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Maurice Borrmans MAfr. (1925-2017)

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Divine Providence and Human Logos in Themistius

Some Philosophical Sources of Discourse 6

Elisa Coda*

Abstract

Themistius' *Discourse 6* proclaims *philantropia* as the key term for the affinity between the ruler and God, and *logos* as the cause of the affinity of all the human beings among them and with God. Against the background of the philosophical *paideia* that represents Themistius' project for the élite in Constantinople, the *Discourse 6* is analysed in comparison with another rhetorical work that two centuries earlier had been devoted to the same topic: Dio of Prusa's *Olympic Discourse*. The two orations share some common features, but the *Discourse 6* bears the traces of Themistius' reading of the *Timaeus*, as well as of his exegesis of Aristotle's *De Anima*.

1. Themistius' Hellenic Wisdom

The *Demegoria Constantii*, which announces and motivates Themistius' (ca. 317-389 AD) adlection to the senate of Constantinople in 355 AD, illustrates his role and importance in the development of the cultural policy of the Empire at that moment:

ἀπανταχοῦ γὰρ τῆς οἰκουμένης φιλοσοφίαν ἐκλάμπειν ἐσπουδακῶς μάλιστα αὐτὴν εὐθηνεῖν βούλομαι κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἡμετέραν. Ὅπερ δὴ καὶ πυνθάνομαι ὑπάρχειν αὐτῇ διὰ Θεμιστίου, συνόδοις μὲν νέων φιλοσοφούντων ἀβρυνομένη, γινομένη δὲ κοινὸν παιδεύσεως καταγώγιον, ὥστε ἀπαντας ἀπανταχόθεν ὁμολογουμένως παρακεχωρηκέναι τῇ πόλει κρατεῖν φιλοσοφία, καὶ ὥσπερ ἐκ τινος ἀκηράτου πηγῆς ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἡμετέρας φοιτᾶν ἀπανταχοῦ τὰ διδάγματα τῆς ἀρετῆς. (...) Μεταλαβὼν γὰρ παρ' ἡμῶν ἀξιώματος Ῥωμαϊκοῦ ἀντεισφέρει σοφίαν Ἑλληνικὴν, ὥστε τὴν πόλιν διὰ τοῦτο δεῖκνυσθαι τὴν ἡμετέραν κορυφὴν ὁμοῦ τύχης καὶ ἀρετῆς.¹

While it is my heart's desire that philosophy should shine in every part of the world, I especially wish it to flourish throughout our city. And indeed I know that this has happened in her case because of

* Concetta Luna and Tiziano Dorandi read a first draft of this paper, saving me from many errors and suggesting decisive improvements. My deepest thanks go to them; of all the shortcomings that may remain I only am responsible.

¹ *Demeg.* 20 D-21 A e 21 A-B, trans. Heather-Moncour in *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century. Select Oration of Themistius*, Translated with an Introduction by P. Heather – D. Moncur, Liverpool U.P., Liverpool 2001 (Translated Texts for Historians, 36), p. 111. The origin of the Greek text of the *Demegoria*, or *Constantii oratio*, is disputed, though there is a general consensus that Constance's chancery had a role: for details cf. *ibid.*, p. 97, n. 154. An analysis of this letter "as an historical document from a theoretical perspective" is provided by L.J. Daly, "Constantius' Adlection of Themistius to the Byzantine Senate: Elite Mobility in the Late Roman Empire", *Proceedings of the Ohio Academy of History* 2002, pp. 14-27 (quotation from p. 26, URL: <http://www.ohioacademyofhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2002Daly.pdf> last consulted 12 oct. 2018). The Greek text of the *Discourses*, including the passage of the *Demegoria* quoted above, is quoted from *Themistii orationes quae supersunt* rec. H. Schenkl, opus cons. G. Downey, Vol. I, Teubner, Leipzig 1965, Vol. 2 et 3 cons. G. Downey et A.F. Norman, Teubner, Leipzig 1971, 1974.

Themistius, since she takes pride in her companies of young philosophers and is a house of learning open to all, so that all men from every quarter have conceded that the city is supreme in philosophy and the teachings of virtue flow forth from her in every direction as if from some pure spring. (...) For in receiving from us a Roman dignity, he offers Hellenic wisdom in return, so that for this reason our city is revealed as the summit both of good fortune and of virtue (trans. Heather-Moncour, p. 111).

Themistius' pivotal role in conveying to later ages the "Hellenic wisdom" – the σοφία Ἑλληνική mentioned in the *Demegoria* – is well known. He sided with the idea of ethical and political engagement of the philosopher, who "passing judgment in union with the highest power"² does not limit himself to speaking about the philosophical ideals, but is constantly engaged in putting them into practice.³ This was, in Themistius' views, the stance of his father Eugenius, who used to declare that his model was Socrates.⁴ In his turn, Themistius set for himself the task to promote the σοφία

² Them., *Or.* 34, § 7: βραβεύουσαν τὰ δίκαια φιλοσοφίαν μετὰ τῆς μεγίστης δυνάμεως, trans. R.J. Penella, *The Private Orations of Themistius*, Univ. of California Press, Oakland CA 1999 (Transformation of the Classical Heritage), p. 214. The implications of Themistius' stance are stated by R. Sorabji in the section entitled "Themistius" of his *Introduction to Aristotle Re-Interpreted. New Findings on Seven Hundred Years of the Ancient Commentators* ed. by R. Sorabji, Bloomsbury, London – Oxford – New York – New Delhi – Sydney 2016, as follows: "Historians know Themistius best as a leading civil servant in the imperial capital Constantinople, serving six emperors in succession in dangerous times, five of them Christian. (...) But he not only wrote the commentaries on Aristotle early in his career for his school which prepared people, among other things, for civil service. He also insisted, against strong opposition, on openly advocating the ethics of Plato and Aristotle in public life" (pp. 17-18).

³ In *Or.* 20, the funeral oration in honour of his father Eugenius, the latter's soul is depicted as having a seat near to Socrates', Plato's, and Aristotle's (*Or.* 20, 234 C-D: καθίζουσί τε παρὰ Σωκράτει καὶ Πλάτῳνι, ἀγαγόντες καὶ τὰ σὰ παιδικὰ τὸν θεῖον Ἀριστοτέλην). On Eugenius' ethical commitment cf. *Or.* 20, 238 D-239 A: τοῦτον οὖν τὸν τρόπον καὶ ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίας οὐχὶ λόγων χρῆναι ἐπίδειξιν ποιεῖσθαι, οὐδὲ ἐνθένδε ποθὲν τεκμαίρεσθαι ὅστις πόρρω ἤκει σοφίας, οἷον εἰ μετ' ἐπιστήμης διαιροῦτο τὰ γὰρ καὶ φάσκει τὴν ἀρετὴν μέγιστον εἶναι τῶν λοιπῶν καὶ ὑπερφέρειν μακρῶ τὰ ἄλλα, τὰ τε τοῦ σώματος λεγόμενα καὶ ὅσων ἐξέωθεν τύχη βασιλεύει, ἀλλ' εἰ φρονοῖ τούτον τὸν τρόπον καὶ προαιροῦτο καὶ τὴν ἀγαθὴν πράξιν αἰεὶ ἐπίπροσθεν ἄγχι τῆς χρήματα ἢ δόξαν φερούσης. ἄλλως δ' ἔχοντα τῇ μὲν γλώττῃ φιλοσοφῆσιν, τῇ καρδίᾳ δὲ οὐδαμῶς ("Similarly, my father would say, in philosophy it is not necessary to make a show of words. He used to say that we do not judge that a person is well advanced in wisdom because we have observed, for example, that he can skillfully distinguish the various things that are good and says that virtue is greater than and far superior to everything else, superior to what people call the things of the body and to what fortune rules over without our having any say in the matter. No, it is not on any such basis that we would judge a person to be well advanced in wisdom; rather, we would try to determine whether the person's thinking is in line with his words, whether he is really committed to his principles, whether he always prefers the morally good action to the action that brings wealth or fame. It was my father's contention that anyone not so disposed would be a philosopher only in word, not in his heart" (trans. Penella, *The Private Orations*, pp. 57-8). In affirming that elegance should not prevail over moral commitment (*Or.* 21, 246 A-247 A, *Or.* 28, 343 B-C), Themistius criticizes those who indulge in flourishings: the 'sophists' of his time (*Or.* 22, 265 B: οἱ δὲ ἄδουσι καὶ προσἄδουσι; *Or.* 26, 315 C: ἂ λέγω μὴδὲ ἄλλως ἄδειν καὶ προσἄδειν ὑμῖν; 28, 341 B-D). On Eugenius cf. O. Ballériaux, "Eugenius", in R. Goulet (ed.), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques* (henceforth *DPhA*), Tome III, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 2000, pp. 306-7. Themistius' presents the philosophical education at Eugenius' feet as his ancestors' legacy (cf. *Or.* 20, 233 D; 23, 288 D, 2, 28 D-29 A). He was the only one among his brothers to become a philosopher (*Or.* 20, 233 D-234 A), even though philosophy was part and parcel of the education of the upper class: cf. *Or.* 27, 332 D-333 B).

⁴ *Or.* 20, 239 A-B and D: Τούτων δὲ ἀπάντων παραδείγματα ἀπέφαινε Σωκράτη τὸν Ἀθηναῖον, ὃς οὔτε οἶκοι ὑπὸ Ξανθίπτης λοιδορούμενος οὔτε ὑπὸ Κριτίου καὶ τῶν τριάκοντα τυράννων ἀπειλούντων, εἰ μὴ μεταθήσεται καὶ θεραπεύσει τὴν καθεστῶσαν πολιτείαν, ἀποκτενεῖν τε καὶ ἐξελάσειν καὶ ἀνήκεστα ἔργα ἐργάσεσθαι ἡμῶς οὐκ ἔδεισε ποτε οὐδὲ ἐξέπλάγη οὐδὲ κίνδυνον ἄλλον ἐνόμισεν οὕτω δεινόν τε καὶ φοβερὸν ὡς τὸ κακὸν ἀντ' ἀγαθοῦ γενέσθαι καὶ δυσσεβῆ ἀντ' εὐσεβοῦς. (...) τοιαῦτα δὲ ἀπέφαινε καὶ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἀντικρυς παραπλήσια τοῖς Σωκρατικοῖς ("My father used to point to Socrates the Athenian as one who exemplified all these qualities of the true philosopher. Socrates

Ἑλληνική as the basis of the ideal of cosmic order that should have been shared, in his eyes, by the cultivated élite of his age. To this end, Themistius made use of careful rhetorical tools,⁵ of an endless stock of quotations, of allusions to Pagan myths and their philosophical interpretations, and of the reworking of philosophical models. A Platonic philosopher for him is not one who attended Plato's lectures in a remote past; rather, he is the one who puts into practice Plato's ideal of philosophy as the ruling force of human society.

καὶ εἴ τινα χρὴ καλεῖν κληρονόμον τῶν Πλάτωνος τοῦ θεοῦ δογμάτων, οὐχ οὕτω Σπεύσιππον χρὴ καλεῖν ἢ Ξενοκράτην, ἀλλὰ τὸν <τὴν> γνώμην αὐτοῦ βεβαιώσαντα ἢ πάντων μάλιστα ἐκεῖνος ἐποίησατο ἂν εἰς ἔργον ἐκβῆναι, καὶ ἰδεῖν εἰς ταῦτόν συντρέχουσιν δυνάμειν πολιτικὴν καὶ φιλοσοφίαν, καὶ μὴ πορευομένας χωρὶς δὴ φρόνησιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν. (...) καὶ ὑμνήσουσιν οἱ ἐφεξῆς ἄνθρωποι τὸν Θεοδοσίον ἐπὶ τῇ κλήσει τῆς πρὸς τὰ κοινὰ φιλοσοφίας, ὡς τὸν Ἀδριανόν, ὡς τὸν Μάρκον, ὡς τὸν Ἀντωνῖνον τοὺς προπάτορας ἑαυτοῦ καὶ πολίτας καὶ ἀρχηγέτας, οὓς οὐκ ἠγάπησεν ἄχρη τῆς ἀλουργίδος κληρονομησαί, ἀλλὰ τὰς εἰκόνας αὐτῶν ἐπαναγαγὼν εἰς τὴν βασιλίδαν διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου καὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἑαυτῷ καθάπερ ἐκεῖνοι συμπαραστήσατο.

If anyone should be called the heir of the divine Plato's teachings, it should not be Speusippus or Xenocrates, but the person who made Plato's vision prevail, that vision that the famous philosopher most wanted to put into practice, and he most wanted to see political power and philosophy coming together, not good judgment and secular authority going their separate ways. (...) Future generations will sing the praises of Theodosius for his summoning of philosophy to the public sphere, just as they will praise Hadrian, Marcus [Aurelius], and Antoninus [Pius], who are his ancestors, his fellow citizens, founders of his line. Theodosius was not content merely to inherit the purple from them; he also brought them back into the palace as exemplars after a long lapse of time and set philosophy by his side, just as they had done.⁶

was rebuked at home by Xanthippe and also by Critias and the Thirty Tyrants, who threatened to kill him and drive him out and do horrible things to him if he did not change his mind and be of service to the regime that was in power. Nonetheless, he never succumbed to fear. He was never frightened, nor did he think that there was any danger so terrible and formidable than to become wicked instead of good, or impious instead of pious. (...) My father showed the world actions of his own that were very similar to those of Socrates" (trans. Penella, *The Private Orations*, pp. 58-9, modified). Themistius has repeatedly recourse to Socrates as to his model (*Or.* 34): cf. L.J. Daly, *A Mandarin of Late Antiquity: The Political Life and Thought of Themistius*, Dissertation at Loyola University, Chicago 1970 (http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/1019). Socrates is an important figure in the *Discourses*, addressed as a model of *Lebenswahl*; this point deserves further investigation that cannot be made here. Bibliographical references on Themistius' political thought are given below, n. 19. See also R. van den Berg, "Live Unnoticed! The Invisible Neoplatonic Politician", in A. Smith, *The Philosopher and Society in Late Antiquity. Essays in Honour of Peter Brown*, The Classical Press of Wales, Swansea 2005, pp. 101-15, esp. 109-10. Van den Berg refers to *Or.* 26 and *Or.* 38, pointing to the singularity of Themistius' stance.

⁵ Themistius advocated his own approach by explicitly criticizing those who refused to take part in public life; he also had to face the charge of being himself a sophist, flattering emperors to achieve worldly success, rather than the true philosopher he pretended to be. On Themistius' position cf. Heather-Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire* (above, n. 1), pp. XI-XV; see also J. Schamp, "Thémistios et l'oracle des philosophes", in F. Karfik – E. Song (eds.), *Plato Revived. Essays on Ancient Platonism in Honour of Dominic J. O'Meara*, Berlin-Boston 2013 (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, 317), pp. 358-75, esp. 332-40.

⁶ *Or.* 34, 7, esp. ll. 7-12 and 17-23, trans. Penella, *The Private Orations*, p. 214, modified; cf. also *Or.* 17, 214 A. Similar remarks also in *Or.* 2, 40 A (to Costance II); *Or.* 8, 107 C (to Valens); *Or.* 13, 166 B (to Gratian): references are given in the relevant footnotes by R. Maisano (Themistius, *Discorsi*, a c. di R. Maisano, UTET, Torino 1995).

Themistius was engaged in the transmission of Platonic and Aristotelian thought first and foremost as a professor of philosophy:⁷ he ran his own school since 345 AD, teaching for the most part of his life at Constantinople but also elsewhere.⁸ He was also, and for some mainly, a rhetor managing the most prominent positions at the imperial court⁹ under the Emperors Constance II, Julian, Jovian, Valentinian the Great and Valens, and Theodosius. His literary output¹⁰ reflects both activities: we have both discourses and paraphrases of Aristotle's works.¹¹

Themistius' paraphrases were known by pagan, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish authors, being continuously read across the ages and in different cultural landscapes. Most of these paraphrases, even though at an uneven rate, were destined to be read in translation, and this starting from Late Antiquity (in Syriac), through the Middle Ages (in Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin), till the Early Renaissance (in Latin).¹² The rhetorical corpus,¹³ on the contrary, had almost no reception in the Syriac and Arabic milieus;¹⁴ also in the Latin-speaking world it is only at the end of the 15th century that a renewal of interest for Themistius' orations took place.¹⁵ His fame as an elegant orator surpasses the reputation

⁷ *Or.* 31, 352 C-D: Ἐγὼ τοῖς δοκιμωτάτοις τῶν ἀρχαίων φιλοσόφων ἀκολουθήσας, οἱ δύο εἶναι τῆς φιλοσοφίας ὁδοὺς ἐξηγοῦνται, τὴν μὲν θειοτέραν, τὴν δὲ τοῖς κοινοῖς ὠφελιμωτέραν, τὴν ὑμῖν λυσιτελοῦσαν προετίμησα τῆς μόνον τὸ ἐμὸν ἴδιον ἐξεταζούσης, καὶ ἐν πολιτείᾳ φιλοσοφίαν εἰλόμην, ἐπόμενος Σωκράτει καὶ Ἀριστοτέλει καὶ πρό γε τούτων τοῖς ὑμνομένοις ἑπτὰ σοφοῖς, οἱ τὰ ἔργα τοῖς λόγοις ἐγκαταμίξαντες οὔτε ἀπρακτον οὔτε ἀσυντελῆ τοῖς κοινοῖς ἐπεδείξαντο φιλοσοφίαν. τοῦτοις ἅπασιν ἀκολουθήσας τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη ταῦτα σχεδὸν ἐτέλεσα λειτουργῶν ὑμῖν ἐκ τῶν λόγων καὶ πρεσβέων ἐφεξῆς ὅπως αὐτοὶ ἴστε πρεσβείας οὐκ ἀτίμως οὐδὲ ἀδόξως οὐδὲ ἀναξίως τῆς ὑμετέρας χειροτονίας, τὰς μὲν καθ' ἑαυτόν, τὰς δὲ τοῖς ἀρίστοις ὑμῶν κοινωνῶν ("I followed the most highly regarded of the ancient philosophers, who explain that there are two philosophical paths, one that is more concerned with divine matters, and a second that is more useful in public affairs. I chose the kind of philosophy that is beneficial to you over that which investigates only what concerns me personally. I elected the kind of philosophy that operates in the public arena. In so doing, I followed the example of Socrates and Aristotle and their predecessors the celebrated Seven Wise Men, who, by combining deeds with their words, showed us a kind of philosophy that is neither inactive nor useless to society. For nearly forty years now I have followed all these philosophers, putting my learning to work in your service and going on a series of embassies for you, sometimes by myself and at other times in company with the best of you. You yourselves know that on those embassies my service was neither dishonorable nor disreputable nor unworthy of your appointment of me", trans. Penella, *The Private Orations*, pp. 189-90). On the embassies cf. also *Or.* 17, 214 B.

⁸ Some inaugural discourses are preserved in Greek, in part or in their entirety (*Or.* 24, to the students of Nicomedia; *Or.* 27, to those of Paphlagonia; *Or.* 33, to those of Constantinople); information on Themistius' students are given in *Or.* 23, 289 B. Finally, *Or.* 30 and 32 are considered scholastic exercises.

⁹ Themistius was senator in 355, proconsul in 358, prefect of Constantinople under Theodosius I, in whose court he was also appointed teacher of his son and successor Arcadius.

¹⁰ Cf. R.B. Todd, "Themistius", in V. Brown *et al.*, *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum*, Vol. VIII, The Catholic Univ. of America Press, Washington 2003, pp. 57-102; J. Schamp - R.B. Todd - J. Watt, "Thémistios", in Goulet (ed.), *DPhA*, Tome VI (2016), pp. 850-900. I have not been able to take into account for this article the recent study by M. Schramm, "Themistios (§ 40)", in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie. Die Philosophie der Antike 5/1: Philosophie der Kaiserzeit und der Spätantike*, ed. Chr. Riedweg - Chr. Horn - D. Wyrwa, Basel, Schwabe 2018, pp. 410-427, 451-445 (Bibliographie)

¹¹ Themistius' philosophical output was certainly larger than what is available to us: cf. Schamp-Todd-Watt, "Thémistios" (above, n. 10), pp. 865-6 on the rhetorical works lost, and pp. 877-80 on the philosophical works lost.

¹² Overview: E. Coda, "Themistius, Arabic", in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Springer, Dordrecht 2011, pp. 1260-66, and Schamp-Todd-Watt, "Thémistios" (above, n. 10), pp. 870-7.

¹³ Thirty-three orations have come down to us in Greek. However, some of them are fragmentary or incomplete (*Or.* 23, 25, 33, 28); *Or.* 12, which is included in several modern editions, is in reality a Humanist compilation in Greek, based on *Or.* 5 and other sources. The chronology of Themistius' *Discourses* is disputed; cf. Maisano, *Discorsi* (above, n. 6), pp. 107-9.

¹⁴ Unknown to the Latin Middle Ages. For the scanty circulation of some *Discourses* in Syriac and Arabic see the relevant section by J. Watt in Schamp-Todd-Watt, "Thémistios" (above, n. 10), pp. 861-4.

¹⁵ Cf. Todd, "Themistius" (above, n. 10); E. Coda, "Breve nota su una traduzione ebraico-latina umanistica: Mosè Alatino (1529-1605) traduttore di Temistio", *Studia graeco-arabica* 6 (2016), pp. 187-210.

as a philosopher, but even if the paraphrases are consulted chiefly in search for specific exegeses of one or another Aristotelian passage, philosophy – not rhetoric – was for Themistius the pinnacle of wisdom, and specific philosophical doctrines are interspersed also in the *Discourses*, but for the most part outside a technical context, as this article aims to show.

Notwithstanding his importance, Themistius has been studied in an oddly asymmetrical way. Historians focus on the *Discourses*, almost completely discarding the philosophical works. His political thought has attracted much attention, with special reference to his conception of Imperial power,¹⁶ that becomes even more significant against the background of the relationship between Hellenism and the Roman Empire, or Hellenism and Christianity towards the end of Antiquity.¹⁷ Scholars noticed several features of Themistius' vision of history and politics, pointing to his conception of true kingship: the philosophical justification of its divine origin and the use of the model of the *basileus* as “living law” (νόμος ἐμψυχος, *Or.* 5, 64 B) have been highlighted,¹⁸ as well as the political function of the ideal of philanthropia.¹⁹ Other topics that have attracted scholarly interest are his relationship with Julian²⁰

¹⁶ Cf. J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court. Oratory, Civic Duty and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius*, The Univ. of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1995; G. Dagron, “L'Empire romain d'Orient au IV^e siècle et les traditions politiques de l'hellénisme. Le témoignage de Thémistios”, *Travaux et Mémoires du centre de recherche d'Histoire et civilisation byzantines* 3 (1968), pp. 1-242; L.J. Daly, “The Mandarin and the Barbarians: the Response of Themistius to the Gothic Challenge”, *Historia* 21 (1972), pp. 351-72; G. Downey, “Themistius and the Defence of Hellenism in the 4th Century”, *Harvard Theological Review* 50 (1957), pp. 259-74.

¹⁷ Cfr. G. Downey, “Allusions to Christianity in Themistius' Orations”, *Studia Patristica* 5 (1962), pp. 480-88; L.J. Daly, “Themistius' Plea for Religious Tolerance”, *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12 (1971), pp. 65-79; S.A. Stertz, “Themistius: A Hellenic Philosopher and Statesman in the Christian Roman Empire”, *The Classical Journal* 71 (1976), pp. 349-98; I. Muñoz Valle, “Themistio y la promoción de la cultura griega bajo los emperadores cristianos”, *Scriptorium Victoricense* 23 (1976), pp. 164-201.

¹⁸ Chiefly by Dagron, “L'Empire romain d'Orient”, and Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court* (both quoted above, n. 16). On the notion itself see G.D. Aalders, “Νόμος ἐμψυχος”, in P. Steinmetz (ed.), *Politeia und Res Publica. Beiträge zum Verständnis von Politik, Recht und Staat in der Antike*, Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden 1969 (Palingenesia, 4), pp. 315-29. A new approach to this important topic is offered by P. Van Nuffelen, *Rethinking the Gods: Philosophical Readings of Religion in the Post Hellenistic Period*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2011 (Greek Culture in the Roman World), in part. pp. 148-53.

¹⁹ It was first J. Scharold, *Dio Chrysostomus und Themistius*, W. Trinkl, Burghausen 1912 (Wissenschaftliche Abhandlung zum Jahresberichte des Königlich humanistischen Gymnasiums Burghausen), pp. 11-32, to remark that the model of Themistius' φιλόανθρωπος βασιλεύς is Dio of Prusa. On Themistius' philanthropia cf. L.J. Daly, “Themistius' Concept of Philanthropia”, *Byzantion* 45 (1975), pp. 22-40; G. Downey, “Philanthropia in Religion and Statecraft in the 4th Century after Christ”, *Historia* 4 (1955), pp. 199-20; Dagron, “L'Empire romain d'Orient” (above, n. 16), pp. 136-7. Also Julian the Emperor, who was a pupil of Themistius, had recourse to this notion and gave it a special twist, according to M.C. De Vita, *Giuliano Imperatore filosofo neoplatonico*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2011 (Temi metafisici e problemi del pensiero antico. Studi e testi, 121), pp. 248-9: “Giuliano esorta poi alla pratica della philanthropia, che viene esaltata con numerosi exempla di tradizione ellenica, quasi a sottolineare, indirettamente, l'indebita 'usurpazione' del concetto da parte dei cristiani del tempo”. Valuable remarks are offered also by M. Schramm, “Platonic Ethics and Politics in Themistius and Julian”, in R.C. Fowler (ed.), *Plato in the Third Sophistic*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2014 (Millennium Studies in the Culture and History of the First Millennium CE, 50), pp. 131-44: “Themistius' political theory is based on the paradigm of the Republic with a few Hellenistic elements (the king is a philosopher, he is god-like, and his main virtue is φιλοανθρωπία), whereas Julian used the *Laws* with elements from Iamblichus' philosophy (the king is only a guardian of the godly laws and needs help from gods, demons and philosophers, and his main virtue is piety, or εὐσέβεια)” (pp. 131-2). However, as observed by Van den Bergh, “Live Unnoticed!” (above, n. 4), pp. 108-9, with n. 27 on p. 113, it was Themistius who taught Plato's *Laws* to Julian.

²⁰ For a valuable overview on Themistius and Julian cf. Heather-Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire* in the

and religious tolerance as a key-concept of true kingship.²¹ Conversely, historians of philosophy only seldom take into account the discourses, as if they were of little interest to explore Themistius' Aristotelianism. An all-round picture is hampered also by the fact that the paraphrases preserved in Greek are far better known than those surviving only in the Oriental tradition, notwithstanding their importance: the paraphrases of *On the Heavens* and of Book *Lambda* of the *Metaphysics* are lost in Greek and especially that of *On the Heavens* is almost totally discarded as a source for understanding Themistius' own philosophical stance, due to the fact that it exists only in a Hebrew version made out of the Arabic lost version of the lost Greek original, and in a Latin version of the Hebrew version.

Among the topics that the historians of philosophy usually discuss, a prominent position is granted to the question of Themistius' philosophical allegiance. According to some, his work unquestionably belongs to the Neoplatonic tradition.²² For others, Themistius' exegeses fully belong to the Aristotelian and Peripatetic tradition, with no special traits of the Neoplatonic typical themes.²³ Notwithstanding the different perspectives, there is a general scholarly agreement that the *paideia* advocated by Themistius is the real key to understanding his thought.²⁴ There are indeed different

Fourth Century (above, n. 1), pp. 138-42; details in L.J. Daly, "In a Borderland': Themistius' Ambivalence toward Julian", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 73 (1980), pp. 1-11; U. Criscuolo, "Sull'Epistola di Giuliano Imperatore al filosofo Temistio", *Koinonia* 7 (1983), pp. 89-111; T. Brauch, "Themistius and the Emperor Julian", *Byzantion* 63 (1993), pp. 79-115; E. Pack, "Libanio, Temistio e la reazione giuliana", in G. Cambiano - L. Canfora - D. Lanza (eds.), *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, I.3, Roma 1994, pp. 651-97. See also De Vita, *Giuliano Imperatore* (above, n. 19), p. 101 with n. 87, who compares the notion of *basileus philosophos* in Themistius and Julian, and the recent exhaustive study by R. Chiaradonna, "La figura del filosofo nel IV secolo d. C. Considerazioni sulla Lettera a Temistio di Giuliano Imperatore", *Aitia* [online] 5 (2015), URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/aitia/1293> – last consulted 12 October 2018. On the *Epistle on Government* attributed to Themistius in Arabic see the section by J. Watt in Schamp-Todd-Watt, "Thémistios" (above, n. 10), esp. pp. 862-3. In other important studies of his, listed in the above mentioned contribution, Watt has provided an analysis of the reception of this work in the Syro-Christian and Arabic-Islamic worlds. The authorship of the *Epistle on Government* has been challenged, chiefly because there is no trace in it of the key notions of *philanthropia* and *nomos empsychos*. Possible explanations have been advanced, examined by M. Conterno, *Temistio Orientale*, Paideia Brescia 2014, esp. pp. 27-40, and S. Swain, *Themistius, Julian, and Greek Political Theory under Rome. Texts, Translations, and Studies of Four Key Works*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2013, Ch. 2 ("Themistius, Letter to Julian"), pp. 22-51.

²¹ See above n. 17.

²² Cf. I. Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism and the Harmonization of Aristotle and Plato*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2015 (Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition, 18), with reference to previous scholarship, and p. 75 for the assessment of Themistius' Neoplatonism.

²³ H.J. Blumenthal, "Photius on Themistius (Cod. 74): Did Themistius Write Commentaries on Aristotle?", *Hermes* 107 (1979), pp. 168-82; J. Vanderspoel, "The Themistius' Collection of Commentaries on Plato and Aristotle", *Phoenix* 43 (1989), pp. 162-4; D.J. O'Meara, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2003, esp. pp. 206-8. For a valuable survey of the historiographical question cf. I. Kupreeva, "Themistius", in L.P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2010, vol. I, pp. 397-416. Cf. also the balanced assessment by Sorabji, "Themistius" (above, n. 2): "What Themistius does have in common with the philosophers whom we call Neoplatonists is that he wishes to harmonise Plato and Aristotle wherever possible. But that is not a sufficient condition for being a Neoplatonist: there were harmonisers before Neoplatonism, and Themistius prefers harmony but does not think it is his business to argue for harmony at length. It should be less controversial that Themistius did not agree with Iamblichus' version of Neoplatonism" (p. 20).

²⁴ Cf. G. Downey, "Education and Public Problems as Seen by Themistius", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 86 (1955), pp. 291-307; B. Colpi, *Die Paideia des Themistios. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Bildung im vierten Jahrhundert nach Christus*, P. Lang, Frankfurt 1987; R.J. Penella, "Plato (and Others) in the Orations of Themistius", in Fowler, *Plato in the Third Sophistic* (above, n. 19), pp. 145-61.

ideas on his conception of the political engagement of the philosopher, whether or not it is the same as that of the later Neoplatonic philosophers – most noticeably, D.J. O’Meara disagrees with this;²⁵ but it is fair to say that for Themistius if the philosopher holds a position apt to influence the law-giver, the philosophical ideals can be transformed into concrete rules for social life.²⁶

An ecumenical vision completes this position. The exposure of the élite to a training in Hellenic wisdom is for Themistius independent of any specific religious affiliation and, in the same vein, he is alien from any specific philosophical affiliation to this or that school, if this means antagonism among them. This was neither Plato’s nor Aristotle’s attitude, in Themistius’ eyes: his stance when he deals with this point, coupled with the presence of Platonic and Neoplatonic topics in his Aristotelian paraphrases, made him to be classified among the proponents of the “harmony between Plato and Aristotle”.²⁷ However, it is primarily his ideal of *paideia*, in my opinion, that inspires his treatment of the topic of Plato and Aristotle in agreement.

It is in this vein that this harmony is presented as the legacy of Themistius’ father Eugenius:

Or. 20, 235 C

Τὸ μὲν οὖν πρόσωπον καὶ τὸ σχῆμα ὅλον μονοῦ δῆθεν ἐπὶ Ἄριστοτέλους τοῖς μυστηρίοις. ἅπαντα δὲ ὁμῶς συνανεῶγγυτο τῶν σοφῶν τὰ ἀνάκτορα, καὶ συνεπώπτευσε τὰ ἱερὰ καὶ ὅσα Πυθαγόρας ὁ Σάμιος ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκόμισεν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ ὅσα ὕστερον ἐν τῇ ποικίλῃ στοᾷ Ζήνων ὁ Κιτιεύς. τὰ μὲν γὰρ Πλάτωνος τοῦ μεγάλου ἀγχίθυρα τε αἰεὶ ἐπεδείκνυε καὶ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ περιβόλῳ, καὶ οὐδὲ μετημφιέννυτο τὴν στολὴν μεταβαίνων εἰς τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν ἐκ τοῦ Λυκείου, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις Ἀριστοτέλει προθύσας εἰς τὴν Πλάτωνος ἔληγεν ἱερουργίαν. (...) εἶναι γὰρ δὴ τῆς Πλάτωνος βακχείας τὴν Ἀριστοτέλους φιλοσοφίαν ἅμα μὲν γενναῖον προτέλειον, ἅμα δὲ θριγκόν τε καὶ φυλακτῆριον. εὐβάτου τε γὰρ οὔσης ἔτι καὶ εὐεπιδρόμου τοῖς σοφισταῖς, τειχίσαι τε Ἀριστοτέλη καὶ περιφράξασθαι πανταχόθεν καὶ ἀποκλεῖσαι τὰς ἐπιβουλάς τῶν δογμάτων (...) πρὸς μὲν δὴ Πλάτωνα τὸν σοφὸν οὔτε αὐτός ποτε ἐστασίασεν οὔτε Ἀριστοτέλη ῥαδίως ᾤετο. (...) οὐδεμία γὰρ φιλοσοφία πόρρω ἀπώκισται καὶ μακρὰν ἀποσκηνοῖ τῆς ἐτέρας, ἀλλ’ οἷον εὐρείας ὁδοῦ καὶ μεγάλης μικραὶ διασχίσεις τε καὶ ἀπονεύσεις, αἱ μὲν πλεῖον, αἱ δὲ ἔλαττον περιελθοῦσαι, εἰς ταῦτόν ὅμως πέρας συνθέουσιν.

To be sure, the visage and shape impressed upon these sacred mysteries were almost entirely those of Aristotle. Nevertheless, my father helped to open up all the shrines of the sages. He was one of those who were fully initiated in the sacred knowledge that Pythagoras of Samos brought back to Greece from Egypt and in what Zeno of Citium later taught in the Painted Stoa. He always displayed the works of the great Plato right at the door [of Aristotle’s ‘temple’] and in the very temple precinct. When

²⁵ O’Meara, *Platonopolis. Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2003, 2005², p. 208: “[Themistius] shares with the Neoplatonic philosophers of his time neither their metaphysical and political theory, nor their attitude to the involvement of the philosopher in political life. Themistius appeals to a monarchic ideology of a traditional kind such as that advocated by Dio Chrysostom in the second century AD. Themistius’ view of the political vocation of the philosopher appears to be more sanguine, optimistic, if not disingenuous, than that of the Neoplatonists. His subordination of the philosopher to the king, of knowledge to action, is certainly a reversal of the Neoplatonic scale of values”, *ibid.*, p. 208.

²⁶ O’Meara, *Platonopolis* (above, n. 23), p. 99, outlines as follows the grounds for the political engagement of the Neoplatonic philosopher in Late Antiquity: “As the primary expression of political science, the expression of a divine model, a transcendent good, law communicates the good, as a common good, to lives lived on the human level. It expresses moral values and makes possible the benefits which they bring”.

²⁷ Hadot, *Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism* (above, n. 22), pp. 56-60 and 74-97.

passing from the Lyceum to the Academy, he did not change his clothes; he would often first make a sacrifice to Aristotle and then end by worshiping Plato. (...). For he (*scil.* Eugenius) felt that Aristotle's philosophy is an excellent preliminary rite to Plato's frenzy and, at the same time, a defensive wall and safeguard for it. Plato's philosophy is still too accessible, still assailable by sophists, he thought; Aristotle provided fortifications for him, fenced him in on all sides, and kept his teachings from being assailed by plots. (...) My father, then, never quarrelled with the wise Plato, nor did he think that Aristotle ever did so lightly. (...). For no philosophical school has settled far off from the others or keeps a great distance between itself and another school. The schools of philosophy are like side roads that, though they break away and deviate from a wide and long highway, nonetheless all reach the same point in the end, some of them extending the road, others shortening it (trans. Penella, pp. 54-55, modified).²⁸

Themistius was convinced that various ways might lead to one and the same truth, great enough and universal enough to include them all; hence, his treatment of tolerance (especially religious),²⁹ that in his view an emperor was expected to practice, is less a plea for a solid state than an exhortation to imitate in mankind that universal rule imparted by the divine Intellect upon the multifarious cosmos. This was Themistius' spiritual world and the intellectual task he set for himself, and this granted him a posterity in cultural areas as different as the Arabic and Latin Medieval worlds, and the Early Renaissance Europe.

2. Themistius' Discourse 6 and Dio of Prusa's Olympicus

Ready to promote religious tolerance for the philosophical reasons just mentioned,³⁰ Themistius uses the language of the Greek religion both public and mystic, not without echoing also some Christian images; he does not refer in his speeches to any specific creedal tenet.³¹ The Orphic mysteries, as well as the doctrines of 'Orphic' origin allegedly taught to Pythagoras and thereafter transmitted to Plato and Aristotle, feature among the elements of the cultural heritage of a learned man. His writings are free from that militant paganism which after Julian will nourish the

²⁸ Cf. Marinus, *Proclus ou sur le bonheur*. Texte établi, traduit et annoté par H.-D. Saffrey et A.-Ph. Segonds avec la collaboration de C. Luna, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2001 (CUF), p. 109, who quote this passage in their commentary upon the education imparted by Syrianus to the young Proclus in the same way, namely going from Aristotle to Plato, as follows: "La doctrine générale des néoplatoniciens est que l'Aristotélisme sert de 'sacrifices préparatoires' à la mystagogie de Platon, cf. Themistius, *Or.* 20, t. II, p. 6.13-19".

²⁹ See esp. *Or.* 5 and 6.

³⁰ Them., *Or.* 5, 70 A: ταύτη νόμιζε γάνυσθαι τῇ ποικιλίᾳ καὶ τὸν τοῦ παντός ἀρχηγέτην· ἄλλως Σύρους ἐθέλει πολιτεύεσθαι, ἄλλως Ἑλληνας, ἄλλως Αἰγυπτίους, καὶ οὐδ' αὐτοὺς Σύρους ὁμοίως, ἀλλ' ἤδη κατακεκερμάτισται εἰς μικρά. εἰς γὰρ οὐδεὶς τῷ πέλας τὰ αὐτὰ ὑπείληφεν ἀκριβῶς, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τοδί, ὁ δὲ τοδί. τί οὖν βιαζόμεθα τὰ ἀμήχανα; ("Consider that the Creator of the universe also takes pleasure in such diversity. He wishes the Syrians to organise their affairs in one way, and the Greeks in another, the Egyptians in another, and does not wish there to be uniformity among the Syrians themselves but has already fragmented them into small sects. No individual has exactly the same beliefs as his neighbour, but one man believes this and another that. Why then do we use force where it is ineffectual?", trans. Heather-Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century* [above n. 1] p. 170).

³¹ Themistius is not usually considered as one who entered the debate on the priority of Greek over Judaeo-Christian moral teaching; however, there are also other opinions about his position in the debate: cf. Heather-Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century* (above n. 1), pp. 7-11 and 61-69.

religiosity³² of late Neoplatonism,³³ as well as from any ‘theological’ exegesis of Plato’s dialogues. The strenuous defense of pagan cults – be they Greek or Barbarian – that characterizes previous authors like Porphyry,³⁴ or later ones like Proclus,³⁵ can hardly be found in his works.

The *Discourse 6*, Φιλάδελφοι ἢ περὶ φιλανθρωπίας (*Brotherly love*, or *On Philanthropia*) addresses the Emperors Valens and Valentinian³⁶ and was read in the Senate of Constantinople in front of Valens.³⁷ Its main topics are the *divisio imperii*, which Themistius describes as the ideal condition for good relations between the two emperors, and the exaltation of the role of Constantinople as the capital of the Roman Empire. The city is depicted at the end of the speech as

³² By ‘religiosity’ I mean both speculation about the gods as the counterpart of the metaphysical entities of the Neoplatonic cosmos and the allegiance to the revival of ‘Greek’ religion in intellectual milieu after Julian. Dodds famously pointed to the identification of the Olympian gods with the principles of the metaphysical hierarchy subordinated to the One as to the typical feature of Proclus’ theology: cf. E.R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology*, 2nd revised ed. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1963, p. 260, and the remarks on the main ideas governing the Proclean “Platonic Theology” by H.-D. Saffrey, “Les débuts de la théologie comme science (III^e-V^e siècle)”, *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 80 (1996), pp. 201-20, repr. in Id., *Le néoplatonisme après Plotin*, Vrin, Paris 2000 (Histoire des doctrines de l’Antiquité classique, 24), pp. 219-38. On the coexistence in Proclus of the philosophical interpretation of religion and the practice of pagan cults cf. A.-J. Festugière, “Proclus et la religion traditionnelle”, in *Mélanges d’archéologie et d’histoire offerts à A. Piganiol* édités par R. Chevalier, EPHE, Paris 1966, pp. 1581-90, repr. in Id., *Études de philosophie grecque*, Vrin, Paris 1971, pp. 575-84 and Marinus, *Proclus ou sur le bonheur* (above, n. 28), § 18.21-34 Saffrey-Segonds-Luna, with the notes of pp. 127-9.

³³ H.-D. Saffrey, “Accorder entre elles les traditions théologiques: une caractéristique du néoplatonisme athénien”, in E.P. Bos - P.A. Meijer, *On Proclus and his Influence in Medieval Philosophy*, Brill, Leiden - New York - Köln 1992 (Philosophia Antiqua, 53), pp. 35-50, repr. in Id., *Le néoplatonisme après Plotin* (above, n. 32), pp. 143-58; Id., “Proclus, les Muses et l’amour des livres à Athènes au V^e siècle”, in H.J. Westra (ed.), *From Athens to Chartres. Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought. Studies in Honour of É. Jeuneau*, Brill, Leiden - New York - Köln 1992 (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 35), pp. 163-71, repr. in *Le néoplatonisme après Plotin*, pp. 169-77. The main aspects of this attitude are highlighted in another important study by H.D. Saffrey, quoted below, n. 34. See also P. Athanassiadi - C. Macris, “La philosophisation du religieux”, in L. Bricault - C. Bonnet (ed.), *Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Graeco-Roman Empire*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013 (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 177), pp. 41-83, and the valuable survey by G.G. Stroumsa, “Les Sages sémitisés. Nouvel ethos et mutation religieuse dans l’Empire romain”, *ibid.*, pp. 293-307.

³⁴ See A.P. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre. The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge U.P., Cambridge 2013 (Greek Culture in the Roman World), esp. pp. 189-299.

³⁵ H.-D. Saffrey, “Le thème du malheur des temps chez les derniers philosophes néoplatoniciens”, in M.-O. Goulet-Cazé - G. Madec - D. O’Brien (ed.), ΣΟΦΙΗΣ ΜΑΙΗΤΟΡΕΣ. *Chercheurs de sagesse. Hommage à Jean Pépin*, Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1992 (Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité, 131), pp. 421-31 (repr. in *Le néoplatonisme après Plotin* [above n. 32], pp. 207-17), in part. p. 208 (of the reprint): “Les intellectuels païens de ce temps deviennent les uns après les autres des prophètes de malheur, et ils dénoncent comme cause de tous les maux de leurs concitoyens, les empereurs et les fonctionnaires chrétiens, et les moines qui exercent de plus en plus d’influence dans la société. À mesure que le Christianisme est devenu la religion dominante dans l’Empire romain, et surtout une fois qu’il a été choisi comme religion d’État dans l’Empire Byzantin, les empereurs se sont détournés de l’antique religion païenne, et même se sont efforcés de la réduire. À partir de Constantin (306-324) et avec Théodose (379-395) et surtout Justinien (527-565), la législation s’est faite de plus en plus répressive, et même si elle n’a pas été partout appliquée avec rigueur, elle a constitué une pression sociologique et une menace psychologique indubitables. Dans le même temps, puisque les rites cultuels étaient entravés et les lieux de culte interdits, les philosophes néoplatoniciens se sont sentis les derniers dépositaires de la religion qui était pratiquée dans l’Orient gréco-romain depuis presque un millénaire. Leur philosophie se muait en théologie, et ils s’efforçaient de pratiquer encore clandestinement quelques rites”. Themistius’ attitude is different: see above, n. 17.

³⁶ In the opening lines of the oration Themistius addresses the two Emperors (ὡ βασιλεῖς, 71 C, πάντως δὲ καὶ ὑμῖν κριτέον τοῦς λόγους, 72 A), but then he uses the singular, speaking to Valens alone (τῷ κρατούντι δὲ σύ, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἡ τοῦ πλήθους ψῆφος εἰς σὲ περιήκει, 74 A), and alluding to a speech of his to the Senate made the previous day.

³⁷ The exact date of this oration is unknown and disputed. In the Downey-Norman edition, the date is Winter 364/365.

“a place through which all must pass who arrive from and set out in all directions, so that whenever it keeps them closest to home, it puts them at the very centre of the whole empire. (...) it has long been the hearth of the Muses of Plato and Aristotle, and now no less, by God, preserves the kindling sparks”.³⁸ The assessment of the importance of Constantinople as the “New Rome”³⁹ is a key point in Themistius’ view of imperial policy. This political stance of *Discourse 6* gives also room to philosophy.

From the outset a close relationship between βασιλεία and philosophy is asserted: “there is a goodwill and affinity between kingship and philosophy that comes on you, Kings, from high and God sent both down to earth for the same purpose – to care for and correct mankind, the one teaching what is good, the other putting it into practice”.⁴⁰ Kingship and philosophy derive from God, whose power endures “for all time, according to its own laws, which it itself has laid down and preserves unchanged for the protection of creation”.⁴¹ The states which are characterised by disorder (ταραχή), like Minos’ and Lycurgus’ tyrannies, are transient; Valen and Valentinian, on the contrary, rule in a way that imitates the changelessness of the divine cosmic order. Their proclamation⁴² descends from above, ἄνωθεν κάτεισιν (73 C), through divine consent (ἐπινεύσαντος τοῦ θεοῦ), although performed through the διακονία of human beings.

The official and even ceremonious stance of this part of *Discourse 6* is evident:⁴³ the proof of the divine consent to the election of the two emperors is provided, says Themistius, by their mutual affection (εὐνοια) and respect (σπουδή). Thus, allusions to the political value of power-sharing in the division of the Empire intertwines with the plea for the independence of Constantinople.⁴⁴ *Discourse 6* is meant to provide the doctrinal basis for these political assessments, and it is philosophy that grants it. First comes the topic of *philanthropia*.

The foundations of this practice lie in that the whole of mankind shares in the same origin: one and the same God. All human beings have a common father; they are the only ones among living beings to be aware of this common nature, and this is made possible by intellect, “the divine seed” which exists only in them. For this reason everyone can recognise in another human being his brother, sharing like him in an intellection that spreads from the same origin.

³⁸ *Or.* 6, 83 D-84 A.

³⁹ Cf. J. Vanderspoel, “A Tale of Two Cities: Themistius on Rome and Constantinople”, in L. Grig - G. Kelly (eds.), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, Oxford U.P., New York 2012 (Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity), pp. 223-40.

⁴⁰ *Or.* 6, 72 A-B: ἄνωθεν, ὃ βασιλεῖς, εὐνοια καὶ συγγένεια βασιλεία πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν ἐστὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν χρείαν κατέπεμψεν ὁ θεὸς ἀμφοτέρας εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι καὶ ἐπανορθοῦσθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, τὴν μὲν διδάσκουσιν τὰ ἀγαθὰ, τὴν δὲ χορηγοῦσιν, trans. Heather-Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century* (above n. 1) p. 181. The εὐνοια and the συγγένεια of the emperors is also a sign of the lasting alliance between kingship and philosophy.

⁴¹ *Or.* 6, 73 A: κατὰ τοὺς νόμους τοὺς ἑαυτῆς διεξιούσης τὸν ἅπαντα αἰῶνα, οὗς αὐτὴ θεμένη πρὸς σωτηρίαν τῶν ὄντων ἀκινήτους διαφυλάττει, trans. Heather-Moncur, p. 182.

⁴² Themistius alludes to the proclamation (ἀνάρρησις) by the Homeric saying “the will of Zeus” (ἡ τοῦ Διὸς βουλή): 73 C.

⁴³ Themistius’ plea in *Discourse 6* has been interpreted as an attempt to influence in his own favour the imperial policy-making: see Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court* (above, n. 16), pp. 148-53, and Dagron, “L’Empire romain d’Orient” (above, n. 16), pp. 95-112. However P. Heather, “Themistius a Political Philosopher”, in M. Whitby (ed.), *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, Brill, Leiden - Boston - Köln 2018 (Mnemosyne, Supplements, 183), pp. 125-50, points to the fact that Themistius’ self-portraits as “championing senatorial opinion to the emperor”, in *Or.* 5 and 16 “are perhaps the most blatant instances of Themistius selling, or attempting to sell, imperial policy to the Senate, rather than representing senatorial opinion to the emperor” (p. 145).

⁴⁴ *Or.* 6, 76 B: “Both (the Princes) conduct with the same bridles (ἄγουσιν ἄμφο ταῖς αὐταῖς ἡνίαις)”.

Or. 6, 77 B-D

καίτοι πόσω τοῦ σώματος ἐναργεστέρα ἢ κατὰ ψυχὴν συγγένεια καὶ ὁμοιότης, ὅταν ὡς πέφυκε διασώζεται; περὶ ἀρετῆς ἅπαντες ἀμφισβητοῦμεν, κακίαν ὁμολογεῖν αἰσχυρόμεθα, μονωθέντες οὐ καρτεροῦμεν, ἐπιβώμεθα ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς θορούβοις, ἀπαράκλητοι συντρέχομεν εἰς τοὺς κινδύνους, μία τροφὸς ἡμᾶς τιθηνεῖται, κοινὴν κεκτῆμεθα πατρῶν οὐσίαν, τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλατταν καὶ τὸν ἀέρα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ δὴ καὶ φυτὰ καὶ ζῶα, καὶ τὰ μὲν διενειμάμεθα πρὸς ἀλλήλους, τὰ δὲ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἀνέμητα ἡμῖν τῶν κτημάτων. ἐὼ τᾶλλα· μόνοι τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς τικτομένων αἰσθανόμεθα τοῦ πατρὸς ἢ σαφέστερον ἢ ἀμυδρότερον. καὶ γὰρ εἰ τὰ ἐφεξῆς διεστήκαμεν, ἀλλ' εἰς ἐκεῖνόν γε ἅπαντες ἐπεριδόμεθα. Οὐκ ἄρα μάτην ὁ σοφώτατος Ὅμηρος ἀπεσχεδίαζεν ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι, συνεχῶς ἀνυμνῶν τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ ἓνα πατέρα ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε. καίτοι διὰ τί αὐτὸν οὐχ ἵππων λέγει πατέρα οὐδὲ μὰ Δία κυνῶν ἢ λεόντων; ὅτι τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις ἅπασι ζῴοις οὐ μέτεστιν, οἷμαι, οὐδὲ μικρὰ μερὶς τοῦ γεννήτορος· οὐκοῦν οὔτε ἐκεῖνου συνιᾶσιν οὔτε ἀλλήλων, εἰς ἀνθρώπους δὲ μόνους καθήκει τοῦ δευτέρου κρατῆρος ἀπορροή. καὶ τὸ λόγου κοινωνεῖν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ κοινωνεῖν τοῦ θεοῦ σπέρματος.

And yet is the spiritual kinship and likeness not much more obvious than the physical, when it is preserved as it was created? We all try to outdo each other in virtue, we are all ashamed to admit to wickedness, we cannot endure in isolation, we call for each other's help in emergencies; we hasten unsummoned into dangers, a single nurse nurtures us, we hold a common ancestral property – the earth, sea, air and water, indeed all that grows and lives – some of which we have divided up between us as possessions, the rest remaining as yet undivided among us. I pass over the rest. We alone of all creatures of earth recognise our Father, either more clearly or more dimly, and even if we are set apart from one another in hierarchical order, we all lean on Him for support. Surely Homer, in his great wisdom, was not casually improvising in his verses when ceaselessly celebrating the Father of both men and gods⁴⁵ as one and the same. And yet why does he not call him father of horses, or by Zeus, of dogs or lions? Because in all other beasts there is not, in my opinion, the smallest share of their creator. And so they have no understanding either of him or of each other: it is on mankind alone that the outpouring from the second bowl flows down.⁴⁶ To share the faculty of reason is nothing other than to share the divine seed (trans. Heather-Moncur, pp. 188-9).

The topic of the unity of mankind as the offspring of a unique God whose rationality pervades the entire cosmos obviously echoes Stoicism, but other elements are detectable that provide an interesting example of the way in which Themistius intertwines his rhetoric and his activity as a philosophy teacher.

First an account of the common background of *Discourse 6* is in order. Immediately adopted by Christianity, the topic of the *παρουσία* of the one invisible God to each and every human being has famously been traced back to Stoicism by Eduard Norden in his analysis of Paul's Areopagus speech.

⁴⁵ See e.g. *Il.* I 544, III 68 and V 426; on the ever recurring formula “πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε” see G.M. Calhoun, “Zeus the Father in Homer”, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 66 (1935), pp. 1-17 (the quotation, p. 1). In the *Timeaus*, too, the Demiurge is ποιητὴς καὶ πατὴρ, 28 C 3; ὁ γεννήσας πατὴρ, 37 C 7. Cf. also below, n. 54.

⁴⁶ *Tim.*, 41 D 4-7: “When he had finished this speech, he turned again to the mixing bowl he had used before (ἐπὶ τὸν πρότερον κρατῆρα), the one in which he had blended and mixed the soul of the universe. He began to pour into it what remained of the previous ingredients and to mix them in somewhat the same way, though these were no longer invariably and constantly pure, but of a second and third grade of purity” (trans. D.J. Zeyl in *Plato. Complete Works*, Edited with Introduction and notes by J.M. Cooper, Associate Editor D.S. Hutchinson, Hackett, Indianapolis-Cambridge 1997, p. 1245).

Since then, this topic counts as a commonplace in reconstructing the salient trends of the religious discourse in the Imperial age and in late Antiquity.⁴⁷ That Themistius' *Discourse* 6 belongs to this tradition is shown by the fact that here too, as in other earlier examples, resonates that magnificent synthesis of the theology of ancient Stoicism that is Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*. This is true in particular for the topic of the κοινός λόγος,⁴⁸ but also the idea of God as a father who originates the harmonious differences of the entire universe belongs to the same tradition of thought. All this is reminiscent of the intermingling of Stoicism and the *Timaeus* that is such a prominent feature of Graeco-Roman philosophy between Hellenism and the Imperial age.⁴⁹

Calling attention to the Stoic background of Acts 17, Norden had observed that the omnipresence of the divine lurks in the background of both Paul's *parousia* of God to each and every human being (Acts 17, 27) and the *Olympicus* of Dio of Prusa (ca. 40–ca. 120 AD).⁵⁰ Also the topic of the innate feeling of God as the cause of the order of the universe (πρώτη τοῦ θεοῦ ἔννοια) is widespread. J. Scharold, the early 20th century scholar who listed a number of parallels between Themistius' rhetorical works and the orations of Dio of Prusa, claiming that Dio is almost everywhere the source of Themistius,⁵¹ referred to the πρώτη τοῦ θεοῦ ἔννοια as to a point of contact between

⁴⁷ E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos. Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede*, Teubner, Leipzig-Berlin 1913, 1923². Cf. in part the commentary to Acts 17, 28: ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν. "Wenn wir endlich noch die bekannten stoischen Etymologien erwägen: Ζεὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ πάσι δεδωκέναι τὸ ζῆν (Chrisipp. *ap. Stob.*, *Ecl.* I 31, 12 W.) καλοῦμεν αὐτὸν καὶ Ζῆνα καὶ Δία..., ὡς ἂν εἰ λέγοιμεν δι' ὃν ζῶμεν τὸ ζῆν (Ps.Arist. *De Mundo* 7, 401 a 13), wo also die Übereinstimmung mit der Stelle der Acta sich bis auf die Verbalform selbst erstreckt), so werden wir in ζῶμεν, κινούμεθα, ἐσμέν, stoische Begriffe zu erkennen haben, die aber vielleicht erst der Verf. der Acta zu einer formelhaften, feierlich klingenden Trias verbunden hat" (p. 22). See also the useful bibliography appended by C.O. Tommasi Moreschini to the *Introduction* of her Italian trans. of *Agnostos Theos*: "Per un bilancio di *Agnostos Theos*" (Introductory chapter in E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos. Ricerche sulla storia della forma del discorso religioso*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2002 [Letteratura cristiana antica. Studi], including works published up to 2002).

⁴⁸ Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* is preserved by Stobaeus, *Ecl.* I 1, 12 = no. 537 in *SVF* I; cf. the still fundamental essay by M. Pohlenz, "Kleanthes' Zeushymnus", *Hermes* 75 (1940), pp. 117-232, and now the commented translation by J.C. Thom, *Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2005 (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 3). It is through the κοινός λόγος that, in this hymn, Zeus rules the universe (ὑπάτος βασιλεὺς διὰ παντός); the last verse celebrates the κοινός νόμος to which Gods and mortals are equally submitted, as to Zeus' γνώμη. For a general overview see K. Algra, "Stoic Theology", in B. Inwood (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 153-78. E. Asmis, "Myth and Philosophy in Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 47 (2007), pp. 413-29, remarks: "Following Cleanthes, he [= a Stoic reader of the Hymn] equates the lightning, in the first place, with the all-pervasive, ever-living fire of Zeus [...] with both 'common reason', *koinos logos*, and 'common law', *koinos nomos*. *Logos* pervades all things as the rational force of fire. 'Law' is *logos* viewed as an imperative force: it is reason that commands right action and prohibits wrong-doing (...) For the Stoic, the image of lightning unifies the entire poem by means of a conceptual progression that begins and ends with *nomos*. The semantic weight of the lightning bolt, concentrated in line 10, spread out, so to speak, from the center to the periphery. The term *nomos* is first introduced in 2 as the culmination of a series of attributes of Zeus; and it closes the poem in the last line as the ultimate object of worship" (pp. 419-20).

⁴⁹ G. Reydam-Schils, *Demiurge and Providence. Stoic and Platonist Readings of Plato's Timaeus*, Brepols, Turnhout 1999 (Monothéismes et Philosophie).

⁵⁰ Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (above, n. 47), p. 19: "Durch diese Worte soll erklärt werden, wie leicht es ist, Gott zu finden: 'der ja doch nicht ferne ist von einem Jeden von uns'. Hierzu gibt es nun eine schon von Wettstein (...) notierte überraschende Parallele in einer Rede des Dion von Prusa, die uns auch noch weiterhin beschäftigen wird. Nämlich in seinem Ὀλυμπικός ἢ περὶ τῆς πρώτης τοῦ θεοῦ ἔννοιας (12, 28 = I p. 162 v. Arnim) sagt er: die Vorstellung eines göttlichen Wesen sei dem Menschengeschlechte infolge seiner Verwandtschaft mit Gott eingepflanzt: ἄτε γὰρ οὐ μακρὰν οὐδ' ἔξω τοῦ θεοῦ διωκισμένοι καθ' ἑαυτοῦς (...) οὐκ ἐδύναντο μέγχι πλείονος ἀξύνετοι μένειν".

⁵¹ Scharold, *Dio Chrysostomus und Themistius* (above, n. 19), p. 46, concludes his comparison stating that "Ein Rückblick auf die im vorausgehenden angeführten Stellen, die beiden Rhetoren gemeinsam sind, rechtfertigt die wiederholt aufgestellte

Themistius' *Discourse 1* and Dio's *Olympicus*.⁵² The fact that now we can read the *Olympicus* in the brand-new critical edition accompanied by comprehensive introduction and detailed commentaries by G. Ventrella, T. Grandjean and L. Thévenet⁵³ permits a comparison of the ways in which these two rhetorical pieces – the *Olympicus* at the end of the 1st cent., and *Discourse 6* towards the middle of the 4th – elaborate on the Homeric and Platonic topic of divine fatherhood⁵⁴ along the Stoic lines of *logos* as the token of the συγγένεια between mankind and God. This is what the two orations have in common; in the next section I will focus on some differences. Let's first read the relevant passage of Dio's *Olympicus*.

Olympicus (Or. XII), 27-29

περὶ δὲ θεῶν τῆς τε καθόλου φύσεως καὶ μάλιστα τοῦ πάντων ἡγεμόνος πρῶτον μὲν καὶ ἐν πρώτοις δόξα καὶ ἐπίνοια κοινὴ τοῦ ζυμπαντος ἀνθρωπίνου γένους, ὁμοίως μὲν Ἑλλήνων, ὁμοίως δὲ βαρβάρων, ἀναγκαία καὶ ἔμφυτος ἐν παντὶ τῷ λογικῷ γιγνομένη κατὰ φύσιν ἄνευ θνητοῦ διδασκάλου καὶ μυσταγωγῆς <οὐ> χωρὶς ἀγάπης καὶ χαρᾶς διὰ τε τὴν συγγένειαν τὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ πολλὰ μαρτύρια τάληθοῦς, οὐκ ἔῶντα κατανοστέα καὶ ἀμελεῖσθαι τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους καὶ παλαιοτάτους· ἄτε γὰρ οὐ μακρὰν οὐδ' ἔξω τοῦ θείου διωκισμένους καθ' αὐτούς, ἀλλὰ ἐν αὐτῷ μέσῳ πεφυκότες, μᾶλλον δὲ συμπεφυκότες ἐκείνῳ καὶ προσεχόμενοι πάντα τρόπον, οὐκ ἐδύνατο μέχρι πλείονος ἀξύνετοι μένειν, ἄλλως τε ζύνεσιν καὶ λόγον εὐληφότες περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἄτε δὴ περιλαμπόμενοι πάντοθεν θείοις καὶ μεγάλοις φάσμασιν οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ ἄστρον, ἔτι δὲ ἡλίου τε καὶ σελήνης, νυκτός τε καὶ ἡμέρας ἐντυγχάνοντες ποικίλοις καὶ ἀνομοίοις εἶδεσιν, ὕψεις τε ἀμηχάνους ὄρωντες καὶ φωνὰς ἀκούοντες παντοδαπὰς ἀνέμων τε καὶ ὕλης καὶ ποταμῶν καὶ θαλάττης, ἔτι δὲ ζῶων ἡμέρων καὶ ἀγρίων, αὐτοὶ τε φθόγγον ἤδιστον καὶ σαφέστατον ἰέντες καὶ ἀγαπῶντες τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φωνῆς τὸ τορὸν καὶ ἐπιστήμον, ἐπιθέμενοι σύμβολα τοῖς εἰς αἰσθήσιν ἀφικνουμένοις, ὡς πᾶν τὸ νοηθὲν ὀνομάζειν καὶ δηλῶσαι εὐμαρῶς, ἀπείρων πραγμάτων καὶ μνήμας καὶ ἐπινοίας παραλαμβάνοντες. πῶς οὖν ἀγνώτες εἶναι ἔμελλον καὶ μηδεμίαν ἔξειν ὑπόνοιαν τοῦ σπείραντος καὶ φυτεῦσαντος καὶ σφύζοντος καὶ τρέφοντος, πανταχόθεν ἐμπιμπλάμενοι τῆς θείας φύσεως διὰ τε ὄψεως καὶ ἀκοῆς ζυμπάσης τε ἀτεχνῶς αἰσθήσεως;

Behauptung, dass Themistius in seinen Redenden Dio Chrysostomus benützt hat, allerdings ohne selbst seine Quelle zu nennen. Es ergibt sich aus diesem Abhängigkeitsverhältnis ferner ein Beweis für die überragende Stellung, die Dio Chrysostomus in der zweiten Sophistik eingenommen hat, und ein Bild der Arbeitsweise des Themistius". A different interpretation of Themistius' use of Dio's exegesis of the myth of Heracles at the crossroads is offered by Colpi, *Die Paideia des Themistios* (above, n. 24), p. 160, and by J. Schamp, "Héraclès à la croisée des chemins: imitation et récréation chez Dion et chez Thémistios", in E. Amato et al. (eds.), *Dion de Pruse: l'homme, son œuvre et sa postérité*. Actes du Colloque international de Nantes (21-23 mai 2015), Olms, Hildesheim 2016 (Spoudasmata, 169), pp. 489-504, esp. pp. 499-500. See also A. Brancacci, *Rhetorike Philosphousa. Dione Crisostomo nella cultura antica e bizantina*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1985 (Elenchos 11), esp. pp. 122-4.

⁵² Scharold, *Dio Chrysostomus und Themistius* (above, n. 19), p. 14, refers to the *Olympicus* in relationship to Themistius' Or. 1, as for the topic of the universal feeling of the divine (πρώτη τοῦ θεοῦ ἔννοια) based on the universal grasp of the cosmic order.

⁵³ The Greek text of the *Olympicus* is quoted after the edition by G. Ventrella: Dion de Pruse, *Ceuvres, Discours Olympique ou Sur la conception première de la divinité* (Or. XII), *À Athènes, Sur sa fuite* (Or. XIII), Texte établi, introduit et commenté par G. Ventrella, traduit par T. Grandjean et L. Thévenet, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2017 (CUF). The English translation quoted is by J.W. Cohoon, *Dio Chrysostom. Discourses*, Greek Texts and facing English Trans., 5 vols, Harvard U.P., Cambridge (MA) 1932-1951 (Loeb Classical Library, 339), in part. vol. II, *Discourses* 12-30. Cf. also Dio Chrysostom, *Orations VII, XII, XXXVI* ed. by D.A. Russell, Cambridge U.P., New York 1992 (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics).

⁵⁴ Dio Chrysostom, *Olympicus*, 22: οὗτος γὰρ δὴ κοινὸς ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεῶν βασιλεύς τε καὶ ἄρχων καὶ πρύτανις καὶ πατήρ, "alike of men and gods the king and ruler and lord and father", trans. Cohoon, p. 25. For Zeus as 'father' in the Homeric poems see above, n. 45.

Now concerning the nature of the gods in general, and especially that of the ruler of the universe, first and foremost an idea regarding him and a conception of him common to the whole human race, to the Greeks and to the Barbarians alike, a conception that is inevitable and innate in every creature endowed with reason,⁵⁵ arising by nature without the aid of a human teacher or priest, <not> deprived of love and joy has made its way because of mankind's kinship with the Gods⁵⁶ and of the many pieces of evidence of the truth, which did not suffer the earliest and most ancient men to doze and grow indifferent to them; for inasmuch as these earlier men were not living dispersed far away from the divine being or beyond his borders apart by themselves, but had grown up in his company and had remained close to him in every way, they could not for any length of time continue to be unintelligent beings, especially since they had received intelligence and the capacity for reason on this, illumined as they were on every side by the divine and magnificent glories of heaven and the stars as well as of the sun and moon, by night and day encountering varied and dissimilar forms, seeing wondrous sights and hearing manifold voices of winds and forest and rivers and sea, of animals tame and wild; while they themselves uttered a most pleasing and clear sound, and taking delight in the limpid and intelligent quality of the human voice, attached symbols to the objects that reached their senses, so as to be able to name and designate everything perceived, thus easily acquiring memories and concepts of innumerable things. How, then, could they have remained ignorant and conceived no inkling of him who had sowed and planted and was now preserving and nourishing them, when on every side they were filled with the divine nature through both sight and hearing, and in fact through every sense? (trans. Cohoon, pp. 31 and 33, modified).⁵⁷

The parallel reading of the two texts shows more than one affinity in the two orations. For Dio as well as for Themistius mankind shares in an innate knowledge of the divine that is both common and exclusive: all human beings, and only human beings know God by nature, not by instruction; proof is given through a comparison with other living beings, the animals, whose lack of articulated language (in Dio) or of rationality (in Themistius) prevents them from being aware of something that human beings, instead, spontaneously know: God's universal causality (τοῦ πάντων ἡγεμόνος ... δόξα καὶ ἐπίνοια κοινὴ τοῦ ξύμπαντος ἀνθρωπίνου γένους in Dio, αἰσθανόμεθα τοῦ πατρός in Themistius). However, Themistius' treatment bears the clear traces of his activity as a professor of philosophy.

3. *Themistius, the Rhetor and Themistius, the Commentator*

Under closer inspection some differences appear in the use of the image of the "seed" by Dio and Themistius.⁵⁸ While Dio's allusion to the principle who "had sowed and planted and was now preserving and nourishing (τοῦ σπείραντος καὶ φυτεύσαντος καὶ σφύζοντος καὶ τρέφοντος)" echoes the λόγοι σπερματικοί attesting the divine as omnipresent in nature – a basically Stoic

⁵⁵ Reference to previous scholarship on Stoic theology with special reference to Posidonius as a possible source of Dio of Prusa is given in Russell's commentary *ad loc.*, quoted above, n. 53, p. 177, now superseded by Ventrella - Grandjean - Thévenet, quoted above n. 53, pp. 37-62, on the sources of the *Olympicus*, esp. pp. 40-46 on the sources of the passage quoted above.

⁵⁶ Cf. É. des Places, *Syngeneia. La parenté de l'homme avec Dieu, d'Homère à la patristique*, Klincksieck, Paris 1964 (Études et commentaires, 51).

⁵⁷ Cf. Ventrella - Grandjean - Thévenet, quoted above n. 53, pp. 250-82, and H.-J. Klauck, "Nature, Art, and Thought: Dio Chrysostom and the *Theologia Tripertita*", *The Journal of Religion* 87 (2007), pp. 333-54.

⁵⁸ On the sources of Dio's use of this image cf. Ventrella (above, n. 53), pp. 279-81, pointing to Stoic sources, chiefly Chrysippus.

idea, even though some scholars have detected also Platonic themes in it⁵⁹ – Themistius refers to the *Timaeus* as to his explicit source. When writing that “To share the faculty of reason is nothing other than to share the divine seed (οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ κοινωνεῖν τοῦ θεοῦ σπέρματος)”, he is quoting verbatim *Tim.* 73 C 7.⁶⁰ This quotation is connected, in Themistius’ presentation, to another one that occurs earlier in the *Timaeus*, that of the “mixing bowl” of *Tim.* 41 D 4. Both quotations are combined to each other and with another passage, less literally echoed, in which the Demiurge is depicted as sowing the souls (*Tim.* 41 D 8 - 42 A 2) to provide a consistent account of the divine ancestry of mankind based on clearly recognisable allusions to Plato.

Homer’s claim that Zeus is the father of both men and gods – not of irrational animals – is explained along the lines of the *Timaeus*: they only, men and gods, share in rationality, although to different degrees. The passage just mentioned, with the Demiurge sowing the souls in different bodies, heavenly and terrestrial, according to a hierarchy,⁶¹ forms the background of this claim. Even more explicit is the reference to the “mixing bowl”, that contains a detail apt to prove that Themistius does not limit himself to referring generically to the narrative of the generation of the soul in the *Timaeus*, but has in mind a precise scholarly tradition. He says: “it is on mankind alone that the outpouring from the second bowl flows down”. In this sentence the allusion to a “second” bowl is puzzling, because the bowl in the *Timeus* is obviously only one;⁶² note, however, that there is a well-established exegetical tradition (Atticus, in part Plotinus, Porphyry, and Theodorus of Asine) that understands the expression ἐπὶ τὸν πρότερον κρατῆρα in the sense of distinguishing two “bowls” in the myth of the production of the soul.⁶³ The rationale for keeping distinct the bowl in which the cosmic soul had been mixed from that in which the individual souls are produced by the Demiurge, after his speech to the heavenly gods (*Tim.*, 41 A 7 - D 3), lies exactly in the hierarchy thus established

⁵⁹ On Dio of Prusa as a reader of Plato see M. Trapp, “Plato in Dio”, in S. Swain (ed.), *Dio Chrysostom. Politics, Letters, and Philosophy*, Oxford U.P., Oxford 2000, pp. 213-39, esp. p. 228, pointing to “Plato’s immense importance as an authority on its [i.e., of the *Olympicus*] chosen subject-matter(s)”. G. Hertz, “Dion aux prises avec la θεία καὶ ἀμήχανος φύσις: étude de l’*Olympikos* et de son ancrage platonicien”, in Amato et al. (eds.), *Dion de Pruse: l’homme, son œuvre et sa postérité* (above, n. 51), pp. 199-215, says: “L’image de l’ ‘artisan’ (...) dans le *Discours olympique* semble témoigner en faveur d’un ancrage du discours plus platonicien que stoïcien. (...) D’après eux (= the Stoics) le principe actif pénètre en effet la matière inerte et l’âme par la diffusion en elle de ‘raisons séminales’ (σπερματικοὶ λόγοι). Ce modèle de copulation cosmogonique (...) apparaît totalement absent de l’*Olympikos*, quoique Dion, lorsqu’il le juge opportun, sache à l’occasion nourrir son propos de tel élément doctrinal stoïcien (...). Plutôt que le modèle naturaliste stoïcien, l’auteur du *Discours olympique* préfère de toute évidence l’analogie platonicienne du créateur donnant forme, par son travail, à un matériau extérieur à lui” (pp. 203-4).

⁶⁰ Plato, *Tim.*, 73 C 7; the expression belongs to the section in which the formation of the human body is described, and the narrow context is that of the construction of head as the seat of the soul (73 C 6 - D 1): “He then proceeded to mold the ‘field’, as it were, that was to receive the divine seed, making it round, and called this portion of the marrow ‘brain’” (trans. Zeyl, quoted above n. 45, p. 1274).

⁶¹ *Tim.*, 41 D 8 - 42 A 2: “And when he had compounded it all, he divided the mixture into a number of souls equal to the number of the stars, and assigned each soul to a star. He mounted each soul in a carriage, as it were, and showed it the nature of the Universe. He described to them the laws that had been foreordained: They would all be assigned one and the same initial birth, so that none would be less well treated by him than any other. Then he would sow each of the souls into that instrument of time suitable to it (σπαρείσας αὐτὰς εἰς τὰ προσήμοντα ἐκάσταις ἕκαστα ὄργανα χρόνων), where they were to acquire the nature of being the most god-fearing of living things, and, since humans have a twofold nature, the superior kind should be such as would from then on be called ‘man’” (trans. Zeyl [see above, n. 45] p. 1254).

⁶² *Tim.*, 41 D 4; the passage is quoted above, n. 45.

⁶³ Cf. D’Ancona et al., *Plotino. La discesa dell’anima nei corpi (Enn. IV 8[6]. Plotiniana arabica (pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli 1 e 7; Detti del Sapiante Greco)*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2003 (Subsidia mediaevalia patavina, 4) pp. 172-3, with bibliographical references to previous literature.

between the soul of the cosmos and the individual souls. Different in degree, as shown by the fact that they are produced not in the mixing bowl of the cosmic soul, but in a “second” one, they share nonetheless in the “divine seed” of rationality that brute animals do not possess.

For this reason, adds Themistius, animals cannot be aware of their creator, nor can they know (or understand) each other: “Because in all other beasts there is not, in my opinion, the smallest share of their creator. And so they have no understanding either of him or of each other (ὅτι τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις ἄπασι ζώοις οὐ μέτεστιν, οἴμαι, οὐδὲ μικρὰ μερὶς τοῦ γεννήτορος· οὐκοῦν οὔτε ἐκείνου συνιᾶσιν οὔτε ἀλλήλων)”.

This topic, in turn, reveals Themistius the professor of philosophy. The idea comes from his exegesis of Aristotle’s *De Anima*, III 5, 430 a 25, where he presents, as an additional argument supporting the unicity of the Agent Intellect for the whole of mankind, the presence in mankind of the common notions (κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι). These make human beings capable of understanding, without any previous instruction and all in the same way, the primary definitions and axioms (ἡ ἀδιδακτος καὶ ὁμοία τῶν πρώτων ὄρων σύνεσις καὶ τῶν πρώτων ἀξιωμαμάτων).⁶⁴ To this common share in rationality we owe, says Themistius, that we human beings understand each other, that we can overcome the subjectivity of sense-perception – as taught by Plato – and that the student understands the teacher and vice versa:

μήποτε γὰρ οὐδὲ τὸ συνιέναι ἀλλήλων ὑπῆρχεν ἄν, εἰ μή τις ἦν εἷς νοῦς, οὐ πάντες ἐκοινωνοῦμεν, καὶ τὸ Πλάτωνος ἀληθές, ὡς εἰ μή τι ἦν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις <πάθος> τοῖς μὲν ἄλλο τι τοῖς δὲ ἄλλο τι ταυτόν, ἀλλὰ τις ἡμῶν ἴδιόν τι ἔπασχε πάθος ἢ οἱ ἄλλοι, οὐκ ἂν ἦν ῥάδιον ἐνδείξασθαι τῷ ἐτέρῳ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πάθημα. οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστήμαις ὁ διδάσκων τῷ μαθητῶντι τὰ αὐτὰ νοεῖ· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν ἦν τὸ διδάσκειν καὶ τὸ μαθηθῆναι, εἰ μὴ ταυτὸ ἦν τὸ νόημα τοῦ διδάσκοντος καὶ τοῦ μαθηθάνοντος. εἰ δὲ ταυτόν ὡσπερ ἀνάγκη, δηλονότι καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς γίνεται νοῦς ὁ τοῦ διδάσκοντος τῷ μαθηθάνοντος, εἴπερ ταυτόν ἐπὶ τοῦ νοῦ ἡ οὐσία τῆς ἐνεργείας, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἴσως ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων μόνων τὸ διδάσκειν καὶ τὸ μαθηθῆναι καὶ τὸ συνιέναι ὅλως ἀλλήλων, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων οὐκέτι, διότι μηδὲ ἡ κατασκευὴ τῶν ἄλλων ψυχῶν τοιαύτη, ὥστε δέχεσθαι τὸν δυνάμει νοῦν καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐνεργείας νοῦ τελειοῦσθαι.⁶⁵

For we would not understand one another unless there were a single intellect that we all shared. And Plato’s statement is true, ‘If there was not an <affection> that was identical, although individually different for different human beings, but instead any one of us was uniquely affected in comparison with other people, it would not be easy for that person to indicate to another how he was personally affected. Similarly with bodies of knowledge, the teacher’s objects of thought are identical to those of the learner; for there would not even be any teaching and learning unless the thought possessed by teacher and learner was identical. And if, as is necessary, that thought is identical, then clearly the teacher also has an intellect identical to that of the learner, given that in the case of the intellect its essence is identical with its activity. But surely the reason why only in the case of human beings is there teaching, learning and mutual understanding generally, but not at all in the case of the other animals, is that the constitution of other souls is also not such that it can receive the potential intellect and be perfected by the actual intellect (trans. Todd).⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Themistii *In libros Aristotelis De Anima paraphrasis* edidit R. Heinze, Reimer, Berlin 1899 (*CAG* V.3), pp. 103.36-104.2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.2-14.

⁶⁶ *Themistius. On Aristotle’s On the Soul*, translated by R.B. Todd, Cornell U.P., Ithaca, New York 1996, p. 129.

Daily experience, the comparison with other animals, the teaching of Plato, and the reference to the universal and spontaneous share in the ἀδίδακτος καὶ ὁμοία ... σύνεσις of the first principles of reasoning concur in the explanation of the Agent Intellect and of its role as the unique principle of intellection for the whole of mankind. This topic, on which Themistius elaborates in the scholarly context of his exegesis of Aristotle's *De Anima*, features also in the *Discourse 6*, echoed by the expression τὸ συνιέναι ἀλλήλων in both places.

Discourse 6 is a laudatory speech grounded in Themistius' views on kingship. It has an obvious ceremonial stance and implies recourse to a great amount of literary antecedents and sources to be fully understood. But the foundations of its key concept, *philanthropia*, are philosophical. They consist of the idea that through rationality mankind shares in the affinity with that divine ancestor who is the ποιητῆς καὶ πατήρ of the *Timaeus*, but also the divine Intellect of Aristotle's *De Anima*. This part of the *Discourse 6* can be fully appreciated only if one takes into account Themistius' idiosyncratic way to understand Plato and Aristotle in agreement. They agree with each other because they share in a common legacy of rationality that no educated man can disavow. As shown by the passage of the paraphrase of the *De Anima*, in his eyes a Platonic epistemology provides arguments for Aristotle's Agent Intellect. Themistius the philosopher and Themistius the rhetor shed light on one another; by examining in close connection the two sides of his literary output one can reconstruct a profile that is neither that of an intellectual of the Second Sophistics, nor that of a Neoplatonic philosopher in the sense that this label has after Proclus.

