter into Dionysius’ philosophical understanding of God as the principle of all things.

⁷ Procession is thus attributed both to the cause and to the effect without difference of meaning: the cause ‘proceeds to’, i.e., produces, the effect, and the effect ‘proceeds from’, i.e., depends on, the cause.

⁸ See Proclus, *El. theol.* 30: if the effect did not proceed from the cause, it would be in no way distinct from the cause and thus would not exist as itself.

⁹ Like procession, therefore, reversion is attributed both to the cause and to the effect: the cause reverts the effect to itself, and the effect reverts to the cause.

being, therefore, its end is its source and its source is its end (cf. Plotinus, 3.8 [30] 7.17, *telos hapasin hē archē*) and all things in tending toward their own proper ends are tending toward the Good, at once the source and the end of all things, in their own ways. As Proclus explains, therefore, ‘all things desire the Good, and each attains it through its proximate cause: therefore each has appetite of its own cause also. Through that by which there is being to each thing, through this there is also being good; toward this first is its appetite; and to that toward which is first its appetite, toward this it reverts’ (*El. theol.* 31). Living things, for example, revert to the Good by way of life, which is their mode of being one, of being good, and therefore of being. On this basis, Proclus distinguishes three principal modes of reversion, proper to different kinds of beings: those that merely exist, those that live, and those that have a cognitive capacity.

Every being reverts either existentially only, or vitally, or also cognitively. For either it has from its cause existence only, or life together with existence, or it has received from thence a cognitive faculty also. Insofar, then, as it only is, it makes an existential reversion; insofar as it also lives, a vital one also; insofar as it has knowledge likewise, a cognitive one. For as it proceeds, so it reverts. . . . Appetition is in some things, then, according to existence only, which is a fitness for the participation in their causes; in others, according to life, which is a movement towards the higher; in others, according to knowledge, which is a consciousness of the goodness of their causes.

(*El. theol.* 39)

Here Dionysius follows Proclus very closely. ‘The Good’ names God as at once the principle from which all things proceed, in which all things are contained, and to which all things revert: ‘Every being is from the Beautiful and Good and in the Beautiful and Good and is reverted to the Beautiful and Good’ (*DN* 4.10.705D). Dionysius adopts Proclus’ account of the modes of reversion, with the additional distinction of a ‘sensitive’ mode, proper to irrational animals, between the cognitive mode proper to angels and humans and the vital mode proper to plants.

It is the Good . . . from which all things originate and are, as brought forth from an all-perfect cause; and in which all things are held together, as preserved and held fast in an all-powerful foundation; and to which all things are reverted as each to its own proper limit; and which all things desire: the intellectual and rational cognitively, the sensitive sensitively, those without a share in sensation by the natural motion of vital desire, and those which are not living and are beings merely by their fitness for existential participation.

(*DN* 4.4.700B; cf. *DN* 1.5.593D)

Thus, the proper activity of each kind of thing, which is that thing’s way of being, is its mode of reversion to, or desire for, God as the Good. Reversion,

therefore, is in no way subsequent to procession, as though beings first proceed, or are made to be, by God, and then revert, or tend toward him. Rather, reversion, no less than procession, is the very being of all things, and each thing's mode of reversion is its proper mode of being. All things are, then, only in and by desiring God, the Good, in the ways proper to them. As Dionysius says, 'By all things, then, the Beautiful and Good is desired and loved and cherished . . . and all things, by desiring the Beautiful and Good, do and wish all things that they do and wish' (DN 4.10.708A). All the activity, and hence the very being of all things, then, is at once their procession from and reversion to, or love for, God as the Good.

As the Good or Goodness¹⁰ whereby all things are good, God is also the Beautiful or Beauty itself, and Dionysius frequently uses the divine names 'Good' and 'Beautiful' conjointly (e.g., DN 4.7.704B; 4.8.704D; 4.10.705C–708A; 4.18.713D). The beauty of all things is the manifest, differentiated presence of God as the Beautiful in them, and the Beautiful is identical with the Good as at once the cause of being to all things and the end toward which all things are drawn: 'From the Beautiful is being to all beings, each being beautiful according to its proper determination' (DN 4.7.704A), and 'the Beautiful above being is called Beauty (*kallos*) on account of the beautifulness distributed from it to all beings in the manner proper to each . . . and as calling (*kaloun*) all things to itself' (DN 4.7.701C).¹¹ Conversely, God pre-contains in himself, without differentiation, all the beauty of all things (DN 4.7.704A). Indeed, the divine name 'Beautiful' expresses the unity of all the modes in which God is the cause of all things. 'The Beautiful is the principle of all things, as making cause, and moving and holding together the whole by the love of its proper beautifulness; and limit of all things, and cherished, as final cause, since for the sake of the Beautiful all things come to be; and paradigmatic [cause], in that all things are determined according to it' (DN 4.7.704AB). Here causality of being, final causality, and formal determination are united under the name of the Beautiful: the beauty of each being, which is the determinative presence and manifestation of God in it, is at once its principle and its end. For Dionysius, therefore, as for, e.g., Plotinus, Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine, to be is to be beautiful, and beauty is the very principle of being itself. 'Further, it is necessary to understand this too, that not even one of beings is altogether deprived of participation in the Beautiful, since as the truth of the oracles [i.e., the scriptures] says, "all things are very beautiful"' (CH 2.3.141C, citing Genesis 1.31 (LXX)).

¹⁰ Dionysius uses the terms *to agathon* or *tagathon* and *agathotēs* interchangeably.

¹¹ The pun on *kallos/kalein* is drawn from Proclus, *In Alcib.* 328.

The entire cycle of procession and reversion is summarized in Dionysius' account of divine love (*erōs*).

The cause of all things, through excess of goodness, loves (*erai*) all things, makes all things, perfects all things, sustains all things, reverts all things; and the divine love is good, of good, through the good. For love, the very benefactor of beings, pre-existing in excess in the Good, did not permit it to remain unproductive in itself, but moved it to productive action, in the excess which is generative of all things.

(DN 4.10.708AB)

In saying that God loves all things, Dionysius is innovating, at least terminologically, on his Platonic sources.¹² (Plotinus in an exceptional passage, 6.8 [39] 15.1, describes the One as *erōs*, but this refers to the One's self-relation, not to a relation to its products; Proclus attributes a downward-reaching, beneficent or providential love to lesser gods, but not to the One itself.) Divine love, in Dionysius, refers at once to procession and to reversion: God loves all things in that he goes forth or is constitutively present to them (procession), and in that he constitutively draws them to himself (reversion). Despite the terminological innovation, therefore, Dionysius' discussion of love is closely comparable to Plotinus' description of the One's 'overflow' which is generative of all things (5.2 [11].9–10), and to Proclus' understanding of production in terms of 'excess' (*periousia*) and generative self-multiplication (e.g., *El. theol.* 27). For Dionysius, too, divine love is 'excessive' or 'ecstatic':

The very cause of all things, by the beautiful and good love of all things, through excess of erotic goodness, becomes out of himself in his providences toward all beings, and is as it were enticed by goodness and affection and love and is led down, from above all things and beyond all things, to in all things, according to an ecstatic power beyond being, without going out from himself. (DN 4.13.712AB)

God's 'ecstasy', his 'going out of himself', is his procession to or presence in all things in virtue of which all things are. God 'goes out of himself' without 'going out from himself' in that he is, so to speak, intrinsically ecstatic, not a defined, self-contained being but always already 'out of himself' and 'in all things' as their constitutive determinations. Because God is not any being but the productive differentiation of all things, his being 'in himself' consists in his being 'out of himself' and in all things.

Thus, unlike Aristotle's God, who as pure form and pure being is an 'unmoved mover', Dionysius' God, beyond form and being, is not only beloved, but also

¹² Whether Dionysius' account of divine *erōs* is really different in metaphysical content from Plotinus and Proclus is controversial. For the view that it is, see Rist 1966: 239; de Vogel 1981: 57–81; Buckley 1992: 56. For the opposing view, see Perl 2007: 44–6.

love itself; that is, he not only moves all things toward himself as their end but also is himself ‘moved’ (*kineitai*) in that he proceeds to or is present in all things (DN 4.14.712C).

They call him cherished and beloved, as beautiful and good, and again love and charity, as the power which at once moves and leads beings up to himself . . . and as being the manifestation of himself through himself and the good procession of the transcendent union . . . Herein the divine love eminently shows its endlessness and beginninglessness, as an eternal circle, whirling around through the Good, from the Good, and in the Good and to the Good in unerring coiling-up, always proceeding and remaining and returning in the same and by the same.

(DN 4.14.712C–713A)

The entire cycle of procession and reversion is the ‘whirling circle’ of divine love, which is God in all things as their very being.

It follows that for Dionysius, like the other late Platonists but unlike some of his fellow Christians, God’s making all things is not the result of a ‘choice’, in such a way that, as is sometimes said, God ‘might not have created’. ‘Since, as subsistence of goodness, by its very being it is cause of all beings, the good-founding providence of the Godhead is to be hymned from all the effects . . . And by its being it is the production and origin of all things . . .’ (DN 1.5.593D; cf. DN 4.1.693B). But this should not be taken to mean that, either for Dionysius or for the non-Christian Platonists, God is subject to some kind of necessity, a condition or law more universal than himself, or that he is moved to produce by something other than himself. Rather, it is because God is himself the production of all things that no alternative is possible. Only God himself – not any choice, motion, will, or activity distinct from God himself – is the cause of all things. That love ‘did not permit’ the Good to be unproductive (DN 4.10.708B) is a consequence, not a limitation, of God’s being absolutely unconditioned by anything.

4 EVIL

If all things proceed from the Beautiful and Good and are beautiful and good, the question inevitably arises, ‘What is evil, and whence does it originate?’ (DN 4.18.716A). Dionysius’ treatment of this problem incorporates extensive passages taken directly from Proclus’ *On the Subsistence of Evils*, while also differing from Proclus in significant ways.¹³ For Dionysius, as for Proclus, and also for other Christians influenced by Platonism such as Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine,

¹³ See Steel 1997: 89–116. Steel, however, offers a different interpretation of Dionysius’ alterations to Proclus’ account of evil from that given here.

evil is neither any being, nor a positive attribute of any being. It is, rather, a partial lack of goodness, and therefore of being, in a thing which to some extent is and is good. 'All beings, insofar as they are, are good and from the Good; and insofar as they are deprived of the Good, they are neither good nor beings . . . But what is in every way deprived of the Good neither was nor is nor will be nor can be in any way whatsoever' (*DN* 4.20.720B). Following Proclus, he rejects Plotinus' identification of matter with evil on the ground that 'if [matter] is in no way whatsoever, it is neither good nor evil. But if it is somehow a being, and all beings are from the Good, this too would be from the Good' (*DN* 4.28.729A). Again, like Proclus and against Plotinus, Dionysius argues that if matter is a necessary aspect of the world, it cannot be evil. 'If they say that matter is necessary for the completion of all the cosmos, how is matter evil? For evil is one thing, and the necessary another' (*DN* 4.28.729A). Evil, rather, consists in a being's partial failure to possess the proper perfections which constitute it as that kind of being. But whereas Proclus holds that such failures can occur only at the level of human souls and natural bodies, Dionysius interprets evil as such a deficiency at any ontological level: 'This is evil, for intellects [i.e., angels] and souls [i.e., human souls] and bodies: the weakness and falling away from the possession of their proper goods' (*DN* 4.27.728D). Thus, for example, the demons, which Dionysius understands in Christian terms as fallen angels, 'are not evil by nature, but by the lack of the angelic goods' (*DN* 4.23.725B), and 'the evil in them is from the falling away from their proper goods, and a change, the weakness . . . of the perfection befitting them as angels' (*DN* 4.34.733C).

The proper goods for any being are the characteristic activities which are its mode of reversion and therefore of being. This 'weakness', therefore, is fundamentally the being's partial failure to revert to, or desire, God, and therefore a partial failure to be. All desire is for some good (*DN* 4.19.716C), and all beings, insofar as they have any desire, any activity, and hence any being at all, are desiring God, the Good, and to that extent are good. Thus even the demons 'are not altogether without a share in the Good, insofar as they are and live and think, and in short, there is some motion of desire in them. But they are called evil through the weakness in their activity according to nature' (*DN* 4.23.725B). Conversely, to desire evil is to desire nothing, and this is not to desire: 'And if [the demons] do not desire the Good, they desire non-being. And this is not desire, but a failure of true desire' (*DN* 4.34.733D). Evil, then, consists fundamentally in passivity, in the partial failure of a being to exercise the activities which are its being and its participation in God. At the ethical level, this means that a person is vicious to the extent that he is driven by passions rather than by active desire, which is always for the Good (see *DN* 4.20.720BC, and *EH* 3.3.11.440C-441A). And if we ask what is the cause of this failure, the

answer is that, precisely as a deficiency of activity and hence of being, it is without cause (*anaition*: DN 4.30.732A; 4.32.732D),¹⁴ a conclusion suggested by Proclus (*De mal. subs.* 50.30) and independently arrived at by Augustine (*De civ. Dei* 12.7.9).

5 HIERARCHY

The principal divine ‘names’ or processions, discussed in *On Divine Names* chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 respectively, are the Good or Goodness, Being, Life, and Wisdom. With the substitution of the biblical term ‘Wisdom’ (*sophia*) for the more common philosophical term ‘Intellect’ (*nous*), this sequence reflects Proclus’ account of the Good or the One as the source of all things absolutely, followed by Being, Life and Intellect as the three main levels of intelligible reality, productive of different kinds of beings. Thus, for Proclus, all things, including even matter as privation, proceed from the Good; all beings proceed from the Good and Being; all living things, from the Good, Being and Life; and all cognitive things, from the Good, Being, Life, and Intellect (see *El. theol.* 57 and 101). So too, for Dionysius,

the divine name of the Good, manifesting the whole processions of the cause of all things, is extended both to beings and to non-beings, and is above beings and above non-beings. That of Being is extended to all beings and is above all beings. That of Life is extended to all living things and is above living things. That of Wisdom is extended to all intellectual and rational and sensitive beings and is above all these things.

(DN 5.1.816B)

‘Non-beings’, here, evidently means formless matter, which, considered in abstraction from form is not any being, but which, *qua* included in beings, proceeds from and participates in the Good. Thus, ‘the Good’ names God as he is present in all beings and non-beings; ‘Being’ names God as he is present in all beings; ‘Life’ names God as he is present in living things; and ‘Wisdom’ names God as he is present in all conscious beings, i.e., animals (sensitive beings), humans (rational beings), and angels (intellects, or intellectual beings). The order of these divine processions is therefore a mirror image of the ranks of beings:

Good
Being
Life
Wisdom

¹⁴ Cf. Jones 1980b: 86–7: ‘The question “Why is there evil at all?” is a mistaken question; for, it seeks an ultimate cause where there is none. However, in denying the legitimacy of this question we do not seek to explain evil away; rather, we indicate that evil is uncaused and unexplainable.’

conscious beings
 living beings
 (mere) beings
 non-beings

The five principal levels of beings, then, are angels, humans, irrational animals, plants, and inanimate things.

After explaining this, Dionysius raises a hypothetical objection: ‘Yet someone might say, “Wherefore is Being set above Life and Life above Wisdom, when living things are above beings, and sensitive things which live above these, and rational things above these, and the intellects are above the rational things and are more around God and closer to him?”’ (*DN* 5.3.817A). In other words, since living things are higher than inanimate ones, conscious beings are higher than plants, and so on, it would seem to follow that Life should be above Being and Wisdom above Life. Dionysius replies that the more specific processions, e.g., Life in relation to Being or Wisdom in relation to Life, do not exclude but rather include the more universal ones. Thus plants, in possessing Life, also possess Being, and conscious beings, in possessing Wisdom, also possess Being and Life.

But since the divine intellects also are [in a way] above other beings, and live [in a way] above the other living things, and think and know [in a way] above sense and reason . . . they are nearer to the Good, participating in it in an eminent way, and receiving from it more and greater gifts; likewise rational beings excel sensitive ones, having more by the eminence of reason, and the latter [excel other living things] by sensation, and [living things excel mere beings] by life. And . . . the things which participate more in the one and infinitely giving God are closer to him and more divine than the rest.

(*DN* 5.3.817B)

Being is higher than Life, then, because Being is a more universal perfection of which Life is a specification. Life, in plants, therefore, is not superadded to Being, but is the superior mode of Being proper to them as compared to stones; Wisdom, i.e., consciousness, is not superadded to Life, but is the superior mode of Life and Being proper to cognitive things. Angels, as intellects, are the highest kind of beings because intellection, as the highest mode of consciousness, is the highest mode of life and being. The various processions, then, are more and less universal modes of the same divine presence that constitutes all things.

In apparent opposition to Proclus and other non-Christian Platonists, who hypostasize such terms as a ranked multiplicity of divinities, Dionysius insists that these processions are not ‘demiurgic substances or hypostases’ (*DN* 11.6.953D), and that he is saying not that

the Good is one thing and Being another and Life or Wisdom another, nor that the causes are many and that there are different divinities, higher and lower, productive of

different things; but that all the good processions and divine names hymned by us are of one God; and one [i.e., the name Good] manifests the complete providence of the one God, but the others, his more universal and more specific [providences].

(DN 5.2.816C–817A)

We may wonder, however, to what extent there is a real philosophical difference between Dionysius and his non-Christian sources here.¹⁵ For Proclus, all things are produced immediately by the One or Good as well as by their ‘proximate’ causes, and the productive power of any lower term is nothing but the participated power of a higher term – ultimately, therefore, of the One itself – in it (see *El. theol.* 56). Terms such as Being, Life and Intellect, then, are the differentiated and more specific modes of unity or goodness operative in different beings. Thus, while Proclus hymns the various modes of goodness as a multiplicity of gods, Dionysius hymns God as the various modes of goodness. For both Dionysius and Proclus, all things are filled with and constituted by a multiplicity of divine powers at work differently in different things, and all of these are modes of presence of the One, the Good, or God.

For Dionysius, then, there is no tension or opposition between God’s immediate presence to all things and the hierarchical structure of reality. Rather, God is present in all things, or all things participate in God, ‘analogously’ or ‘according to their rank’, i.e., in the manner appropriate to each. ‘The Good is altogether not uncommunicated to any of beings, but shines forth the ray beyond being, established steadfastly in itself, by illuminations analogous to each of beings’ (DN 1.2.588CD; see also DN 4.1.693B). This is an ‘analogous’ or ‘proportional’ presence in that mere being is to a stone, as life is to a plant, as sense is to an animal, as reason is to a human, as intellect is to an angel. Each being thus participates directly in God in and by occupying its proper place in the hierarchy of reality. Divine justice, therefore, consists not in equality but in the hierarchical order in which each being occupies its proper place within the whole (DN 8.7.896AB). Since God is not any being but ‘all things in all things and nothing in any’, he does not stand at the head of this hierarchy, as if he were merely the highest being, but rather transcends and permeates the whole: he transcends it in that he is not any member of it, even the highest, and he permeates it in that he is immediately present throughout in the way proper to each level.

¹⁵ It is regarded as a profound and crucial difference by, for instance, Roques 1954b: 78–81 and Louth 1989: 86–7. Dionysius’ own position is very clear; the controversy hinges principally on the interpretation of Proclus’ ‘many gods’. We may note that later in the sixth century, the non-Christian philosopher Olympiodorus (perhaps in order to accommodate Christianity) was to suggest that the Platonic doctrine of many gods could be interpreted in a similar way: ‘If you wish, do not think that these powers have individual substances and are distinguished from one another, but place them in the first cause and say that there are in it both intellectual and vital powers’ (*In Gorg.* 47.2).

Within the hierarchy of beings, not only do all things proceed from and revert to God, but also, the higher proceed to the lower and the lower revert to the higher (*DN* 4.8.704D–705A; 4.10.708A; 4.12.709D; 4.15.713AB). Thus, each level of beings receives the divine light, the participation in God, from those above, and passes it on to those below. ‘The purpose of hierarchy, then, is likeness and union with God as far as possible . . . making the members of his dancing company divine images, clear and spotless mirrors, receptive of the original light and thearchic ray and sacredly filled with the granted radiance, and ungrudgingly flaring it up again to the next, according to the thearchic ordinances’ (*CH* 3.2.165A; cf. Dionysius’ description of angels as mirrors, *DN* 4.22.724B). As this image of an array of mirrors suggests, there is no conflict between God’s immediate productive presence to all things and the hierarchical transmission of this presence. Rather, it is precisely by means of hierarchical mediation that God is immediately present throughout the entire hierarchy of beings as the being of all things (see also *CH* 3.3.301D).¹⁶ Since hierarchical activity consists fundamentally in transmission, that is to say, in giving and receiving, it is no accident that Dionysius’ fullest presentations of the hierarchical structure of reality as a whole are found embedded in his discussion of divine love. The hierarchically structured love of beings for one another is the participation of them all in the divine love that constitutes all things. For love, says Dionysius, is ‘a power unifying and connective and distributively combining, pre-existing in the Beautiful and Good through the Beautiful and Good and given out from the Beautiful and Good through the Beautiful and Good, and holding together co-ordinates according to their mutual communion, moving the first things to providence for their inferiors, and establishing the more needy in reversion to their superiors’ (*DN* 4.12.709D; cf. *DN* 4.15.713AB).

6 KNOWLEDGE AND MYSTICISM

The divine procession ‘Wisdom’ is subdivided into the three principal levels of cognition recognized in the philosophical tradition, intellection, discursive

¹⁶ For the opposing view, that only cognitive ‘illumination’, and not being, is hierarchically transmitted, see Louth 1989: 84–5; Golitzin 1994: 142–5. The response to this is best given by Rutledge 1964: 14 n.1: ‘Some commentators . . . find it necessary to say that the orders of the hierarchies do not *create* those subordinate to them. This is true, but it is not the whole truth . . . If the whole being and activity of each member is received it seems to matter little whether we say he or God creates the one immediately below. The immanence and transcendence of God . . . must be stated with *exactly* the same emphasis . . . If we say that God creates each member of the hierarchy immediately, then . . . we must add immediately that each member *is* God, at *exactly* this level of manifestation or creation’ (italics in original).

reason and sensation, loosely correlated with angels, humans and irrational animals respectively. The correlation is loose because the human soul is capable not only of reason but also of sensation, and indeed can ascend above reason to intellection and beyond. These modes of cognition are higher and lower modes of apprehending reality, distinguished by the degrees of unity in which they do so, intellect being the most unified and sense the most multiple (*DN* 4.9.705AB, and 7.2.868BC). Consequently, intellect and sense are not opposed to each other, but are higher and lower modes of the same activity. Thus, just as Plotinus says that ‘sense-perceptions are dim intellections’ (6.7 [38] 7.30–1), so Dionysius remarks that even sensations are ‘an echo of Wisdom’ (*DN* 7.2.868C). For this reason, and in accord with the general principles of Late Platonic and Dionysian hierarchy, the higher does not lack anything that the lower has, but possesses it in a higher way. Thus Dionysius follows Proclus’ principle that whatever is known is known according to the mode, not of the object, but of the knower (*El. theol.* 124). So, for Dionysius, angels, as intellects, do not lack a knowledge of sensible things, but rather, ‘the angels know . . . the things on earth, knowing them not by sense-perception (although they are sensible things), but by the proper nature and power of the deiform intellect’ (*DN* 7.2.869C).

For Dionysius, as for Plotinus and Proclus, it is not the case that God can be apprehended by intellect but not by sense. Rather, he is given to all modes of cognition, even the lowest, and to none, even the highest: to none, in that God ‘is neither intelligible nor sensible nor any of beings whatsoever’ (7.2.869C); and to all, in that all reality, all that is available to apprehension in any mode, is the manifestation of God.

God is known both through knowledge and through unknowing. And of him there is both intellection and reason and knowledge and touching and sense-perception and opinion and imagination and name and all other things; and he is neither thought nor spoken nor named. And he is not any of beings, nor is he known in any of beings. And he is all things in all things and nothing in any, and he is known to all from all and to none from any.

(*DN* 7.3.872A)

In affirming that there is sense-perception of God, Dionysius makes explicit a principle that is at least implicitly present throughout the Platonic tradition, that all awareness, at every level, is awareness of God, because all being is the differentiated presentation of God.

Since God is not an object for intellect as opposed to sense, the cognitive ascent cannot end with intellection, but must pass beyond intellection into still greater unity, beyond any cognition whatsoever. ‘Souls, uniting and

gathering their manifold reasonings into one intellectual purity, go forth in the way and order proper to them through immaterial and undivided intellection to the union above intellection' (DN 11.2.949D). Since intelligibility and therefore being depend on distinction, in moving into absolute unification we pass beyond thought and being into what Dionysius calls 'unknowing (*agnosia*)', 'the darkness of unknowing' (MT 1.3.1001A), 'the union above intellect' (DN 7.3.872B; 11.2.949D), or 'the cessation of intellectual activities' (DN 1.4.592D). Dionysius' 'mysticism' is thus arguably closer to that of Plotinus than to that of Proclus, in that Dionysius calls for and attempts to articulate an immediate union of the soul with the God beyond being. Moreover, Dionysius repeatedly adopts Plotinus' principle that in order to attain this we must 'take away all things' (*aphēle panta*, Plotinus, 5.3 [49] 17.39), because all things, in their plurality and distinction, are not God. 'We take away all things (*ta panta aphairoumen*) so that we may unhiddenly know that unknowing which is hidden by all the things that are known in all beings, and that we may see that darkness above being which is hidden by all the light in beings' (MT 2.1.1025B; cf. MT 1.1.1000A, *panta aphelōn*; DN 2.4.641A, *hē pantōn aphairesis*; DN 1.5.593C, *tēs pantōn tōn ontōn aphaireseōs*). Dionysius' call for us to ascend above light and being to 'the divine darkness' (MT 1.1.1000A; *Epist.* 5.1073A) is thus fundamentally an expression of his Platonic metaphysics, in which all beings, all that can be apprehended by thought, are other than God, and God is not intelligible and not any being.

To explain how God can be said to know all things, although he is neither intellectual nor sensitive but transcends all cognitive activities (DN 7.2.868D), Dionysius argues that God knows all things, not from the things, but in knowing himself as the cause, that is, the undifferentiated containment, of all things.

For if as one cause God imparts being to all beings, as that single cause he will know all things, as being from him and pre-subsisting in him, and not from beings will he receive the knowledge of them . . . God, then, does not have a distinct knowledge of himself and another comprehending all beings in common . . . By this, then, God knows beings, not by the knowledge of beings, but by that of himself.

(DN 7.2.869BC)

Thus Dionysius links God's knowing all things in himself with his making all things, in such a way as to suggest that his knowing all things, which is his knowing himself as all things in all things, is one with his making of all things: 'Thus the divine intellect encompasses all things by the transcendent knowledge of all things, pre-containing the knowledge of all things in himself as the cause of all things, knowing and producing angels before angels come to be, and

within and from himself. . . knowing and bringing into being all other things' (DN 7.2.869A).

7 SYMBOLISM

Dionysius uses the term 'symbol' to refer to the sensible expressions of God and of angels found in Scripture and liturgy, as distinct from the intelligible 'names' of God discussed in the *On Divine Names*. The symbols, he says, are explained in a longer treatise, *On Symbolic Theology*, which either was never written or has not survived. The distinction between intelligible 'names' and sensible 'symbols', however, is not uniformly maintained, for Dionysius sometimes passes with complete continuity from one to the other (e.g., DN 1.6.596BC; see also CH 2.3.140CD, where names such as Word (*logos*), Intellect (*nous*) and Being (*ousia*) are included in the discussion of symbols), and any distinction between the sensible and the intelligible is relativized vis-à-vis God who infinitely transcends both. Consequently, all things and expressions share in the nature of symbols, which is at once to reveal and conceal God.

Although *Epistle 9* apparently serves to some degree as an epitome of the lost or unwritten *Symbolic Theology*, it is in the opening chapters of the *Celestial Hierarchy* that Dionysius expounds his philosophical theory of symbolism. Here he distinguishes between what he calls 'similar' and 'dissimilar' symbolic expressions both for angels and for God. 'Similar' symbols are those which seem noble or exalted and hence appropriate to what they symbolize, while 'dissimilar' symbols, such as wild beasts or inanimate objects, seem inappropriate or repugnant. But this distinction, like that between names and symbols, becomes relativized. On the one hand, since all expressions of God are infinitely inadequate, the seemingly appropriate symbols are in fact no less 'dissimilar' than the others. Indeed, Dionysius argues that the more obviously 'dissimilar' symbols are actually more appropriate, because they more clearly indicate the infinite otherness of all things from God and force upon us the moment of negation. 'If, then, the negations are true of divine things, but the affirmations are unsuitable to the hiddenness of ineffable things, the revelation concerning invisible things through dissimilar formations is rather more appropriate' (CH 2.3.141A). And on the other hand, since all things participate in God, having some goodness and beauty, nothing is absolutely dissimilar (CH 2.3.141C, quoted above).

Consequently, all symbolic expressions at once reveal and conceal God. As expressions, they reveal him, making him knowable in and as themselves. But in doing so they also conceal him, for every symbol, precisely as an expression, as knowable, is not God himself and thus leaves him hidden. 'For it is not possible

that the thearchic ray illumine us otherwise than as anagogically cloaked in the variety of the sacred veils' (*CH* 1.2.121B). God cannot be revealed, be manifest, except by being 'veiled', hidden, in symbols. Only by way of symbols can God be revealed or known without being objectified as a being. Dionysius expresses this unity of revealing and concealing in his use of the word *proballein*, which means both 'present' and 'shield'. Symbols are *probeblēmēna*, at once presentations and screens of God (e.g., *Epist.* 9.1.1105BC), and the removal of all symbols, therefore, leads not to a knowledge of God unveiled but to the darkness of unknowing. Dionysius' theory of symbolism is thus another dimension of the dialectical unity of hiddenness and manifestation, concealing and revealing, that dominates his thought. And the incarnation, therefore, in which God becomes manifest as a human being while remaining hidden (*Epist.* 3.1069B, quoted above), recapitulates the symbolic nature of being as such.

In the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, Dionysius discusses the liturgical role of sensible things and actions as symbols. Unlike the angels, who are pure intellects, humans need sensible symbols to begin the ascent from sense to intellect and beyond (*EH* 1.5.376D–377A; cf. *CH* 10.2.273AB). The angels' intellectual contemplation is the celestial liturgy, their ceaseless praise and worship of God (e.g., *EH* 4.3.5.480BC). The human liturgy of the Church is the symbolic, i.e., sensible, analogue of this intellectual liturgy, and its function is to bring us to contemplation in imitation of the angels. 'Let us see our [hierarchy] analogously to us ourselves, multiplied by the variety of the sensible symbols, by which we are hierarchically led up to the uniform deification in proportion to what is ours . . . They [i.e., the angels], as intellects, think (*hōs noēs noousi*), according to what is right for them, but we are led by sensible images to divine contemplation as far as possible' (*EH* 1.2.373AB). In this context Dionysius frequently employs the Platonic term 'theurgy' (*theourgia*), but he uses it to refer not to the ritual acts themselves, but to the divine activities that these symbolize, especially the acts of God incarnate. The symbolic rituals thus present and make known to us, at the sensible level, the activities of God. The knowledge of and communion with God that the angels receive intellectually, we receive by way of sensible, symbolic liturgy: 'Let us say, then, that the thearchic blessedness, the Godhead by nature . . . has given the hierarchy for salvation and deification of all rational and intellectual beings: to the hypercosmic and blessed inheritances [i.e., the angels], more immaterially and intellectually . . . ; but to us, what to them is given in a uniform and enfolded manner, has been given . . . as is fitting for us, in the variety and multiplicity of the divided symbols' (*EH* 1.4.376B). The sensible liturgy of our hierarchy is thus the mode in which we share in the contemplative liturgy of the celestial hierarchy, doing sensibly that which the angels do intellectually.

CONCLUSION

The *corpus Dionysiacum* appeared at a critical point in the history of late-antique philosophy. At the very time when non-Christian Platonism was being repressed by the Christian authorities, this mysterious author produced a body of works that does not merely adopt isolated terms or concepts from the Platonic philosophical tradition, but rather integrates the fundamental insights and structures of Platonism into Christian thought. One of the most striking features of Dionysius, and one of the ways in which he is, perhaps, closer in spirit to Plotinus than to Proclus despite his strong textual dependence on the latter, is the way in which he cuts through the elaborate technicalities of fifth-century Athenian Platonism to articulate what is most essential, although not always explicitly stated, in it: the vision of all reality, at all levels, as the unfolding or manifestation of God, and of God as the enfolding, the undifferentiated containment, of all reality; the absolute coinciding of transcendence and immanence; the idea of all knowledge, all awareness at any level, as knowledge of God; the understanding of God not as a self-contained monad but as manifestation, procession, or differentiation itself; and hence the centrality of love, interpreted in these ontological terms, as the constitutive principle of all reality. Dionysius assimilates these insights into a Christian vision by understanding Christian ideas such as creation, incarnation, divine love, sacramental liturgy and union with God in terms of these Platonic philosophical principles, and thus offers a Platonic interpretation of Christianity. In so doing, he detaches Platonic metaphysics and spirituality from the pagan *cultus* with which it was bound up in thinkers such as Iamblichus and Proclus, and incorporates it rather into Christian worship and belief. He contributes to the Christian philosophical tradition, in addition to the concepts already mentioned, the *exitus-reditus* pattern in which all things proceed from and return to God, the hierarchical structure of reality, and the principle that to be is to be good and beautiful, together with the associated interpretation of evil as deficiency of goodness and therefore of being. Dionysius thus becomes one of the main representatives of Platonic philosophy within Christian thought and one of the principal sources for its continued presence, bequeathing it to Maximus the Confessor, Eriugena and, later, to thinkers such as Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa and many others.

BOETHIUS

JOHN MAGEE

I LIFE AND WORKS

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was descended from an established Roman elite. His date of birth is unknown but must have been c. 480, perhaps as early as 475. His father, (? Narius) Manlius Boethius (cos. 487), came from a line that may have had its origins in the East, while his maternal lineage too went back to the *Gens Anicia*, which had converted to Christianity in the fourth century. Boethius himself was named Consul in 510, the Consulship being one of only two securely datable facts concerning his public life. He evidently lost his parents, or his father, when still young and was adopted by Q. Aurelius Memmius Symmachus (cos. 485), a descendant of Q. Aurelius Symmachus (cos. 391). Although the details of Boethius' education remain obscure, we may be certain that Symmachus had a controlling hand in shaping it. At *Variae* 1.45.3 Cassiodorus mentions Boethius' having 'entered far away the school of the Athenians' (*Atheniensium scholas longe positus introisti*), which, as Courcelle observed, probably indicates only that Boethius intellectually 'enrolled' in the school despite the distance from Athens. Courcelle alternatively proposed that Boethius studied under Ammonius in Alexandria, but his thesis is seriously undermined by the texts he adduced in support of it. Boethius' commentaries are not mere copies of Ammonius', and even if they were, to demonstrate that Boethius actually studied in Alexandria would be an entirely different matter. It is impossible to prove that he did *not* study in Athens or (and) Alexandria, but since nothing in his own or any other extant writings furnishes reliable evidence to the effect that he did, the question must remain open. More recently, James Shiel has proposed that Boethius, far from having acquired his Greek culture from direct contact with any city in the East, got what he did strictly from scholia copied into the margins of his Greek codices. His theory, meant to explain the logical writings, is too restrictive, although scholia may indeed have formed part of Boethius' contact with various Greek intellectual traditions. A mere handlist of the contents of the library referred

to at *Consolatio* 1.4.3 would tell us much about Boethius' education and at the same time fill an important gap in our knowledge of the fate of Greek philosophy in the West on the eve of the dark ages. But since no such thing has survived, it is necessary to reconstruct what we can from evidence in the extant works.

Evidence from Cassiodorus and Ennodius indicates that Boethius had gained a reputation for his scientific and philosophical scholarship by c. 507, when he appears already to have received the title of Patrician. He married Symmachus' daughter Rusticiana and sired two sons, Fl. Boethius and Fl. Symmachus (coss. 522). In September of 522 Boethius was named *Magister Officiorum*, thereby becoming the highest ranking official in the court of the Ostrogothic King Theoderic at Ravenna. At the apex of his career, however, things began rapidly to spin out of control. Numerous political forces in both Church and state contributed to the events that led to Boethius' downfall, but at issue ultimately was a breakdown in the pattern of tolerance and co-operation that had obtained between Romans and Ostrogoths under Theoderic. The question of Theoderic's successor that was opened with the death of Eutharic destabilized the *Innenpolitik* of the kingdom; Theoderic's dynastic network, constructed in the 490s through a series of marriage alliances with the Franks, Visigoths, Burgundians and Vandals for purposes of bolstering Italian independence, was disintegrating; and the election of Pope John I in August of 523 fostered senatorial hopes for, and Ostrogothic suspicions of, ecclesiastical and political union with the East. Theoderic felt increasingly threatened, and the Roman Senate became the focus of his paranoia. Boethius' defence, in (probably) the fall of 523, of a senatorial colleague Albinus, and thus of the Senate as a whole, on the occasion of a treason charge laid by a certain Cyprian rebounded on him. Three others, Opilio (Cyprian's brother), Basil and Gaudentius, were soon after Boethius' head as well. Boethius' description of the affair evokes Tacitus' account of the Senate and Stoics in the aftermath of the Pisonian conspiracy: the opportunistic *delatores*, armed with falsified evidence to support a *crimen maiestatis*, played on the suspicions of the monarch, and Boethius' fate was sealed. He was removed first to a Verona baptistry then to some form of confinement in Pavia, while the Senate passed judgement on him from Rome. Finally, he was brutally tortured to death. The date of his demise is unknown, although Theoderic's death in August of 526 furnishes the obvious *terminus ante quem*. Boethius evidently founded no school, and his commentaries, although aimed at serving the needs of beginners as well as advanced readers, do not bear the stamp of works intended especially for use in the classroom but in their consistent organization according to books suggest rather a culture of solitary study and contemplation. Boethius took the double commentary idea from Porphyry, and in their structure and style his

commentaries differ significantly from the extant *reportationes* of Ammonius' lectures.

Boethius' corpus is divisible into the three broad categories of mathematical, theological and philosophical writings. The chronology is vague. The only secure piece of evidence serves to date the *Categories* commentary to Boethius' Consulship in 510 (*In Cat.* 201b). Second in order of importance are data furnished by (a) the end of the dedicatory preface to *De arithmetica*, in which Boethius speaks in terms of a first harvest, and (b) the first book of the *Consolatio*, the *mise-en-scène* of which presupposes the process set in motion in the autumn of 523. (a) Assuming that 'first fruits' is meant to signal a first publication, and cautiously bearing in mind Ennodius' praise of Boethius' precociousness, we may date the beginning of Boethius' literary career to c. 500, at about age twenty. (b) Boethius did not survive Theoderic, and since the claim¹ that the dramatic setting of the *Consolatio* is a fiction may safely be ignored, the compositional date of the dialogue must fall somewhere between Autumn 523 and August 526. Brandt argued for five phases of activity:

- 1 c. 500–9: Mathematical writings, *Isagoge* translation and commentaries
- 2 c. 509–11: *Categories* translation and commentary
- 3 c. 511–15: *Peri Hermeneias* translation and commentaries, *Prior Analytics* translation, *Introductio ad syllogismos categoricos*, *De syllogismo categorico*, *De hypotheticis syllogismis*, *De divisione*
- 4 c. 515–22: *Topics* and *Sophistical Fallacies* translations, *In topica Ciceronis*, *De topicis differentiis*, *Opuscula sacra*
- 5 c. 523–4: *Consolatio*

while DeRijk draws the following conclusions for the logical writings:

- c. 504–9: *Isagoge* translation and commentaries, *De syllogismo categorico*, *De divisione*
- c. 509–11: *Categories* translation and commentary
- c. 513–16: *Peri Hermeneias* translation and commentaries, (?) *Introductio ad syllogismos categoricos*
- c. 516–23: *De hypotheticis syllogismis*, *In topica Ciceronis*, *De topicis differentiis*, (?) *Introductio ad syllogismos categoricos*, *Topics*, *Sophistical Fallacies*, and *Prior Analytics* translations.²

Perhaps the most significant recent development has been the proposal to postpone the second *Isagoge* commentary to immediately after the *Categories* commentary.³

¹ Reiss 1982: 80–102. ² Brandt 1903: 267–9; DeRijk 1964: 157–61; cf. Galonnier 2007: 126–35.

³ Asztalos 1993: 369–71.

Cassiodorus, *Variae* 1.45.4, in recording Theoderic's praise of Boethius for having brought Pythagoras, Ptolemy, Nicomachus and Euclid to the West, provides indirect evidence for a suite of four mathematical works, only two of which have survived (cf. Cassiod., *Inst.* 2.6.3; Boeth., *Cons.* 2.7.4). His reference to the 'four-fold gates of learning' is an obvious echo of Boethius' own taxonomy, at *De arithmetica* 1.1, of the four-fold path or 'quadrivial' sciences (arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy); but whereas Boethius' remarks are speculative in nature, Cassiodorus' concern works that Boethius wrote or translated. The treatise on astronomy is lost, while of the geometry only (possible) fragments survive.⁴ The treatises on arithmetic and music, on the other hand, are extant, although the latter is missing at least the last eleven chapters of its fifth book.

Of Boethius' translations we have those of Porphyry's *Isagoge* and of Aristotle's *Categories*, *Peri Hermeneias*, *Prior Analytics*, *Topics* and *Sophistical Fallacies*, and of his commentaries we have those on the *Isagoge*, *Categories* and *Peri Hermeneias*.

Boethius commented on Porphyry's *Isagoge* twice. For the first commentary he worked from Marius Victorinus' translation, which he found to be defective and so abandoned before writing the second commentary. Boethius did not move directly from the first *Isagoge* commentary to the second but, as has been mentioned, undertook the work on the *Categories* first. After several attempts at the latter his sense of the desiderated translation style was sufficiently well formed to drive him back to the *Isagoge*, and the opening words of the second commentary (2.135.5–13), with their clearly articulated 'policy statement' concerning literal and precise translation, are a reflection of the lessons learned.⁵ Thus the second commentary was not written for advanced readers but reflects Boethius' desire to get it right by working from his own translation. In it Boethius abandons, in addition to Victorinus' Latin, the dialogue format, a Porphyrian touch (cf. the *Kata peusin*) employed for the first commentary. Finally, for the second commentary he reduces the number of prefatory topics treated. In the prolegomena to the first *Isagoge* and *Categories* commentaries he discusses the *intentio*, *utilitas*, *ordo*, *cuius opus*, *inscriptio* and *pars philosophiae* themes, whereas in the prolegomena to the second *Isagoge* commentary he treats only of the *inscriptio*, *intentio* and *utilitas*. The fact that for both of the *Peri Hermeneias* commentaries Boethius similarly reduces the number of prefatory topics suggests that the second *Isagoge* commentary marks a point of departure in his conception of commentary prolegomena. Hence changes in the

⁴ Folkerts 1970.

⁵ Cf. Courcelle 1969: 280–1; for the remains of Victorinus' translation see *AL* 1.6–7, 63–8, and Hadot 1971: 371–80.

translation commented on, in the literary format, and in the prolegomena (not to mention doctrine) serve to illustrate the developmental gap separating the first *Isagoge* commentary from the second. Differences between the commentary lemmata and continuous translation further suggest that Boethius revised his Latin, perhaps after consultation of a second Greek exemplar.

The *Categories* in all probability represents Boethius' first attempt at a commentary based on one of his own translations. Three stages of development are discernible. Boethius first made a rough draft, then drew up lemmata, commenting as he went; the draft survives in excerpts, which at some early point were supplemented by lemmata extracted from the commentary for purposes of producing what is now known as the 'composite' version. Finally, he produced a polished continuous translation, consulting a second Greek exemplar. Asztalos has convincingly shown that it was only in the course of working on the *Categories* that Boethius formed the plan of writing separate commentaries for beginners and advanced readers.⁶ As to the sources, Boethius followed closely Porphyry's introductory 'Question and Answer' commentary but also consulted the lost *Ad Gedalium* and (or) Iamblichus (or some source that quoted from him).

Boethius worked on the *Peri Hermeneias* translation and commentaries between c. 513–16. He now had a clear sense of what his Latin should convey, he was equipped in advance with the plan of writing a shorter commentary for beginners and a longer one for advanced readers (*In Perih.* 1.31.6–32.6), and he was ready to announce the bold project of translating, commenting on and harmonizing all of Plato and Aristotle (2.79.9–80.9). He initially drew up abbreviated lemmata for the first commentary, then expanded and revised them for the lemmata of the second before finally producing the continuous translation. The first edition of the commentary is constructed along the lines of a paraphrase, after the manner of Themistius, and in it Boethius reverts only once to the earlier commentators (1.132.3–8), selecting an interpretation of Alexander for its simplicity while reserving Porphyry's more complex exegesis for the second edition (2.275.4–293.21).⁷ The second edition, by contrast, shows a heavy reliance on doxographical material for the development of its interpretations, and the tradition on which it mainly relies is that of Aspasius, Herminius, Alexander and Porphyry. In all probability Boethius obtained his information concerning the first three from Porphyry, whose interpretations and criticisms of the others he consistently adopts.

⁶ Asztalos 1993: 371–94. See Hadot 1959 for a possible fragment of a lost second *Categories* commentary.

⁷ Cf. Magee 2010: 35–41.

The *Prior Analytics* translation comes down to us in two recensions, one associated with Chartres, the other with Florence; the latter appears to be a revision of the former and is the repository of extensive scholia. Differences between the two reveal, as in the case of the other translations, Boethius' experimentation and development in the handling of the Greek philosophical idiom, while the scholia furnish important insights into his contact with the Greek commentators. Although no commentary has survived, the scholia suggest that Boethius at the very least gathered material for sketches of one.

A fragment interpolated in the transmitted text of *De divisione* indicates that there were two redactions of the *Topics* translation, the first of which survives intact. During his last years Boethius became deeply engaged with topical theory generally, writing a commentary on Cicero's *Topics* and then the monograph *De topicis differentiis*, his last work prior to the *Consolatio* (cf. *In top. Cic.* 1048d; 1050b). Two remarks in *De topicis differentiis* (2.8.8 (1191a); 4.13.2 (1216d)) suggest that he also wrote a commentary on Aristotle's *Topics*. The transmitted text of the commentary on Cicero's *Topics* is incomplete (cf. *Top. diff.* 1.1.5 (1173d)). The latter work incidentally marks a final engagement with Victorinus, whose incompetent exegesis of Cicero's treatise provoked Boethius' ire just as his *Isagoge* translation had done many years before (cf. *In top. Cic.* 1041b–d; 1100a; 1156b). The treatment of topical theory not only brought Boethius back to Victorinus, it also gave him the chance finally to establish his place alongside Cicero as an interpreter and transmitter of Greek thought. In a sense, *De topicis differentiis* represents his supreme achievement as a man *utriusque linguae peritissimus*: Aristotle was again in the background, of course, but now Boethius could attempt something completely new in harmonizing Cicero and Themistius.⁸

The *Sophistical Fallacies* translation survives in a single redaction and leaves no trace of a commentary.

As for the remaining monographs, *De hypotheticis syllogismis* is the most comprehensive account of hypothetical syllogistic to survive from antiquity. In the opening chapter Boethius talks about the novelty of his achievement; but there must have been more than he indicates, since there survives a fragment of what appears to have been Ammonius' monograph on the same subject (*CAG* 4.6, 67–9), and Bobzien (2002) has shown on the basis of a Florence scholium that he was working from a lost Greek Peripatetic source. Although Boethius' precise source is unknown, his reference to Theophrastus and Eudemus at 1.1.3 is suggestive of Porphyry (cf. below, on *De syllogismo categorico*). Boethius evidently based *De divisione* on the prolegomena to Porphyry's lost *Sophist* commentary,

⁸ Cf. Magee 2007: 14–16.

while Porphyry in turn drew upon a treatise by Andronicus of Rhodes. As both the Porphyry and Andronicus are lost, *De divisione* is our sole witness to the tradition; along with *De topicis differentiis* it enjoyed immense popularity in the medieval schools. The two-book work entitled *De syllogismo categorico* in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 64, is called *Introductio(nis) in categoricos syllogismos (libri duo)* in the earliest manuscripts and in an ancient list⁹ of Boethian monographs, while the incomplete one-book work entitled *Introductio ad syllogismos categoricos* in Migne has the title *Liber ante praedicamenta* in the list. Whether or not the older titles go back to Boethius is uncertain, but those in Migne, although now fixed in the scholarship, are in all probability false. The first book of *De syllogismo categorico* draws mainly on material selected from the *Peri Hermeneias*, and the second on the first book of the *Prior Analytics*. Our text of the *Introductio*, by contrast, never reaches the main subject, and where it overlaps with *De syllogismo categorico* it offers the more sophisticated handling of material. The relationship between the two monographs is puzzling, but it is unnecessary to athetize the first book of *De syllogismo categorico* or to declare its second book the sequel to the *Introductio*. Already in the first *Isagoge* commentary (I.15.7–11) Boethius refers to an introductory handbook on categorical syllogisms by Porphyry, and the manner in which he cites Theophrastus and Eudemus in *De syllogismo categorico* (813b–c; 814c; 829d) suggests that Porphyry is indeed his source, although there are signs of contact with other commentary traditions as well.¹⁰

The *Opuscula Sacra* point both ahead to medieval scholasticism and back to St Augustine, and the beginning of *De trinitate* implicitly establishes the programme: a bow to Augustine in the preface (30 Moreschini), followed by an echo of Aristotle (*EN* 1094b23–5) in chapter 2 (65–7 Moreschini). Usener (1877) put the question of authorship to rest, and Troncarelli has recently uncovered possible traces of the lost preface to *De fide catholica*.¹¹ Of the five tractates, *De trinitate* and *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* have the most sharply defined theological aims, while *Utrum pater et filius* and *De fide catholica* target an elementary audience. *De trinitate*, *De hebdomadibus* (*Quomodo substantiae*, etc.), and *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* project an esoteric tone, and in the first two in particular the *brevitas* with which Aristotle is so frequently taxed in the commentaries suddenly becomes Boethius' means of keeping the truth within the restricted circle of those who understand and can be trusted. Like Boethius, the dedicatees, Symmachus and John the Deacon (later John I), were marked men; this is a point of some interest, in that it draws out the political

⁹ Magee 1998: lix.

¹⁰ Cf. Smith 1993: 8.8–9; 11.21; Chadwick 1981: 166; Thomsen–Thörnqvist 2008a: xviii–xxiv; 2008b: xv–xxii.

¹¹ Troncarelli 2005: 301–36.

undercurrents to Boethius' more abstract and theoretical concerns. *De trinitate* is of philosophical interest mainly for its insights into the division of the sciences and its application of the *Categories* to Trinitarian doctrine – a subtle departure from Augustine (cf. *Conf.* 4.16.28). The philosophical interest of *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* consists primarily in the weight carried by its first three chapters, and most noteworthy is the manner in which Boethius in the second chapter (130–62 Moreschini) conflates diaereses drawn from the *Isagoge* (cf. *In Isag.* 2.208.9–209.6) and *Categories* (cf. *In Cat.* 169c–175c) in order to derive the famous definition of *persona*. *De hebdomadibus*, or *Quomodo substantiae in eo quod sint bonae sint cum non sint substantialia bona*, is philosophically the most interesting of the group. The title *De hebdomadibus* probably arose owing to Boethius' reference in the opening line to 'our hebdomads' or groups of seven. The work rests on a series of postulates that number nine in the transmitted text but were almost certainly seven in origin, since the first axiom, consisting of general observations on common conceptions, should stand outside the series, while 7 and 8 appear to be two parts of a single axiom. No Boethian work has proved more puzzling than this one.¹² Problems arise immediately, in the postulates. What is meant by the 'form of being' (*essendi forma*)? How are we to interpret the ellipse in the first sentence of axiom 6? And so on. Boethius poses the question of how substances can be good *qua* existent given that they are not good *qua* substances, and he seeks a path leading between two impossibilities, i.e., that things are good by *participation* (and hence not good *per se*), and that they are *substantially* good (and hence undifferentiated from God). The argument arises out of a counterfactual hypothesis: if there were no first good to explain being (*esse*), then goodness and being would be only incidentally united in the created order (*participation* impossibility), while created things, if at all good, would be only good – rather, they would be *the* only good (*substantial* impossibility). The goodness of the created order is therefore to be explained on the grounds that things derive their existence from a source in which being and goodness are completely undifferentiated. Although it seems most unlikely that *De hebdomadibus* is a mere derivative of a Greek source, there are hints throughout that Boethius is nevertheless thinking in Greek. Close comparison with *Consolatio* 3.10–12 confirms what is otherwise known from Usener's *Anecdota*: both *De hebdomadibus* and the *Consolatio* belong to Boethius.

The *Consolatio* stands alone, and its extraordinary formal control and sweeping overview of the philosophical tradition raise questions concerning the circumstances of composition. How much time did Boethius have to write

¹² Cf. Galonnier 2007: 287–373.

it?¹³ Was he able to consult a library or did he work only from memory? Did he edit and revise the text? Did he in fact finish it?¹⁴ As we shall have more to say about the *Consolatio* below, it will suffice for the moment to note the challenge presented by its densely interwoven literary and philosophical texture. Philosophers tend to see the literary form and imagery as somehow clouding the argument, while literary critics tend to treat the philosophical argument as somehow foreign to the form and imagery. The literary form, however, provides crucial clues to the unfolding of the overall argument, and the argument in turn, although at times running quietly beneath the surface, gives substance to the literary form. Form and content, in other words, are inseparable.

It is difficult to determine how much of the corpus has disappeared. There may have been a translation, possibly with draft commentary, of the *Physics*.¹⁵ Boethius was acquainted with the *Posterior Analytics*, although it is uncertain whether he translated or commented on it; he certainly had access to Themistius' paraphrases of both *Analytics* and to Praetextatus' translation thereof (*In Perih.* 2.3.7–4.3; *Div.* 885d; *In top. Cic.* 1051b). A bucolic poem has evidently vanished, but the *Liber de definitionibus* transmitted under his name belongs to Victorinus (*In top. Cic.* 1098a; 1100b). Certain works are mentioned in such a way as to make it impossible to say whether they were merely planned, partially drafted, or actually completed. A treatise *De ordine Peripateticae disciplinae* was evidently written some time between the second *Peri Hermeneias* commentary and *De divisione*; another on the harmony of Plato and Aristotle was planned but may not have been written, and the same holds for a planned compendium of the *Peri Hermeneias* (*In Perih.* 2.80.1–6; 2.251.8–16; *Div.* 877b). Boethius obviously planned numerous projects in advance and must have worked on more than one at a time, and although some of his cross-references furnish reliable evidence for establishing relative chronology, others, having been penned with an eye only to his readers' presumed order of study, carry no implication as to the order of composition. Boethius' failure to mention a work, or his mentioning it in such a way as to suggest borrowing from a source, does not amount to proof that he had no direct knowledge of the same. For example, certain hints of *De generatione et corruptione* in the commentaries may well reflect mere borrowing from a source (e.g., *In Cat.* 262a (cf. Porph., *In Cat.* 141.14)), but the *Consolatio*, which draws from many sources but is a copy of none, suggests direct acquaintance with the treatise (cf. below, p. 802).

¹³ Note the urgent tone of *Cons.* 4.6.5 and 5.1.4.

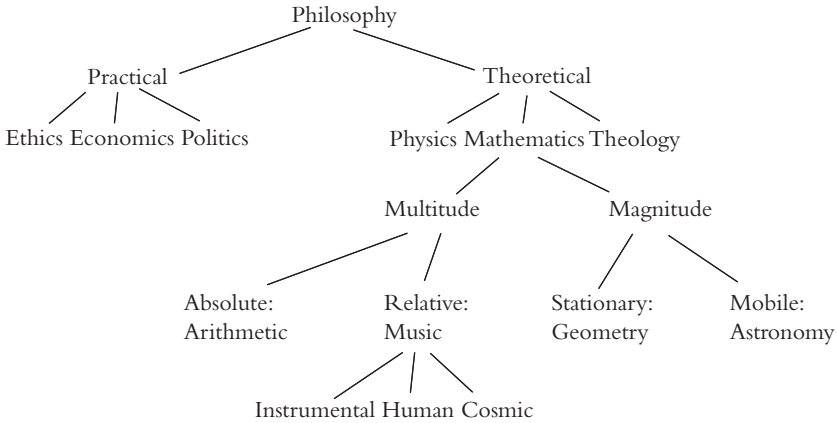
¹⁴ Tränkle 1977; cf. Gruber 2006: 403, ad loc. 47; Magee 2005: 357, n. 40.

¹⁵ *In Cat.* 289c; *In Perih.* 2.190.13; 2.458.27; *In top. Cic.* 1152c; *Cons.* 5.1.12; for the astronomy and geometry, see above, p. 791.

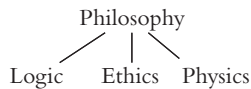
2 DOCTRINE

Philosophy and the sciences

At *De arithmetica* 1.1 Boethius coins the term *quadrivium* ('four-fold path') as a metaphor for the four mathematical sciences, leaving it to the medieval imagination to devise *trivium* for grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. He inherited two systems of dividing philosophy, the more elaborately articulated one being associated with the Peripatetic tradition:



The division is nowhere laid out in its entirety, but its pieces are scattered throughout the corpus.¹⁶ Although the division is not original to Boethius, he is the one who most clearly laid it out for medieval writers. In the first *Isagoge* commentary Boethius shifts emphasis from the theoretical sciences to a parallel trichotomy of *objects contemplated*: *natural* (physics), *intelligible* (mathematics), *intellectible* (theology). We shall return to this presently. The other system is generally associated with the Stoic and Academic traditions:



Boethius mentions it only twice, and without comment (*In Cat.* 161b; *In Perih.* 2.79.18–20).¹⁷ In the second *Isagoge* commentary he states the Stoic case for logic in such a way as to imply that the Practical–Theoretical distinction of

¹⁶ *Arith.* 1.1; *Mus.* 1.2; 2.3; *In Isag.* 1.8.1–9.22; *Tin.* 2; *Cons.* 1.1.4; cf. Ammon., *In Isag.* 11.6–16.16; *Philop.*, *In Cat.* 4.23–5.14.

¹⁷ Cf. Magee 1998: xxii–xxiii, with n. 26; xxxvii, n. 8.

the first division corresponds to the Ethics–Physics one of the second, and he does so by a subtle interchange of terms (*activa* = *moralis*, *speculativa* = *naturalis*, 2.140.18–141.19). But the point is merely polemical, his concern being to determine whether logic is a *part* (Stoic position) or *instrument* (Peripatetic position) of philosophy. On *that* question Boethius sits the fence: logic has its proper philosophical aims but is also what discovers and evaluates arguments employed in other philosophical domains (2.142.16–143.7; cf. Olympiod., *In Cat.* 14.13–18.12).

Boethius is aware of the differences separating the various co-ordinate sciences and of the different ways in which they approach identical realities (*Intr. syll. cat.* 762c), but he is also aware of the hierarchy inherent in human knowledge and cognition: understanding an object in different ways ultimately means understanding it at different *levels* (*Cons.* 5.4.24–37). Philosophy stands above the other disciplines as the source from which they flow (*In Isag.* 1.7.11–23). This is made especially clear in *De arithmetica* (2.2) and *De institutione musica* (1.1/30), each of which looks to Plato's *Timaeus* for confirmation of the view that the sciences reflect the rational foundations of the universe. At the same time, however, the prefaces to the scientific works recall the world of the *Almagest*, projecting the notion of a seamless continuum between the mathematical sciences and philosophy in all of its other manifestations. Although Boethius may be one of the most prominent fathers of the later western tradition of compartmentalized arts and sciences faculties, his views are nevertheless firmly rooted in a Platonic–Pythagorean commitment to the fundamental unity of number and reality.

Plato and Aristotle, Plato or Aristotle?

In the second *Peri Hermeneias* commentary (2.79.9–80.6) Boethius announces his intention of translating every work of Aristotle he can procure, supplying commentaries that will treat of the corpus from the points of view of logic, ethics and physics, and furnishing a systematic ordering of the different treatises; in addition, he will translate and comment on all of Plato's dialogues and then demonstrate that Plato and Aristotle are in essential agreement on the most significant philosophical points. As noted previously, whether or not Boethius actually composed his planned work on the unity of Plato and Aristotle is unclear. The probability of his having been influenced by Porphyry's lost work on the latter topic is high, and the fact that the extant commentaries make no attempt to demonstrate the unity of the two philosophers suggests that he planned to deal with (or dealt with) the problem in a separate monograph dedicated to the topic.

The two *Isagoge* commentaries furnish some important insights into how Boethius' conception of the problem may have evolved. In a youthful rush of enthusiasm he in the prolegomena to the first commentary (1.7.11–9.12) evidently takes Porphyry's refusal to treat of the deeper questions concerning genera and species as an invitation to import Platonizing elements into his own speculation. He proffers a definition of philosophy that emphasizes the mind's illumination and withdrawal into itself and then traces the descent of mind (soul) from the level of the unchanging and divine 'intellectibles' (*intellectibilia*) or *noēta* to that of the 'intelligibles' (*intelligibilia*), i.e., to the heavens and sublunary sphere, where through corporeal contagion (*corporum tactu*) and the contemplation of lower realities it actually becomes a lower reality (*ut non magis ipsa intellegantur quam intellegant*). Since the metaphysical impulse of the prefatory remarks implicitly outran Porphyry's text, the scope of which is to introduce readers to Aristotle, in the prolegomena to his *second* commentary (2.136.2–138.3) Boethius evidently upon reflection decided to exercise restraint, explaining the soul instead according to a traditional Peripatetic classification (cf. *Div.* 888a; *Top. diff.* 3.3.5 (1196d)). And that he now sought to distinguish more rigorously between Plato and Aristotle is further indicated by the well-known passage (2.164.3–167.20) in which he offers a solution to the problem of universals with an explicit recognition of its being, not philosophically superior (sc. to Plato's view), but closest to Aristotle's thought. Developing a line of argument derived from Alexander of Aphrodisias, Boethius puts forward the view that species are singular in their sensible but universal in their conceptual manifestation. 'I have not thought it appropriate', he concludes (2.167.15–20), 'to adjudicate between the opinions [of Plato and Aristotle], since that pertains to a deeper level of philosophical investigation, and I have more studiously pursued Aristotle's opinion, not because it is the one which I most approve, but because [the *Isagoge*] was written as a companion to the *Categories*, of which Aristotle is the author.'

It is unsurprising that the Platonizing elements of the prolegomena to the first *Isagoge* commentary should resurface in the *Consolatio*, a deeply Platonic work under none of the constraints of Peripatetic exegesis, and one which takes up for consideration the descent of soul into the material world and the 'eternal law' according to which it is sanctioned that mind should become the objects of its contemplation (3.12.1; 4.4.28–9; 5.2.8–9). From start to finish, Boethius adhered to a fundamentally late Platonic view of mind and soul, and his having allowed it to creep into the preface to the first *Isagoge* commentary can be seen as a symptom of scholarly immaturity, duly corrected in the more orthodox second commentary. Very surprising, however, is the appearance in the *Consolatio* of precisely the doctrine that Boethius in the second *Isagoge*

commentary borrowed from Alexander solely for purposes of maintaining an orthodox line of *Aristotelian* exegesis.¹⁸ *Philosophia* practically quotes from the commentary in claiming that sensible objects are singular in themselves but universal in relation to reason, and she expresses none of the doubts articulated in the commentary (5.6.36; cf. *In Isag.* 2.166.14–21).

Hence we are in the face of a rather perplexing scenario: the first *Isagoge* commentary anticipating the Platonism of the *Consolatio* and then being effectively silenced by the second commentary for purposes of an orthodox Peripatetic exegesis; but then the *Consolatio*, echoing a Peripatetic doctrine from the second *Isagoge* commentary without any hint of the reservations there voiced concerning it. The first phenomenon at least is easily explained: as a commentator Boethius gradually developed the discipline of separating his own views from those of the philosopher whose text he was elucidating. The second, however, points up the fundamental difficulty: the *Consolatio* did indeed provide broad scope for embracing Plato, but it did not mean letting go of Aristotle. How then were the two philosophers to be harmonized?

One point to emerge with exceptional clarity in the *Consolatio* is the dominance of Plato and Aristotle, who alone are judged worthy of being claimed as members of *Philosophia*'s fold (1.3.6; 3.9.32; 5.1.12; cf. 1.4.5; 3.12.1; 4.2.45). The allegory of her gown sheds important light: the Epicurean and Stoic 'mob' tore at its unity, coming away with only bits and pieces (1.3.7; cf. 3.2.12; 5.m4.1–9). The Hellenistic schools, in other words, represent for Boethius heretical attacks on the Platonic–Aristotelian monolith. At 3.9.4 and 16 *Philosophia* explicitly identifies the assertion of multiplicity over unity as a universal and fundamental human error, and in a certain sense the *Consolatio* can be seen as Boethius' effort to restore unity to the general perspective on the philosophical tradition as a whole. Aristotle becomes most visible in the fifth book, Plato in the third. The more brilliant evocations are of Plato and stand out like mountain peaks towering over the plains. Thus the general *mise-en-scène* recalls the *Crito* and *Phaedo*, and from 3.m9 on the *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias* are elevated to positions of particular prominence. Aristotle appears to have presented a slightly different set of possibilities and challenges. The influence of the *Physics*, *Peri Hermeneias* and *De caelo* on *Consolatio* 5 is unmistakable. Subtler, but equally important, is the influence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which Boethius obviously knew well (cf. *In Cat.* 242c; above, p. 794). Thus *Philosophia*'s claims concerning happiness *qua* the perfect, self-sufficient state of all goods (3.2.2–3;

¹⁸ The doctrine that higher faculties of the soul subsume lower ones but not vice versa appears both at *In Isag.* 2.136.14–17 and 2.137.4–21 and at *Consolatio* 5.4.31–7 and 5.5.3–4, but is put forward without any notably Platonic or Aristotelian bias.

3.8.12; 3.9.26) adhere closely to the *Ethics*,¹⁹ and the same can be said of her description of the good *qua* universal end (3.11.38 (cf. *EN* 1094a2–3)) and final cause (3.2.19–20; 3.10.36–40)²⁰ of human action. Even her account of the fortuitous cycles of life, although generally considered one of the most typically Roman aspects of the *Consolatio*, can be shown to recall the *Ethics*, and despite its overtly rhetorical emphasis book 2 keeps Aristotle working beneath a network of images that more superficially evoke Roman traditions and sources (2.1.9–19; 2.2.2–10; 2.m4.1–8 (cf. *EN* 1100a35–b8; 1100b33–1101a7)).

There are points where accommodation inevitably proves impossible. For example, although Boethius shares with Aristotle the view that goods of the soul are superior to those of the body (*Cons.* 3.2.10–11 (cf. *EN* 1098b12–15; 1102a16–18)), he does not see the latter as a necessary constituent of human happiness but values them only insofar as they imitate or approximate the one transcendent Good (3.2.14–20; 3.9.17–27 (cf. *EN* 1153b16–25)). Indeed, he holds that their absence rather than presence is conducive to a virtuous and happy life (2.8.3; cf. 4.7.3), and nearly every page of the *Consolatio* carries some suggestion to the effect that happiness entails a flight from the phenomenal world (e.g., 4.1.9; 5.5.11–12). They also part ways over the Socratic (Platonic) paradox that people act contrary to what is best only through ignorance. Aristotle of course holds it to be false, whereas Boethius, with an eye to *Gorgias* 466d–e, recasts it in the form of the claim that only the wise do what they desire (4.2.45).²¹ In general, the *Consolatio* leaves little room for distinguishing between choice and desire in the Aristotelian sense (*EN* 1111b26–9; 1112b11–34), working with a means/end distinction that is suggestive rather of Plato's *Gorgias* (467c–d). Boethius in the end leaves it to the vaguely defined concepts of natural intention (3.3.1; 3.11.30–3; 4.2.26) and participation (3.10.23–5; 3.11.7–8; 4.4.17) to carry the philosophical weight, and there is a blunt simplicity to the results, in that the Good is described as both final cause (3.10.36–40) and divine source of all lower goods (3.10.2–21; cf. *Hebd.* 1111–17 Moreschini). The *Consolatio* furnishes no indication that Boethius seriously weighed Aristotle's criticisms of the Platonic Idea of the Good. If at 4.1.3–5 (cf. 1.4.30) he seems to acknowledge the remoteness of such a thing (cf. *EN* 1096b32–4), it is only because he identifies its *apparent* irrelevance to human life as a problem (cf. 1.m5.25–36) the solution to which will ultimately reside in the possibility of an ascent up to the *inaccessa lux* (5.3.33–6; 5.6.46–7).

¹⁹ Arist., *EN* 1097a25–b16; 1176a30–b6. Note however the echoes also of Plato, *Phlb.* 20d; 60b–c; 61a; [Plato], *Def.* 412d.

²⁰ Arist., *EN* 1094a18–22; 1097a16–19; for Boethius on the four causes, cf. *In Isag.* 2.174.14–18.

²¹ Cf. Arist., *EN* 1113a15–b2; 1145b25–8. (The phrase *voluisse prava* at *Cons.* 4.4.4 is not to be pressed literally in this connection.)

Similar considerations arise in connection with the psychology. Not unlike Aristotle, Boethius speaks of the human soul as moving between the status of beasts and gods, changing in accordance with the direction of its gaze (*Cons.* 3.10.22–5; 4.3.7–21 (cf. *EN* 1145a22–7; 1177b26–31; 1178b21–8)); like Plato, on the other hand, he has it surviving to be rewarded or punished after separation from the body (4.4.22–3);²² yet unlike Plato he describes its reward or punishment as final and eternal (4.4.9; cf. *Fid. cath.* 234–43 Moreschini). There is, in other words, no clear line to divide Aristotle from Plato, or indeed Plato from St Augustine. Boethius' subtlest, and philosophically weakest, attempt to harmonize Plato and Aristotle emerges from passages in two related poems in the *Consolatio*. At 4.m6.19–24 Philosophia describes fire and earth as arising out of a process of change between the primary qualities of moistness, dryness, heat and coldness (*humida siccis . . . frigora flammis*), after *De generatione et corruptione* 2.4; at 3.m9.10–12, on the other hand, she describes the transformation of the same four qualities (*frigora flammis, / arida . . . liquidis*) as occurring according to the laws of mathematical proportion (*numeris*), after *Timaeus* 31b–32b. Proclus remarks the futility of trying to reconcile the two systems along such lines (*In Tim.* 2.37.33–38.16), but both Calcidius (*In Tim.* §§317–18) and Macrobius (*In somn. Sc.* 1.6.25–7) evidently think it possible to map the Aristotelian doctrine onto the Platonic. From *In Isagogen* 1.31.22–32.1 it is certain that Boethius knew Macrobius' interpretation, which he in all probability adopted for purposes of his own philosophico-poetic pastiche.

The *Consolatio* can be described as a kind of cento, stitched together in places of the most varied material. It differs from the commentaries in relying less than they do on the cut-and-paste method of compilation and aiming instead at a more elaborate juxtaposition of borrowed elements. The result, although unoriginal by comparison with the works of a Plato or Aristotle, is not entirely superficial or philosophically insignificant. For although the constituent parts of the *Consolatio* are not new, their combination reflects a unity of philosophical purpose that is wholly lacking in the majority of the late-antique compilers with whom Boethius is sometimes compared. Boethius shows consistent discrimination in his selection of material: the pieces are beautifully crafted in themselves and stitched together with remarkable originality of design. As regards imperfections, some allowance must be made for Boethius' aims: the *Consolatio* draws on tradition but is not an exegetical work, the main purpose of its compressed synthesis being to convey a deeply personal message. In it Plato and Aristotle are made to speak for, and through, the condemned Roman senator, and its pervasive sense of urgency means that a certain amount of the

²² Plato, *Gorg.* 523a–527b; *Phd.* 113d–114c; *Rep.* 615a–621d; cf. Arist., *EN* 1115a26–7.

relevant philosophical background is perforce handled indirectly or by suggestion, often in the poetry. Hence a poem (3.m9) based on the cosmology of the *Timaeus* to affirm the order of the world, two others on the theory of recollection (3.m11; 5.m3) to mark progress in the course of philosophical therapy prescribed for what at 1.2.5 is diagnosed as a state of ‘lethargy’ or amnesia, another (4.m1) based on the *Phaedrus* to celebrate the soul’s flight to freedom, and so on. Most of these pieces can stand on their own for sheer literary merit; every one of them contributes to the general argument of the *Consolatio*.

To return to an earlier observation. As a commentator on the works of Porphyry and Aristotle Boethius gradually developed the discipline of suppressing his own views to the advantage of those most closely aligned with the texts on which he commented. Thus the Platonic flight described at the beginning of the first *Isagoge* commentary gives way in the second commentary to Peripatetic doctrine and an appeal to Alexander’s authority on the question of universals. The reservations explicitly articulated by Boethius in connection with the latter, it should be noted, find no analogue in either of the *Peri Hermeneias* commentaries, which adhere closely to Aristotle’s thought. Unlike Ammonius, Boethius never discusses Iamblichus’ interpretations of the *Peri Hermeneias*, and rarely looks to Plato’s dialogues for insights into Aristotle’s text (*In Perih.* 2.93.1–10 (cf. *Peri H.* 16b33–17a2); 2.316.12–21). His use of Syrianus shows no signs of trying to force Plato upon Aristotle, and at one point in the second commentary (2.172.13–22) he rejects an interpretation from Syrianus which in its use of Plato strayed from the *auctoritas Aristotelica*. What in fact emerges in the second *Peri Hermeneias* commentary is a consistent subordination of Alexander to Porphyry, which is in all probability meant implicitly to convey a message similar to the one so clearly intended in the second *Isagoge* commentary: Alexander is an important but ultimately inferior interpreter, precisely because *Aristotle himself is ultimately inferior to Plato*. If this is indeed Boethius’ thinking, then his talk of *scientia Pythagorica* and *perfecta doctrina* at *In Categorias* 160b begins to make sense: for the *Categorias* (unlike the *Peri Hermeneias*) the deeper, more advanced level of exegesis to which Boethius refers means a *Platonizing* interpretation.

As to the *Consolatio*, the juxtaposition of Plato and Aristotle conveys an overall impression strangely akin to that of Raphael’s School of Athens: Aristotelian ethics (and logic) alongside Platonic cosmology (and metaphysics). The *Opuscula Sacra*, although not philosophical works *stricto sensu*, tell a somewhat similar story: late Platonic, indeed Augustinian, metaphysics underpinned by Aristotelian (Porphyrian) logic. Of course, mere juxtaposition obviously fails as an argument for the unity of Plato and Aristotle, and the crucial, if unanswerable, question is whether Boethius ever developed a coherent account of the (in)compatibility of the two philosophers. John of Salisbury wryly remarks on the strangeness

of trying posthumously to reconcile two men who, for as long as they lived, could only manage to disagree (*Metalog.* 2.17 (875d)); he has in mind Bernard of Chartres, who presumably propounded a Boethian line of the sort stated in the opening of the second book of the second *Peri Hermeneias* commentary. Insofar as John was able to distinguish between the Platonic and Aristotelian pieces of the Boethian puzzle, he must have seen that, although in many respects brilliantly assembled, they do not combine to form a perfectly coherent whole.

Boethius' Platonism

Boethius was a Platonist, but the lack of evidence for any translations and (or) commentaries on Plato's dialogues makes it difficult to assess the strain(s) of the tradition by which he was most influenced. It is noteworthy that he frequently discusses Porphyry but mentions Plotinus only once, and in such a way as to suggest that he is merely copying material handed down by Porphyry. At *De divisione* 875d–876d he intimates that on Plotinus' recommendation Porphyry consulted Andronicus' treatise on diaeresis for purposes of his own commentary on Plato's *Sophist*. This is anecdotal – there is no reference to any philosophical view held by Plotinus – and obviously stems from Porphyry. Hence the one passage in which Boethius actually names Plotinus is useless for determining whether or not he had first-hand knowledge of the *Enneads*; but insofar as it furnishes no indication that he did *not* have such knowledge the question remains open, and with that our problems begin. It is remarkable, for example, that Boethius registers no explicit acknowledgement of Plotinus' fundamental hierarchy of the One, Intellect and Soul. Macrobius, however, discusses Plotinus in his commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* and at 1.14.6–7 recasts it in the form of the triad, God–Mind–Soul. Since Boethius knew the latter, it is a mere *argumentum ex silentio* to conclude that he was ignorant of the general doctrine. In fact, the doctrine is indirectly intimated in the *Consolatio*, for Boethius indicates that Soul emanates from and revolves around Mind (3.m9.16–17; 4.6.15–16; cf. 5.2.8), and that everything flows from the Good (3.10.5–16) or perfect Unity (3.11.39).

Two things above all stand out in Boethius' Platonism: its close adherence to Plato's own writings, and its silence concerning developments associated with the tradition from Iamblichus to Proclus. As to the latter, it seems clear that Boethius was unconcerned to fill the universe with metaphysical postulates. Even *De hebdomadibus*, the work closest in spirit to Proclus' *Elements*, is remarkably restrained: its axioms, far from supporting any proliferation of hypostases, serve rather as the foundation for an astonishing piece of metaphysical concentration. Among post-Porphyrian philosophical figures only Iamblichus (*In*

Cat. 162a, etc.), Themistius (*In Cat.* 162a; *In Perih.* 2.4.2–3; *Top. diff.* 2.10.1 (1194b), etc.), and Syrianus (*In Perih.* 2.18.26, etc.) are mentioned, and none of the mentions provides any real insight into Boethius' relationship to the later tradition generally. Klingner's conclusion, followed by Courcelle, that Boethius consulted Proclus' commentary on the *Timaeus*, is unsubstantiated, the doctrinal analogues adduced in support of it being far too general to link the two with any certainty. For example, the concept, shared by Proclus and Boethius, of a god who *qua* self-sufficient is free from desire and carries the pattern of the universe in his mind is widespread and need not have come from Proclus in particular.²³ The commentary on Cicero's *Tōpics* (1092d) makes it certain that Boethius used Cicero's translation of the *Timaeus*, and there is a good chance that he knew Porphyry's commentary as well.

The accident of survival almost certainly skews our understanding of the problem, and the modern *horror vacui* at the thought of a Roman philosopher or commentator without a Greek source has had the effect of privileging Proclus vis-à-vis the *Timaeus*. The method is seductive: isolate a passage from Boethius, find a tolerably close analogue in Proclus, and conclude that Proclus is Boethius' source. The general methodological problem is best illustrated by Courcelle's theory, which actually converts textual parallels into evidence for a master–disciple relationship. Given the possibility of dependence on a common tradition, it ought to be obvious that even firm textual parallels would not amount to stringent proof that Boethius copied from Proclus or Ammonius; but the worrisome point is that so little in the way of convincing analogues has been brought into consideration in the first place. This is not to say that Boethius did not consult Proclus or Plotinus, only that it has yet to be demonstrated that he did; in the absence of any such demonstration it seems best to withhold assent. The question of Boethius' sources is ultimately of great significance for our understanding of the Hellenic culture of Ostrogothic Italy and hence of the early Middle Ages generally, but to argue from broad assumptions about the culture of Ostrogothic Italy to precise conclusions concerning Boethius' sources is mere question-begging. Proof that Boethius consulted (e.g.) the *Enneads* would amount *eo ipso* to proof that they were available; the mere assumption of their availability, however, can only distort the issue.

Although the *Consolatio* is the work most revelatory of Boethius' Platonism, important information is to be gained also from others. As previously observed, in the prolegomena to the first *Isagoge* commentary Boethius speaks of philosophy as an illumination and withdrawal into the self and of the divine force that attracts the soul, and in explicating the three theoretical branches of philosophy

²³ Cf. Klingner 1921: 43–4; Courcelle 1969: 302.

he in effect converts a traditional Peripatetic classification into an ontological hierarchy that reflects a late Platonism of some kind. For although he equates physics with natural objects and theology with the divine *noēta* or *intellectibilia*, he does not mention mathematics or mathematical but instead speaks in terms of ‘intelligible’ beings (*intelligibilia*) that move between the higher and lower planes (1.8.19–9.6). His analysis targets the hierarchy of things and the mind’s (soul’s) descent into the world of matter rather than the sciences as such, so that the whole passage looks slightly out of place in a commentary on a treatise that is supposed to introduce readers to Aristotle’s *Categories*. In *De trinitate* 2, by contrast, a more mature work whose Augustinian slant might well have been expected to invite just such Platonizing speculation, mathematics occupy the intermediate position between physics (‘natural’ philosophy) and theology, and there is no comment concerning the mind or soul.

The *Consolatio* brings some of the philosophical sensibilities of the first *Isagoge* commentary back into view, clearly indicating that Boethius the philosopher, as opposed to exegete, consistently shared certain fundamental assumptions with other Platonists of late antiquity. Above all, there is the mobility of soul, its intermediate nature and its journey of procession and return. This is figured forth at 1.1.2, in the allegory of Philosophia: her appearance changes, just as her arguments strain for the divine *intellegentia* while holding to the level of human *ratio* (1.m2.6–7, 26–7; 5.m3.20–31; 5.m4.22–3; 5.m5.12–15). *Consolatio* 2.5.25–9 remarks on man’s habit of thrusting himself below the level of beasts through willed obliviousness of his divine and godlike dignity. 3.10.24–5 (4.3.8–10) and 4.3.15–21 develop the thought with arguments to the effect that human beings are deified through participation in divinity but devolve into beasts by turning away from the Good. At 4.4.28–31 Boethius finally states the principle in a general way, remarking on the divine sanction by which the human soul in redirecting its gaze ‘becomes what it contemplates’ – the idea that, as previously noted, so clearly echoes *In Isagogen* 1.9.4. Soul, along with spirit, nature, the heavens, angels and demons, is an instrument of providential influence over the phenomenal world and is the particular key to human self-determination (*Cons.* 4.6.13; cf. *In Perih.* 2.231.11–232.10). It exists prior to incarnation and while in the body retains dim visions of truths previously known (3.m11; 5.m3.20–31); as if inebriated, it dreams of revisiting its homeland (3.1.5; 3.2.13; 3.3.1; 3.12.9; 4.1.8–9; 5.1.4). It descends in three stages, coming into contact with corporeality and then with earthly limbs before suffering a moral fall. Each of the stages involves further loss of memory, freedom and self (3.12.1; 5.2.8–9). The *Consolatio* is vague about the causes of the downward impulse but makes frequent allusion to the process of conversion and return. Cultivation of philosophy ignites the spark that initiates the upward motion (3.12.25) and stirs

the 'agent' intellect (5.m4.26–7; 5.5.1). There are hints that the most deeply embedded truths are through the aid of divine grace or illumination recollected in a flash of insight, and prayer is obviously meant to play an important role in salvation (3.9.32–3; 5.3.33–4; 5.4.30–3; 5.5.11–12; 5.6.46–7).

As to the fate of the soul after separation from the body, at *Consolatio* 4.4.23, in a section that clearly draws inspiration from the *Gorgias*, Boethius explicitly sidesteps the question; the disclaimer is meant to caution readers against the expectation of an eschatological myth analogous to the one at the end of Plato's dialogue, and Boethius avoids the myth precisely because he has no theory of transmigration to support it. His concern is to demonstrate that virtue is its own reward and vice its own 'inseparable' punishment *in this life* (4.3.11–13), and his observation that as a result of changes within the mind human beings become beasts or gods carries no hint whatsoever of metempsychosis. In maintaining that the mental state changes while the human form remains (4.3.15; 4.4.1), Boethius deliberately subverts one of the oldest Greek myths: Circe's potions altered the bodies of Odysseus' companions, not their minds (4.m3.27–32). *Consolatio* 4.4.9, as has been noted, speaks of the soul-body separation or 'final death' as infinite and eternal. But although the wicked will not be reincarnated as beasts, the changes their souls undergo in this life are nevertheless real to the extent that *qua* privation evil is an absence of being: in ceasing to be fully human (divine), the soul descends to the bestial state (3.12.29; 4.2.32–6; 4.3.15). The possibility of deification, on the other hand, is unproblematical for the Christian Boethius.²⁴

Boethius' close adherence to Plato's writings has been mentioned as one of the main characteristics of his Platonism, and by adherence is here meant not the mere imitation of Plato but a privileging of his authority over that of later Platonists. Although Boethius clearly was influenced by the later tradition, the *Consolatio* is not his attempt to expound or summarize it, and we can only imagine that the general picture would have been different had Boethius lived to translate and comment on Plato as planned. *Itur in antiquam silvam* perhaps best expresses the general spirit of the work, which reaches back to those authorities whose hold on Boethius' imagination appears to have been especially strong: Augustine, Aristotle, the Bible, and above all Plato. The interplay between the latter two is especially noteworthy. For example, although it has long been recognized that 3.12.22 (*cuncta fortiter suaviterque disponit*) borrows from Wisdom 8.1 (*fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter*), what those in search of Boethius' Christianity have tended to overlook is that the quotation is made to serve a *philosophical* purpose. All things, *Philosophia* argues, hasten to the Good,

²⁴ Chadwick 1981: 211; Marenbon 2003: 111; Moreschini 2003: 34.

thereby manifesting the unity of intention between ruler and ruled: nothing *chooses* to resist the Good, and nothing *can* resist it. The universal disposition of the Good is, in other words, a matter of both will (*suaviterque*) and necessity (*fortiter*). ‘Boethius’ is taken by the manner in which Philosophia has expressed the point: she speaks the language of the Bible – or, *the Bible conveys a Platonic truth*. Similarly, 1.m5.47–8 and 1.5.10 echo the Lord’s Prayer (cf. *Eut.* 8 (766–7 Moreschini)). But once again Biblical language serves as the vehicle for expression of a Platonic truth, for the point at issue is whether the Good rules not only the heavens but also the sublunary world of human affairs, that is, whether the universe is governed by chance or by *logos*. Boethius would probably have been puzzled by our modern fascination with sources considered *simpliciter*; at any rate, the *Consolatio* does not stand to the Platonic dialogues or to any other known writings in the relationship of mere copy to source. There may be relatively little in it that does not originate elsewhere, but the borrowed elements do not in themselves explain the work as a whole. Its genius and originality derive from Boethius’ extraordinary power of combination, and what ultimately matters is not simply the fact *that* he quotes and paraphrases Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, etc., but the manner in which he combines and implicitly contrasts the borrowed elements in order to form a new synthesis.

3.9.32–3 marks the turning point of the *Consolatio* and formally acknowledges Plato’s authority over its second half. Plato’s prominence is further highlighted by the poetry that leads immediately thereafter into book 4: 3.m9 paraphrases *Timaeus* 29a–42d, 3.m11 epitomizes the theory of *anamnēsis*, and 4.m1 is a loose adaptation of *Phaedrus* 246a–248e. *Consolatio* 4.2 and 4 then take the celebrated *Gorgias* paradoxes up for consideration, and book 5, although bringing Aristotle’s *Physics* (5.1.12), *Peri Hermeneias* (discussed below) and *De caelo* (5.6.6–8) into focus, gives Plato the final word (5.6.9–14). The adaptations of Plato are much more than mere paraphrases, as 4.m1 will illustrate. The poem is based on the celebrated *Phaedrus* myth of the soul’s ascent to the ‘place beyond the heavens’ (247c) and Boethius builds up to it through a carefully structured series of philosophical motifs. An exhortation to the soul to return to its homeland (3.m10.4–6; cf. 4.m1.25–6), the theory of recollection (3.m11), the backward (downward) gaze of the soul (3.m12.52–8; cf. 4.m1.27–8), and a promise of wings to bear the mind aloft (4.1.9) – all serve to set the stage for the poetic reworking of the *Phaedrus* myth in 4.m1. Boethius alters the myth in two fundamental ways: he suppresses Plato’s figure for the tripartite soul (charioteer and horses) and eight of the nine patterns of life into which the reincarnated soul is said by Plato to descend. The latter marks the boldest change, for as against the expectation that the soul’s downward gaze will be said to initiate a becoming filled with oblivion and then falling, as at *Phaedrus* 248c, the poem’s

final lines instead describe the just soul as *soaring on high*, peacefully gazing down upon the despots who terrorize nations (4.m1.29–30; cf. 1.3.14). The upshot of this change is a removal *uno ictu* of the notion of transmigration (rebirth as philosopher, king, politician, etc.) from the philosophical landscape. Boethius in effect uses Plato's figure of the winged soul to inform his own interpretation of the metaphysical flight from tyranny, the idea being that the soul will find peace in its inner freedom and celestial *patria* (cf. 1.5.3–5) and consolation in the thought that it is in reality earthly despots, not their victims, who are captives (cf. 4.m2). Freedom (*libertas*) is the unifying theme of the *Consolatio*. Boethius begins in book 1 with Theoderic and the freedom of the Roman Senate, and ends in book 5 with divine providence and the freedom of the human soul; the concept of *libertas* is radically revalued along the way, the transformation emerging already by 3.m2.7–26, with its images of the savage lion, an obvious figure for the tyrant, and caged bird (i.e., embodied soul) longing to be set free. Hence in jettisoning the doctrine of metempsychosis 4.m1 inevitably separates itself as well from Plato's general account of reward, punishment and justice; and it must be said that the result, despite the great beauty of the poem, is somewhat flat philosophically. The gloating mood of the final verses runs too closely to the thought and diction of 1.m5.39–41 to be overlooked: the latter forecasts that tyrants will fall victim to Fortune, as 4.m1.27–30 predicts that the just will smile upon their suffering. The longing for justice in the form of revenge, in other words, is never lost sight of.²⁵ At any rate, 4.m1 is much more than a mere imitation or paraphrase of Plato, and to understand it is not so much a matter of uncovering further late Platonic 'sources' as of grasping how Boethius adapts Plato himself to context.

Of course, Plato's influence is not confined to the poetry of the *Consolatio*, and anchored in the prose arguments proper are passages that draw on his thought in a more focused, dialectical manner. The *Gorgias*, particularly the Polus colloquy, influences the argument of the *Consolatio* more obviously than any other Platonic dialogue. Its influence is first felt at 3.2.19–20 (*Gorg.* 467b–468b), where a distinction is drawn between what people choose (means) and desire (end). But whereas Plato's concern is to explain how rhetoric counterfeits justice in relation to the soul as cookery does medicine in relation to the body (*Gorg.* 464b–466a), in 3.2–8 Boethius shifts the emphasis by directing discussion towards goods of the body and of the soul more generally, and to the counterfeiting that goes on between them. Although people variously pursue riches, office, rule, glory and pleasure, their 'natural intention' or desire is in

²⁵ The fact that 4.4.38–40 plays off the irony of *Gorgias* 480b–481b (pity for the unjust) does not significantly alter the picture here.

fact a drive for *self-sufficiency, reverence, power, nobility and joy*; but their desire for the latter in turn expresses a more deeply seated desire for the *good*. Hence by the end of book 3 the Good emerges as the transcendent cause of all that is and happens in the world. With this initial engagement the *Gorgias* is kept quietly in the background, but with the references to Plato at 4.2.45 and to the famous paradoxes at 4.4.3–12 it comes into full view. 4.2 picks up the paradoxical claim that the good are powerful and the wicked impotent, and 4.4 the related paradoxes that the wicked are unhappier in attaining their ends than in failing them, that they are less unhappy when punished than when not, and that those who do wrong are unhappier than those who suffer it.

Significant changes arise in the course of adapting the *Gorgias*. Most obviously, Philosophia is as an interlocutor a stiff reflection of her Platonic counterpart, Socrates, while her disciple, 'Boethius', lacks Polus' lively impetuosity. The inevitable effect of these changes is a privileging of *arguments* over the psychological interplay between their exponents. The difference becomes particularly evident at 4.4.38–40, where Philosophia attempts to imitate the irony with which Socrates brings the Polus colloquy to a conclusion (*Gorg.* 480b–481b). Her digression is awkward, especially in the absence of a Callicles to seize upon its apparent absurdity. As to the style, Boethius aimed for Plato but often struck closer to Epictetus or Seneca. Something of Plato's suppleness, in other words, has been lost to a more scholastic mode of thought and expression, and the differences become evident precisely because of Boethius' effort to think and write in the manner of Plato. Significant changes occur also at the level of argumentation. In distinguishing, for example, between will (*voluntas*) and power (*potestas*) as forming the basis of human action, 4.2.5 raises to the status of a central point an idea that is by comparison peripheral in the *Gorgias* (509d). The importance of the distinction is highlighted at 4.4.5 by the addition of a third element, accomplishment (*perficere*), but the triad (*velle, posse, perficere*) on which the rest of 4.4 is then built finds no precise analogue in the *Gorgias*. Again, at 4.3.1–13 Boethius inserts an argument to the effect that the good are always rewarded and the wicked always punished, which is then capped with an excursus on human devolution into beasts (14–21). The argument supports a broader concern for fortune and providence, as becomes clear at 4.6–7, while the excursus looks as though it is intended as compensation for the gap left by the removal of Plato's eschatological myth. Finally, Boethius has omitted at least three ideas that are crucial to the arguments of the *Gorgias*: the relationship of doing to suffering vis-à-vis just punishment (476b–e), the difference between pleasure and benefit vis-à-vis the good (477a), and the distinction between what is by nature worse and by convention more shameful (482d–e).

It seems appropriate to conclude with observations concerning the final book of the *Consolatio*. At 5.4.1 Boethius indicates that he is returning to questions insufficiently treated in earlier writings; he has in mind Cicero's *De fato* and the third book of his own second *Peri Hermeneias* commentary, which at 2.232.10–11 similarly signals the incompleteness of its own coverage. The commentary anticipates the *Consolatio* in targeting certain Stoic themes, in appealing to Aristotle's illustration of chance occurrences from buried treasure, in positing the apparent freedom/foreknowledge disjunction, the doctrine of double necessity, and so on.²⁶ Moreover, like the *Consolatio* it confines its treatment to a separately structured book, replete with lengthy prolegomena (*In Perih.* 2.185.17–198.21) that pit Peripatetic against Stoic (and Epicurean). No book in any of the other commentaries is similarly handled, while even a cursory review of the scholarship will suffice to confirm the impression that *Consolatio* 5, marked as a 'digression' at 5.1.5, has been treated by most commentators as a self-contained entity. The philosophical problem of free choice and providence, in other words, exercised Boethius' imagination for nearly a decade, and that preoccupation is reflected in the separately structured treatments allotted it in each of the two works.

In certain respects, however, the two treatments differ *toto caelo*. In the commentary proper (versus prolegomena), for example, Boethius evinces a certain avoidance of Stoic doctrine, no doubt because of its irrelevance to Aristotle's text but probably also because of the obscurity of the doxographical material transmitted by Porphyry (e.g., *In Perih.* 2.71.13–18; 2.201.2–6; cf. *In Cat.* 264c). The *Consolatio* presents a different picture. The 'obscure men of old brought forth by the Porch' (5.m4.1–2) undoubtedly contributed to the disintegration of philosophy (cf. 1.3.7), but they also inspired Seneca, whose martyrdom speaks to the Roman Boethius in a way that even that of Socrates cannot. In the end, Boethius cannot have it both ways but must choose between the two philosophers. The first four books of the *Consolatio* swing between the caprices of Fortune (1.m5.25–36; 2.1–2) and a fatalism so overdetermined as to bind not only the universe but also 'the actions and fortunes of men by an indissoluble concatenation of causes' (4.6.19). In solving the problem of Fortune, in other words, the doctrine of fate articulated at the end of book 4, like the hydra that generates a new head for every one removed (cf. 4.6.3), merely raises a new dilemma: are we in fact free to choose in such a highly ordered world? Insofar as *Consolatio* 5 is informed by the *Peri Hermeneias*, Boethius is indeed retracing the steps of his commentary, but insofar as it reformulates the problem, he is

²⁶ *In Perih.* 2.195.10–196.3; 2.224.2–9; 2.225.10–21; 2.230.8–19; 2.231.12–232.10; 2.241.1–243.9 = *Cons.* 5.m4.1–9; 5.1.12–18; 5.3.3–6, 23–7; 5.3.29–32 (5.6.44); 4.6.13; 5.6.27–9.

moving into new territory. *Consolatio* 1–2 evokes the world of Seneca, a world with which Boethius the Roman politician felt a strong connection; *Consolatio* 5, by contrast, draws the Christian Platonist to the surface. 5.3.29–36 states the fundamental concern, that without free choice of the will we are robbed not only of our concepts of virtue and vice but of the very possibility of distinguishing between them with the aid of divine grace (*divina gratia*). The passage is echoed by the closing lines (5.6.44–8), which constitute an exhortation not only to cultivate virtue and shun vice but also to extend prayers upward to the omniscient judge. The *Peri Hermeneias* commentary states the Peripatetic (anti-Stoic) case for free choice of the will and even reflects, in a way that Aristotle does not, on the implications of divine omniscience for human affairs (2.225.9–226.22); but it does not take up for consideration the highest freedom, which is the mind's ascent to communion (*commercium*) with the divine light (5.3.34). That is what the *Consolatio* endeavours to defend against Fortune on the one hand and Stoic fatalism on the other.

MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

DAVID BRADSHAW

The work of Maximus the Confessor (580–662) presents the philosophical world view of the Greek-speaking Christian tradition in its most fully developed form. It is comprehensive both in the extent to which it draws upon earlier authors – including Clement of Alexandria, Origen, the Cappadocian Fathers, Nemesius of Emesa, Evagrius of Pontus, Cyril of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Dionysius, among others – and in its far-ranging scope. Pride of place among the influences on Maximus must undoubtedly go to Pseudo-Dionysius. Like the Areopagite, Maximus regards ‘good’ as the pre-eminent divine name, and he welcomes the Platonic description of the Good as ‘beyond being’ as appropriate to the Christian God. He is also like Pseudo-Dionysius in his vision of the cosmos as fundamentally theophanic, a manifestation of intelligible or spiritual reality in sensible form. However, Maximus is more explicit than Pseudo-Dionysius about the role of the divine will in creation, and he gives a more prominent role to the Incarnation as the central act by which the divine is made manifest. Accordingly, whereas Pseudo-Dionysius can be (and often has been) read as implicitly denying that God is a personal being, for Maximus the personal character of God is never in question.

Any attempt to situate Maximus within the history of philosophy must begin with some disclaimers. Maximus writes as a theologian rather than a philosopher, and many of his most interesting ideas are presented through elaborate allegorical interpretations of Scripture. To winnow out the philosophical elements, as we shall do here, can inevitably present only a partial picture of his thought. Maximus also never mentions pagan philosophers by name, so that whether he draws on them directly (and not only as mediated through earlier Christian authors) is a matter of speculation.¹ Nonetheless, his works do articulate a powerful philosophical vision, one that is well worth understanding in its own right.

¹ For discussion of Maximus’s knowledge of philosophical sources see Mueller-Jourdan 2005: 23–33 and 44–8, and Törönen 2007: 17–34. Both authors conclude that Maximus probably had some

LIFE AND WORKS

Little is known of Maximus' early years. A Greek biography composed in the tenth century states that he was born of noble parents in Constantinople, received a good education, and by his early thirties was first secretary to the Emperor Heraclius; it has been shown, however, that this portion of the biography is merely a paraphrase of that of an earlier saint, Theodore the Studite. There exists also a life of Maximus in Syriac, written by a contemporary, which says that he was the son of a Samaritan and a Persian slave girl and was brought up after their deaths in a Palestinian monastery. Unfortunately this biography seems to have polemical motives (it originated among Monophysites, who regarded Maximus as a heretic), and its account of his early years leaves unexplained his evident learning and wide circle of friends at court. Thus the Greek *Life* is probably more correct in its general drift, if not in detail.

Regardless of which *Life* is followed, Maximus' own correspondence confirms that he served for a time in the imperial chancellery and that he left this service around 613 to become a monk. He resided first at a monastery in Chrysopolis (across the Bosphorus from Constantinople) and then at the monastery of St George at Cyzicus. Sometime near the end of this period, in the early to mid-620s, he composed two of his major works of spiritual direction, *On the Ascetic Life* and *Four Centuries on Charity*, as well as the *Quaestiones et Dubia*, a series of questions and answers on puzzling passages in Scripture and the Church Fathers. In 626 the Persian army invaded the area around Constantinople, and the monks of St George fled south. Maximus spent time in Crete and possibly Cyprus before arriving in Carthage sometime between 628 and 630. Despite his travels these were immensely fruitful years, as during them he composed two of his most important works, the *Mystagogy*, a philosophical interpretation of church architecture and the liturgy, and the *Ambigua*, a series of explanations of puzzling passages in the writings of Gregory Nazianzen. (More precisely, *Ambigua* 6–71, the *Ambigua ad Joannem*, were composed at this time, and *Ambigua* 1–5, the *Ambigua ad Thomam*, around 634–6.) During his early years in Carthage, from 630 to 634, he also composed two other major works, the *Questions to Thalassius*, a series of explanations of puzzling passages in Scripture, and the *Chapters on Theology and Economy*.² Finally, it is presumably

knowledge of the late-Platonic Aristotelian commentaries, especially the *Prolegomena Philosophiae* and commentaries on the *Isagoge* and *Categories*. Maximus may also have been personally acquainted with Stephanus of Alexandria, who served as professor of philosophy at Constantinople while Maximus was employed in the imperial chancellery.

² In patristic writings 'theology' refers to the doctrine of God considered in Himself, 'economy' to God's dealings with the world, particularly as they are exemplified in the Incarnation.

to these early years that we may assign Maximus' contribution to the *Scholia* on the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius. It has long been known that, although the scholia are assigned to Maximus in many manuscripts, the majority are in fact by John of Scythopolis. Nonetheless there seems little reason to doubt that the remainder (those not found in the earliest manuscripts, where they are correctly attributed to John) are in fact by Maximus.³ As we shall see below, it was primarily as a scholiast on the Areopagitic corpus that Maximus was known to the West in the Middle Ages.

In 634 a controversy broke out which would preoccupy Maximus' remaining years. Sergius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, had since the early 620s been promoting a programme for reunion between the official Byzantine Church, which accepted the Council of Chalcedon, and the Monophysites, who rejected it. He proposed as a basis for compromise the doctrine of Monoenergism, i.e., that although Christ was of two natures as taught by Chalcedon, he had a single human-divine activity or energy (*energeia*). This proposal at first met with little resistance, but in 634 Sophronius, the newly elected Patriarch of Jerusalem, issued a letter criticizing it. In response Sergius modified his position terminologically while retaining most of its substance (and thus a plausible basis for reunion). The new position was Monotheletism, the doctrine that Christ had two natures but a single human-divine will. In 638 the Emperor issued an edict, drafted by Sergius, making Monotheletism the official policy of the Empire. In 648 a more conciliatory edict was issued forbidding anyone to discuss the number of wills or energies in Christ, but by that time the real position of the imperial government was already clear.

Maximus was a friend and disciple of Sophronius, and upon the latter's death in 639 the leadership of the anti-Monoenergist and anti-Monothelite cause fell to him. In the period from 634 to 649 he wrote numerous letters and short treatises arguing that Christ had two energies, one human and one divine, and likewise two natural wills. These were later collected (along with a few miscellaneous early works) as the *Opuscula Theologica et Polemica*. Maximus also participated in a public disputation over Monotheletism with Pyrrhus, a former Patriarch of Constantinople, of which a transcript survives. These works are important sources for Maximus' analysis of the will, to be discussed below. They are also notable for their careful definitions of philosophical terms which had become important for Christian theology – substance, accident, relation, difference, union, hypostasis, and so forth.⁴ Maximus' attention to definition

³ For the text see Migne *PG* 4, cols. 29–576.

⁴ See particularly *Opuscula* 14, 18, and 23, which consist for the most part of lists of such definitions.

seems to have earned him a reputation as a logician, for in subsequent years a number of short introductory works on logic circulated under his name.⁵

Ultimately the emperor, Constans II, decided that Maximus' opposition to his policies could no longer be tolerated. Maximus was arrested in 653, and, after two years awaiting trial, convicted of treason and exiled to Thrace. When further attempts to force a recantation failed, he was arrested again in 662; this time he was publicly flogged and his tongue and right hand cut off so he could no longer speak or write. He died in exile later that year, alone save for two disciples. Nonetheless his teaching that Christ had two energies and two natural wills was ultimately affirmed at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680–1). Today Maximus is regarded as a saint by both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. The honorific title 'confessor' indicates that, although not directly a martyr, he died because of his witness for the faith.

ONTOLOGY

Maximus' ontology is most succinctly expressed in two passages of the *Chapters on Theology and Economy*:

Those of God's works which did not happen to begin in time are participated beings, in which participating beings share according to grace, for example, goodness and all that the term goodness implies, that is, all life, immortality, simplicity, immutability, and infinity, and all that are contemplated as substances around Him; they are God's works, yet did not begin in time.

(1.48)

God infinitely transcends all things which participate or are participated.

(1.49)

There is here a three-fold division between God, His works which did not begin in time, such as goodness, immortality, simplicity, and infinity, and the things that participate in those works and did begin in time. The latter group includes all that we normally think of as creatures. The surprising category is the second one, where what are normally regarded as divine attributes are instead labelled as works (*erga*) of God. This is in itself rather puzzling, and it is made more so when one reads elsewhere that God *is* life, goodness, truth, and so on, and that to participate in these perfections is to participate in God (*Theol. Econ.* 1.54, *Myst.* 5, *Cent. Char.* 3.24–5). Thus the 'things around God' are in some sense identical to God, although they are His works.

Despite its puzzling appearance, the distinction between God and His manifestation within the divine attributes or perfections already had a long history.

⁵ There exists also a short philosophical treatise *On the Soul* which is attributed to Maximus in some manuscripts and printed among his works in Migne, but is almost certainly not by him.

Perhaps its earliest forerunner was the distinction in Philo of Alexandria between God (or ‘He Who Is’) and the divine Powers.⁶ Other more immediate precedents include the distinction drawn by the Cappadocians between the divine essence (*ousia*) and energies (*energeiai*), and that in Dionysius between the super-substantial divinity and the divine processions.⁷ The term used here, the ‘things around God’, also appears frequently in the Cappadocians.⁸ In light of this prior history, the puzzle presented by the ‘things around God’ can best be resolved by understanding them as activities which God performs – activities in which God manifests His being and is present, in a direct and unmediated way, to that which receives the manifestation. The point of referring to them as ‘works’ is to emphasize that God performs them freely and is not *fully* revealed in them, but remains transcendent as their source.

This means that Maximus’ theology is at once both apophatic and kataphatic. It is kataphatic insofar as God is present within creation as the being, life, wisdom, truth, and other perfections of creatures; it is apophatic insofar as none of these perfections can be identified with the divine essence or (in Dionysius’ terms) the ‘supersubstantial divinity’. In regard to being, for example, Maximus writes:

Both the names ‘being’ (*to einai*) and ‘non-being’ (*to mē einai*) are to be reverently applied to Him, although not at all properly. In one sense they are both proper to Him, one affirming the being of God as cause of beings, the other denying in Him the being which all beings have, based on His pre-eminence as cause. On the other hand, neither is proper to Him because neither sets forth the substantial, natural essence of the one under discussion.

(*Myst.*, Introduction 664B–C)

As this passage illustrates, apophaticism is for Maximus not only the denial of names otherwise affirmed, but also the recognition that language itself – both affirmation and denial – loses its grip in the attempt to speak of God. The juxtaposition of affirmation and denial is a way of simultaneously recognizing two deeply rooted convictions: that God is present in all that is rightly apprehended as good, constituting its goodness, and that no such apprehension adequately or correctly identifies God as He is in His own nature.

⁶ For example, *On the Posterity of Cain* 168–9, *On Special Laws* 1.45–9, *On Abraham* 121–2. Note that, properly speaking, Philo considers ‘God’ (*theos*) a name of the creative or beneficent Power.

⁷ Among the more important texts are Basil, *Epistle* 234, *Against Eunomius* 1.8, 14, *On the Holy Spirit* 8.19, 9.22, 26.61; Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 3.5.58–60, *On the Holy Trinity passim* (= Ps.–Basil, *Epistle* 189), *On Not Three Gods passim*, *Homilies on the Beatitudes* 6, *Homilies on the Song of Songs* 11; Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 1.4, 2.1, 5, 4.1, 5.1–2, 7.3, 9.9, 11.6.

⁸ For example, Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 2.89, 102, 582, 3.1.103–4, 3.5.59–60, 3.6.3; Gregory Nazianzen, *Orations* 30.17, 38.7.

One problem facing such a view is the special status of the term ‘good’ itself. Maximus (in the first passage quoted) subordinates all the other ‘things around God’ to goodness, speaking of them collectively as ‘goodness and all that the term goodness implies’. This is in keeping with the view of Pseudo-Dionysius, who sees ‘good’ as the pre-eminent divine name because it embraces all the divine processions, including being, life, and wisdom (*DN* 5.1). Interestingly, Dionysius never says that God is not good (*agathos*) but only that He is not goodness (*agathotēs*) (*DN* 13.3, *MT* 5). Maximus draws what is perhaps a similar distinction between truth and goodness ‘as we know them’ and the ultimate truth and goodness found only in God (*Myst.* 5.680D). These are merely hints, but they suggest that ‘good’ as a name of God has a distinctively comprehensive character, and so is indefinable and open-ended in a way that sets it apart from other divine names.

However that may be, the kataphatic side of Maximus’ thought has clear implications for his understanding of sensible reality. One of them is that all of sensible reality is symbolic, pointing beyond itself to a higher, intelligible reality. If the perfections of creatures are self-revelatory acts of God, then all beings, insofar as they are real, represent the divine. Maximus presents this idea in terms of the traditional Platonic *topos* of the relationship between the objects of sense (*ta aisthēta*) and the objects of intellect (*ta noēta*). He uses the analogy of a church with two parts, the nave, representing the sensible world, and the sanctuary, representing the intelligible world. As they function in liturgical worship, these are not two separate and distinct spheres, but two levels cooperating in the performance of a single act. In the same way, the sensible and intelligible worlds are not two distinguishable parts, but two manners in which the single creation exists and can be apprehended.

The whole intelligible world seems mystically imprinted on the whole sensible world in symbolic forms, for those who are capable of seeing it, and conversely the whole sensible world subsists within the whole intelligible world, being rendered simple, spiritually and in accordance with intellect, in its rational principles. The sensible is in the intelligible in rational principles, and the intelligible is in the sensible in types.

(*Myst.* 2.669C)

‘Type’ (*tupos*) refers here to the sensible representation of a heavenly reality, as a bishop is a type of Christ or baptism a type of the resurrection. In saying that ‘the intelligible is in the sensible in types’, Maximus presents the sensible world as a kind of cosmic Liturgy, the earthly enactment of an eternal heavenly drama. Conversely ‘the sensible is in the intelligible in rational principles (*logoi*)’, so that sensible objects have a higher level of existence, one at which their real meaning and purpose is revealed. Just as one cannot understand baptism except as a type

of the resurrection, so one cannot understand sensible objects apart from their *logoi*. The relationship is both semiotic and ontological, for the type both figures or represents the *logos*, and constitutes its immediate sensible presence.

The notion of the *logoi* of beings is one that Maximus adopts from earlier patristic authors, particularly Origen, Evagrius and Dionysius.⁹ As we shall see in a moment, to behold – or better, hear – the *logoi* within creation is for Maximus an important goal of the spiritual life. First, however, some important questions must be addressed: are the *logoi* created or uncreated, and what is their relation to the divine *Logos*, the second person of the Trinity? Maximus' answer returns us to the all-important balance of the apophatic and kataphatic:

The highest, apophatic theology of the *Logos* being set aside (according to which He is neither spoken nor thought, nor in general is any of the things which are known along with another, since He is supersubstantial and is not participated by anything in any way), the one *Logos* is many *logoi*, and the many are one. The One is many by the goodly, creative, and sustaining procession of the One into beings; the many are One by the returning and directive uplifting and providence of the many to the One as to an almighty principle, or a centre which precontains the principles of the rays that go out from it, and as the gathering together of all things.

(*Ambig.* 7.1081B–C)

This might seem to be a dual-aspect theory: considered in one way the *Logos* is neither spoken nor thought, considered in another it is the many *logoi*. However, Maximus emphasizes that the one *Logos* becomes many by His 'procession into beings', and that the many are one by the inverse movement of providence. The procession at issue here is a voluntary act, both in the weak sense that it is in accordance with the divine will, and in the stronger sense that it is deliberately chosen. The most decisive evidence on this point is Maximus' discussion of creation in the *Centuries on Charity*, which states that the creation is not coeternal with God and that God created 'when He wished (*hote eboulēthē*)' (*Cent. Char.* 4.4). Maximus also quotes with approval Dionysius' description of the *logoi* as 'divine acts of will' (*theia thelēmata*), which again indicates that each *logos* is specifically and individually intended (*Ambig.* 7.1085A). The statement that 'the one *Logos* is many *logoi*' must therefore be understood as presupposing the divine decision to create; *given* that decision, the *logoi* are the articulated content of the *Logos*, His manifestation within the created world. Thus they are uncreated but have a content that is determined by God's creative intent.

⁹ See Origen, *Commentary on John* 1.19.114, 34.244, 13.42.280, 19.5.247; Evagrius, *On Prayer* 52, 80, *On Discrimination* 20, *Gnostic Chapters* 1.20, 23, 2.35, 36, 45, 5.12, 17, 19; Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* 5.8 824c.

One can contrast the *logoi* in this respect with the ‘things around God’ discussed earlier. God presumably does not choose to be, to live, to be wise, and so on, although he does choose the particular ways in which these attributes are expressed. It seems, then, that both the ‘things around God’ and the *logoi* are divine acts of self-manifestation, but the former would belong to God even apart from the creative act, whereas the latter would not.

TRANSFORMED HUMANITY

How does one become capable of perceiving the intelligible in the sensible? To understand Maximus’ answer, one must first understand his diagnosis of our present condition. Maximus follows Gregory of Nyssa in teaching that man was originally created without the passions of pleasure, grief, desire, fear, and the like, save for a natural desire for God and pleasure in His presence (*Quest. Thal.* 1 and 61). After the Fall, we became subject to the passions as well as to natural and social inequality, corruption and death. In Maximus’ terms, there is now a sharp incongruity between our principle of nature (*logos tēs phuseōs*), which was unchanged by the Fall, and our sinful and passion-ridden manner of existence (*tropos huparxeōs*). This rupture affects not humanity alone, but the entire created order. In a reworking of the traditional Platonic conception of man as microcosm, Maximus sees humanity as capable of uniting within itself the two poles of each of the five divisions of being: uncreated versus created, intelligible versus sensible, heavenly versus earthly, paradisiacal versus worldly, and male versus female (*Ambig.* 41).¹⁰ To perform this unification is the special vocation intended for us by the Creator. Because of our sinfulness, however, instead of transcending these divisions we find ourselves trapped within them.

It is against this background that one can understand Maximus’ treatment of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation the divine *Logos* took on human nature in a new *tropos huparxeōs*, one that was free of the ancestral curse passed down through human generation (*Ambig.* 42, *Quest. Thal.* 21). In taking on human nature, the *Logos* took on even human passions such as hunger, pain, and the fear of death, using them mercifully for the salvation of all (*Opusc.* 3 and 7, *Disp.* 297B–C). He thus joined human nature to ‘a manner of being that is beyond nature’, opening up to all the possibility of this new manner of existence. The result is that, in a phrase Maximus borrows from Gregory Nazianzen, ‘the natures are instituted afresh’. ‘Natures’ here is plural because, in restoring human nature,

¹⁰ Here each division after the first is a subdivision of the second half of that preceding. For the source of these divisions see Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1.270–2, 2.6.66 and *On the Making of Man* 16.

Christ also fulfilled the human vocation to unite the five divisions of being. By living sinlessly with no need of intercourse, he transcended the division of male and female; by passing to paradise upon his death and then returning to be with his disciples, he transcended the division between the inhabited world and paradise; by his ascension he transcended the division between earth and heaven; by passing bodily through 'all the divine and intelligible ranks of heaven', he transcended the division between the sensible and the intelligible; and by appearing as a man before God the Father, he transcended the division between the created and uncreated. In this way 'he divinely recapitulates the universe in himself, showing that the whole creation exists as one' (*Ambig.* 41.1312A).

There remains to each individual the task of appropriating the manner of existence made available in Christ. The means to this end is, for Maximus, simply the Christian life in its fullest form: prayer, study of Scripture, liturgical and sacramental participation, ascetic self-denial, the struggle against the passions, and the active practice of the virtues, especially charity. Maximus sees these various elements as therapeutic for the different parts of the soul: 'almsgiving heals the passionate part of the soul, fasting extinguishes the appetitive part, and prayer purifies the mind and prepares it for the contemplation of the things that are' (*Cent. Char.* 1.79). Later he explains in more detail:

There are certain things which check the passions in their movement and do not allow them to increase, and others which diminish them and cause them to decrease. For example, fasting, labour, and vigils do not allow appetite [or lust, *epithumia*] to grow, while solitude, contemplation, prayer, and love for God decrease it and make it disappear. Similarly in the case of passion [or anger, *thumos*], long-suffering, the forgetting of offences, and meekness check it and do not allow it to grow, while charity, almsgiving, kindness, and benevolence cause it to diminish.

(2.47)

Plainly the different elements of the spiritual life are not segregated from one another; prayer aids in the struggle against the passions, as does the practice of charity, and as the passions are overcome these practices in turn come to feel more natural. Maximus does not envision the goal as the absence of passion, however, but as the redirection of the appetites and passions toward God. Although he follows long-established custom in using the Stoic term *apatheia* to designate this goal, he defines it merely as 'a peaceful state of the soul by which it becomes resistant to vice' (1.36). The sign of *apatheia* is a mind that is undisturbed in prayer (1.88).¹¹

¹¹ See also, in more detail, the four stages of *apatheia* at *Quest. Thal.* 59.544C-D.

The transformation of the passions is accompanied by a transformation of the senses. In *Ambigua* 21 Maximus develops an elaborate correlation between the five senses and the five faculties of the soul: sight is an image of intellect, hearing of discursive reason, smell of passion (*thumos*), taste of appetite, and touch of the vivifying faculty.¹² The four cardinal virtues come about by the interweaving of the members of each pair as they are exercised correctly, so that temperance, for example, results from the interweaving of the appetitive faculty with taste when each is directed to the appropriate object. These virtues in turn are interwoven to form wisdom and meekness, and from these there comes the most comprehensive virtue of all, charity. The cumulative effect of this process is that the senses are rendered rational (*logistheias*, 1249B). They then ‘gently order the faculties of the soul by their own perceptions of the *logoi* in beings; and through these *logoi*, as in a written text, God the *Logos* is recognized by those sharp-sighted with regard to truth’ (1248B). The transformation of the senses is also an awakening, or opening, to the divine presence in the sensible world.

Maximus, following patristic terminology, calls this transformation *theōsis* or deification. Deification is the reciprocal movement toward God made possible by the Incarnation. As Maximus writes regarding charity:

Nothing is so conducive to justification or so fitted for deification . . . as mercy offered with pleasure and joy to those who stand in need. For if the *Logos* has shown that the one who is in need of having good done to him is God – ‘inasmuch as ye have done it’, he says, ‘unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me’ (Matt. 25.40), and he who speaks is God – then He will much more show that the one who can do good and does it is truly God by grace and participation, because he has taken on in proper imitation the activity and characteristic of His own beneficence.

(*Myst.* 24 713A–B)

The concept of deification is the social and anthropological side of Maximus’ general vision of the presence of the intelligible within the sensible. It is also the essential complement to his apophaticism. God is beyond human thought or utterance because He possesses no form; yet He willingly takes on form in one whose passions and senses have been opened to divine reality and whose will is conformed to His own. This process in effect recapitulates the Incarnation: ‘so the human being is made God, and God is called and appears as human’ (*Ep.* 2.401B). Maximus even goes so far as to say that ‘God and man are paradigms one of another, for as much as God is humanized to man through love of mankind, so much is man able to be deified to God through charity’ (*Ambig.* 10.1113B). That God takes man as His paradigm is perhaps the height of divine

¹² See *Ambig.* 21.1248A–1249C (translated in Nellas 1987: 216–18).

condescension, and the most surprising way in which the unseen God becomes palpably manifest within the world.

TIME AND ETERNITY

Maximus' ontology and his understanding of deification come together in his teaching about time and eternity. This teaching, like so much else in Maximus, is a development of that of Pseudo-Dionysius. The latter holds two apparently contradictory positions: that God is 'the eternity of things that are, the time of things that come to be', and that God 'transcends both time and eternity, and all things in time and eternity' (*DN* 5.4.817C, 5.10.825B). This duality strongly suggests that time and eternity are among the divine processions, for to hold both that God is *x* and that God transcends *x* is how Pseudo-Dionysius typically speaks of the processions. The question such a view raises, however, is what it means to think of time as a divine procession in light of the close association between time and the created world. The Greek Fathers generally followed Plato in holding that time came into being with the sensible cosmos.¹³ Does not this imply that its status is that of a creature?

John of Scythopolis attempts to clarify the Areopagite's teaching on this point. He first defines eternity, in a way reminiscent of Plotinus, as 'the life that is unshaken and all together at once, already infinite and entirely unmoving, standing forth as a unity'.¹⁴ He then distinguishes time as a divine procession from time as a creature. The former is time in the truest sense; it is an unfolding or explication of divine eternity which was initially at rest in God, but 'shone forth' in the creation of sensible objects. Created time consists in the movement of those objects as it is divided into intervals and measured by time as a divine procession. (As John observes, we often call by the same name both the measure and that which is measured, as we may call a certain length of wall a cubit.) So both eternity and time are divine processions, but the former is the divine life itself, whereas the latter is the shining forth of that life in the creation of sensible objects.

John's exegesis of the Areopagite effectively elevates the status of time beyond that of a creature to that of an act of divine self-manifestation. It was left to Maximus to follow through the implications of such a view. Maximus devotes a long scholium to the remark of Dionysius that temporal terms such as 'was', 'will be', 'came to be', and 'will come to be' are 'properly hymned' of God

¹³ For example, Basil, *Hexaemeron* 1.5.

¹⁴ John of Scythopolis, *Scholia on the Divine Names* (Migne PG 4.316A); cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* 3.3.7.37-9.

(DN 5.8.824A). This statement is already a striking repudiation of the Platonic principle that temporal terms properly apply only to the sensible world (*Tim.* 37e–38a). Maximus goes a step further than even Dionysius, stating that such terms are in fact ‘fitting to no one other than to God, because in Him “was” is contemplated as higher than every first principle’ (PG 4.328A). In effect, Maximus applies to temporality the Dionysian principle that ‘caused things pre-exist more fully and truly in their causes’ (DN 2.8.645D). He concludes that God ‘was’ and ‘will be’ in a higher sense than creatures, for all pastness and futurity derive from Him.

Such a view also implies a positive evaluation of the role of temporality in the life of creatures. Maximus’ views on this point emerge in the course of an elaborate allegorical interpretation of the Transfiguration. He takes Moses and Elijah as images, respectively, of time and nature, both come to pay homage to Christ. The reason that Moses is a fitting figure of time is that, like time, he does not enter into the Holy Land with those he escorts to it. Maximus explains:

Such is time, not overtaking or accompanying in movement those whom it is accustomed to escort to the divine life of the age to come . . . For even if otherwise the *logoi* of time abide in God, there is manifest in a hidden way the entry [into the Promised Land] of the Law given through Moses in the desert to those who receive the land of possession. For time is eternity, when it ceases from movement, and eternity is time, whenever, rushing along, it is measured by movement; since by definition eternity is time deprived of movement, and time is eternity measured by movement.

(*Ambig.* 10.1164B–C)

Maximus here restates the traditional Platonic understanding of time as the ‘moving image’ of eternity in a deliberately symmetrical fashion that presents each as the other in a different form. This fundamental theme of equivalence finds intriguing expression in the concept of the ‘*logoi* of time’. Like the *logoi* of beings discussed earlier, the *logoi* of time are the diversified expression of the Creator’s intent, but now understood specifically with reference to historical processes. According to Maximus, although Moses (time) does not enter the Promised Land, the Law given through Moses – that is, the *logoi* of time – does so. Historically, the Law entered the Promised Land precisely to the extent that it was embodied within the practice and observance of the Israelites. If we are justified in pressing this feature of the allegory, then the *logoi* of time return to their unity in God through their embodiment in the lives of those who enter into the ‘age to come’. Such a view is in keeping with Maximus’ general understanding of human obedience as the means by which God ‘takes shape’ in the world and ‘is called and appears as human’.

Maximus' view of time and eternity draws upon elements that are integral to the Platonic tradition, but takes them in a new direction, one that issues in a strikingly positive evaluation of the temporal aspect of human existence. Just as in his treatment of deification, Maximus finds value in time and the contingencies of the sensible realm because he sees in them above all an arena in which God expresses His being in a new mode.

THEORY OF THE WILL

As mentioned earlier, the monothelite controversy turned Maximus' work in a new and more polemical direction. The philosophical interest of this controversy lies primarily in Maximus' conceptual innovations regarding the will. Before setting these out we must first clarify some points of Greek terminology.

The key terms in the debate were *thelēma* and *thelēsis*. Both are nouns deriving from *thelō*, a verb meaning to wish or be willing. *Thelēma* is rare in classical Greek but appears frequently in the Septuagint and New Testament. There it has two meanings: will in the sense of determinate purpose or counsel (as in the phrase 'thy will be done' in the Lord's prayer), and will in the sense of an act of willing (as in the statement that God created the world by His will, Rev. 4.11). *Thelēsis* is rare in both the classical and koine periods, although it does appear ten times in the Septuagint and once in the New Testament. Properly speaking it ought to designate an act of willing, in keeping with the general meaning of the *-sis* suffix, but in practice its meaning tended to overlap that of *thelēma*. Neither was a technical philosophical term, and neither designated will in a third possible sense, that of a faculty of will. Indeed – as historians of philosophy have often pointed out – ancient Greek had no term for a faculty of will, understood as a capacity that operates independently of reason. It is true that Aristotle speaks of a deliberative faculty (*to bouleutikon*) and a desiring faculty (*to orektikon*), but deliberation is a function of reason, as is desire insofar as it includes rational wish (*boulēsis*).

The monothelite assertion of one *thelēma* and *thelēsis* in Christ was intended to safeguard his unity as an acting agent. Although it is not always clear whether the Monothelites had in mind Christ's faculty of will, act of willing, or determinate will, they probably meant to include all three. The objection raised by Maximus centred on the difficulty such a view creates for attributing any active role to the humanity of Christ. Maximus pointed repeatedly to the prayer of Christ in Gethsemane – 'Father, if you will, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will (*thelēma*) but thine be done' (Luke 22.42) – as indicating that Christ had a distinctly human *thelēma*, and that this *thelēma* was capable of standing in tension (although not necessarily outright contradiction) to the divine will. In

this verse *thelēma* no doubt refers to what we have labelled determinate will. Nonetheless, for such a difference to be possible Christ must also have possessed a distinctly human capacity for willing, and that is the point on which Maximus focused. (He preferred for the sake of precision to refer to the determinate will as that which is willed, *to thelēthen* or *thelēton*.) As he saw it, the recognition of two distinct faculties of will is a necessary corollary to the Chalcedonian affirmation of Christ's two distinct natures, divine and human, for without it such an affirmation would be empty.

Maximus defines this natural faculty of will as 'a faculty desirous of what is in accordance with nature, which holds together in being the attributes that belong essentially to a being's nature'. It is present in all living things, and when active is 'a simple rational and vital desire' (*Opusc.* 1.12C–13A). This definition probably owes something to the Stoic notion of *oikeiōsis*, the attachment all animals have to their own constitution and natural flourishing.¹⁵ However, Maximus emphasizes that in rational beings the natural will takes on a distinctive form which he describes variously as rational appetite (*logikē orexis*), desiderative mind (*nous orektikos*), and self-determination (*to autexousion*) (*Disp.* 293B, 301B–C, 317C). Will *qua* rational appetite is the master faculty governing the entire process that leads to intentional action: 'willingly (*thelontes*) we think, and wish, and search, and consider, and deliberate, and judge, and are inclined toward, and choose, and are moved toward, and use' (293B–C).¹⁶ Rational wish (*boulēsis*) and choice (*proairēsis*) are understood by Maximus as modes of *thelēsis* – the former as an act of will directed toward an object which may or may not be in our power, the latter as deliberative appetite directed specifically toward an object within our power (*Opusc.* 1.16B–C, 21D). This is an Aristotelian distinction which Maximus has probably received through the mediation of Nemesius of Emesa.¹⁷

Maximus also distinguishes from the natural will what he calls the 'gnomic will' (*gnōmikon thelēma*). Gnostic will is 'the self-chosen impulse and movement of reasoning toward one thing or another', or equivalently, 'an act of will in relation to a real or assumed good' (*Opusc.* 14.153A–B, *Disp.* 308C). So understood it may seem to be the same as rational wish, but Maximus emphasizes its hesitant and fallible character, and its capacity for evil as well as good. Evil, in fact, is nothing other than the difference of our gnostic wills from the divine will (*Opusc.* 3.56B). For these reasons Maximus denies that Christ

¹⁵ See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.85, and for the close verbal similarity between Maximus' definition and Stoic doctrine see Sorabji 2000: 337–9.

¹⁶ See also the similar passage at *Opusc.* 1.21D–24A, which makes it clear that these are meant as sequential stages.

¹⁷ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.2, 1111b19–26; Nemesius of Emesa, *On the Nature of Man* 33.49.

possessed a gnostic will, although allowing that he exercised rational wish via his human will.

The natural will as understood by Maximus is, in many ways, a Greek counterpart to the concept of *voluntas* in Augustine. The two are not identical, for Maximus does not think in terms of will-power or a divided will as does Augustine, and he does not assign the will any particular role in the emotions or in acts of perception, memory, imagination and belief. Nor does Augustine define the will, in Maximus' fashion, as rational appetite. What the two have in common is a conception of the will as guiding, rather than merely responding to, acts of reason, and therefore as the locus of human freedom and individual character. Yet there does not seem to have been any direct influence of Augustine upon Maximus.¹⁸ Maximus' theory has two essential components: will as an intrinsic drive toward self-preservation and natural flourishing, and the transformation of this drive in rational beings through reflection, deliberation and choice. Both elements are exhibited vividly in the prayer at Gethsemane, and, whatever his verbal indebtedness to the Stoics, it seems to have been mainly by pondering this episode that Maximus arrived at his views.

INFLUENCE

The influence of Maximus took different forms in the Christian East and West. In the East his works enjoyed wide circulation and were generally viewed as a touchstone of Christian orthodoxy, especially in matters of Christology. A sign of their importance is that John of Damascus, in his discussion of the two wills of Christ, for the most part simply paraphrases Maximus.¹⁹ Maximus' *Mystagogy* was a major influence on subsequent Byzantine interpretations of the Divine Liturgy, as well as (indirectly) in the development of the theology of the icon in the eighth and ninth centuries. His understanding of the 'things around God' and the divine *logoi* played an important role in the Hesychast controversy of the fourteenth century, especially in the work of Gregory Palamas. His works of spiritual direction also continued to be widely read, as can be seen by their extensive representation in the *Philokalia*, an eighteenth-century compilation of ascetic texts which serves as an authoritative (though unofficial) canon of Eastern Orthodox monasticism.

In the West Maximus was influential mainly as a commentator on Pseudo-Dionysius. In the ninth century Anastasius Bibliothecarius translated the *Scholia*

¹⁸ It is surprising that Maximus never mentions Augustine, despite spending fifteen years in Carthage and several years thereafter in Rome. At most there may have been some minor points of unacknowledged influence, as argued by Berthold 1982.

¹⁹ John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith* 2.22.

to accompany his revision of Eriugena's translation of the Dionysian corpus. Although Anastasius was aware that some were by Maximus and some by John of Scythopolis, the marks by which he attempted to indicate the distinction were soon lost, and they circulated simply as the work of Maximus. In this form the *Scholia* were read by a wide range of medieval figures including Bernard of Clairvaux, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Meister Eckhart, and Nicholas of Cusa. Eriugena had already made translations of the *Ambigua ad Joannem* and *Questions to Thalassius*, but they were not widely circulated and seem to have had little influence other than on Eriugena himself. There was also a paraphrase of the *Mystagogy* by Anastasius, a translation of the *Centuries on Charity* by Cerbanus, and a retranslation of parts of the *Scholia* by Robert Grosseteste, but they too do not appear to have circulated widely. Other than as a commentator on Dionysius, Maximus' greatest influence was through his theory of the will, which reached the West via John of Damascus and became an integral part of scholastic thought on the subject.

JOHN SCOTUS ERIUGENA

WAYNE HANKEY AND LLOYD P. GERSON

Eriugena, master of the liberal arts, translator, philologue, poet, philosopher and theologian, developed the most systematic and radical form of Platonism in the Latin West until Maître Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa – both, directly or indirectly, under his influence. His accomplishment is the more remarkable because made almost entirely without access to non-Christian authors, by drawing out philosophy largely from theological writings – into which genres his own works also almost entirely fall. After Boethius, he was the first to draw together the Greek and Latin Platonisms and the resulting system enabled his reconciliation of Latin and Greek Christian theology. For him the Latin Fathers were foundational – pre-eminently Augustine, importantly crucially Boethius, and also Ambrose.¹ They are contained within a single logical structure with the Greek Fathers, whose writings are known to him and influential even before he made his famous translations. Eriugena's reconciliation was accomplished by extending the primarily Plotinian and Porphyrian Platonism of the Latins in the direction of crucial notions from Iamblichus, Proclus and Damascius transmitted by the Greeks. The conclusion of Hellenic philosophy John encounters indirectly by way of Boethius, the Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor – to name the most influential sources. In general, in the Latin Middle Ages, when the earlier Platonism of Augustine met the later, most authoritatively through the Pseudo-Dionysius, 'this highest theologian' (*Expos.* 4.189), the latter established the encompassing logic. Eriugena established the norm. Following the Plotinian and Proclean interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* into meontology, for Eriugena, the divine 'nothingness by excellence' (*Peri.* 3.681A) is 'beyond all things which are and which are not' (*Peri.* 3.681C). This divine nature, which is said not to be 'because of its ineffable excellence and incomprehensible infinity' (*Peri.* 3.634B), comprehends

¹ The *Patrologia Latina* edition of Eriugena provides a common system of reference, thus, we give, where available, its column numbers. We quote from the latest critical edition where one exists; for the *Periphyseon*, this is the text of Jauneau 1996–2003. Translations are those of Hankey.

being. By plunging into it, Eriugena enters the brilliance of a darkness where Augustine can no longer be his guide.²

1 LIFE AND WRITINGS

Although he does not call himself ‘Eriugena’ until his translation of the Pseudo-Dionysius,³ we may accept that John was indeed a Scot – that is to say an Irishman – born and educated in Ireland. His Hellenophilia, language, script, and elements of his education, reflected in his writings, which include at least two commentaries on the *Marriage Between Philology and Mercury* of Martianus Capella, are characteristic of the Irish monastic schools. In succession to the Irish missionaries, their learned alumni established themselves in Gaul and Northern Italy. There was an Irish ‘colony’ at Laon in the third quarter of the ninth century and Irish scholars, pre-eminently Eriugena, here and elsewhere played an important role in the Carolingian Renaissance. From about 847, he was a teacher of the liberal arts at the (moveable) palace school of ‘the most glorious of catholic kings’ (*Trans. Dion. Prol. 1031A*), Charles the Bald (823–77), grandson of Charlemagne and Hellenophile patron of the arts and letters. John held no distinguished ecclesiastical office and it was probably the King’s patronage that protected him from the negative consequences of the condemnations which followed on his only intentional foray – made by invitation – into doctrinal controversy. He successfully developed the flattering arts of a royal poet. Some of his poems depict Charles in Greek imperial terms as a sacred monarch, and what may be one of his last texts, belonging to the same period as the unfinished *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, the poem, ‘Starry Halls’, celebrates the dedication of a church erected by Charles. He seems to have died during the 870s.⁴

By 850 Eriugena was sufficiently celebrated as a scholar that Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, and Pardulus, Bishop of Laon, urged him into ecclesiastical controversy. The result was his *Treatise on Divine Predestination*, composed in 851 or 852, where we begin to see some of his characteristic doctrines and methods but an alien tone. In the end it pleased neither those who opposed nor those who had commissioned it.

The trouble in the church had been started by a brilliant monk named Gottschalk using Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings to deduce the doctrine of

² Duclow 1977, Hankey 1998: 125–32, Carabine 2000: 34–43, Hankey 2002: 141–4, Rorem 2005: 105–12. For an alternative view where the accommodation is of the Greeks to Augustine, and both Platonisms to Christian trinitarian theology, see Crouse 1996.

³ *Hom. 10* Jeaneau = Jeaneau 1969: 10.

⁴ *Hom. 48–50* Jeaneau = Jeaneau 1969: 48–50.

double predestination – i.e., God directly wills both the election of the blessed and the damnation of those destined for eternal fire. While the evidence suggests that Gottschalk delighted in making trouble, and the language he used may give some justification, those who know him through the *Periphyseon* and the *Commentary* and *Homily* on John's Gospel will be shocked to discover Eriugena not only calling Gottschalk's Augustinian deductions 'most stupid and most crude insanities' (*De praed.* 1.4.360A) but also opining that he 'truly deserved to burn in oil and pitch' (*De praed.* 3.7.369D). Further, in contrast to his later eschatology, he judges that 'no one must doubt' that the fire of eternal punishment is 'corporeal' (*De praed.* 19.1.436D); nonetheless, this statement follows a highly subjective and spiritual vision of eternal punishment in the two preceding chapters. Eriugena seems determined to refute his adversary on Augustinian grounds. Despite philological evidence that his reading of the Greeks (Origen, Ps.-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa) had already begun, Augustine is 'that most acute investigator and asserter of truth' (*De praed.* 15.3.413C), and the Platonism of this treatise does not reach beyond that of Augustine and Boethius. In the numerous texts of Augustine he quotes, as well as in his arguments to prove the unity and simplicity of 'the one divine substance' (*De praed.* E.3.438C; cf. *De praed.* P.357B), God and his good will remain within the opposition between God as 'the highest being' (*De praed.* 3.3.366B; cf. *De praed.* 15.5.414C) and the non-being of evil. That non-being God can neither know or will. Eriugena's purpose is to maintain simultaneously divine predestination and grace, on the one hand, and human freedom, on the other (*De praed.* 4.1.370A). This is also the purpose of Boethius in books 4 and 5 of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and Eriugena's fundamental argument follows his. The solution of Boethius is located within a line passing from Porphyry through Iamblichus, Ammonius and Proclus. While Eriugena remains one with Boethius and Augustine, in making no recourse to the divine non-being in this treatise, he did not express himself conventionally or acceptably as far as his audience was concerned.

Eriugena's lapidary conclusion made no concessions to mythological religious language. Double predestination is inconsistent with the goodness and unity of God. His simplicity is of such a kind that predestination and God are one: 'the one eternal predestination of God is God and pertains only to those things which are and in no way to those things which are not' (*De praed.* E.3.438C). Moreover, he insisted that the means by which he had arrived at his flinty formula were essential to theology: the error on predestination had grown out of 'an ignorance of the liberal arts' and 'of the Greek writings in which the interpretation of predestination generates no fog of ambiguity' (*De praed.* 18.1.430C–D). Rightly interpreting Augustine, whose texts gave literal support to double predestination, would require the orthodox to cultivate both of these

more assiduously than their adversaries had done. This conclusion brought Eriugena's readers back to his first chapter and its assertion that 'true philosophy is true religion and conversely that true religion is true philosophy' (*De praed.* 1.1.358A), reproducing but intensifying Augustine (*C. Iul. Imp.* 4.14.72; cf. *De vera rel.* 5.8) so that philosophy and theology form 'a dialectically conditioned unity'. The mutual transformation of philosophical ideas and religious images which Eriugena would accomplish in the *Periphyseon* was only suggested here but, when combined with its other features, the publication of the treatise resulted in a torrent of extravagant personal abuse and supposed refutations. Its propositions were formally condemned by at least one local Church Council (Valence in 855); the Pope (in 859) confirmed *both* the doctrine of double predestination and redemption for all believers, and his patron, Archbishop Hincmar, was humiliated. Happily, the only evident effects on Eriugena were that in the future he stayed out of doctrinal controversy, that he did not again use the abusive language endemic to it, and that he took up the liberal arts and Greek more determinedly so that he was able even more completely to break through the figurative language of Scripture and theology to philosophical understanding.

Eriugena taught both the three linguistic (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and the four mathematical (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) arts at the court, and his annotated text-book is his most extensive work which approaches the character of philosophy as distinct from theology. We have it in two printed forms: his *Annotations* and his incomplete *Gloss* on the *Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, by the fifth-century pagan Platonist Martianus Capella. There are, however, doubts about the character of these printed texts, and many other glosses of *De nuptiis*, either by Eriugena himself or those associated with him, may exist in manuscript. What we have are valuable, nonetheless, because they show something of the character of his Irish education, give striking examples of how he relates mythological and philosophical forms, allow us to assess his learning 'since Martianus' encyclopaedia embraces nearly all the areas of knowledge available to the ninth century', frequently citing its sources by name. It and the *Gloss* give 'occasional mentions of diverse philosophical sects';⁵ in it Eriugena exhibits 'his knowledge of Platonism gathered from Macrobius, the *Timaeus* and Calcidius'.⁶ Despite some wishful readings, the *Annotations* do not give a new heliocentric theory of the heavens, and Eriugena had no 'idea of seeking truth by observation and so going beyond the literary tradition',⁷ but

⁵ Madec 1986: 149. ⁶ Marenbon 2007: 73.

⁷ Liebeschütz 1973: 57 with Erhardt-Siebold and Erhardt 1940: 15–16 and versus Lutz 1939: xviii–xx.

'follows a rationalist demythologisation of the allegory of Martianus in order to distil general scientific knowledge'.⁸

Philosophy is for him neither pagan, as opposed to Christian, nor mundane as opposed to theology, mystical interpretation and union.⁹ Gone since Boethius and the Pseudo-Dionysius is the 'critical confrontation between Christian and pagan philosophy where pagan philosophy is deemed acceptable or not according to Christian lights'.¹⁰ Further, and most importantly, just as the absence of metaphysics as a distinct philosophical discipline enabled or forced logic to become ontology within the Carolingian schools, so the lack of the philosophical sciences deriving from Aristotle required the liberal arts to play their role. In respect to both absences, Eriugena exploited the necessities they created to turn what he was given into essential elements within the dialectic of his systematized philosophical theology.

The arts are eternal forms innate to the mind and their cultivation, so far as by them the soul pushes itself back from sensible embodiment to thinking the underlying intelligible laws, and enables the soul to recollect itself and summon its own immortality. Eriugena writes that Martianus 'openly teaches that the study of wisdom makes the soul immortal. . . all the arts which the rational soul employs are naturally present in all men whether they make good use of them. . . and, for this reason, every human soul is made immortal by the study of wisdom which is innate in itself' (*Annot. in Marc.* 17.12). Crucially, because the forms are themselves living ideas in the divine and human minds, they (and the mind) are known only by the activity of creating and practising the arts, for humans both a sensible and a rational activity. The soul is made immortal by making what is innate in it. This paradox results from two developments in the Platonic tradition to which Eriugena is a creative heir, one of them much earlier than the other: the transformation of the Platonic Forms into thoughts and the unification of abstraction and reminiscence. This understanding of the study of wisdom or philosophy, when taken with the dialectical interplay between it and religion asserted in the *Treatise on Predestination*, renders comprehensible his notorious comment, 'No one enters heaven unless through philosophy, the seed of splendours' (*Annot. in Marc.* 57.15). The context here, where 'a certain woman Philosophia speaks', who has the virtues and the arts at her disposition, brings to mind the *Consolation* of Boethius, which inspired the solution in the *Treatise*. The one who can open the door of heaven is Lady Philosophy; she does so in virtue of her ambiguity, her capacity to be earthly and heavenly, and even to pierce through the heavens, and thus, after a long submission to her,

⁸ Moran 1989: 44. ⁹ Madec 1986: 148–9. ¹⁰ Beierwaltes 1990: 57; cf. Crouse 1980.

she is able to raise the human soul to simple intuition in which the divine and human visions meet.

At the request of Charles the Bald, Eriugena undertook a new Latin translation of the manuscript of the Dionysian corpus with which King Louis the Pious had been presented by the Byzantine emperor in 827. Dedicated to Charles, the translation appeared around 860, having used and improved upon an earlier attempt by Hilduin, abbot of royal Saint-Denis, which then faded into the shadows. This became the first of a series of translations which would seem to have been inspired by what excited Eriugena about the Dionysian corpus: the *Ambiguities* and *Questions to Thalassius* of Maximus the Confessor, who is essential to interpreting the Pseudo-Dionysius, the matters treated in Gregory of Nyssa's *On the Creation of Humankind* must have been of great interest to Eriugena once he understood Dionysius through Maximus. Gregory's work would have seemed to complete and extend the *Hexaemeron* of Basil. If indeed, as it seems, he did translate Basil, the text is now lost. There is textual evidence of the same kind as for the *Hexaemeron* that he also produced a now also lost translation of the *Anchoratus* of Epiphanius. Eriugena's translations are determinedly literal; 'I am the translator of this work not the expositor' (*Trans. Dion. Prol.* 1032c), he wrote in his dedicatory Prologue to his Latin Dionysius, and he squarely faced the risk of being blamed for his faithful literalism. That consisted, according to the dominant medieval practice, not only in reproducing the Greek word for word in Latin, but also in replicating the Greek word order and grammatical structures. The sophisticated papal librarian at the time, Anastasius, while marvelling that an Irishman could have made the translation at all, expressed his dismay that the literalism left Dionysius unintelligible. What, however, made Eriugena's translation enduringly useful, and even irreplaceable as an interpretation, if not as a translation, was that, in contrast to Hilduin, he genuinely understood the thought of Dionysius and the others. Although there are problems at some very important points, the fundamental teaching got through, both to him and to his readers. Besides Eriugena's outstanding philosophical genius, this was due, in part, to his use, outside the translations, of paraphrase as constant endeavours to restate the teaching. In the end, Eriugena was a successful translator because he was a deeply philosophical expositor.¹¹

A consequence of the reciprocity between his philosophical development and his understanding of the Greek texts he translated, particularly those of the terrifyingly difficult Dionysius, is that we find a crucial mistranslation corrected by his later teaching in (a) the continuously amended *Periphyseon* (begun around 864), (b) the still later *Exposition of the Celestial Hierarchies* (between 865–870),

¹¹ Roques 1973, Kavanagh 2002: 71–6, Harrington 2004: 2, Rorem 2005: 47–75.

(c) in the *Homily*, which succeeds and complements the *Periphyseon*, and (d) in the incomplete *Commentary* on John's Gospel, belonging to the end of his life.¹² The works which follow the *Periphyseon* assume its characteristic doctrines, and, as in the case of the *Exposition*, do not 'present any substantial change in Eriugena's thought', but rather nuances, and different angles from which to view, or different images with which to present, the same substance. In consequence, we shall not treat their doctrinal content individually, but allow it to come out in the general consideration of Eriugena's teaching, which will be based on the *Periphyseon*. Before turning to that, we must look, however, at his crucial misreading of Dionysius with respect to the divine nothingness.

Eriugena's philosophical movement, beyond his Augustinian foundation, to more a radical form of Platonism, where the divine infinite nothingness by excellence exceeds both being and non-being, required him to rethink the Dionysian text. It conveyed Plotinus' notion of a non-cognitive direct apprehension with which the soul seeking union with the first principle is struck. Eriugena was dissatisfied with his early translations and we find manuscripts with variants in his hand between the lines of the *Celestial* and of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. Michael Harrington has identified what distinguishes 'Eriugena's initial reading of Dionysius, as translator, from his further reading as composer of the *Periphyseon* . . . The *Periphyseon* radically emphasizes the non-cognitive character of the divine being and the unknowing which unites us to it, while the Dionysius translation tends to reduce this union to a form of knowing.'¹³ Crucial was his 'consistent rendering of the Greek *epekeina* (beyond) as *summitas* (summit)' in his translations. For Dionysius, in contrast, God is the darkness beyond the intelligible peaks of the mountain. 'By identifying God with the summit of the mountain, rather than the darkness above it, Eriugena includes God among those objects of intellectual activity.'¹⁴ In the *Periphyseon* and subsequent works, however, God assumes his proper Platonic and Dionysian character as beyond thought and being.

2 THOUGHT

2.1 *The Periphyseon and its First Principle*

The *Periphyseon* is a systematic philosophical theology explicating the structure, and the beginning and end, of the universe in the form of a dialogue between a master or 'Nutritor' and his 'Alumnus' or disciple. The pupil is active; he draws out the master's thought by asking questions and raising real problems

¹² *Hom.* 48–50 Jeaneau = Jeaneau 1969: 48–50.

¹³ Harrington 2004: 22. ¹⁴ Harrington 2005: 137.

and objections. He is well educated, and often represents someone who had an entirely Latin, though excellent, education; perhaps he is Eriugena himself before he awoke to deeper philosophical understanding through his reading, translation and reflections on the Greeks. Certainly Eriugena remained in dialogue with himself in the *Periphyseon*, just as he deepened his understanding of the first principle during his advance toward writing it. In 2003, Édouard Jeuneau completed, in five volumes, a publication of the text with significantly differing versions owed to Eriugena himself; he showed that the author left, not a finished canonical work, 'but a text in perpetual becoming'.¹⁵ Revision was not only a feature of the completed work but also of its initial writing. Because 'Eriugena has an irrepressible penchant for digressions and for returning to past subjects',¹⁶ the initial plan, in which the four divisions of nature would have been treated in four books, is modified so that a fifth book is added.

The *Periphyseon* may be regarded as composed of (1) a consideration of whether, and then how, the *Categories* of Aristotle may be predicated of God, (2) together with a philosophical treatment of the works of the six biblical days of creation (a hexameron), derived from Philo Judaeus via the Latin and Greek Fathers, (3) which concludes with a massive eschatology corresponding to the seventh day of rest. Crucial to the reception of the *Categories* was a fourth-century summary, the *Ten Categories* (*Categoriae decem*), falsely ascribed to Augustine in the Carolingian schools, and important in their curriculum. Owing to Porphyry, Augustine and Boethius, thinking about the *Categories* was inescapable for Latin theologians in this period. Nonetheless, in Eriugena, later Greek Platonism transforms everything. He takes the exact opposite position to the standard Aristotelian theses: (1) the distinction between primary and secondary substances, (2) the ontological priority of individuals, and (3) the denial of the real existence of universals. Thus, 'taking as his point of departure Aristotelian terminology and concepts, he goes on to rethink them and reformulate them so as to obtain a radically Platonic position'.¹⁷

By way of the unification of affirmative (kataphatic) and negative (apophatic) theologies in Dionysius, the categories become the means not only of elevating God beyond all finitude, but also of his creating himself and all else through what he knows and perceives in the human mind – whose categories have thus become ontological building blocks of the universe. In doing this, Eriugena, primarily via the Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, reaches back to Iamblichus and reworks a logical figure whereby he had made the categories applicable to the intelligible realm. Michelle Wilband has shown how, in the

¹⁵ Jeuneau 1996a: xix. ¹⁶ Jeuneau 1996a: xiii. ¹⁷ Erismann 2002: 13.

kataphatic use of the categories, which succeeds their negation in respect to the divine, they are not only intelligible realities, but are ‘the ultimate constituents of the universe and the only means by which it can be known’.¹⁸ Thus, place and time become fundamental to God’s self-definition by which everything comes to be. Only God is infinite; all else is limited by where and when, which, as conditions of the coming into being of things, are not prior in time ‘but only in respect of creation, to all things that are in the universe. Necessarily that which contains is understood before that which is contained, just as the cause precedes the effect’ (*Peri.* 1.482C).

Eriugena gave his defining work a Greek title, *Periphuseōn*, *Concerning Nature* (*Expos.* 2.168A); it is a *phusiologia*, a science of nature (*Peri.* 4.741C), a term he would have found in Gregory of Nyssa (*De hom. opif.* 1). As has become clear, Eriugena’s First Principle, as he understands it in this work, matches its subject. Nature includes ‘what is and what is not’ (*Peri.* 1.441A) and the divine nothingness through excellence, ‘beyond all things which are and which are not’, is its principle. The division of nature, a title generally given to the work, though not by its author, would seem to have been intended as the ‘division of the work’.¹⁹ Nature is completely divided logically, and returns to itself according to the same logic: ‘first, into that which creates and is not created, second into that which is created and creates, third into that which is created and does not create, fourth, that which neither creates nor is created’ (*Peri.* 1.441D). These divisions produce four subjects: (1) God as creator, (2) the primary causes, (3) what is subject to generation in space and time, the labours of the hexameron, including the human – the work of the sixth day – and its fall, which as the end of the procession becomes the point of departure for the return into (4) God as end, the final object of investigation. The structure is obviously that of a late Platonic *monē*, *proodos*, *epistrophē*. This sketch conceals more than it reveals, however, not only because the anthropology expands itself into an unplanned book, but, more importantly, because there are no absolute objects. In the late Platonic systems, the Forms have become not only thoughts but forms of apprehension, contemplations or the results of contemplation (*Enneads* 3.8 [30] 7.1–2). In Eriugena, as Stephen Gersh puts it: there are ‘thinkers who turn out to be objects of thought . . . [and] objects of thought which turn out to be thinkers’.²⁰ The *Periphyseon* is an interplay of subjectivities, and the divisions of nature are perspectives on God, theophanies, of which he is the author.

At the very beginning, we are warned that perspective is fundamental and constitutive. The Nutritor, before explaining why his subject is nature, reveals that the most fundamental division of all things is between what can be

¹⁸ Wilband 2008: 84. ¹⁹ Jauneau 1996a: xi. ²⁰ Gersh 2006: 156.

perceived by the spirit – his terms are general enough to include sensible perception and conceptual knowing – and what exceeds its grasp. The first are the things which are and the second are what are not (*Peri.* 1.441A). Further, immediately after the four divisions are listed and their logical interplay is shown, five modes of the primal difference between the being which ‘falls within the perception of bodily sense or of the intelligence’, and what fleeing ‘not only sense but even all intellect and reason’ because of its excellence is not (*Peri.* 1.443A), are listed. That list is also programmatic.

As in the *Nous* of Plotinus (5.1 [10] 4.26–9), being and knowing are mutually relative, but in Eriugena, reaching back to the teaching of Proclus, communicated through Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, the first is the immediate omnipresent cause of the sensible as well as of the conceptual. With the Trinity ‘as absolute causality which constitutes its own being as an inner relatedness, Eriugena seized and decisively developed in his own mode of thought the modest starting points for an inner-trinitarian *theogonia* provided by Dionysius’.²¹ Eriugena writes: ‘the motion of the highest, three-fold and single, true goodness, immutable in itself, its simple multiplication, and its never exhausted diffusion from itself, into itself, back to itself, is the cause of all things, indeed is all things (*Peri.* 3.632D). This trinitarian causality takes him beyond Augustine, and he is also carried further than Dionysius by Maximus for whom ‘God’s omnipresence to creation is that of a non-spatial and a temporal being to a realm characterized by space and time as inseparable concomitants’.²² Thus, the being which constitutes everything surpasses hierarchical order: *Ousia* is ‘not more fully in the most general genus than in the most particular species, nor is it less in the particular species than in the most general genus’ (*Peri.* 1.492A).

2.2 Anthropology and epistemology

The reciprocity between subject and object which prevailed in the *Nous* of Plotinus is re-established in Eriugena on a new basis and with a greater extension. In the *Periphyseon*, and in the works which follow it, the human is the medium by which God creates himself and the universe of beings precisely because it embraces all the forms of knowing and ignorance, including sensation. Drawing upon Gregory of Nyssa, while writing the *Periphyseon*, Eriugena came gradually to this understanding of human nature so that, more than being ‘that in which all things could be found (*inerat*)’, it became ‘that in which all things are created (*condita est*)’²³ (*Peri.* 4.807A). Thus, although reality is a matter of

²¹ Beierwaltes 1994: 13. ²² Gersh 1980: 58.

²³ Zier 1992: 80; cf. *Hom.* 19.294A–D with Jauneau’s notes, Jauneau 2000: viii–xxiv.

human perspective, because the human is essential to the divine self-knowing and self-creation, human subjectivity with its diverse perspectives is objectively constitutive of what is. Michael Harrington has outlined the functioning of this creative subjectivity: (1) Apart from a perceiving subject no difference exists between the first and the fourth divisions of nature; they are our contemplations of God as beginning and as end (*Peri.* 2.527A–B). (2) The second and third divisions are also creations of the human mind, because created nature ‘presents itself to those contemplating it under a double mode’ (*Peri.* 3.689A).²⁴ (3) Within the third division: first, ‘cause and effect are two sides to the same creature – the creature as beyond knowledge, and the creature as manifest to knowledge’; second, ‘God and creature are two sides of one nature’.²⁵ (4) In respect to the human, the fall, which, with Gregory and against Augustine, is no more temporal than Paradise is a place, is a matter of perspective: ‘the human subject may see its own nature in its differentiation [turned outwards toward sensible multiplicity] (as fallen), or in its unity (as unfallen)’.²⁶ (5) For Eriugena, the creation of the world, and thus the manifestation of the divine Trinity, depend upon the differentiating capacity of the human mind and, consequently, the fall. In this interdependence of God and the human, Eriugena writes that the human ‘in paradise before his sin fell short [of likeness to God] in nothing except in respect of subject’ (*Peri.* 2.585A; cf. *Peri.* 4.778A). Christ exists through himself; the human requires Christ. For the human, this difference amounts once again to two different starting-points.

The human is one with the divine starting-point so far as the human mind, like the divine, is nothing, and directly knows only that it is, not what it is: ‘For as God is comprehensible when from the creature it is deduced that he exists, and incomprehensible because by no human or angelic intellect, not even by his own, can what he is be understood (since he is not a thing, but is superessential), so it is only given to the human mind to know that it is, what it is in no way is open to it’ (*Peri.* 4.771C–D).

Both God and the human come to cognizable being by making. ‘The divine nature . . . by creating itself begins to know itself in something’ (*Peri.* 3.689B). The human proceeds to knowledge by a creative abstraction which Eriugena compares to the way the eternal liberal arts come to be in the human. What he touches by his corporeal sense are ‘in a certain way created in me’. Because, the *Alumnus* testifies, when I ‘imprint the phantasiums of them in my memory, and when I treat these things within myself, I divide, I compare, and, as it were, I collect them into a certain unity, I perceive a certain knowledge of

²⁴ Harrington 1998: 125. ²⁵ Harrington 1998: 125; cf. *Peri.* 3.678c.

²⁶ Harrington 1998: 131; cf. Moran 1989: 157–60.

the things which are external to me being made within me' (*Peri.* 4.765C; version 5). He compares this becoming to 'concepts of intelligibles . . . as for example the concept of the liberal arts' which only the mind contemplates, and which he understands 'to be born and become' in himself (*Peri.* 4.765D). The essential link between making and knowing comes out when we consider that the real being of the substances of things is, like God and the human mind, incomprehensible: 'Gregory the theologian confirms with many reasons that no substance or essence, either of a visible or an invisible creature is able to be comprehended by intellect or reason' (*Peri.* 1.443B). This is a late Platonic commonplace and follows from the fact that the real being of every substance is in the incomprehensible first principle. Eriugena's epistemology derives from Iamblichus and Proclus for whom we come to ourselves and move toward our inner unity with the principle by a creative projection. Ultimately, for him 'production is thinking' and thinking is creation.

CONCLUSION

From two fundamental notions: God creates himself, and God is nothing, Eriugena concludes that the nothing from which God creates is himself. Alumnus is troubled both by the premisses and by the conclusion. The result is a long treatise on nothing at the midpoint of *Periphyseon* (*Peri.* 3.634–88). Because there is no other from which the universe can be made, Nutritor concludes that 'God is the nothing of the things which are and which are not,' (*Peri.* 3.687B) not as privative, like matter, but, as infinitely full. Gregory is the source for a related doctrine: 'matter is nothing else than a certain composition of accidents which proceeds from invisible causes to visible matter' (*Peri.* 1.479B; quoting *De hom. opif.* 24). Nutritor recalls this doctrine midway through the treatise on nothing to show how what is comes from nothing: 'for quantities and qualities, although in themselves they are incorporeal, yet when they come together into unity they produce formless matter, which, by the addition of incorporeal shapes and colours, moves into diverse bodies' (*Peri.* 3.663A, version 3). He goes on to consider the consequence of the fact that 'all bodies come from the elements, but the elements from nothing' (*Peri.* 3.663C). For Eriugena, nothingness underlies being, being emerges from it, and being returns into it.

PART VIII

PHILOSOPHY IN TRANSITION

INTRODUCTION TO PART VIII

In this concluding section, an overview is provided of the three streams of philosophical thought flowing out from late antiquity. The aim here is to show how ancient Greek philosophy and its Christianized versions were received.

Philosophy in early Byzantium seems to have been completely subordinated to theological and ecclesiastical ends. Nevertheless, that explicit constraint did not prevent the further exploration of the ontological and epistemological issues that constitute the permanent inheritance of the ancient Greek philosophical tradition. When the political and theological controversies between Latin West and Greek East later erupt, it will become evident that philosophical disputes, for example, regarding the interpretation of Aristotle's account of the activity of divinity, are much to the fore. With the fall of Byzantium in 1453, the exodus of Greek scholars to the West will provide the groundwork for another encounter of Greek philosophy with Christianity, this time with Scholasticism.

It is now increasingly a commonplace that the primary transmitters of ancient Greek philosophy to the West were the Arabic Muslim scholars of Alexandria and Baghdad and elsewhere who translated and thereby preserved a significant number of basic texts. It is not infrequently the case that these Arabic translations can fill in lacunae owing to the disappearance or defective condition of Greek originals. But it is in the construction of an Islamic philosophical theology that a fruitful and challenging encounter of one religious tradition with ancient Greek philosophy can be found. A premiss for this encounter was the reaffirmation of the harmony of Plato and Aristotle, and the essential integrity of Platonism. This is especially evident in the so-called *Theology of Aristotle* which is in a way for Islamic philosophical theology what the works of Pseudo-Dionysius are for its Byzantine counterpart.

This work concludes with a sketch of the transformation of an array of critical problems in ancient Greek philosophy into a recognizably medieval context. Undoubtedly, an absolute division between ancient and medieval is artificial.

There is, however, a subtle difference between the early encounters between Christianity and ancient Greek philosophy and the later ones. In the former, at least from the Christian perspective, Greek philosophy was explored as a potential contributor to the foundation of theology; in the latter, Greek philosophy (and the subsequent Arabic Islamic interpretation of it) was explored when that foundation had already been laid. This second-order reflection constituted something new, as is evident from the study of Scholastic texts.

EARLY BYZANTINE PHILOSOPHY

KATERINA IERODIAKONOU AND
GEORGE ZOGRAFIDIS

I PRELIMINARY ISSUES

The study of early Byzantine philosophy raises certain preliminary issues that one needs to bear in mind from the start, for they concern the very definition of this field of scholarly research. It is only sixty years ago, when Basil Tatakis' *La philosophie byzantine* (1949) appeared as a supplement in Emile Bréhier's *Histoire de la philosophie*, that Byzantine philosophy emerged as a subject matter worth investigating in the history of philosophy. There is no doubt that the attitude towards Byzantine philosophy and its different periods has in the meantime changed considerably, but it is still helpful to first investigate its credentials as a legitimate part of the history of philosophy, and thus to justify the inclusion of its early period at the end of a narrative on the philosophy of late antiquity. Let us, therefore, begin by commenting on the nature and status of our subject matter.

1.1 *Is there Byzantine philosophy?*

The question regarding the very existence of something that can be called 'Byzantine philosophy' is raised even in recent contributions,¹ although not in the same terms as in Tatakis' book. Sixty years ago the discussion was primarily focused on the possibility of and the conditions for the existence of a Christian philosophy, a more general issue that during the 1930s occupied principally the French historians of philosophy. The outcome of this discussion was to establish the study of a western medieval Christian philosophy, which had originated from the writings of the Christian Fathers and centred on the works of Thomas Aquinas. Tatakis undertook to do something analogous for the medieval East. That is to say, he carefully studied the works of Byzantine thinkers from the fifth to the fifteenth century, most of which were at the time still unedited,

¹ O'Meara 1991; Ierodiakonou 2002: 1–3; Kapriev 2002; Bydén 2003: 1–2; Trizio 2007.

and brought to the attention of the scholarly community their philosophical preoccupations, especially those in connection with the problems raised in the ancient philosophical tradition.

Nowadays the question about the existence of Byzantine philosophy is not a question concerning its originality, its systematic character, or its philosophical significance. The discussion among modern scholars mainly revolves around the criteria which should be adopted in order to assess this period of philosophical thought without imposing on it, and thus without judging it, on the basis of an anachronistic approach. For there is a general consensus that before we come to evaluate the contribution of the Byzantines in the history of philosophy, we should first at least try to find out and understand what they themselves took philosophy to be. In other words, we should try to apply a conception of philosophy that is appropriate for the period in question, so that our approach to Byzantine philosophy respects the internal criteria that the Byzantines themselves used when they were talking about philosophy.

To start with, there is considerable evidence testifying to the Byzantines' systematic interest in ancient philosophy. They copied and diligently studied the philosophical works of antiquity, used them for educational purposes, commented on them, and paraphrased them. In their engagement with the writings of the ancient philosophers, the Byzantines dealt with immediately recognizable philosophical problems. There is no doubt, however, that many times the context in which the Byzantine thinkers presented their ideas was clearly theological and the philosophical views they expressed were meant to be in close agreement with the dogmas of the Orthodox Church. This, of course, raises the much debated issue of the relation between Byzantine philosophy and Byzantine theology. For if we conceive of philosophy as a theoretical endeavour that should be completely separated from theological considerations, the existence of Byzantine philosophy is at stake. On the other hand, if we keep in mind that theology was an integral part of ancient philosophy during all its periods, and that it played a prominent role, especially in late antiquity, it would not make sense to exclude a period of thought such as the Byzantine from the canon of the history of philosophy. Still, since the relation between philosophy and theology determines in a significant way the character of Byzantine philosophy, there is a good reason to briefly investigate it further.

1.2 The 'autonomy' of Byzantine philosophy

Modern scholars tend to agree that the distinction between philosophy and theology throughout the Byzantine times remained intact, or in other words that philosophy in Byzantium enjoyed both theoretical and practical

(i.e., institutional) autonomy. But even if this is the case, we still need to examine (a) the kind and the degree of this autonomy, and (b) the outcome of this autonomy, i.e., whether or not and for what reason philosophy actually used its autonomous status. That is to say, it is worth investigating whether Byzantine philosophy had the intellectual strength and the institutional framework to take the responsibility to demarcate its own realm and to be self-governing.

The autonomy question has often been discussed in connection with the formula '*philosophia ancilla theologiae*', a formula that is traditionally considered to have prevailed during the Christian Middle Ages and to refer to the subordination of philosophy to theology. The autonomy of philosophy and its characterization as '*ancilla theologiae*' are of course in opposition; the autonomy of philosophy implies that philosophy neither has nor serves theology's objects and aims, and even if it has similar aims to theology it uses a different and independent method to attain them. It seems, however, that the formula '*philosophia ancilla theologiae*' could easily be misunderstood; for being presented as the servant of theology could have meant for Byzantine philosophy that at least it had a certain place and was not completely rejected. That is to say, it makes sense to think that the Christian thinkers who used this formula gave at least some, more or less prominent, status to philosophy and were opposed to their contemporaries who ardently discarded philosophy.

Therefore, when we speak of the autonomy of philosophy, we usually conceive of philosophy as being independent from theology, its method and its doctrines, and as being free to construct its own system. But philosophical discourse in Byzantium was also aiming at finding demonstrative reasons for things that the Byzantines were already certain about on the basis of non-philosophical grounds, namely, on the basis of their Christian faith. Moreover, philosophy was not supposed to inquire into the ultimate truth, and this *prima facie* restrained philosophy's freedom; in fact, it defined it. For if human reason has its limits, philosophy has to work within these limits, and in that sense it simply enjoys a limited freedom to investigate its various fields. So, it may have been that Byzantine philosophy developed its own methods, but its conclusions mostly had to be in agreement with theology and it had to remain silent in front of what is beyond comprehension. Besides, in a theocentric society such as the Byzantine we cannot expect absolute independence and self-enactment for any theoretical discipline.

It is this weaker sense of autonomy, then, that we can apply in the case of philosophy in Byzantium; and in applying it, we must keep in mind the following methodological issues:

- (a) The issue of the autonomy of Byzantine philosophy should be disconnected from that of its originality and philosophical significance. We cannot attest the

latter by establishing the former, and vice versa; for the lack of originality, for instance, does not necessarily entail the dependence of philosophy on theology. Hence, no value judgement is justifiable solely on the basis of our establishing or not the autonomy of Byzantine philosophy.

- (b) The tendency to put an emphasis on its autonomy may be justified in defending the study of Byzantine philosophy – if we still need to defend it. But once the autonomy of this field of scholarly research is accepted, we still have to investigate the intimate relations in Byzantine culture between philosophy, theology and rhetoric. After all, the activity and literary production of the Byzantine scholar who was engaged in the philosophical discourse was rarely devoted merely to this field.
- (c) Finally, it remains to be carefully investigated whether the question about philosophy's autonomy is our own projection onto Byzantine thought or whether the Byzantine thinkers themselves posed it, explicitly or implicitly, in an attempt to free philosophy from its alleged or real restraints. In other words, whether it was a genuine Byzantine problem or whether it is a legitimate technique to understand through a contemporary point of view certain aspects of Byzantine thought.

1.3 *Defining the character of Byzantine philosophy*

In early Byzantine texts (as in many more later on) we find definitions of philosophy which repeat with very slight differences the six classical definitions that were systematized by Platonic commentators such as Ammonius, David and Elias, and were attributed to Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle. The Byzantines did not always refer to the sources of these definitions, and if they did, they would sometimes refer to them erroneously.² According to these definitions, philosophy is:

- (a) knowledge of being as such (attributed to Pythagoras);
- (b) assimilation to God as far as humanly possible (Plato, *Theaetetus*);
- (c) knowledge of divine and human things (Pythagoras);
- (d) preparation for death (Plato, *Phaedo*);
- (e) art of the arts and science of the sciences (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*);
- (f) love of wisdom (Pythagoras).

These six definitions were usually presented along with the division of philosophy into a theoretical and a practical part, a division that the Byzantines inherited from the later Platonic tradition and left intact. The theoretical part concerns knowledge and includes physics (material things), mathematics (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, harmonics), and theology (immaterial entities: God, angels,

² E.g., John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters* 3.66; see also Michael Psellus, *Philosophica minora* 2, opus 49.

soul). The practical part concerns virtues and includes ethics, economics and politics. There is, of course, the problem about the place of logic in this scheme, and the Byzantines devoted some space in their works to discuss whether logic should be considered as a part or as an instrument of philosophy.

The Byzantines interpreted the six definitions in such a manner as to suggest a way to reconcile the theoretical and practical aspects of ancient philosophy with the Christian way of life. According to the early Christian Fathers and the Byzantine thinkers who followed them, true philosophy was presented as intrinsically connected with asceticism and monasticism. This may seem rather extreme and provocative, given the hostility of the illiterate ascetics towards ancient Greek philosophy, but it should not escape us that in late antiquity one could be called a philosopher just in virtue of his way of everyday life, without necessarily adhering to, or for that matter introducing, a certain philosophical system.

In the ninth century, George the Monk (*Chronicle* 1.345), and a century later the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (905–59) (*De virtutibus* 1.129), declared that Greek philosophy was not to be trusted, for one cannot philosophize without Christ; this is the reason why the Greeks and the Jews had been mistaken. Philosophy was thus presented as an exercise of the soul, and its main concern was the immunity from worldly and temporal pleasures. This is after all the way the philosopher can reach the ‘ultimate philosophy’ that has death as its privileged object (Photius, *Amphilochia* 1.59.115). Later on, in a more theoretical language Michael Psellus (*Chronographia* 3.34) aptly expresses this conception of philosophy, by drawing a sharp distinction between two different attitudes towards philosophy:

By ‘philosophers’ I do not here mean those who investigate the natures of beings and seek the principles of the universe and who neglect the principles of their own salvation. I mean those who despise the world and have indulged themselves in the things that are not of this world.

So the six definitions of philosophy that were used by the Byzantines clearly suggest that the characteristics which they themselves attributed to philosophy were so diverse that there is no point in talking of the ‘essence’ of Byzantine philosophy. In fact, there seem to be so many different elements that constitute Byzantine philosophy, elements which originate from the Greek philosophical tradition as well as from Christian dogma, so many thinkers who viewed themselves or were presented as engaged in philosophical discourse, so many kinds of texts in which philosophical questions were raised and discussed, that it would make no sense to try to find the ‘essence’ of Byzantine philosophy. Instead, it would perhaps be more promising to pay attention and try to shed

enough light on each one of these diverse features of Byzantine philosophy, no matter how scattered they may seem to be, so that they come clearer to the front and its study proves interesting. This is after all particularly important, since Byzantine philosophy is a relatively unknown field and there is still a lot of work to be done for the relevant texts to be edited, commented on and carefully assessed.

2 THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING

2.1 The beginning of Byzantine philosophy

The question regarding the beginning of Byzantine philosophy is actually still open – something not uncommon in the history of philosophy, as long as there is no consensus about the criteria we may adopt in order to draw a clear chronological division between the different historical periods. Adopting a political criterion would bring the beginning of Byzantine philosophy to as early as the fourth century, when there is evidence of the beginnings of the political and cultural differentiation of the eastern part of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, it has also been argued that Byzantine philosophy should be taken as conventionally starting in 529, the year Justinian closed the school of Athens and Stephanus from Alexandria (c. 550/55–after 619/20) began his philosophical career in Constantinople. It is more useful, however, to adopt a criterion that is connected with the development of the philosophical discourse itself; that is to say, it makes more sense to determine when a new period in the history of philosophy starts by taking note of the changes in the interests of the philosophers. In this case the beginning of Byzantine philosophy cannot be placed in the fourth century with the theological works of the Christian Fathers, and it cannot even be placed around the sixth century with John Philoponus who clearly belongs in the tradition of pagan philosophy, even if he criticizes it at certain places. It is more plausible, therefore, to think that, since the Byzantines' occupation with philosophy seems restricted during the seventh and eighth century, Byzantine philosophy acquires its main characteristics after the ninth century, or even better after the eleventh century, in the works of thinkers who managed to combine in a systematic way their interest in the ancient philosophical texts with their Christian world view.

Early Byzantine philosophy, then, may be said to cover the period from the fourth to the ninth century, or even better – and this is what we have adopted for the purposes of this chapter – the period from the seventh to the middle of the eleventh century. In particular, we distinguish two phases in early Byzantine philosophy:

- (a) The first phase from the seventh century until the middle of the ninth century constitutes the transition from late antiquity to the Middle Ages and is marked by the Iconoclastic crisis. Unfortunately, the scarcity of sources does not facilitate the full reconstruction of the educational setting and the philosophical production of this phase.
- (b) The second phase extends from the middle of the ninth century until the middle of the eleventh century, the period of the reconsolidation of Byzantium and of the so-called first Byzantine humanism. This phase ends with the renewed interest in letters that was initiated by the Komneni dynasty and the appearance of the first *stricto sensu* Byzantine philosopher, Michael Psellus (1018–after 1081).

2.2 *The intellectual and educational background*

Until the end of Iconoclasm in the middle of the ninth century the Byzantine Empire's wars against its external enemies, but even more the crisis of the cities' life and the disappearance of the local aristocracy, changed the cultural setting and minimized all intellectual activity. The literary life during the first phase of early Byzantine philosophy was mainly dominated by figures emerging from the monastic environment, like the historian Theophanes (c. 760–817) or the theologian Theodore the Stoudite. From the middle of the ninth century, however, intellectuals were mostly laymen, two emperors were first class writers, and many high officials and members of the clergy formed the new ruling elite that conducted the intellectual affairs of Constantinople. Needless to say, it was only in the eleventh century that the Byzantine intellectuals formed a separate professional and social group. Hence, the figure of the philosopher at this early period of Byzantine philosophy is to be found among the monks, the scholars, the learned, and the teachers of ancient philosophical texts.

Though, of course, Byzantine philosophy should not be identified with its classroom teaching, there is no doubt that it was closely interwoven with the educational processes in Byzantium, which were restricted to certain circles of intellectuals and only later on institutionalized. Besides, it was its continuous, even if sometimes basic, presence in education that ensured philosophy's survival through the difficult centuries of the first phase; for our scarce and not totally reliable sources (mostly the *vitae* of saints and texts from writers like John of Damascus and Theodore the Stoudite) suggest that the teaching of philosophy continued uninterrupted throughout the seventh and the eighth centuries. It consisted mainly of an elementary introduction to logic, i.e., of the study of Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Isagoge*. But it is also interesting to note that at least in the *Vita* of Nikephoros we find a list of chapter headings of

an unidentified handbook that contains an introduction both to logic and to physics.

From the middle of the ninth century, however, Platonic dialogues were also taught along with other classical texts, like the Homeric poems, tragedies, Demosthenes, and Isocrates. Things changed significantly from the middle of the eleventh century, when the so-called University of Constantinople was founded by Constantine Monomachos. Such institutions were private and their main purpose was to educate and prepare civil servants for their administrative posts. They received support from the emperor and the Church, but there was no central control of the curriculum. Philosophical courses started with logic, ethics, then physics and mathematics, and finally metaphysics. Rhetoric and grammar were also taught as well as the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and harmonics).

2.3 *Forms of philosophical literature*

During the period from the seventh to the eleventh century, the production of philosophical works was a random phenomenon within the circles of scholars and was not determined by a fixed curriculum in educational institutions. Furthermore, the philosophical texts which the Byzantines produced, either for educational purposes or by engaging in philosophical thinking, were of quite diverse forms; they were, for instance, compendia, commentaries, treatises, dialogues, and texts in question and answer form.

The compendia were used for the teaching of philosophy and they were mostly logical ones. Needless to say, few compendia exist from the seventh to the eleventh centuries, compared to the many that survived from the later periods. But there are some anonymous brief logical texts from the seventh century, in which logical terms and definitions are discussed (e.g., substance, subsistence, difference, accident). We find something similar also in Theodore of Raithou's (†637/49) *Preparation*, in Anastasios Sinaïta's *A Guide for Life*, and in Theodore Abu Qurra's (c.740–820/5) *Examination and Explanation of the Terms that Philosophers are Occupied With*. The anonymous compendium of 1008, the so-called *Anonymus Heiberg*, which is a synoptic but systematic overview of logic and the *quadrivium*, constitutes really an exception for this period, but was imitated during the Komnenian and early Paleologan times when many such compendia appeared.

The *Philosophical Chapters* of John of Damascus is a compilation that perhaps begins a new form of introductory handbook, suitable for elementary

philosophical education in the context of a Christian discourse.³ It is a selection of concepts and themes from the Aristotelian logical treatises and Porphyry's *Isagoge*, which serves as a preparation for his major theological work *Accurate Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. John's authority established the importance of the study of Aristotle's *Organon* and his method encouraged the selective use of ancient wisdom; at the same time he seems to have considered as futile the writing of lengthy commentaries in the late Platonic tradition.

In this early period there are no commentaries in the form of a continuous *exegesis* of an entire philosophical text (whereas there are theological ones), with the exception of Arethas' commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Isagoge*. There are, however, brief expositions of ancient philosophical texts with critical comments, for instance, Photius' synopsis of the ten categories (*Amphilochia*, quest. 137–47), and, of course, scholia in the margins of philosophical manuscripts.

There are also small treatises which deal with many different issues and attempt to settle difficult philosophical questions, for instance, Photius' treatise on genera and species (*Amphilochia*, quest. 77). Such treatises sometimes contain fragments from ancient philosophical texts, mainly from the Platonic commentators, and read as if the author meant to keep personal notes or to gather material for his teaching.

A few texts were written in the form of a dialogue, e.g., Germanos' *On Predestined Terms of Life*, John of Damascus' *Against the Manichaeans*, and the spurious *Dispute Between a Saracen and a Christian*, as well as the introductory dialogue between Philosophy and History in Theophylaktos Simokattes' (late sixth century) *Universal History*.

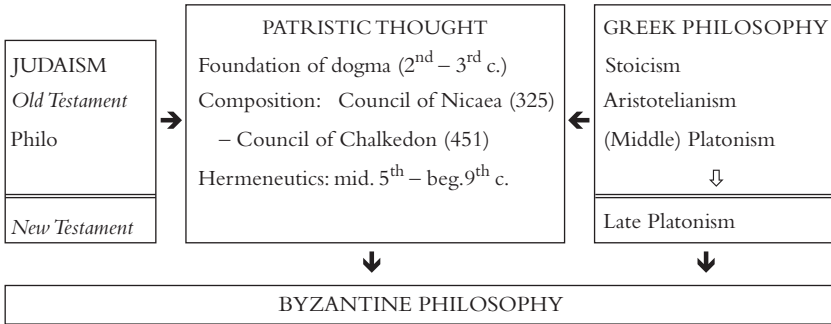
The genre of 'question-and-answer' works (*erōtapokrisis / aporia*), which was established by Maximus the Confessor, is represented by Anastasius Sinaita's *Questions and Answers*, Niketas Stethatos' (c. 1005–c. 1090) *Discourse in the Form of Question and Answer*, and, above all, Photius' *Amphilochia* that was actually written as an impressive collection of questions and responses, mainly on scriptural issues and few philosophical topics.

Finally, philosophical issues are also raised, even if only incidentally, in the hundreds of letters that survived from this period. The genre of epistolography was regenerated in the early ninth century and became extremely popular during the following centuries. For our period particularly important are the letters of Theodore the Stoudite, Photius, Arethas, Nicholas I Mystikos (852–925),

³ Cf. also the *Philosophical Chapters* of Anastasius I of Antiocheia, in which many definitions of philosophical terms are gathered that occur 'in the holy doctrines'.

Niketas David Paphlagon (late ninth – early tenth), the ‘Anonymous Professor’ (tenth century), and Niketas Magistros (c. 870–after 946).

3 THE SOURCES OF EARLY BYZANTINE PHILOSOPHY



3.1 Greek philosophy

There is no doubt that one of the main sources for the development of Byzantine philosophy was the Greek philosophical tradition. The dependence of the Byzantines on ancient thought and their direct or indirect dialogue with the texts of the ancient philosophers suggest that we should think of Byzantine philosophy as the continuation of Greek philosophy – even though there are obvious divergences from it.

(A) THE KNOWLEDGE OF AND THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS GREEK PHILOSOPHY The Byzantines’ knowledge of ancient philosophy was both direct and indirect. They were reading and studying the ancient philosophical texts from the original or from ancient handbooks and anthologies. The fact that there was no language barrier was, of course, significant. At the same time, they were also introduced to the doctrines of the ancient philosophers through the writings of the Christian Fathers who at times referred to them and tried to reconstruct them. Besides, a clear tendency towards classicism and the use of ancient prototypes can be detected in many different areas of Byzantine culture.

Moreover, the use of ancient philosophical texts for educational purposes, especially after the ninth century, meant that there was a need for diligently copying them, and thus transmitting them from generation to generation. There are more than a thousand Byzantine manuscripts which have preserved Aristotle’s works and 260 with Platonic dialogues. Not surprisingly, the logical

treatises from the Aristotelian *Organon* were copied most frequently, and in particular the *Categories* (approx. 160 mss.), the *De interpretatione* (approx. 140 mss.), the *Prior Analytics*, but also the *Nicomachean Ethics* (approx. 120 mss.) and the *Physics*.

The fact that the Byzantine scholars were eager to study and preserve the writings of ancient philosophers does not mean that they uncritically accepted their philosophical views. After all, they wanted to keep a clear distance from whatever pagan elements they detected in them. They greatly depended on the ancient philosophical terminology, but they also made use of the ancient logical and physical theories. They claimed that the ancients had managed to grasp the truth to a certain degree, and they could make use of their argumentative techniques in order to reject heresies.

The Byzantines' attitude towards Greek philosophy was diverse and depended on many factors, for instance, on their level of education and philosophical knowledge, on whether they were laymen or monks, and on the purpose and aim of their writings. In general, there are three different approaches to ancient philosophical theories that we can detect in the works of Byzantine scholars:

- (a) Rejection: The wish to construct their own distinct Christian identity urged the Byzantines to attack the doctrines of the ancient philosophers, by stressing their pagan character and by insisting that knowledge of the divine is more important; it is a tradition that goes back to Paul and the early Apologists.
- (b) Moderate acceptance: Some Byzantine thinkers, following the Cappadocians, were willing to open a dialogue with the ancient philosophers and selectively use their theories, especially for educational purposes.
- (c) Defence: Finally, there were also those Byzantines who, like Justin or Clement, tried to show that Christianity shares with ancient wisdom common elements, and it would thus be profitable to study the works of ancient philosophers.

It should be noted, however, that the expressed attitude of the Byzantines towards ancient Greek thought and civilization should not always be taken at face value, especially when it explicitly condemns the ancient philosophers and, in general, 'Hellenism';⁴ for even in these cases it is important to closely investigate the real presence and influence of specific ancient concepts and theories on the Byzantine authors.

(B) THE QUESTION OF BYZANTINE 'PLATONISM' AND 'ARISTOTELIANISM' The ancient philosophers who influenced the Byzantine thinkers were predominantly Plato and Aristotle. The Byzantines, at least in our period, were not concerned about the historical Plato or Aristotle, that is to say, they were

⁴ See Kaldellis 2008, esp. 173–87, for the ambivalence of the Byzantines' attitude to 'Hellenism'.

not interested in reconstructing their doctrines with great accuracy. They followed the Platonic tradition of downgrading the differences between the two philosophers and in presenting Aristotelian theories as propaedeutic to Plato. In particular, the teaching of logic as an introductory course to philosophy was regarded as the best way to approach the subtle doctrines of Plato's metaphysics. Hence, it is not reasonable to view the development of Byzantine philosophy as involved in a conflict between Platonism and Aristotelianism, since it is only in the fifteenth century that differences between the two ancient philosophers were stressed. Moreover, it is not helpful to label the Byzantine thinkers as 'Platonists' or 'Aristotelians'; for we cannot assume that they were in any sense followers of these two philosophical traditions, since most Byzantines did not have a consistent attitude towards them.

In Platonism, the Byzantines found positions which they could assimilate to their Christian world view, such as Plato's conception of the Demiurge as the creator of the world or the immortality of the soul; they also had in common with the Platonic tradition a top-down metaphysical approach to the world. At the same time, Platonic doctrines like the theory of forms or the pre-existence of the soul were criticized and rejected. On the other hand, the study of Aristotle's logic and physics was regarded as useful, though different views were expressed as to the use of the syllogistic in matters concerning the divine. Other Aristotelian theses, however, like the eternity of the world and the denial of afterlife were not viewed favourably. For instance, the historian George the Monk (*Chronicle* 83) accused 'miserable Aristotle' who 'insolently revolted against his teacher' and rejected his doctrines declaring the mortality of the soul and denying divine providence. Also, in his *Letter to Niketas* (*Scripta* 1.342–62), Arethas introduced the expression 'rational soul', and defended the non-Aristotelian position that the rational soul is perfect the moment human beings are born, since it is created by God.

3.2 *Patristic thought*

By 'Patristic thought' we mean here the early Greek period of the Patristic tradition. For the eastern theologians the Patristic tradition did not end with John of Damascus (as it is often assumed), but it continued during the whole life of the Christian Church and was in close interaction with Byzantine thought, and especially with Byzantine philosophy.

The Church Fathers served as a medium for the Byzantines' knowledge of Greek philosophy, insofar as they quoted and discussed, for their own purposes, many ancient philosophical texts and views. Besides, while they were formulating Christian dogma, they assimilated the philosophical (mainly Platonic)

discourse of their times. Patristic thought also bequeathed to early Byzantine philosophy its ambivalent attitude towards Greek philosophy. The Byzantines accepted the main points of the Patristic criticism of the ancient philosophical tradition – regardless of the degree of its influence on them: the irreconcilable oppositions between ancient philosophical schools, the divorce between theory and action, the formalistic and distant from life character of ancient philosophy, unacceptable views such as Aristotle's God, Epicurean hedonism, or Stoic pantheism, and the consideration of 'Hellenism' as a source of heresies.

Patristic thought provided the early Byzantine philosophers with a more or less fixed set of basic theological beliefs about the fundamental questions of Christian doctrine on theology (God, Trinity) and on 'the economy of salvation' (Christology, cosmology and anthropology). The Byzantine thinkers wrote on all these issues, but they were exegetical rather than argumentative; they appealed to the past authorities, creating *florilegia* and 'uses' (chains of Patristic quotations). So, their immediate heritage, i.e., the thought of the Cappadocians, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor and others, proved to be influential and had only to be interpreted or sometimes to be adjusted to new challenges, like the Iconoclastic crisis. But, in general, the Byzantines until the middle of the eleventh century did not feel the need for a new kind of philosophy, content as they were with the Christian world view. Thus, in regard to the major dogmas of Christianity, early Byzantine philosophy did not differentiate itself. The work of John of Damascus, a synthesis that heavily relies on earlier Patristic thought, can be considered as a typical – for our period – example of the encounter between the Christian dogma and ancient Greek thought, through its Patristic reception. All these make obvious the dependence of early Byzantine philosophy on Patristic thought and their interrelation.

4 THE PHILOSOPHERS – A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

To talk of the philosophical production of the early Byzantine period, some scholars have chosen the historical narration and the doctrinal presentation of each individual author,⁵ whereas others have introduced a thematic approach based on the different philosophical topics that occupied the Byzantine thinkers.⁶ In what follows we suggest a combination of the two: at first we present the main authors of this period who engaged themselves in a philosophical discourse, and then we focus on certain philosophical topics which were central at the time. For the historical outline, we adopt the above mentioned

⁵ Tatakis 1949; Brisson 1998; de Libera 2004. ⁶ Matsoukas 1994.

periodization in the two main phases with a prelude and a finale that is also the connecting link to late Byzantine philosophy.

4.1 *Prelude: From the middle of the seventh century to the break of Iconoclasm (c. 730)*

The so-called ‘Dark Ages’ of Byzantium (seventh–eighth century), a period of political unrest and multiple wars, were marked by the theological dispute over monotheletism⁷ and have little to offer in the field of philosophy.

The only surviving philosophical texts are small collections of definitions for educational purposes. Such texts existed earlier: Anastasius I of Antiocheia (second half of the sixth century) in his *Philosophical Chapters* cites 162 very brief definitions of various terms, a practice not unknown in the Patristic literature. Besides, the anonymous texts of the late seventh and the early eighth century use as sources earlier Patristic texts, for instance, the *Doctrina Patrum*, Cyril of Alexandria, Nemesius of Emesa’s *On Human Nature*, Maximus the Confessor, as well as the late Alexandrian commentators (Ammonius, Elias, David). In most cases, though, it is not easy to identify the exact sources of these definitions. Furthermore, we cannot simply assume that in these texts the discussion of Aristotle’s ten categories and the *quinque voces* of Porphyry’s *Isagoge* testify to first-hand knowledge of the ancient logical treatises.

But the purpose of such texts was not exclusively educational. There are theological questions here that not only have philosophical interest, they can be adequately discussed only insofar as philosophical issues are involved and philosophical terms are used. Hence, these texts that collected philosophical definitions clearly show that the Byzantine theologians were engaged at least in this aspect of philosophy, so that they could avoid terminological confusion and offer a secure basis for further elaborations of Christian dogma.

Anastasius Sinaïta (†after 700) in his *Guide for Life* uses ‘effectual proofs’ (*pragmatikai parastaseis*: I.I.27–34)⁸ to rebut the heretics and, in particular, the Monophysites, because, as he warns, scriptural evidence can be falsified; it is thus better to be equipped with such proofs, he claims, when entering a theological dispute. This reflects a major concern of the Byzantine writers in their debates with the heretics, namely, to give precise definitions of the terms used. They seem to believe that this is an important task for the theologian and

⁷ A theological movement that suggested a single will (*thelēma*) in Christ; Maximus the Confessor, who elaborated a concept of a variety of wills, was its main opponent.

⁸ ‘*Parastaseis*’ in this text is used as a synonym for ‘*apodeixeis*’; *parastaseis* are opposed to the Scriptural text. Anastasius insists that in a dispute both the Christians and the heretics can equally adduce Biblical passages to support their views, but the actual evidence lies in the real meaning of the word as it is explained in the Patristic texts.

it is indispensable and prior to any discussion: 'the safe basis of every rational wisdom is the foreknowledge and understanding of the terms' (1.3.19–21). In fact, when Anastasius insists on the right definition of the terms used, he follows a Patristic practice from Origen to John of Damascus, which culminated in the discussion of homonyms and is depicted in the collections of definitions that appeared independently or as parts of longer Patristic texts.

It is interesting to note that the Byzantine authors were fully aware of the fact that 'the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church does not follow Greek philosophers in every term, and especially in the discourse concerning Christ and the Trinity' (Anastasius, *Guide* 1.3.42–5). For the Byzantines, on the other hand, it was a commonplace to juxtapose 'our' or 'the Fathers' definitions and the 'outside' definitions as well as to differentiate the 'idle disputing' of the pagans from the 'clear and brief' discourse of the Fathers. For instance, Anastasius in the *Guide*, as Theodore of Raithou (late sixth century) had already done in his *Preparation* and John of Damascus will do in his *Philosophical Chapters*,⁹ mentions and defines such terms as 'God', 'hypostasis', 'nature', 'soul', 'body', 'natural property', 'will', 'energy', 'unity', 'consubstantiality'. He distinguishes carefully between the use of terms in the human and in the divine realm, and he occasionally refers to ancient philosophical definitions, mainly from Plato and Aristotle. The principal reason for this is his belief that such terms, when taken 'humanly', cannot express the mystery of the divinity and the unqualified application of 'common notions' may thus lead to error and heresy.

4.2. *The Iconoclastic controversy*

The period of Iconoclasm (c. 730–843) was marked by the reformation of the Byzantine Empire, its troubled relations with the Bulgarians and the West, and the end of the threat by the Arabs. The recession of classical letters continued, but the philosophical curriculum seems not to have altered during the crisis. The flourishing of theological literature within monasteries can be seen in the dogmatic recapitulation of John of Damascus' influential *Accurate Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* and the production of an impressive bulk of anti-iconoclastic treatises.

Germanus I of Constantinople (c. 650–c. 733) participated as Patriarch in the controversy that formulated an early defence of the veneration of the icons on the grounds of Christology (Incarnation) and ecclesiastical tradition. His work *On Predestined Terms of Life* is a dialogue between a 'believer' and a 'rationalist' on the question whether God has laid down certain boundaries according to which

⁹ Theodore of Raithou, *Preparation* 209.5–10; John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters* 31.

the end of each human being's life is to take place. The rationalist holds that everything takes place by chance while the believer tries to prove that the belief in divine providence does not contradict human free will. He distinguishes foreknowledge and predestination. Although human beings are predestined, this fact does not deprive them of their freedom and the responsibility for their actions. It is a theme that John of Damascus and many other Byzantine thinkers will later on take up and comment on.

John of Damascus (c. 675–c. 753/4) was the major thinker of this period and one of the most influential theologians not only in late Byzantine thought but also in western medieval theology (for instance, to Aquinas). Writing in the monastic environment of Palestine and addressing his fellow monks, he recapitulates the earlier Patristic tradition and sets the theological standards for later Byzantine developments. As most Byzantine theologians and thinkers John wrote numerous polemical treatises against the heretics of his time or of earlier times, as well as against the Iconoclasts.¹⁰ In these works, he discussed christological and trinitarian issues using (frequently *verbatim*) Patristic texts and terms with philosophical background. But his main work, which underwent many revisions until his death, is the threefold *Fountain of Knowledge* where, in his own words, he intended to:

(a) set forth what is most excellent among the wise men of the Greeks, knowing that anything that is true has been given to human beings from God, [...] gather together what belongs to the truth and pick the fruits of salvation from the enemies, and reject everything that is evil and falsely called knowledge.

(b) Then [...] set forth in order the chattering nonsense of the heresies [...], so that by recognizing what is false we may cleave the more to the truth.

(c) Then, with the help of God and by his grace, set out the truth.¹¹

In the first part, known as *Dialectica*, John presents ancient Greek wisdom and, in particular, some basic logical and philosophical terms. According to him, the philosophical introduction serves as a handmaiden for the theological part. This does not necessarily entail that the terms explained here must all be used in theological discussions but, more importantly for John, that the theologian must be trained to argue rigorously and convincingly.

The second part, *On Heresies*, is of no philosophical interest, save the doxographical chapters (5–8) on the Pythagoreans, the Platonists, the Stoics and the Epicureans (nothing on the Aristotelians!), and the inclusion of 'Hellenism'

¹⁰ Edited by Kotter in *Die Schriften* 4 and 3, respectively. His works include also liturgical poetry, sermons and an extensive *florilegium* (*Sacra parallela*).

¹¹ *Philosophical Chapters*, proemium 43–57; transl. Louth 2002: 31.

among the four ‘mothers’ of heresies (ch. 3). These texts are totally dependent on earlier anti-heretical writings, e.g., on Epiphanius.

In the third part of the trilogy, the *Accurate Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, John offers in a condensed and systematic form the Christian world view as it can be extracted from the Bible and the Patristic tradition. In a hundred chapters he deals with questions that can be classified under four headings: (a) on the existence of God, the divine attributes and the Trinity (1–14); (b) on the visible and invisible creation, the constitution of human beings, human psychology and providence (15–44); (c) on Christology (a topic discussed extensively in his polemical writings) and Incarnation (45–81); and (d) on the various practices of the Christians that differentiate them from their Middle East neighbours, such as the sacraments, the veneration of saints and the icons (82–100).

As a philosopher, John is often considered to be derivative and his knowledge of philosophy is contested. Although modern scholarship has labelled John ‘an Aristotelian’ or ‘the first (or true) scholastic’, we cannot endorse such unqualified characterizations.¹² He uses terms that belong to the philosophical tradition, but defines them in accordance with his own theological and polemical purposes. John does not (and as a Christian thinker could not) commit himself to a coherent Aristotelian doctrine, but feels free to accept parts of the ancient philosopher’s logic or physics, and to reject other views, such as the Aristotelian ‘fifth body’ (*Exp.*, 4.14–15, 20.17). His debt to the Church Fathers (e.g., the Cappadocians, Nemesius, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor) is great and is also manifest in the abundant use of *florilegia* of Patristic citations (‘uses’, *chrēseis*). A closer understanding of his writing technique, the ‘chapters’ (*kephalaia*) and the ‘uses’, shows that the claim for originality in the case of John, and the whole tradition he represents, was a misplaced one; for in his case ‘originality means to remain faithful to the originals’.¹³ ‘I shall say nothing of my own’, John says (*Philosophical Chapters*, proem. 2.9), and willingly resigned himself to the role of a transmitter. On the other hand, John’s encomium of knowledge (*Phil. Chapters* 1), his discussion of religious language (*Exposition* 6.9, 11–12b), or his conviction of the demonstrability of dogmas such as the existence of God or his oneness (*Exp.* 3, 5), allow us to suggest that, on John’s view, the rational arguments are supposed to be persuasive to everyone who uses his reason, but they are necessary only to those who lack faith. Moreover, he seems to believe that philosophical analysis and

¹² This view can be found in Tatakis 2003: 82 and 90, J. Lenstroem, A. Harnack, J. Hoeck and others (Zografidis 1999: 201 and 205).

¹³ A statement of Z. Lorentzatos, a modern Greek essayist, used by Louth 2002: vi; for a discussion of the general problem of originality in Byzantium, see Littlewood 1995: esp. 1–15.

arguments can help when embodied in a wider theological context – a view that indicates a kind of restricted autonomy of philosophy.

The most important contribution in this period is the formation and elaboration of a theory of images. While iconoclastic theory can be only partially reconstructed on the basis of polemical works which sometimes quoted passages from iconoclastic writings that have not survived,¹⁴ iconophile literature of all genres (treatises, acts, hagiography, poetry) and of uneven theoretical value covers thousands of pages. Apart from Germanus and John of Damascus, in the first phase of Iconoclasm, it was mainly Nikephorus I of Constantinople (c. 750–828) and Theodore the Stoudite (759–826) who re-enforced the iconophile argument. Their theory offered legitimacy to religious art as it is practised until today among Orthodox Christians. For the defenders as well as for the opponents of the icons, the problem was not an aesthetic one; what was at stake was the authentic interpretation of the Christian tradition, the place of the holy in society, and the control over the production of the symbolic.

The defence of the icons turned out to be not just an apologetic discourse, but amounted to a systematic elaboration of a sophisticated ‘philosophy of images’. The cosmological scheme of images that John developed (*Apologetic Orations*) comprises six different meanings of the term ‘image’, which present it not just as a work of art but as a category of thought; a category that is necessary for the understanding of the interrelations of the persons in the Trinity, of the creation and the conservation of the world, of human creation, and its relation to God, of the linguistic and pictorial expression of how human beings comprehend the ineffable. The rejection of icons, as Nikephorus forcefully argued, meant the rejection of the ‘economy’ (*oikonomia*) of creation, i.e., of the relation between the two ontological levels, the uncreated and the created. The image is a sign of the presence of an absence, an immanent trace of the transcendental. It does not express the artist’s personal emotion but manifests a reality. Since art is supposed to reflect the absolute beauty of God, likeness and imitation are not enough; what is needed is a symbolic language to convey the theoretical message. And the truth of the image is not its appearance or its beauty, but its reference and its proper use.

The historian George (Hamartolos) the Monk in the middle of the ninth century chronologically belongs to the next period, but he shares a great deal with the mentality of the period of Iconoclasm. A fervent iconophile, he has more interesting things to say in his long digressions on theological issues and edifying stories. In his *Short Chronicle* (83.14ff.), George accuses unreservedly ‘the miserable’ Aristotle and favours Plato. Even if George’s style is harsh at

¹⁴ Texts from the iconoclastic Synods and writers are gathered in Hennephof 1969.

times, he presents us with the main Christian objections to Aristotle and the affinities with Plato, especially concerning the doctrine of the immortal soul and divine providence. We do not know whether George's text reflects a then common view about the differences between the two philosophers, but it seems that his work expresses the spirit of the Byzantine monks of the ninth century.

George's remarks on the disagreement between Plato and Aristotle cannot be regarded as a reliable indication of a sharp contrast between Byzantine Aristotelians and Platonists. When he comes to treat Plato he simply adopts, among others, the thesis introduced by the early Apologists that Plato knew Moses. In spite of the extensive references to Platonic texts, George did not have a first-hand knowledge of Plato; he either used an unidentified source that contained ethical quotations from ancient writers or, more probably, he exploited the relevant passages from Theodoret of Cyrren's *Cure for Hellenic Sicknesses*.¹⁵

4.3 THE BYZANTINE 'ENCYCLOPEDIISM' OR THE 'FIRST BYZANTINE HUMANISM' (c. 850–TENTH CENTURY)

A change occurred during the second half of the ninth century, when there is evidence of a new interest in ancient Greek literature, and especially in philosophy, an interest that has led modern scholars to talk about the 'first Byzantine humanism'. The mission of Cyril (Constantine the Philosopher) and Methodius from Thessaloniki to Moravia and the invention of the Cyrillic alphabet, the Christianization of the Bulgarians, the expansion of the Byzantine civilization, the cultural exchanges with the Arabic world as well as the Latin translations of the Greek Fathers are tokens of the intellectual life of this period. The scholarly activity is also attested by the significant production of manuscripts of ancient texts, among them many philosophical, and by the compilation of works like the dictionary of *Suda* or Photius' *Lexicon* as well as other collections and anthologies that accumulated texts and knowledge – a sign of the Byzantine 'encyclopedism'.

Leo the Mathematician or the Philosopher (c. 790–after 869) is considered to be the first genuine Renaissance man. He taught for decades and at the middle of the ninth century he was appointed as the head of the new philosophical school at the Magnaura Palace in Constantinople. He became famous for his competence in geometry and was accused for being a 'Hellēn', i.e., sympathetic to paganism. He had a good knowledge of Porphyry and while reading Plato's

¹⁵ Belfiore (1978) suggests the former, while Karpozilos 2002: 243–9 argues in favour of the latter.

Laws he 'corrected' the text of the first five books; we only find some notes of his in manuscripts containing Platonic dialogues.

But it is undoubtedly with the patriarch of Constantinople Photius (c. 810–after 893), that we first encounter in Byzantine times a systematic revival of the study of antiquity and a profound interest in the texts of ancient philosophers. Photius also seems to have been a devoted teacher and his home was a centre of learning for a large number of students. But he is famous mainly for his *Bibliothēke*, a vast compilation of quotations from ancient Greek literature, and a *Lexicon*, in which he collected notable words and expressions. He also taught Aristotelian logic and wrote for this purpose comments on Aristotle's *Categories* in eleven chapters, which are included in the *Amphilochia*, an unsystematic collection of small essays dealing with theological and philosophical topics. In these comments, as well as in some of his other essays, Photius engages in a critical discussion of some of the most central theses in ancient philosophy, for instance, Aristotle's distinction between primary and secondary substances or Plato's theory of Forms. Genus and species, according to Photius, are corporeal, but they are not bodies; they are corporeal, since they are predicated of bodies, but they are not themselves bodies. He rejects Plato's Forms, because he thinks that these would presuppose a fallible Creator, and moreover there is no reason to introduce such immutable and immovable entities in order to serve as predicates for beings that are in a constant state of becoming.

During this period of the 'first Byzantine humanism', the archbishop of Caesarea, Arethas (c. 850–c. 932/44) also commented on Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Isagoge*. He is better known, however, for having been instrumental in the transmission of ancient texts, in particular the Platonic corpus. He commissioned the transcription of a complete copy of Plato's works to which he added marginal notes.

4.4 *Finale: Anonymous Heiberg*

The *Anonymous Heiberg* is a short text in five parts of unequal size: logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy; logic is by far the longest. The edition was prepared by Heiberg and published posthumously in 1929. It has been suggested that perhaps the author was the monk Gregory Aneponymous. As for the date, the astronomical part gives 6516 as 'the present year'; since the same part also establishes some correlations between the Byzantine and the Egyptian calendars, these indicate a period between 1 September and 14 December 1007, assuming that the five parts belong to a unitary composition. It is unoriginal, there are numerous parallels to be found in the earlier literature, and for the

chapter on logic it is plain that the author is writing in the Peripatetic tradition. The part on logic includes a summary of Aristotle's *Categories* prefaced by an account of the Porphyrean *quinque voces*, then a summary of the *De interpretatione* and the *Prior Analytics*; there is also a long account of fallacies and sophisms, based ultimately on Aristotle's *Sophistici Elenchi*. Its aim is to give the reader the essentials of logic, which is presented as the instrument of the sciences. This text influenced the many logical compendia that were to be produced by the Byzantines in the following centuries.

5 TOPICS

5.1 *Metaphysics*

If by 'metaphysics' we mean, in a Kantian mode, the investigation of entities and states of affairs such as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul and the freedom of will, then we can indeed talk of Byzantine metaphysics. Byzantine theologians and philosophers of our period constantly talk about God, being, principles and causes, but we must be careful if we want to use the term 'metaphysics' for their discourse. For the Byzantines' distinction between the uncreated transcendence (the true and higher intelligible reality) and the created immanence (the derived and lower reality, sensible and intelligible) must not be confused with the ancient Greek distinction. The Platonic distinction between the sensible and the intelligible can be taken literally only within the created realm, but when applied to the God–world relation it must be regarded only as a way of speaking.

The rational approach to metaphysical issues was not the prevailing one in early Byzantine philosophy. We do not find an account of transcendence that comprises a conception of God as the highest and ultimate being and an appreciation of the human mind as capable of comprehending it. We can claim that early Byzantine philosophy avoided with few exceptions the mingling of reason with faith, and adopted a moderate fideism. Byzantine thinkers may have given to reason a kind of independence (and to philosophy a certain kind of autonomy), but at the same time they undermined its ability to form an integrated system of thought, insofar as they preferred to leave the highest object – God himself – outside, and the project of the justification of religious belief unaccomplished.

In early Byzantine philosophy the existence of God was taken for granted and little effort was made to demonstrate this or any other basic Christian belief. Since the knowledge of the existence of God is implanted in human beings by

nature, its truth was thought to be self-evident. But for those who did not admit the Revelation, did not believe in Scripture or belonged to the 'Hellenizers' it was permissible to use syllogisms in order to persuade them by reason. It is for this reason, then, that John of Damascus restated the arguments for the existence of a personal and providential God that are to be found in Aristotle and the Stoics, as well as in certain Christian Fathers like Gregory of Nyssa. In particular, he used cosmological and teleological arguments, as well as the *omnium consensus* argument. Thus, the role of these theistic arguments was not to offer the foundation of the dogma, but to serve in an apologetic or polemical context.

But certitude about the existence of God does not entail knowledge of him. The Byzantines follow an earlier Patristic view when they claim that humans are not capable of knowing what God really is, i.e., his essence. What are knowable are things concerning God and his activities through which his contact with the world becomes possible. Such a distinction seems to undermine a traditional property of God, namely, his simplicity, but permits us to conceive of a God who is within the world and still transcendent.

How is it possible to talk intelligibly about such a God? (a) In an affirmative way, by distinguishing God's being from the being of the world and by attributing to God a series of predicates; e.g., 'God is x (all-powerful, omnipotent, eternal, good etc.)'. (b) In a negative way, by denying God certain predicates; e.g., 'God is non-x (unoriginate, nameless, indescribable, anonymous etc.)'. (c) By putting together contradictory predicates; e.g., 'God is supra-essential essence.' All these are in accordance with the fundamental statement of Byzantine metaphysics that God is incomprehensible.¹⁶

This early Byzantine conception, which is a Patristic one, leaves narrow margins for the use of reason in issues concerning God himself or the relations between the three persons of the Trinity. The connection between logic and metaphysics is centred around the issue whether it is possible to apply the Aristotelian categories to the Trinity; that is to say, how the one divine nature refers to but is not divided into the three hypostases, or how the two natures, the divine and the human, are united in one hypostasis/person. When later Psellus declared (*Ad Xifilinum* 4) that the use of syllogisms is neither contrary to the Church dogma nor strange to philosophy but a tool which helps us to find what we are seeking, he expressed an opinion that could be accepted in our period only with great reservations.

¹⁶ See e.g., the opening chapter of John of Damascus' *Exposition* 1.3.

5.2 *The world*

The Byzantines adopted the Patristic interpretation of the Biblical account of the creation of the world, an account that was elaborated in philosophical terms borrowed from Greek philosophy. The relation of the Christian God to his creation is neither that of the Platonic creator who was considered to be limited by the pre-existent matter nor of the indifferent Aristotelian first unmoved mover and of the impersonal One in the late Platonic hierarchy.

It is possible to reconstruct, with the inevitable simplifications, the statements that form the theistic Byzantine system:

- God is the cause of everything, i.e., of every reality outside him. Hence, there is an absolute ontological distinction between the uncreated God and the created world.
- Since God is identical with being, whatever comes to exist outside him appears *ex nihilo*.
- Since God created everything that exists outside him, he did not depend on something else and he did not need self-sustained ideas or forms that would operate as paradigms and limit his creative act.
- The archetypes according to which the world was created are God's thoughts; in this the Byzantines follow a Platonic tradition that had made the ideas the content of God's mind.
- The creation of the world is a caused act, absolutely free and the outcome of God's will (goodness and love). God was not constrained to produce anything outside him and he could produce something else or nothing.
- God did not necessarily create; this means that the world is not necessary, but – in this particular sense – contingent.
- Such a world is finite and within time; it has beginning and end, i.e., it returns to nothing. The existence of matter is not questioned, but it does not serve as the everlasting and unchangeable substratum of beings. Time and history follow a linear course towards their end (eschatological perspective).
- The mode of the production of the world implies its continuous and total ontological dependence on its creator at every moment.
- The need for a 'continuous creation' to secure the maintenance and the coherence of the world is satisfied by the operation of divine providence.

Physics was thus subdued to metaphysics and a special role was given to the final cause. The attribution of movement to the activity of a prime mover and the distinction between sublunar and superlunar sphere, i.e., the Aristotelian paradigm, was predominant despite the unexploited criticism of Philoponus. Within such a teleological paradigm the Byzantines' main concern was not the investigation of how natural phenomena occur or how the world was created. They considered these issues of minor importance in comparison to

the acknowledgement of their efficient and final cause, which is their creator, God himself.

5.3 Anthropology

SOUL AND BODY The Patristic doctrine of the creation of human beings according to the image and likeness of God locates the likeness in the soul, in free will, and in the power humans have over earthly things.¹⁷

The traditional problem of the soul–body relation was considered on the basis of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. The pre-existence of the souls and metempsychosis were rejected and a re-evaluation of matter and of the human body seemed plausible (and necessary, for instance, for the legitimacy of the icons of Christ). However, even if the soul was situated at the same ontological level as the body, i.e., that of the created reality, it retained its primacy. The apparent dualism is not ontological but functional; the soul was thought to be immortal not in virtue of its nature but owing to God’s grace.

According to the Byzantines, the exercise of virtues that do not differ from those of Greek philosophical ethics leads not merely to happiness but to the assimilation to God. The terminology comes from Stoicism and the Platonic tradition and it is inscribed in the Christian ascetic and mystical tradition. The Byzantines used to talk about the impassibility of the senses, the moderation of the passions, and the purification of the soul as presuppositions for elevation to the intelligible world and beyond apprehension to the contemplation of God. It is an experience of a state of illumination, at which all understanding ends; it is ‘darkness and silence, where we see and do not think’ (Michael Psellus, *Ad Xifilinum* 5). It is a state that is conceived not as the loss of the person into the ‘infinite sea of essence’, but as the vision of God and the deification of human within the context of a personal relationship based on and conducted by divine love.

FREEDOM AND NECESSITY The admission of the world’s contingency could have had a dramatic outcome to physics and to anthropology, but it was balanced by God’s conception as omnipotent and benevolent. But are these, as well as the other attributes of God, compatible with the existence of evil and do they leave room for human freedom?

The problem of evil: since God created the world, the world is good; and since he created each and every thing, every creature cannot but be good. Then, how can we explain, or even justify, the undeniable presence of evil? The cause

¹⁷ John of Damascus, *Exposition* 26.18–19, 62.20.

of evil can be neither God nor matter, which was created by God. The Platonic doctrine of evil as the privation of the good was acceptable by the Byzantines as long as it showed, at its Proclean version, that evil is non-being. But this, according to them, does not solve the existential problem. A solution that certain Christian Fathers seemed to endorse is that God has his own reasons (unknown to humans) to permit wrongdoing and the existence of evil. The acceptance of the purposefulness of evil, when exemplified to the specific person, leads to a version of what has been called 'soul-making theodicy' that originated in the works of Irenaeus.

On the other hand, a constant concern was to prove that God is not (and cannot be) the cause of evil (Basil of Caesarea, John of Damascus, Photius). So, another solution was to locate the cause of evil in the Devil. But even in such a case the deeper cause is to be found not in the nature of the Devil but in the will: 'the Devil became by his own will the originator of the evil' (John of Damascus, *Exposition* 41.25–6). Thus, when it comes to the human realm, the cause of evil can be attributed to free will. The presence of evil is nothing but the proof of humans' freedom of choice and a consequence of its use. Human beings who would never commit evil in virtue of their given nature or thanks to divine intervention are not free. And this kind of freedom, despite the evils that could bring and has brought, is preferable and worthy of humans.

Free will: since God knows and foresees future human actions, does this entail that they are predestined and, therefore, not free? The opponents of predestination, for instance, Photios (and later on, Nicephorus Blemmydes), believe that this principle is dangerously close to the ancient Greek concept of fate, which is incompatible with a Christian approach to human life and freedom. The advocates of determination are numerous, among them Germanus and John of Damascus (and later on, Michael Psellus, Nicholas of Methone, Theodore Metochites, George Scholarius).

Germanus, in his work *On Predestined Terms of Life*, wishes to prove that the belief in divine providence does not contradict human free will. He distinguishes foreknowledge and predestination; though human beings are predestined, this fact does not deprive them of their freedom. This theme will be later on taken up and analysed by John of Damascus (*Exposition* chs. 38–45). He also considers that providence does not prevent free choice; that God knows everything does not mean that he is their cause, just as a doctor is not the cause of the disease he predicted. The cause lies in the freedom of the human will. Man cannot intervene in the matters that do not belong to human power, in necessities, and in the cosmic order that God has enacted. There are, however, things that we can change, there are dispositions and decisions that are contingent and depend on the human will. Thus, for the Byzantines the trust in divine providence does

not exclude moral responsibility as long as it is combined with the acceptance of free choice.

To conclude, early Byzantine philosophy was characterized by the absence of a doctrinal system and of a well-defined philosophical community. From the middle of the seventh to the middle of the tenth century the tension between Christian thought and Greek philosophy was slowly diminishing, though it was undoubtedly still present. Most thinkers closely followed the Patristic paradigm of a selective use of the ancient philosophical tradition. At the same time the knowledge of Greek philosophy started to be appreciated and that reinforced the appeal in studying the original texts. It is in fact the interest in commenting and gradually reappropriating the Platonic and Aristotelian texts that will lead from the middle of the eleventh century onwards to the more original attempts of philosophers like Michael Psellus and John Italus at the next phase of Byzantine philosophy.

THE ORIGINS OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY*

CRISTINA D'ANCONA

I THE TRANSMISSION OF THE GREEK LEGACY TO THE ARAB WORLD: AN OUTLINE

It is widely acknowledged¹ that the origins of Arabic-Islamic philosophy are to be found in the transmission of a great amount of texts both from classical Greece – some Plato and virtually the whole of the Aristotelian corpus – and post-classical Greek thought, from Hellenism to late antiquity.² In this chapter, we shall see that post-classical thought has been of momentous importance in the Arab interpretation of Plato's and Aristotle's doctrines. Predictably, the transmission of their works was made possible through the spread of classical Greek philosophy in the Mediterranean area during the Hellenistic and imperial ages, and then again through the scholastic tradition of late antiquity.³ However, post-classical thought was decisive for the rise of Islamic philosophy even from a more substantial point of view: the main problems dealt with by Muslim philosophers can be understood only against the background of the rethinking of Plato and Aristotle which took place in the imperial age, chiefly thanks to Alexander of Aphrodisias and Plotinus. Furthermore, the systematic structure into which Aristotle's doctrines were moulded in the curricular teaching in the

* All dates are given CE.

¹ Even though the concurrent view that Arabic-Islamic philosophy stems from the Qur'an itself has been propounded (see Nasr 1996a and 1996b), most scholars agree that its rise depends upon the translations from Greek: see Walzer 1950, Rosenthal and Walzer 1973, Rosenthal 1975, Endress 1987, 1992.

² The Arab readers became acquainted with the doctrines of Socrates and the Presocratics mostly through the doxographies of Hellenistic and imperial ages.

³ To put it in Gutas' words, 'the first rule of thumb in Greco-Arabic studies (. . .) says that whatever was not available, either as an idea or a cited text, or as a discrete written work, in the philosophy of late antiquity is by the same token not to be expected to appear in Arabic' (Gutas 1994: 4941). On the role of the late antique schools and libraries in the transmission of the Greek legacy to the Armenian, Syriac and Arabic cultures see also D'Ancona 2007.

schools of late antiquity paved the way for their transmission to Latin and Arabic thought.⁴

In this respect, as remarked by Hugonnard-Roche (1994), the parallel projects of Boethius and Sergius of Reš'aynā (d. 536) are revealing. At the end of antiquity, both of them advanced the project of making available respectively into Latin and Syriac a corpus of philosophical writings wherein Porphyry's *Isagoge* featured as an introduction to the *Organon*, and Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines were understood as the harmonious parts of a whole – a programme which is reminiscent of the distinctive profile of post-Plotinian schools, especially in Alexandria. While the hypothesis that Boethius became acquainted at Alexandria with the teaching of Ammonius son of Hermias has been challenged,⁵ that Sergius of Reš'aynā attended courses there has been convincingly argued by Hugonnard-Roche (1997).

Sergius did not remain without successors in his attempt to make the philosophical texts available to the cultivated Syrian readership. An uninterrupted chain of Christian scholars, before and after the Arab conquest of Syria, continued to translate the logical corpus and comment upon it. To be more precise, this activity, which lasted for centuries, was not limited to Aristotle's logical writings plus the *Isagoge*: instead, it included some cosmological, psychological, ethical and theological works, all of them stemming from post-classical Greek philosophy. This tradition of learning explains why under the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, in the golden age of the translations from Greek, so many Christians from Syria were enrolled to translate the medical and philosophical works that another cultivated readership, this time an Arabic one, wanted to have at its disposal. It is all too natural that the tradition of learning transmitted in this way was largely dependent upon the texts available in the school libraries of the Hellenized Syria already under Islamic rule,⁶ even though the search for Greek sources, during the fully fledged stage of the translation movement, was also actively conducted through missions, both official and private, even outside the boundaries of the Islamic Empire, in the Byzantine country.⁷

⁴ A blatant example is provided by the so-called 'enlarged Organon' of late antiquity, which includes Porphyry's *Isagoge*, the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* in the Syriac and Arabic traditions as well as in the late antique curriculum.

⁵ Courcelle 1948: 299–300, surmised that Boethius became directly acquainted with Ammonius son of Hermias' teaching in Alexandria, a hypothesis which has been challenged by Minio Paluello 1957; for an explanation of the similarities between Boethius and Ammonius different from that advanced by Courcelle see Shiel 1958; for an overview on the debate, see Zambon 2003.

⁶ 'From this derives the second rule of thumb in Graeco-Arabic studies, which says that whatever was not and could not have been available, either as an idea or a quoted text, or as a discrete written work, to Syriac-speaking Christians is by the same token not to be expected to appear in Arabic' (Gutas 1994: 4943). See also Brock 2003, Hugonnard-Roche 2004 and 2007.

⁷ See Endress 1987: 423–4 on the correspondence about manuscripts between the caliph al-Ma'mūn and the Byzantine emperor (Leo the Armenian) and on the mission sent to the *bilād al-Rūm*

However, the debt of Arabic-Islamic philosophy towards the last stages of Greek thought is by no means only a question of chronological and geographical vicinity. The very understanding of what 'philosophy' is, as well as the architecture of its parts have been convincingly traced back to the Greek eisagogic literature of late antiquity, in particular the introductions to the study of Aristotle's philosophy stemming from the school of Alexandria.

As a preface to the analysis of the impact of post-classical thought on the beginnings of Arabic-Islamic philosophy, here is a synopsis of the works translated into Syriac and Arabic. (For a survey of post-classical works up to Plotinus in Arabic translation see Gutas 1994.)

Author	Syriac	Arabic
Nicolaus Damascenus	<i>De Plantis</i>	<i>De Plantis, De Arist. philos.</i>
Aetius		<i>Placita philosophorum</i>
Nicomachus of Gerasa		<i>Intro. arithm.</i>
Plutarch of Chaeronea	<i>Tranq. an. Cap. ex inim. ut.</i>	<i>On Soul</i>
Galen (only the philos. writings)		<i>Comp. Tim. Plat. De Mor., Comm. In De Int.</i>
Hippolytus of Rome		<i>Refut.</i> ⁸
Alexander of Aphrodisias	<i>De Princ. univ.</i> ⁹	<i>De Prov., Quaest., In Metaph. (Book 12), De An., De Intell.,</i> ¹⁰ <i>De Princ. univ.</i>
Plotinus		<i>Enn. 4–6</i>
Porphiry	<i>Isag. Philos. Hist.</i>	<i>Isag. In Cat., In Phys., In Eth., Nic. Philos. Hist.</i>
Iamblichus		<i>On the Golden Verses (?)</i>

(cont.)

(the Byzantine country), in search of Greek manuscripts: Endress refers to the account in the *K. al-Fihrist* by Ibn al-Nadīm (end of tenth century), 243.9–13 Flügel. Here is the passage, in Dodge's English translation: 'Then he wrote to the Byzantine emperor asking his permission to obtain a selection of old scientific [manuscripts], stored and treasured in the Byzantine country. After first refusing, he complied with this. Accordingly, al-Ma'mūn sent forth a group of men, among whom were al-Ḥajjāj ibn Maṭar; Ibn al-Baṭrīq; Salmān, the director of the Bayt al-Ḥikmah; and others besides them. They brought the books selected from what they had found. Upon bringing them to him [al-Ma'mūn], he ordered them to translate [the manuscripts] so that they made the translation' (Dodge 1970: 584). See also Gutas 1998: 178–9, referring to a famous *Letter* by Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (ed. by Bergsträsser 1925) on his own travels in search of manuscripts of Galen.

⁸ A doxography based on Hippolytus' *Refutatio omnium haeresium* is extant in Arabic (Rudolph 1989), hence it can be inferred that a translation did exist.

⁹ In this context, it is worth mentioning also the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, that does not appear in the chart for practical reasons, but is stemming almost with certainty from the second century CE (see Besnier 2003); on the Syriac and Arabic translations of the *De mundo* see Raven 2003.

¹⁰ There is an Arabic translation of other short writings belonging, as the *De intellectu*, to the so-called *Mantissa* (*On Visual Rays, On Sight*).

Author	Syriac	Arabic
Themistius	<i>De virt.</i>	<i>In An. post., In De an., On Government, In De caelo, In Metaph. (Book 12), On the Reduction of Syllogisms</i>
Nemesius of Emesa	<i>De Nat. hom.</i>	<i>In Met.</i>
Syrianus		<i>El. Th.</i> , ¹¹ <i>In Tim.</i> , 18 <i>Arguments, Monobibl. On Immortality, Decem Dub. de prov., On the Golden Verses</i> (?) ¹²
Proclus		
Ps.-Dionysius Areop.	<i>DDN, CH, MT, Ep.</i>	<i>DDN, CH, MT, Ep.</i>
Philoponus		<i>In Phys., De Aet. mundi, Contra Arist., De Conting. mundi</i> ¹³
Simplicius		<i>In Cat., In De An.</i>
Olympiodorus		<i>In De gen. corr., In Meteor.</i>

Obviously, not all the writings listed in this chart had the same impact on the rise of Arabic-Islamic philosophy. Another fact that this chart leaves unaccounted for is the circulation of Stoic theories. Although some of these seem to be at home in Arabic-Islamic theology and philosophy, their presence cannot be traced to any writing of Stoic allegiance translated into Syriac or Arabic.¹⁴

2 THE CIRCLE OF AL-KINDĪ: ARISTOTELIANISM AND LATE PLATONISM AT THE BEGINNINGS OF ARABIC PHILOSOPHY

Even though some philosophic works were translated into Arabic already under the Umayyads (r. 661–750), it was under the ‘Abbāsids (r. 750–1258) that the assimilation of Greek thought flourished. The astonishing amount of information about the translations provided in the *Kitāb al-Fihrist* (*Book of the Catalogue*)

¹¹ Twenty propositions of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* have been discovered in Arabic, intermingled with short genuine writings by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Edition: Endress 1973; further propositions in Arabic version have been discovered by Pines 1986 and Zimermann 1994.

¹² This work is attributed to Proclus in the Arabic text, but the authorship has been challenged.

¹³ Fragments of the *Contra Arist.*, lost in Greek, have been discovered by Kraemer 1965. See also Mahdi 1967 and 1972. On the *De Conting. mundi* see Troupeau 1984.

¹⁴ Stoic doctrines embedded in writings by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Plotinus prove to have been of some importance: to give but the two most important examples, the Stoic doctrine of providence was known through Alexander of Aphrodisias (see below, n. 26) and the doctrine of the seminal reasons through Plotinus.

by Ibn al-Nadīm¹⁵ has been already analysed by some of the great Orientalists of the past.¹⁶ However, a substantial deepening in our knowledge of the starting-point of Arabic-Islamic philosophy has been provided by quite a recent discovery. The analysis of the linguistic peculiarities and doctrinal adaptations of a group of early Greco-Arabic translations – including, among others, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *De caelo*, Plotinus' *Enneads* and Proclus' *Elements of Theology* plus some Alexander of Aphrodisias – enabled G. Endress to single out a Baghdad scholarly circle active in early 'Abbāsīd times (Endress 1973; 1997). This circle gathered around the scientist and philosopher al-Kindī (d. c. 866) and was engaged in the assimilation of Greek thought, sharing with the caliph and his court a peculiar interpretation of Islam as the peak of ancient wisdom – an interpretation that characterized the early 'Abbāsīd caliphate and proves to be connected with the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the created Qur'ān.¹⁷ The interpretation outlined above is best exemplified by the following words of al-Kindī:

Indeed, the human art which is highest in degree and most noble in rank is the art of philosophy, the definition of which is knowledge of the true nature of things, insofar as is possible for man . . . The noblest part of philosophy and the highest in rank is the First Philosophy, i.e., knowledge of the First Truth Who is the cause of all truth . . . The truth requires that we do not reproach anyone who is even one of the causes of even small and meagre benefits to us; how then shall we treat those who are [responsible for] many causes, of large, real and serious benefits to us? Though deficient in some of the truth, they have been our kindred and associates in that they benefited us by the fruits of their thought, which have become our approaches and instruments, leading to much knowledge of that the real nature of which they fell short of obtaining. [We should be grateful] particularly since it has been clear to us and to the distinguished philosophers before us who are not our co-linguists, that no man by the diligence of his quest has attained the truth, i.e., that which the truth deserves, nor have the [philosophers as a] whole comprehended it. Rather, each of them either has not attained any truth or has attained something small in relation to what the truth deserves. When, though, the

¹⁵ The *Book of the Catalogue* is the monumental work of a scholar of the tenth century, Ibn al-Nadīm, the son of a book dealer and he himself a man of letters interested in an extremely wide range of subjects. According to Dodge 1970: xviii–xix, 'It is probable that while he was still a young man al-Nadīm began to make a catalogue of the authors and the names of their compositions for use in his father's bookstore . . . as he grew older, al-Nadīm evidently became interested in so many subjects about which he read in books, or which he learned about from friends and chance acquaintances, that he included a great deal of additional material with his notes about the poets and scholars. Thus, instead of being merely a catalogue for a bookshop, *Al-Fihrist* became an encyclopaedia of medieval Islamic culture.'

¹⁶ After the pioneering works by Barthélemy d'Herbétot in 1697, Aimable Jourdain in 1819, Johann Georg Wenrich in 1842, see especially Steinschneider 1889–96.

¹⁷ The possibility for man of interpreting the Qur'ān rests on its createdness, a major tenet of the Mu'tazilite school which was endorsed by some 'Abbāsīd caliphs, especially al-Ma'mūn.

little which each one of them who has acquired the truth is collected, something of great worth is assembled from this . . . Aristotle, the most distinguished of the Greeks in philosophy, said: 'We ought to be grateful to the fathers of those who have contributed any truth, since they were the cause of their existence; let alone [being grateful] to the sons; for the fathers are their cause, while they are the cause of our attaining the truth.' How beautiful is that which he said in that matter! We ought not to be ashamed of appreciating the truth and of acquiring it wherever it comes from, even if it comes from races distant and nations different from us.¹⁸

(trans. Ivry)

Rather than considering the pre-Islamic times as the reign of *jāhiliyya*, i.e., dark ignorance and idolatry, this interpretation of Islam lays emphasis on the continuity between the Descent of the Book and the great civilizations of the past. True, the pagan scientists and philosophers 'fell short of obtaining' the fully fledged knowledge of the Uniqueness of God (*tawhīd*); yet, they approached it, as it appears in Aristotle's doctrines. Much of what they discovered by trial and error is of the highest importance for the rational assessment of faith, which goes hand in hand with the knowledge of the 'true nature of things'. The scientific knowledge of man and the cosmos worked out by the Greeks¹⁹ provides proofs for the faith in the existence, uniqueness and providence of God, as well as in the afterlife. Instead of carrying on a blameworthy innovation (*bid'a*) liable to infringe upon the tradition (*sunna*), the secular sciences of ancient Greece are instances of the human progressive discovery of that Truth which God *is* and has revealed through the Qur'ān, whose language is opened to rational interpretation.²⁰ This is tantamount to saying that the legacy of Greece in the fields of logic, cosmology, psychology, and metaphysics depends upon that Truth which is not *generated* by the Qur'ān, indeed *generates* the Qur'ān itself. Aristotle, praised as the 'most distinguished of the Greeks in philosophy', features in Kindī's account as well as in a famous dream of the caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–33) as the highest representative of Greek sciences as a whole (Endress 1990).

It is such systematic knowledge that al-Kindī aimed at teaching to the cultivated audience of the caliphal court and especially to a son of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim (r. 833–42), to whom he was appointed as tutor. To al-Ma'mūn al-Kindī addressed a treatise *On First Philosophy*, echoing Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

¹⁸ Abū Rīda 1950–53: 1, 97.6–103.5 = Rashed and Jolivet 1999: 9.8–13.16; Ivry 1974: 57–8.

¹⁹ It should be recalled here that to Kindī's time belong the translation of Aetius' *Placita philosophorum* (Daiber 1980) and the reworking of Hippolytus of Rome's *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (Rudolph 1989), both providing knowledge of various and at times conflicting Greek doctrines on cosmos, man and God.

²⁰ Al-Kindī wrote an epistle *On the Exposition about Bowing of the Outermost Body and its Obedience to God*, that gives a cosmological interpretation of Qur'ān 55:6 (Abū Rīda 1950–53: 1, 244–61 = Rashed and Jolivet 1999: 176–99).

even in the title; in fact, the treatise intermingles genuine Aristotelian tenets and a great amount of late Platonic elements, mostly derived from Plotinus and Proclus as well as from Philoponus' anti-eternalist works.²¹ For his pupil Aḥmad, al-Mu'taṣim's son, al-Kindī reworked the Arabic translation of a selection from Plotinus' *Enneads* 4–6. This adaptation was destined to become one of the most influential writings of Arabic-Islamic philosophy: the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*. To the adaptation of Plotinus' writings a prologue is included, whose Kindian authorship has been advanced.²² In this prologue, some alleged *ipsissima verba* of the Philosopher are quoted. After having recalled what he presents as the main point established in the *Metaphysics*, namely, the theory of the four causes, 'Aristotle' explicitly connects it to the Plotinian theory of the three principles One, Intellect and Soul, as if all this were stemming from one and the same bulk of doctrines. The writing announced by 'Aristotle' – the *Theology* – counts by the same token as the peak of the systematic account of cosmos and its principles expounded in the Aristotelian corpus: that 'knowledge of the true nature of things' which features in Kindī's *On First Philosophy*.

The first chapter of the Book of Aristotle the Philosopher, called in Greek Theologia, being the discourse on the Divine Sovereignty . . . The Philosopher said: 'First desired last attained and first attained last desired. Where we finish, in the branch of knowledge contained in this book of ours, is the limit of our aim and the extreme of our desire in the whole of our previous works . . . Since it is established, by the agreement of the leading philosophers, that the pre-existing initial causes of the universe are four, namely, Matter, Form, the Active Cause and Perfection, it is necessary to examine them and the accidentia that emerge from them and among them, and to know their beginnings and causes . . . Now we have previously completed an explanation of them and an account of their causes in our book which is after the *Physics*, and have arranged these causes in the divine intellectual arrangement, after the exposition of the soul and of nature and its action . . . Now since we have completed the customary prefaces, which are principles that lead on to the explanation of what we wish to explain in this book of ours, let us not waste words over this branch of knowledge, since we have already given an account of it in the book of the *Metaphysics*, and let us confine ourselves to what we have presented there, and at once mention our aim in what we wish to expound in the present work . . . Now our aim in this book is the discourse on the Divine Sovereignty, and the explanation of it, and how it is the first cause, eternity and time being beneath it, and that it is the cause and originator of causes, in a certain way, and how the luminous force steals from it over mind and, through the medium of mind, over the universal celestial soul, and from mind, through the medium of soul, over nature, and from soul, through the medium of nature, over the things that come to be and pass away. This

²¹ Endress 1973: 243–6; Davidson 1987: 96–116; D'Ancona 1995; 1999.

²² D'Ancona 1998, 2001; according to Zimmermann 1986, the author of this Prologue is the translator into Arabic of the Plotinian treatises, 'Abd al-Masīḥ ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Nā'ima al-Ḥimṣī.

action arises from it without motion; the motion of all things comes from it and is caused by it, and things move towards it by a kind of longing and desire.²³

(trans. Lewis)

The Plotinian doctrine of the supra-sensible principles One, Intellect and the Soul is presented as the ultimate foundation of the causal interactions at work in the world of coming-to-be and passing away, i.e., the reign of the four Aristotelian causes matter, form, the maker, and the goal. The Plotinian One, explicitly identified with the Unmoved Mover of book 12 of the *Metaphysics*, turns out also to be the First Cause above eternity and time, i.e., transcendent with respect to both the eternal movement of the separate substances and the transient substances within the sublunar world.

This picture of the universe is by no means peculiar to 'Aristotle' alone. We have just seen al-Kindī describing the science of the Greeks as a process of accumulation of bits of truth, at times intermingled with errors; in the *Theology*, 'Aristotle' presents himself as the follower of Plato and praises his great predecessor for having corrected the errors of his own predecessors, laying in this way the foundations of that rational theology which he himself, 'Aristotle', will expound in the book:

We intend to begin by giving the view of this surpassing and sublime man on these things we have mentioned. We say that when the sublime Plato saw that the mass of philosophers were at fault in their description of the essences, for when they wished to know about the true essences they sought them in this sensible world, because they rejected intelligible things and turned to the sensible world alone, wishing to attain by sense-perception all things, both the transitory and the eternally abiding . . . he pitied them for this . . . He distinguished between mind and the sense-perception and between the nature of the essences and the sensible things. He established that the true essences were everlasting, not changing their state, and that the sensible things were transitory, falling under genesis and corruption. When he had completed this distinction he began by saying 'The cause of the true essences, which are bodiless, and of sensible things, which have bodies, is one and the same, the First True Essence,' meaning by that the Creator, the Maker. Then he said: 'The First Creator, who is the cause of the everlasting intelligible essences and of the transitory sensible essences, is absolute good . . . Every nature, intelligible and sensible, has its beginning in that, for the good is sent in the worlds only from the Creator, for he is the originator of the things, and from him are sent life and souls into this world.' . . . Then he said: 'This world is compound of matter and form. What informed matter is a nature more exalted than matter and superior to it, viz. the intellectual soul. It was only by the power of the sublime mind within the soul that she came to inform matter. Mind came to give the soul the power to inform matter only by virtue of the first essence, which is the cause of the other essences, those

²³ Badawī 1966: 3.3–6.12; trans. Lewis 1959: 486–7.

of mind, of soul and of matter, and all natural things. Only because of the first agent did the sensible things become beautiful and splendid, but this action took place only through the medium of mind and soul.' Then he said: 'It is the true first essence that pours forth life, first upon mind, then upon soul, then upon the natural things, this being the Creator, who is absolute good.'²⁴

(trans. Lewis)

What had been presented in the prologue quoted above as the peak of Aristotle's own writings – 'the extreme of our desire in the whole of our previous works' – is in fact nothing if not a development of 'Plato's' doctrine, enthusiastically endorsed by 'Aristotle' and grounded on the correction of the materialistic approach of the earliest thinkers, who thought that sense-perception could attain knowledge of real beings. A remote echo of Plato's divided line, with its correspondence between the kinds of knowledge and the degrees of reality, is put into the service of an account of the nature of the cosmos, which is at one and the same time also an account of the main accomplishments of Greek thought. 'Aristotle' shares with his teacher Plato the idea that whereas sense-perception grasps the changing beings, the knowledge of their causes can be attained only through intellectual knowledge: hence, the real causes of the changing beings are supra-sensible. The intelligible principles are the true beings: 'Aristotle' endorses the doctrine – ultimately based on the *Timaeus* – of the two worlds, the upper intelligible world, and the lower world of coming-to-be and passing away. According to 'Plato', the lowly world is composed of matter and form; but this is due to the agency of a principle, the celestial soul; Soul, in turn, is enabled to put the forms into matter by another principle higher than it, Intellect. Again, Intellect is enabled to make the celestial soul operate on matter by another principle, this time the First Cause itself. As the supreme cause of the true, intelligible beings, the First Cause is pure Being, named also the Creator and the absolute Good. In one stroke, this text credits Aristotle with the Plotinian doctrine of the three principles One, Intellect and Soul, and with its creationist interpretation. As expounded by and large in the *Theology* and echoed in the prologue, Plotinus' One-Good turns out to be the pure Being and the Creator of beings, both intelligible and sensible.

The promised account of the divine causality that reaches the world of coming-to-be and passing away through Mind, the Celestial Soul and Nature did not remain confined to the *Theology*. Other writings coming from the same circle and labelled by F. Zimmermann as 'Kindī's metaphysics file'²⁵ elaborate on the basic idea put by 'Aristotle' into Plato's mouth. Drawing on materials to

²⁴ Badawī 1966: 25.15–27.6, English trans. Lewis 1959: 231. ²⁵ Zimmermann 1986.

be found in Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plotinus, Proclus, Philoponus and in a late Platonic paraphrase of the *De anima* (Arnzen 1998), the circle of translators gathered around al-Kindī worked out a comprehensive account of the cosmos, man and God which was eventually ascribed to Aristotle and his school. Whereas the *Theology* accounts mostly for the divine creation and the destiny of human soul, other writings account in more detail for the cosmological issues involved in that 'sum of our philosophy' which was announced in the passage of the prologue quoted above. To the translators of Kindī's circle can be traced back the adapted version of three writings by Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Providence* (lost in Greek)²⁶ and *Quaestiones* 2.3 (47.28–50.27 Bruns) and 2.19 (63.8–28). In the Arabic adaptation, Alexander's writings turn to deal with the crucial issue of how the divine creation can reach even the lowest degree of reality – the changing beings – without compromising God's transcendence.

As detailed in a number of studies by R. Sharples on Alexander's cosmology, the problem of divine πρόνοια is raised by Aristotle's *prima facie* opposite claims at *Metaph.* 12.7, 1072b13–14 and 9, 1075a25–6: in the first passage, Aristotle maintains that cosmos and the nature depend upon the First Principle, whereas in the second one he proclaims that this principle does not think anything but the most divine and the noblest thing, namely, himself. Against the background of the second-century CE criticisms of Aristotle best exemplified by Atticus (fr. 3 des Places), it comes as no surprise that Alexander felt compelled to address the issue of whether or not the divine takes care of the cosmos – an issue regarding which Stoics and Epicureans were struggling. Against the Platonists, Alexander had to maintain that there cannot be such a thing as a divine reasoning about the cosmos, unless one is prepared to admit a change in the divine mind. Against the Stoics, he had to build up a doctrine of providence that, without divesting the divine from the role of ruler of the universe, avoided the risk of making it responsible for evil and – even worse – the one of making the lowly beings something for the sake of which the divine exists and operates. As is well known, Alexander has recourse to the Aristotelian tenet of the regularity of the celestial movements (*De gen. corr.* 2.10, 336b31; *Meteor.* 1.2, 339a21). Their eternity and regularity warrant the continuity and order of the sublunar changes, so that what happens in the world of coming-to-be and passing away is not fortuitous; at one and the same time, the well-being of the sublunar world is by no means the primary task of the divine. One of the writings where this idea is expounded, i.e., *Qu.* 2.19, is extant also in Arabic, and the translation

²⁶ The treatise *On Providence*, lost in Greek, is extant in two Arabic versions, one stemming from the circle of al-Kindī and the other of the tenth-century translator Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus. (Ruland 1976; Fazzo-Zonta 1998; Thillet 2003).

bears the hallmarks of Kindī's circle. Some substantial adaptations appear in the doctrine: while the Greek Alexander maintains that no *πρόνοια* at all is needed for the divine part of the cosmos, i.e., the heavenly spheres, and that the divine *πρόνοια* of that part *on* the sublunar world is the result of their combined movements, the Arabic Alexander maintains that

[T]he whole world has a director in two ways (I say for origination and for adorning and perfecting), just as the Sage related in his book called The Book of Direction, although the sublime part of the world not falling under generation and corruption is, rather, eternal in one state and one motion, desiring to imitate the first agent – like the heavenly bodies, for they have no need in that endurance of the direction of any part of the world (I say in improvement and their preservation and their perpetuation). For the first director is their director (I say that he is their originator and their adorer and their perfecter and he is the preserver of their being and their perfection and their perpetuation). What is in the world falling under generation and corruption does have need of the direction of certain parts of the world in the preservation of its being and its perfection and its perpetuation – like the changing, opposite bodies . . . So if this is as we have described, we resume and say also that the world has two parts: one of them is not generated from any other thing and not falling under corruption, constant in movement, not changing and not undergoing alteration and having no need of the direction of any other part of the world . . . ; and the other part is generated, falling under [corruption . . . having need in] its endurance of the direction of certain parts of the world, which are the heavenly bodies without any need of . . . at all, for the first director is the cause of the origination of the essence of all the parts of the world, just as the Sage related in the Book of Causes. And we say also that every one of the world's parts whose essence and form came to be together, and whose form did not come from another form changing, <that part is> from the first agent without intermediary. He is the director of that part also, preserving it always in its state; they are the first sublime heavenly bodies.²⁷

(transl. Fazzo and Wiesner)

The 'Book of Causes' is nothing else than the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de Causis* of the Latin Middle Ages, the well-known adaptation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, as uncovered by Thomas Aquinas:²⁸ an adaptation that Endress' research has traced back to the circle of al-Kindī. What we meet in this passage is the earliest quotation of the *De causis*, contemporary with its production out of

²⁷ Trans. Fazzo and Wiesner 1993: 152–3; the Arabic text is still unpublished; it is available in the MS Istanbul, Suleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Canullah* 1279, ff. 63v21–64r13.

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Super Librum de Causis expositio*, Proem. 3.3–10 Saffrey: 'et in graeco quidem invenitur sic traditus liber Procli Platonici, continens ccxi propositiones, qui intitulatur Elementatio theologica; in arabico vero invenitur hic liber qui apud Latinos De causis dicitur quem constat de arabico esse translatum et in graeco penitus non haberi: unde videtur ab aliquo philosophorum arabum ex praedicto libro Procli excerptus, praesertim quia omnia quae in hoc libro continentur, multo plenius et diffusius continentur in illo.'

the Arabic translation of the *Elements of Theology*. Note that the *De causis* already features as a work by Aristotle, the Sage. It is true that the sentence referring to it in the Arabic *Qu.* 2.19 'does not exactly match any in the *Liber de Causis*, although the terminology and the notion are at home in it' (Fazzo-Wiesner 1993: 139); however, the two adaptations, Alexander's and Proclus', share with one another and with the adaptation of Plotinus so precise a doctrinal profile to suggest that they are issued from one and the same philosophical project.

A consistent account of the universe and its principles can be extracted from the adaptations of Greek post-classical texts worked out in Kindī's circle. The pivot of this 'sum of our knowledge' is the topic of the creation through intermediaries, originated in all likelihood in the process of translating and reworking Plotinus. As we saw in the Prologue of the *Theology*, the First Principle of all that exists is the One, named also Pure Being and the Creator, God Almighty. Both in the *Theology* and in the Arabic Proclus, the first effect of this Pure Being is Being,²⁹ i.e., the intelligible nature that, after the One, is the most universal supra-sensible cause. The intelligible nature – Intellect and the whole intelligible realm it has within itself – is created directly by the One-Good; the lowly levels of reality – Soul, the visible cosmos and the sublunar beings within it – are created through Intellect. In turn, Intellect pours forth the divine power of being, life and order through another intermediary, Soul. The adaptation of Alexander's *Qu.* 2.19 accounts for the transmission of the supernal power through the heavenly bodies, whose eternal movement does not prevent them from being created. The Arabic Alexander insists on the fact that the sublime part of the world too is created, although 'not from any other thing'.

The *Liber de Causis* outlines a complete hierarchy of the universe, from the One to the perishable individuals. All the levels of being different from and subordinated to the One-Good are created: Intellect is repeatedly called the first creature,³⁰ and its causality is kept distinct from creation, insofar as whatever is produced by Intellect presupposes being, whereas the production of being – i.e., creation – presupposes nothing and belongs to the One-Good alone.³¹ Still, the causality of the One-Good is not confined to the sole creation of being: this principle, as in the Arabic Alexander, is called here the 'Director, *mudabbir*', or, as the Latin *Liber de Causis* has it, 'regens verum et agens verum',³² a ruler whose transcendence does not impede omnipresence and providence.

²⁹ The formula of the Latin *Liber de Causis* is well known: 'prima rerum creatarum est esse et non est ante ipsum creatum aliud', prop. 4, Pattin 1966: 142.37–38 (Arabic: Bardenhewer 1882: 65.4–5).

³⁰ E.g., *Liber de Causis*, prop. 4, Bardenhewer 1882: 66.5, Pattin 1966: 143.64; prop. 6 (7), Bardenhewer 1882: 73.4–10, Pattin 1966: 151.93–152.5.

³¹ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 17 (18), Bardenhewer 1882: 92.10–93.4, Pattin 1966: 174.54–61.

³² *Liber de Causis*, prop. 19 (20), Bardenhewer 1882: 97.4, Pattin 1966: 179.36–37.

The *Liber de Causis*, reworking prop. 112 of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, credits the First Principle itself with that providence not conflicting with separatedness, that Proclus had attributed to the Henads.³³ Thus, after the One-Good, located above eternity and time,³⁴ there is the eternal intelligible realm, with soul 'lower on the horizon of eternity and above time'.³⁵ Then, again, there are the heavenly bodies, endowed with eternal duration in time. They are intermediate between the eternal, intelligible being and the things falling under time. Both kinds of substance are created, with the difference that one is created together with the whole of the timely duration, whereas the other is created *under* time, so that its duration begins and ends in certain moments of time. Within this framework, Alexander's tenet that perpetual duration in the sublunar world belongs only to the species reappears.³⁶

Souls, therefore, that follow an intelligence are complete, perfect, of slight declination and separation. But souls that follow being more lowly are below the higher souls in completeness and declination. Higher souls infuse lower souls with the goodnesses they receive from an intelligence. Every soul that receives more power from an intelligence is stronger in its impression. What is impressed by it is fixed, abiding steadfastly, and its motion is regular, continuous motion. But that [soul] in which the power of an intelligence is less is below the first souls in impression, and what is impressed by it

³³ *El. Th.* prop. 122, 108.1–4: 'All that is divine both exercises providence towards secondary existences and transcends the beings for which it provides: its providence involves no remission of its pure and unitary transcendence, neither does its separate unity annul its providence' (trans. Dodds 1963: 109) = *Liber de Causis*, prop. 19 (20), Bardenhewer 1882: 95.2–5, Pattin 1966: 177.97–102: 'The first cause rules all created things without being mixed with them. This is because rule does not weaken its unity, exalted over every thing, and does not destroy it, nor does the essence of its unity, separated from other things, prevent it from ruling things' (trans. Taylor 1996: 120).

³⁴ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 2, Bardenhewer 1882: 62.1–2, Pattin 1966: 138.74–5: 'The being that is before eternity is the first cause, since it is the cause of eternity' (trans. Taylor 1996: 12).

³⁵ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 2, Bardenhewer 1882: 62.3–4, Pattin 1966: 138.80–2, trans. Taylor 1996: 12.

³⁶ This tenet is part and parcel of Alexander's doctrine of providence outlined above, with its focus on the fact that the Unmoved Mover does not care about the sublunar world and the individuals within it. However, both in the Arabic Alexander and in the Arabic Proclus this point is replaced by its contrary, namely, the claim that the First Principle does exercise providence. Within this new framework, the idea that in the sublunar world permanence is granted only to the species (with its hidden corollary that the destiny of the individuals is not governed by providence) appears also in the Arabic Alexander. In addition to the passage from *Qu.* 2.19 quoted above, see the following passage from the treatise *On the Principles of the All* (lost in Greek): 'Such is also the case with the bodies that are generated and perish: their permanence and duration are only eternal in species, corresponding to the eternity in number of the others', i.e., the heavenly bodies, 'for it would not have been possible for the former to be numerically eternal if they had not been such specifically, nor would it have been possible for the latter to be specifically eternal without the former's numerical eternity and this continuous circular motion following this course,' Genequand 2001: 84.4–11 (Ar.), 85 (English trans.). In the same vein, see *On Providence* (lost in Greek): 'Imperishability in the things falling under generation and corruption concerns only the species and happens to be only via the succession of things that in themselves are not eternal' (89.7–9 Ruland).

is weak, evanescent and destructible. Nevertheless, although it is so, its impression still persists through generation.³⁷

(trans. Taylor)

Every substance originated in time is either perpetual in time and time is inseparable from it because it and time were equally originated; or it is separated from time and time is separate from it because it was originated in a certain moment of time. For if originated things follow one after another and the higher substance follows only the substance similar to it and not the substance dissimilar to it, then the substances similar to the higher substances (namely the originated substances from which time is not separate) are before the substances that are <not> similar to the perpetual substances (namely the substances not continuous with time and originated in certain moments of time). . . . It is impossible for perpetual substances above time to follow temporal substances that are not continuous with time except through the mediation of temporal substances perpetual in time. And these substances came to be intermediate because they share in perpetuity with higher perpetual substances and they share in time with temporal substances that are not continuous <with time> through generation. For, although they are perpetual, their perpetuity is through generation and motion . . . It has become clear and evident, then, that there are some substances perpetual above time, there are some substances equal with time and time is inseparable from them, and there are some that are not continuous with time and time is separate from them both above and below, and these [latter] are substances falling under generation and corruption.³⁸

(trans. Taylor)

The first proposition of the *Liber de Causis* had stated that the influence of the most remote cause – the True One – adheres more to the effect than the one of whatever secondary cause.³⁹ Here, towards the end of the booklet, we reach the bottom of the cosmic hierarchy: the substances falling under generation and corruption. And if the Arabic version of *Qu. 2.19* is acquainted with the *Liber de Causis*, the latter, in turn, is well acquainted with Alexander's cosmology, as shown by the presence of the topic of perpetual duration according to the species. In other words, Plotinus, Proclus and Alexander of Aphrodisias are combined in one and the same picture of the cosmos, and we shall see in a moment that Philoponus contributes to it, too. After having reached the sublunar world in

³⁷ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 4 (5), Bardenhewer 1882: 68.3–69.3, Pattin 1966: 145.98–146.13; trans. Taylor 1996: 37.

³⁸ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 29 (30), Bardenhewer 1882: 110.2–113.8, Pattin 1966: 193.66–198.42; trans. Taylor 1996: 167–8.

³⁹ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 1, Bardenhewer 1882: 58.3–60–8, Pattin 1966: 134.1–136.47, trans. Taylor, 1996: 5–6: 'Every primary cause infuses its effect more powerfully than does a universal second cause . . . It is, therefore, now clear and plain that the first remote cause is more comprehensively and more powerfully the cause of a thing than the proximate cause. For this reason, its activity comes to adhere more powerfully to the thing than the activity of the proximate cause. It happens in this way only because a thing first of all is affected by the remote power alone and then is secondly affected by the power that is below the first.'

its description of the degrees of reality, the *Liber de Causis* connects the end with the beginning and states that everything – even the perishable individuals – is under the influence of the divine causality pouring forth from the One–Good through Intellect, Soul and the heavenly bodies. If the One is ‘more powerfully the cause of a thing than its proximate cause’, this is because it is that cause upon which the substance of the thing depends, no matter whether sempiternal or destructible.

[I]t is already clear from what we have said that everything that comes to be, falling under time in its substance, has a substance that depends on the pure being, which is both the cause of durability and the cause of all things, whether sempiternal or destructible. There must be a true one causing the acquisition of unities while it is itself unacquired, though all the rest of the unities are acquired . . . Therefore, that in which there is a fixed unity not found to be from another is the first true one . . . Therefore, it is already clear and plain that every unity after the true one is acquired and created. But the first true one creates unities, causing acquisition [but is] not [itself] acquired, as we have shown.⁴⁰

(trans. Taylor)

The whole universe is the effect of the unique first cause, the True One owing its pure unity to nothing if not itself. Even if a part of this universe is eternal in duration, this does not prevent it from being created: creation is explicitly kept apart from production in time. At the end of the passage quoted above from the prologue of the *Theology*, ‘Aristotle’ presents the following interpretation of ‘Plato’s’ position:

How well and how rightly does this philosopher describe the Creator when he says ‘He created mind, soul and nature and all things else’, but whoever hears the philosopher’s words must not take them literally and imagine that he said that the Creator fashioned the creation in time. If anyone imagines that of him from his mode of expression, he did but so express himself through wishing to follow the custom of the ancients. The ancients were compelled to mention time in connection with the beginning of creation because they wanted to describe the genesis of things, and they were compelled to introduce time into their description of genesis and into their description of the creation – which was not in time at all – in order to distinguish between the exalted first causes and the lowly secondary causes. The reason is that when a man wishes to elucidate and recognize the cause he is compelled to mention time, since the cause is bound to be prior to its effect, and one imagines that priority means time and that every agent performs his action in time. But it is not so; not every agent performs his action in time, nor is every cause prior to its effect in time. If you wish to know whether this act is temporal or not, consider the agent: if he be subject to time then is the act subject to time, inevitably, and if the cause is temporal so too is the effect. The agent and the cause

⁴⁰ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 31 (32), Bardenhewer 1882: 116.4–118.5, Pattin 1966: 200.83–203.16, trans. Taylor 1996: 161–2.

indicate the nature of the act and the effect, if they are subject to time or not subject to it.⁴¹

(trans. Lewis)

The move of disentangling creation from time is clearly reminiscent of Philoponus' arguments against Proclus.⁴² As we saw before, the *De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum* was known in Kindī's circle; now we meet, in the words of 'Aristotle', one of the objections raised by Philoponus against the eternalist claim that a created world would imply a changing principle. Philoponus replied to Proclus that the quality of the action does not depend upon the nature of the effect, but upon the nature of the agent. This remote echo of the late Platonic interpretation of the *Timaeus* surfaces in the passage of the *Theology*, transformed into Aristotle's account of how the First Cause operates. The pre-eternal One gives rise to the timeless eternity of the intelligible world as well as to the perpetual duration of the cosmic system; its causal power reaches even the things falling under time. This cluster of doctrines will lastingly influence the developments of Arabic-Islamic philosophy, even when new problems will give rise to new solutions.

3 PHILOSOPHY IN TENTH-CENTURY BAGHDAD: ARGUMENTS AND SYSTEM

The assimilation of Greek thought continued after the generation of al-Kindī in a changed landscape. First, there is the fact that knowledge of Greek thought increased enormously after Kindī's age, both from the viewpoint of the number and variety of the sources known and from the viewpoint of the dissemination of scientific and philosophic learning in cultivated society. The Christian physician and translator Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (d. 873), his son Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910–11) and other translators associated with them put at the disposal of the learned Arabic readership almost the whole of the Aristotelian corpus and a considerable amount of commentaries, from Alexander of Aphrodisias to Olympiodorus, in addition to other works stemming from Plato and the Platonic tradition. Later on, another Christian, Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d. 940), translated from Syriac some Aristotelian works and further commentaries by Alexander,

⁴¹ Badawī 1966: 27.7–28.3, English trans. Lewis 1959: 231; for a commentary, see D'Ancona *et al.* 2003: 312–17.

⁴² See in particular Philoponus' reply to Proclus' eighteenth argument: *De aet. mundi contra Proclum*, 613.22–617.22 Rabe, English trans. Wilberding 2006: 97–100. See Lang-Macro 2002: 140–9 for an annotated translation of Proclus' eighteen arguments.

Themistius, Simplicius and Olympiodorus.⁴³ Abū Bišr Mattā was the leader of a philosophical circle where Aristotle was studied along with the commentaries, as shown by Hugonnard-Roche (1993); the Muslim philosopher al-Fārābī was one of his pupils. Even before outlining the new profile of Arabic-Islamic philosophy that the new materials contributed to shape, it is worth noting that philosophy had become an intellectual option facing others. The interest in foreign sciences was no longer at home only in the caliphal court: instead, it became widespread in urban learned society.

Another important fact to mention is that the spiritual and cultural climate had changed with respect to al-Ma'mūn's times. Not only did the caliphate experience a severe crisis,⁴⁴ but, even more relevant for our purposes, it abandoned the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the created Qur'ān and put an end to the *miḥna*, the inquisition that had been promoted by al-Ma'mūn in order to impose this doctrine. In the long run, the anti-Mu'tazilite attitude of some religious leaders, like al-Aš'arī (d. 935), and the increasing codification of the traditional Islamic sciences of law, grammar and theology generated an attitude of diffidence towards philosophy – a diffidence that was nothing but the counterpart of the rise of groups of philosophers competing with the advocates of the traditional Islamic sciences for intellectual leadership. The sources show that both men of letters and theologians challenged the legitimacy of having recourse to the foreign sciences. A well-known dispute between Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus and the grammarian Abū Sa'īd al-Sīrāfī on the respective merits of grammar and logic, held in 938 in Baghdad, provides proof of the sophisticated level of the argument and of the importance of the issue at hand. What was under debate was by no means this or that philosophical doctrine, but the very possibility of the transfer from one linguistic universe into another. Abū Bišr Mattā's contention that a mental truth antecedent to and independent of any given language might have been made available in whatever culture – a contention successfully challenged by the grammarian al-Sīrāfī, if one has to trust the sources – lies in the background of Fārābī's thought.

By the time of al-Fārābī, the Greek legacy had gained a firm footing in philosophical circles. Thanks to the efforts of three generations of translators – the circle of al-Kindī in the first half of the ninth century; Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq and his associates, between the second half of the ninth century and the first

⁴³ The chart above gives a rough overview of the works translated; note however that only post-classical authors are mentioned there.

⁴⁴ The difficulties became evident already with al-Mu'tasim (r. 833–42), who transferred the headquarters away from Baghdad, in Samarra; the crisis reached its peak with the arrival of the Būyid dynasty at Baghdad in 945.

decade of the tenth; Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus and his associates, towards the middle of the tenth century – Plato's and Aristotle's doctrines, together with their interpretations of the Hellenistic and imperial ages, were widely known and had already become part and parcel of a new literary genre inaugurated by al-Kindī: the philosophical treatise.

We saw before that the first assimilation of Greek thought, in Kindī's age, was dominated by the idea that Aristotle was the most faithful heir of Plato and had driven Plato's doctrine to completion, providing knowledge of cosmos and the causes both within it and transcendent to it. In the Kindian account, Greek lore was given by Aristotle a systematic structure that was in complete harmony not only with Plato's teaching, but also with the Islamic *tawhīd* and the correlated tenets of creation, providence, and the afterlife. Against the background of the diffidence towards the foreign sciences outlined above, here is what al-Fārābī sets for himself as an important point to elucidate, in his book *The Harmonization of the Two Opinions of the Two Sages, Plato the Divine and Aristotle*:⁴⁵

I see most of the people of our time delving into and disputing over whether the world is generated or eternal. They claim that there is disagreement between the two eminent and distinguished sages, Plato and Aristotle, concerning: the proof [of the existence] of the First Innovator; the causes existing due to Him; the issue of the soul and the intellect; recompense for good and evil actions; and many political, moral, and logical issues. So I want to embark in this treatise of mine upon a harmonization of the two opinions of both of them and an explanation of what the tenor of their arguments signifies in order to make the agreement between the beliefs of both apparent, to remove doubt and suspicion from the heart of those who look into their books, and to explain the places of uncertainty and the sources of doubt in their treatises.⁴⁶

(trans. Butterworth)

This passage and the treatise it opens are telling: not only does al-Fārābī voice the objections against philosophy – there is much dispute over Plato's and Aristotle's doctrines; philosophy incurs the charge of inconsistency⁴⁷ – but also he himself is well aware of the dissensions within the history of Greek thought. He no longer has recourse to the Kindian model of the accumulation of truth:

⁴⁵ The Farabian authorship of this writing has been challenged, but the detailed analysis carried on by Martini Bonadeo 2008 in my opinion settles the issue.

⁴⁶ *Harmonization* 36.5–37.1 Martini Bonadeo, English trans. Butterworth 2001: 125.

⁴⁷ It should be recalled that within the Islamic context inconsistency equals falsity, given that a *ḥadīth* (Prophetic saying) warrants the *Umma* against being in agreement on error: the implication is that where there is disagreement, there is error (see Bernard 1970). Especially the ṣāfi'ite Sunni school of law (named after Ṣāfi'ī, d. 820) insisted on the harmony (*iḡmā'*) of the opinions of the juriconsults as the source of law. Fārābī's harmonization (*ḡam'*) of Plato's and Aristotle's doctrines recalls this technical notion and counters the criticism of inner inconsistency, i.e., falsity, raised also by al-Sīrāfi in the dispute with Fārābī's master Abū Biṣr Mattā.

as shown by several of his writings – chiefly by his reply to Philoponus' *Contra Aristotelem*, but also by the *Harmonization* – he is acquainted with opinions at odds on no less crucial points as eternity of the world versus creation, and is aware that Aristotle's doctrines have been challenged by later Greek thinkers.

The variety of materials at his disposal, the scholarly practice of commenting upon Aristotle in the philosophical circle directed by Abū Biṣr Mattā, the confrontation with other doctrinal allegiances in the literary circles of the capital, the display of diffidence and scorn about philosophy: all this suggests a new assessment of the reasons why philosophy is indeed the discipline one has to entrust. As detailed in the *Harmonization*, Fārābī's idea is that if one relies upon Plato and Aristotle and studies their works in due order, i.e., systematically and under the guidance of a good master, he will realize that a profound harmony reigns between their doctrines. The disagreement arises only because of the factiousness of one-sided, less-gifted followers of the two schools, incapable of going beyond the differences in the formulae that Plato and Aristotle adopted in order to expound one and the same truth.

The topic of the harmony between Plato and Aristotle, typical of the Platonic schools of late antiquity, has been advocated to account for this Farabian move, and with good reason (Endress 1991b). In one of his works lost to us, but partly preserved by later sources, al-Fārābī attempts to present himself as the true, legitimate heir of the scholarly tradition at Alexandria, the place that was for him the last seal of the school directed by Aristotle.⁴⁸ Even though the tendentiousness of the reconstruction of the transfer of lore 'from Alexandria to Baghdad' has been noticed (Gutas 1999), there is scholarly agreement on the fact that Fārābī's understanding of Plato's and Aristotle's doctrines is shaped by the legacy of late antiquity. What Fārābī's library actually did contain as Hellenistic and late-antique writings is far from being completely clear, but among the post-classical Greek sources he was acquainted with there are surely Galen, Alexander

⁴⁸ The fragment preserved by the thirteenth-century historian Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a can be read in the English translation by Rosenthal 1975: 50–1. It begins, 'Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī has given the following account of the appearance of philosophy [in Islam]. Philosophy was popular in Alexandria in the time of the Greek rulers and after the death of Aristotle until the end of the woman's rule. The teaching of it continued unchanged after the death of Aristotle during the reign of the thirteen rulers. During their reign twelve teachers, one of them named Andronicus, taught philosophy in succession. The last of these rulers was the woman whom the Roman Emperor Augustus defeated and had killed. He took over the rule and, when he had secured it, he inspected the libraries and found there manuscripts of Aristotle's works, written in his lifetime and in that of Theophrastus. He also found that scholars and philosophers had written books on the same ideas as Aristotle. He ordered the books written in the lifetime of Aristotle and his pupils to be copied and used as text books and all other books to be excluded. Andronicus was appointed by him to supervise this task. He ordered him to copy manuscripts and take them to Rome and to leave further copies at the school in Alexandria. He also commanded him to leave a teacher as his deputy in Alexandria and to travel to Rome with him. In this way it happened that philosophy was taught in both places.'

of Aphrodisias, an unknown work on Plato's dialogues antedating Plotinus,⁴⁹ Plotinus (via the *Theology*),⁵⁰ Porphyry, Proclus (still via the texts of the age of al-Kindī), Ammonius, John Philoponus and the Alexandrian eisagogic literature. Al-Fārābī himself wrote a series of commentaries on Aristotle's works, containing the traces of a deep knowledge of the late-antique tradition of exegesis: most of them are devoted to the enlarged Organon of late antiquity, but some concern other works;⁵¹ his personal writings too exhibit an omnipresent acquaintance with the philosophical literature of Hellenism and late antiquity.

The awareness of a deep crisis in the Islamic community (Endress 1990) and the feeling of the diffidence surrounding the philosophers leads al-Fārābī to a new assessment of the relationship between Greek thought and Islam. As his predecessor al-Kindī, he is convinced that the most fundamental truths about God, man and the cosmos revealed in the sacred Book can be rationally understood if one follows in the footsteps of the Greek philosophers, chiefly Aristotle. At variance with al-Kindī, he no longer thinks that philosophy, having reached its peak with Aristotle, after him simply gave the final touches to his thought. Al-Fārābī is aware of the fact that Aristotle has been criticized in the past by some Greek philosophers as he is at present by 'the people of our time', and sets for himself the task of re-establishing the truth. To the scientific and metaphysical truths taught by Aristotle the primacy must be acknowledged; at one and the same time, they should not be studied only in the small circles of the philosophers and set against the other sciences of purely Islamic breed. The Greek legacy has its place – indeed, leadership – within the context of an all-embracing system of the sciences, that al-Fārābī is confident can overcome the conflicting pretensions of different groups to intellectual and spiritual leadership within the Islamic community. Following Plato's lead, he is convinced that no state can be virtuous unless the kings are philosophers, or the philosophers are kings. Hence, the true *imām* of the Islamic community owes his legitimacy to the fact of knowing the truth, and is entitled by this knowledge to establish virtue in the state. This is why Fārābī's most systematic work, the *Opinions of the Citizens of the Perfect State*, opens with metaphysical truths about the

⁴⁹ Fārābī's summary of the contents of Plato's dialogues known as the *Philosophy of Plato* (*De Platonis philosophia* ed. Rosenthal and Walzer 1943) depends upon a Greek source lost to us, akin to the Middle Platonic account of Plato's works and alien from the peculiar features of the late Platonic interpretation of the dialogues.

⁵⁰ The scholars who challenge the Farabian authorship of the *Harmonization* point to the fact that in no other Farabian writing is the *Theology* quoted; however, albeit not quoted, the doctrines of the *Theology* and of the *Liber de causis* are at home in other works by him, such as *On the Perfect State* (Walzer 1998).

⁵¹ See Vallat 2004: 378–80 and Zimmermann 1981. Among the exegetical works (commentaries or summaries), there are writings on Plato's *Laws*, Euclid's *Elements*, a treatise on the scope of the *Metaphysics*, an outline of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies. See Vallat 2004: 380–2.

First Cause and the cosmic system below it. Science, whose crowning part is rational theology,⁵² uncovers the truths of the sacred Book that God revealed in a performative, poetic language capable of conducting to them even the most uneducated listener. Developing and emphasizing the Kindian – and, for that matter, Mu‘tazilite – conviction that the sacred Book is open to rational interpretation, al-Fārābī thrusts himself forward to proclaim that *only* Greek philosophy ensures solid foundations to the doctrine of creation, whereas the sacred Book makes use of a non-scientific language and offers the virtually misleading image of a pre-existent matter:

Were it not that the path we are pursuing in this treatise is the middle path . . . we would have spoken at length and said that none of the adherents of the [various] schools, sects, laws, and the rest of the factions has the knowledge about the generation of the world, affirming [the existence of] its Artisan, and giving a summary account of the issue of innovation that Aristotle, and Plato before him, and those who pursue their approach have. That is, that all the arguments of the learned in the rest of the schools and sects do not, upon detailed analysis, indicate anything other than the eternity of clay and its perdurance. If you would like to grasp that, look into the books compiled about ‘beginnings’, the accounts related in them, and the traditions recounted from their predecessors to see marvellous things: one says that at the outset there was water, and it was set in motion; foam gathered from which the earth was constituted; and smoke rose up from which the heavens were arranged. Then [look into] what the Jews, the Magians, and the rest of the nations say, all of which indicates transformations and changes that are contraries of innovation . . . Had God not rescued intelligent and mindful people by means of these two sages and those pursuing their approach, who clarified the issue of innovation by clear and persuasive proofs . . . mankind would have remained in perplexity and bewilderment.⁵³

(trans. Butterworth)

What al-Fārābī means by ‘innovation’, i.e., creation out of nothing, is the timeless emanation of being of the Platonic texts of Kindī’s age. As in the *Theology* and in the *Liber de Causis*, God’s creation gives rise both to eternity and time: the eternal cosmos of the separate substances and the timely duration of the sublunar world both depend upon a First Cause whose pure and absolute

⁵² In the short treatise *On the Purposes of the Metaphysics* (partial English translation and commentary: Gutas 1988: 238–42) al-Fārābī maintains that theology is not to be found in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Indeed, this work is devoted to ‘universal science’, namely, ‘what is common to all beings . . . and the common first principle of all beings, which [alone] ought to be called by the name of God’ (Gutas 1988: 241): this led astray, to put it in Farābī’s words, those who ‘have the preconceived notion that the import and content of this book consist of a treatment of the Creator, the Intellect, the Soul and other related topics’ (Gutas 1988: 240). The three topics, the Creator, Intellect and the Soul, are the subject matter that ‘Aristotle’ assigned to another work distinct from the *Metaphysics*, i.e., the *Theology*, in the Prologue quoted above, pp. 875–6.

⁵³ *Harmonization*, 66.2–67.3 Martini Bonadeo, English trans. Butterworth 2001: 157–8, giving the Koranic references for the images of water, foam, smoke, etc.

unity transcends even the eternal duration of the celestial sphere. Under the guidance of the philosopher-king, the citizens of the perfect state share in the correct view of the nature and order of the universe; first and foremost, they know that it has a first principle. Here are the opening words of *The Perfect State*:

The First Existent is the First Cause of the existence of all the other existents. It is free of every kind of deficiency, whereas there must be in everything else some kind of deficiency, either one or more than one; but the First is free of all their deficiencies . . . It is the existent for whose existence there can be no cause through which, or out of which, or for the sake of which, it has come to exist. For it is neither matter nor is it at all sustained by a matter or a substratum; its existence is free of all matter and substratum. Nor does it have form, because form can exist only in matter . . . Likewise its existence has no purpose and no aim, so that it would exist merely to fulfil that aim and that purpose; otherwise that would have been a cause of its existence, so that it would not be the First Cause.⁵⁴

(trans. Walzer)

Even though al-Fārābī does not quote the *Liber de Causis*, this passage and the top-down structure of the treatise are reminiscent of the booklet, with its Proclean model of the descent from the One to the many and, at the outset, a First Cause giving an Aristotelian ring in the place of Proclus' One. No need to say that, as in the texts of Kindī's circle, this First Cause is indeed the pure One: oneness is its essence.

If then the First is indivisible with regard to its substance, the existence it has, by which it is distinguished from all other existents, cannot be any other than that by which it exists in itself. Therefore its distinction from all the others is due to a oneness which is its essence . . . Thus the First is one in this respect as well, and deserves more than any other one the name and the meaning [of 'the one'].⁵⁵

(trans. Walzer)

Its causality is universal: everything depends upon it and owes to it the being it has, be it sensible or intelligible. Al-Fārābī adopts the term 'emanation, *ḥayḍ*', used in the *Theology* and even more in the *Liber de causis*, meaning a production of effects that takes place with no change whatsoever in the principle.

The First is that from which everything which exists comes into existence. It follows necessarily from the specific being of the First that all the other existents which do not come into existence through man's will and choice are brought into existence by the First in their various kinds of existence, some of which can be observed by sense-perception, whereas others become known by demonstration. The genesis of that which comes into existence from it takes place by way of emanation . . . Again, by giving existence to something else the First does not attain a perfection which it did not have before . . . Nor

⁵⁴ Walzer 1998: 56.2–58.8 (Ar.), 57–9 (English trans.).

⁵⁵ Walzer 1998: 68.6–13 (Ar.), 69 (English trans.).

is it in need, for the existence of something else to emanate from its existence, of anything other than its very essence, neither of a quality which would be in it nor of a motion through which it would acquire a state which it did not have before, nor of a tool apart from its essence.⁵⁶

(trans. Walzer)

As in the *Liber de Causis*, the emanation from the First Cause originates a hierarchy of levels of being.

But the substance of the First is also such that all the existents, when they emanate from it, are arranged in an order of rank, and that every existent gets its allotted share and rank of existence from it. It starts with the most perfect existent and is followed by something a little less perfect than it. Afterwards it is followed successively by more and more deficient existents until the final stage of being is reached.⁵⁷

(trans. Walzer)

The main frame of the cosmic hierarchy is that of the *Liber de Causis*, but in his description of the separate substances, the celestial bodies, the sublunar bodies and the nature of man al-Fārābī brings in many additional elements from the encyclopaedia of an Aristotelian of the tenth century, elements that one can begin to explore thanks to the rich annotation of Walzer's translation. One of the most important innovations of Fārābī's library with respect to the sources available to al-Kindī is represented by Alexander's psychological writings. As we saw before, both *On Soul*⁵⁸ and *On Intellect* were translated by Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn, and a short treatise by al-Fārābī *On Intellect* (Bouyges 1938) shows that he was acquainted with the latter.⁵⁹ It is well known that Alexander's *On Intellect* attempts at solving one of the major puzzles of Aristotle's *De anima*, namely, what is precisely the thing that, in book 3, acts on the human capacity to intelligize as light does in sight (*De an.* 3.5, 430.10–25). Apart from the differences between Alexander's accounts in his *On Soul* and *On Intellect*, the main point in both texts is that while Aristotle refrained from saying which one of the substances of his world this thing might be, Alexander squarely identified it with the divine Intellect of book 12 of the *Metaphysics*.⁶⁰ It is striking that al-Fārābī, though clearly inspired by Alexander in his own account of intellect, states in as many words that the separate principle activating our potentiality to

⁵⁶ Walzer 1998: 88.11–92.10 (Ar.), 89–93 (English trans.).

⁵⁷ Walzer 1998: 94.8–13 (Ar.), 95 (English trans.).

⁵⁸ The (lost) Arabic translation is attributed to Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn in the Hebrew text.

⁵⁹ In his *On Intellect* al-Fārābī endorses Alexander's classification of the meanings of 'intellect' (potential, as a habitus and active), adding – as Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn did before him – the 'acquired' intellect, that derives, as shown by Geoffroy 2002, from the Arabic Plotinus.

⁶⁰ Alexandri Aphrodisiensis *Praeter commentaria scripta minora*, Suppl. Ar. 2.1: *De an.* 90.2–91.6 Bruns; *De intell.* 107.29–113.24 Bruns.

grasp the intelligible concepts is by no means God Almighty, but a derived principle filled with the intelligible forms and communicating them to the human soul (Bouyges 1938: 32.8–33.9). As a matter of fact, what al-Fārābī endorses is Alexander's doctrine moulded into the pattern of the *Theology* and the *Liber de Causis*, where Intellect is kept apart from the First Cause and features as the principle that allows soul to intelligize. This doctrine, attributed to Aristotle himself in the first stage of the assimilation of Greek philosophy, becomes in Fārābī's hands the key to interpret Alexander's account of intellection. Abstraction from sense-perception is but the first step of the ascent towards the true intelligible things; the latter are known by man thanks to the agency of a separate Intellect; man's ultimate felicity consists in his assimilation to the intelligible realm.

The presence of the first intelligibles in man is his first perfection, but these intelligibles are supplied to him only in order to be used by him to reach his ultimate perfection, i.e., felicity. Felicity means that the human soul reaches a degree of perfection in [its] existence where it is in no need of matter for his support, since it becomes one of the incorporeal things and of the immaterial substances and remains in that state continuously for ever. But its rank is beneath the rank of the Active Intellect.⁶¹

(trans. Walzer)

If philosophy deserves leadership, it is because it is the path towards true felicity for the individual as well as for the state. True, not everybody is capable of ascending towards the intelligible realm; but everybody can reach virtue, provided that the state is perfect – and this can happen, provided that it is put under the direction of the intelligible rule governing the universe, through the mediation of the true *imām*. The man 'on whom the Active Intellect has descended' is the philosopher, the true prophet, 'and God Almighty grants him Revelation through the mediation of the Active Intellect'.⁶² What we see at work here is the confluence of two philosophical traditions: Alexander's account of intellection is interpreted in the light of Plotinus, and vice versa. Thanks to Alexander, the Plotinian return of the soul to the intelligible realm has turned into the 'conjunction' of man's intellect with the Active Intellect – a major topic of Arabic-Islamic philosophy, both East and West.

4 WHAT ARABIC PHILOSOPHY OWES TO LATE ANTIQUITY: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

After al-Fārābī, several important new doctrines and different approaches were propounded in the history of Arabic-Islamic philosophy during the period

⁶¹ Walzer 1998: 204.13–206.3 (Ar.), 205–7 (English trans.). ⁶² Walzer 1998: 245.

corresponding to the Middle Ages in Europe, and even later; but the prominent features of the legacy of late antiquity are set, and this is why this chapter ends with him. First and foremost, the primacy of Aristotle is established along the paths of the schools of late antiquity. Not only did Aristotle organize knowledge from logic to theology, but also he did so in profound harmony with the thought of his master, Plato: a harmony that escapes the enemies of philosophy, punctilious and superficial at one and the same time. The system of knowledge is dominated by the idea of a hierarchy of degrees in reality – an idea that would hardly have been extracted from the Aristotelian corpus without Alexander's cosmology, because if it is perfectly true that the existence of two levels of substance, material and separate, imposes itself on any reader of Aristotle's main works, what is not evident at all without Alexander is what kind of relationship there can be between these two levels. Alexander's account of the movement of the heavens as the result of their desire for the Unmoved Mover, and of the cosmic order as the result of their governance on the lower levels, counts itself as a powerful impulse to the picture of reality as a hierarchy of ontological degrees. Still, it is to the Late Platonic tradition that this idea owes its decisive features. 'Aristotle's' universe, in Arabic-Islamic philosophy, embraces two worlds, the intelligible and the visible, both transcended by a unique First Principle supremely simple. Because of its perfect simplicity, this principle is infinite: its absolute oneness prevents descriptive knowledge, yet it is no longer beyond being; indeed, it is insofar as it is Pure Being that it is beyond description. The ineffability of the First Principle – *Causa Prima superior est omni narratione*⁶³ – is a view attributed to Aristotle, not only, as one might be tempted to say, by those Arabic-Islamic philosophers who were clearly influenced by late Platonic thought, but by Averroes, too.⁶⁴ A hierarchy of separate substances pours forth the universal causal power of this principle on the lower levels of being; man, placed as he is within the world of coming-to-be and passing away, can nevertheless exercise theoretical knowledge in order to reach that conjunction with the intelligible realm which is nothing if not his ultimate, never-ending felicity. In a sense, and for whatever such a short formula is worth, one might say that what Arabic-Islamic philosophy owes to late antiquity is the same that Medieval Latin philosophy owes to it: a powerful rethinking of the Greek classical heritage, through the combined readings of Aristotle and Plato by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Plotinus.

⁶³ *Liber de Causis*, prop. 5(6), 69.8 Bardenhewer, 147.22 Pattin.

⁶⁴ Averroes, *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, T.C. 51, 1078.10 Bouyges.

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY BECOMES MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

STEPHEN GERSH

Any attempt to describe and understand the transition between ancient and medieval philosophy is immediately confronted by the enormous quantity of writings to be evaluated and by the complexity of their interrelations. In the face of such a challenge, certain methodological premisses guiding the selection of authors, texts and themes must be established, even if that selection can only be fully justified at the conclusion of the project. The analysis to be undertaken here will employ the following explicit criteria.

First, the authors of the texts transmitted and their privileged themes will be used as the basis for investigating the readers of the transmitted texts and their privileged themes rather than the reverse. To provide some concrete examples, we will employ the ancient writer Calcidius' presentation of the three principles of Platonism as a starting-point for the discussion of Hugh of St Victor's medieval treatment of the same topic, or the ancient writer Boethius' definitions of nature as a starting-point for Iohannes Scottus Eriugena's treatment of the same issue during the ninth century, or again the ancient writer Proclus' placing of the One beyond Being as a starting-point for Berthold of Moosburg's medieval treatment of the same question. Discussion of the actual medieval context of such philosophical questions in a systematic or chronological manner will not be our primary concern.

Secondly, the emphasis will be placed on secular rather than Christian writings, on the writings of post-classical rather than classical antiquity, and on the writings of Platonists rather than Aristotelians. In other words, we will discuss – in terms of their medieval afterlife – late-ancient commentaries on Plato written by Platonists such as the *Commentarius in Timaeum* of Calcidius, certain independent treatises exhibiting Platonic tendencies like Proclus' *Elementatio theologica*, and late-ancient commentaries on Aristotle written by Platonists such as the *Commentarius in De interpretatione* of Boethius, these works being either written originally in Latin or translated into Latin from Greek. In dealing with the transformation of ancient philosophy into medieval philosophy, it is nevertheless important to remember that medieval thinkers always read their secular,

post-classical and Platonic sources in combination with certain *Christian*, post-classical and Platonic sources. By far the most important among these were Augustine and pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.¹

Application of the above criteria leads to a methodological division of this chapter into three main sections dealing with the influence on medieval philosophy of the late-ancient writers Calcidius, Boethius and Proclus respectively. This ordering conflicts with the chronological order of the late-ancient authors themselves – which should rather be Calcidius, Proclus, Boethius – but is necessary in order to take account of the pattern of medieval reception. The chapter will conclude with a fourth section dealing with the influence of various late-ancient writers whose influence on medieval philosophy is less than that of the main group but still worthy of note.

I CALCIDIUS

The influence of ideas from Calcidius' *Commentarius in Timaeum* can be found mostly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with some earlier traces.² For the purposes of this analysis, we should particularly take account of Calcidius' doctrines regarding the three principles, the distinction between higher and lower forms, the origin of the world, the relation between the World Soul and the Holy Spirit, the relation between the World Soul and the human soul, and the relation between macrocosm and microcosm.

When Calcidius speaks of the three principles: God (*deus*), Matter (*silva*), Exemplar (*exemplum*) (*Commentarius in Timaeum* 307. 308.14–309.2), he is following a doctrine elaborated within the doxographical tradition with respect to the *Timaeus*. However, his version of the traditional teaching is more developed

¹ We shall note below a few places where the influence of these Christian writers combines with that of the secular Platonists in significant ways (see pp. 897 and 898 on Augustine and p. 908 and n. 112 on Dionysius). To summarize briefly: (A) (With regard to methodology) Augustine established the propaedeutic role of secular *scientia* towards Christian *sapientia*, and the concept that Platonism and Christianity agree on fundamental questions. Dionysius conferred apostolic authority on (crypto-) Platonic Christian theology. (B) (With regard to doctrine) Both writers accept the substantiality and immortality of the human soul, and the providential order of creation. Augustine emphasized the dichotomy of intelligible and sensible, the parallel continua between good/being and evil/non-being, the notion of creation with time rather than in time, and the trinitarian structure of created things. Dionysius introduced a more radical transcendence of God, the formalized dichotomy of affirmative and negative theology, the formalized dichotomy of the procession and reversion of the created things, and triadic structure of the angelic world. It is usually against a backdrop of these assumptions that medieval thinkers understood what they read in Calcidius, Boethius or Proclus.

² There is no adequate survey of the influence of Calcidius during the Middle Ages. This is probably because the *fortuna* of Calcidius' commentary has been viewed as inextricable from that of the Latin *Timaeus* itself.

because a technical definition of a principle as simple, without quality and eternal justifies the choice of these three terms. It is also more developed because the mode of discovering these principles in general is specified as the process of resolution (*resolutio*) – a movement from sensible, temporal, prior for us, and posterior in nature to their opposites (ibid. 302.303.15–304.17). Moreover, the mode of studying the principles is specified either as resolution – abstraction by the mind of qualities, quantities and shapes from sensible objects – in the case of Matter, or else as composition (*compositio*) – extrapolation by the mind from the order inherent in such objects to existence of their transcendent cause – in the case of God and Exemplar (ibid. 302.303.9–306.10). When taken at face-value, the triadic system of principles seems to imply that Matter is not created by God and that the Exemplar is external to him. It was therefore frequently cited as the quintessential Platonic teaching by medieval writers like Hugh of St Victor³ who wished to separate this philosophy clearly from Christianity.

Another passage in Calcidius' commentary (*In Tim.* 347.339.1–6) discusses a different triad occurring in Plato's text: namely, that of idea (*idea*), native form (*species nativa*) and matter (*silva*). The second member of this triad – corresponding to the sensible form entering the Receptacle as opposed to the intelligible form or archetype – aroused considerable interest during the twelfth century, given that it seemed to facilitate the reconciliation between Aristotelian and Platonic notions of form, and also – via the etymological connection between *nativa* and *natura* – the emphasis upon quasi-autonomous natural processes which was desired by many contemporary thinkers. Thus, Bernard of Chartres attributes to unnamed commentators the doctrine that certain native forms (*nativae formae*) were combined by God with matter in the original cosmic confusion (*Glosae super Platonem* 4.188–99), and even criticizes Calcidius for suggesting that the primal elements resulted from the combination of *intelligible* form and matter (ibid. 8.246–75). Since Bernard's commentary became the standard gloss on Plato's dialogue during this period, we find the doctrine recurring in many other philosophical texts. A variant of the doctrine in which the *nativa* seems not to be the sensible form itself but the composite of matter and sensible form occurs in Gilbert of Poitiers.⁴

Calcidius has a clear doctrine regarding the origin of the world and a definite interpretation of Plato's quasi-sequential narrative in the *Timaeus*. For the commentator, the world is both made and eternal. Its origin can be described as causative (*causativa*) rather than temporal (*temporaria*) because it

³ See *Adnotationes elucidatoriae in Pentateuchon*, in *Genesim* 4.33AB, *De Sacramentis* 1.1.1.187AB, *Didascalicon* 2.5.29.19–23.

⁴ *Expositio in contra Euticen et Nestorium* 1.82–5, p. 260 and *Expositio in de Trinitate* 1.2.26, p. 83.

arose in a single self-identical moment (*uno eodemque momento*). In fact, the beginnings of the world and time itself are simultaneous.⁵ Since this interpretation of Plato had already been absorbed into the Christian context of creationism by Augustine who argued that the world was created not in time (*in tempore*) but with time (*cum tempore*), medieval thinkers had no difficulty in developing Calcidius' argument by combining it with the Genesis account of six days of creation. For example, both William of Conches⁶ and Thierry of Chartres (*De Sex Dierum Operibus* 1.24, pp. 565–6) distinguish the original causative moment of cosmogony – identifiable with the traces in Plato's Receptacle – from the first six days of creation in which the elements were gradually reconfigured into their present form, and also from the subsequent historical era.

Among issues of interest to medieval scholars raised by Calcidius' interpretation of the World Soul mentioned in Plato's *Timaeus*, it was undoubtedly its designation as a third substance (*tertia substantia*) after God and Providence (*In Tim.* 188.213.1–2) that produced the greatest controversy. In the twelfth century, William of Conches argued that the World Soul could be understood both as a natural force (*naturalis vigor*) providing the motions of growth, sense and discernment to living things, and also as the Holy Spirit, benevolent concord, and divine love. In his early commentary on Boethius, William adds the personal qualifier *ut mihi videtur* ('as it seems to me') to the second interpretation (*Glosae super Boetium* iii, m. 9.525–8). In his *Philosophia mundi*, he attributes it to a group of unnamed thinkers (*Philosophia mundi* 1.4.13), in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, he says that he will neither affirm nor deny the interpretation (*Glosae super Platonem* 71, pp. 124–5), and in his commentary on Macrobius, he attributes it to certain thinkers who were seeking evidence of the Trinity in pagan texts (*Glosae super Macrobius* 3A). Finally in the late treatise *Dragmaticon philosophiae*, William makes no mention of the interpretation of the World Soul as the Holy Spirit. Both William of Conches and Peter Abailard – by emphasizing the strictly figurative character of this interpretation, the latter was even more careful to avoid subordinating the divine persons (see *Theologia scholarium* 1.1411–1750) – were trying to avoid accusations of heresy. Nevertheless, the doctrine was formally condemned at the Council of Sens in 1141.

Medieval controversies not only regarding the World Soul itself but also concerning the relation between the World Soul and human souls can be traced back to Calcidius. The beginnings of this latter controversy can be found in

⁵ Ibid. 23.73.6–7; 23.74.15–19; 101.152.11–13; 105.154.17–19.

⁶ *Glosae super Platonem* 40–41, pp. 73–6; 43, pp. 77–8; 94, pp. 165–7.

Iohannes Scottus Eriugena's commentary on Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis philologiae et mercurii*, where the writer – with specific citation of Calcidius in *expositione Timaei Platonis* ('in his exposition of Plato's *Timaeus*')⁷ – explains that Plato calls the general World Soul from which individual souls proceed into parts of the world body 'Entelechy' (*entelechia*) (*Annotationes in Marcianum* 10.16–24). The closeness of the relation between general and individual implied by the notion of proceeding is crucial, given that a dispute between Ratramnus of Corbie and the disciple of a certain 'Macarius' in which the relation between the general soul and the individual souls in cosmology is identified with the relation between universals and particulars in logic, probably originates in this teaching. In Ratramnus' treatise *De anima ad Odonem*, we see on the part of Ratramnus himself one of the earliest defences of the conceptualist and on the part of Macarius' disciple one of the earliest defences of the realist theory of universals during the Middle Ages, both sides utilizing a combination of abstract dialectical skills and abundant citation of Augustine's *De quantitate animae* and Boethius' *Contra Eutychem et Nestorium*.⁸

Calcidius makes extensive use of the analogy between macrocosm and microcosm implied by the *Timaeus*. In some passages, the location of the reason within the human head is associated with the analogy between the spherical shapes of the head and of the cosmos respectively (*In Timaeum* 231.245.3–6). Elsewhere, Calcidius suggests that the three parts comprising the human soul – the rational, the irascible and the appetitive – are analogous with the three types of living creature (*ibid.* 232.246.9–247.12), and argues that the four elements composing the human body – earth, air, fire and water – are analogous with the four elemental constituents of the cosmos itself (*ibid.* 202.221.20–222.6). Medieval writers develop both the psychological and physical versions of the macrocosm–microcosm analogy. There is no more striking example than the division of Bernard Silvestris' philosophical allegory entitled *Cosmographia* into two narrative parts: the *Megacosmos* in which *Natura* complains to *Noys* about the disorderly state of *Silva*, and *Noys* responds by reducing the latter to a more polished form; and the *Microcosmos* in which *Noys* produces humanity as the completion of the cosmos, having ordering *Natura* to seek the further assistance of *Urania* and *Physis* in this process.⁹

⁷ Eriugena seems to be referring to Calcidius' commentary in general rather than quoting a specific passage at this point. However, cf. *In Tim.* 93.146.20–1 (the Demiurge makes the World Soul) and *ibid.* 201.220.18–221.9 (the Demiurge makes the higher parts of the human soul himself and delegates the making of the lower parts to the subordinate gods).

⁸ See especially *De anima ad Odonem* 8.114.1ff. ⁹ *Cosmographia* 1. Summary.

2 BOETHIUS

The influence of ideas derived from Boethius' numerous works extends throughout the medieval period, increasing progressively and continuously from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, albeit with some abatement during the thirteenth and fourteenth under competition from Aristotle's writings. Of special importance are such derivations from Boethius as the definition of nature, the application of the categories to God, the distinction between *quo est* and *id quod est*, the notions of enfolding and unfolding, the distinction between eternity and time, the notion of cosmic harmony, the notion of cognitive levels, and the theory of universals. However, we should preface discussion of these points with some remarks about Boethius' contribution to the development of philosophical methodology during the Middle Ages. Boethian influences contributed to this development in at least four areas.

A. THE ORDER OF THE ARTES Before the formal adoption of Aristotle by the universities in the thirteenth century, it was Boethius who provided medieval thinkers with many of the principles on which the organization of knowledge and the curricula of schools were based. William of Conches may be cited as an example of such a thinker. In his *Glosae super Boetium*, William explains that wisdom can be divided into the theoretical and the practical, the theoretical into theology, mathematics and physics, and the mathematical into arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy (*Glosae super Boetium*. i, pr. 1.268–362). Given that the first division is based on an inscription of the letters Θ and Π on the robe of the personified *Philosophia*, the second on the distinction between a science's objects as things outside bodies, things around bodies, and the properties of bodies, and the third on the distinction between a science's objects as multitude in itself, multitude in relation, immobile magnitude, and mobile magnitude, William is clearly producing this entire structure from the combination of three Boethian passages: *De consolazione philosophiae* I, pr. 1.17–21, *De sancta Trinitate* 2.68–83, and *De arithmetica* I.1.23–45.

B. THE FORMULAE OF INTRODUCTION It is obviously important to understand the thematic organization of any text selected for commentary, and Boethius follows an unidentified Greek source in formally listing six questions to be addressed as preliminary to a reading. These are, regarding (1) the work's overall intention (*intentio*, *skopos*), (2) the reason for its importance (*utilitas*), (3) its order of discussion (*ordo*), (4) the correctness of its ascription to the author (*si germanus*), (5) the meaning of its title (*inscriptio*), and (6) its relation to a part

of philosophy (*ad quam partem philosophiae*) (*In Isagogen Porphyrii, editio prima* 1.1.4.17–5.10). We find exactly the same set of questions or an abbreviated set prefaced to the anonymous Carolingian *Glossae in Porphyrium* (27.3–7), to Peter Abailard's *Logica 'Nostrorum Petitioni Sociorum'* (509.9ff.), and to many other medieval commentaries on the *Isagoge* and on other works.¹⁰

C. THE AXIOMATIC METHOD Before the introduction of Aristotelian textbooks into the universities during the thirteenth century, it was Boethius who provided medieval scholars with the clearest example of formalized reasoning as the explicit basis of philosophical discourse. Among such scholars, Alan of Lille has an important place. Alan's *Regulae caelestis iuris* begin by arguing that, just as every science has its own fundamental assumptions – for example, the maximal propositions of dialectic or the theorems of geometry – so also must theology have its own ultimate principles (*regulae*) (*Regulae caelestis iuris* prol. 5, p. 122). Whereas the former exhibit only the necessity inherent in the regularity of nature, the latter embody a necessity unchangeable by action or nature. Alan continues by noting that Boethius had explained how these principles could be used to demonstrate other things while themselves being indemonstrable, and also how some of them were intelligible to all people but others only to a few (*Regulae caelestis iuris* prol. 7–10, p. 123). Application of the term 'hebdomads' (*hebdomades*) to the principles shows that Alan has the set of axioms in Boethius: *Quomodo substantiae* 17–46 introduced by this term particularly in mind.

D. THE HARMONY OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE Having outlined the project of translating into Latin and writing commentaries on all of Aristotle's and Plato's writings which he was never to complete, Boethius at one point summarizes his hermeneutic intention. This is to show that there is a certain harmony (*quodammodo concordia*) between the two philosophers and that, contrary to the view of many readers, they agree on the most important philosophical issues (*in philosophia maximis consentire*) (*In de Interpretatione, editio secunda* 2.3.80.1–6). Boethius' statement obviously drew the attention of medieval thinkers to an important problem of interpretation. That it did not resolve the issue is shown by the contrary responses of John of Salisbury who denies the agreement in his *Metalogicon* (2.17.80–4) and Henry Bate of Mechelen who affirms it in his *Speculum divinatorum et quorundam naturalium* (7.2.1–12, etc.).

¹⁰ Boethius is a contributor to the general theory of *accessus ad auctores* which is of great importance to the field of hermeneutics during the Middle Ages.

In the light of these methodological considerations, we may perhaps now turn to the headings mentioned earlier under which Boethius influenced medieval philosophical doctrine as such.

In preparing his polemic against the heretical followers of Eutyches and Nestorius, Boethius must first define the terms ‘nature’ (*natura*) and ‘person’ (*persona*). With respect to the former term he notes: (1) *natura* can be applied to *a* bodies and the bodily only, or *b* incorporeal substances only, or *c* all things that can be said to exist in some manner; (2) In application *c*, all things have nature which as existent, can be grasped by intellect in some manner (*cum sint, quoquo modo intellectu capi possunt*) – the phrase ‘grasped by intellect’ allowing the inclusion of substances and accidents, the phrase ‘in some manner’ the inclusion of God and Matter (which can only be grasped imperfectly through the privation of other terms), and the phrase ‘as existent’ the exclusion of Nothingness; in applications *a* and *b*, a nature is that which can be active, passive (or both) (*vel quod facere vel quod pati possit*) – bodily things and the soul of bodily things having both action and passivity, God and other divine things having action only; in application *a*, nature is the source of motion in itself and not accidentally (*motus principium secundum se, non per accidens*) – the phrase ‘source of motion’ referring to such things as the tendencies upwards and downwards of fire and earth respectively, and the phrase ‘in itself and not accidentally’ to such things as the bed which collapses as wood rather than as bed; (3) *Natura* can also be applied to the specific differentia informing each and every thing (*unamquamque rem informans specifica differentia* (*Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* 1.59–112). The most remarkable of the many uses of this Boethian discussion during the Middle Ages is the famous division of nature on which Eriugena’s treatise *Periphyseon* is entirely based. Although he never mentions Boethius’ name in this context, the fact that the author makes his fundamental division by combining the notions of differentia (as affirmative + negative) with the duality of active and passive (as creating + created) and by stressing that these are *notions* (grasped intellectually) (*Periphyseon* 1.1–33; 2.1–119), and then applies the division dynamically (as procession and reversion) (*ibid.* 1.402–533; 2.582–952) repeats too many of Boethius’ points to be a coincidence. In fact, Eriugena only differs from his predecessor by applying nature to the existent *and* the non-existent (as supra-existent) (*ibid.* 1.674–884) under the influence of pseudo-Dionysius.

The question of how the categories should be applied to God is tackled in one of the most important chapters in Boethius’ *De sancta trinitate*. Among many subtle changes to Aristotle’s original theory necessitated by this novel application, the notion that predications in categories other than substance must be understood as signifying substantially or even super-substantially in the case of God is particularly suggestive. According to Boethius’ argument here,

saying that God is good is equivalent to saying that he is goodness itself or above goodness itself, and saying that God is great is equivalent to saying that he is greatness itself or above greatness itself (*De sancta trinitate* 4.187–96). Anselm of Canterbury expands this theory – which actually originated with Augustine – in interesting ways in his *Monologion*. He argues that predicating quality or quantity of the supreme nature in the usual manner would imply that it is *x* through another (*per aliud*) and not through itself (*per se*) – a situation precluded by an earlier argument in his treatise. On the contrary, saying that the supreme being is just is equivalent to saying that it is justice itself and saying that it is great is equivalent to saying that it is greatness itself (*Monologion* 16.30.1–31). Anselm further concludes that when referring to the supreme nature as just or great, each predicate signifies the same as every other (*idem . . . quod omnia*), whereas when referring to a human being as bodily or rational, these predicates are not applied according to a single mode or viewpoint (*non uno modo vel consideratione*) (*ibid.* 17.31.21–32.4).

Boethius had introduced into his theological discussions an important set of technical terms. These are difficult to translate definitively outside their context but may be rendered provisionally as follows: in *De sancta trinitate* 4.260–8 – *quo est* ('by which it is'), in *De sancta trinitate* 2.92–104 and *Quomodo substantiae* 26–43 – *esse* ('[it] is') and *quod est* ('what it is'), and in *Quomodo substantiae* 29–40 – *esse aliquid* ('[it] is something'). The difficulty of understanding the interrelation between these terms – a difficulty increased by the potential distinction between predicative ('it is [*x*]') and existential ('it is [exists]') senses within *esse* itself – gives rise to numerous attempts at interpretation during the Middle Ages. Two contrasting thirteenth-century examples may illustrate this. On one side, Bonaventure seems to represent the typical interpretation of Boethius during this period – probably an accurate reading in the historical sense – in arguing that, with respect to some existent thing under consideration, the *quo est* refers to that thing's essence whereas the *quod est* refers to the thing as composite of matter and form (*In 1 Sententiarum* d.xxiii, a.1, q.3). On the other side, a transformation of the original Boethian position becomes the standard teaching of Thomas Aquinas. For the latter in most instances, the *quo est* – replaced by *esse* outside the Boethian context – signifies the 'act of being' in the case of spiritual things and either the act of being or the 'form of the whole' or the 'form of the part' in that of corporeal things, whereas the *quod est* – replaced by *essentia* in non-Boethian contexts – signifies the form in the case of spiritual things and the composite of matter and form in that of corporeal things (*In 1 Sententiarum* d.viii, q.5, a.1–2). Aquinas here reads Boethius in terms of the distinction between existence and essence in Avicenna and that between the finite and the infinite in the *Liber de causis*.

In *De consolazione philosophiae*, the final philosophical problem of the Boethian text: the obvious confusion of justice and injustice in the world, is partly resolved through a subtle analysis of the relation between providence and fate. According to Boethius, the former – equivalent to the reasons of things present altogether and simultaneously in the divine mind – and the latter – corresponding to the disposition of things by the divine mind in individual places and times – represent the union (*adunatio*) and the unfolding (*explicatio*) respectively of things that are the same (*eadem*) (*De consolazione philosophiae* 4, pr. 6.34–40). In an obvious development of this terminology, several medieval writers use the Boethian duality of enfolding (*complicatio*) and unfolding (*explicatio*) as the preferred way of expressing the emanative relation between the first principle and the world. Examples of this usage can be found in Thierry of Chartres' *Lectiones in Boethii De Trinitate*¹¹ and – under the probable influence of such passages – in Nicholas of Cusa's *De docta ignorantia*.¹²

For the Boethius of *De consolazione philosophiae*, the duality of providence and fate also corresponds to the duality of eternity and time. Eternity is here defined as the total, simultaneous and perfect possession of interminable life (*interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*), and is contrasted with perpetuity as the life of pure presence is contrasted with the life extending from past, through, present, to future (*De consolazione philosophiae* 5, pr. 6.9–29). Anselm of Canterbury makes use of this teaching within the complex series of arguments comprising his *Monologion*. Having established the eternity of the supreme being in the sense that application of the term 'always' to this being is with reference not to continuity of times but to transcendence of time, Anselm makes a further deduction. If it is the same for the supreme being to exist and to live (*idem est illi esse et vivere*), and its being is eternal in the strict sense described above, then the supreme being possesses the eternity of life in the same manner. Anselm's conclusion – that the supreme being possesses the totality of interminable life simultaneously and perfectly (*Monologion* 24.42.8–29) – is a *verbatim* citation of Boethius.

Boethius' discussion of the principles of music begins with an important cosmological theory. According to this doctrine, there are three types of music or harmony: the cosmic (*mundana*), the human (*humana*) and the instrumental (*instrumentalis*), of which the first or cosmic is subdivided into that among the celestial bodies, that between the elements in the cosmos, and that between the elements in the seasons, the second or human is subdivided into that between the soul and the body, that among the parts of the soul, and that among the

¹¹ *Lectiones in De Trinitate* 2.4, pp. 155–8; 2.31, pp. 165–6; 2.66, p. 176.

¹² *De docta ignorantia* 1.22.44.10–45.29; 2.3.69.1–13; 2.6.79.1–18, etc.

elements in the body, and the third or instrumental is subdivided into that governed by the tension of strings, that governed by the air in pipes, and that produced by percussion (*De institutione musica* 1.2.187.17–189.11). Boethius' cosmological theory fascinated medieval readers probably on account of its numerological tendency. Especially notable among the later responses are various attempts to introduce further tripartite subdivisions, for example, of the harmony of the celestial bodies into position, motion and nature of those bodies, and of that between elements in the cosmos into weight, number and measure of the elements. Also noteworthy are various attempts to determine whether the harmony of the celestial bodies resides in their speeds of rotation or the distances between their orbits, and whether that between the soul and the body depends on some kind of structural affinity between the psychological and the corporeal spheres in general. A typical example of the medieval reading of Boethius' theory can be found in Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus*. Here, the original divisions and subdivisions depicted visually on the robe of a personified *Musica* are combined with conceptual innovations such as the idea of microcosm and macrocosm, the notion of contrariety underlying harmony, the description of consonances, and the problem of bisecting the tone (*Anticlaudianus* 3.386–468).

The concluding argument of Boethius' *De consolacione philosophiae* is framed by an important distinction between levels of cognition. His final task is to resolve the apparent contradiction between the necessity inherent in God's foreknowledge of human action and the contingency implied in the human exercise of free will (*De consolacione philosophiae* 5, pr. 3.3–5). Boethius achieves this by distinguishing the cognitive faculties of intellect, reason, imagination, and sense as a descending hierarchy (*ibid.* 5, pr. 4.80–8; 5, pr. 5.12–20), by explaining that cognitive objects are comprehended not according to their own power but rather according to the ability of the cognitive subjects (*non secundum sui vim, sed secundum cognoscentium potius comprehenditur facultatem*) (*ibid.* 5, pr. 4.72–5), and by arguing that the higher faculties comprehend the objects of the lower but not vice versa (*ibid.* 5, pr. 4.88–91; 5, pr. 5.21–37). It is therefore possible to conclude that what appears to the faculty of reason as a contradiction between necessity and contingency may be resolved somehow by the faculty of intellect (*ibid.* 5, pr. 5.38–54). Perhaps the most dramatic development of this theory occurs in Nicholas of Cusa. This writer fastens on the association of the reconciliation of contradictions with the distinction between intellect and reason, but replaces the reconciliation of the contradictories necessity and freedom with that of the contradictories finitude and infinity. According to Nicholas, whereas reason holds that an actual maximum can be attained and that there is no progression to the infinite, intellect grasps that an actual maximum cannot be attained and also that there is no progression to the infinite. This is

because the nature of intellect is to be the precision (*praecisio*) of reason – as that of reason is to be the precision of sense – and intellect is therefore able to modify the conjectures (*coniecturae*) made by reason (*De Coniecturis* 1.10.50–2).

In commenting on Porphyry's *Isagoge* for the second time, Boethius attempts to answer three profound questions about universals raised but not answered by the Greek Platonist: (1) Whether they subsist or are in the understanding only, (2) whether they are incorporeal or corporeal, and (3) whether they are separate from sensible things or in sensible things. Boethius explicitly follows Alexander of Aphrodisias in explaining that universals are incorporeal, subsisting in sensible things but being understood outside sensible things. He notes that this is the Aristotelian solution, included here because the *Isagoge* is an introduction to Aristotle's work, and that it contrasts with the Platonists' view. According to the latter, universals are incorporeal, existing and being understood outside sensible things (*In Isagogen Porphyrii, editio secunda* 1.10.158.21–1.11.167.20). Boethius returns to the question of universals in *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, where his proposed definition of person as an individual substance of a rational nature requires the clarification of certain of its terms. Here, he notes that the understanding of universals is derived from particulars, and that both universals and particulars have subsistence (*subsistentia*) and existence (*essentia*) but that particulars alone have substance (*substantia*). This is because accidents depend on particulars in order to exist although the reverse is not the case (*Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* 3.194–220). Boethius also deals with the question of universals in an important passage of *De consolazione philosophiae*. Here he argues that the Stoic view of our minds as simply passive to external impressions is insufficient to explain how a universal notion arises, and that there must be some more powerful efficient cause which recombines the divided and disproves the false with the true by returning to itself. In fact, our mind applies certain forms which it holds within (*quas intus species tenet*) to the external impressions on the basis of similarity of motions between the two (*De consolazione philosophiae* 5, v. 4.10–40). Boethius' comments stimulated discussion of the problem of universals among medieval writers without providing them with any decisive solutions, the most striking evidence of this being John of Salisbury's survey of approaches which had been current in the twelfth-century schools. These comprise on the one hand, *verbal* solutions such as Roscelin's view that universals are simply *voces* (words as phonetic items) and Abailard's that they are rather *sermones* (words as semantic units) and on the other, *real* solutions such as Walter of Mortagne's view that they are *status* (modes of reality), Bernard of Chartres' that they are *ideae* (transcendent forms), Gilbert of Poitiers' that they are *formae nativae* (immanent forms), and Joscelyn of Soissons' that they are *res collectae* (collections) (*Metalogicon* 2.17.16–107). John himself goes on to reject all these positions in favour of

an Aristotelian solution similar to that outlined in Boethius' commentary on Porphyry.

3 THE LATIN PROCLUS

The influence of ideas derived from Proclus' works – primarily the *Elementatio theologica* in the translation by William of Moerbeke (completed 1268) but occasionally other texts – can be found mostly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Of special importance are such derivations from Proclus as the placing of the One above being, the cycle of procession and reversion, the function of the first limit and first infinity, the notion of essential causality, the four-fold system of unity, intellect, soul, and body, and the triadic structure of being, life and intellect. However, we should preface discussion of these points with some remarks about the indirect influence of Proclus on medieval thought before his actual writings became known, and about Proclus' contribution to the development of philosophical methodology during the Middle Ages.

Before his actual writings became available in translation, certain ideas of Proclus had already begun to influence medieval thinkers anonymously through translations of other writers who used Proclus without citing his name. One example of this covert influence is the distinction between three kinds of whole – before the parts, of the parts and in the part – stated at *Elementatio Theologica*, props. 67–9. This three-fold distinction was applied to the transcendent form, the immanent form, and the abstracted form as part of the Byzantine writer Eustratios of Nicaea's defence of Plato's theory of the Form of the Good against the Aristotelian critique in his commentary on the first book of the *Ethica Nicomachea* (*In Primum Aristotelis Moralium ad Nicomachum* 1.7, pp. 69–71). Albert the Great read this commentary in the Latin translation of Grosseteste, and in order to mount his similar defence of the Platonic theory recast Eustratios' theory as a three-fold distinction between universals *ante rem* ('before the thing'), *in re* ('in the thing'), and *post rem* ('after the thing') (*Super Ethica Commentum* 1.1.5.29). Another example of Proclus' covert influence is the doctrine of a descending hierarchy of principles linked by emanation stated in *Elementatio theologica*, props. 56–7. In his compilation from Proclus which became known in the Latin world as the *Liber de causis*, the Arabic author interpreted the hierarchy of principles as a sequence of causes in which each cause has a different relation to the First according to the level of power which it possesses, and in which higher causes extend their powers beyond lower causes (*Liber de causis* 1.1–5 and 13–18). Albert the Great read this work in a Latin translation which is probably the work of Gerard of Cremona, and contrasts its doctrine favourably with that of Hermes Trismegistus and others whereby all secondary principles have

the same relation to First and the First has the same relation to all secondary principles.¹³

Proclus also contributed to the development of philosophical methodology during the Middle Ages in perhaps three main areas.

A. THE AXIOMATIC METHOD Medieval scholars were able to draw examples of formalized reasoning not only from the logical, physical and metaphysical writings of Aristotle but also from Proclus' *Elementatio theologica* in Moerbeke's translation. This work is arranged as a series of 211 propositions together with proofs and corollaries, and illustrates the extension of demonstrative form to a large-scale work and also the application of this procedure specifically to theology, in both these respects developing Aristotle's methodology to an unprecedented degree. Berthold of Moosburg's massive commentary on the work defines precisely the discursive procedures involved, distinguishes the material aspect of the propositions themselves (the *elementa* as *hylementa*) from the formal aspect of the interrelation of the propositions (the *elementa* as *elevationa*), and compares the discursive procedures with those of Euclid and others.¹⁴

B. THE HISTORY OF PLATONISM Proclus' *Elementatio theologica* obviously impressed its medieval readers as a work of such singular method and content that its precise position within the history of philosophy had to be explained. Berthold of Moosburg does this by recalling the historical account of philosophy included in Augustine's discussion of scepticism which stated that, as part of a strategy of defending Platonism against the attacks of Zeno the Stoic, the dogmatic teaching of the Old Academics had been maintained as a secret doctrine by the New Academy. According to Berthold, the contribution of Plotinus was to remove all the allegorical coverings (*integumenta*) beneath which the ancient Platonists had concealed their doctrines. The excellence of Proclus resides in his subsequent establishment of the ordering of Plato's propositions in the present book (*theoremata ordinavit in praesenti libro*) and in his use of the Dionysian doctrine of the soul's circular, rectilinear, and oblique motions in order to ascend to knowledge of the supreme good (*in notitiam summi boni*) (*ibid.* 37.14–38.48).

C. THE PRIMACY OF THE PARMENIDES AND THE TIMAEUS In addition to the *Elementatio theologica*, Moerbeke also translated what remains of the Greek text of Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides* – later cited by Berthold of Moosburg,

¹³ *De causis et Processu Universitatis a prima causa* 1, t. 4, c.5. Albert obviously had some acquaintance with the text of Proclus' *Elementatio* itself, since he cites some of the early propositions in his *Summa Theologica*. However, he seems not to exploit Proclus' teaching or relate it to the *Liber de causis*.

¹⁴ *Expositio super Elementationem theologiam Procli* [Expos. tituli] 37.30–40.118; 45.278–51.491.

extracts from the Greek text of his *Commentary on the Timaeus* – later utilized by Henry Bate of Mechelen, and the three short treatises on providence and evil – later cited by Berthold of Moosburg. Although it is difficult to establish the exact textual route by which this idea came to Moerbeke or his patron, the emphasis placed upon the *Parmenides* and the *Timaeus* seems to recall an ancient and anticipate a Renaissance mode of exegesis. According to this approach, since the *Parmenides* describes all intelligible things in relation to the One while the *Timaeus* describes all sensible things in relation to the Demiurge, the two dialogues summarize Plato's entire teaching about the higher and lower worlds respectively.

In the light of these methodological considerations, we may perhaps now turn to the headings mentioned earlier under which the Latin Proclus influenced medieval philosophical doctrine as such.

Proclus' *Elementatio theologica* begins with the statement that every multiplicity somehow participates in unity (*omnis multitudo participat aequaliter uno*) (prop. 1), Berthold of Moosburg's commentary on it being divided into a *suppositum* consisting of three points and a *propositum* consisting of three points. In the first point of the *suppositum*, Berthold notes the disagreement between Plato and Aristotle about the nature of the distinction upon which multiplicity is based. According to Aristotle, for whom unity is a transcendental, it is the opposition of being and non-being which grounds multiplicity, whereas according to Plato for whom unity – as the 'One' – is above being and non-being, it is the degree of power which grounds it. Berthold's view is that the opinion of Plato and consequently of his follower Proclus is superior with respect to this question (*Expositio super Elementationem Theologicam Procli* [prop. 1] 71.22–74.128). The second point of the *suppositum* concerns the distinction between potential and actual multiplicities, while the third point deals with the material and formal causes of multiplicity (ibid. 74.129–77.209). In the first point of the *propositum*, Berthold contrasts the view of Aristotle and his Arabic commentators that being is the primary formal intention with various Platonic views concerning the most primal reality. These are (a) Dionysius' doctrine of the One not in the many (*non in multitudine*), producing all things from itself, and preceding the distinction between unity and multiplicity, (b) Dionysius' doctrine of the One in the many (*in multitudine*) which takes various forms, and (c) Proclus' teaching in *De providentia* regarding the three-fold distinction of Ones according to cause (*secundum causam*), according to existence (*secundum existentiam*), and according to participation (*secundum participationem*) respectively (ibid. 77.214–78.252). The second point of the *propositum* demonstrates that everything existent participates in the One, while the third point explains the different modes of participating in the One (ibid. 78.253–80.309).

Dietrich of Freiberg employs as the foundation of his ontology the causal cycle of procession and reversion which figures so extensively in Proclus' thought. For example, he cites the teaching of the *Elementatio theologica* (prop. 31), that everything which proceeds from another according to its essence reverts (*convertitur*) to that from which it proceeds (*procedit*), and then applies this to the relation between the agent intellect and the possible intellect (*De intellectu et intelligibili* 3.24.2). He also cites the statement in the *Elementatio theologica* (prop. 34), that everything which reverts according to nature makes its reversion (*conversio*) to that from which it also has the procession (*processus*) of its own substance, and then applies this to the relation between the One and all things (*De intellectu et intelligibili* 1.9.2). Dietrich's doctrine – which is developed at much greater length in Berthold of Moosburg's *Expositio* – differs from Proclus' original in important respects. For Dietrich, the association between the notion of a cycle of procession and reversion and that of an activity according to essence or nature is developed into an elaborate theory of essential causation. Moreover, the Aristotelian distinction between agent intellect and possible intellect invoked by the thirteenth-century writer plays no role in the system of the *Elementatio theologica* itself. For Dietrich finally, the cycle of procession and reversion equivalent to an activity according to essence or nature takes on an entirely intellectual character.

In the complex metaphysical system of Proclus, the One is followed by the first limit and the first infinity which are then followed by being. According to the *Elementatio theologica* (prop. 90), a first limit in itself and a first infinity in itself must precede the being composed of limit and infinity. Several propositions (props. 92–3) then explain that the multiplicity of infinite potencies is dependent upon the first infinity – one of the accompanying proofs adding that the first infinity is neither the One nor Being (prop. 92, proof) – and that the infinity in beings is infinite neither to superior principles nor to itself. Further, according to the *Elementatio theologica* (prop. 95), those potencies that are more unified have greater infinity than do those potencies that are more multiple. Thomas Aquinas explicitly cites material from this Proclean account in his commentary on two propositions of the *Liber de causis* dealing with the same topic while introducing some specifically Thomistic changes in order to recast this teaching in a more overtly monotheistic form (*Super Librum de causis expositio* 16, pp. 92–8 and 17, pp. 98–9). In his own discussion, Aquinas expresses general approval of the doctrines stated in the *Elementatio theologica* that infinite potencies depend on a first infinity, and that such potencies are infinite with respect to the lower but not with respect to the higher. However, he rejects Proclus' teachings that the first infinity comes after the One and before being in the order of reality, and that the being composed of limit and infinity corresponds to the idea of being (*idea entis*). According to Aquinas, both the *Liber de causis* and Dionysius teach

that the first infinity is identical with God, while the *Liber de causis* explains that being here corresponds to the first created being or intelligence (*primum ens creatum . . . intelligentia*) (*Super Librum de causis expositio* 16, pp. 92–8 and 17, pp. 98–9).

Props. 172–4 of the *Elementatio theologica* form the nucleus of Proclus' theory of intellection. In this section, he argues that every intellect is a cause through its essence (prop. 172), that each intellect is identical with its consequents according to cause, self-identical according to substance, and identical with its antecedents according to participation (prop. 173), and that every intellect causes by its thinking (prop. 174). Berthold of Moosburg elaborates the important doctrine of the essential cause (*causa essentialis*) – a vertical causal relation between a more universal thing on one level and a more particular thing on another as opposed to a horizontal causal relation between two individual things on the same level – in his commentary on prop. 174. In the first point of the *suppositum*, Berthold distinguishes the different kinds of intellect to which Proclus' theory may be applied. These include the agent intellect, the possible intellect, and the acquired intellect.¹⁵ The second point of the *suppositum* quotes with approval the statement in Dietrich of Freiberg's *De cognitione entium separatorum* that every essential cause pre-contains its effect essentially and intellectually (*essentialiter et intellectualiter*), by means of its causal reasons, and in a more excellent and elevated manner (*nobiliori et eminentiori modo*), and also the statement in Dietrich's *De intellectu et intelligibili* that there is proportionately (*proportionaliter*) in every essential cause, just as there occurs in the case of the supreme Good, a certain boiling over to the exterior (*ebullitio ad extra*).¹⁶ In the third point of the *suppositum*, Berthold notes that the theory outlined applies to substances which are intellectual according to essence but not to those which are intellectual according to participation (*Expositio* 140.121–9). Precisions to the doctrine are added in the first part of the *propositum* where the first point is that the intellects which are essential causes think all their intellectual objects simultaneously (ibid. 140.135–50), and the second point is that the boiling over to the exterior is the proper end of the thing (*finis rei*)¹⁷ – here Dietrich's *De intellectu et intelligibili* is again cited as authority. Further precisions are added in the second part of the *propositum* where the first point is that the intellects which are essential causes have an action (*agere*) which is not equivalent to motion (*movere*) (*Expositio* 142.206–24), and the second point is that the diffusion of the sun's light is analogous with the boiling over to the exterior (ibid. 143.247–61).

¹⁵ *Expositio super Elementationem theologiam Procli* [prop. 174] 136.10–137.53.

¹⁶ Ibid. 137.54–138.79 and 139.96–119. Cf. Dietrich of Freiberg: *De intellectu et intelligibili* 1.8.1–2 and *De cognitione entium separatorum* 23.1.

¹⁷ Ibid. 140.151–141.183. Cf. Dietrich of Freiberg: *De intellectu et intelligibili* 1.10.2.

Dietrich of Freiberg places at the centre of his ontology a distinction of four kinds of beings (*quadruplex maneries entium*) explicitly derived from Proclus' *Elementatio theologica* (prop. 20). According to Dietrich, when the ancient thinker states that the substance of soul is superior to all bodies, the intellectual nature superior to all souls, and the One itself superior to all intellectual hypostases, he is referring to the first three kinds with their positive names but to the fourth with a name suggesting privation (*De intellectu et intelligibili* 1.4.1–2.). This last point is confirmed by three propositions in the *Liber de causis*.¹⁸ These state that the first cause is superior to every description, that it is above every name, and that it is bountiful through itself and to the greatest degree – as indicated by its unity (*De intellectu et intelligibili* 1.4.2). Berthold of Moosburg's *Expositio* follows this reading of the simplified Proclean theory of the hypostases with respect to both the microcosm and the macrocosm. Thus, the subject of theological discourse is four-fold as corporeal, spiritual, intellectual and unitary (*corporale, spirituale, intellectuale et uniale*), while man in his constitution embraces the four principal parts of the universe (*complectitur quattuor partes principales universi*).¹⁹

In the complex metaphysical system of Proclus, the second term in the previous four-fold enumeration can be subdivided into a triad of being, life and intellect. As explained in *Elementatio theologica* (prop. 101), being is prior to life and life to intellect, and each of these represents an unparticipated term at the head of series of participating terms. A further proposition notes that all things exist as composites of limit and infinity through the primal being, have self-motion through the primal life, and participate in knowledge through the primal intellect (prop. 102). Thomas Aquinas explicitly cites material from this Proclean account in his commentary on the proposition of the *Liber de causis* dealing with the same topic, again introducing some specifically Thomistic changes in order to bring the teaching into greater agreement with Christianity (*Super Librum de causis expositio* 18, pp. 100–4). In one passage he begins by retaining the subordinating relation between the three primal terms and identifying them with the idea of being (*idea entis*), the idea of life (*idea vitae*), and the ideal intellect (*intellectus idealis*) respectively of which the Platonists speak, but then removes the subordinating relation between the three terms and makes them one and the same with God (*unum et idem quod est Deus*) in accordance with Dionysius' and Aristotle's teaching (ibid. 18, pp. 102–3). Elsewhere he emphatically distinguishes causality in the sense of creating (*per modum creationis*) and without the presupposition of another term (*nullo praesupposito*), from

¹⁸ These are: *Liber de causis* 5 (6) 57; 21 (22) 166; 20 (21) 162–3. Dietrich's own numbering of the propositions differs slightly from that of the modern edition.

¹⁹ *Expositio super Elementationem Theologicam Procli* [prol.] 7.71–2 and 23.581–4.

causality in the sense of informing (*per modum formae*) and with the presupposition of another term (*praesupposito altero*), and then concludes that among the primary terms being is causal in the first sense, whereas life and intellect are causal in the second sense (*ibid.* 18, p. 104).

4 OTHER LATIN WRITERS AND LATIN TRANSLATIONS

In addition to the three particularly influential writers whom we have been discussing, several other secular, post-classical and Platonic writers have a more limited significance as sources of medieval philosophy. With one exception, we are here dealing with translations into Latin produced in late antiquity or during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁰

The Latin 'Hermetic' dialogue *Asclepius* is the translation of a non-extant Greek original made in the late-ancient period. Because of its citation by Augustine and other Church Fathers and certain perceived doctrinal similarities with Christianity, this dialogue was extremely influential during the Middle Ages from the late-eleventh century onwards. Of particular importance for later readers was the *Asclepius*' unusually emphatic combination of two ideas.²¹ The first idea is that God as unity is identical with the totality of created things in the sense that all created things not only pre-existed in God but continue to depend upon him.²² The second idea is that God has no name because names imply a limited multiplicity and God is an infinite unity, and also that he has every name because – thanks to his identity with the totality of creation – his name can be applied to all things and all things' names can be applied to him (*ibid.* 20.320.15–321.9). This doctrine is brilliantly utilized in order to expand Boethius' teaching regarding the application of the categories to God in Thierry of Chartres' *Lectiones in Boethii De Trinitate*. (4.11, pp. 189–90).

The *Commentarius in Somnium Scipionis* by Macrobius exercised a considerable and indeed unparalleled influence upon medieval philosophy through its summary of the famous doctrine concerning the One (or Good), Intellect, and Soul (*Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* 1.2.13–14 and 1.14.6–9). This presentation has certain peculiar features tending to identify its occurrence as a source even

²⁰ In addition to the writers and works briefly discussed below, it is at least worth mentioning a few other late-ancient figures who contributed something to the dissemination of Platonism during the Middle Ages. Of particular importance among these are Apuleius (who provided a biography of Plato which was used by John of Salisbury), Martianus Capella (who provided another curricular paradigm of the liberal arts which was much favoured during the twelfth century), and Servius (who harnessed the authority of Virgil to the doctrine of the World Soul).

²¹ The impact of these ideas on medieval writers was increased by the fact that they are equally prominent in Pseudo-Dionysius' thought.

²² *Asclepius* 1.296.11–13; 2.297.23–298.1; 20.321.7; 34.344.22–3.

when it is not explicitly cited. These include its routine substitution of the term God (*deus*) for the terms One or Good, its dissemination of the enigmatic name of *Tugaton* (= *t'agathon*) through MSS copied by scribes ignorant of Greek, and its derivation of Soul from the downward rather than the upward looking of Intellect. Given that Plotinus' doctrine of the three hypostases had never been stated fully by Augustine, and that the Proclean variant of the doctrine was not available before the late thirteenth century, Macrobius' summary was for many years the only one available to Latin readers. It was most frequently employed – for example, in Bovo of Corvey's commentary on Boethius' *De consolazione philosophiae* (p. 246) – in order to contextualize Plato's doctrine of the World Soul.

Among the writings which began to influence philosophical thought from the early twelfth century onwards was Nemesius of Emesa's *De natura hominis*. This work was known through two translations: one incomplete version made by Alfanus of Salerno before 1085 and circulated under the title of *Premnon physicon* without indication of author's name, and another complete version made by Burgundio of Pisa in 1165 and circulated under the title of *De natura hominis* with attribution to 'Nyssenus' (i.e., Gregory of Nyssa). It was also known through substantial extracts in the *De fide orthodoxa* of John Damascene – also translated by Burgundio – which was widely studied in theological circles. To cite just one example of its influence, Albert the Great derived six classic arguments against the thesis that the soul is a harmony of the body from Nemesius' *De natura hominis* presumably in the translation of Burgundio.²³

William of Moerbeke translated not only the *Elementatio theologica* and other works by Proclus but also Ammonius' commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione*. Thomas Aquinas subsequently made extensive use of this translation when writing his own commentary on the Aristotelian text which, however, remained unfinished at his death. It is not surprising to find that, in making approximately nine explicit references to Ammonius together with numerous tacit uses of his predecessor, Aquinas exploits the latter's strictly logical observations to the exclusion of his metaphysical subtext.

Also undertaken by William of Moerbeke around the same date was a translation of part of Philoponus' commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*. The earlier view that Aquinas employed this *De intellectu* in his dispute with the Averroists concerning the unity of intellect – as originally argued by the pro-Latin Byzantine writer George (Gennadios) Scholarios – has been brought into question by the modern editor of the Moerbeke translation. However, there is no doubt

²³ Cf. Nemesius: *De natura hominis* 2.30.71–32.5 and Albert: *De homine* t. 1, q.4, a.5.

that Philoponus' commentary is employed as a major source in the *Speculum divinatorum et quorundam naturalium* of Henry Bate of Mechelen.

A third translation by Moerbeke – of Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Categoriae* – was widely read during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Among the more important refinements introduced in order to harmonize the Aristotelian position with the Platonic one, the Greek commentator proposes various further distinctions within the category of relation. In particular, Simplicius makes great efforts to defend the ultimate reality of relation (*In Praedicamenta Aristotelis* 7, pp. 229–30). Elsewhere, he distinguishes a primal relation corresponding to Otherness in the intelligible world, and involving neither presence in a substratum nor duality of substrata, from secondary relations characteristic of the sensible world, being either inherent in their substrata and altered together with them or separate from the substrata and altered independently of them (*ibid.* p. 237 and pp. 280–1). Simplicius also distinguishes between participated and participating relations (*ibid.* pp. 236–7 and p. 277). Some of Simplicius' innovations in this area recur in the doctrine of Duns Scotus and of later *Scotisti*.²⁴

²⁴ *Opus oxoniense* 1, d.2, q.5, p. 187. Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *De caelo* also had some influence during the later Middle Ages.

APPENDIX: LIST OF WORKS OF ANCIENT AUTHORS

Works surviving only in fragments are preceded by an asterisk. Lost works are in italics, and language(s) of preservation is in parentheses when not preserved in the language of composition. Dubious works are preceded by an obelus and spurious works are listed under [author].

AENEAS OF GAZA

Theophrastus

AËTIUS

*Doctrines (*De placitis philosophorum reliquiae*)

ALBINUS

Introduction to Plato's Dialogues (*Isagoge*)
On the Lectures of Gaius, 11 books

ALCINOUS

Handbook of Platonism (*Didaskalikos*)

ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS

*Commentary on Aristotle, *Categories*
Commentary on Aristotle, *Metaphysics* First 5 books genuine, *Last 9 (by Michael of Ephesus, fragments of genuine commentary preserved in Averroes)
Commentary on Aristotle, *Meteorology*

- Commentary on Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics?* (uncertain whether Alex. wrote a commentary on Aristotle's NE in addition to Ethical Problems)
- *Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation (*De interpretatione*)
- *Commentary on Aristotle, On Generation and Corruption (Greek, Arabic)
- *Commentary on Aristotle, On the Heavens (*De Caelo*)
- Commentary on Aristotle, On Memory*
- Commentary on Aristotle, On Sense Perception (*De Sensu*)
- *Commentary on Aristotle, On the Soul
- *Commentary on Aristotle, Physics (Greek, Arabic)
- *Commentary on Aristotle, Posterior Analytics
- Commentary on Aristotle, Prior Analytics Book I
- Commentary on Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations (Sophistici Elenchi)* (lost; surviving commentary attributed to him is by Michael of Ephesus)
- Commentary on Aristotle, Topics
- Ethical Problems
- On the Conversion of Propositions (Arabic)
- *On the Disagreement Between Aristotle and his Associates Concerning Mixed Premises (Greek; some speculate that part survives in Arabic)
- On Fate
- On Mixture and Increase
- On the Principles of the Universe (Arabic)
- On Providence (Arabic, some fragments in Greek)
- On the Soul
- *On Specific Differences (Arabic)
- On Time (Arabic, Latin translation from Arabic)
- On Utterances (Arabic)
- Problems and Solutions (*Quaestiones et Solutiones*)
- †Refutation of Galen's Attack on Aristotle's Doctrine That Everything That Moves is set in Motion by a Mover (Arabic)
- Refutation of the Assertion of Xenocrates That the Species is Prior to the Genus (Arabic)
- Supplement to On the Soul (*De anima libri mantissa*)
- On the Intellect = Mantissa 2 (also transmitted separately in Latin and Arabic)

[ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS]

- On Fevers
- On the First Cause and the Motion of the Universe (Arabic)
- Medical Problems

AMELIUS

- Against the Claim That Numenius Should be Considered the Original Author of the Doctrines of Plotinus* (40 books)
On the Problem of Justice in Plato
Against the Book of Zostrianos (40 books)
On the Doctrinal Differences between Plotinus and Numenius
Against Porphyry on Intelligibles outside Intellect
Response to Porphyry's Reply
Notes on Plotinus' lectures and treatises
Edition of Numenius
 † *On the Method of the Philosophy of Plotinus*
Over 100 volumes of Sayings and Commentaries (according to Porphyry)

AMMONIUS, SON OF HERMEIAS

- Commentary on Aristotle, *Categories* (anonymous student, from lecture)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Books I–VII (Asclepius, from lecture)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* (Philoponus, from lecture)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *On Interpretation* (*De interpretatione*)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *On the Soul* (Philoponus, from lecture, with his own comments added, Book III disputed)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* Book I (Philoponus, from lecture)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* Book II (Philoponus, from lecture)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* Book I (anonymous student, from lecture)
 Commentary on Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* Book I (Philoponus, from lecture)
 Commentary on Nicomachus, *Introduction to Arithmetic* (lectures by Philoponus based on Asclepius' publication of his own notes on Ammonius' lectures)
 Commentary on Porphyry, *Introduction* (*Isagoge*) (*Proemium* inauthentic)
 *On the fact that Aristotle made God not only the final but also the efficient cause of the whole world (Simplicius, in *Cael.* 271, 13–21, in *Phys.* 1363, 8–12) (no verbatim fragments; content and part of argument described)
Lectures on Plato, Gorgias (lectures reported, uncertain if published)
Lecture on Plato, Theaetetus (lectures reported, uncertain if published)
Lectures on Ptolemy, Syntaxis (lectures reported, uncertain if published)
 *On Hypothetical Syllogisms

*Treatise on Plato, Phaedo 69d4-6
Treatise on the Astrolabe

AMMONIUS SACCAS

On the Harmony of the Four Gospels (Diatessaron) (possibly by another Ammonius dubbed by scholars 'Ammonius the Christian')
On the Harmony of Moses and Jesus (possibly by another Ammonius dubbed by scholars 'Ammonius the Christian')

ANDRONICUS OF RHODES

†*Edition of Aristotle's Works (Corpus Aristotelicum)*
Pinakes of Aristotle's Works

[ANDRONICUS OF RHODES]

On the Passions

Anonymous Commentary on Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation (*De interpretatione*)

Commentary on Aristotle, Posterior Analytics Book I (12th cent. CE)

Commentary on Aristotle, Posterior Analytics Book II

Commentary on Aristotle, Rhetoric

*Commentary on Aristotle, Rhetoric

Commentary on Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations (*Sophistici Elenchi*)

Commentary on Aristotle, Theaetetus (before 2nd cent. CE)

Commentary on Plato, Parmenides (Latin)

Scholia on Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations (*Sophistici Elenchi*)

Summary (Paraphrasis) of Aristotle, Categories

Summary of Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

*Summary of Aristotle, Rhetoric

Summary of Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations (*Sophistici Elenchi*)

APULEIUS

Apology (*Apologia*)

Florida

The Golden Ass (*Metamorphoses* or *Aureus Asinus*)

On the Doctrine of Plato

On the God of Socrates

On Interpretation (*De Interpretatione*)

On the World

ARISTOCLES OF MESSENE

*On Philosophy

ARIUS DIDYMUS

*On the Sects of Philosophers (*de Philosophorum sectis*)

*Physics

[ARCHYTAS]

On Universal Logos or the Ten Categories (purported to predate Aristotle's)
The Ten Universal Logoi

ASCLEPIODOTUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Commentary on Plato, Timaeus

ASCLEPIUS

Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Books I–V (notes from lecture by Ammonius)

Commentary on Nicomachus' Introduction to *Arithmetic* (notes from lecture by Ammonius)

ASPASIUS

Commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Books I–IV, parts of VII–VIII

ATHENAGORAS OF ATHENS

Supplication for the Christians

Treatise on the Resurrection of the Body

ATTICUS

*Against Those who Promise Plato's Doctrines via Aristotle

*Commentary on the *Phaedrus*

*Commentary on the *Timaeus*

AUGUSTINE, ST., BISHOP OF HIPPO

Against Adimantus, a Disciple of Mani
 Against Adversaries of the Law and the Prophets
 Against an Arian Sermon
 Against the Donatists
 Against Faustus, a Manichee
 Against Felix, a Manichee
 Against the 'Foundation Letter' of the Manichees
 Against Gaudentius
 Against the Jews
 Against Julian
 Against Julian, an Unfinished Work
 Against the Letter of Parmenian
 Against the Letters of Petilian
 Against Lying
 Against Maximinus, an Arian
 Against the Priscillianists
 Against Secundinus, a Manichee
 Against the Sceptics
 Against Two Letters of the Pelagians
 City of God
 Commentary on the Letter to the Galatians
 Commentary on Statements in the Letter to the Romans
 Comments on Job
 Confessions
 Debate with Fortunatus, a Manichee
 Debate with Maximinus, an Arian Bishop
 Explanations of the Psalms
 A Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Love
 Letters
 The Mirror
 On Admonition and Grace
 On Adulterous Marriages
 On the Advantage of Believing
 On the Advantage of Fasting (Sermon 400)
 On Agreement Among the Evangelists
 On Baptism
 On the Care of the Dead

On the Catholic and the Manichean Ways of Life
On Christian Discipline (Sermon 399)
On the Christian Struggle
On Christian Teaching
On Contenance
On the Correction of the Donatists (Letter 185)
On the Creed, to Catechumens
On the Deeds of Pelagius
On Dialectic
On the Divination of Demons
On Eight Questions from Dulcitius
On Eight Questions from the Old Testament
On Eighty-Three Varied Questions
On Faith and the Creed
On Faith and Works
On Faith in the Unseen
On Free Will
On Genesis, against the Manichees
On the Gift of Perseverance
On the Good of Marriage
On the Good of Widowhood
On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin
On Grace and Free Will
On the Grace of the New Testament (Letter 140)
On Grammar
On the Greatness of the Soul
On the Happy Life
On Heresies
On Holy Virginitv
On the Immortality of the Soul
On the Instruction of Beginners
On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an unfinished book
On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount
On Lying
On Marriage and Concupiscence
On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism
On Music
On the Nature of the Good
On Nature and Grace

On the One Baptism against Petilian
 On Order
 On the Origin of the Soul (Letter 166)
 On Patience
 On the Perfection of Human Righteousness
 On the Predestination of the Saints
 On the Presence of God (Letter 187)
 On Rhetoric
 On the Sack of the City of Rome (Sermon 397)
 On Seeing God (Letter 147)
 On the Soul and Its Origin
 On the Spirit and the Letter
 On the Teacher
 On True Religion
 On the Two Souls
 On a Verse in James (Letter 167)
 On the Work of Monks
 Proceedings with Emeritus
 Psalm Against the Donatists
 Questions on the Gospels
 Questions on the Heptateuch
 Reconsiderations
 Responses to Januarius (Letters 54–55)
 The Rule
 Sayings in the Heptateuch
 A Sermon to the People of the Church of Caesariensis
 Sermons
 Six Questions against Pagans (Letter 102)
 Sixteen Questions on Matthew
 The Soliloquies
 A Summary of the Meeting with the Donatists
 A Table Verse
 To Catholic Members of the Church
 To Cresconius, a Donatist Grammarian
 To Simplicianus
 Tractates on the First Letter of John
 Tractates on the Gospel of John
 The Trinity
 Unfinished Commentary on the Letter to the Romans
 Verses on St Nabor

BASIL OF CAESAREA

- Against Eunomius (Books 1–3)
†Ascetic sermon or prologue
†Enarratio on the Prophet Isaiah
Homilies 1–9 on the Hexaemeron.
Homily on Psalm 1
Homily on Psalm 7
Homily on Psalm 14, part 1
Homily on Psalm 14, part 2
Homily on Psalm 28
Homily on Psalm 29
Homily on Psalm 32
Homily on Psalm 33
Homily on Psalm 44
Homily on Psalm 45
Homily on Psalm 48
Homily on Psalm 59
Homily on Psalm 61
Homily on Psalm 114
Homily on Psalm 115
Homily 1. On Fasting
Homily 2. On Fasting
Homily 3. On the Words, ‘Know Thyself’
Homily 4. On Giving Thanks
Homily 5. On the Martyr Julitta
Homily 6. On Luke 12:18 and on Avarice
Homily 7. On the Rich
Homily 8. In Time of Famine and Drought
Homily 9. That God is not the Author of Evils
Homily 10. Against Anger
Homily 11. On Envy
Homily 12. On the Beginning of Proverbs
Homily 13. Exhortation to Holy Baptism
Homily 14. On Easter Drunkenness
Homily 15. On Faith
Homily 16. On the Words, ‘In the beginning was the Word’
Homily 18. On the Martyr Gordius
Homily 19. On the Holy Forty Martyrs
Homily 20. On Humility

- Homily 21. On Detachment from Worldly Goods, and on the Conflagration started Outside the Church
- Homily 23. On the Holy Martyr Mamas
- Homily 24. Against Sabellians, Arius, and Anomoians
- Homily 26. Delivered in Lakizis
- Homily 27. On the Holy Generation of Christ
- Homily 29. Against Those who Slanderosly say That we say There are Three Gods
- †Homilies 1–2 on the Creation of Humanity (of which recensions 2–3 surely spurious)
- †Homily on Paradise
- †Introduction to the Ascetic Life
- Letters (368 extant, many dubious or spurious; of especial interest are Letters 8, now commonly ascribed to Evagrius Ponticus, and Letter 38, ascribed now to Gregory of Nyssa)
- Longer Rules
- †Liturgy of Basil (Byzantine, Old Syriac, Old Armenian versions)
- Moral Rules
- On Baptism (2 books)
- †On the Canonicae (Epitimia)
- †On Fallen Monks (Epitimia)
- On the Faith (Preface to the Moral Rules)
- On the Holy Spirit
- On the Judgment of God (Preface to the Moral Rules)
- †Philokalia (with Gregory Nazianzen)
- †Sermon on Ascetic Discipline
- Shorter Rules

[BASIL OF CAESAREA]

- Admonition to a Spiritual Son
- Against Eunomius (books 4–5)
- Alexandrian Liturgy of Basil
- Ascetic Constitutions
- Doctrines 2–8
- Epitimia 26
- Epitimia diversorum sanctorum de refectorio
- Homilies 17, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35
- Homily on Psalm 28b
- Homily on Psalm 37

Homily on Psalm 132
Homily on Virginity
On Consolation
On the Spirit
On Virginity to Letoius (by Basil of Ancyra)
Various Sermons

BOETHIUS

Translation into Latin of Porphyry, Introduction (Isagoge)
Translation into Latin of Aristotle, Categories (plus fragments of a first recension)
Translation into Latin of Aristotle, On Interpretation (De interpretatione) (two editions)
Translation into Latin of Aristotle, Prior Analytics (two recensions, plus scholia)
Translation into Latin of Aristotle, Topics (plus fragment of a second recension)
Translation into Latin of Aristotle, Sophistical Refutations (De sophisticis elenchis)
Commentary on Porphyry, Introduction (Isagoge) (two editions)
Commentary on Aristotle, Categories
Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation (De interpretatione) (two editions)
Commentary on Cicero, Topics
On Arithmetic
On Music
Geometry (excerpted tradition)
Introduction to Categorical Syllogisms
On the Categorical Syllogism
On Hypothetical Syllogisms
On Division
On Topical Differences
Five Theological Tractates:
De sancta trinitate (On the Holy Trinity)
The Consolation of Philosophy
Utrum Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus de divinitate substantialiter praedicentur (Whether the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Predicated Substantially of the Divinity)
Quomodo substantiae, in eo quod sint, bonae sint, cum non sint substantialia bona (How Substances are Good Insofar as They Exist, Although They are not Substantial Goods), or: De hebdomadibus (On the Hebdomads)

†De Fide Catholica (On the Catholic Faith)
 Contra Eutychen et Nestorium (Against Eutyches and Nestorius)

BOETHIUS OF SIDON

On the Nature of the Soul
Commentary on Aristotle, Categories

CALCIDIUS

Commentary on Plato, Timaeus (31c–53c)
 Translation into Latin of Plato, Timaeus (up to 53c)

CHALDAEAN ORACLES (AUTHORS ANONYMOUS)

CICERO

Against Gaius Verres
 Against Piso
 Against Publius Valinius at the Trial of Sestius
 Brutus
 Catiline Orations or Against Catiline
 *Consolation
 †Handbook of Candidacy (attributed to Cicero, probably written by his brother
 Quintus)
 *His Life and Times
 Hortensius Letters (more than 800 extant)
 In Defence of Flaccus
 In Favour of the Manilian Law on the Command of Pompey
 Letters to Atticus
 Letters to Brutus
 Letters to his brother Quintus
 Letters to his friends
 On Behalf of Aulus Caecina
 On Behalf of Aulus Cluentius
 On Behalf of Cornelius Balbus
 On Behalf of Gaius Rabirius
 On Behalf of Gaius Rabirius Postumus
 On Behalf of King Deiotarus before Caesar
 On Behalf of Ligarius before Caesar

On Behalf of Lucius Licinius Murena
On Behalf of Lucius Valerius Flaccus
On Behalf of Marcellus
On Behalf of Marcus Caelius Rufus
On Behalf of Marcus Fonteius
On Behalf of Plancius
On Behalf of Publius Cornelius Sulla
On Behalf of Publius Quintus
On Behalf of Quintus Roscius Gallus the Actor
On Behalf of Sestius
On Behalf of Sextus Roscius of Ameria
On Behalf of the Poet Aulus Licinius Archias
On Behalf of Titus Annius Milo
On Behalf of Tullius Spoken against Caecilius at the Inquiry Concerning the
 Prosecution of Gaius Verres
On Divination
On Duties
On Fate
On Friendship
On His House
*On His Own Consulship
On Invention
On Old Age
On the Best Kind of Orators
On the Consular Provinces
On the Divisions of Oratory
On the Ends of Goods and Evils
On the Laws
On the Nature of the Gods
On the Orator
On the Republic
On the Responses of the Haruspices Opposing the Agrarian Law proposed by
 Rullus
Philippics (14 speeches against Marcus Antonius)
†Rhetoric addressed to Herennius
Stoic Paradoxes
The Orator
The Posterior Academics
The Prior Academics or Lucullus
To the Citizens after his Recall from Exile

To the Senate after his Recall from Exile
 Topics
 Tusculan Disputations

CLAUDIANUS MAMERTUS

On the State of the Soul or On the Substance of the Soul (3 books) (*De Statu
 Animae*)
 Letter to Sapaudus of Vienne
 Letter to Sidonius Apollinaris
 †Poems

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

*Against the Quartodecimanism position of Melito of Sardis
 *Ecclesiastical Canon against the Judaizers (one passage survives)
 Epitomes From the Writings of Theodotus and the So-Called Eastern Teaching
 of the Time of Valentinus (*Excerpta ex Theodoto*)
 Exhortation to the Greeks (*Protrepticus*, 1 Book)
 Hymn of Christ the Servant (*Hymnus Christi servatoris*)
 Instructor (*Paedagogus*, 3 Books)
 Miscellanies of Notes of Revealed Knowledge in Accordance with the True
 Philosophy (*Stromateis*, 8 Books)
Outlines (Hypotyposesis) (Commentary on the Scriptures)
 Selections from Prophetic Sayings (*Eclogae prophetae*)
 *Treatise on the Passover
 Who is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved? (*Quis dives salvetur?*)

CLEOMEDES

On the Heavens (astronomy textbook in two books)

CORNUTUS

Compendium of Greek Theology
 *Reply to Athenodorus on Aristotle's Categories
On Conditions
 *Commentary on Virgil
 *On Pronunciation and Orthography
 *Manual of Rhetoric
 *On Figures of Speech

DAMASCIUS

- Problems and Solutions on the First Principles (Dubitationes et Solutiones de primis principiis; also called *De principiis*) (last part is lost)
Commentary on Plato's *Phaedo* (2 redactions), transmitted under the name of Olympiodorus
Commentary on Plato's *Philebus*, transmitted under the name of Olympiodorus
Commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* (first part is lost)
*Life of Isidorus (*Vita Isidori*)
Epigrams
On Number, Place and Time (quoted by Simplicius)
Paradoxa
Commentaries on Plato's *First Alcibiades*, *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, *Timaeus* and *Laws*
Commentaries on Rhetorical Works, and on the *Chaldaean Oracles*
Commentary on Aristotle, *Categories*
Commentary on Aristotle, *Meteorologica*
Commentary on Aristotle, *De Caelo*

DAVID

- Commentary on Porphyry's Introduction (Isagoge)
Commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*

DEXIPPUS

- Commentary on Aristotle, *Categories*

DIO CHRYSOSTOM

- Fragments
In Praise of Hair
Letters
Orations

DIOGENES LAERTIUS

- Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers

DIOGENES OF OENOANDA

*Inscription of Epicurus' Teachings

[PSEUDO]-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE

Epistles

†*On the Angelic Properties and Orders* (may be identical with *On the Celestial Hierarchy*)

On the Celestial Hierarchy

†*On the Divine Hymns*

On Divine Names

On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy

†*On Intelligibles and Sensibles*

†*On Just and Divine Judgement*

On Mystical Theology

†*On Soul*

†*Symbolic Theology*

†*Theological Outlines*

ELIAS

Commentary on Porphyry's Introduction (Isagoge)

EPICTETUS

Discourses (in 8 books, 4 survive; compiled by Arian)

Handbook (*Encheiridion*), (brief abridgement of the Discourses, including material from the four lost books)

EUDORUS

*Divisions of Philosophic Discourse

EUNAPIUS

Lives of the Sophists

*Continuation of the History of Dexippus (the historian, c. 210–273)

EUSEBIUS OF MYNDUS

†Sayings (Collected by Stobaeus)

GALEN

- Advice to an Epileptic Boy (*Pro puero epileptico consilium*)
Against Julian (*Adversus ea quae a Juliano in Hippocratis aphorismos enuntiata sunt libellus*)
Against Lycus (*Adversus Lycum*)
Against Those who Have Written on Disease Characteristics, or On Periodicities (*Adversus eos qui de typis scripserunt vel de circuitibus*)
Art of Medicine
The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher
Causes of Diseases (*De causis morborum*)
Causes of Pulses (*De causis pulsuum*)
Causes of Symptoms (*De symptomatum causis*)
*Commentary on Plato, *Timaeus*
Commentary on Hippocrates, Aphorisms
Commentary on Hippocrates, Epidemics
Commentary on Hippocrates, Fractures
Commentary on Hippocrates, Nature of Man
Commentary on Hippocrates, On the Duty of a Doctor
Commentary on Hippocrates, On Joints
Commentary on Hippocrates, Prognostics
Commentary on Hippocrates, Prorrhethics
Commentary on Hippocrates, Regimen in Acute Diseases
Commentary on Hippocrates, Surgery
Diagnosis by Pulses (*De Dignoscendibus Pulsibus*)
Differences of Diseases (*De morborum differentiis*)
Differences of Pulses (*De differentia pulsuum*)
Differences of Symptoms (*De symptomatum differentiis*)
Difficulties in Breathing (*De difficultate respirationis*)
Differences of Fevers (*De differentiis febrium*)
Dissection of Muscles (*De musculorum dissectione ad tirones*)
Elements of Logic (*Institutio logica*)
Epitome of Plato's *Timaeus* (Arabic)
The Errors of the Soul (*De animi cuius libet peccatorum dignotione et curatione*)
Exercise with the Small Ball (*De parvae pilae exercitio*)

- Exhortation to the Arts (Protrepticus)
- The Faculties of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body (Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur)
- From Galen's Commentaries on Bandages (Ex Galeni Commentariis De Fasciis)
- †Generally Available Remedies (De remediis parabilibus)
- Glossary of Hippocratic Terms (Glossarium)
- Good Condition (De bono habitu)
- How to Detect Malingerers (Quomodo morborum simulantes sint apprehendendi)
- On Abnormal Swelling (De tumoribus praeter naturam)
- On Affected Parts (De locis affectis)
- On Anatomical Procedures (De anatomicis administrationibus) (books 10–15, extant only in Arabic)
- On Antecedent Causes (De Causis Procatarteticis) (Latin)
- On Antidotes (De antidotis)
- On the Anatomy of the Nerves (De nervorum dissectione)
- On the Anatomy of the Uterus (De uteri dissectione)
- On the Anatomy of Veins and Arteries (De venarum arteriarumque dissectione)
- On Bandages (De fasciis liber)
- On Barley Soup (De ptisana)
- On the Best Constitution of our Bodies (De optima corporis nostri constitutione)
- On the Best Method of Teaching (De optima doctrina)
- On Black Bile (De atra bile)
- On Bloodletting against Erasistratus (De venae sectione adversus Erasistratum)
- On Bloodletting against the Erasistrateans (De venae sectione adversus Erasistrateos Romae degentes)
- On Bodily Mass (De plenitudine liber)
- On Bones for Beginners
- On the Cause of Breathing (De causis respirationis)
- On the Composition of the Art of Medicine
- On the Composition of Drugs according to Kind (De compositione medicamentorum per genera)
- On the Composition of Drugs according to Places (De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos)
- On Containing Causes (De Causis Contentivis) (Latin, Arabic)
- On Crises (De crisisibus)
- On Critical Days (De diebus decretoriis)
- *On Demonstration

- On the Diagnosis of Dreams (*De dignotione ex insomniis*)
On the Difference of Uniform Parts (*De partium homoeomerum differentiis*)
(Arabic)
On Disease Characteristics (*De typis*)
On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato (*De placitis Hippocratis et
Platonis*)
On the Elements according to Hippocrates
On Recognizing the Best Physician (Arabic)
On the Formation of the Foetus (*De foetuum formatione libellus*)
On the Function of Breathing (*De utilitate respirationis*)
On the Function of the Pulse (*De usu pulsuum*)
On Good and Bad Humours in Foodstuffs (*De Bonis et Malis Alimentorum
Sucis*)
On Habits (*De consuetudine*)
*On His Own Opinions (*De propriis placitis*) (Latin, Arabic, Greek)
On Insensibility according to Hippocrates (*De comate secundum Hippo-
cratem*)
On Leeches, Revulsion, Cupping-Glasses, Incision and Scarification (*De hiru-
dinibus, revulsione, cucurbitula, incisione et scarificatione*)
On Linguistic Sophisms (*De sophismatis seu captionibus penes dictionem*)
On Marasmus (*De marcore*)
On Medical Experience (*De experientia medica*) (Arabic)
On Mixtures (*De temperamentis*)
On the Movement of the Muscles (*De moto musculorum*)
On My Own Books (*De libris propriis*)
On the Natural Faculties
On the Parts of the Art of Medicine (*De partibus artibus medicativae*)
On Plethora
On the Power of Cleansing Drugs (*De purgantium medicamentorum
facultate*)
†On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs (*De simplicium medicamen-
torum temperamentis ac facultatibus*)
On the Preservation of Health (*De sanitate tuenda*)
On the Properties of Foodstuffs (*De alimentorum facultatibus*)
On the Pulse for Beginners (*De pulsibus libellus ad tirones*)
On Sects for Beginners
On Semen (*De semine*)
*On the Substance of the Natural Powers (*De substantia facultatum naturalium*)
On Theriac to Piso (*De theriaca ad Pisonem*)

On the Thinning Diet (*De victu attenuante*)
 On Treatment by Bloodletting (*De curandi ratione per venae sectionem*)
 On Tremor, Palpitation, Spasm and Rigor (*De tremore, palpitatione, convulsione et rigore liber*)
 On Uneven Distemper (*De inaequali intemperie*)
 On the Utility of Parts (*De usu partium*)
 On Whether Blood is Naturally Contained in the Arteries (*An in arteriis natura sanguis contineatur*)
 Opportune Moments in Diseases (*De morborum temporibus*)
 Opportune Moments in Diseases as a Whole (*De totius morbi temporibus*)
 The Order of my own Books (*De ordine librorum propriorum*)
 The Organ of Smell (*De instrumento odoratus*)
 Outline of Empiricism (*Subfiguratio Empirica*) (Latin)
 The Passions of the Soul (*De proprium animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione*)
 Prognosis by Pulses (*De praesagitione ex pulsibus*)
 †Synopsis on Pulses (*Synopsis librorum suorum de pulsibus*)
 The Therapeutic Method (*De methodo medendi*)
 Therapeutics to Glaucon (*Ad Glauconem de medendi methodo*)
 Thrasybulus

[GALEN]

On Bloodletting (*De venae sectione*)
 Commentary on Hippocrates, On Humours
 Commentary on Hippocrates, On Nourishment (*In Hippocratis de Alimento*)
 Compendium on Urine (*De urinis compendium*)
 Correct and Expert Prediction (*De Praesagitione Vera et Experta*)
 Diseases of the Kidneys (*De Renum Affectibus*)
 Dream-Prediction based on Astrological Science (*Prognostica de decubitu ex mathematica scientia*)
 History of Philosophy (*De historia philosophica*)
 Introduction
 Medical Definitions (*Definitiones medicae*)
 On the Best Sect
 On the Humours (*De humoribus*)
 On Melancholy (*De melancholia*)
 On Prognosis (*De praenotione*)
 On the Pulse to Antonius (*De pulsibus ad Antonium*)

- On Regimen in Acute Diseases in Hippocrates' Opinion (De victus ratione in morbis acutis ex Hippocratis sententia liber)
- On Sexual Matters (De venereis)
- On Theriac to Pamphilianus (De theriaca ad Pamphilianum)
- On Urine (De urinis)
- On Urine from Hippocrates, Galen and Some Others (De urinis ex Hippocrate, Galeno et aliis quibusdam)
- On Weights and Measures (De ponderibus et mensuris)
- That the Qualities are Incorporeal (Quod qualitates incorporeae sint)
- Whether the Foetus is an Animal (An animal sit quod est in utero geritur)
- Whom to Purge, With Which Cleansing Drugs, and When (Quos quibus catharticis medicamentis et quando purgare oporteat)

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

Epistles 245

Epigrams

Orations:

On the Holy Feast of Pascha

Apologia for his Flight to Pontus

In Response to Those who Called for him (to be a Priest) but Would not Welcome him

First Invective Against Emperor Julian

Second Invective Against Emperor Julian

First Oration on Peace or First Eirenika

Memorial Panegyric on his Brother Caesarios

Memorial Panegyric on his Sister Gorgonia

Apologia To His Father on the Occasion of his own Episcopal Ordination

A Statement of his Position After Returning From his Flight

To Gregory of Nyssa (A composite piece also including an oration delivered on the festival of the local Cappadocian martyrs)

To His Father After the Latter Had Inducted Him as Bishop at Nazianzus

Address Given When He Consecrated a New Bishop at Doara (as edited by his Cousin Bishop Eulalios)

On Love for the Poor

Panegyric Oration on the Maccabees

Oration on His Father's Silence

Civic Address to Nazianzus. When the Prefect Was Enraged Against Them

Funeral Oration for His Father

- To Julian the Moderator of Taxes
 On Theology and the Installation of Bishops (A composite from Orations 2, 6, and 23. The original title was probably 'An Exposition of Doctrine on the Occasion of a Reception of Bishops')
- Panegyric on Athanasios the Bishop of Alexandria
 Third Oration on Peace or Third Eirenika
 Second Oration on Peace or Second Eirenika
 Panegyric on St Cyprian
 Panegyric for the Philosopher Hero (Oration for Maximus the Cynic)
 A Second Statement of his Position (cf. Oration 10)
 First Theological Oration. An Initial Refutation of the Eunomians
 Second Theological Oration. On the Nature of Theology
 Third Theological Oration. On the Son
 Fourth Theological Oration. Second Oration on the Son
 Fifth Theological Oration. On the Holy Spirit
 On the Need for Moderation in Debate
 Oration Against the Arians and on His Own Position
 Oration for the Arrival of the Egyptians
 On the Martyrs and Against the Arians
 On His Own Position. In Refutation of Those who Maintained He Coveted the Throne of Constantinople
 On the Gospel Text: 'When Jesus Had Finished These Words,' Matt. 19.1f
 On the Theophany, or the Birthday of the Saviour
 Oration on the Holy Lights
 Oration on Holy Baptism
 Oration for Pentecost
 Final Farewell: Delivered in the Presence of the 150 Bishops
 Panegyric in Memory of Basil the Great
 On the New Lord's Day (Homily for the Sunday After Pascha)
 Oration on the Holy Feast of Pascha (a re-edition of Oration 38)
- Poetic Works:
- 38 Dogmatic Poems (*Carmina dogmatica*)
 40 Moral Poems (*Carmina moralia*)
 206 Historical and Autobiographical Poems, divided by former editors into:
- Poems about himself (*Carmina de seipsos*)
 Poems which look to others (*Carmina quae spectant ad alios*)
 †Suffering Christ (*Christus patiens*) (A Euripides pastiche perhaps by Constantinus Manasses)

[GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS]

Liturgies of Holy Gregory (Liturgia sancti Gregorii)

Meaning in Ezechiel (Significatio in Ezechielem)

*Oration Against the Astronomers

GREGORY OF NYSSA

Against Arius and Sabellius, on the Father and the Son

Against Eunomius

Against Fate

Against Fornicators

Against those who bear rebuke sorely

Against Usurers

Canonical Letter to Letoius

Catechetical Oration

Encomium for 40 Martyrs, 1

Encomium for 40 Martyrs, 2

Encomium on his Brother Basil

Encomium on Saint Stephen, protomartyr

Funeral Oration on Bishop Meletius

Funeral Oration on Flacilla

Funeral Orations on Pulcheria

Homilies on Ecclesiastes

Homilies on the Song of Songs

Letters

*Letter to Philip the Monk

Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus

Life of Holy Macrina

Life of Moses

On 1 Corinthians 15: 28

On the Annunciation

On the Beatitudes

On Beneficence

On Not Three Gods

On the Christian Profession, To Harmonius

On the Christian Way of Life

On the Creation of Mankind, First Sermon

On the Creation of Mankind, Second Sermon

On the Creation of Mankind, First Sermon (Recensio C)

On the Creation of Mankind, Second Sermon (Recensio C)
 On the Deity against Evagrius (commonly, On his Ordination)
 On the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit
 On the Holy Paschal Mystery (commonly, Oration 3 on the Resurrection of Christ)
 On the Holy and Saving Paschal Mystery (commonly, Oration 4 on the Resurrection of Christ)
 On the Holy Spirit Against Macedonius
 On the Holy Spirit or on Pentecost
 On Holy Theodorus
 On Infants' Premature Deaths
 On the Inscriptions of the Psalms
 On the Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus
 On the Lord's Prayer
 On the Love of the Poor
 On the Luminous Day (commonly, Oration on the Baptism of Christ)
 On the Making of Man
 On Perfection
 On Saint Ephrem
 On the Six Days of Creation
 On the Sixth Psalm
 On the Soul and Resurrection
 On Those who Have Fallen Asleep
 On Those who Postpone Baptism
 On the Three Days Space Between the Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (Oration 1 on the Resurrection of Christ)
 On Virginity
 Oration on the Birthday of Christ
 Rebuttal of Apollinarius
 Refutation of Eunomius' Confession
 Second Encomium on St Stephen, protomartyr
 *Sermon on Holy Rome
 *Sermon on Mary and Joseph
 *Sermon on the words, 'This is my beloved Son'
 Ten Syllogisms Against the Manichees
 Testimony Against the Jews
 To Ablabius
 To Bishop Theodosius on the Serpent
 To Eustathius, on the Holy Trinity and the Godhead of the Holy Spirit
 To the Greeks from Common Notions

To Simplicius, on Faith
To Theophilus against Apollinarians
†*Treatise to Xenodorus the Grammarian

[GREGORY OF NYSSA]

Book on the Cognition of God
The Discovery of the Image in Camulian
Letter 26 to Evagrius the Monk
On the Ascension of Christ
On the Luminous Holy Resurrection of the Lord (commonly, Oration 3 on
the Resurrection of Christ)
On Meeting the Lord
On Paradise
To the Image and Likeness of God

HARPOCRATION

*Commentary on Plato, 24 books
Platonic Lexicon

HERMIAS

Lectures on Plato, Phaedrus (by his teacher Syrianus)

HIEROCLES OF ALEXANDRIA

Commentary on pseudo-Pythagoras, Golden Verses (*Carmina aurea*)
On Providence and Fate

[HIEROCLES OF ALEXANDRIA]

Collection of some 260 witticisms attributed to Hierocles and Philagrius

HIEROCLES THE STOIC

*Elements of Ethics (300 line fragment survives on papyrus found at Hermopolis
in 1901)
Extracts from other work on ethics preserved by Stobaeus

HYPATIA OF ALEXANDRIA

The Astronomical Canon

Commentary on Diophantus, *Arithmetica* (13 volumes)

Edited the third book of Theon of Alexandria, *Commentary on Ptolemy, Almagest*

Edited Theon of Alexandria, *Commentary on Euclid, Elements*

Edited *Commentary on Apollonius, Conics*

IAMBlichus OF CHALCIS

Chaldaean Theology

**Commentary on Aristotle, Categories*

Commentary on Aristotle, Metaphysics

Commentary on Aristotle, On the Heavens

Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation

Commentary on Aristotle, On the Soul

Commentary on Aristotle, Prior Analytics

**Commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles*

Commentary on Nicomachus, Introduction to Arithmetic

**Commentary on Plato, Alcibiades I*

Commentary on Plato, Cratylus

Commentary on Plato, Gorgias

Commentary on Plato, Parmenides

Commentary on Plato, Phaedo

Commentary on Plato, Phaedrus

Commentary on Plato, Philebus

Commentary on Plato, Sophist

**Commentary on Plato, Timaeus*

Commentary on pseudo-Pythagoras, Golden Verses (Carmina aurea)

Exhortation to Philosophy (Protrepticus)

**Letters (fragments of 20 survive; e.g. The Letter to Macedonius on Fate)*

The Life of Pythagoras

**On the Descent of the Soul*

On the Distinction of Best Reason

The Reply of the Master Abammon to the Letter of Porphyry to Anebo (De Mysteriis)

On the General Theory of Mathematics (De communi mathematica scientia)

**On the Gods*

- *On Providence and Fate
- *On the Soul
- *On the Speech of God in the Timaeus
- On Statues*
- *On the Symbols (of the Pythagoreans)
- On the Virtues*
- The Panegyric of Alypius*
- Platonic Theology*
- †The Theology of Arithmetic (Theologoumena arithmeticae)

ISIDORE

Etymologies On the Nature of the Universe (De rerum natura)

JOHN SCOTUS ERIUGENA

- *Commentary on the Gospel of St John
- Commentary on Metre IX of Book III of the Consolation of Philosophy of Boethius
- Commentary on Priscian's Institutiones grammaticae
- Exposition of the Celestial Hierarchies of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite
- Glosses on the Bible
- Glosses on the Parisian Dionysian Corpus
- On Divine Predestination
- On the Division of Nature (Periphyseon)
- On the Eucharist*
- Poems (Carmina)
- *Sermon on the Prologue of the Gospel of St John (Homilia in Johannem)
- Solutions for Chosroem (Solutiones ad Chosroem)
- Tractate on the Vision of God (Tractatus de visione Dei)
- Translation into Latin of Epiphanius, On Faith
- Translation into Latin of Gregory of Nyssa, On the Creation of Humankind (De hominis opificio)
- Translation into Latin of Maximus Confessor, Ambiguities (Ambigua)
- Translation into Latin of Maximus Confessor, Questions to Thalassius (Quaestiones ad Thalassium)
- †Translation into Latin of Priscianus Lydus
- Translation into Latin of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Works
- Translation into Latin of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Works, Revised

JUSTIN MARTYR

Address to the Pagans (Oratio ad Graecos)
Against All Heresies (Syntagma)
Against Marcion
Apology to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus
 Dialogue with Trypho the Jew
 First Apology (to Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus)
On the Oneness of God (De Monarchia)
On the Soul (Peri psuchēs)
The Psalmist (Psaltēs)
Refutation Against the Pagans (Elenchos)
 Second Apology

[JUSTIN MARTYR]

Address to the Pagans (Oratio ad Graecos)
 Confutation of Some Aristotelian Doctrines (Confutatio Dogmatum quorundam Aristotelicorum)
 Exposition of Right Faith (Expositio Rectae Fidei)
 Hortatory Address to Pagans (Cohortatio ad Graecos *or* Ad Graecos de Vera Religione)
 Letter to Diognetus (Ad Diognetum)
 *Letter to Euphrasius the Sophist
 Letter to Zenas and Serenus (Epistola ad Zenam et Serenum)
 On the Oneness of God (De Monarchia)
 *On the Resurrection (De Resurrectione)
 Questions of Christians to Pagans (Quaestiones Christianorum ad Graecos)
 Questions of Pagans to Christians (Quaestiones Graecorum ad Christianos)
 Questions and Responses to the Orthodox (Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos)

LONGINUS, CASSIUS

The Art of Rhetoric
Homeric Questions
Whether Homer is a Philosopher
Homeric Problems and Solutions Philosophical Discourses
 *On the Chief End
 †On Sublimity (De sublimitate)

Prolegomena to the Handbook of Hephaestion on Meter
Two Publications on Attic Diction

MACROBIUS

Commentary on Cicero, The Dream of Scipio
*On the Differences and Similarities of the Greek and Latin Verb
Saturnalia

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

Meditations or To Himself

MARINUS

Commentary on Euclid, Data
Commentary on Plato, Philebus
Life of Proclus or On Blessedness (De Felicitate)

MARIUS VICTORINUS

The Art of Grammar (*Ars grammatica*)
†Book to Justinus the Manichean (*Liber ad Justinum Manichaeum*)
Books of the Platonists (Libri platoniorum, Translations into Latin of works of Plotinus and Porphyry, including the latter's De regressu animae [On the Return of the Soul])
†*Commentary on Aristotle, Categories in Eight Books*
† *Commentary on Cicero, Topics (In Topica Ciceronis)*
Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (*Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios*)
Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (*Commentarius in epistolam ad Galatas*)
Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (*Commentarius in epistolam ad Philippenses*)
Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans
Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians
Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians
Expositions of Cicero's Rhetoric (*Explanationes in Ciceronis rhetoricam*)
Hymns on the Trinity (title uncertain)
Letter of the Arian Candidus to Marius Victorinus (*Candidi Ariani ad Marium Victorinum*) (Letter 1)

- Letter of the Arian Candidus to the Rhetor Marius Victorinus on the Divine Begetting (Candidi Ariani ad Marium Victorinum rhetorem de generatione divina)
- Letter of Marius Victorinus Rhetor of the City of Rome to the Arian Candidus (Marii Victorini rhetoris urbis Romae ad Candidum Arianum)
- Letter of Marius Victorinus to the Arian Candidus (Marii Victorini VC ad Candidum Arianum) = Against Arius IA
- On Definitions (De definitionibus)
- On *Homoousios* (Marii Victorini de homoousio) = Against Arius III
- On *Homoousios* (Marii Victorini de homoousio) = Against Arius IV
- *On Hypothetical Syllogisms (De syllogismis hypotheticis)
- On the Necessity of Accepting *Homoousios* (De homoousio recipiendo)
- †On Physics (De physicis)
- On Saying
- Homoousios* in Greek and Latin, Against the Heretics (Marii Victorini graece et latine de homoousio contra haereticos) = Against Arius II
- †On the Words of the Scripture: There was made one day with evening and morning (De verbis scripturae: factum est vespere et mane dies unus)
- †*Translation into Latin of Aristotle, Categories*
- †*Translation into Latin of Aristotle, On Interpretation*
- *Translation into Latin of Porphyry's Introduction to Aristotle's Categories
- That the Trinity is *Homoousios* (Marii Victorini quod trinitas homoousios sit) = Against Arius IB

MAXIMUS OF TYRE

Dialexeis (The Philosophical Orations)

MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

- Chapters on Theology and Economy (= Chapters on Knowledge)
- Dispute with Pyrrhus (= Opuscula Theologica et Polemica 28)
- Epistles
- Four Centuries on Charity
- Mystagogy
- On the Ascetic Life
- On the Lord's Prayer
- On Psalm 59
- On Various Difficulties (Ambigua) 1–5 = On Various Difficulties addressed to Thomas (Ambigua ad Thomam)

6–71 = On Various Difficulties addressed to John (*Ambigua ad Joannem*)
Questions, Doubts and Replies (*Quaestiones et Dubia*)
Questions to Thalassius
Questions to Theopemptus
Reckoning of the Ecclesiastical Calendar (*Computus Ecclesiasticus*)
Scholia on Areopagitic Corpus (partly by Maximus)
Theological and Polemical Treatises (*Opuscula Theologica et Polemica*)

[MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR]

Life of the Virgin (Georgian)
Logical Treatises
Moscow Gnostic Century
On the Soul
Theological Chapters (= *Loci Communes*)
Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice (= 500
Capita) (a compilation drawn mainly from the Questions to Thalassius and
its scholia)

MICHAEL OF EPHESUS

Commentary on Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (Books 6 to 14) (once attributed to
Alexander of Aphrodisias)
Commentary on Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 5, 9–10
Commentary on Aristotle, *On the Motion of Animals*
Commentary on Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*
Commentary on Aristotle, *On the Progression of Animals*
Commentary on Aristotle, *Parva Naturalia*
Commentary on Aristotle, *Sophistici Elenchi* (once attributed to Alexander of
Aphrodisias)

MUSONIUS RUFUS

*Discourses (collected by his student Lucius; 21 extracts preserved by Stobaeus)

NEMESIUS

On the Nature of Man (*De Natura Hominis*)

NICOLAUS OF DAMASCUS

Autobiography

Life of Augustus

Life of Herod

On Plants (Arabic)

*On the Philosophy of Aristotle (Syriac)

*Universal History (144 Books)

NUMENIUS

*On the Good

*On the Indestructibility of the Soul

*On the Mystical Sayings of Plato

*On Numbers

*On the Points of Divergence Between the Academicians and Plato

*On Space

*The Initiate or the Hoopoe, the Bird of Prognostication

OLYMPIODORUS

Commentary on Aristotle, Categories

Commentary on Aristotle, Meteorology

Commentary on Aristotle, On Generation and Corruption

Commentary on Aristotle, On the Soul (possibly one excerpt survives)

†Commentary on Paulus Alexandrinus, Introduction to Astrology (erroneously credited to Heliodorus, but possibly from lectures given by Olympiodorus)

Commentary on Plato, Alcibiades I

Commentary on Plato, Gorgias

*Commentary on Plato, Phaedo

Commentary on Plato, Sophist

Commentary on Porphyry, Introduction (Isagoge)

Introduction (Prolegomena) to the Categories

Life of Plato (= Commentary on Plato, Alcibiades I: 2.17–162)

*Scholia on Aristotle, On Interpretation (De interpretatione)

[OLYMPIODORUS]

Commentary on Aristotle, Categories (not identical with commentary above)

- Anonymous Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation (De interpretatione, not identical with scholia above)
 Commentary on Aristotle, Prior Analytics
 Commentary on Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics
 Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy
 Commentary on Plato, Phaedo (now attributed to Damascius, not identical with commentary above)
Commentary on Plato, Theaetetus (assumed to have existed as the result as a mistaken interpretation of a passage in Ibn Al-Nadim, Fihrist by the translator, B. Dodge)
 Commentary on Plato, Philebus (now attributed to Damascius)
 Commentary on Zosimus of Panopolis, On Operation (Kat'energeian)

ORIGEN

- Against Celsus
 *Book on Job (one fragment remains)
 *Books on Ezekiel (25) (one fragment remains)
 *Books on Isaiah (30)
 *Books on the Psalms (unknown number)
 Books on the Song of Songs (10) (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
 *Commentary on Genesis (8 books)
 Commentary on John (32 books) (some books remain in Greek)
 *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians
 *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians
 *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians
 *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to Philemon
 *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to Titus
 *Commentary on the First and Second Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians
 Commentary on Matthew (25 books) (books 10–17 remain in Greek; part of a translation in Latin)
 *Commentary on Osee (one fragment remains)
 Debate with Heraclides
Dialogue against Candidus Valentinianus
 *Hexapla
 *Homilies and Books on the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews
 *Homilies on Acts of the Apostles (17)
 *Homilies on Deuteronomy (unknown number)
 Homilies on Exodus (13) (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
 Homilies on Ezekiel (14) (Latin, translated by Hieronymus)
 Homilies on Genesis (16) (Latin, translated by Rufinus)

- Homilies on Isaiah (32) (Latin, translated by Hieronymus)
- Homilies on Jeremiah (45) (20 remain in Greek and 2 in Latin, translated by Hieronymus)
- Homilies on the Name of Jesus (26) (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
- *Homilies on Job (unknown number)
- Homilies on Judges (9) (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
- Homilies on Leviticus (16) (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
- Homilies on Numbers (28) (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
- Homilies on the Psalms (120) (9 remain in Latin, translated by Rufinus, all the rest are lost)
- Homilies on the Song of Songs (2) (Latin, translated by Hieronymus)
- Homily on I Kings 1,2 (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
- Homily on I Kings 28, 3–25
- *Letters
- *Miscellanies (Stromata)
- *On Ecclesiastes
- On the Epistle of Paul to the Romans (15 books) (10 books remain in Latin, translated by Rufinus)
- *On the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians
- *On Lamentations
- On Luke (39 homilies) (Latin, translated by Hieronymus)
- *On Natural Things (one fragment remains)
- On Passover
- On Principles (Latin, translated by Rufinus)
- *On Proverbs
- *On Resurrection (2 books)
- On Speech (De oratione)
- Scholia on the Apocalypse

ORIGEN THE PLATONIST

That the King Alone is the Creator
On Daimones

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

- On Abraham (*De Abrahamo*)
- Alexander or Whether Brute Animals Possess Reason (Armenian) (*De animalibus*, On Animals)
- Allegory of the Law 1–3 (*Legum allegoriae*)
- Every Bad Man is a Slave*

- Every Good Man is Free (*Quod omnis probus liber sit*)
 Flaccus (*In Flaccum*)
 **Hypothetica* or Apology for the Jews (*Apologia pro Iudaeis*)
 Life of Moses 1–2 (*De vita Mosis*)
 On the Change of Names (*De mutatione nominum*)
 On the Cherubim (*De Cherubim*)
 On the Confusion of Tongues (*De confusione linguarum*)
 On the Contemplative Life (*De vita contemplativa*)
 On Covenants 1–2 (*De testamentis*)
 On the Creation of the World (*De opificio mundi*)
 On the Decalogue (*De Decalogo*)
 On Dreams 1–2 (*De somniis*)
 On Dreams 3–5 (*De somniis*)
 On Drunkenness (*De ebrietate*)
 On the Embassy to Gaius (*Legatio ad Gaium*)
 On the Eternity of the World (*De aeternitate mundi*)
 On Flight and Finding (*De fuga et inventione*)
 On the Giants (*De gigantibus*)
 *On God (Armenian) (*De deo*)
 On Husbandry (*De agricultura*)
 On Isaac (*De Isaaco*)
 On Jacob (*De Jacobo*)
 On Joseph (*De Iosepho*)
 On Mating with the Preliminary Studies (*De congressu eruditionis gratia*)
 On the Migration of Abraham (*De migratione Abrahami*)
 On Noah's Work as a Planter (*De plantatione*)
 On Numbers (*De numeris*)
 On the Posterity and Exile of Cain (*De posteritate Caini*)
 *On Providence 1–2 (Armenian) (*De Providentia*)
 On Rewards (*De mercedibus*)
 On Rewards and Punishments (*De praemiis et poenis*)
 On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain (*De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*)
 On Sobriety (*De sobrietate*)
 On the Special Laws 1–4 (*De specialibus legibus*)
 On the Unchangeableness of God (*Quod deus sit immutabilis*)
 On the Virtues (*De virtutibus*)
 *Questions and Answers on Exodus 1–2 (Armenian) (*Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum*)
 *Questions and Answers on Genesis 1–4 (Armenian) (*Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesim*)

Who is the Heir of Divine Things (*Quid rerum divinarum heres sit*)
 The Worse Attacks the Better (*Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*)

[PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA]

Interpretation of Hebrew Names (*Interpretatio Hebraicorum nominum*)
 On a Harlot's Reward (*De mercede meretricis*)
 On Jonas (Armenian) (*De Jona*)
 On Sampson (Armenian) (*De Sampson*)
 On the World (*De mundo*)
 The Book of Biblical Antiquities (*Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*)
 On Times (*De temporibus*)
 On Virtue (*De virtute*)

PHILOPATOR

Lost work on Stoic physics, title unknown

JOHN PHILOPONUS

Accentuation Rules of Aelius Herodianus Peri Schēmaton (Tonika Parangelmata)
 *Against Andrew (Syriac)
 *Against Aristotle on the Eternity of the World (Contra Aristotelem)
Against Iamblichus on Statues
 *Against the Letter of Dositheus (Syriac)
 Against Proclus, On the Eternity of the World (Contra Proclum)
 *Against Themistius (Syriac)
 Arbiter (Diatētēs) (Syriac, Greek fragments)
 Commentary on Aristotle, Categories
 Commentary on Aristotle, Meteorology I
 Commentary on Aristotle, On Generation and Corruption
 Commentary on Aristotle, On the Intellect (Latin, Greek fragments)
 Commentary on Aristotle, On the Soul I-II
 Commentary on Aristotle, Physics I-IV, with excerpts of V-VIII
 †Commentary on Aristotle, Posterior Analytics I
 †Commentary on Aristotle, Posterior Analytics II
 Commentary on Aristotle, Prior Analytics I
 Commentary on Aristotle, Prior Analytics II
Commentary on Aristotle, Topics and/or On Sophistical Refutations

Commentary on Nicomachus, Introduction to Arithmetic
 † *Commentary on Plato, Phaedo*
 † *Commentary on Porphyry, Isagoge*
 Epitome of the Arbiter (Syriac)
 *Four Divisions (Tmēmata) against the Fourth Council (Syriac)
 Letter to the Emperor Justinian (Syriac)
 *Letter to a Partisan (Syriac)
Miscellaneous Theorems (Summikta Theorēmata)
 *On the Contingency of the World (De Contingentia Mundi) (Arabic)
 On the Creation of the World (De Opificio Mundi)
 † On Difference, Number and Division (Syriac)
 On Easter
 † On Fevers
 † *On the Inclinations (of Bodies)*
 † On Pulsations
 *On the Resurrection (Syriac, Greek fragment)
 *On the Trinity (On Theology) (Syriac)
 On the Use and Construction of the Astrolabe
 On the Whole and its Parts to Sergius (Syriac)
 On Words with Different Meanings According to Different Accents
 *† That Each Body is Finite and Possesses Finite Capacity
 Two Refutations of Objections against the Arbiter (Syriac)

[JOHN PHILOPONUS]

Commentary on Aristotle, Metaphysics
 Commentary on Aristotle, On the Generation of Animals
 Commentary on Aristotle, On the Soul III
 On Monasticism
 Refutation of Nestorius

PLOTINUS

Enneads

PLUTARCH OF ATHENS

Commentary on Aristotle, On the Soul
Commentary on Plato, Gorgias
Commentary on Plato, Phaedo

Commentary on Plato, Parmenides

Commentary on Plato, Timaeus

PLUTARCH OF CHAERONEA

Moralia:

Advice about Keeping Well

Advice to Bride and Groom

Against Colotes

Beasts are Rational

Can Virtue be Taught?

Causes of Natural Phenomena

Comparison Between Aristophanes and Menander

Consolation to his Wife

*Desire and grief – Psychic or Bodily Phenomena?

Dialogue on Love

Dinner of the Seven Wise Men

Greek Questions

†Greek and Roman Parallel Stories

How a Man may Become Aware of his Progress in Virtue

How to Profit by One's Enemies

How to tell a Flatterer From a Friend

How the Young Man Should Study Poetry

Institutions of the Spartans

Is the Saying 'Live in Obscurity' Right?

It is Impossible to Live Pleasantly in the Manner of Epicurus

Letter of Condolence to Apollonius

†Lives of the Ten Orators

Love Story

On Affection for Offspring

On Being a Busybody

On the Birth of the Soul in Timaeus

On Brotherly Love

On Chance

On Common Conceptions against the Stoics

On Compliancy

On the Control of Anger

On the Delays of Divine Vengeance

On the Eating of Flesh

On the Education of Children

On the E at Delphi
On Envy and Hate
On Exile
On the Face Which Appears in the Orb of the Moon
†On Fate
On the Fortune of the Romans
On the Fortune and Virtue of Alexander the Great
On the Glory of the Athenians
On Hearing
On Isis and Osiris
On Love of Wealth
On the Malice of Herodotus
On Monarchy, Democracy and Oligarchy
On Moral Virtue
†On Music
On the Obsolescence of Oracles
On the Opinions of the Philosophers
On Praising Oneself Inoffensively
On the Principle of Cold
On the Sign of Socrates
On Stoic Self-Contradictions
On Superstition
On Talkativeness
On Tranquillity of Mind
On Virtue and Vice
Oracles at Delphi no Longer Given in Verse
A Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power
Platonic Questions
Precepts of Statecraft
Roman Questions
Sayings of Kings and Commanders
Sayings of the Spartan Women
Sayings of the Spartans
The Stoics Speak More Paradoxically than the Poets
Summary of the Spirit in Timaeus
Table Talk
That we Ought Not to Borrow
To an Uneducated Ruler
Virtues of Women
Whether Affections of the Soul are Worse than Those of the Body

Whether an Old Man Should Engage in Public Affairs

Whether Fire or Water is More Useful

Whether Land or Sea Animals are Cleverer

Whether Vice is Sufficient to Cause Unhappiness

Lives:

Aemilius Paulus

Aratus

Aristides

Artaxerxes

Augustus

Cato the Elder

Cimon

Claudius

Comparison Agesilaus and Pompey

Comparison Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar

Comparison Aristides and Marcus Cato

Comparison Coriolanus and Alcibiades

Comparison Crassus and Nicias

Comparison Demetrius and Mark Antony

Comparison Demosthenes and Cicero

Comparison Dion and Brutus

Comparison *Epaminondas and Scipio Africanus*

Comparison Tiberius Gracchus and Gaius Gracchus With Agis and Cleomenes

Comparison Lucullus and Cimon

Comparison Lysander and Sulla

Comparison Numa and Lycurgus

Comparison Otho Pelopidas and Marcellus

Comparison Pericles and Fabius Maximus

Comparison Philopoemen and Flaminius

Comparison Phocion and Cato the Younger

Comparison of Romulus and Theseus

Comparison Gaius Marius Sertorius and Eumenes

Comparison Solon and Poplicola

Comparison Themistocles and Camillus Theseus

Comparison Timoleon and Aemilius Paulus

Crassus

Galba

Heracles

Lucullus

Lycurgus
Nero
Nicias
Numa Pompilius
Pericles
Philip II of Macedon
Pyrrhus
Romulus
Timoleon

[PLUTARCH OF CHAERONEA]

Arguments in Favour of Nobility (Pro nobilitate)
Greek and Roman Parallel Stories
The Doctrines of the Philosophers
Lives of the Ten Orators
On Fate
On Homer
On Music
On Rivers
On the Rule of One in the Republic (De unius in re publica dominatione)

PORPHYRY

Against Aristides
Against Aristotle on the Soul Being an Entelecheia
Against the Book of Zoroaster
*Against the Christians
Against Those who Separate the Intelligible from Intellect
*Collection of Rhetorical Enquiries
Commentary on Aristotle, Categories by Question and Answer
*Commentary on Aristotle, Categories in Seven Books
*Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation
*Commentary on Aristotle, Ethics
*Commentary on Aristotle, Metaphysics
*Commentary on Aristotle, Physics
*Commentary on Aristotle, Sophistici Elenchi
*Commentary on Plato, Cratylus
†Commentary on Plato, Parmenides
*Commentary on Plato, Phaedo
*Commentary on Plato, Philebus

- *Commentary on Plato, Republic
- *Commentary on Plato, Sophist
- *Commentary on Plato, Timaeus
- Commentary on Plotinus, Enneads*
- Commentary on the Preface of Thucydides*
- Commentary on Ptolemy, Harmonics
- *Commentary on the Textbook of Minucianus
- Commentary on Theophrastus On Affirmation and Denial*
- *Commentary on the Works of Julian the Chaldaean
- *Date Charts (Chronica)
- Elements*
- Grammatical Problems*
- *Homeric Enquiries
- Introduction to Astronomy (3 books)*
- *Introduction to Categorical Syllogisms
- Introduction to Ptolemy, Apotelesmaticae
- Isagoge
- Launching Points to the Intelligibles (Sententiae)
- *Letter to Anebo
- Letter to Longinus*
- *Miscellaneous Enquiries (Summikta Zetemata)
- On Abstinence From Eating Animals
- On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey
- †On Contemporary Writers on Rhetoric
- On the Disagreement of Plato and Aristotle*
- On Divine Names*
- †On the Holy Life
- **On Love in the Symposium*
- On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of his Books
- †On Marriage
- *On Matter (five books)
- †On Names Used by the Poet (Homer)
- On the Platonic Questions of Eubulus*
- On Incorporeals*
- *On Knowing Yourself
- *On Perception
- *On the Philosophy from Oracles
- On the Philosophy of Homer*
- *On Principles (two books)
- *On the Powers of the Soul

- *On the Return of the Soul (Latin)
- †On Scansion
- On the Science of Definitions of Legal Issues (staseis)*
- On Sleep and Awakening* (possibly a part of *On Perception*)
- *On the Soul Against Boethus (five books)
- On the Sources of the Nile According to Pindar*
- *On Statues
- *On the Styx
- On the Unity of Plato and Aristotle*
- On the Usefulness of Kings in Homer*
- *On What is in our Power
- *Philological Lecture
- *Philosophical History
- †The Sun
- The Sacred Marriage*
- To Gaurus on how the Embryo is Ensouled
- To Marcella
- *Treatise for Nemertius

PRISCIANUS LYDUS

- †Commentary on Aristotle, *On the Soul* (attributed to Simplicius)
- Solutions to Questions Raised by Chosroes, King of the Persians
- Metaphrase of Theophrastus, *On the Soul*

PROCLUS

- Collection of the Mathematical Theorems Related to the Timaeus*
- Commentary on Aristotle's Organon: On Categories, On Interpretation, On Prior and Second Analytics*
- Commentary on Euclid, *Elements Book I*
- *Commentary on Hesiod, *Works and Days*
- †Commentary on Nicomachus, *Introduction to Arithmetic*
- Commentary on Plato, *Alcibiades I* (until 116b1)
- Commentary on Plato, *Cratylus*
- Commentary on Plato, Gorgias*
- Commentary on Plato, *Parmenides* (until 142a8)
- Commentary on Plato, Phaedo*
- Commentary on Plato, Phaedrus*
- Commentary on Plato, Philebus*

- Commentary on Plato, Republic
Commentary on Plato, Sophist
Commentary on Plato, Symposium (Discourse of Diotima)
Commentary on Plato, Theaetetus
 Commentary on Plato, Timaeus (17a–44d)
 †Commentary on pseudo-Pythagoras, Golden Verses
 (Arabic)
 *Commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles
 *Commentary on the Enneads of Plotinus
Commentary on the Gods of Homer
Commentary on the whole of Homer
 Elements of Physics (Elementatio Physica)
 Elements of Theology (Elementatio Theologica)
 Epigrams
Examination of Aristotle's Arguments Against the Timaeus
 Exposition of Astronomical Hypotheses
 Hymns
Letter to Aristocles On initiation (peri agōgēs)
 †On Eclipses (Latin)
On Light
On Mythical Symbols
On Orphic Theology
On Parallel Lines
On Place
On Porphyry's Isagoge.
 On Providence, Fate and What Depends on us (Latin)
 *On Sacrifice and Magic
 *On the Eternity of the World, Against the Christians
 On the Existence of Evils (Latin)
On the Harmony of Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato with the Oracles
 On the Immortality of the Soul (Arabic)
On the Mother of the Gods
On the Three Monads (in the Philebus)
 Platonic Theology
Prolegomena to Plato's Philosophy
Prolegomena to the Study of Aristotle
Purification of the Doctrines of Plato
 Ten Problems Concerning Providence (Latin)
 Three Proofs of the Immortality of the Soul (Arabic)
 *Uranodromos

[PROCLUS]

Chrestomathia
On Eclipses
On Epistolary Style
On the Sphere
Paraphrasis of the Tetrabiblion of Ptolemy

PTOLEMY

Almagest
*Analemma (partly in Latin)
Canobic Inscription
Geography
*Handy Tables
*Harmonics
Introduction to the Handy Tables
Mechanics
On Dimension
On the Elements
On the Kritērion and Hēgēmōnikon
On Paradoxical Visibility Phenomena of Venus
On Parallel Lines
On Weights
*Optics (Latin)
*Phaseis
*Planetary Hypotheses (Partly in Arabic and partly in Hebrew)
Planisphaerium (Arabic and Latin)
Tetrabiblos

SALLUSTIUS

On the Gods and the Cosmos

SENECA

Moral Epistles to Lucilius
Natural Questions
On Anger

On Benefits
 *On Duties (*De officiis*)
 On Clemency
 On the Firmness of the Wise Person
On Earthquakes (De motu terrarum)
 *On Friendship
 On the Happy Life
On the Location of India (De situ Indiae)
 On Leisure
 *On the Life of his Father
 *On Marriage
On Moral Philosophy
On the Nature of Fish
On the Nature of Stones
On the Location and Religion of the Egyptians (De situ et sacris Aegyptiorum)
 On Providence
 †*On the Shape of the World (De forma mundi)*
 On the Shortness of Life
 †*On Superstition (*De superstitione*)
 On Tranquillity of Mind
 The Pumpkinification of the Divine Claudius
 To Helvia, On Consolation
 To Marcia, On Consolation
 To Polybius, On Consolation
 Tragedies:
 Agamemnon
 †Hercules on Oeta
 The Madness of Hercules
 Medea
 Oedipus
 Phaedra
 The Phoenician Women
 Thyestes
 The Trojan Women

[SENECA]

Letters to the Apostle Paul (c. 370 CE)

Octavia

SEVERUS

- *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus
- *On the Soul

SIMPLICIUS

- Commentary on Aristotle, Categories
- Commentary on Aristotle, On the Heaven
- †Commentary on Aristotle, On the Soul
- Commentary on Aristotle, Metaphysics*
- Commentary on Aristotle, Meteorologica*
- Commentary on Aristotle, Physics
- Commentary on Epictetus, Handbook
- *Commentary on Euclid, Elements book 1
- Commentary on Hermogenes, Rhetorical Art*
- Commentary on Iamblichus, On the Pythagorean Sects*
- Epitome of Theophrastus, Physics*

[SIMPLICIUS]

- Commentary on Aristotle, Sophistici Elenchi
- Commentary on Hippocrates, On Fractures

SOPATER OF APAMEA

- Historical Extracts* (summary preserved by Photius)
- On Providence*
- People who have Undeserved Good or Bad Fortune*

SOSIGENES

- *On Revolving Spheres
- *On Sight (*Peri Opseōs*)
- *Commentary on Aristotle (Prior Analytics)

STEPHANUS OF ALEXANDRIA

- Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation (*De interpretatione*)
- *Commentary on Porphyry, Introduction (*Isagoge*)
- †On the Great and Sacred art of Making Gold

STOBAEUS

Anthology (Eclogae 1 book and Florilegium 2 books)

SYNESIUS

Catastasis 1 or Constitutio. Praise of Anysius
 Catastasis 2 or Fall of Cyrenaica
 Dio, or On His Own way of Life
 The Egyptian Tale or On Providence
 Epistles (156 extant)
 Homily 1
 *Homily 2
 Hymns (10) (9 by Synesius, Hymn 10 is spurious)
 In Praise of Baldness (Calvitii Encomium)
On Hunting (Cynegetica)
 On Dreams
 On Kingship (De Regno)
 To Paeonius on the Gift of the Astronomical Instrument

SYRIANUS

Commentary on Aristotle, On Interpretation
 Commentary on Aristotle, Metaphysics Books III, IV, XIII, XIV
Commentary on Aristotle, On the Heavens
 Commentary on Hermogenes, On Types of Style (Peri Ideōn)
 Commentary on Hermogenes, On Issues (Peri Staseōn)
Commentary on Plato, Timaeus
Commentary on Ptolemy, Almagest (Suntaxis Mathematica or Magna Suntaxis)
 Lectures on Plato, Phaedrus (preserved by Hermias)
On the Orphic Poems
 Preface to Hermogenes, On Types of Style (Peri Ideōn)
The Agreement Between Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato and the Chaldaean Oracles

TAURUS, L. CALVENUS

*Comentary on Plato, Gorgias
 *Commentary on Plato, Timaeus
On the Difference Between Plato and Aristotle
On Corporeals and Incorporeals

THEMISTIUS

Philosophical works.

Letter on the State (Arabic)

*On the Soul

On Virtue (Syriac)

*On Wisdom

*Paraphrase of Aristotle, Categories (Greek, Latin, and Arabic)

†Paraphrase of Aristotle, History of Animals (Arabic)

Paraphrase of Aristotle, Metaphysics Lambda (Hebrew and Latin, Arabic fragments)

Paraphrase of Aristotle, On the Heavens (Hebrew and Latin)

Paraphrase of Aristotle, On the Soul (extant also in Arabic)

Paraphrase of Aristotle, Physics

Paraphrase of Aristotle, Posterior Analytics

*Paraphrase of Aristotle, Prior Analytics Book 1 (Hebrew, Arabic)

*Paraphrase of Aristotle, Topics (Arabic and Latin)

Treatise in refutation of Maximus concerning the reduction of second and first figures of syllogism to the first figure (Arabic)

Speeches:

Political

Or. 1 ('On Humanity, or Constantius')

Or. 2 ('To Emperor Constantius that the King is the Best Philosopher (speech of thanksgiving)')

Or. 3 ('Embassy Speech on Behalf of Constantinople Delivered at Rome')

Or. 4 ('To Emperor Constantius')

Or. 5 ('On the Consulship, to the Emperor Jovian')

Or. 6 ('On Brotherly Love or on Humanity')

Or. 7 ('On the Unfortunate (Speech in Senate in the Presence of Valens)')

Or. 8 ('Quinquennial Congratulatory Speech for Valens')

Or. 9 ('Exhortation to Valentinianus Jr.')

Or. 10 ('On Valens's Peace')

Or. 11 ('Decennial (to Valens), or on the speeches appropriate to be pronounced for the Emperor')

Or. 13 ('On Love, or Royal Beauty')

Or. 14 ('Embassy Speech to Emperor Theodosius on behalf of Constantinople Delivered at Rome')

Or. 15 ('To Theodosius on the Most Royal of the Virtues')

Or. 16 ('Thanksgiving Speech to the Emperor for Peace and the Consulship of the General Saturninus')

Or. 17 ('On His Appointment to the Urban Prefecture (of Constantinople)')

Or. 18 ('On the King's Willingness to Listen')

Or. 19 ('On the Humanity of the Emperor Theodosius')

*Philopolis

*To the Emperor

Private (Orations 20–34)

Or. 20 ('Funeral Oration in Honour of His Father <Eugenius>')

Or. 21 ('The Examiner or the Philosopher')

Or. 22 ('On Friendship')

Or. 23 ('The Sophist')

Or. 24 ('Exhortation to the Nicomedians to Study Philosophy')

Or. 25 ('In Reply to One Who Asked for an Extempore Oration')

Or. 26 ('On Speaking or How the Philosopher Should Speak')

Or. 27 ('On the Need to Give Thought Not to Where <We Study> but to the Men <Who Will Teach Us>')

Or. 28 ('The Disquisition on Speaking')

Or. 29 ('In Reply to Those Who Interpret <His Oration> 'The Sophist' Incorrectly

Or. 30 Should One Engage in Farming?')

Or. 31 ('Concerning His Presidency <of the Senate>, Addressed to the Senate <of Constantinople>')

Or. 32 ('On Moderation of One's Emotions, or On Love of One's Children')

Or. 33 (<'On the Names of the King and the Consul'>)

Or. 34 ('In Reply to Those Who Found Fault with Him for Accepting Public Office')

[THEMISTIUS]

Paraphrase of Aristotle, *Parva Naturalia*

Paraphrase of Aristotle, *Prior Analytics Book 1*

Oratio 12, To Valens on Religion

THEON OF ALEXANDRIA

Commentary on Ptolemy, *Almagest* (*Syntaxis Mathematica*)

'Little Commentary' on Ptolemy, *Handy Tables*

'Great Commentary' on Ptolemy, *Handy Tables*

Edition of Euclid's Elements

† *Epigrams*

† *Progymnasmata*

THEON OF SMYRNA

On Mathematics Useful for the Understanding of Plato (Expositio rerum mathematicarum ad legendum Platonem utilium)

The Order of Reading Plato's Works and the Titles of his Compositions

THRASYLLUS

* *On the Heptachord*

* *Prolegomena to the Reading of Democritus*

* *Prolegomena to the Reading of Plato*

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AANL.M</i>	<i>Atti dell' Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storici e Filologiche</i>
<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ACW</i>	<i>Ancient Christian Writers. Westminster, MD–London</i>
<i>AGATHIAS</i>	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>
<i>AHSW</i>	M. T. Clark (trans.) <i>Augustine of Hippo, Selected Writings</i> . New York (1984)
<i>ALBINUS</i>	
<i>Prol.</i>	<i>Prologos</i>
<i>ALCINOUS</i>	
<i>Didasc.</i>	<i>Didascalikos</i>
<i>ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS</i>	
<i>DA</i>	<i>On the Soul</i>
<i>Fat.</i>	<i>On Fate</i>
<i>Mant.</i>	<i>Mantissa</i>
<i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Commentary on Aristotle, Metaphysics</i>
<i>Mixt.</i>	<i>On Mixture</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>On the Principles of the Universe</i>
<i>Prov.</i>	<i>On Providence</i>
<i>Quaest.</i>	<i>Quaestiones</i>

ANRW	W. Haase and I. Temporini, eds., <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> . Berlin (1972–)
AMM. MARC.	Ammianus Marcellinus
AMMONIUS <i>In Isag.</i>	<i>On the Isagoge</i>
AP. <i>Flor.</i> <i>Met.</i>	Apuleius <i>Florida</i> <i>Metamorphoses</i>
ARIST. <i>An. post.</i> <i>An. pr.</i> <i>Cael.</i> <i>Cat.</i> <i>De an.</i> EN GA GC <i>Int.</i> <i>Meteor.</i> <i>Part. an.</i> <i>Phys.</i>	Aristotle <i>Posterior Analytics</i> <i>Prior Analytics</i> <i>On the Heavens</i> <i>Categories</i> <i>On the Soul</i> <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> <i>On the Generation of Animals</i> <i>On Generation and Corruption</i> <i>On Interpretation</i> <i>Meteorologica</i> <i>On the Parts of Animals</i> <i>Physics</i>
Ps.-Arist. <i>Mund.</i>	Pseudo-Aristotle <i>On the World</i>
AS	<i>Augustine Studies</i> . New York
ASCLEPIUS <i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics</i>
ASPASIUS <i>In EN</i> <i>AugSt</i>	<i>On the Nicomachean Ethics</i> <i>Augustinian Studies</i>

AUGUSTINE

<i>C. Adim.</i>	<i>Against Adimantus</i>
<i>C. adv. leg.</i>	<i>Against Adversaries of the Law and of the Prophets</i>
<i>C. ep. Man.</i>	<i>Against the 'Foundation' Letter of the Manichees</i>
<i>C. ep. Pel.</i>	<i>Against Two Letters of the Pelagians</i>
<i>C. Faust.</i>	<i>Against Faustus, a Manichee</i>
<i>C. Fel.</i>	<i>Against Felix, a Manichee</i>
<i>C. Iul.</i>	<i>Against Julian</i>
<i>C. Iul. imp.</i>	<i>Against Julian, an Unfinished Work</i>
<i>C. Sec.</i>	<i>Against Secundias, a Manichee</i>
<i>Comm. in Psal.</i>	<i>Explanation of the Psalms</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessions</i>
<i>C. Acad.</i>	<i>Against the Sceptics</i>
<i>De civ. Dei</i>	<i>The City of God</i>
<i>De ord.</i>	<i>On Order</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Letters</i>
<i>De an. et or.</i>	<i>On the Soul and its Origin</i>
<i>De cons. ev.</i>	<i>On Agreement among the Evangelists</i>
<i>De doctr. chr.</i>	<i>On Christian Teaching</i>
<i>De fide r.q.n.v.</i>	<i>On Faith in the Unseen</i>
<i>De Gen. ad litt.</i>	<i>On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis</i>
<i>De Gen ad litt. imp.</i>	<i>On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis, an Unfinished Book</i>
<i>De Gen. c. Man.</i>	<i>On Genesis, against the Manichees</i>
<i>De haer.</i>	<i>On Heresies</i>
<i>De lib. arb.</i>	<i>On Free Will</i>
<i>De mag.</i>	<i>On the Teacher</i>
<i>De mend.</i>	<i>On Lying</i>
<i>De mor. eccl.</i>	<i>On the Catholic and the Manichean Ways of Life</i>
<i>De nat. b.</i>	<i>On the Nature of the Good</i>
<i>De nupt. et conc.</i>	<i>On Marriage and Concupiscence</i>
<i>De pecc. mer.</i>	<i>On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism</i>
<i>De praed. sanct.</i>	<i>On the Predestination of the Saints</i>
<i>De quant. an.</i>	<i>On the Greatness of the Soul</i>
<i>De serm. dom. m.</i>	<i>On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount</i>
<i>De spir. et litt.</i>	<i>On the Spirit and the Letter</i>

<i>De Trin.</i>	<i>The Trinity</i>
<i>De ut. cred.</i>	<i>On the Advantage of Believing</i>
<i>De vera rel.</i>	<i>On True Religion</i>
<i>In Io. ev. Tr.</i>	<i>Tractates on the Gospel of John</i>
<i>Qu. in Hep.</i>	<i>Questions on the Heptateuch</i>
<i>Retr.</i>	<i>Reconsiderations</i>
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermons</i>
<i>Sol.</i>	<i>The Soliloquies</i>
BA	<i>Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Oeuvres de saint Augustin. Paris</i>
BASIL	
<i>Adul</i>	<i>Address to Young Men</i>
<i>Eun.</i>	<i>Against Eunomius</i>
<i>Hex.</i>	<i>Hexameron</i>
<i>Spir.</i>	<i>On the Holy Spirit</i>
BOETHIUS	
<i>Arith.</i>	<i>On Arithmetic</i>
<i>Cons.</i>	<i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i>
<i>Fid. cath.</i>	<i>On the Catholic Faith</i>
<i>In Cat.</i>	<i>On Aristotle's Categories</i>
<i>In Isag.</i>	<i>On the Isagoge</i>
<i>In Perih.</i>	<i>On Aristotle's Perihermeneias</i>
<i>In top. Cic.</i>	<i>On Cicero's Topics</i>
<i>Intr. syll cat.</i>	<i>On Hypothetical Syllogisms</i>
<i>Mus.</i>	<i>On Music</i>
<i>Top. diff.</i>	<i>On Various Topics</i>
<i>Trin.</i>	<i>The Trinity</i>
BWSA	W. J. Oates (ed.), <i>Basic Writings of Saint Augustine</i> , 2 vols, New York (1948)
CAG	H. Diels (ed.), <i>Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca</i> . Berlin (1882–1909)
CASSIOD.	
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutiones</i>
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i> . Turnhout (1977–)
CCSG	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca</i> . Turnhout (1977–)

CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Scriptorum Latina</i> (1953–)
CFHB	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i> . Various places (1967–)
CFML	<i>Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum Series Latina</i> . Turnhout
CICERO	
<i>Ac.</i>	<i>Academics</i>
<i>De leg.</i>	<i>On the Laws</i>
<i>De or.</i>	<i>On the Orator</i>
<i>Div.</i>	<i>On Divination</i>
<i>Fin.</i>	<i>On Ends</i>
<i>ND</i>	<i>On the Nature of the Gods</i>
<i>Off.</i>	<i>On Duties</i>
<i>Orat.</i>	<i>Oration to M. Brutus</i>
<i>Tusc.</i>	<i>Tusculan Disputations</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (1863–)
C. IUST.	Codex Iustinianus
CLEM.	Clement
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromateis</i>
<i>Paed.</i>	<i>The Instructor</i>
<i>Protrept.</i>	<i>Exhortation to the Greeks</i>
CLAUD.	Claudian
<i>In Rufin.</i>	<i>Against Rufinus</i>
<i>Cm</i>	<i>Cassiacum</i> . Würzburg
CMG	<i>Corpus Medicorum Graecorum</i> (1908–).
CML	<i>Corpus Medicorum Latinorum</i> (1915–).
CPhMA–PB	<i>Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Philosophi Byzantini</i> . Athens (1984–).
CPhMA–CAB	<i>Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina</i> . Athens (1994–)
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> . Vienna (1866–)

CTh.	Codex Theodosianus
Cyp.	Cyprian
DAMASCIUS	
<i>In Phd.</i>	<i>On Plato's Phaedo</i>
<i>Phil. Hist.</i>	<i>History</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>On Principles</i>
<i>Vit. Isid.</i>	<i>The Life of Isidore</i>
DAVID	
<i>In Porph. Isag.</i>	<i>On Porphyry's Isagoge</i>
DEXIPPUS	
<i>In Cat.</i>	<i>On the Categories</i>
Diels, <i>Dox.</i>	H. Diels, <i>Doxographi Graeci</i> , Berlin (1879).
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz, <i>Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> , 6th edn, Berlin (1952)
D.L.	Diogenes Laertius
DPhA	R. Goulet, dir. <i>Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques</i> , Paris
PS.-DIONYSIUS	
CH	<i>The Celestial Hierarchy</i>
DN	<i>The Divine Names</i>
EH	<i>The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy</i>
MT	<i>The Mystical Theology</i>
DSTFM	<i>Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale</i>
ÉAA	<i>Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité</i> , Paris
ÉFR	<i>Collection de l'École française de Rome. Rome</i>
EP	<i>Encyclopédie de l'Islam</i> . Leiden
EP	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> . Leiden–Boston (2008)
EK	L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd, <i>Posidonius, The Fragments</i> ;

- Commentary. 3 vols. Cambridge (1972–).
- ELIAS
In Porph. Isag. *On Porphyry's Isagoge*
- EUNAP.
Vit. Soph. *Eunapius
 Lives of the Sophists*
- EUSEBIUS
Adv. Hierocl. *Against Hierocles*
DE *Demonstratio Evangelica*
HE *History of the Church*
LC *In Praise of Constantine*
PE *Praeparatio Evangelica*
FaCH *The Fathers of the Church.*
 Washington, DC
FGrH F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen
 Historiker*. Berlin (1923–).
FHG C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum
 Graecorum*. Berlin (1841–70).
- GALEN
AA *On Anatomical Procedures*
Aff. dig. *The Passions of the Soul*
Caus. morb. *Causes of Diseases*
Caus. puls. *Causes of Pulses*
Comp. med. gen. *On the Composition of Drugs According
 to Kind*
Comp. med. loc. *On the Composition of Drugs According
 to Places*
CP *On Antecedent Causes*
Dem. *On Demonstration*
Diff. puls. *Differences of Pulses*
Dig. puls. *Diagnosis of Pulses*
Foet. form. *On the Formation of the Foetus*
Hipp. elem. *On the Elements According to
 Hippocrates*

<i>Hipp. epid.</i>	<i>On Hippocrates' 'Epidemics'</i>
<i>HNH</i>	<i>On Hippocrates' 'Nature of Man'</i>
<i>Inst. log.</i>	<i>Introduction to Logic</i>
<i>Lib. prop.</i>	<i>On My Own Books</i>
<i>Loc. aff.</i>	<i>On Affected Parts</i>
<i>Med. exp.</i>	<i>On Medical Experience</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>On the Therapeutic Method</i>
<i>Nat. fac.</i>	<i>On the Natural Faculties</i>
<i>Opt. doc.</i>	<i>On the Best Method of Teaching</i>
<i>Opt. med.</i>	<i>The Best Doctor is also a Philosopher</i>
<i>Ord. lib. prop.</i>	<i>The Order of My Own Books</i>
<i>Pecc. dig.</i>	<i>On the Diagnosis and Cure of the Errors of the Soul</i>
<i>PHP</i>	<i>On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato</i>
<i>Praen.</i>	<i>On Prognosis</i>
<i>Prop. plac.</i>	<i>On His Own Opinions</i>
<i>Praes. puls.</i>	<i>Prognosis by Pulses</i>
<i>QAM</i>	<i>The Faculties of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body</i>
<i>Sect.</i>	<i>On Sects for Beginners</i>
<i>SMT</i>	<i>On the Powers [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs</i>
<i>Temp.</i>	<i>On Mixtures</i>
<i>UP</i>	<i>On the Utility of the Parts</i>
GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS	
<i>Orat.</i>	<i>Orations</i>
GREGORY OF NYSSA	
<i>Ant. adv. Ap.</i>	<i>Against Apollinarius</i>
HESIOD	
<i>Erg.</i>	<i>Works and Days</i>
HIEROCLES	
<i>C.A.</i>	<i>Commentary on pseudo-Pythagoras, Golden Verses (Carmina aurea)</i>

<i>Comm. on Prov.</i>	<i>On Providence and Fate</i>
HILARY <i>Hist. frag.</i>	<i>Historica fragmenta</i>
HIPPOLYTUS <i>Ref.</i> <i>HJb</i>	<i>Refutation of All Heresies</i> <i>Historisches Jahrbuch der</i> <i>Görres-Gesellschaft</i>
HOMER <i>Il.</i> <i>IP</i>	<i>Iliad</i> <i>Instrumenta Patristica. Steenbrugge</i> <i>(1969–72)</i>
IAMBlichUS <i>De an.</i> <i>DM</i> <i>In Phlb.</i> <i>In Soph.</i> <i>VPyth.</i> <i>IG</i> <i>ILA</i>	<i>On the Soul</i> <i>On the Mysteries</i> <i>On Plato's Philebus</i> <i>On Plato's Sophist</i> <i>On the Life of Pythagoras</i> <i>Inscriptiones Graecae (1873–).</i> <i>Inscriptions Latines d'Aquitaine.</i> <i>Bordeaux (1991–).</i>
IREN. <i>Haer.</i>	<i>Irenaeus</i> <i>Against Heresies</i>
JEROME <i>Chron.</i> <i>Comm. in Daniel</i> <i>De vir. ill.</i>	<i>Chronicon</i> <i>On Daniel</i> <i>De viris illustribus</i>
JOHN OF NIKIU <i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicle</i>
JOHN SCOTUS ERIUGENA <i>Annot. in Marc.</i> <i>Expos.</i> <i>Hom.</i>	<i>Annotationes in Marcianum</i> <i>Expositions</i> <i>Homilies</i>

<i>Trans. Dion</i>	<i>Translation into Latin of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Works</i>
JOS. <i>V.Mos.</i> <i>War</i>	Josephus <i>On the Life of Moses</i> <i>On the Jewish War</i>
JULIAN <i>Ep. ad Ath.</i> <i>Ep.</i> <i>Frag. Epist.</i> <i>Gal.</i> <i>Misop.</i> <i>Or.</i>	<i>Letter to the Athenians</i> <i>Letter</i> <i>Letter fragments</i> <i>Against the Galileans</i> <i>Misopogon</i> <i>Orations</i>
JUSTIN MARTYR <i>1Apol.</i> <i>2Apol.</i> <i>Dial.</i>	<i>First Apology</i> <i>Second Apology</i> <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>
JUVENAL <i>Sat.</i>	<i>Saturnalia</i>
KEIL, GRAM. LAT.	H. Keil, <i>Grammatici Latini</i> , 8 vols. (1855–1923; repr. 1961)
LACT. <i>Inst.</i> <i>Mort.</i>	Lactantius <i>Divine Institutes</i> <i>De Mortibus persecutorum</i>
LIB. <i>Or.</i> LCC LCL	Libanius <i>Orations</i> <i>Library of Christian Classics.</i> Philadelphia, PA–London The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA–London
LUCIAN <i>Eun.</i>	<i>The Eunuch</i>

MA	<i>Miscellanea Agostiniana</i> , 2 vols. Rome (1930–1)
MACR.	Macrobius
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Saturnalia</i>
<i>Somn. Scip.</i>	<i>Commentary on Scipio's Dream</i>
MARINUS	
<i>Vit. Procl.</i>	<i>Life of Proclus</i>
MARIUS VICTORINUS	
<i>In Cic. rhet.</i>	<i>On Cicero's Rhetoric</i>
MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR	
<i>Ambig.</i>	<i>On Ambiguity</i>
<i>Cent. char.</i>	<i>Four Centuries on Charity</i>
<i>Disp.</i>	<i>Dispute with Pyrrhus</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Letters</i>
<i>Myst.</i>	<i>Mystagogy</i>
<i>Theol. Econ.</i>	<i>Chapters on Theology and Economy</i>
NBA	<i>Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana. Opere di sant'Agostino, edizione latino-italiana.</i> Rome (1965–)
NEMESIUS	
<i>Nat. hom.</i>	<i>On the Nature of Humans</i>
NHC	The Nag Hammadi Codices
NPNF	<i>A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church.</i> Oxford; repr. Grand Rapids, MI
NUMENIUS	
<i>Nat. hom.</i>	<i>On the Nature of Humans</i>
OAWPS	<i>Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Sitzungberichte.</i> Vienna

OLYMPIODORUS

<i>In Alc.</i>	<i>On Plato's Alcibiades</i>
<i>In Cat.</i>	<i>On Aristotle's Categories</i>
<i>In Gorg.</i>	<i>On Plato's Gorgias</i>
<i>In Meteor.</i>	<i>On Aristotle's Meteorology</i>

OPTATUS

<i>Ap.</i>	<i>Apology</i>
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ORIGEN

<i>C. Cels.</i>	<i>Against Celsus</i>
<i>Comm. in Ioh.</i>	<i>Commentary on John</i>
<i>Exh. Mart.</i>	<i>Exhortation to Martyrdom</i>
<i>Hom. in Ez.</i>	<i>Homilies on Ezekiel</i>
<i>Hom. in Gen.</i>	<i>Homilies on Genesis</i>
<i>Hom. in Ios.</i>	<i>Homilies on Joshua</i>
<i>Hom. in Lev.</i>	<i>Homilies on Leviticus</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>On Principles</i>

OW

Augustinus, Opera – Werke.
Paderborn–Munich–Vienna–Zurich

PG

J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* (1857–66).
Paris

PHILO

<i>Abr.</i>	<i>On Abraham</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>On the Cherubim</i>
<i>Congr.</i>	<i>On the Confusion of Tongues</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>On the Decalogue</i>
<i>Det.</i>	<i>The Worse Attacks the Better</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	<i>On the Giants</i>
<i>Immut.</i>	<i>On the Unchangeableness of God</i>
<i>Jos.</i>	<i>On Joseph</i>
<i>Leg. ad Gaium</i>	<i>On the Embassy to Gaius</i>
<i>Leg. alleg.</i>	<i>Allegory of the Law</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>Migration of Abraham</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>On the Creation of the World</i>
<i>Post. C.</i>	<i>On the Posterity and Exile of Cain</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	<i>On Rewards and Punishments</i>

<i>Prov.</i>	<i>On Providence</i>
<i>Qu. ex.</i>	<i>Questions and Answers on Exodus</i>
<i>Qu. gen.</i>	<i>Questions and Answers on Genesis</i>
<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain</i>
<i>Som.</i>	<i>On Dreams</i>
<i>Spec. leg.</i>	<i>On the Special Laws</i>
<i>V. Mos.</i>	<i>Life of Moses</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>On the Virtues</i>
PHILOPONUS	
<i>Aet. mund.</i>	<i>Against Proclus, On the Eternity of the World</i>
<i>In An. pr.</i>	<i>On Aristotle Prior Analytics</i>
<i>In Cat.</i>	<i>On Aristotle Categories</i>
<i>In DA</i>	<i>On Aristotle On the Soul</i>
<i>In Phys.</i>	<i>On Aristotle Physics</i>
PHILOSTORGIUS	
<i>Hist. Eccl.</i>	<i>History of the Church</i>
PHILOSTRATUS	
<i>HE</i>	<i>History of the Church</i>
PHOTIUS	
<i>Bibl.</i>	<i>Bibliotheca</i>
<i>Cod.</i>	<i>Code</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>J. P. Migne (ed.), Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina, 221 vols. Paris (1844–64)</i>
PLATO	
<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcibiades</i>
<i>Crat.</i>	<i>Cratylus</i>
<i>Gorg.</i>	<i>Gorgias</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Laws</i>
<i>Phd.</i>	<i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
<i>Phlb.</i>	<i>Philebus</i>
<i>Prt.</i>	<i>Protagoras</i>

<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	<i>Sophist</i>
<i>Tht.</i>	<i>Theaetetus</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
PLOTINUS	
<i>Enn.</i>	<i>Enneads</i>
<i>PLS</i>	A. Hamman (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina. Supplementum.</i> 5 vols. Paris
PLUTARCH	
<i>De gen. Socr.</i>	<i>On the Sign of Socrates</i>
<i>De Is. et Os.</i>	<i>On Isis and Osiris</i>
<i>Plat. qu.</i>	<i>Platonic Questions</i>
<i>Stoic. rep.</i>	<i>On Stoic Self-Contradictions</i>
<i>Virt. mor.</i>	<i>On Moral Virtue</i>
PORPHYRY	
<i>Harm.</i>	<i>Commentary on Ptolemy, Harmonics</i>
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>To Marcella</i>
<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Sententiae</i>
<i>VPlot.</i>	<i>Life of Plotinus</i>
<i>VPyth.</i>	<i>Life of Pythagoras</i>
PROCOPIUS	
<i>Aed.</i>	<i>De aedificiis</i>
<i>Bel.</i>	<i>De bello Gothico</i>
PROCLUS	
<i>De mal. subs.</i>	<i>On the Existence of Evils</i>
<i>De prov.</i>	<i>On Providence, Fate and What Depends On Us</i>
<i>El. th.</i>	<i>Elements of Theology</i>
<i>In Cr.</i>	<i>Commentary on Plato Cratylus</i>
<i>In Parm.</i>	<i>Commentary on Plato Parmenides</i>
<i>In R.</i>	<i>Commentary on Plato Republic</i>
<i>In Tim.</i>	<i>Commentary on Plato Timaeus</i>
<i>Theol. Plat.</i>	<i>Platonic Theology</i>

PS	<i>Patristic Studies</i> . Washington, DC
PTOLEMY	
<i>Apotelesm.</i>	<i>Astrological Influences</i>
PTS	<i>Patristische Texte und Studien</i> (1963–). Berlin.
RB	<i>Revue Benedictine de Critique, d' Histoire et de Littérature Religieuses</i>
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, and W. Kroll, <i>Real-Encyclopädie d. klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (1893–). Berlin.
RÉAug.	<i>Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques</i>
RechAug.	<i>Recherches Augustiniennes et Patristiques</i>
RFNS	<i>Revista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica</i>
RSPhTh	<i>Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques</i>
SBL	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i> . Chico, CA
SC	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i> (1942–). Paris.
SEN.	Seneca
<i>Ben.</i>	<i>On Benefits</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Moral Epistles to Lucilius</i>
NQ	<i>Natural Questions</i>
SEXTUS EMPIRICUS	
M	<i>Against the Mathematicians</i>
PH	<i>Outlines of Pyrrhonism</i>
SGL	<i>Scrittori Greci e Latini</i> . Milan
SHA	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
SHL	<i>Synthese Historical Library</i> . Texts and Studies in the History of Logic and Philosophy. Dordrecht–Boston, MA
SIDONIUS	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Letters</i>
SIMPL.	Simplicius

- An.* *Commentary on Aristotle On the Soul*
In Cael. *Commentary on Aristotle On the Heavens*
In Cat. *Commentary on Aristotle On Categories*
In Ench. Epict. *Commentary on Epictetus Handbook*
- PS.-SIMPLICIUS
In DA *Commentary on Aristotle On the Soul*
SLI *Studi Latini e Italiani*
SLS *Studia Latina Stockholmiensia. Stockholm*
- SOCRATES
HE *History of the Church*
- SOZOMEN
HE *History of the Church*
SPM *Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia. Utrecht–Antwerp*
- STEPHANUS
In D. an. *Commentary on Aristotle On the Soul*
In De. Interpr. *Commentary on Aristotle On Interpretation*
- STOBAEUS
Ecl. *Anthology (Eclogues)*
- SUETONIUS
Gram. *On Grammar*
SVF H. von Arnim (ed.), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 4 vols. (1903–24). Leipzig.
- SYMMACHUS
Rel. *Relationes*
- SYNESIUS
Catas. *Catastases*
De ins. *De insomniis*

<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Letters</i>
<i>H.</i>	<i>Homilies</i>
TERTULLIAN	
<i>An.</i>	<i>On the Soul</i>
THEODORET	
<i>Gr. aff. cur.</i>	<i>Cure for Greek Illness</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>History of the Church</i>
THEOPHANES	
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicle</i>
THEOPHYLUS	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Letters</i>
<i>TMIUL</i>	<i>Testi e Manuali per l'Insegnamento Universitario del Latino. Bologna</i>
VICTORINUS	
<i>Ad Cand.</i>	<i>Letter to the Arian Candidus</i>
<i>De hom. rec.</i>	<i>On Homoeanism</i>
<i>In cic. rhet.</i>	<i>Expositions of Cicero's Rhetoric</i>
<i>In Eph.</i>	<i>Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians</i>
<i>Trin.</i>	<i>That the Trinity is Homoousios</i>
<i>VKHCLK</i>	<i>Veröffentlichungen der Kommission zur Herausgabe des Corpus der lateinischen Kirchenväter. Vienna</i>
<i>VS</i>	<i>Verba Seniorum. Alba</i>
<i>WSt</i>	<i>Wiener Studien. Zeitschrift für Klassische Philologie und Patristik</i>
<i>WSA</i>	<i>The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. New York</i>
ZACH.	<i>Zacharius</i>
<i>V.Serv.</i>	<i>Life of Servius</i>

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CHAPTER 1 THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE FROM THE ANTONINES TO CONSTANTINE

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CHAPTER 2 THE TRANSMISSION OF ANCIENT WISDOM: TEXTS,
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CHAPTER 3 CICERO AND THE NEW ACADEMY

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CHAPTER 4 PLATONISM BEFORE PLOTINUS

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CHAPTER 8 PERIPATETICS

PRIMARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

[Although early Peripatetics such as Theophrastus, Eudemus and Strato are mentioned in the chapter, I have not included them here; to give a complete list of all their extant and known-but-lost works would completely unbalance this listing with material outside the period principally covered. Where more than one edition of a work exists my listing is selective, on the basis of what is most recent, most standard, and most widely accessible.]

Aëtius

The doxography of Aëtius was reconstructed from [Plutarch], *Placita* and Stobaeus' anthology by H. Diels and printed by him in parallel columns, one from each source, in *Doxographi Graeci* (1879), Berlin, 273–444. Diels' presentation of the material, his rearrangement of the Stobaeus column to match the [Plutarch] one, and his assignment to Aëtius of some material in Stobaeus but not in [Plutarch] are all open to question; see J. Mansfeld and D.T. Runia, *Aëtiana: the Method and Intellectual Context of a Doxographer*, vol. 1 *The Sources* (1997). Leiden.

*Alexander of Aphrodisias**Commentaries on*

Categories. Lost (unless the fragments in the 'Archimedes palimpsest' are from this; see p. 140, n.6. Throughout this list 'lost' = 'lost apart from reports in later authors'.)

De interpretatione. Lost.

Prior Analytics 1. Greek text in *CAG* 2.1, ed. M. Wallies (1883). Berlin English translation in Barnes, J. et al. *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Prior Analytics 1.1–7* (1991). London; I. Mueller, I. with J. Gould, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Prior Analytics 1.8–13 (with 1. 17, 36b35–37a31)* (1999). London; I. Mueller, with J. Gould, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Prior Analytics 1.14–22* (1999). London; I. Mueller, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Prior Analytics 1.23–31* (2006). London; I. Mueller, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Prior Analytics 1.32–46* (2006). London.

Posterior Analytics. Lost, but fragments collected in P. Moraux, *Le commentaire d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise aux Secondes Analytiques d'Aristote* (1979). Berlin.

Topics. Greek text in *CAG* 2.2, ed. M. Wallies (1891). Berlin.

De sophisticis elenchis. Lost (the commentary attributed to Alexander and edited in *CAG* 2.3 by M. Wallies (1891) Berlin, is by Michael of Ephesus). On the history of commentaries on this work of Aristotle see S. Ebbesen, *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle's Sophistici Elenchi* (1981). Leiden.

- Physics*. Lost, but fragments in Arabic translation in E. Giannakis, 'Fragments from Alexander's Lost Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*' (1996), *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 10: 157–87, and from scholia in Greek in M. Rashed, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise: Commentaire perdu à la Physique d'Aristote (livres IV–VIII). Les scholies Byzantines* (2010). Berlin.
- De caelo*. Lost, but fragments from book 1 collected in A. Rescigno, *Alessandro di Afrodisia: Commentario al De caelo di Aristotele. Frammenti del primo libro* (2004). Amsterdam; fragments from books 2–4 in *idem*, *Frammenti del secondo, terzo e quarto libro* (2008). Amsterdam.
- De generatione et corruptione*. Lost, but fragments in Arabic translation in E. Gannagé, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle On Coming-to-Be and Perishing 2.2–5* (2005). London.
- Meteorologica*. Greek text in CAG 3.2, ed. M. Hayduck (1899). Berlin. English translation of commentary on book 4 in E. Lewis, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Meteorology 4* (1996). London.
- De anima*. Lost. Fragments on intellect collected in P. Moraux, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise: Exégète de la noétique d'Aristote* (1942). Liège–Paris, 203–21.
- De sensu*. Greek text in CAG 3.1, ed. P. Wendland (1901). Berlin. English translation in J. A. Towey, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle On Sensation* (2000). London.
- Metaphysics*. Greek text in CAG 1, ed. M. Hayduck (1891). Berlin. English translation in: W. E. Dooley, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Metaphysics 1* (1989). London; W. E. Dooley and A. Madigan, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Metaphysics 2 and 3* (1992). London; A. Madigan, *Alexander of Aphrodisias, On Aristotle Metaphysics 4* (1993). London; W. E. Dooley, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Aristotle Metaphysics 5* (1993). London. Only the commentary on A–Δ is genuine; the rest is by Michael of Ephesus. Fragments from the genuine commentary on Λ preserved by Averroes are collected in J. Freudenthal, *Die durch Averroes erhaltenen Fragmente Alexanders zur Metaphysik des Aristoteles untersucht und übersetzt* (1885). Berlin (Abh. Berlin 1884, phil.-hist. Kl., no. 1). English translation in C. Genequand, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: a Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lambda* (1984). Leiden.
- Ethics*. It is uncertain whether Alexander wrote a full commentary on this work in addition to the *Ethical Problems* (below).

Treatises

- De anima*. Greek text in *Supplementum Aristotelicum* 2.1, ed. I. Bruns (1887). Berlin, 1–100. English translation and commentary in A. P. Fotinis, *The De Anima of Alexander of Aphrodisias* (1979). Washington, DC. A new English translation in preparation by V. Caston. Italian translation and commentary in P. Accattino and P. L. Donini, *Alessandro di Afrodisia: L'anima* (1996). Rome and Bari.
- De fato*. Greek text in *Supplementum Aristotelicum* 2.2 ed. I. Bruns (1892). Berlin, 164–212; also, with French translation, in P. Thillet, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise: Traité du Destin* (1984). Paris. English translation and commentary in R. W. Sharples (1983). *Alexander of Aphrodisias On Fate* (1983). London. Italian translations in A. Magris, *Alessandro di Afrodisia, Sul Destino* (1996). Florence; and in C. Natali, *Alessandro di Afrodisia: Il Destino* (1996). Milan.
- De mixtione*. Greek text in *Supplementum Aristotelicum* 2.2 ed. I. Bruns (1892). Berlin, 213–38; also, with English translation and commentary, in R. B. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics* (1976). Leiden.

- De principiis* (*On the Principles of the Universe*). Survives only in Arabic. Edition and English translation in C. Genequand, *Alexander of Aphrodisias On the Cosmos* (2001). Leiden; a new edition in preparation by S. Fazzo and M. Zonta.
- De providentia*. Survives only in Arabic, apart from a few fragments in Greek. Text, Italian translation and commentary: S. Fazzo and M. Zonta, *Alessandro d'Afrodizia, La Provvidenza* (1998). Milan. Introduction, French translation and text: P. Thillet, *Alexandre: Traité de la providence* (2003). Paris.
- De differentia*. How many original discussions in Greek on this topic are represented by the texts surviving only in Arabic is a complex and uncertain question. Arabic texts of some of the material at A. Badawī, *Aristū 'inda l-'Arab* (1947). Cairo, 295–308 and, with German translations, at A. Dietrich, 'Die arabische Version einer unbekanntenen Schrift des Alexander von Aphrodisias über die Differentia specifica' (1964), *Nachr. Göttingen*, 122–9 and 136–43; French translations at M. Rashed, *Essentialisme* (2007). Berlin, 53–79 and 104–17.
- Refutation of Galen's Attack on Aristotle's Doctrine that Everything that Moves is Set in Motion by a Mover*. Survives only in Arabic; however, the extent to which the entire text in its present form reflects Alexander is questioned by S. Fazzo, 'Alexandre d'Aphrodise contre Galien: la naissance d'une légende' (2002), *Philosophie Antique: Problèmes, Renaissances, Usages* 2: 109–44, at 128–40. Text, English translation and commentary in N. Rescher and M. Marmura, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: The Refutation of Galen's Treatise on the Theory of Motion* (1969). Islamabad.
- On Time*. Survives only in Arabic and in Latin translation from the Arabic. Arabic text at A. Badawī, *Commentaires sur Aristote perdus en grec et autres épîtres* (1971). Beirut §1; Latin text at G. Théry, *Autour du décret de 1210: II, Alexandre d'Aphrodise. Aperçu sur l'influence de sa noétique* (1926). Le Saulchoir: (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 7) 92–7; English translation from the Latin, R. W. Sharples, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias, On Time' (1982), *Phronesis* 27: 58–81.
- On the Disagreement between Aristotle and his Associates concerning Mixed Premises*. Lost (unless a part survives in Arabic; see K. L. Flannery, *Ways into the Logic of Alexander of Aphrodisias* (1995). Leiden, 99ff.; however S. Fazzo, 'Alexandre d'Aphrodise contre Galien: la naissance d'une légende' (2002), *Philosophie Antique: Problèmes, Renaissances, Usages* 2: 109–44, at 126–7, questions whether the fragment in question, no. 11 in A. Dietrich, 'Die arabische Version einer unbekanntenen Schrift des Alexander von Aphrodisias über die Differentia specifica' (1964), *Nachr. Göttingen* 85–148, can be securely connected with Alexander, given the circumstances of its transmission and the inappropriateness in other respects of the title given to it in the MS. For extensive discussion of the evidence in later authors see Flannery, *op. cit.*

Collections of shorter discussions

- De anima libri mantissa* (*Supplement to On the Soul*). Probably from Alexander's papers, but incorporating material by earlier authors some of which is explicitly criticized; it would be unwise to assume that whatever is not criticized is therefore endorsed by him. Greek text in *Supplementum Aristotelicum* 2.1, ed. I. Bruns (1887). Berlin; and in R. W. Sharples, *Alexander Aphrodisiensis De anima libri mantissa* (2008). Berlin. English translation in R. W. Sharples, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: Supplement to On the Soul* (2004). London. Greek text and Italian translation in P. Accattino, *Alessandro di Afrodizia: De anima II (Mantissa)* (2005). Alessandria.

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- Quaestiones et solutiones*, and the largely similar *Ethical Problems*. Material connected with Alexander's school, but not all necessarily by him. Greek text in *Supplementum Aristotelicum* 2.2, ed. I. Bruns (1892). Berlin, 1–163. English translations in R. W. Sharples, *Alexander of Aphrodisias: Ethical Problems* (1990). London; id. *Alexander of Aphrodisias: Quaestiones 1.1–2.15* (1992). London; id. *Alexander of Aphrodisias: Quaestiones 2.16–3.15* (1994). London.
- A number of short pieces similar to those listed above survive only in Arabic (there are also extant Arabic versions of some of those surviving in Greek). There is no single edited collection incorporating all such texts now known, and the situation is in any case essentially fluid, new texts coming to light and others coming to be recognized as versions of known works by authors – e.g. Proclus and Philoponus – other than Alexander. Different texts may sometimes be versions of the same Greek original, and the divisions between different discussions transmitted as a single text are not always clear. The following list excludes the works now identified as versions of known works by authors other than Alexander; references are given to the listing in A. Dietrich, 'Die arabische Version einer unbekanntenen Schrift des Alexander von Aphrodisias über die *Differentia specifica*' (1964), *Nachr. Göttingen* 85–148 (D), supplemented by J. van Ess, 'Über einige neue Fragmente des Alexander von Aphrodisias und des Proklos in arabischer Übersetzung' (1966), *Der Islam* 42: 148–68 (vE), but these listings are in many respects now out of date.
- Refutation of the Assertion of Xenocrates that the Species is Prior to the Genus* (D4). Arabic text, A. Badawī, *Aristū'inda l-'Arab* (1947). Cairo, 281ff.; English translation and discussion, S. Pines, 'A New Fragment of Xenocrates and its Implications' (1961), *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 51 no.2, reprinted in id. *Studies in Arabic Versions of Greek Texts and in Medieval Science (The Collected Works of S. Pines, vol.2)* (1986). Jerusalem–Leiden, 3–95. German translation, J. van Ess, appendix to H.-J. Krämer, 'Aristoteles und die akademische Eidoslehre' (1973), *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 55: 188–90. French translation in M. Rashed, 'Priorité de l'εἶδος ou du γένος entre Andronicos et Alexandre: vestiges arabes et grecs inédits' (2004), *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 14: 50–1, reprinted in id. *L'héritage aristotélicien* (2007). Paris 70–1.
- On the First Cause and the Motion of the Universe* (vE35). Edited and translated into English, C. Genequand, *Alexander of Aphrodisias On the Cosmos* (2001). Leiden, 136–43; edited and discussed, G. Endress, 'Alexander Arabus on the First Cause' (2002), in C. D'Ancona and G. Serra (eds.), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodizia nella tradizione Araba*. Padua, 19–74.
- On the Conversion of Propositions* (vE36). Arabic text in A. Badawī, *Commentaires sur Aristote perdus en grec et autres épîtres* (1971) Beirut, §11.
- On Utterances* (vE37). Arabic text in A. Badawī, *Commentaires sur Aristote perdus en grec et autres épîtres* (1971). Beirut, §4.

Spurious works

- Problemata* (φυσικὰ ἀπορήματα καὶ ἱατρικὰ προβλήματα; to be distinguished from the *Quaestiones* and *Ethical Problems* above). Books 1–2 edited in J. L. Ideler, *Physici et Medici Graeci* (1841). Berlin, vol. 1, 3–80; a new edition is in preparation by Carl-Gustaf Lindqvist. Books 3–4 (the attribution of which to Aristotle or to Alexander, in either case as spurious works, is itself problematic) edited and translated into English, with discussion of the attribution, in S. Sophia Kapetanaki and R. W. Sharples, *Pseudo-Aristoteles (pseudo-Alexander), Supplementa Problematorum* (2006). Berlin.
- De febribus*. Greek text and Italian translation in P. Tassinari, *Pseudo-Alessandro di Afrodisia: Trattato sulla Febbre* (1994). Alessandria.

Andronicus

There is at present no collection of the fragments of Andronicus. Translations of *selected* passages relating to Andronicus and to the other authors in this list (with the exceptions of Nicolaus of Damascus and of Alexander) will be included in a sourcebook, *Peripatetic Philosophy 200 BC–AD 200*, currently being prepared for Cambridge University Press by R.W. Sharples.

Pseudo-Archytas

Text and commentary in T. A. Szlezák, *Pseudo-Archytas über die Kategorien* (1972). Berlin.

Aristocles

On Philosophy. Text, translation, commentary in M. L. Chiesara, *Aristocles of Messene: Testimonies and Fragments* (2001). Oxford.

Pseudo-Aristotle

Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the Cosmos (De mundo)*. This appears in standard collections of the works of Aristotle; see for example the text and annotated translation by D. J. Furley in E. S. Forster and D. J. Furley, *Aristotle: On Sophistical Refutations, etc.* (1955) London/Cambridge, MA.

'Arius Didymus'

On the identification of this person and the attribution of certain texts to him see 144, n.26. The fragments relating to physics are edited by H. Diels in *Doxographi Graeci* (1879), Berlin, 447–72. For the Greek text of 'Doxographies A–C' one must still, regrettably, refer to the edition of Stobaeus by C. Wachsmuth, *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologii duo libri priores* (1884). Berlin. 'Doxography C' will be translated into English in the forthcoming sourcebook mentioned above.

Aspasius

On Aristotle's Ethics. Greek text in CAG 19.1, ed. G. Heylbut (1889). Berlin. English translation in D. Konstan, *Aspasius: On Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics 1-4, 7-8* (2006) London.

Boethius

A collection of the fragments of Boethius is currently being prepared by a group of scholars led by Marawn Rashed (Paris).

Critolaus

Critolaus Fragments in F. Wehrli (1969, 2nd edn), *Die Schule des Aristoteles: 10, Hieronymos von Rhodos: Kritolaos und seine Schüler*. Basle.

Nicolaus of Damascus

Syriac text and English translation of books 1–5 in H. J. Drossaart Lulofs, *Nicolaus of Damascus on the Philosophy of Aristotle* (1965). Leiden. The sixteenth-century Greek text of *On Plants* (on which see above, pp. 150–1) appears in standard collections of the works of Aristotle.

Xenarchus

A collection of the fragments of Xenarchus is currently being prepared by Andrea Falcon.

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CHAPTER 11 PTOLEMY

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CHAPTER 12 GALEN

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CHAPTER 20 PHILOSOPHY IN A CHRISTIAN EMPIRE: FROM THE GREAT PERSECUTION TO THEODOSIUS I

This bibliography is shared by chapters 1, 20 and 32, and is repeated in its numerical position so that readers will not have to be redirected elsewhere in the volume.

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CHAPTER 21 THEMISTIUS

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- Medieval Latin version by Guillaume de Moerbeke has been published in Thémistius, *Commentaire sur le Traité de l’âme d’Aristote*, ed. G. Verbeke (1957). Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke, Louvain; on other Latin translations, see Todd 2003: 78–86. Modern translations: Italian: *Parafraasi dei Libri di Aristotele sull’ anima*, trans. V. de Falco (1965). Padua; English: *Themistius on Aristotle’s On the Soul*, trans R. B. Todd (1996). London.
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- Poetics*. Greek text non-extant, but Themistius’ discussion of *Poetics* is mentioned (with reservations) by Arabic biobibliographers (Peters 1968: 29) and al-Fârâbî, cf. A. J. Arberry (1938) ‘Fârâbî’s Canons of Poetics’, *Rivista degli studi orientali* 17: 266–78 and *Avicenna’s Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle: a Critical Study with an Annotated Translation of the Text*, ed. I. M. Dahiyyat (1974). Leiden, 24–6.
- Posterior Analytics*, Greek text in *CAG* 5.1, ed. M. Wallies (1900). Berlin, xvi + 88p. The Arabic translation by Abû Bishr Mattâ (now lost) served as a *Vorlage* of the medieval Latin translation by Gerard of Cremona; see edition in J. R. O’Donnell (1958) ‘Themistius’

Paraphrasis of the Posterior Analytics in Gerard of Cremona's Translation, *Medieval Studies* 20: 239–315. On other Latin translations, see Todd 2003: 73–8.

Prior Analytics. Greek text lost (on the text published under the name of Themistius in CAG 23.3, see section 'Spurious works' below). Themistius' paraphrase is attested in Arabic sources (Paris BN 2346 mentions 'a commentary by Themistius' (ad 42b18, see Badawi 1947: I, 107, n. 8) and cited by Averroes. Fragments of the paraphrase of book 1 survive in Hebrew (see S. Rosenberg and C. Mannekin (1988) 'Themistius on Modal Logic: Excerpts from a Commentary on the Prior Analytics attributed to Themistius', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 11: 83–103).

Topics. Greek text lost, but the paraphrase was known both in late antiquity and in medieval Arabic tradition. Boethius makes ample use of it in his treatise *De differentiis topicis*. See E. Stump (1974) 'Boethius' Works on *Topics*', *Vivarium* XII. 2: 77–92, and E. Stump (1978) *Boethius's De topicis differentiis*, Ithaca, NY; on further Latin tradition also Todd 2003: 60–1. The paraphrase is mentioned by the Arabic biobibliographers and actively used by Averroes in his *Middle Commentary*. See C. Butterworth and A. Haridi (eds.) (1979) *Averroes: Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Topics*. Cairo (sections 53, 83, 84, 85, 93, 98, 128, 136, 152, 157, 158, 164, 165, 172, 177, 192, 193, 238, 242, 258, 291). M. Aouad suggests that the Arabs knew Themistius' commentary on books II–VII under the title *On Places* (*Fī al-mawāḍiʿ*, vel sim.), M. Aouad (ed.) (2002), *Averroès (Ibn Rušd), Commentaire moyen à la Rhétorique d'Aristote*, vol. III, Paris, 61 n.2. However that may be, Themistius' paraphrase is well attested in two independent traditions.

Other philosophical treatises and fragments

'Treatise in Refutation of Maximus Concerning the Reduction of Second and First Figures of Syllogism to the First Figure' (Arabic). Text in 'Aristú 'inda al-'Arab: dirásah wa nušúš ghair manshúrah, ed. A. Badawi (1947). Part 1, Cairo, 309–25; French translation: *La transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe*, ed. A. Badawi (1968) (*Études de philosophie médiévale* 56), Paris, 166–80.

'On Virtue, or the Excellence of the Soul' (Syriac). Text edited by R. Mach, with Latin translation *a fronte*, in H. Schenck and G. Downey (eds.) (1965) *Themistii orationes quae supersunt* (hereafter SDN), 3 vols., III, 9–71. For discussion, see A. Brancacci (2000) 'Themistio e il Cinismo', *Elenchos* 21.2: 381–96.

'Letter on the State' (in Arabic). Text, edited by I. Shahid, with Latin translation *a fronte*, in SDN III, 73–119.

'On the Soul' (*Peri psukhês*). Four fragments of the work under this title attributed to Themistius in Stobaeus' Florilegium. Greek text: SDN III, 2–4.

'On Wisdom' (*Peri phronêseôs*). Fragment of an epideictic speech. Greek text: SDN III, 4–5.

Dubious

History of Animals. The Arabic text of a paraphrase with the attribution to Themistius is published in *Commentaires sur Aristote perdus en grec et d'autres épîtres*, ed. A. Badawi (1971). Beirut, 193–275. Attribution to Themistius in the Arabic manuscript was questioned by H. V. Brown and F. W. Zimmermann (1973) 'Neue arabische Übersetzungstexte aus dem Bereich der

spätantiken griechischen Philosophie', *Islam* 50.2: 323–4 and further criticized by J. N. Mattock (1976) 'The Supposed Epitome by Themistius of Aristotle's Zoological Works', *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik & Islamwissenschaft, Göttingen, 15. Bis 22. August 1974*. Göttingen, 260–7. The hypothesis of Themistius' authorship has been recently revived by M. Zonta (1996), *La filosofia antica nel Medioevo ebraico. Le traduzioni ebraiche medievali dei testi filosofici antichi*, Brescia, 160–1.

Spurious

Paraphrase of Aristotle, *Parva naturalia*, edited in *CAG* 5.6, ed. P. Wendland (1903). Berlin, is most likely by Sophonias: see V. Rose (1867) 'Über eine angebliche Paraphrase des Themistius', *Hermes* 2:191–213.

Paraphrase of Aristotle, *Prior Analytics I*, subtitled 'On Mixed Premises' (*Peri mixeôn*), edited in *CAG* 23.2, ed. M. Wallies (1884). Berlin, 1–164; see V. Rose, op. cit., who argues that Sophonias might be its likely author.

Speeches

(a) Political (Orr. 1–19). Standard critical edition of the Greek text is still *Themistii orationes quae supersunt*, eds. H. Schenkl and G. Downey (1965). Vol. 1, Leipzig (hereafter SDN). *Discorsi di Temistio*, ed. and trans R. Maisano (1995) (hereafter M). Turin (*Classici greci Autori della tarda antichità e dell'età bizantina*), prints Italian translation with the Greek text, based on the Teubner edition but containing a number of improvements based on the Teubner apparatus: these are listed at pp. 87–106. Translations into modern languages: English (selections): *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius*, eds. P. Heather and D. Moncur (2001). Liverpool (hereafter HM). German: *Themistios, Staatsreden*, trans., with commentary H. Leppin and W. Portmann (1998). Stuttgart (hereafter LP); Spanish: *Temistio: Discursos políticos*, trans. J. Ritoré Ponce (2000). Madrid.

Or. 1. 'On Humanity, or Constantius'. Greek text in SDN 1, 4–25; *English*: HM 69–96; *German*: LP 27–46; *Italian*: M 114–53.

Or. 2. 'To Emperor Constantius that the King is the Best Philosopher (Speech of Thanksgiving)'. Greek text: SDN 1, 27–56; *German*: LP 47–67; *Italian*: M 169–207.

Or. 3. 'Embassy Speech on Behalf of Constantinople Delivered in Rome'. Greek text: SDN 1, 57–68; *English*: HM 114–35; *German*: LP 68–79; *Italian*: M 209–29.

Or. 4. 'To Emperor Constantius'. Greek text: SDN 1, 69–89; *German*: LP 80–99; *Italian*: M 231–63.

Or. 5. 'On the Consulship, to the Emperor Jovian'. Greek text: SDN 1, 91–104; *English*: HM 149–73; *German*: LP 100–12; *Italian*: M 265–87.

Or. 6. 'On Brotherly Love or on Humanity'. Greek text: SDN 1, 105–25. *English*: HM 173–98; *German*: LP 113–28; *Italian*: M 289–319.

Or. 7. 'On the Unfortunate (Speech in Senate in the Presence of Valens)'. Greek text: SDN 1, 127–51; Translations: *English*: J. M. Sugars (1997) 'Themistius' Seventh Oration: text, translation and commentary'. Ph.D. thesis: University of California at Irvine; *German*: LP 128–49; *Italian*: M 321–61.

- Or. 8. 'Quinquennial Congratulatory Speech for Valens'. Greek text: SDN I, 153–80; *German*: LP 150–72; *Italian*: M 363–405.
- Or. 9. 'Exhortation to Valentinianus Jr'. Greek text: SDN I, 181–194; *German*: LP 173–83; *Italian*: M 407–27.
- Or. 10. 'On Valens' Peace'. Greek text: SDN I, 195–214; *German*: LP 184–98; *Italian*: M 429–57.
- Or. 11. 'Decennial (to Valens), or on the Speeches Appropriate to be Pronounced for the Emperor'. Greek text: SDN I, 215–30; *German*: LP 199–213; 459–89.
- Or. 12. 'To Valens on Religions'. A sixteenth-century imitation of Themistius by humanist Andreas Dudith (composed in Latin), and mistakenly included by G. Rehm in his 1614 edition of Themistius' speeches as Or. 12. For details, see Todd 2003: 100–2. Latin text: SDN III, 137–44.
- Or. 13. 'On Love, or Royal Beauty'. Greek text: SDN I, 231–57; *German*: LP 214–39; *Italian*: M 489–531.
- Or. 14. 'Embassy Speech to Emperor Theodosius on behalf of Constantinople'. Greek text: SDN I, 259–65; *English*: HM 218–30; *German*: LP 240–5; *Italian*: M 533–43.
- Or. 15. 'To Theodosius on the Most Royal of the Virtues'. Greek text: SDN I, 267–86; *English*: HM 230–54; *German*: LP 246–64; *Italian*: M 545–77.
- Or. 16. 'Thanksgiving Speech to the Emperor for Peace and the Consulship of the General Saturninus'. Greek text: SDN I, 287–304, *English*: HM 255–83; *German*: LP 265–82; *Italian*: M 579–609.
- Or. 17. 'On His Appointment to the Urban Prefecture <of Constantinople>'. Greek text: SDN I, 305–9; *English*: HM 298–304; *German*: LP 283–7; *Italian*: M 611–21.
- Or. 18. 'On the King's Willingness to Listen'. Greek text: SDN I, 311–25; *German*: LP 288–300; *Italian*: M 623–43.
- Or. 19. 'On the Humanity of the Emperor Theodosius'. Greek text: SDN I, 327–39; *German*: LP 301–11; *Italian*: M 645–63.
- 'Philopolis', a hypothesis of the lost panegyric to Julian (c. 363) preserved in the MS Salamanca 1–2–18. Greek text: SDN III, 1. See: O. Seeck, H. Schenkl (1906) 'Eine verlorene Rede des Themistius', *Rheinisches Museum* 61: 554–66.
- 'To the Emperor', text attributed to Themistius in Marc. Gr. 412, f. 80^v, 1–81, 16, transcribed and discussed in E. Amato, I. Ramelli (2006) 'L'inedito ΠΡΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΑ di Temistio', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 99.1: 1–67 (who suggest it might be addressed to Theodosius).
- (b) Private speeches (Orr. 20–34). The critical edition of the Greek text: *Themistii orationes quae supersunt*, vol. 2, eds. H. Schenkl, G. Downey and A. F. Norman (1971). Leipzig (referred below as SDN II). English translation, with substantive introduction and notes, in *The Private Orations of Themistius*, trans R. J. Penella (2000). Berkeley, CA (referred below as P); Italian translation in Maisano 1995, cited above.
- Or. 20. 'Funeral Oration in Honor of His Father <Eugenius>'. Text SDN II, 2–15; Translations: *English*: P 51–60; *German*: *Themistios. Eis ton hautou patera. Basanistês ê philosophos (20. und 21. Rede)*, ed. and trans S. Oppermann (1965). Göttingen; *Italian*: M 667–85.
- Or. 21. 'The Examiner or the Philosopher'. Text: SDN II, 17–49; *English*: P 61–87; *German*: Opperman (see ad Or. 20); *Italian*: M 687–733.

- Or. 22. 'On Friendship'. Text: SDN II, 51–73; *English*: P 88–107; *Italian*: M 735–75.
- Or. 23. 'The Sophist'. Text: SDN II, 76–95; *English*: P 108–27; *Italian*: M 777–815.
- Or. 24. 'Exhortation to the Nicomedians to Study Philosophy'. Text: SDN II, 98–111; *English*: P 128–37; *Italian*: M 817–37.
- Or. 25. 'In Reply to One Who Asked for an Extempore Oration'. Greek text: SDN II, 114–15; *English*: P 138–9; *Italian*: M 839–43.
- Or. 26. '<On Speaking or How the Philosopher Should Speak>'. Greek text: SDN II, 118–51; *English*: P 140–63; *French*: *Plaidoyer d'un socratique contre le Phèdre de Platon: XXV^e discours de Thémistius*, ed. and trans. H. Kesters (1959). Louvain; *Italian*: M 845–89.
- Or. 27. 'On the Need to Give Thought Not to Where <We Study> but to the Men <Who Will Teach Us>'. Greek text: SDN II, 154–67; *English*: P 164–74; *Italian*: M 891–913.
- Or. 28. 'The Disquisition on Speaking'. Greek text: SDN II, 170–2; *English*: P 175–7; *Italian*: M 915–21.
- Or. 29. 'In Reply to Those Who Interpret <His Oration> "The Sophist" Incorrectly.' Greek text: SDN II, 174–9; *English*: P 178–83; *Italian*: M 923–33.
- Or. 30. 'Should One Engage in Farming?' Greek text: SDN II, 182–6; *English*: P 184–8; *Italian*: M 935–43.
- Or. 31. 'Concerning His Presidency <of the Senate>, Addressed to the Senate <of Constantinople>'. Greek text: SDN II, 188–92, *English*: P 189–93; *Italian*: M 945–55.
- Or. 32. 'On Moderation of One's Emotions, or On Love of One's Children'. Greek text: SDN II, 194–204, *English*: P 194–203. Analysis in O. Ballériaux (1988) 'Le ΜΕΤΡΙΟΠΙΑΘΗΣ Η ΦΙΛΟΤΕΚΝΟΣ (Discours xxxii) de Thémistius', *Byzantion* LVIII: 22–35; *Italian*: M 957–75.
- Or. 33. '<On the Names of the King and the Consul>'. Greek text: SDN II, 206–10; *English*: P 204–8; *Italian*: M 977–87.
- Or. 34. 'In Reply to Those Who Found Fault with Him for Accepting Public Office'. Greek text: SDN II, 212–32; *English*: HM 304–33; P 209–30; *German*: 'Die 34. Rede des Themistios, ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΡΧΗΣ', ed. and trans. H. Schneider (1966). Winterthur; *Italian*: M 989–1027.

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CHAPTER 26 GREGORY NAZIANZUS

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Orations and Letters

The *Editio princeps* of Gregory was published in Basle 1550. Claude Morel issued a Paris edition in 1609, which was reissued in 1630 with a Latin translation supplied by Billius. The Benedictine edition was prepared by Du Frische, Louvard and Moran, and collated by Clémencet in Paris

1778. Its appearance was delayed because of the French Revolution, and it came to completion under Caillau only in 1840. It was this which was popularized as the edition in *Cursus Completus Patrologiae Graecae* (PG) vols. 35–8, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris) 1886. This is still the fullest and most complete edition, though a collection which, like many other parts of Migne, needs great care in its use (see Geerard 1974). The task of identifying the dubia and spuria, and attaining a proper critical edition of Gregory, has now been in process for over fifty years. The following represent the most important new editions, or select translations, in European languages:

Sources Chrétiennes Series (SC). Paris 1969–96 (vols. 149, 208, 247, 250, 270, 284, 309, 318, 358, 384, 406).

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Discours 20–23, ed. J. Mossay (1980) SC 270.

Discours 24–26, ed. J. Mossay (1981) SC 284.

Discours 4–5 Contre Julien, ed. J. Bernardi (1983) SC 309.

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The critical edition of the *Letters* of Gregory has been prepared by P. Gallay:

Gregor von Nazianz. Briefe, ed. P. Gallay (1969). *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 53. Berlin.

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The poetic works

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CHAPTER 28 NEMESIUS OF EMESA

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CHAPTER 31 AUGUSTINE

PRIMARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 Latin editions and English translations (in chronological order for each work)

Full titles of all abbreviated series are given in the List of Abbreviations.

- Acta contra Fortunatum Manichaeum liber unus*: PL 42; CSEL 25/1; CFML, 2; trans. NPNF 1.4; WSA 1.19.
- Ad catholicos fratres liber unus*: PL 43; CSEL 52.
- Ad Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati libri quattuor*: PL 43; CSEL 52.
- Ad inquisitiones Ianuarii libri duo* (Ep. 54–5): PL 33; CSEL 34/2; CCL 31; trans. FaCh 12; WSA 11.1.
- Ad Simplicianum libri duo*: PL 40; CCL 44; trans. LCC 6 (book 1); WSA 1.12.
- Adnotationes in Iob liber unus*: PL 34; CSEL 28/2.
- Adversus Iudaeos*: PL 42 = NBA 12/1; trans. FaCh 27.
- Breviculus conlationis cum Donatistis libri tres*: PL 43; CSEL 53; CCL 149/A.
- Confessionum libri tredecim*: PL 32; CSEL 33; M. Skutella, H. Jürgens and W. Schaub (1969) Stuttgart; CCL 27; SGL; trans. NPNF 1.1; FaCh 21; LCC 7; H. Chadwick (1991) Oxford; WSA 1.1, and many others.
- Conlatio cum Maximino Arrianorum episcopo*: PL 42 = NBA 12/2; OW 48; CCL 87/A; trans. WSA 1.18.
- Contra Academicos vel De Academicis libri tres*: PL 32; CSEL 63; SPM 2; CCL 29; Catapano 2006; trans. FaCh 5; ACW 12; P. King (1995) Indianapolis, IN.

- Contra Adimantum Manichaei discipulum liber unus*: PL 42; CSEL 25/1; trans. WSA 1.19.
- Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum libri duo*: PL 42; AANL.M 8.25.3 (1981); CCL 49; trans. WSA 1.18.
- Contra Donatistas liber unus*: PL 43; CSEL 53.
- Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum libri quattuor*: PL 44; CSEL 60; trans. NPNF 1.5; WSA 1.24.
- Contra epistulam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti liber unus*: PL 42; CSEL 25/1; trans. NPNF 1.4; WSA 1.19.
- Contra epistulam Parmeniani libri tres*: PL 43; CSEL 51.
- Contra Faustum Manichaeum libri triginta tres*: PL 42; CSEL 25/1; OW 21 (Books 1–x1); trans. NPNF 1.4; WSA 1.20.
- Contra Felicem Manichaeum libri duo*: PL 42; CSEL 25/2; trans. WSA 1.19.
- Contra Gaudentium Donatistarum episcopum libri duo*: PL 43; CSEL 53.
- Contra Iulianum libri sex*: PL 44 = NBA 18; trans. FaCh 35; WSA 1.24.
- Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum*: PL 45; CSEL 85/1–2; trans. WSA 1.25.
- Contra litteras Petiliani libri tres*: PL 43; CSEL 52; trans. NPNF 1.4.
- Contra Maximinum Arrianum*: PL 42 = NBA 12/2; OW 48; CCL 87/A; trans. WSA 1.18.
- Contra mendacium liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. NPNF 1.3; FaCh 16.
- Contra Priscillianistas liber unus*: PL 42; CCL 49; trans. WSA 1.18.
- Contra Secundinum Manichaeum liber unus*: PL 42; CSEL 25/2; OW 22; trans. WSA 1.19.
- Contra sermonem Arrianorum liber unus*: PL 42; CSEL 92; OW 48; CCL 87/A trans. WSA 1.18.
- De adulterinis coniugiis libri duo*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. FaCh 27; WSA 1.9.
- De agone christiano liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. FaCh 2.
- De anima et eius origine libri quattuor*: PL 44; CSEL 60; trans. NPNF 1.5; WSA 1.23.
- De animae quantitate liber unus*: PL 32; CSEL 89; Catapano 2006; trans. FaCh 4; ACW 9.
- De baptismo libri septem*: PL 43; CSEL 51; OW 28; trans. NPNF 1.4.
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- De continentia liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. NPNF 1.3; FaCh 16; WSA 1.9.
- De correctione Donatistarum liber unus* (Ep. 185): PL 33; CSEL 57; trans. WSA 11.3.
- De correptione et gratia liber unus*: PL 44; CSEL 92; trans. NPNF 1.5; FaCh 2; WSA 1.26.
- De cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum episcopum liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. NPNF 1.3; FaCh 27.
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- De divinatione daemonum liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. FaCh 27; WSA 1.8.
- De doctrina christiana libri quattuor*: PL 34; CCL 32; CSEL 80; SGL; BA 11/2; trans. NPNF 1.2; FaCh 2; R. P. H. Green (1995) Oxford; WSA 1.11.

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- De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus*: PL 34; CSEL 28/1; BA 50; trans. FaCh 84; WSA 1.13.
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- De Genesi adversus Manichaeos libri duo*: PL 34; CSEL 91; BA 50; trans. FaCh 84; WSA 1.13.
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- De libero arbitrio libri tres*: PL 32; CSEL 74 = OW 9; CCL 29; BA 6³; Catapano 2006; trans. ACW 22; FaCh 59; T. Williams (1993) Indianapolis, IN.
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- De octo quaestionibus ex veteri testamento*: MA 2; CCL 33; PLS 2; trans. FaCh 16.
- De opere monachorum liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. NPNF 1.3; FaCh 16.
- De ordine libri duo*: PL 32; CSEL 63; SPM 2; CCL 29; BA 4/2; Catapano 2006; trans. FaCh 5.
- De origine animae (Ep. 166)*: PL 33; CSEL 44; trans. FaCh 30; WSA II.3.
- De patientia liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; F. O'Brien (1980) Ann Arbor, MI; trans. NPNF 1.3; FaCh 16.
- De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum ad Marcellinum libri tres*: PL 44; CSEL 60; trans. NPNF 1.5.
- De perfectione iustitiae hominis liber unus*: PL 44; CSEL 42; trans. NPNF 1.5.

- De praedestinatione sanctorum liber ad Prosperum et Hilarium primus*: PL 44 = BA 24, NBA 20; trans. NPNF 1.5; FaCh 86; WSA 1.26.
- De praesentia dei ad Dardanum liber unus* (Ep. 187): PL 33; CSEL 57; trans. FaCh 30; AHSW; WSA II.3.
- De rhetorica*: PL 32; C. Halm (1863) *Rhetores Latini minores*. Leipzig, 137–51; SLI 4 = NBA 36.
- De sancta virginitate liber unus*: PL 40; CSEL 41; trans. NPNF 1.3; FaCh 27; WSA 1.9; P. G. Walsh (2001) Oxford.
- De sententia Iacobi* (Ep. 167): PL 33; CSEL 44; trans. WSA II.3.
- De sermone domini in monte libri duo*: PL 34; CCL 35; trans. NPNF 1.6; ACW 5; FaCh 11.
- De spiritu et littera ad Marcellinum liber unus*: PL 44; CSEL 60; trans. NPNF 1.5; LCC 8; WSA 1.23.
- De symbolo ad catechumenos* (Sermo 398): PL 40; CCL 46; trans. FaCh 27; WSA III.10.
- De trinitate libri quindecim*: PL 42; CCL 50–50/A; trans. NPNF 1.3; FaCh 45; WSA 1.5.
- De vera religione liber unus*: PL 34; CSEL 77; CCL 32; OW 68; trans. LCC 6; WSA 1.8.
- De videndo deo liber unus* (Ep. 147): PL 33; CSEL 44; trans. FaCh 20; AHSW; WSA II.2.
- De unico baptismo contra Petilianum ad Constantinum liber unus*: PL 43; CSEL 53.
- De utilitate credendi liber unus*: PL 42; CSEL 25/1; trans. NPNF 1.3; LCC 6; FaCh 4; WSA 1.8.
- De utilitate ieiunii* (Sermo 400): PL 40; CCL 46; trans. PS 85; FaCh 16; WSA III.10.
- Enarrationes in Psalmos*: PL 36–7; CCL 38–40; OAWPS 63 = VKHCLK 15 (En. Ps. 65); CSEL 93/1, 94/1, 95/3–5; trans. NPNF 8; ACW 29–30 (En. in Ps. 1–36); WSA III.15–20.
- Epistulae*: PL 33; CSEL 34/1–2, 44, 57–8, 88 (Epistulae Divjak); PLS 2; ÉAA 29, 105–7 (Ep. 211); WSt 84 (Ep. 173/A); BA 46/B (Epistulae Divjak); CCL 31, 31/A, 31/B, 44 (3–4; Ep. 37), 46 (276–7; Ep. 222; 280–1; Ep. 224), 50 (25–6; Ep. 174), 64 (104–6; Ep. 219), 92 (78–81; Ep. 171/A), 149/A (63–71; Ep. 128–9); trans. NPNF 1.1; FaCh 12, 18, 20, 30, 32, 81; WSA II.1–4.
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CHAPTER 32 FROM CONSTANTINE TO JUSTINIAN

This bibliography is shared by chapters 1, 20 and 32, and is repeated in its numerical position so that readers will not have to be redirected elsewhere in the volume.

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CHAPTER 46 EARLY BYZANTINE PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER 47 THE ORIGINS OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER 48 ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY BECOMES MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

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