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Book Announcements & Reviews

Siglas

CDA – Cristina D’Ancona

EC – Elisa Coda

GM – Giovanni Mandolino

MZ – Marianna Zarantonello

VK – Veysel Kaya

S. Delcomminette - P. d'Hoine - M.-A. Gavray (eds.), *Ancient Readings of Plato's Phaedo*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2015 (Philosophia Antiqua, 140), VII + 364 pp.

The interpretations of Plato's *Phaedo* have attracted much interest in recent times; after the book by S. Gertz *Death and Immortality in Late Neoplatonism* (2011, reviewed in 2013 in this journal by G. Chemi), another volume has been published on the *Phaedo*'s readers from Aristotle to Simplicius. "Thus, while the relative neglect of ancient interpretations of the *Phaedo* in recent scholarship is understandable, it is our conviction that a systematic treatment of the history of the reception of this dialogue can offer novel perspectives on the philosophical debates amongst the ancient schools of thought, on the exegetical discussions within the Platonic schools, on the fate of Plato's ideas in Antiquity and beyond, and can even challenge some of our own ideas about Plato. The present volume aims at offering just such a treatment. In an attempt to reconstruct the main lines of the interpretation of the *Phaedo* in Antiquity, one of its ambitions is to shed light on the sources of the surviving Neoplatonic commentaries", say the editors (p. 2).

Three different attitudes are detected in the reception of the *Phaedo*: exegesis, critical response, and appropriation. S. Delcomminette, "Aristote et le *Phédon*" (pp. 17-36) challenges the usual idea that Aristotle totally disagreed with the *Phaedo*. "Est-ce à dire qu'Aristote n'a rien retenu du *Phédon* dans sa maturité? Je souhaiterais montrer que c'est loin d'être le cas, mais que [...] c'est beaucoup moins dans la psychologie que dans l'institution des principes mêmes de la science physique que l'influence de ce dialogue se fait sentir" (p. 19). According to Delcomminette, both the *De Generatione et corruptione* and the *Physics* are inspired to some extent by Plato's *Phaedo*: the so-called argument from opposites had some influence on Aristotle's analysis of the contraries. A caveat is added: "Bien entendu, tout ce que je suggère est qu'Aristote a pu s'inspirer de l'analyse platonicienne. Il va de soi que la théorie aristotélicienne du devenir est plus développée que celle que l'on trouve dans le *Phédon* (...) rien dans l'analyse platonicienne ne correspond à la réduction aristotélicienne de tous les couples de contraires entre lesquels il peut y avoir devenir à une contrariété fondamentale (cf. *Phys.* I 5, 188 a 28-30; 6, 189 a 13-14; 189 b 22-27), à savoir celle de la forme et de la privation" (p. 25).

In his "Strato of Lampsacus as a reader of Plato's *Phaedo*: His Critique of the Soul's Immortality" (pp. 37-62), H. Baltussen offers an attempt to rearrange the fragments of Strato's *aporiai* on the *Phaedo* that have come down to us embedded in one of Damascius' courses on this dialogue, *In Phaed.* I, § 431-448 (strangely enough, at p. 37 this work is described as a "commentary on the *Phaedo* that is attributed to Damascius", whereas at p. 38 it features as "Damascius' commentary on the *Phaedo*"). Reacting to contemporary literature on Strato of Lampsacus, Baltussen challenges the idea that the puzzles raised by Strato were merely dialectical, if this means non-committal. On the contrary, "Close investigation of the objections by Strato and their role in Damascius revealed that they were taken seriously in both the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions in their debates on the soul, because they raised serious problems against the arguments in a foundational work on the topic of the soul's immortality, Plato's *Phaedo*. [...] Platonists like Proclus and Damascius recognised their potential threat and responded" (p. 61).

Still in the critical vein of Strato of Lampsacus, but from a different viewpoint come the attacks on the *Phaedo* from the Stoic camp examined by F. Alesse, "Le *Phédon* dans le Stoïcisme hellénistique et post-hellénistique" (pp. 63-89). Notwithstanding the basic disagreement, "certains thèmes du *Phédon* ont laissé une trace dans la littérature stoïcienne qui se développe durant plusieurs siècles; parfois, des arguments et des instruments conceptuels élaborés dans ce dialogue semblent avoir été réutilisés à des fins philosophiques bien éloignées de celles de Socrate et de Platon" (p. 66). While criticisms of the *Phaedo* prevail in ancient Stoicism, with Roman Stoicism and especially in Seneca's *Epistle* 65 the attitude changes. For Seneca body is a prison for the soul, even though "Sénèque n'insiste pas sur la supériorité ontologique de la *mens*, mais sur sa supériorité morale et eschatologique" (p. 83). He seems convinced of the soul's immortality, while this is not the case with Epictetus. But even Epictetus endorses several images and expressions typical of the *Phaedo*: "aux thèmes de la parenté divine de l'âme et de la philosophie comme recueillement et éloignement du monde s'ajoute celui de la méditation sur la mort" (p. 87).

L. Corti, "Sextus, the Number Two and the *Phaedo*" (pp. 90-106) examines the passages of Sextus' *Against the Mathematicians* (IV, 21-22) and *Outlines of Scepticism* (III, 164-166) where, criticizing in all likelihood the Neo-Pythagoreans, he wants "to destroy number and to show that the discipline which is constructed to handle

it does not exist” (p. 92). According to Corti, *ibid.*, the attack is directed against the theorists of arithmetic like Nicomachus of Gerasa or Theo of Smyrna. Once he has shown that the principles on which this ‘philosophical’ arithmetic stands – the one and the two – are nonsensical and non-existent, Sextus is confident he has shown that the discipline itself will be ruined. In his attack on the ontological status of number two, Sextus has recourse to Plato’s reasonings in the work that he labels *On the Soul*. He “reports the difficulty put forward in *Phd.* 97a against the idea that the mere conjunction of two units and their juxtaposition is the cause of those which were not formerly two things becoming two” (p. 94). For Corti, Sextus’ arguments miss the mark: “The ‘Pythagorean’ theory would have deserved a more radical and effective criticism. For it concerns cardinal numbers (the ‘natural’ numbers), and aims at explaining the generation of e.g. number two. The more radical criticism, which Sextus does not provide, would point out that since numbers are not generated, there is nothing to explain” (p. 106).

In “Plutarch’s Reception of Plato’s *Phaedo*” (pp. 107-33) G. Roskam discusses the surprising fact that only 16 quotations of the *Phaedo* properly speaking feature in the more than 100 extant works by Plutarch. “This *prima facie* suggests that the influence of the *Phaedo* throughout the *Corpus Plutarcheum* is rather meagre” (p. 112). After having presented another list less selective (pp. 125-6), Roskam discusses the pervasive influence of topics derived from the *Phaedo*, most importantly that of the *exemplum Socratis*, and comes to the conclusion that “Although there can be no reasonable doubt that Plutarch knew the *Phaedo* from personal reading, this conclusion does not imply that later thinking can simply be bracketed all together. Many centuries separate Plutarch from Plato, and the rich exegetic tradition and philosophical thinking in both the Academy, later Platonism and other philosophical schools also conditioned and influenced Plutarch’s interpretation and reception of Plato’s dialogues” (p. 130).

The focus of the article by H. Tarrant, “The *Phaedo* in Numenian Allegorical Interpretation” (pp. 134-53), is the Neopythagorized Platonism of Numenius against the broader background of the Platonic schools. The *Phaedo* “was certainly among texts that featured as a regular part of pre-Plotinian Platonist curricula, and is the second of just four works recommended for the ideal pupil by Albinus” (p. 137). Hence it attracted exegeses on the part of philosophers of Platonic allegiance, like the ὑπομνήματα alluded to in the anonymous commentary on the *Theaetetus* (ἐν τοῖς εἰς τὰ Περὶ ψυχῆς ὑπομνήμασι, XLVIII 9-11; Bastianini and Sedley, in their 1995 edition, pp. 536-7, identify this work as a commentary on the *Phaedo*). “Have they perhaps written a discursive work entitled Περὶ ψυχῆς, or a commentary on the Aristotelian *De Anima* that also discusses Platonic themes?”, asks Tarrant (p. 137). On this a note of caution is in order. It would be notable if there were examples of Platonists commenting upon the *De Anima* before the turn imposed by Plotinus’ extensive treatment of Aristotle, and the consequent decision on the part of Porphyry and Iamblichus to comment upon the Aristotelian works. But this is only an incidental remark: the focus of the paper is on Numenius, whose well-known endeavour to present Plato as a Pythagorean should have made the *Phaedo* especially suitable for this project (p. 141). However, Numenius never quotes this dialogue in the fragments that have come down to us. “Ancient wisdom, as adopted successively by Pythagoras and Plato, was not in need of modern proofs. Rather the dialogue offered an account of Socrates’ final understanding of this ancient wisdom about the true status of human life here, and about the superiority and relative freedom of what awaits us beyond its constraints” (p. 153).

With the paper by R. Chiaradonna, “Plotin lecteur du *Phédon*: l’âme et la vie en IV 7[2] 11” (pp. 154-72) we come to Plotinus and his keen interest in the *Phaedo*. Among the many inspirations taken from this dialogue, Chiaradonna narrows his focus on Plotinus’ use, in his own *On the Immortality of the Soul* (IV 7[2]), of the final argument: life is essentially present to the soul. Chiaradonna sides with O’Brien, who in his article “Immortal and Necessary Being in Plato and Plotinus” (1995) maintains that Plotinus reacts to Strato of Lampsacus’ criticism of the final argument. Strato’s objection was that the argument proves only that the soul is alive only as long as it has life. In order to counter the objection, Plotinus interprets the Platonic comparison between the two pairs soul/life and fire/heat in a highly idiosyncratic way: “la chaleur est un constituant essentiel du feu, mais un accident de la matière. Par conséquent, le feu sera essentiellement chaud, mais il ne sera pas impérissable [...]. L’argument est très condensé mais, selon toute vraisemblance, la raison de ce fait est que la matière du feu peut accueillir les qualités contraires par rapport à celles qui le constituent: par conséquent, le feu (chaud et sec) périt et d’autres éléments s’engendrent. Plotin utilise ainsi de manière très ingénieuse la doctrine aristotélicienne de la transformation réciproque des éléments pour montrer qu’un être sensible, qui est ‘f’ de manière essentielle, est toujours corruptible en vertu de la matière qui lui sert de sujet. Plotin refuse de concevoir la structure de l’âme

selon ce modèle” (pp. 159-60). It is not the case that soul ‘possesses’ life, be it in an essential manner: rather, soul is life: “dire que la vie est présente dans l’âme signifie, aux yeux de Plotin, que, dans l’âme, l’être et la vie s’identifient [...]. Un objet de ce type ne saurait se trouver dans notre monde sensible et corporel, car la matière l’empêche; mais [...] pour Plotin il est impossible d’expliquer le monde sensible sans postuler un tel principe” (p. 164).

P. d’Hoine, “Syrianus and the *Phaedo*” (pp. 173-211) argues that the *Phaedo* was of primary importance for Syrianus, notwithstanding the fact that he authored only “short monographs” on it (p. 179), not a complete commentary. From the analysis of Syrianus’ treatment of the argument from contraries, on which we are informed by Damascius (*In Phaed.* I, § 183-206), d’Hoine comes to the conclusion that the *Phaedo* was crucial in Syrianus’ understanding of Plato. Also Syrianus’ developments about recollection are examined, but it was the argument from contraries that proved to be most important for the subsequent Neoplatonic philosophers: “Even though there is no evidence that he [Syrianus] ever wrote a commentary on the entire dialogue, his monograph on the argument from contraries was the main source of inspiration for Damascius’ and Olympiodorus’ interpretation of the argument, with Proclus acting as an intermediary” (p. 210).

A. Lernould, “Damascius, Olympiodore et Proclus sur les attributs ‘divin’ (θεῖον) et ‘intelligible’ (νοητόν) en *Phédon* 80 a 10 - b 1 dans l’argument dit ‘de la similitude’” (pp. 212-39) remarks that Plato’s term νοητόν, listed among the features of that kind of being that is opposed to the objects of sense-perception, is interpreted by Damascius (*In Phaed.* I, § 315; II, § 30.9) in the active sense of ‘being capable of thought’ (the rendering of νοητικόν in Westerink’s translation). Also Olympiodorus (*In Phaed.* 13, § 2.13-24) “refuse de donner à νοητόν en *Phd.* 80 b 1 un sens passif” (pp. 215-16). This elicits the question: “quelle raison philosophique peut justifier cette violence exercée à l’encontre de la grammaire quand on donne à νοητός, qui est une forme passive, un sens actif?” (p. 219). The subdivision of the intelligible being into different levels is established in post-Plotinian Platonism after Iamblichus; against this backdrop, it is understandable that Lernould comes to the conclusion that “en traduisant dans le *Phédon* νοητός par νοητικός (= νοερός), Olympiodore et Damascius veulent dire que les Formes dont il est question dans le *Phédon* ne doivent être situées ni au plan de l’Intelligible, ni au plan de l’Intelligible-Intellectif mais au plan de l’Intellectif (et plus précisément, dans l’Intellect Intellectif” (pp. 223-4). However, what Proclus (i.e. the source of both Damascius and Olympiodorus) says here is something less committal: as opposed to ἀνόητος which does not mean “that which is not thought of”, but “that which does not think”, νοητός bears an active meaning.

S. Gertz, “From ‘Immortal’ to ‘Imperishable’: Damascius on the Final Argument of Plato’s *Phaedo*” (pp. 240-55) challenges the idea that all the Neoplatonic readers of the *Phaedo* were convinced of the force of the final argument: “some ancient readers of the *Phaedo* were just as sceptical of the ‘ultimate final argument’ as many modern scholars are” (pp. 240-41). This is shown, according to Gertz, by Damascius’ debate with Strato of Lampsacus discussed above in the volume by Baltussen and Chiaradonna. “Strato’s objections made an impression on Damascius and forced him to revisit the final argument with the kinds of problems and difficulties in mind that his Peripatetic adversary had pointed out so acutely” (p. 249). Damascius, in Gertz’s opinion, did not succeed in solving the puzzle raised by Strato: the soul can well escape death in the ordinary sense, but nothing grants it imperishability in the broad sense of not being extinguished in any way whatsoever. According to Gertz (p. 255), the fact that a final solution of Strato’s puzzle is lacking in Damascius’ commentaries induced Westerink in his comments on Damascius’ treatment to suggest that the latter was looking for some sort of “indirect solution”. Gertz instead thinks that in the last resort Damascius was aware he had no valid argument to oppose Strato: “As a result, we must either look for some indirect solution that would resolve the problem – this is in effect Westerink’s position – or accept that Damascius would have sided with Strato and Cebes. Having failed to find anything like a convincing reply, direct or indirect, to Strato’s and Cebes’ worry in Damascius’ commentary, I would suggest that the second alternative is most plausible” (*ibid.*). If so, Damascius would have been convinced that Strato succeeded in showing against Plato that the final argument is not conclusive: something that to me is so alien from the attitude of a Neoplatonic philosopher, that it should be argued with positive arguments. This one, which is *e silentio*, is not sufficient to elicit a conclusion that has far-reaching consequences for any Neoplatonic reader of the *Phaedo*.

F. Trabattoni, “La théorie de l’âme-harmonie chez les commentateurs anciens” (pp. 256-69), maintains that “À la racine des erreurs commises par Damascius, par Philopon (et par Némésius), mais sans que ce soit le cas

de tous les platoniciens, il y a le désir de retrouver dans le *Phédon* l'argument 'catégoriel' présent dans l'*Eudème* d'Aristote, qu'ils jugent particulièrement utile d'un point de vue platonicien: l'âme est substance, l'harmonie est qualité" (p. 256). Trabattoni examines Philoponus and Damascius, who attest that Aristotle in this early lost dialogue claimed that the soul cannot be 'harmony', because it is a substance, while 'harmony' is a quality. This point features also in Nemesius (p. 265). All these Platonists, according to Trabattoni, made use of this argument "pour montrer que la doctrine aristotélicienne des catégories n'était pas du tout incompatible avec la pensée de Platon". They were wrong: the main point of this paper is in fact that the *Eudemus* was superseded by the *De Anima*, where Aristotle renounced understanding the soul as a substance. Thus, their attempt to construe the arguments against the soul-'harmony' as an instance of mutual consistency of Plato and Aristotle (p. 268) is doomed to failure. This reconstruction in my opinion understates the role of both Alexander and Plotinus. Also Plotinus is listed as an instance of the Platonist propensity to credit Aristotle *tout court* with the criticism of the soul-'harmony' based on the idea that the soul is substance: "Fort emblématique, à ce propos, est la position de Plotin. Dans le court paragraphe de *Enn.* IV 7[2], 8 qu'il consacre à réfuter la doctrine de l'âme-harmonie (8⁴), il rappelle d'abord, à peu près comme l'avait fait Aristote, que contre cette théorie (qu'il attribue sans erreur aux Pythagoriciens) 'on a déjà énoncé beaucoup d'arguments'; ensuite, il mentionne parmi d'autres les deux arguments de l'*Eudème*, notamment l'argument catégoriel: 'l'âme est une substance et l'harmonie n'est pas une substance' " (p. 267). But Plotinus read the *De Anima* with Alexander's lens, and both in Aristotle's *De Anima* and in Alexander's own interpretation of it he found reasons to turn the argument of substance against the Aristotelian camp. Well aware of the fact that the soul of the *De Anima* can hardly be a substance, he criticized the inconsistency of the Aristotelians, who on the one side refused the soul-'harmony', and on the other incurred in the same epiphenomenist error of the Pythagoreans. In this way, Plotinus created a topic that was destined to influence first Themistius (as shown by E. Coda in this same journal, 2017), then Nemesius, then the Athenian Neoplatonists including Damascius, and also the Alexandrian Philoponus in his commentary on the *De Anima*.

B. Demulder - G. Van Riel, " 'Nombreux sont les porteurs de thyrses, mais rares les Bacchants'. Olympiodore et Damascius sur le *Phédon*" (pp. 270-92) challenge the idea that the philosophers of the Neoplatonic school of 6th century Alexandria, here exemplified by Olympiodorus, were influenced in their teaching by a hostile Christian environment, and that this accounts for the differences with respect to other Neoplatonists like Damascius. "Notre hypothèse de travail consistera à soutenir que l'aspect décisif du commentaire tient au fait que Olympiodore a constamment tenu compte du public qu'il envisageait" (p. 276). Both Damascius and Olympiodorus explain the *Phaedo* to their respective audiences taking as the basis of their classes the lost commentary by Proclus. On the basis of two parallel sections in their commentaries, namely the part where both comment upon Socrates' interdiction of suicide and the digression on the degrees of virtue, that both include in their presentation of the *Phaedo*, Demulder and Van Riel come to the conclusion that Damascius and Olympiodorus do not differ in doctrine, but only in their attitude towards their audience. "Dans son commentaire, Olympiodore présente un message moral et, pour ainsi dire, protreptique. Ses interprétations et ses doctrines s'inscrivent à chaque fois dans l'orthodoxie néoplatonicienne. Dans ce cadre, Olympiodore fournit parfois des lectures originales et certainement moins compliquées que ce que nous connaissons d'un Damascius ou d'un Proclus. De toute évidence, la raison n'en est pas qu'Olympiodore n'aurait pas osé ou pu avancer un précis des doctrines néoplatoniciennes dans leur détail, mais plutôt qu'il n'a pas voulu le faire. Il a été un professeur qui, tout en se plaignant du niveau de ses élèves, a essayé d'éduquer un public intéressé, mais non spécialisé" (p. 292).

In the last article of the volume, M.-A. Gavray, "Simplicius, lecteur du *Phédon*" (pp. 293-310) discusses the few and at times surprisingly incorrect quotations from the *Phaedo* in Simplicius' works. In particular, in his commentary on the *Physics* (*In Phys.*, p. 666.25-26: ἐπιστώσατο καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Πλάτωνος τὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς μονὴν ἐκ τούτου κατασκευάζοντος ἐν οἷς φησιν ἐν Τιμαίῳ ἰσόροπον γὰρ πρᾶγμα ὁμοίου τινὸς ἐν μέσῳ τεθῆν) Simplicius attributes to the *Timaeus* a passage that belongs instead to the *Phaedo*, namely the account of the reason why the intrinsic equilibrium of the earth is sufficient to hold it up in the middle of the cosmos (*Phaed.*, 109 A 4). "L'extrait cité par Simplicius vient à la fin du dialogue, alors que Socrate entame une allégorie de la Terre destinée à expliquer que chaque âme rejoigne son lieu propre. Ce dernier expose alors quelques points de cosmologie, sur le mode du mythe, dont la finalité est de rendre le récit crédible. Or, sur ce point, Simplicius suit une grille de lecture néoplatonicienne. Comme le confirment les témoignages de Proclus et de Damascius,

la dimension mythologique, allégorique, du texte platonicien a laissé la place, dans l'exégèse néoplatonicienne, à une perspective cosmologique. À cet égard, le *Phédon* est mis sur le même pied que le *Timée*: une explication de la nature qui fait intervenir les dieux mais possède une vérité littérale. Cette orientation explique d'ailleurs probablement le renvoi erroné de Simplicius, dans le Commentaire sur la *Physique*, quand il cite sous le nom du *Timée* notre extrait du *Phédon*" (p. 309). It is in any case noteworthy that in the commentary on the *De Caelo* Simplicius correctly refers the doctrine to the *Phaedo* (*In De Caelo*, p. 517.20-22: δηλοῦ τὰ ἐν Φαίδωνι περὶ τῆς γῆς εἰρημμένα, ἐν οἷς φησιν· "ἰσόροπον γὰρ πρᾶγμα ὁμοίου τινὸς ἐν μέσῳ τεθῆν οὐχ ἕξει μᾶλλον οὐδὲ ἕττον οὐδαμῶσε κλιθῆναι"). The volume is completed by a Bibliography (pp. 311-35) and by indexes (pp. 336-64).

This is an interesting and instructive book, but Plotinus' role in changing the approach of the Platonists to the *Phaedo* is underestimated in my opinion. It is true that Plotinus did not comment upon the *Phaedo* and on this count he is not entitled to expect more space in this collection; but without Plotinus some crucial points in the doctrine of the soul, as well as in the understanding of the *Phaedo* and of Aristotle's *De Anima*, that form the background to many of the authors discussed here, would simply not have taken place. To quote only the philosopher who in several senses counts as the beginning of the late Neoplatonist account of the soul, one may remark that Iamblichus' *De Anima*, which is in itself a reaction to the decisive twist imparted by Plotinus, has not been taken into account, notwithstanding the fact that a recent book by I. Martone made this point quite explicit (*Giamblico. De Anima. I frammenti, la dottrina*, Pisa U.P., Pisa 2013). Thus, I think it is useful to conclude this book announcement by pointing to a fact that emerges from Martone's analysis.

There is a general scholarly consensus on the fact that the developments typical of post-Plotinian Neoplatonism were originated in the Iamblichean move to split the Plotinian νοῦς into two: an intelligible realm, and a hierarchical order of intellectual principles. Another feature of post-Plotinian Neoplatonism fostered by Iamblichus was the rejection of Plotinus' doctrine of the undescended soul, in favour of the idea that the soul does not belong to the intelligible realm in its own right: if it can ascend to it, it is only thanks to the divine powers of theurgy. Both points are better understood against the background of Plotinus' innovations, Porphyry's interpretation of them, and Iamblichus' own attempt at avoiding the consequences he felt he could not accept. Indeed, it is to Porphyry's idea that the substance of the soul and that of Intellect are one and the same that Iamblichus opposes that soul and Intellect must be carefully kept apart from one another. Iamblichus is especially eager to emphasize that this is precisely the doctrine of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and all the "Ancients". His criticism of his fellow Platonists, as shown by Martone, is the result of a silent dialogue he entertains with Plotinus and Porphyry, and is best explained as the needed clarification that Iamblichus is willing to give of the true nature of soul, whose essential inferiority with respect to the intelligible realm had been neglected by his immediate predecessors in the Platonic school. The point most relevant to the present discussion is that Plotinus made his proof for immortality pivot on the thesis, in itself grounded on the argument of affinity of the *Phaedo*, that the soul has the same status as the intelligible οὐσία. There are reasons to think that in his own *De Anima* Iamblichus was less committed to describing the nature, incorporation, and afterlife of the soul (the topics of his work on the soul that were selected by Stobaeus, our only source for this Iamblichean work) than to present the reasons why the soul has a lower status with respect to the intelligible realm. This might provide also a key to understanding why he appears at times so unexpectedly sympathetic to the doctrines that stress the deep involvement of the soul in the life of the body, like Aristotle's. When a new Platonic school was created in Athens, that presented itself as the direct continuation of Plato's Academy, Plutarch of Athens deemed it necessary to pursue the endeavour to comment upon Aristotle that, on different counts, had been undertaken by Porphyry and Iamblichus. It was under the guidance of Plutarch of Athens that, as reported by Marinus of Neapolis (§ 12.9-11 Saffrey-Segonds-Luna), Proclus read Aristotle's *De Anima* and the *Phaedo*. Syrianus enlarged the list of the works by Aristotle to be commented upon, but he also taught courses on the *Phaedo*, and the *Phaedrus*. Then Proclus started to teach, with the idea of having Plato's *Phaedo* systematically accounted for in the light of Iamblichus' distinction between the intelligible realm and that level of being – the soul – where a substance which is in itself changeable can perform intellectual activities. All this is better accounted for against the decisive move made by Plotinus, when he described the soul as an instance of the intelligible οὐσία, and as a continuation of Iamblichus' reject of this move, with its corollarium, the reject of the doctrine of the undescended soul.

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