



Between Athens & Alexandria *PLATONISM, 3rd - 7th c. CE*

INTELLECT AND SOUL IN ALEXANDRIAN NEOPLATONISM

Institute for Mediterranean Studies, Rethymno, 20-21 June 2022

ABSTRACTS

Mark Edwards (University of Oxford) *Stephanus, Philoponus, and the Active Mind*

Much of this paper is a commentary on Book 3 of the commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*, formerly ascribed to Ammonius, but generally assumed since Michael Hayduck's edition (Berlin: Reimer 1897) to be largely the work of Ammonius' pupil Philoponus. It is also widely held, however that the true text of book 3 of Philoponus' commentary on *De Anima* is the one translated into Latin by William of Moerbeke. On this assumption the commentary of Philoponus on *De Anima* consists of books 1 and 2 in Greek and book 3 in Latin.

Pantelis Golitsis has made an impressive argument for assigning the Greek of book 3 to Philoponus while assigning books 1 and 2 to his tutor Ammonius (with the further hypothesis that the lectures of Ammonius are accompanied by Philoponus' annotations). On this assumption, only book 3 in Greek may be unconditionally attributed to Philoponus.

In the second part of this paper, I note some evidence that might seem to tell in favour of the attribution of the Latin text to Philoponus and against the attribution of the Greek text of book 3 to him. That is, it tends to strengthen the position that is contested by Golitsis. It does not suggest that this evidence is conclusive, but that there may be sufficient reason to investigate the claims of another commentator, Stephanus, to the authorship of the Greek text of book 3. It must be stressed that this paper is offered as a scholarly inquiry, and is not written with sufficient knowledge of Stephanus to pretend to any definitive opinion.

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Pantelis Golitsis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) *From Alexandria to Athens: What Damascius Learned from Ammonius*

Damascius of Damascus, last 'Platonic successor' in Athens, is rarely compared to one of his masters, namely Ammonius, the philosopher of Alexandria. When scholars do compare the two Neoplatonist philosophers, they usually focus on the negative picture of Ammonius, which is drawn by Damascius in his *Life of Isidore*. In this paper, I argue that Damascius admired Ammonius' intellectual endeavours and espoused a basic feature of the philosophical exegesis of his master, namely his concordism regarding the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, as is evident in Damascius' (fragmentarily

preserved) treatise *On Time*. Damascius' downgrading of Ammonius came about rather as a disappointment, which is however by no means fully justified.

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Paul Kalligas (Director of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi & National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)_*Plotinus on Bringing Order to the Universe*

According to Plotinus, order is one of the salient features of the physical world. It is the most conspicuous manifestation of divine Providence and guarantees the beauty and harmony characterising the visible universe as an image of the intelligible realm. The principal agent which brings about such order is thought to be the Cosmic Soul, which informs the material universe in such a way as to make it a suitable abode for the individual souls to inhabit, and establishes the "sympathetic" relations that regulate interaction between its various parts. Number plays a crucial role in bringing about such order by representing different levels of unity. An examination of the various types of number envisaged by Plotinus reveals the ways in which order is regarded by him as an integral constituent of the structure of the universe.

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Dimitrios Vasilakis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)_*Towards a Dialectical Relation Between Form and Content: Reading Plotinus' Enn. III.5 via the Phaedrus ?*

One of the central aspects of Plotinus' short treatise on Eros (*Enn.* III.5.[50]) is the exegesis -rare for Plotinian standards- of the myth of Eros' genealogy from the *Symposium* (203b1-c6). In this context, Plotinus offers some methodological remarks about how to interpret myth, as well as rational discourses. Starting from these meta-remarks I will try to show the relevance of the *Phaedrus* in reading III.5, both in terms of Plotinus' exegesis, as well as in terms of structuring the whole treatise. I will also attempt to illuminate the relation between the form of the treatise, its mode of approach and its topic, i.e. Eros.

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Irini-Fotini Viltanioti (University of Crete & IMS-FORTH)_*Plotinus on Plato's Timaeus 90 a.*

In this paper, I endeavour to reconstruct Plotinus' reading of Plato's *Timaeus* 90 a. I argue that, in this Platonic passage, Plotinus sees his own distinction between «Intellect which makes it possible to reason», namely the Hypostasis Intellect, and "intellect which reasons", namely our reasoning faculty. On this reading, *Timaeus* 90 a accounts for Plotinus' doctrine of the undescended Soul. Furthermore, I try to show that Plotinus interprets this passage in connection with (a) the vision of the gods' and souls' chariots contemplating the Forms in the central myth of Plato's *Phaedrus* (246 e-250 b), and (b) the soul's choice of guardian spirit (δαίμων) in *Republic X* (617 d-e). Thus, faithful to Ammonius Saccas' "philosophy without conflict", Plotinus' interpretation harmonises Plato with Aristotle's distinction between active and passive Intellect in *De anima* Γ 5.

SPEAKERS

Mark Edwards has been Tutor in Theology at Christ Church, Oxford, and University Lecturer/Associate Professor in Patristics in the Faculty of Theology and Religion in the University of Oxford since 1993. Since 2014, he has held the title of Professor of Early Christian Studies. His books include *Origen against Plato* (2002), *Catholicity and Heresy in the Early Church* (2009), *Image, Word and God in the Early Christian Centuries* (2012), *Religions of the Constantinian Empire* (2015), and *Aristotle and Early Christian Thought* (2019).

Pantelis Golitsis is Associate Professor of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He holds a PhD from the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris) and a Habilitation from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (Munich). His main research interests lie in Aristotle, Neoplatonism and the reception of Aristotle in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. He is the author of *Les Commentaires de Simplicius et de Jean Philopon à la Physique d'Aristote. Tradition et innovation* (De Gruyter, 2008; Prix Zographos de l'Association pour l'encouragement des Études Grecques en France). His recent publications include a critical edition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics Lambda* (Crete University Press, 2021) and *On Progression of Animals* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), as well as a new edition of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics I-III* (De Gruyter, 2021).

Paul Kalligas is Professor Emeritus of Ancient Philosophy at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Since 2016, he has been Director of the European Cultural Centre at Delphi, which aims at raising awareness of the Greek Culture in Europe. Professor Kalligas has published a critical edition, Modern Greek translation and detailed commentary of Plotinus' *Enneads* in seven volumes (1990-2018) under the auspices of the Academy of the Athens. An English translation of his Commentary of *Enneads* I-III appeared at Princeton University Press in 2014. Professor Kalligas has also published annotated translations of works by Plato and Aristotle. From 1997 to 2012, he has been director of the philosophical journal *Deucalion*.

Dimitrios Vasilakis completed his PhD in 2014 at King's College London under the supervision of Peter Adamson. Since then, he has held post-doc and teaching fellow positions at the universities of Munich (LMU), Erfurt and Athens. His book on *Eros in Neoplatonism* came out with Bloomsbury Academic in 2021. He is currently teaching at the University of Athens. He has recently been elected as an Assistant Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Ioannina.

Irini-Fotini Viltanioti is an Associate Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Crete and a Research Fellow at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies-Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas (IMS-FORTH), where, in collaboration with the Alexandria Center for Hellenistic Studies of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (ACHS-BA), she is director the Research Project "Between Athens & Alexandria. Platonism, 3rd-7th c. CE" supported by the A. S. Onassis Foundation. Her research focuses on Neoplatonism, Early Greek Philosophy, and the Pythagorean Tradition. She is the author of *L'harmonie des Sirènes du pythagorisme ancien à Platon* (De Gruyter, 2015; Prix Goblet d'Alviella de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, 2016) as well as co-editor of *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and of *Logic and Exegesis: The Logical Reconstruction of Arguments in the Greek Commentary Tradition* (special issue of *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis* 24, 2021).