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# PLATO'S SECOND COMING

An Outline of the Philosophy  
of  
George Gemistos Plethon

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# PLATÓNŮV DRUHÝ PŘÍCHOD

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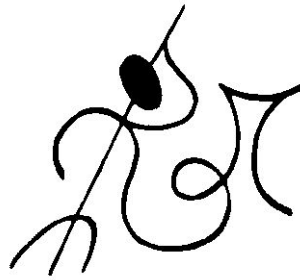
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Vojtěch Hladký

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ΠΛΗΘΩΝΟΣ ΠΟΣΕΙΔΑΩΝ

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## *Introduction*

George Gemistos Plethon is certainly one of the most important, but at the same time also mysterious figures of Byzantine and Renaissance philosophy. The lectures on Plato he gave to the Florentine humanists during his stay in Italy certainly – directly or indirectly – helped to promote the renewal of Platonic philosophy in the West. However, as it seems, his own version of Platonism has not been sufficiently explored yet and his religious beliefs and their relation to his philosophical thought have not also received a satisfactory treatment. This both should be the task of the present study.

### **1. The Man and his Work**

George Gemistos, surnamed later also Plethon, was born in Constantinople<sup>1</sup> some time around 1360.<sup>2</sup> He might have studied under famous philosopher Demetrios Kydones, who played an important role in introducing Latin scholasticism into Byzantine thought,<sup>3</sup> and mysterious Jew Elissaeus,<sup>4</sup> but we cannot be sure in any of these two cases. Gemistos appears in Constantinople around 1405, but shortly afterwards moves to Mistra, the capital of the despotate of Morea (today's Peloponnese) where he was active at the court of the Despot as one of his officials<sup>5</sup> and at the same time as a distinguished humanist and teacher of ancient Greek thought and culture.<sup>6</sup> He must have soon become well known as a statesman, philosopher, and an authority on the ancient Greek world. In spite of being a layman, he travelled as a counsellor with the Byzantine delegation to Italy to participate in the Council at Ferrara and Florence in 1438-1439, where the Church union was to be concluded. There he met the Italian humanists and gave his famous lectures on Plato's philosophy.<sup>7</sup> After the Council he returned to the Peloponnese and spent the rest of his life in Mistra.<sup>8</sup> He died most probably in 1454, but the year 1452 is also possible.<sup>9</sup> After

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bessarion, *De nat.* 93.10 (Latin version): *Plethon Constantinopolitanus*, Alexandre (1858), p. v, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This date may be deduced from the statement of George of Trebizond, according to which Gemistos died almost hundred years old (*centum enim pene misera aetate annos compleuit*), *Comp.* III (penultimate chapter = LEGRAND III, p. 289), cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Gemistos mentions his discussion with Kydones about Plato (*Ad Bess.* I 467.18-22), so it is clear that he at least knew him. Whether he was in fact his pupil is, nonetheless, far from certain, cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *infra*.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Filelfo's letter from 1441 (*Ad Sax.*): [*Gemystus*] *est enim jam admodum senex, quique magistratum gerit nescio quem.*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *infra* and Woodhouse (1986), pp. 33-47, 79-118.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 118-188.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 215-239, 267-282, 308-321.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1976), pp. 163-170, *contra e.g.* Alexandre (1858), p. xliii with n. 2, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 3, 5, who accept the earlier date on the basis of a manuscript note: *Μην. Ιουν. κς' Νιε' έτελεύτησεν ο διδάσκαλος ο Γόμοστος [sic] ήμέρα δευτέρα, ώρα α' τής ήμέρας [= 26.6.1452].* In contrast, Monfasani concludes for 1454 in his overall reconstruction of the chronology of Trebizond's works. It may be also noted that the corruption of Gemistos' name

his death he was accused of paganism and ancient Greek polytheism by his main personal as well as philosophical opponent Scholarios, who finally managed to seize and burn Gemistos' most important work, the *Laws*, discovered after his death.<sup>10</sup> His alleged polytheism inspired by Plato subsequently began to provoke condemnation, censure, but also fascination among the Byzantine and Renaissance thinkers, so that even his remains were transferred to Italy in 1464 by his admirer Sigismondo Malatesta, who buried Gemistos in his neo-pagan Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini.<sup>11</sup>

Gemistos left behind numerous texts covering such diverse disciplines as grammar, rhetoric, literature, music, geography, astronomy, ancient history, politics, religion, philosophy, and theology.<sup>12</sup> Although some of them are only excerpts and summaries from ancient authors, most probably made in his school for teaching purposes, the wide range of his interests definitely shows that he was not only an excellent scholar, but, in fact, a kind of polymath.<sup>13</sup> For practical reasons the present study will have to concentrate only on the texts that are somehow relevant for his philosophy, although those political, religious, and theological treatises that contribute to the understanding of his philosophical thought will be also sometimes discussed here.

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(“Gomostos”) does not make the manuscript note much trustworthy. Moreover, there is one fact that may further support the later date (1454) of his death. When Scholarios is writing about the events in the late 1440s and early 1450s, he says that Gemistos replied to his *Defence of Aristotle* but that he himself could not do the same because of “the fate of our country”. (Ὁ μὲν οὖν αὖθις ἀντέγραφε, τὸν αὐτὸν πρὸς τε Ἀριστοτέλη καὶ ἡμᾶς, ἐκεῖνῳ δῆθεν συνηγοροῦντας, ἀγῶνα πεπονημένους. Ἡμᾶς δὲ ἢ τῆς πατρίδος ἀντιγράφειν αὐτῷ ἐκόλυε συμφορὰ ..., *Ad Jos.* 156.14-16.) It is noteworthy that it was the fall of Constantinople, and not the death of Gemistos which is mentioned as the obstacle that prevented Scholarios from answering properly. This would certainly fit better to the sequence of events, in which Gemistos died a year after 1453 and not the one before it. Nonetheless, this hint is naturally quite feeble. Furthermore, Kamariotes at the very outset of his treatise, begun probably after the fall of Constantinople and finished in 1455 (*cf. In Pleth.* IX.8 Astruc, Astruc (1955), pp. 259-261), seems to talk about Gemistos as of somebody who is alive rather than dead, *In Pleth.* 2: Πλήθων ὁ ἄδελφος, ἐπὶ φιλοσοφία, εἶπερ τις τῶν πώποτε ἀναξίως μέγα πεφρονηκῶς, καὶ τῷ περιόντι τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ δοκούσης σοφίας οὐ δεόντως χρησάμενος· οὐ γὰρ ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ οὐδ' οὔτε τοῦ ἄλλου ἐπὶ βλάβῃ μὲν οὖν ἑαυτοῦ τε, καὶ εἴ τις αὐτῷ προσέχειν αἰροῖτο, φαίνεται κεκρημένος ... However, in the closing part of the treatise he makes clear that Gemistos recently died, *ibid.* 218, *cf.* n. 706. This would place Gemistos death between 1453-1355. Moreover, it is really strange that if Gemistos really died in late June 1452, Kamariotes learnt it only some time after the fall of Constantinople in late May next year.

<sup>10</sup> *Cf. infra.*

<sup>11</sup> *Cf.* Woodhouse (1986), pp. 159-160, 374-375.

<sup>12</sup> For the overview of Gemistos' works *cf.* Woodhouse (1986), xvi-xviii. Unfortunately Woodhouse fails to note that later Masai (1963) found out that an unpublished treatise *On Fortune* (*Περὶ τύχης*) is in fact a text by Alexander of Aphrodisias and not by Gemistos as he claimed in his previous works. Similarly, the *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* (*Περὶ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*) is a later forgery published under the name of Gemistos, *cf.* Monfasani (1994). For other unpublished texts by Gemistos and the survey of manuscripts *cf.* also Masai-Masai (1954), Dedes (1981).

<sup>13</sup> *Cf.* Woodhouse (1986), pp. 27-28.

## 2. Gemistos and Scholarship

The secondary literature on Gemistos is surprisingly rich,<sup>14</sup> and for this reason in this study of his philosophical thought only the most important contributions that have significantly influenced the discussion over his work may be taken fully into account. There are thus many occasional informative or, in contrast, very specialized writings on some aspects of his thought and legacy, interesting as they sometimes may be, that must be necessarily left aside.

The modern Plethonic scholarship begins with the works of W. Gass,<sup>15</sup> and especially C. Alexandre,<sup>16</sup> who both around the middle of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century published some of Gemistos' key texts, accompanied with their studies. Alexandre's edition of Plethon's *Laws* and other shorter texts related to it has not been superseded until today although in the meantime some more text of the *Laws* has been discovered by R. and F. Masai. Alexandre's book is also a turning-point in the overall interpretation of Gemistos' religious beliefs, because while W. Gass was not still sure about his paganism,<sup>17</sup> Alexandre's extensive edition of the *Laws* is widely accepted by modern scholars as the decisive proof of it. In the second half of the same century F. Schultze made the first important attempt to reconstruct Gemistos' metaphysical system in its entirety.<sup>18</sup> He was followed by a Greek scholar I.P. Mamalakis who in the late 1930s published important works on Gemistos,<sup>19</sup> as well as M.V. Anastos who shortly after the World War II wrote detailed and very interesting studies on diverse aspects of his thought and learning.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, arguably the most important works on Gemistos' philosophy still remain those by F. Masai from the 1950s, who has also re-examined the tradition of the transmission of his texts and have discovered some important manuscripts.<sup>21</sup> Of many Greek scholars who contributed significantly to the Plethonic scholarship we should mention especially Th.S. Nikolaou,<sup>22</sup> L. Bargeliotes,<sup>23</sup> and Ch.P. Baloglou,<sup>24</sup> the last one being especially interested in political and economical aspects of Gemistos' writings. J. Monfasani<sup>25</sup> and J. Hankins,<sup>26</sup> both concentrating on themes that have some relation to Gemistos, made very important contributions to understanding of Gemistos' work in the

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. the list of the secondary literature at the end of this study, including the systematic bibliographies cited there.

<sup>15</sup> Gass (1844).

<sup>16</sup> ALEXANDRE.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Gass (1844), pp. 35-37.

<sup>18</sup> Schultze (1874).

<sup>19</sup> Mamalakis (1939), (1955), for other works on Gemistos by this author cf. the systematic bibliographies.

<sup>20</sup> Anastos (1948), for other works on Gemistos by this author cf. the systematic bibliographies.

<sup>21</sup> Especially Masai-Masai (1954) and Masai (1956), (1963), (1976), for other works on Gemistos by this author cf. the systematic bibliographies.

<sup>22</sup> All his diverse papers on Gemistos were collected in: Nikolaou (2005).

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Bargeliotes (1973), (1975), (1976), (1979), (1980), (1989), (1990-1993), for other works on Gemistos by this author cf. the systematic bibliographies.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Baloglou (2002), for other works on Gemistos by this author cf. the systematic bibliographies.

<sup>25</sup> Monfasani (1976), (1992), (1994).

<sup>26</sup> Hankins (1991).



contemporary context of the Renaissance thought. B. Tambrun-Krasker, specializing on Gemistos, has prepared several important editions of his texts and, besides some articles, wrote an extensive PhD thesis on him, unfortunately unpublished so far.<sup>27</sup> Finally, in 1986 C.M. Woodhouse put out a complex and detailed study of Gemistos' life, the events in which he took part, and his writings, the most important of which are translated or summarized in English there.<sup>28</sup> Even if Gemistos' philosophy and religious beliefs will be treated from a significantly different perspective here, the present work is much indebted to this exceptional book that provide an ideal starting point for anybody interested in the remarkable thinker of Mistra. Thus, although this text can hopefully be understood on its own, the previous knowledge of Woodhouse's book is to a certain extent presupposed.

What is now, as it seems, most needed for the proper understanding and appreciation of Gemistos' thought is a kind of global *schizzo*, a systematic overview of his philosophy concentrating especially on his Platonism. Such an overall reconstruction must be primarily based on his own texts, and it should be confronted with the testimonies of other writers and supplemented with them only in the second place. Plethonic scholarship often relies too much on the external information about this, certainly extraordinary and fascinating, personality and thus tends to interpret his works from the perspective of the contemporaries that might have perhaps misunderstood them or were even overtly hostile to their author. This unfortunately leads many interpreters to regard some of his texts as hypocritical, tactical, and not-representing Gemistos' real thought. The approach of the present study is thus purposely reversed one – it will attempt to concentrate first on Gemistos' texts, accept all of them, as much as possible, as serious, although perhaps at the same time various expressions of his philosophical and religious beliefs, and interpret them in their proper context. Only then external testimonies may be introduced, which must be, nonetheless, always submitted to a careful examination that is especially necessary in the case of Gemistos' real religious standpoint. Only then the conclusions can be drawn.

To discuss Gemistos' thought properly, it seems convenient to divide his writings into three groups that correspond to the most important aspects of his philosophy. The first one is the so-called public philosophy, that means, the philosophy Gemistos presented publicly as his own and in the case of which it is also probably that he himself adheres to it. The second group is the Platonism contained in his commentaries and interpretations of the thought of others in the first place Plato and *Chaldaean Oracles*. The mysterious *Laws*, discovered after Gemistos' death, belongs

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<sup>27</sup> Especially *De virt., Or. mag.*, Tambrun-Krasker (1992), (1998), (1999), (2001), (2002), (2005). Tambrun-Krasker's editing of other Gemistos' text is still in progress, for other works on Gemistos by this author cf. the systematic bibliographies.

<sup>28</sup> Woodhouse (1986). In his review Monfasani (1988) discusses some shortcomings of Woodhouse' book. Cf. also n. 12.

also to the same group of texts that are subsumed here, for the reasons that will be apparent later on, under a common designation the *philosophia perennis*. Finally, the third part of the present work will treat the problem of Gemistos' religious beliefs including his sole treatise dealing with Christian theology, often considered as hypocritical and not representing his real opinions. This part will also discuss at length external testimonies as well as the content and the intentions of the *Laws*, on both of which the usual conclusion about his paganism is based. For the reasons that will become apparent only in the third part of this study, the name "Gemistos" will be used – to some extent in the similar manner as Woodhouse – when his personality or public philosophy is meant, whereas his surname "Plethon" will be restricted solely to the context of the *philosophia perennis*.

W.B. Yeats

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

I

That is no country for old men. The young  
In one another's arms, birds in the trees  
– Those dying generations – at their song,  
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,  
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long  
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.  
Caught in that sensual music all neglect  
Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

An aged man is but a paltry thing,  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing  
For every tatter in its mortal dress,  
Nor is there singing school but studying  
Monuments of its own magnificence;  
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,  
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,  
And be the singing-masters of my soul.  
Consume my heart away; sick with desire  
And fastened to a dying animal  
It knows not what it is; and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;  
Or set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

1927

*(The Tower, 1928)*

## *I. Public Philosophy*

### **1. Platonic Reforms**

The part of Gemistos' philosophy that was presented as his own reflections openly to a larger public consists of five texts which contain several more or less general philosophical arguments and reasoning. We may divide them into two groups. The first one comprises an informative letter and two advisory speeches of a political character, written most probably during 1414-1418. The other two texts are two funeral orations, on the empresses Cleope and Helen, which were delivered much later, in 1433 and 1450 respectively, and will be discussed below.<sup>29</sup> The earliest of the political texts is Gemistos' letter to Manuel II, usually cited as the *On the Isthmus*, the main scope of which is to inform the Emperor about the situation in the Peloponnese, where Gemistos moved probably not long time before. At the same time Gemistos attempts to propose some basic reforms to improve the unfavourable situation there.<sup>30</sup> The letter was written probably in 1414, just before the Emperor's visit to the peninsula.<sup>31</sup> The second text, philosophically by far the most interesting, is an advisory speech in the ancient style, known as the *Address to Theodore*, the ruling Despot of Morea at that time. Written some time during 1416-1418,<sup>32</sup> it urges the introduction of radical reforms into the despotate. The reformatory proposals of the speech were developed into further details in the last text composed in 1418, the *Address to Manuel*, to whom the *On the Isthmus* had been already directed. Moreover, the speech clearly presupposes that the Emperor also knows the *Address to Theodore*.<sup>33</sup>

According to what Gemistos says in the *On the Isthmus*, the main reason why it is not possible to defend the Peloponnese against the incursions of "barbarians", that is, the Ottoman Turks together with Italians and other Latins, is its bad political organisation (*κακοπολιτεία*). The cases of the Lacedaemonians, Persians and Romans, as well as the barbarians who threaten the state now, show that their success or failure depends on the virtue (*ἀρετή*) of the political organisation or constitution (*πολιτεία*). The reform of it is thus urgently needed, because the present weakness of the despotate can only be counterbalanced by the quality of its political organisation (*πολιτεία*).<sup>34</sup> In the *Address to Theodore* Gemistos similarly claims that the only way the city or nation can change for better from worse is the reform of its state-organisation (*τὴν πολιτείαν ἐπανορθωσάμενοι*). There is no other cause (*αἰτία*) for its well-being or the opposite,

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Zakythinis (1932), pp. 190, 240, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 113, 309-310.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Baloglou (2002), pp. 35-36.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Baloglou (2002), p. 97, Woodhouse (1986), p. 100, dates the letter to the years 1415-1416, Masai (1956), pp. 387-388, before 1415, Blum (1988), 12, p. 30, n. 8, to 1427.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Baloglou (2002), p. 99, Woodhouse 92, Masai (1956), pp. 387-388.

<sup>33</sup> *Ad Man.* 265.18-20, cf. Baloglou (2002), p. 103, Woodhouse (2002), p. 92, Masai (1956), pp. 387-388..

<sup>34</sup> *De Isthmo* 309.4-310.18.

because although this may also be a result of chance (τύχη), the situation of such city would be uncertain and can change quickly. The prosperity of the cities is in fact mostly due to the virtue of its constitution (δι' ἀρετὴν πολιτείας) and, conversely, they deteriorate if it is corrupted.<sup>35</sup>

Gemistos then gives a series of examples from ancient mythology and history to support this claim. – The rise of the Greeks (Hellenes) is connected with Herakles who instead of lawlessness and outright injustice (ἀνομία καὶ ἀδικία κατὰρα) introduced the law and zeal for virtue (ζῆλος ἀρετῆς). Before him the Greek nation was ruled by strangers and was not important in any significant way. Afterwards many successes in Greece and abroad may be remembered. Similarly the Lacedaemonians became the leaders (ἡγεμόνες) of all the Greeks only after Lycurgus proclaimed his famous constitution, and they remained in this position as long as they were observing it. Then came the time of the Thebans whose leader, Epameinondas, had received the Pythagorean education. He, in turn, trained Philip of Macedon while the future king was kept as a hostage in Thebes. Philip, together with Aristotle, was responsible for the education of his famous son, Alexander the Great who, having conquered the Persians, was to become the leader of all the Greeks and, as well as the king of all Asia. The great power of the Romans (apparently not only of the ancient Romans, but also of the Byzantines) was due to the virtue of their constitution and it lasted until the Saracens appeared, who were originally a small part of the Arabs and subordinated to the Romans. When the Saracens introduced new laws and constitution to the Arabs, they managed to seize “the biggest and best part of Roman empire”. They thus conquered Libya and introduced their political order (πολιτεία) to the Persians as well as to many other nations who eagerly follow these laws (νόμοι) and for this reason seem to prosper (εὐτυχεῖν). This is also true about the barbarians, that is, the Turks, “who have been very successful in the fight against us” because “using these laws, they are much powerful”.<sup>36</sup> A short treatise by Gemistos is preserved, or rather an excerpt from the work of the monk Theophanes, which shows that he was interested in the history of early Islam.<sup>37</sup> Mohammad is there called “the leader of the Arabs and their lawgiver (ὁ ἀραβάρχης τε καὶ νομοθέτης)”, which suggests that for Gemistos he was a political as well as a religious reformer, who – as we have just seen – was ultimately responsible for the military successes of his followers including those of the contemporary Turks.<sup>38</sup>

In the *Address to Theodore* Gemistos then sets the present political situation of the Byzantine state into a broader historical context, identifying the Turks, “the neighbouring barbarians, who have deprived our empire of many fertile parts”, with the ancient Parapamisadai. These were

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<sup>35</sup> *Ad Theod.* 116.16-24.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 116.24-118.12.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Klein-Franke (1972), pp. 2-4.

<sup>38</sup> *Mab.*, Dedes (1981), p. 67.

previously attacked and defeated by Alexander the Great and “his Greeks”, and now, after much time and having become stronger, they seek the revenge of his Indian campaign on “us ... the Greeks (Ἕλληνας)”.<sup>39</sup> The identity of ancient and present inhabitants of the Peloponnese is even more emphatically declared in the *Address to Manuel*. – “We, whom you lead and rule over, are Greeks by descent (Ἕλληνας τὸ γένος), as the language (φωνή) and traditional culture (πάτριος παιδεία) shows.”<sup>40</sup> This is a notorious and frequently quoted statement of Gemistos, who is often seen as the forerunner of modern nationalism.<sup>41</sup> As it is well known, the Byzantines usually called themselves Romans (Ῥωμαῖοι) and the name “Greek (Hellenic)” was normally reserved for the ancient Greeks, that is, pagans. We must not, however, overlook the context of the whole passage. As we have just seen, Gemistos situates current events into a global historical perspective, in which they are the long-term result of what happened in the ancient Greek history. The Byzantines are thus threatened by the Ottoman attacks because of the age-old antagonism originated by Alexander’s expedition to the East. Contemporary nations are here apparently considered to be the descendants of those since the ancient past. (It was also a widespread Byzantine custom to designate the peoples settled down and living in the territories known from the ancient historians by the names of their ancient inhabitants.)<sup>42</sup> As it has been said, the chief goal of Gemistos’ speech is to persuade the Emperor of the necessity to defend the Peloponnese. To achieve this he claims that for the Greeks there cannot be any other country to live in than the Peloponnese, the adjacent European mainland, and the neighbouring islands. The Greeks lived in this country since time immemorial because it is not known to have been previously inhabited by any other nation, and from the peninsula they moved to and settled in many other countries. The Greeks originating from here also accomplished many famous deeds and even the founders of Constantinople were the Peloponnesian Dorians.<sup>43</sup> To defend the Peloponnese is not only necessary, but also realisable. – In the *Address to Theodore* Gemistos demonstrates at length, using many mythological and historical examples, that many nations, due to their determination, managed to overcome situations even worse than that of the despotate at that time.<sup>44</sup>

That the broad affinities with the ancient past and culture in general is what Gemistos has in mind in the first place, proves also the *Funeral Oration on Helen*, written, however, more than thirty years later (in 1450). Here he talks about the Byzantines in a more traditional way as “this

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<sup>39</sup> *Ad Theod.* 114.22-115.5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ad Man.* 247.14-15, *cf.* 250.1.

<sup>41</sup> *Cf.* Zografidis (2003), p. 130-131, n. 4 and the literature cited there, in particular: Bargeliotis (1973), (1989), (1990-1993), Nikolaou (1989), pp. 99-102, Patrick Peritore (1977).

<sup>42</sup> *Cf.* Ditten (1964), who concentrates especially on a pupil of Gemistos, the historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles.

<sup>43</sup> *Ad Man.* 247.15-248.18.

<sup>44</sup> *Ad Theod.* 115.20-116.15.

Roman nation of ours (τὸ τοῦτο ἡμέτερον τῶν Ῥωμαίων γένος)<sup>45</sup> and uses the traditional title of Byzantine rulers “the Emperor of the Romans (Βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων)”.<sup>46</sup> In the *Address to Theodore* the continuity with the ancient Roman Empire is nevertheless also implied when Gemistos says “we thus see whereto the matters got for us from the great Roman Empire ... (ἐκ τῆς μεγίστης Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ...)”.<sup>47</sup> In Gemistos’ historical perspective, among many other interconnections and mutual influences, there is also an ethnical bond between the Greeks (Hellenes) and the Romans. – Rome was founded by the Trojans who after the fall of Troy moved under the leadership of Aeneas from Phrygia to Italy. They joined together with the Sabines, who were the Lacedaemonians and came there from the Peloponnese. These two nations thus jointly established city that was to create “the greatest and at the same time best Empire of all that are remembered”.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, according to Gemistos, the ancient Greeks and Romans are closely related because of their origin and the cultural continuity. For him, as it seems, the Byzantines were descendants of both the Greeks and the Romans, and the invoking the ancient Greek past of the contemporary inhabitants of the Peloponnese is therefore just one side of the story. Despite all this it must be admitted that to go back to the ancient Greek identity of the Peloponnesians and to call them by their ancient name is in the Byzantine context indeed a daring and extraordinary thought. What is not entirely clear and what will be the problem that we will have to deal with repeatedly, is how far Gemistos was willing to go in his identification with the ancient Hellenes, that is, pagans. The crucial question, which appears already here, is whether he was just trying to point out the historical roots of the Byzantines, or whether he was attempting to revive the Hellenic culture and religion in its entirety.

In the *Address to Theodore*, after Gemistos presented in a large historical perspective the necessity to reform the political order on the Peloponnese, he proceeds to his own considerations and proposals for the best constitution. According to him, there are three kinds of the constitution (πολιτεία) – monarchy, oligarchy and democracy, all of which exist in several forms. Those who are concerned about what is best (τὰ βέλπιστα), claim that the best of them is a monarchy which uses the best counsellors (συμβούλους) and good laws. There should be a moderate number of counsellors, composed of educated men. This is because the mass of people is unable to discuss the problems properly, lacking the necessary knowledge, and so its decisions are usually unreasonable. On the other side, a very limited number of counsellors would pursue exclusively their own profit and not the common good, and thus only the moderate number of

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<sup>45</sup> *In Hel.* 271.5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 272.7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ad Theod.* 129.13-14.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 115.23-116.2, cf. *Ad Man.* 248.18-249.4.

them will pursue what is profitable for all. They need to be moderately rich, because those who are very rich are only interested in gaining even more, while the poor seek to satisfy their needs in the first place.<sup>49</sup> The solution proposed by Gemistos is thus a certain kind of compromise between monarchy and oligarchy – a system with one sole ruler advised by a wider body of counsellors. It is seemingly a deviation from the ideal constitution proposed by Plato in the *Republic*, which presupposes the ruling class composed of limited number of the philosophers-guardians and which in Gemistos’ initial distinction would be probably closest to the oligarchy.<sup>50</sup> He can, however, base his decision for monarchy on Plato’s *Politicus* and perhaps also on some passages in the *Republic* itself, and this suits much better the context of Byzantium, in which the Emperor’s exclusive power is fact that can never be challenged.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, nonetheless, Gemistos obviously tries to be faithful to the Platonic ideal of a philosophical oligarchy from the *Republic* and so, as we have seen, postulates as the second highest authority in the state a body of educated counsellors who should help the monarch to rule properly.

According to the *Address to Theodore*, almost every city or state is divided into three classes. – The first are the self-sufficient producers (*αὐτουργικόν*), that is, farmers, shepherds, and “all who by themselves produce the fruit of the earth”. The second are the suppliers of services (*διακονικόν*), including the craftsmen, merchants, and retailers. Finally, the third is the ruling class (*ἀρχικόν*), composed of those whose main task is to preserve (*σωτῆρες*) the whole city as well as serve as its guardians (*φύλακες*) if necessary. Its head is the Emperor or some other leader (*βασιλεὺς ἢ τις ἡγεμὼν*), but it cover judges, officials (*ἄρχοντες*), and soldiers as well, who all must naturally be supported by the taxes.<sup>52</sup> In the *Address to Manuel* the two tax-paying lower classes are jointly called “helots”, which was the name for the inhabitants of ancient Spartan territory who had no civil rights.<sup>53</sup> The producers and suppliers thus apparently stand in contrast to the “free” defenders and governors of the state. At the same time it also is typical for Gemistos’ interest in ancient Greece and his attempt to stress the historical continuity in the Peloponnese.

As the *Address to Theodore* continues, these three “first kinds (*γέννη*)” of people can be distinguished in the city by their very nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*) and each has its own occupation and work (*τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ αἱ πράξεις*). It should be determined by good legislation that each of them does what belongs to its competence (*τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν*) only and should not become

<sup>49</sup> *Ad Theod.* 118.24-119.19, cf. 113.5-114.3.

<sup>50</sup> Plato, *Resp.* II 369b-376d, III-IV 412b-427c.

<sup>51</sup> *Idem*, *Polit.* 291d-303b, *Resp.* IX 579c-580c, 587b-588a. Plutarch, too, another possible source for Gemistos, prefers monarchy from these three kinds of constitution (*De mon.*), for Plethon’s general interest in Plutarch cf. Diller (1954), Mioni (1985), p. 385. Cf. Ellissen (1860), p. 146, n. 32, p. 149, n. 42, Baloglou (2002), pp. 190-193, nn. 25-26. For the general outline of the Byzantine political thought cf. Dvorník (1966).

<sup>52</sup> *Ad Theod.* 119.20-120.24, cf. *Ad Man.* 254.11-255.17.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 255.17-256.4, 256.11-13.



involved in the occupation reserved for the other kinds. Especially the ruling class ought to be engaged in trade and retailing because it is primarily responsible for the defence of the city and this is also the reason why it is supported by the taxes of the others. These, on the contrary, should not be obliged to serve as soldiers, because it is too burdensome to do both.<sup>54</sup> This is, in fact, Gemistos' long term-preoccupation,<sup>55</sup> which, together with the refusal of the common Byzantine usage of unreliable foreign mercenaries,<sup>56</sup> appears already in his earlier speech the *On the Isthmus* as well as in the later *Address to Manuel*. There he even claims that if the defenders, who, as it is said elsewhere, fight for their freedom in the first place, and producers were not strictly separated, the state would not be able to defend itself because the latter ones would desert from the army and return back to their duties at home.<sup>57</sup> For these reasons Gemistos considers the strict division of the three kinds in his state as necessary. However, he may also have been influenced by Plato because the chief principle on which the ideal city of the *Republic* is based is basically the same. – Everybody, individuals and classes, should do one work only, fulfil only what has been assigned to him as his duty and occupation and not to attempt to be active in several fields at the same time. This is equalled with the justice.<sup>58</sup> In the *Republic*, too, the city is divided into three classes – farmers (γεωργοί), craftsmen (δημιουργοί), and the guardians (φύλακες), including those of them “who are able to rule (ίκανοὶ ἄρχειν)”. The guardians should be supported by the other two classes – basically for the similar reasons as are those given in Gemistos' political writings. However, what is absent there is the communism of the *Republic*, including the living in common and the prohibition of the personal property with the exception of the most indispensable things.<sup>59</sup> This is again most probably due to the specific situation, in which these proposals should be realized. For the Byzantine society of that time such type of communism would have been simply unacceptable.

We may leave aside Gemistos' proposals, sometimes very detailed and concrete, about the organisation of the army, taxation, punishments, and the public life in general.<sup>60</sup> What for him is the most important part of the legislation (κεφάλαιον ἀπάντων) are, nevertheless, the laws concerning the public as well as private opinions about the divine (τὰ περὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δόξαν). There are three main principles: “First, there is one divine entity in reality (ἐν μὲν εἶναι τι θεῖον ἐν τοῖς οὐσι), an essence that surpasses everything (προὔχουσά τις τῶν ὄλων οὐσία). Second, this divine entity cares also about humankind (τὸ θεῖον τοῦτο καὶ ἐπιμελὲς εἶναι ἀνθρώπων) and all the human affairs, either small, or great, are ordered by it (δικοικεῖσθαι). Third, it orders

<sup>54</sup> *Ad Theod.* 121.1-14.

<sup>55</sup> *De Isthmo* 310.18-311.7, 311.21-312.12, *Ad Man.* 253.17-254.10.

<sup>56</sup> *Ad Theod.* 121.14-19, *Ad Man.* 252.14-253.5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 251.5-252.5.

<sup>58</sup> Plato, *Resp.* II 370b-c, 374b, IV 433a-434c, cf. Baloglou (2002), pp. 197-198, n. 37.

<sup>59</sup> Plato, *Resp.* III 414b-417b, especially 415a-c, cf. Baloglou (2002), pp. 195-196, nn. 32-34.

<sup>60</sup> For a detailed commentary of Gemistos' political treatises cf. Masai (1956), pp. 66-101, and Baloglou (2002).

everything according to its judgment (*κατὰ γνώμην τὴν αὐτοῦ διοικεῖν ἕκαστα*), always rightly and justly, it neither fails in its duty towards each thing, nor can it be flattered and its intentions be changed (*ῥωπευόμενον τε καὶ παρατρεπόμενον*) by human gifts.” According to Gemistos, the divine entity does not in fact need humans. However, they may still practice their religious ceremonies and sacrifice offerings to the divine (*αἱ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀγιστεῖται θυσίαι τε καὶ ἀναθήματα*) if they are moderate and inspired by the pious intention. These religious practices should be nevertheless understood merely as symbols of the recognition (*ὁμολογίας ὄντα σύμβολα*) that source of our good is “out there” in the divine and that we have not begun to be guilty of the first two kinds of impiety, that is, not believing that there is some divine entity and that it cares about the world including humankind. Such ceremonies and offerings, though, must not be excessive as this would naturally be the third kind of impiety – an attempt to change the will of the divine and the way it orders the world.<sup>61</sup>

Those, who, both in public and private, respect these principles, live in accordance with the virtue (*ἀρετή*) and pursue the good (*τὸ καλόν*). Badness (*κακία*) and wrongdoings (*ἁμαρτήματα*) arise from a behaviour that follows the opposite principles. Now, Gemistos resumes the three kinds of the impiety. – There are always some people (1) who are mistaken by their belief that there is absolutely nothing divine in the universe (*οὐδ’ εἶναι τι τὸ παράπαν θεῖον ἐν τοῖς οὐσίῳ*). Those (2) who believe, that there is some divine, but is not concerned in any way with human affairs (*οἱ δ’ εἶναι μὲν, φροντίζειν δὲ μηδὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων*). And, finally, those (3) who, though accepting that there is something divine and, moreover, that it cares about humans, believe that they may “persuade and enchant” it by some religious ceremonies, offerings and prayers in order that it does not always fulfil what is just (*οἱ δ’ εἶναι καὶ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, παραιτητὸν δ’ εἶναι καὶ τισὶ θυσίαις καὶ ἀναθήμασι καὶ εὐχαῖς κηλούμενον μὴ ἀκριβοῦν ἐκάστοτε τὰ δίκαια*). In other words, Gemistos claims here that if the divine is just it may not change its decisions. These two opposite opinions about the divine correspond to the two opposite manners of life mentioned above. The first has the pursuit of the good (*τὸ καλόν*), the second pleasure (*ἡ ἡδονή*) as its chief goal of life.

As Gemistos says, according to all the Greeks (Hellenes) and “barbarians” who “partake to some extent in the intellect (*οἱ γε καὶ ὁσονοῦν νοῦ μετέχοντες*), man is a nature composed of a divine and a mortal essence (*ξύνθετος τις φύσις ἔκ τε θείας οὐσίας καὶ θνητῆς*). The divine part of this composition is the soul, the mortal is the body. Those who follow “the divine in them (*τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς θεῖον*)”, which has prevailed over the other part, have the right opinions about the divine, which is akin to it (*περὶ τὴν ξυγγενῆ οὐσίαν*), and their whole life is guided by the virtue and the good. The others who are subdued to “the mortal and animal in them (*τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς*

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<sup>61</sup> *Ad Theod.* 125.3-22.

θνητὸν καὶ θηριῶδες)” are mistaken in their opinions about the divine and devote their life entirely to pleasure. There are also people “in between” who either look for fame, which is in fact a (false) image (εἰδῶλον) of the virtue and the good, or for money as a means to achieve pleasure.<sup>62</sup> As usually, Gemistos finds examples from history and mythology for both these manners of life. Thus Herakles, Lycurgus, Alexander, and Cyrus represent the virtuous life revering gods, Paris, Helen, Sardanapalus, and Nero the opposite one.<sup>63</sup>

The authority on which Gemistos grounds his reasoning is, once more, Plato. The distinction of three kinds of impiety corresponds exactly to the discussion in book X of Plato’s *Laws*.<sup>64</sup> The radical difference between the soul, “the divine part of us”, and mortal body pursuing the pleasures is, no doubt, also Platonic.<sup>65</sup> Notable is Gemistos’ constant use of the expression “the divine (τὸ θεῖον)” instead of “the God (ὁ θεός)”. Perhaps he wanted to leave his claims about the divine principles as general as possible to be accepted by anybody “who partakes in the intellect” and clearly distinguish his philosophical speculations from Christian theology. However, some of his proposals are obviously directed against the religious customs of his time. When in the *Address to Manuel* he discusses the distribution of the collected taxes, he allocates to the high priests (τῶν ἱερέων οἱ ἐπὶ τῆς μείζονος ἱερωσύνης) that serve the community just one “helot” to each, – that is, one taxpayer – to support them, because, living in celibacy (μοναυλία), they do not have to sustain the family.<sup>66</sup> From the last remark it is clear, that Gemistos must have the higher orthodox clergy in mind that cannot marry. In contrast, the monks should not be supported from the public revenue at all (but at the same time they do not have to pay taxes), because they do not contribute to the public welfare in any way. Gemistos treats them extremely harshly calling them “those who claim to philosophise (οἱ δὲ φιλοσοφεῖν μὲν φάσκοντες)”, which in the Byzantine context often means to live the monastic life.<sup>67</sup> They think that on this pretence they may profit from much of the public money. As they say, they keep apart of everything in order to worship God in private and care for their own souls. However, for Gemistos, it is not pious (ὅσιον) to support them for the sake of public security on the pretence of their virtue (τὸ πρόσχημα τῆς ἀρετῆς) and at the same to take the money from those to whom it really belongs. This is obviously being done in order that the monks pray to the God for the well-being of the whole state. But this equals again with the third kind of impiety, which, as we already know,

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 125.22-126.23.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 126.24-128.13.

<sup>64</sup> Plato, *Leg.* X 884a-907b, especially 885b, cf. Webb (1989), p. 217. For Proclus’ interest in this passage of Plato’s *Laws* cf. Dillon (2001), pp. 250-254.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. e. g. Plato, *Resp.* X 611b-612a, *Leg.* 899d-900c, *Phd.* 62b, *Phaedr.* 250c, *Phibb.* 31d-32d.

<sup>66</sup> *Ad Man.* 257.5-8, cf. 256.5-6.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Ellissen (1860), p. 142, n. 19, Blum (1988), p. 187, n. 6, Baloglou (2002), p. 252, n. 19.

consists in the belief that God will accept something apart from the offerings that are appropriate.<sup>68</sup>

## 2. Fate of the Soul

The funeral orations on the empresses Cleope and Helena, composed, as we already know, in 1433 and 1450,<sup>69</sup> are undoubtedly quite unusual examples of Gemistos' rhetoric abilities. After the obligatory recapitulation of the empress' descent, set by him, as was his custom, into a wider mythological and historical context and followed by a eulogy of her virtues, Gemistos surprised his contemporary listeners or readers by a series of purely rational arguments demonstrating the immortality of the soul. Perhaps Gemistos had already made his name as a philosopher so that he was even expected to do so, especially in the case of the second oration when he was perhaps invited to repeat the success of the previous speech, composed almost twenty years ago. As it is well known, the immortality of the soul is, once more, a prominent theme in Platonism.<sup>70</sup>

In the *On Cleope* Gemistos reminds the audience that the empress was from Italy, which in ancient times was occupied by the Romans who managed to conquer almost all the inhabited world.<sup>71</sup> Then her beauty as well as her virtues are praised, and her prudence (φρόνησις), temperance (σωφροσύνη), clemency (ἐπιεικεία), honesty (χρηστότης), piety (εὐσεβεία), love for her husband (φιλανδρία), and nobleness (γενναιότης) are mentioned.<sup>72</sup> Gemistos also stresses that Cleope converted to the Orthodoxy. – A sign of her piety “was her worship of the God (ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ λατρεία), which she demonstrated by prayers and continuous fasting according to our custom”.<sup>73</sup> He similarly mentions that she “abandoned the life here” and was “received by God (ὑπὸ Θεοῦ ἀνειλημμένη)”, “she partook in our mysteries (τῶν ἡμετέρων μετείληφθα μυστηρίων)”, that is sacraments.<sup>74</sup> As it therefore seems, Gemistos identifies clearly with the Orthodoxy here.

In order to relieve the grief at the death of the empress, he then proceeds to an argumentation demonstrating the immortality of the human soul. As he claims, if there were nothing in a human being that is immortal, the desperation caused by death would probably be incurable. In fact, however, there is a part of us that is mortal and another that is immortal (τὸ μὲν τι ἡμῶν θνητὸν εἶναι, τὸ δ' ἀθάνατον), which is actually the principal part of us and which

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<sup>68</sup> *Ad Man.* 257.5-258.4, cf. Katsafanas (2003).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Zakythinis (1932), pp. 190, 240, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 113, 309-310.

<sup>70</sup> The whole Plato's *Phaedo* is dedicated to the argumentation in favour of the immortality of the human soul.

<sup>71</sup> *In Cleop.* 165.2-6.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 165.14-168.4.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* 167.13-14.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 168.9-13.

is human being in the proper sense of the term (τὸ κυριώτατον ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ μάλιστα ἄνθρωπος εἶη). The mortal part is a kind of tunic (χιτώνιον) attached to our immortal part. For this reason it is wrong to despair when we or our friends take off this tunic, as if the principal part of us, what we ourselves are (τὸ κυριώτατον ἡμῶν καὶ ὃ δὴ αὐτοὶ ἐσμην), not only survives and is preserved, but passes over to another life, better than the one here. This is because being the better and the purest part of us (ἄμεινόν τε καὶ εἰλικρινέστατον) it can, after putting aside its mortal and earthly garment, attain and enjoy the divine (τὰ θεία), especially if somebody cared of and was regularly acquainted with things divine here already. This must be certainly true also of the just deceased Cleope, who lived here, as it has been emphasized, well and piously and is thus prepared for the life there. In contrast, the person, who did not care here about the divine will feel dizzy there and will stay without contact with the divine because of not being accustomed to it.<sup>75</sup>

At this moment Gemistos feels the need to argue for the reality of the life after death. First, he points out that the belief in the immortality of the human soul is very ancient and widespread and almost all the people venerate (θεραπείας τινάς ... προσφέρειν) those who have deceased, not as not existing any more, but, on the contrary, as being and continuing in their existence. People seem to be of a similar opinion about the divine (ἢ περὶ τοῦ θείου δόξα) as about the immortality of the soul. All people thus think that there is something divine (τι θεῖον) and venerate (θεραπεύουσι) it in a similar way as all of them venerate (θεραπείας ... προσφέροντες) the dead as being and continuing in their existence. Although one must have doubts about any doctrine, it is impossible to doubt these opinions which are “obvious, common, and accepted always and by all people”.<sup>76</sup>

Non-rational animals (τὰ ἄλογα) have no idea about the existence of the divine because they do not understand causation (αἰτία), nor do they desire everlastingness (ἀιδιότης) because they do not understand infinity (ἄπειρία). The understanding of the causation and infinity (apart from other things) is accessible only to the logical nature (ἡ λογικὴ φύσις) by which mankind, having received the rational soul from God (ὁ θεός), both understands and desires the divine and everlastingness. God would not enable a nature which is entirely different and mortal to know himself, but it must be somehow akin to him (πη καὶ οἰκεία). This is because knowing must have something in common with what is being known (κοινωνεῖν γὰρ ἂν δεοὶ τὸ γιγνωσκόν τῷ γιγνωσκομένῳ) and what is in such a community (κοινωνοῦντα) must be somehow mutually akin (οἰκεῖα πη ἀλλήλοις δεοὶ). Nor would God have inserted into man the desire for everlastingness (ἀιδιότητος ἐπιθυμία) if it were to have remain unaccomplished (ἄτελῆ) and worthless. God

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 169.1-170.3.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 171.7-172.8.

does not leave any major being that exists according to nature (*οὐδὲν τῶν μεγάλων καὶ κατὰ φύσιν*) unaccomplished but, as far as possible, accomplishes everything appropriately. Gemistos thus concludes that, because of these two things, the doctrine about the divine and the desire for everlastingness, the human soul is everlasting (*ἀίδιος*).<sup>77</sup>

He supports this claim further by a rather strange argument concerning suicide. Non-rational animals do not seem to kill themselves deliberately (*ἐκ προνοίας*), but there are some people who do. In general, there is nothing that would desire its own destruction. Non-rational animals, as we have just seen, do not desire everlastingness because they do not understand it, nor for this reason do they willingly (*ἐκόντα*) seek their own destruction. The human soul would not have such inclinations (*ῥῆμα*), if the death of the body were to cause its destruction. According to Gemistos, a suicidal soul must therefore either consider it as no longer profitable for it to stay in the body, or must at least be convinced that a suicide will not bring any harm to itself and it, will just go away, leaving the body.<sup>78</sup>

In the funeral oration *On Helen*, similarly as twenty years before, Gemistos begins by reminding the origin of the dead empress. She is said to be “a Thracian”, which is, again, the name of an ancient tribe later used by the Byzantines for the Slav peoples in Balkans. (Helen was a Serb.)<sup>79</sup> Gemistos thus attempts, as usually, to demonstrate the continuity between antiquity and his own time. He thus says that the Thracians are an ancient nation, which occupies a very large part of the inhabited world and which has been important and distinguished from the ancient times. Eumolpus, who founded for the Athenians the Eleusinian mysteries connected with the doctrine about immortality of the soul, was a Thracian, and the cult of the Muses, too, came to Greece from Thrace.<sup>80</sup> Gemistos then praises the virtues of Helen, mentioning especially her intelligence (*σύνεσις*), nobleness (*γενναιότης*), temperance (*σωφροσύνη*), and justice (*δικαιοσύνη*).<sup>81</sup>

Then he proceeds again to an argumentation concerning the immortality of the human soul. Although it is impossible to refrain from grief when our relatives or friends die, we must consider their death to be a departure of “the better and principal part of us (*τὸ ἄμεινον τε καὶ κυριώτερον ἡμῶν*)” to the place proper to it, but not as its entire destruction.<sup>82</sup> For Gemistos, the latter opinion makes those who accept it worse and more ignoble than those who claim the opposite, presumably because they are afraid of death and therefore, for instance, of fighting for their own country. Moreover, he tries to prove that it is also false. First, its falsity is obvious from

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* 172.8-173.8.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 173.9-174.4.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 310.

<sup>80</sup> *In Hel.* 267.3-269.6.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* 273.2-8.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* 274.1-12.

the very fact that it makes people worse. As he puts it, the false opinion cannot make people better and the right one worse, but the opposite must be true. Second, we should not only concentrate on what we have in common with beasts, thinking that our entire essence is similar to them. If we take into account other “actions and contemplations of ours (*πράξεις τε καὶ θεωρίαι*)” as well, we must conclude that there is another essence in us, which is more divine than that of beasts. For Gemistos, there is nobody “sane in thought (*ἡ δίανοια*)” who would not believe – either due to his own considerations or to the influence of others – that there is “one God (*Θεός τις εἷς*) that presides over all and that he is the creator (*δημιουργός*), being producer of it (*παραγωγός*) and supremely good (*ἄκρως ἀγαθός*)”. Nor is there anybody who would not accept that between God and us there is some other nature, either one by genus, or divided in many genera, which is superior to us, though being much inferior to God. “Because nobody will think that we are the supreme of the works of God.” Everybody also believes that those natures superior to us are the intellects (*νόες*)<sup>83</sup> and souls (*ψυχαί*) superior to ours. There cannot be any other higher work and activity (*τὸ κυριώτατον ... ἔργον καὶ πρᾶξις*) of these natures than the contemplation of reality (*ἡ τῶν ὄντων θεωρία*), the notion of the creator of all (*ἡ τοῦ τῶν ὄλων δημιουργοῦ ἔννοια*) being at the top of it (*καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτῇ*). There is no other activity that would be superior or happier for those who are capable of it, and it can even be achieved by human beings.<sup>84</sup> In other words, the natures superior to us are intellectual and not material. The mentioning of these natures, existing either in one genus or in more between God and us may be considered as close to ancient paganism. However, it can be interpreted as a statement in perfect accordance with the Christian faith because in the Byzantine theological tradition angelology, or the “hierarchies” of the divine beings described by Dionysius Areopagite, always played an important part and this was probably how the passage was understood by Gemistos’ contemporaries.

According to his further argumentation, human beings are not only capable of the animal action and behaviour, but can also emulate those genera that are superior to us. This is, again, because if man is himself capable of achieving, as far as it is possible, the same contemplation as they are (*τῆς αὐτῆς αὐτοῖς θεωρίας ἐς δύναμιν καὶ αὐτὸς ἄπτεται*), he must necessarily share not only their actions, but also their essences (*τὰ δὲ κοινωνοῦντα τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις ἀνάγκη κοινωνεῖν*). This is due to the axiom that the actions must be analogous to the essences and the essences to the actions. Now, if somebody’s actions are identical with those of animals, he must share a similar essence, too. And conversely, if somebody’s actions are the same as those

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<sup>83</sup> Gemistos seems to systematically avoid the using of the nominative plural of the Greek substantive *νοῦς* that was usually turned into a rather irregular grammatical form *νόες* by Proclus and other Neoplatonists. We will keep to their usage however un-Plethonic it may be.

<sup>84</sup> *In Hel.* 274.12-276.11.

of the genera superior to us, his essence must be similar to theirs. This enables Gemistos to conclude that man is composed of two different essences – the divine and the animal one. The animal part in us is naturally mortal, but the divine must be immortal if the essence of the genera higher than us is also such. This would be impossible if the god that is supremely good and free from all envy (*φθόνου ἔξω παντός*), did not produce – “besides other things”, that is presumably the material world – also the essences that are closer to him by their immortality. If they are immortal, the essence in us that is similar to them must be also such, because what is mortal could never become similar to the immortal, and what has a somehow limited and deficient potentiality to exist could never bear a resemblance to that which has not.<sup>85</sup>

At this point Gemistos introduces again his argument concerning the suicide, similar to the one we have just seen in the previous funeral oration. – Those who kill themselves show that man is composed of two essences, a mortal and an immortal one, as has just been claimed. There is nothing that would be inclined (*ὀμῶν*) to its own destruction, but everything tends, as much as it is possible, not to abandon its being and preserve itself. If therefore somebody commits suicide, it is not so “that his mortal part kills the mortal, but the immortal the mortal”.<sup>86</sup> In other words, if human beings had been composed solely of one mortal essence, they would not be able to kill themselves due to the principle that everything tends to preserve its own existence. Thus we have to surmise from the occurrence of the human suicide that in the course of it the mortal part in man is destroyed by some different essence which survives that is, by their immortal part.

As in the previous oration, Gemistos claims that the most ancient and most venerable nations in the world believed in the immortality of the human soul. That this doctrine is ancient and widespread is demonstrated by a series of nations who all adhered to it – the Iberians, Celts, Tyrrhenians, Thracians, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Medes, Indians and others.<sup>87</sup> As has been said already at the beginning of the speech, death is therefore only departure of the principal part in us to a place proper to it. There those who are good will be rewarded and the bad will be punished “by the most just God, the judge whose intentions cannot be changed”.<sup>88</sup>

### 3. Conclusion I: Platonism in Practice

As we have thus seen, the starting point of Gemistos’ considerations, aimed to reform the political system of the despotate of Morea and to save it against Ottoman attacks, is the question

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 276.12-278.4.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 278.4-279.2.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 279.3-8.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* 279.9-280.8.



of the right constitution and the laws. In this context the activity of a lawgiver is crucial because the welfare of a state depends directly on its organization. This is already a Platonic motive discussed at length by Plato in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, to mention just his most important texts dealing with similar problems. In order to understand in depth the difficult situation of the late Byzantine state, Gemistos, as a humanist and an authority on ancient culture and thought, locates political philosophy into a broader historical perspective. This enables him to use many historical examples to prove his claim about the importance of the good constitution. At the same time he reveals the roots of contemporary problems, which, in his view, have resulted from a long-term competition between the East and the West, the ancients and the “barbarians” from Asia. Furthermore, this leads him to a position in which he radically emphasizes the continuity between the nations known in antiquity and the contemporary ones. From this perspective he finds it necessary to defend the Peloponnese from which the Greeks had originated. Although by stressing the ancient origin of the inhabitants of the Peloponnese he certainly goes well beyond the usual Byzantine conception of national identity, this does not mean that he disregards the tradition of the Roman Empire, of which Byzantium is the direct successor. On the contrary, the achievements of both the Greeks and the Romans represent for him the best ancient tradition in which it is necessary to continue. However, what is apparently missing in his account is the Christian identity of the Byzantines. For Gemistos, the political or military success of a nation thus does not seem to depend entirely on its religion but rather on its state organization. This, at least, together with the historical conditions mentioned above, enables him to explain why the Muslim Ottomans were so successful in their fight against the Christian Byzantines. – They owe their efficient state organization to Muhammad.

In his own proposals for the best political constitution Gemistos always tries to give rational arguments for his conceptions. However, in many cases he obviously derives his inspiration from Plato, although he modifies some of his radical conclusions to suit the Byzantine context better. The state should thus be ruled by a monarch, who is advised by the body of the counsellors. Society should be divided into three classes – the producers, the suppliers of the services, and the rulers who are responsible for its defence. These classes should be engaged in their proper activities only, because otherwise society cannot work properly and is vulnerable to attacks from the outside. A central part in Gemistos’ legislation is played by “the divine”, as he constantly stresses. Similarly to book X of Plato’s *Laws*, there is something divine that cares about humans and whose will cannot be altered by their supplications. Gemistos refuses excessive forms of its worship and goes even so far as to criticise the contemporary monasticism, which does not contribute by anything to the welfare of the society.

The considerations about the best organisation of the state are supplemented with Gemistos' rational arguments for the immortality of the human soul presented in the funeral orations on the dead Empresses. In the Platonic tradition this doctrine is crucial. As he claims, man is composed of two natures – the mortal body and the immortal soul that is akin to the divine. Human beings thus may behave according to their higher part, contemplate the divine, and live righteously. Alternatively, they may behave according to the body and live similarly to beasts. Both doctrines about the existence of the divine and the immortality of the soul are connected, the latter depending on the former. They are also shared by the majority of people, which again proves their importance. Noteworthy is also Gemistos' mentioning of the nonmaterial natures between God and us, which are most probably to be identified with angels or daemons.

The main features of Gemistos' philosophy presented to the public are thus certainly Platonic by their inspiration, but this does not mean that they are in conflict with Christianity. Although some of its contemporary peculiarities such as the excesses of the monasticism are criticised, Gemistos, nevertheless, speaks of it especially in his funeral orations, as of “our” religion and seems to identify with the Orthodoxy. The principles about the divine, representing for him the core of all the legislation, as well as the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, are formulated generally enough to be acceptable equally by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but also by ancient Greek polytheism (at least in the form it appears in Platonic tradition). This is because Gemistos avoids the controversial issues, such as the question whether the world was created by God in time or is everlasting, or whether the immortality of the human soul implies also its pre-existence before birth and periodical reincarnations. Moreover, by constantly speaking of “the divine”, Gemistos is able to avoid complicated religious disputes about monotheism and polytheism, Christian belief in the Holy Trinity and the conceptions in which the highest god is unique and “simple”. However, as we will see, all of these problems will re-appear in his *Laws*.

Gemistos, in other words, presents such basic principles as might be, as he claims, universally accepted by all the religions, that he could know. Furthermore, as he repeatedly says, these theological principles are so generally widespread because they are based on reason common to all people. Thus he is able to constitute universal religion that is at the same time the source of universal legislation, necessary to save the despotate of Morea. At the same time, as it has been already mentioned, it enables him to presuppose the existence of rules on which the fortune of the diverse nations believing in different religions depend and which have found their expression in the good constitution based on certain fundamental principles leading people to live according to the virtue. These universal principles thus represent the fundament of history

that develops according to them. For this reason they may also be reconstructed from past events. The apparent unimportance of the Christian religion in this conception might perhaps have been troublesome for some of his contemporaries, but we should not forget that, after all, Gemistos was a Platonic philosopher and an interpreter of the ancient Greek tradition, not a professional theologian. Furthermore, as it has been said already, this conception makes it possible to understand better the recent military success of the infidels and find a rational explanation for them.

Although it seems that none of Gemistos' political proposals were put into practice, they must have been certainly appreciated by the Emperor and the Despot.<sup>89</sup> The same is true about his funeral orations, which probably further helped to establish his fame as a Platonic philosopher in the ancient sense of the word. It is also interesting to compare Gemistos' approach to that of his pupil Bessarion who studied with him in Mistra in the first half of the 1430s (before 1436)<sup>90</sup> and whose relation to Gemistos will be discussed in full later on. Like his teacher, Bessarion composed a funeral oration on the dead empress Cleope in 1433, but, unlike the one written by Gemistos, it does not contain any philosophical speculations about the immortality of the human soul and is entirely Christian in its tone.<sup>91</sup> In the speech to the Emperor John VIII on his wife Maria Comnena, who died in 1439 while the Byzantine delegation attended the Council of Florence,<sup>92</sup> Bessarion perhaps attempted to imitate Gemistos in providing a more philosophical consolation. It thus contains a rational argumentation, which, however, demonstrates not the immortality of the soul, but, in contrast, the inevitability of death by showing the necessary corruption of everything in time, including man who is the rational animal (*λογικὸν ζῷον*). Bessarion then tries to overcome this inescapable fate of the mortals by the traditional Christian hope in the future life with the God that is better than the earthly one.<sup>93</sup>

Probably in 1444, just before the disastrous battle of Varna that definitely destroyed all hopes for saving Byzantium, Bessarion, who meanwhile became a cardinal and settled down in Italy, wrote a letter to Constantine Palaiologos, the ruling Despot of Morea (1443-1449) at that time and, as Constantine XI, the future (and the last) Byzantine emperor (1449-1453).<sup>94</sup> Bessarion's letter is the only surviving part of the obviously more extensive correspondence

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), p. 94, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 99, 109.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Mohler (1923), p. 45, Labowsky (1967), p. 687, for the early writings of Bessarion, collected by their author himself in the *Mar. Gr.* 533 (=788), and their dating cf. Mohler (1923), pp. 51-55, Loenertz (1944), pp. 116-121, Saffrey (1964), pp. 279-292, Stormon (1981), Mioni (1985), pp. 421-423, Mioni (1991), pp. 25-46, Rigo (1994) 33-37.

<sup>91</sup> Bessarion, *In Cleop.* Cf. his other consolatory letters from this time (*Ep.* IX-XII 431-437) which are predominantly Christian in its tone, even though Plato and other ancient classical writers are occasionally mentioned.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Gentilini's introduction to *In Mar.*, p. 151, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 171-172.

<sup>93</sup> Bessarion, *In Mar.* 72-187.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Mohler (1923), pp. 210-211, Zakythinis (1932), pp. 226-228, Keller (1955), p. 343, Labowsky (1967), p. 688.

between them<sup>95</sup> and it is interesting for us because it contains many parallels with the *Addresses* to the Despot Theodore and the Emperor Manuel written by Gemistos more than twenty-five years before. Similarly to his teacher, Bessarion, too, urges the Despot to introduce the reforms in order to be able to defend the Peloponnese against the Turkish threat. However, in contrast to Gemistos, his proposals are, as it seems, deliberately less radical and perhaps more realistic. The letter is especially remarkable and quite exceptional for that time because of the admiration that Bessarion express towards the development of the new technologies which he saw in Italy and which he proposes to be introduced also to Morea.<sup>96</sup> Similarly to Gemistos' *Addresses*, the importance of good legislation, including also religious rituals, is particularly emphasised, and the local Spartan tradition of Lycurgus is reminded several times, although other famous lawgivers, namely Zalmoxis, Solon, and Numa, are also mentioned.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the reform of the constitution is said to be a task for the philosopher-king such as Constatine.<sup>98</sup> The population of the Peloponnese should be divided into those working in agriculture (τὸ γεωργικόν) and those who fight (τὸ στρατηγικόν), the latter being chosen from the former, in order that “each gets his own (ἐκατέρω ἀποδώσεις τὰ ἴδια)” and is engaged in one art (τέχνη) and occupation (ἐπιτήδευμα) only.<sup>99</sup> Like Gemistos, Bessarion uses the same expression “guardians (φύλακες)” taken from Plato's *Republic*.<sup>100</sup> He furthermore claims that for the moral of the soldiers religious legislation is important, as the lawgivers and military leaders perceive, because the belief in the existence of “some divine (θεῖον τι)” helps to eliminate anxiety and uncertainty from the soul of people.<sup>101</sup> Although, similarly to Gemistos' writings, the word “Hellenes”<sup>102</sup> is used throughout the text to designate the inhabitants of the despotate and many examples from history are invoked, its tone is, however, once more, undoubtedly Christian.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. Bessarion, *Ad Const.* 439.19 with Mohler's note *ad loc.*

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Keller (1955).

<sup>97</sup> Bessarion, *Ad Const.* 443.1-2, 445.3-7.15-20.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 446.1-4.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* 442.10-12, cf. Lambros (1906), pp. 35-37.

<sup>100</sup> Bessarion, *Ad Const.* 441.4, cf. Lambros (1906), p. 37.

<sup>101</sup> Bessarion, *Ad Const.* 446.20-29.

<sup>102</sup> In 444.23 ἑλληνικὸν γένος is even compared to ἑωμαϊκόν, that is, Italians, as it is evident from the context.

<sup>103</sup> For other detailed parallels between Gemistos' and Bessarion's texts cf. Lambros (1906), pp. 38-41, Zakythinios (1932), pp. 226-228.

W.B. Yeats

*from* THE SONG OF THE HAPPY SHEPHERD

The woods of Arcady are dead,  
And over is their antique joy;  
Of old the world on dreaming fed;  
Grey Truth is now her painted toy;  
Yet still she turns her restless head:  
But O, sick children of the world,  
Of all the many changing things  
In dreary dancing past us whirled,  
To the cracked tune that Chronos sings,  
Words alone are certain good.  
Where are now the warring kings,  
Word be-mockers? – By the Rood,  
Where are now the warring kings?  
An idle word is now their glory,  
By the stammering schoolboy said,  
Reading some entangled story:  
The kings of the old time are dead;  
The wandering earth herself may be  
Only a sudden flaming word,  
In clanging space a moment heard,  
Troubling the endless reverie.

(*Crossways*, 1889)

## II. *Philosophia perennis*

### 1. Writings about the Perennial Philosophy

As we will be able to observe, the “perennial philosophy”<sup>104</sup> as understood by Plethon is a rational conception of the world, shared by all the people who rely on their reason and identical throughout the different ages of the history. Plethon elaborates this philosophy in the works that might be divided into three main groups.

To the core of the first one belongs the ancient *Chaldaean Oracles*, which he attributes – for some reasons – to the Magi, the legendary disciples of the Persian sage Zoroaster.<sup>105</sup> He made his own careful edition of the fragments of the *Oracles*<sup>106</sup> based on the previous work by Michael Psellos.<sup>107</sup> However, in his accompanying commentary<sup>108</sup> Plethon, unlike Psellos, completely ignores their theurgical dimensions.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, he provides a philosophical rather than religious explanation<sup>110</sup> of these notoriously mysterious utterances, which describe in half philosophical, half mythical terms the journey of the soul as well as the means of its salvation<sup>111</sup> and which were highly esteemed already by the late Neoplatonists.<sup>112</sup> Plethon also diverts in some important points from the original doctrine of the *Oracles* (as interpreted by Proclus and reconstructed by modern scholarship).<sup>113</sup> – It is significant for his approach that, according to him, as we will see, the highest god seems to be altogether transcendent and in his interpretation there is no place for Hecate<sup>114</sup> or Power, that in the *Oracles*, together with the First God or the Father and the Second God or the Demiurgic Intellect, forms a kind of trinity (which allows a Christian interpretation provided by Psellos).<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, he refuses the existence of the evil daemons claimed by the

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<sup>104</sup> For the origin and the Renaissance usage of the term the *philosophia perennis* cf. Schmitt (1966), (1970), (1972), for Plethon’s role in the tradition of *prisca theologia* culminating in Ficino cf. Vasoli (1994), (1999), pp. 11-50, (2001).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. the discussion in the part III *infra*.

<sup>106</sup> *Or. mag.* I-XXXIV 1.1-4.8.

<sup>107</sup> *Or. Chald.* 153-186.

<sup>108</sup> *Or. mag.* 4.9-19.22 [*ad* I-XXXIV].

<sup>109</sup> Cf. especially Lewy (1978).

<sup>110</sup> Plethon thus orders the fragments of the *Chaldaean Oracles* scattered throughout Psellos’ treatise in a systematic way, cf. Tambrun-Krasker’s commentary to *Or. mag.*, pp. 47-48. He also excludes six *Oracles* which are found in Psellos mostly because of their non-philosophical content and magical practices described in them, cf. Tardieu (1987), pp. 153-154, Tambrun-Krasker’s commentary to *Or. mag.*, pp. 44-45, 155-156, Tambrun-Krasker (1992), p. 17, and Athanassiadi (2002), pp. 239-241.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Brisson (2003), pp. 111, 128-129.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. des Places’ introduction to *Or. Chald.*, pp. 18-52, and Hadot (1978), pp. 707-716.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Athanassiadi (1999). For the manner Plethon emends and interprets the *Oracles* cf. Lewy (1978), pp. 474-475, Tardieu (1987), pp. 155-164, and, in comparison with Psellos, Athanassiadi (2002).

<sup>114</sup> She disappears from Plethon’s edition and commentary of the text of the *Oracles* due to the corruption in the textual tradition, but it is also possible that Plethon deliberately excludes her as incompatible with the philosophical content of the *Oracles*, cf. Tambrun-Krasker’s commentary to *Or. mag.* X [= *Or. Chald.* LII], pp. 79-81.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. des Places’ introduction to *Or. Chald.*, pp. 12-14, 50-52, Majercik (1989), pp. 5-8, Brisson (2003), pp. 114-119.

original *Oracles*.<sup>116</sup> Plethon also resumes the doctrine of the “Magian” *Oracles*, as he calls them, in his *Brief Clarification*,<sup>117</sup> which is a short summary of the main ideas of his commentary. We are not sure about the exact time of composition neither of this work, nor of the “long” commentary. It was perhaps already before the Council of Florence, but there are no convincing indications enabling us to solve this question definitely.<sup>118</sup>

The second group of the writings concerning the perennial philosophy may be dated more precisely. It consists of the texts, in which Plethon attempts to demonstrate the priority of Plato’s philosophy compared to that of Aristotle.<sup>119</sup> The famous treatise *On the Differences of Aristotle from Plato* was written during the Council in Florence in 1439 and was directed to Italian humanists who had the interest in Plato, still virtually unknown in the West at that time.<sup>120</sup> This unusually radical critique of Aristotle, however, provoked immediate reactions only among the Byzantines. In the first half of the 1440s<sup>121</sup> the Emperor John VIII Palaiologos wrote a letter to Plethon in which he raised two questions concerning the *Differences*.<sup>122</sup> They were then answered at length by its author.<sup>123</sup> Some time around 1444<sup>124</sup> the most hostile attack against it came from George Scholarios, who wrote a lengthy *Defence of Aristotle*.<sup>125</sup> Plethon got this reaction only in the late 1440s and he immediately, most probably in 1449,<sup>126</sup> wrote a similarly fierce response known as the *Reply to Scholarios*.<sup>127</sup> Meanwhile, about 1447,<sup>128</sup> Plethon exchanged two letters with Bessarion who inquired of him about some Platonic questions.<sup>129</sup> It is usually assumed that they had been inspired by the reading of the *Differences*,<sup>130</sup> however, it might not be so due to the time distance and because there is no apparent connection in these letters with Plethon’s treatise.

The third group combines in a certain sense both previous ones. The most important work, which belongs to it, is the *Laws* explicitly based on the doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato.<sup>131</sup> Its closing chapter entitled *Epinomis* proves that this book was intended as an imitation of the *Laws* of Plato which is a problem we will have to turn back to at the end of this study. The modern

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<sup>116</sup> Cf. des Places’ introduction to *Or. Chald.*, p. 14, Majercik (1989), pp. 13-14.

<sup>117</sup> *Or. mag.* 21.1-22.9.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. the discussion in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 50-51.

<sup>119</sup> For the various aspects of this problem cf. Bargeliotis (1980) and Moutsopoulos-Bargeliotis (1987).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. *Contra Schol.* XXIV 438.3-8, Woodhouse (1986), p. 156, Monfasani (1976), pp. 201-202.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Benakis (1974), pp. 332-333.

<sup>122</sup> John VIII Palaiologos, *Ad Gemist.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ad quaes.*, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 229-232.

<sup>124</sup> Masai (1956), p. 406, Monfasani (1976), p. 206, and Woodhouse (1986), p. 237, accept the date 1443-1444, Turner (1969), p. 450, argues for the years 1444-1445.

<sup>125</sup> Scholarios, *Pro Arist.*

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), p. 406, Monfasani (1976), p. 206, Woodhouse (1986), p. 270.

<sup>127</sup> *Contra Schol.*

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Mohler (1923), pp. 336-337, Monfasani (1976), p. 208, Tihon’s commentary to *Meth.*, pp. 21-22. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 232-233, thinks that the letters were written during the early 1440s.

<sup>129</sup> *Ad Bess.* I is the answer to *Ad Gemist.* I, *Ad Bess.* II to *Ad Gemist.* II.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 233, who, unlike Mohler, dates the letters to the early 1440s.

<sup>131</sup> *Leg.* 2, 30 [I,2], 32 [I,2], 252 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

edition of this work does not contain all the text that has been preserved to us and some more may be found in a manuscript *Additus* 5424, which is in the possession the British Library<sup>132</sup> and will be occasionally consulted also in this work.<sup>133</sup> The *Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato*<sup>134</sup> seems to be in the same relation to the *Laws* as the *Brief Clarification to The Explanation of the Oracles*. In both cases we have to do with a short summary of much longer texts and it is thus possible that they were in both cases appended as a kind of recapitulation of the main ideas of these treatises.<sup>135</sup> As for the probable date of the composition of the *Laws*, which is crucial for the proper evaluation of it, it will be also discussed later on in the proper place.

There are two other smaller philosophical works by Plethon that have some relation to those in which the perennial philosophy is elaborated. The first one is the *On Virtues*, a systematic exposition of a rationally based ethics,<sup>136</sup> which was written certainly before Plethon's journey to Italy in 1438-1439, perhaps already in the first years of his stay in the Peloponnese.<sup>137</sup> The *Prayer to the One God*<sup>138</sup> is presumably also an early text.<sup>139</sup> However, its author uses some rather poetic expressions<sup>140</sup> which we do not find in other texts by Plethon. For this reason and because it does not contain anything substantial in addition to them, it may be perhaps left aside as spurious or at least as not so important.

As it is apparent already from the preliminary account of the first two groups of the texts in which Plethon's "perennial philosophy" is presented, the most important representatives of it are Plato and Zoroaster, the latter being the presumed inspirer of the *Magian Oracles*. Two whole treatises are thus dedicated by Plethon to the defence of the philosophy of the former, he edits and comments *Oracles* of the latter, and Zoroaster himself appears several times in his writings as

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Masai-Masai (1954), p. 554, (1956), pp. 399-400.

<sup>133</sup> Its tentative transcription may be found *infra* in the *Manuscript Supplement*.

<sup>134</sup> *Zor. Plat.*

<sup>135</sup> The close connection between the *Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato* and the *Laws* is also supported by the fact that they are both contained in *Add.* as well as in an early Arabic translation of some of Plethon's works, in which they are followed by Plethon's edition of the *Chaldaean Oracles* (without his commentary) accompanied with few lines from the *Brief Clarification*, cf. Nicolet-Tardieu (1980), pp. 43-55, and also his edition of the Arabic text in an appendix to *Or. mag. and Decl. brev.*, pp. 157-171. However, only a detailed investigation of the manuscript tradition could naturally confirm this suggestion.

<sup>136</sup> *De virt.*

<sup>137</sup> There is a copy of the text made by John Eugenikos in 1439, which means that the treatise must have been written before this date, cf. Tambrun-Krasker' introduction to *De virt.*, pp. xxviii-xxix, xxxiv, xlv-vi, Knös (1950), p. 178, Woodhouse (1986), p. 179, Mioni (1991), p. 49, Arabatzis (2003), pp. 221-224. Masai (1956), pp. 402-403, dates it, unconvincingly, after 1439.

<sup>138</sup> *Ad deum unum*.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 45, Blum (1988), p. 10.

<sup>140</sup> To take just the first sentence (*Ad deum unum* 273) – *παγγενέτορ, πανυπέροτατε, ἔξοχε ... βασιλεῦ* might have been copied from Plethon's hymn to Zeus (*Leg.* 202 [III,35]) where these epithets of the supreme god, called in both passages similarly *βασιλεύς*, appear exactly in the same order. Of the other epithets only *ἔξοχε* is used also in the *Laws* (in fact, quite frequently) whereas *παμμέγιστε, πανοίκτιμον, φιλανθρωπότατε, μόνε, συμπαθέστατε, ἀνεξιχνιάστον, ἀνεξερεύνητον, ἄφατον, πέλαγος, and ἄπειρος φιλανθρωπία* can be found in the *Prayer to the One God* only. Could it be that its author, who used obviously quite different vocabulary than Plethon, made use of one of the hymn he found in the *Laws* and supplemented the expressions from its beginning with other epithets of the supreme god of his own?



the most ancient sage.<sup>141</sup> According to the testimony of Plutarch,<sup>142</sup> whom Plethon refers to, he lived 5000 years before the Trojan war, or alternatively, before the return of the Herakleidai.<sup>143</sup> The latter event is situated in Plethon's astronomical treatise to 1103 BC, while, according to the tradition, the former one took place only some decades before.<sup>144</sup> Zoroaster is thus "the most ancient man of those that are remembered (*ἀνὴρ ἀρχαιότατος τῶν γε ἐν μνήμῃ*)". Nevertheless, that does not mean that he is the first one, because, as Plethon claims, „the similar periods, lives, and actions” repeat again forever, and the perennial philosophy, too, is “co-eternal with the whole heaven (*συναΐδια γὰρ ἂν τῷ παντὶ οὐρανῷ*)”.<sup>145</sup> This means that, although, according to our historical records, Zoroaster is indeed the most ancient sage, there is an infinite series of the similarly wise men both before and after him. From those further mentioned by Plethon only the Egyptian Min is, however, comparably old, having lived, as it is sometimes claimed, more than 3000 years before the same date,<sup>146</sup> however, for Plethon, he was not the real sage, because he introduced erroneous rites (*ἀγιστεΐαι φαύλαι*) to the Egyptians who later adopted the doctrines of Zoroaster, although they could not change the faulty legislation of Min. Nearly contemporary to Zoroaster and in accord with him are the laws of the Indians, whose lawgiver was the legendary Dionysos or Bacchos, and those of the western Iberians, whose lawgiver we do not know.<sup>147</sup> As Plethon claims, Plato did not attempt to conceive a philosophy of his own that would be radically new but he accepted the ancient doctrines of Zoroaster.<sup>148</sup> It came to him through Pythagoras who got in Asia in contact with the “Mages of Zoroaster”, the presumed authors of the *Chaldaean Oracles*.<sup>149</sup> For Plethon, the philosophy of Plato is thus in accord with that

<sup>141</sup> For the thorough treatment of Zoroaster's role in Plethon's philosophical system cf. Nikolaou (1971).

<sup>142</sup> Plutarch, *De Is.* 369d, for Plethon's general interest in Plutarch cf. Diller (1954), Mioni (1985), p. 385.

<sup>143</sup> *Or. mag.* 19.20-22, *Leg.* 252-254 [III,43: *Epinomis*], *Contra Schol.* V 378.16-19.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Mercier's commentary to *Meth.*, pp. 228-229 (“-1102”).

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* 252 [III,43], 256 [III,43].

<sup>146</sup> Alexandre's conjecture τούτου (*Leg.* 253, n. 12) emending the codex reading τούτων seems to be mistaken. The sentence: *ἔτι αὖ καὶ τούτων πλείοσι ἢ τρισχιλίους ἔτεσιν ἱστορούμενον πρεσβύτερον* can well mean that “similarly to Zoroaster, Min, too (ἔτι), is an old sage”, not that he is “even (ἔτι) more than three thousand years older than Zoroaster (τούτου)”. First, the sentence on Min is exactly parallel to the one on Zoroaster: *πλείοσιν ἢ πεντακισχιλίους ἱστορούμενος τῆς Ἡρακλειδῶν καθόδου ἔτεσι πρεσβύτερος*, the return of Herakleidai being obviously the common beginning of the counting. Second, Zoroaster would not thus be *ἀνὴρ ἀρχαιότατος τῶν γε ἐν μνήμῃ* or *δόγματων τῶν γε ὀρθῶν ἐξηγητῆς ... ὁ παλαιότατος*, as it is claimed on the same page, just before Min is mentioned.

<sup>147</sup> *Leg.* 252-254 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. *Contra Schol.* V 378.19-23. Plethon most probably derives his information about Min from Diodorus Siculus, whom he excerpted (cf. *Diod. Plut.*, Diller (1956), pp. 34-37, Mioni (1985), p. 158), and Plutarch, who are supported by the authority of Herodotus mentioning Min as the first king of the Egyptians (*Hist.* II,4, 99). According to both Diodorus (*Bibl. hist.* I,45,1-2) and Plutarch (*De Is.* 354a-b), Min substituted the original simple life of the Egyptians by the luxurious one, however, according to the first author, he (previously) introduced to Egypt the veneration of gods and sacrifices. In Diodorus (*Bibl. hist.* I,94,1-2) he is also named together with other famous legendary lawgivers, including Hermes (Trismegistos), Minos, Zoroaster, Zalmoxis, and Moses, cf. Gentile (1990), pp. 64-69.

<sup>148</sup> *Contra Schol.* V 378.12-14.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. the title of Plethon's edition of *Chaldaean Oracles: Μαγικά λόγια τῶν ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου μάγων*, *Or. mag.* 1.1.

of Pythagoras and the teachings of Zoroaster expressed in the *Oracles*.<sup>150</sup> Plato and the *Oracles* are said to share the common doctrine about the first god that leads the others, which is “transcendent by its divinity (τῆ θεότητι ἐξαιρέτος)”<sup>151</sup> and called “the Father” by both.<sup>152</sup> The beliefs in the immortality of the soul<sup>153</sup> and in the astral body are also common to both of them.<sup>154</sup> Unlike in the doctrines held by “the Egyptians”, according to the *Oracles* and Plato, there are no evil daemons.<sup>155</sup> And, what is the most important thing, for Plethon, as we will see, the whole structure of reality in the teachings of Zoroaster and in Plato is the same.<sup>156</sup>

The similarities of the doctrines explicitly recognized by Plethon among the treatises of the first two groups in which the “perennial” philosophy is developed enables him to conceive the texts of the third group, that is, the *Laws* and the *Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato* which are both based on the supposed teaching of Plato and Zoroaster. However, there is a significant difference between these treatises and other writings pertaining to the perennial philosophy. – The first two groups of texts are either explanations of Plato’s philosophy compared to that of Aristotle, or commentaries to the *Magian Oracles*, whereas, as we will see, in the case of the third Plethon claims that it contains the rational theory which closest to the truth. The *Laws* and the *Summary* also differ by the fact that the ancient Greek names of pagan gods are used in them for the description of the metaphysical principles. It should be, nevertheless, noted already here that Plethon is far from being a polytheist in the ordinary sense of the word. He says at the very beginning of the *Laws* that he intends to call the gods that are “recognized by the philosophy (οἱ διὰ φιλοσοφίας ἀναγνωριζόμενοι θεοί)” by the “traditional Greek names (τοῖς Ἑλλησι θεῶν ὀνόμασι)”. In order to be “more in accordance with the philosophy”, he, however, feels a need to transform them from the form, into which they have been distorted by the poets.<sup>157</sup> In another passage he adds that in a work on legislation it is not appropriate to use reasoning (λόγοι) instead of the traditional names of gods “because it would be complicated for the majority (οὐ γὰρ καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς ῥάδιον τὸ τοιοῦτο)”. Similarly inappropriate is, nonetheless, to introduce some names that are new or “barbarian”. It is true that the names familiar from the myths which were invented by the poets and which are “in disaccord with philosophy” are somehow defiled, yet it does not mean that they must necessarily always remain so. If they are

<sup>150</sup> *Contra Schol.* V 378.13-16.23-380.1, *Ad Bess* I 459.8-10, *Or. mag.* 19.5-9, *cf. Leg.* 30-32 [I,2], 252, 256 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>151</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXX 486.23-26, *cf. XVII* 414.2-3.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* 412.8-9.

<sup>153</sup> *Or. mag.* 4.11-12 [*ad I*], *Contra Schol.* XXIX 474.20-25 the immortality of the soul is implied here by the verb ἀπαθανατίζειν describing the activity it exercises on the body.

<sup>154</sup> *Or. mag.* 10.4-12.1 [*ad XIV*], *Contra Schol.* XXIX 474.25-476.2.

<sup>155</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 459.5-11.

<sup>156</sup> *Or. mag.* 19.5-22. For the inspiration of the *Oracles* by Plato’s philosophy *cf. Brisson* (2000), pp. 111-112, *Brisson* (2003).

<sup>157</sup> *Leg.* 2.

used to express the proper doctrine, they will not be misleading any more. Furthermore, it would be difficult to find a name that is not misused in some way, even the very name of “god” (τὸ Θεοῦ ὄνομα) may be defiled by some people.<sup>158</sup>

The chief reasons why in the *Laws* Plethon decides to use the ancient Greek of gods thus seems to be to a large extent practical and required by the specific genre of this writing, so as the perennial philosophy may be more understandable for the majority. He intends the ideal system of laws to be used in a community, in which everybody cannot be naturally expected to understand the subtleties of the philosophical speculations, on which they are based. At the same time Plethon, nonetheless, refuses the presentation of gods we know from ancient Greek mythology and wants to conceive a new theology that is more in accordance with his rational philosophy. If the ancient names were used properly, it might then become a kind of “the philosophy for masses”. In this Plethon comes close to what Plato says at the end of book II of his *Republic*, in which the myths narrated by Homer and Hesiod are criticised. According to Plato, in contrast to what these poets and “teachers of Greece” tell us, the god is good, and cannot be a source of any evil. Furthermore, he is perfect and cannot change, which also means that he cannot appear to men in different forms and thus deceive them, because he refuses any falsehood.<sup>159</sup> As we see, both, Plato and Plethon, therefore advocate a kind of rational theology, which is irreconcilable with the traditional Greek myths found by the poets. In the *Reply to Scholarios*, Plethon further explains that Plato invents his own myths in order to make the deeper truth accessible to many in order to counterbalance the bad influence of the poets. What may be otherwise said clearly, is necessarily somehow obscured in the myths because the majority, paradoxically, understand it better this way.<sup>160</sup> However, as Plethon tells Bessarion, it necessarily means that not everything is said precisely even in the myths narrated by Plato (οὐ ... δι’ ἀκριβείας ἅπαντα λεγόμενα), because it is only in the very nature of myths to express the truth imprecisely.<sup>161</sup> In other words, if in the myths the higher truth is hidden, it is in an imperfect way as compared to the thinking based on reason.

The best way to approach to Plethon’s “perennial philosophy”, seems to follow now the introductory chapters of the *Laws* which discuss its most basic presuppositions. Afterwards the *philosophia perennis* can be, with the help of other Plethon’s writings, presented in a systematic way.

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* 130-132 [III,32].

<sup>159</sup> Plato, *Resp.* II 376e-383c, cf. X 606e-608b.

<sup>160</sup> *Contra Schol.* VI 382.23-384.7.

<sup>161</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 462.32-35.

## 2. Introduction to the Perennial Philosophy

At the very beginning the main intentions behind Plethon's principal work are summarized. – The *Laws* are supposed to contain “the theology according to Zoroaster and Plato”. As it has been already mentioned, the gods “recognized by the philosophy”, are to be called by their traditional Greek (Hellenic) names (τοῖς πατρίοις τοῖς Ἑλλησι θεῶν ὀνόμασιν), they should not be, however, conceived in the form into which they have been distorted by the poets, but in the manner which is more “in accordance with the philosophy”. The ethics contained in the *Laws* was similarly devised to be in accord with the same sages, Plato and Zoroaster, but also with the Stoics. The constitution proposed in the *Laws* is Spartan, without its harshness, which would be unacceptable to most of the people, and “with the addition of philosophy, to be practised principally among the ruling class, this being the supreme merit of the Platonic systems of politics”.<sup>162</sup> The rites (ἀγιστεῖαι), described in this work, should be simple, not superfluous, but sufficient, the physics is conceived mostly according to Aristotle. Finally, the book touches also upon the principles of logic, ancient Greek archaeology, and the healthy diet (ὑγιεινὴ διαίτη).<sup>163</sup>

In the first chapter of the *Laws* proper (I,1) Plethon reveals the background against which he intends to expound his philosophy. – This work of his is supposed to be devoted to the laws and the best constitution according to which the “people that think (διανοούμενοι ἄνθρωποι)” may lead, both in the private and public, the life that is, as much as it is possible, the best and most happy (εὐδαιμονέστατα). By their nature (πεφύκασιν) all the people desire in the first place to live happily (εὐδαιμόνως βιοῦν). This is the chief goal (τέλος), for the sake of which everybody does everything else. Opinions, nevertheless, differ about what the real happiness is.

Now Plethon provides a classification of diverse opinions, which may be held by different people. As it will gradually become clear, the alternative that he accepts himself is always the last one. – (1) Some people search for pleasure (ἡδονή), others for money, still others for glory (δόξα), but some for the virtue and the good (ἀρετὴ καὶ τὸ καλόν) because they consider the virtue to be the only source of a happy and blessed life. (2) Opinions about the virtue itself, however, also differ, because not everybody considers the same things to be similarly good or shameful (καλὰ τε καὶ αἰσχρά). Some people thus believe that reason and knowledge (λόγος τε καὶ μάθησις) is not necessary for virtue. Some even avoid these because certain charlatan sophists (γόητες δὴ τινες σοφισταί) have persuaded them that such an occupation could be only a source of dishonour and ruin for them. Others, on the contrary, think that reason and knowledge is the summit of the virtue (κεφάλαιον ἀρετῆς) and their main concern is how to become as much

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<sup>162</sup> Transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 322.

<sup>163</sup> *Leg.* 2-4.

prudent and sage as possible (*φρονιμώτατοι τε καὶ σοφώτατοι*). (3) Some people conduct very many sacrifices (*θύματα*) and other rites (*ἀγιστεῖαι*), others do not consider any of them to be pious (*ῥοιον*), still others consider some pious and some not. (4) Some profess celibacy (*μοναυλία*) and complete abstinence of the sexual love (*ἀφροδίσια*), others think that marriage and the procreation of children is better and “more divine”. (5) Some divide food (*ἐδώδιμα*) into that which is forbidden even to taste and that which may be eaten, others believe that there is not anything that is not allowed to eat and limit themselves only by measure (*τὸ μέτρον*) in the eating. (6) Some let themselves stain by the dirt, others search for cleanliness “as one of the goods”. (7) Some praise extreme poverty, others admit the earning of money in a moderate way. (8) Some pride themselves on shamelessness (*ἡ ἀναιδέια*), others prefer gracefulness to its contrary (*εὐσχημοσύνη ... πρὸ ἀσχημοσύνης*). (9) Finally, some people believe that we should seek for the virtue not because of the virtue itself, but because of some reward from gods and do not consider it as something that provides happiness by itself. Others, on the contrary, claim that the virtue should be pursued not because of a reward, but because of the virtue itself (*αὐτὴ δι’ αὐτὴν*). Still others, nonetheless, think that it should be sought because of both, the virtue itself and the reward from gods.<sup>164</sup> Although he expressively does not say so, the target of Plethon’s criticism seems to be the Orthodox Church of his time (the non-rational ethics, the excessive rites), or, more precisely, as in the *Address to Manuel*, Orthodox monks (celibacy, fasts, the contempt of hygiene, the refusal of money, shamelessness).<sup>165</sup>

Given so many different opinions about human life, in order to choose among them rightly, it is necessary, to determine what is the best life and in what happiness really (*τὸ εὐδαιμον*) consists. However, this is impossible without previous examination of what the human beings are as well as what their nature and potentiality is (*τίς ποτε ἡ φύσις αὐτοῦ καὶ δύναμις ἐστίν*). But, according to Plethon, we cannot find out what the nature of man is without previous understanding of the nature of the whole (*ἡ τῶν ὅλων φύσις*), that is, of the nature of reality. We should thus ask which being is the “eldest” (*τί μὲν πρεσβύτατον τῶν ὄντων*), that is, the ultimate source of the generation, which natures are “second” and “third”, which are the “last”, and which is the potentiality (*δύναμις*) of each of them. This clearly implies a hierarchical structure of reality and the distinction between what is more and what is less principal or important. Then, in the third step of his philosophical project, Plethon returns back to the examination of man, in this case conceived as a part of a larger whole. Thus only after it is determined what the human

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* 16-20 [I,1].

<sup>165</sup> *Cf.* Katsafanas (2003).

beings are in the relation to the other things, it is possible to decide how they should live and act.<sup>166</sup>

It is interesting to note that in the *Reply to Scholarios* Plethon refuses critique of Plato by Scholarios, who claims that Plato, unlike Aristotle, was not able to distinguish properly the theoretical disciplines one from another. According to Plethon, it is not in fact possible to separate the disciplines absolutely, but some of them are less perfect and require the higher ones. As geometry needs arithmetic so that its objects may be quantified, so physics and ethics need theology, since physical things (τὰ φυσικά) cannot exist without the divine cause (ἢ ἀπὸ θείου αἰτίας), because it is their highest (κυριωτάτη) cause and the highest knowledge is about the causes of things. Ethics also needs theology and even the legislation depends on the god.<sup>167</sup> In the *On Virtues* Plethon further claims that ethics is based on the physics or the understanding of nature (φυσική), which is one of the virtues. This knowledge is a source of happiness because thanks to it man lives according to his rational part (λογιστικόν), establishes the relation to the whole of the world, and finds out what is good for him and what is not.<sup>168</sup> For Plethon, ethics thus seems to depend on physics and this one, in turn, on theology.

However, as in the case of man and his happiness, there are many differences in the opinions about the nature of things. (1) Some believe that there are absolutely no gods. (2) According to others, gods exist, but they do not exercise any providential care of human affairs (τῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων οὐκ ἂν προνοεῖν πραγμάτων). (3) Still others claim that gods exercise the providential care of all, both the world and human affairs. These people are further divided into (a) those who believe that gods are the cause (αἴτιοι) not only of good things, but also of the bad ones and (b) those who think that gods are not the source of anything bad, being the cause of good things only. Opinions also differ regarding the question whether (aa) gods can be persuaded (παραιτητοί) by human supplication to change their intentions (παρατρέποί), or (bb) they carry out everything in accord with their judgment (γνώμη ἀεὶ τῇ σφετέρῃ), which proceeds according to fate (καθ' εἰμαρμένην) and chooses always the best of the possible alternatives.<sup>169</sup> As we have seen above while discussing the *Address to Theodore*, the obvious source of this tripartite division is book X of Plato's *Laws*, where the three types of impious people are distinguished. – (1) Those who do not believe in gods, (2) those who accept that gods exist, but do not think that they care about humankind, and (3) those who think that gods can be relented by the offerings and prayers.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Leg.* 20-22 [I,1].

<sup>167</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXVI 444.28-446.21, 448.2-5, 450.8-14.

<sup>168</sup> *De virt.* [B,10] 11.15-24.

<sup>169</sup> *Leg.* 22-24 [I,1].

<sup>170</sup> Plato, *Leg.* X 884a-907b, especially 885b, cf. Webb (1989), p. 217. For Proclus' interest in this passage of Plato's *Laws* cf. Dillon (2001), pp. 250-254.

The opinions about the divine world (1) also differ. – (a) Some believe that there is only one and sole god and absolutely nothing else may be revered or honoured by men. (b) Others think that there are many gods, similar to each other and identical by their divinity (*οἱ αὐτοὶ θεότητι*). (c) Still others, however, claim that there is one transcendent (*ἑξαιρέτος*) and highest (*μέγιστος*) god, the eldest leader of all (*ὁ πρεσβύτατος τῶν ὄλων ἀρχηγέτης*) and the other gods are of the second and third level of divinity (*ἢ θεότης*). Concerning the nature of the cosmos (2) – (a) some believe that, with the exception of the one creator god (*ἔξω ἐνὸς τοῦ πεποιηκότος θεοῦ*), this universe (*τόδε πᾶν*) has been generated in time (*γενητὸν χρόνῳ*) as by some cause (*τῇ αἰτίᾳ*) and, at some moment (*ποτε*) in the future, it will disintegrate and perish. (b) Others think that the world has been generated and in the future time will remain forever indestructible (*τῶν δὲ, γεγενῆσθαι μὲν, διαμένειν δὲ τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον ἐς αἰὲ ἀνώλεθρον*). (c) Still others claim that the world is being constructed and generated (*συνίστασθαι τε καὶ γίνεσθαι*) in some part (*ἐν μέρει*) while in another part it disintegrates and perishes and this happens eternally (*ἀεὶ δι' αἰῶνος*). (d) Others regard the universe (*τὸ σύμπαν*) as generated by cause (*τῇ μὲν αἰτίᾳ γενητὸν*), but ingenerated in time and imperishable (*τῷ δὲ χρόνῳ ἀγένητον ... καὶ ἀνώλεθρον*) and unchangeable (*ἀπαράλλακτον*) by the god who has constituted and established it because such a god is always in the same state (*ἀεὶ ... κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχων*), never in any respect idle (*ἀργός*) and therefore producing the universe also always and in the same way (*ἀεὶ δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε παράγοντος*). At this point Plethon turns from the opinions about the divine and the world back to the human nature (3). – (a) Some people think that it is similar to other mortal natures and to beasts and there is nothing more noble or divine in it than in them. (b) Others are “led by their hope to the nature that is divine and altogether undefiled”. Finally, (c) some suppose that the human beings occupy “now and always (*νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ*)” the middle place between the immortal (divine) and mortal nature and are a kind of mixture of both (*μικτὴ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν*).<sup>171</sup> Again, as we will gradually be able to observe during Plethon’s presentation of his *philosophia perennis*, also here it is the last option, with which he himself agrees. Now, however, he limits himself just to the systematic classification of different opinions about the best life and of the nature of the divine, man, and the universe.

According to Plethon, all these things are naturally full of confusion and controversy, unless they are examined and until it is determined what can become the firm fundament for happiness, which is, as we know, the chief goal of the human life.<sup>172</sup> The problem is obviously how to approach the examination (*σκέψις*) of these problems or which “leaders of reasoning (*ἡγεμόνες λόγων*)” to choose. The people who often speak about these matters are the poets

<sup>171</sup> *Leg.* 22-26 [I,1].

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.* 22 [I,1].

(ποιηταί), the sophists (σοφισταί), the lawgivers (νομοθέται), and the philosophers (φιλόσοφοι). However, for Plethon, the poets and sophists, who stand here against the lawgivers and philosophers, are not justly considered to be the right “expounders (ἐξηγηταί)” of these problems. The poets use much flattery (κολακεία) and their chief goal is to gain the favour (χάρις) of the others. For this reason they are not concerned about what is the truth and what is the best. The sophists are even worse because they are accustomed to beguiling (γοητεία), they try to increase their reputation by any means, and in this some of them have even higher ambitions than it is appropriate for men. Unlike the poets, they are not only unconcerned about the truth, but often even attempt to destroy it. Both of them seek to “bring down” the divine things to the more human form or, in contrast, to raise the human ones to the more divine form than it is allowed for the human beings, and thus they turn everything upside down and cause a harm to their associates.<sup>173</sup>

One can thus learn something “healthy” about the problems stated and classified above rather from the lawgivers and philosophers. This is because the lawgivers, unlike the poets, propose laws for the common good (ἐπὶ τῷ κοινῷ ἀγαθῷ) and it is not likely that they have entirely missed it. The philosophers, in turn, identify the summit of happiness (κεφάλαιον εὐδαιμονίας) with the truth about being, they seek it rather than any money and, hence, they are the most probable, if anybody, to attain it. According to Plethon, there are only two dangers. The nature of many people is too weak to acquire the knowledge about the highest things and the certainty about them (τὸ περὶ αὐτὰ ἀκριβές). We must therefore be cautious whether even those men, due to the weakness of nature, are not, after all, unable to know what is the truth and the best. Furthermore, we must not mistake the pretenders who are in fact the sophists and poets for the real lawgivers and philosophers.<sup>174</sup>

At this point Plethon enumerates those who are for him the right “leaders of reasoning (ἡγεμόνες ... τῶν λόγων)”. The foremost position, belongs, again, to Zoroaster, the most ancient of the sages and lawgivers. He was the famous “expounder (ἐξηγητήης) of the divine and other good things” for the Medians, the Persians, and for many other people in ancient Asia. Then Eumolpus is mentioned who founded for the Athenians the Eleusinian mysteries connected with the doctrine about the immortality of the soul and who appears in the same context already in the *Funeral Oration on Helen*. Minos was the famous lawgiver of the Cretans and Lycurgus of the Spartans. Iphitus, together with Lycurgus, founded the Olympic rites (ἀγιστεῖαι)

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* 26-28 [I,2], cf. Plato, *Leg.* X 885d-e.

<sup>174</sup> *Leg.* 28-30 [I,2].



in the honour of Zeus, the highest god, whereas Numa was the lawgiver of Romans, who, apart from other things, established the rites to gods.<sup>175</sup>

Besides the lawgivers Plethon mentions also the sages (σοφοί) of the “barbarians” – the Brahmins of India, whose lawgiver was the legendary Dionysos or Bacchos, and the western Iberians.<sup>176</sup> The most important are, however, naturally the Median Magi, who, as we know, according to Plethon, are the disciples of Zoroaster and the authors of the *Magian (Chaldaean) Oracles*. In Greece the Kouretes are “the most ancient ones being remembered”. They reintroduced there the doctrine about the gods of the second and third order together with that about the everlastingness of the works of Zeus, “his children”, and the whole universe. According to Plethon, this doctrine was abandoned by the Greeks at that time because of the so-called Giants who were not mythical creatures, but “impious men who fought against gods”. However, the Kouretes defeated them by using irrefutable arguments (λόγων τε ἀνάγκαις ἀνμφιλέκτων) against their beliefs, according to which and in contrast to those of the Kouretes, everything, with the exception of the one “eldest” creator, is mortal. What is noteworthy here, is the manner, in which Plethon provides a philosophical and rational allegory of the ancient Greek myths about the battle between gods and Giants or the Kouretes who protected the infant Zeus by dancing around him.<sup>177</sup> Plethon further mentions the priests and interpreters of Zeus in Dodona, the prophet Polyeidios, visited because of his wisdom even by Minos, and Teiresias who became the most famous expounder of the doctrine about the infinite ascents of our soul “from here” and its subsequent descents. After Cheiron, who in Greek mythology was a teacher and educator of many famous men, Plethon turns to historical or semi-historical persons. He thus mentions the seven legendary sages – Chilon of Sparta, Solon of Athens, Bias of Priene, Thales of Miletus, Cleoboulus of Lindos, Pittacus of Mitylene, and Myson of Chenai. Then Pythagoras and Plato are named together with other eminent philosophers from their school (οἱ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν). According to Plethon, the most glorious of them are Parmenides, Timaeus of Locri, Plutarch, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus.<sup>178</sup>

If we compare this list of the famous Greek sages and lawgivers to that in the *Address to Theodore*, there are only few common names (Lycurgus and the Pythagoreans), this might be,

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* 30 [I,2]. Plethon derives the information about Numa probably from Plutarch’s *Life* of this legendary Roman lawgiver whose relation to Pythagoras is discussed there at length (*Numa* 60a-b, 64f-65e, 69c-d, 69e, 74d-e). In one passage (62b) Zoroaster is mentioned along with other lawgivers (62b), who, according to Plutarch, are always responsible also for religious legislation. In Plutarch’s *Aet. Rom.* 268c-d, Numa fixes the beginning of the year according to nature (τῆ φύσει) to the winter solstice, which Plethon accepts in the *Laws* (58 [III,36]), cf. Anastos (1948), p. 206, Tihon’s commentary to *Meth.*, pp. 179-180, and also *infra*. For Plethon’s general interest in Plutarch cf. Diller (1954), Mioni (1985), p. 385.

<sup>176</sup> *Leg.* 30 [I,2], 254 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Gantz (1996) I, pp. 147-148, 445-454. For the Kouretes cf. also lost chapter II,9 of Plethon’s *Laws*: *Περὶ τῆς κατὰ Κούρητας θεοσεβείας* (“On religious belief according to the Kouretes”), *Leg.* 10, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 323.

<sup>178</sup> *Leg.* 30-32 [I,2].

nonetheless, explained by the fact that the perspective there is political and historical whereas here mythological and philosophical. It is interesting, too, to note who all in this list is, in some way, a follower of Pythagoras that, as we have seen, provides the connection between Zoroastrian Magi and Plato. As it is well known and as Plethon could not certainly ignore, the Neoplatonists Porphyry and Iamblichus both admired the ancient sage and each of them wrote his own account of his life.<sup>179</sup> As it was usual in antiquity, (Pseudo-)Timaeus of Locri is also considered by Plethon to be a Pythagorean and even a teacher of Plato who is supposed to share the theory of Forms with him as well as the doctrine about the eternity of the world, not mentioning Plato's dialogue named after him.<sup>180</sup> As for Parmenides, he was not only highly esteemed by Plato (who, again, named one dialogue after him), but he is also connected with Pythagoreism by Diogenes Laertius.<sup>181</sup> As Plethon further says, both the Pythagoreans and Plato lay emphasis on the oral teaching, although in the less favourable circumstances using of “reminders (ὑπομνήματα)” of the former thought may be allowed.<sup>182</sup> Finally, in the *Reply to Scholarios*, the *Golden Verses* attributed to the Pythagoreans are quoted and this is certainly what Plethon considered to be the genuine testimony of the ancient Pythagoreism.<sup>183</sup>

Plethon claims that all the aforementioned thinkers agreed among themselves about the majority of things and their doctrines seemed to be the best to “those who were concerned with what is better”. He himself agrees with them too, without searching for his own innovation in these ancient matters, nor is he going to accept some recent innovation by some sophists. According to him, the sages declare that their opinions are always in accord with those that are more ancient and, moreover, it is erroneous to suppose that the truth can change in the course of time. The sophists, on the contrary, strive to make innovations in many things and are anxious for the novelties because the chief goal of their activity is a vain glory.<sup>184</sup>

In his own work, Plethon thus wants to keep to the best ancient opinions and, unlike the poets and sophists, he considers reasoning (λογισμός) to be for him “the most powerful and divine of our criterions (τῶν γε ἡμετέρων κριτηρίων τὸ κράτιστον τε καὶ θειότατον)”, which only can help to attain truth.<sup>185</sup> However, if he plans to rely on the rational argument, he must quite naturally defend it against the potential refutation of the very possibility of any rational argumentation. In his eyes the main opponents of it are the sophist Protagoras and the sceptic Pyrrho who are dealt with in chapter 3 of book I entitled: “*On the opposing doctrines of Protagoras and*

<sup>179</sup> Porphyry, *Vita Pyth.*, Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.*

<sup>180</sup> *De diff.* X 334.26-33, 336.25-27, *Contra Schol.* X 392.22-394.7, XXII 422.26-430.17.

<sup>181</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* IX,21.

<sup>182</sup> *Contra Schol.* V 376.25-378.12, cf. Plato, *Phaedr.* 276d, *Ep.* XII 359c.

<sup>183</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXI 422.21-25, there is also an excerpt of this text preserved in Plethon's hand cf. Diller (1956), p. 37, Mioni (1985), p. 159.

<sup>184</sup> *Leg.* 32-34 [I,2].

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* 34-36 [I,2].

*Pyrrho (Περὶ τοῦ δυοῖν λόγῳ τοῦ τε Πρωταγορείου καὶ τοῦ Πυρρόωνειου)*”.<sup>186</sup> For Plethon, their doctrines, although mutually opposing, are both likewise vain and presumptuous (*ἀλαζόνε τε καὶ ἀτασθάλω*) and as such have to be rejected. In his presentation Protagoras claims that man is the measure of all things (*πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον*) and what appears to each individual also exists (*τὸ δοκοῦν ἐκάστω, τοῦτο καὶ ὄν*). Pyrrho, on the contrary, argues that nothing is true and man is therefore not able to decide (*κριτής*) anything and the things themselves are somehow unsure (*τὰ πράγματα που ἀτὰ ἄπιστα ὄντα*). Plethon does not spend much time on refuting both these doctrines. – If somebody, like Protagoras, claims that everything is true (*πάντα ἀληθῆ*), he must nevertheless accept also the opposite opinion held by the majority of people, according to which not everything is in fact true. If, on the contrary, somebody, similarly to Pyrrho, argues that nothing is true, he must concede that also this very opinion is not true. Thus both Protagoras and Pyrrho are self-refuted. There are, moreover, a further reason for rejecting both doctrines in question. Almost everybody thinks that some people are more wise than the rest and others, who know less, therefore come to them to learn something, while at the same time they refute the ignorant for their false opinions. However, this would not be possible if they thought that either all, or nobody knows the truth. Furthermore, nobody would certainly claim that the contradicting opinions (*τὰ ἀντιφάσκοντα*) are true and not true at the same time. All the people, for example, consider the opinion that this universe (*τόδε τὸ πᾶν*) is everlasting (*ἄϊδιον*) and the one that it is not to be in a contradiction (*ἀντιφάσκειν*). This definitely cannot mean that both opinions are at the same time true, or both are false, but one of them is entirely (*ὅλως*) true, whereas the other is false. When we talk about future events (*περὶ τῶν μελλόντων*), nobody supposes that everything will happen as he thinks, nor will everything proceed differently, but something will come off according to the opinion conceived beforehand and something contrary to it. The opinions about future events, confronted with what really happens, therefore prove to be true, or false too.<sup>187</sup>

Plethon similarly refuses the claim, according to which in spite of our ability to apprehend the truth about something (*ἀληθείας κατάληψις*), it is not appropriate for human beings to inquire into what is divine, because we cannot learn anything clear (*σαφές*) about gods, who are higher beings than we are (*κρείττονες ἢ καθ’ ἡμᾶς*) and, moreover, this is not pleasant (*φίλον*) to the gods themselves. Such consideration is wrong because gods would not have made us capable of inquiring into these things (*ζητητικοί*), if they had not wanted us to inquire into them, nor would they have provided us with the disposition (*ἔξις*) to learn something clear about these matters. It is equally absurd that we would have no idea about these things and we would live as irrational animals, which are capable only of consenting to what happen to them. In such a state

<sup>186</sup> Transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 322.

<sup>187</sup> *Leg.* 36-40 [I,3].

we would not be able to strive after happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*). But, for Plethon, finding truth in these things cannot be just a result of “some divine chance without reason (*θεία τις τύχη ... ἄνευ λόγου*)” since in such case nobody would ever acquire an opinion about anything in a permanent way. The other reason is that such people would not be perfectly happy because they would be deprived of the rational knowledge about the highest things (*λόγου τε ἐστερημένος καὶ ἐπιστήμης τῆς περὶ τὰ μέγιστα*), no matter if they were otherwise doing well (*εὖ ἔχει*), or not. As Plethon claims, to do well does not suffice because even the madmen can happen to do well. What is therefore necessary is to have a satisfactory knowledge about what means that somebody is doing well, and what is good and bad for man. Furthermore, there is not anything bad in the divine things (*οὔτε αἰσχροῦ τινος τοῖς θεοῖς μέτεστι πράγμασι*) so that gods would not want us to know their matters (*τὰ αὐτῶν*). – The divine, by its very nature, is not envious (*οὔτε φθονερόν τὸ θεῖον*) and does not prevent us to benefit from this knowledge. Although the divine is much higher (*κρεῖττον*) than us, this does not mean that it is unknowable for us since our nature is that of rational beings (*λογικοί*) and it is not entirely different from it. The god has made us able to inquire into his matters (*ζητητικοὶ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ*) in order that we do so and benefit greatly from learning something about him.<sup>188</sup>

At this point Plethon states the main presupposition of his further work: “If we use as the principles the notions that are given by gods in common to all the people, or at least to the most and better of them, along with the divinations about the divine (*χρώμενοι γὰρ ἀρχαῖς ταῖς κοινῇ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὑπὸ θεῶν διδομέναις ἐννοίαις τε καὶ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ μαντεῖαις, ἧ καὶ ταῖς τῶν πλείστων καὶ βελτιόνων*), and if we establish these [principles] as fixed for us (*καὶ ταύτας ἡμῖν βεβαίας αὐτοῖς τιθέμενοι*), and if we, under the leadership of the sages, proceed at each point by a necessary reasoning (*ἀπὸ τούτων ἂν λογισμοῖς ἕκαστα ἀναγκαίως, ἧ οἱ σοφοὶ ὑφηγῶνται, μετιόντες*), we will not – with the divine help – miss the best rational knowledge about everything (*θεῶν ἂν συλλαμβανόντων, τοῦ βελτίστου περὶ ἐκάστων λόγου οὐκ ἀποτευξόμεθα*).” He then dedicates a prayer to the gods of reason (*θεοὶ λόγοι*), asking them to enable us to attain the truth.<sup>189</sup> This prayer at the beginning of the exposition of his philosophy corresponds to the allocutions and hymns with which the *Laws* ends.<sup>190</sup>

What is a crucial point here, is the introduction of “the notions that are given by gods in common to all the people”. These “common notions (*κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι*)”,<sup>191</sup> a conception taken by Plethon from the ancient philosophy,<sup>192</sup> are the basis that allows him to claim that the rational

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.* 40-42 [I,3].

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.* 42-44 [I,3-4], cf. 252 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* 132-240 [III,34-36], *Add.*

<sup>191</sup> Cf. the title of lost chapter II,2: *Πρόληψις ἐννοιῶν κοινῶν* (“Preliminary account of common notions”), *Leg.* 8, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 323 (altered), and perhaps also *Ad Bess.* I 459.29-30.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 115-130.

knowledge of the divine (and subsequently also of the world) is possible and that it is the same for everybody. The common notions are “a gift of gods”, because the divine obviously wants us to have the knowledge about itself and, hence, to be attainable through our reason, although at the same time “divination” is also mentioned. However, it means that if the divine is knowable by reason, it is necessarily intelligible and its own nature is similarly rational. In this we are thus, due to the gift of reason from gods, akin to the rationality of the divine. The “common notions” seem to be also meant in the *Magian Oracle* XVII, which will be discussed later on and according to which: “‘The paternal intellect’ (ὁ πατρικὸς νοῦς), that is, the immediate creator of the essence of the soul, ‘has sown’ also ‘the symbols to the souls’ (ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐνέσπειρε καὶ τὰ σύμβολα), or the images of the intelligible Forms (ἦτοι τὰς τῶν νοητῶν εἰδῶν εἰκόνας), from which each soul always acquires reasons of things (οἱ τῶν ὄντων ... λόγοι).”<sup>193</sup>

### 3. The Division of Reality

In Plethon’s metaphysical system reality is divided into three degrees ordered in a hierarchical scale. In the conclusion at the end of his *Explanation of Magian Oracles* he interprets the account of “the mythology of the Magi” found in Plutarch’s *Isis and Osiris* from his own philosophical perspective.<sup>194</sup> One of Plethon’s intentions here is certainly to demonstrate his claim about the mutual agreement of the “*Oracles of Zoroaster*” and the philosophy of Plato. As he claims, very many have made their opinions to be in accord with these *Oracles*, in the first place the sages “around Plato and Pythagoras”, as it is also confirmed by Plutarch. On the basis of *Isis and Osiris* by this author Plethon concludes that Zoroaster divided the existing things (τὰ ὄντα) into three kinds. The first of them are “presided over” (ἐφιστάθη) by Horomazes (Ὡρομάζης), the last ones by Ahriman (Ἀριμάνης), whereas Mithra (Μίθρας) is in the middle. Plethon then identifies Horomazes with “the Father (πατήρ)” of *Magian Oracles*, Mithra with “the second intellect (δεύτερος νοῦς)” and Ahriman, who, as it seems, has no equivalent in the *Oracles*, with the Sun. Horomazes is “three times bigger and further (τριπλάσιον ἑαυτὸν ἀφεστηκέναι)” from the Sun while Mithra who comes after Horomazes is “two times bigger (διπλάσιον)”. As Plethon attempts to show, this structure of Zoroastrian cosmos is the same as the division of reality in a famous passage in Plato’s second letter: “Upon the King of All (ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς) do all things turn; he is the end of all things and the cause of all good. Things of the second order turn upon

<sup>193</sup> *Or. mag.* 16.6-9 [*ad* XXVII], *cf.* XXVII 3.16, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 52 (altered).

<sup>194</sup> Plutarch, *De Is.* 369d-370c. It is significant for Plethon’s own philosophical perspective that his interpretation of the Zoroastrian teaching completely disregards the dualism apparently present in the mythology described by Plutarch.

the Second, and those of the third order upon the Third.”<sup>195</sup> The analogy of the doctrines found in the myth of Zoroastrians recounted by Plutarch, in the *Magian (Chaldaean) Oracles*, and in Plato thus enables Plethon to claim that these three texts represent three expressions, differing only in their particular formulation, of one omnipresent and everlasting *philosophia perennis*, in which reality is divided into three hierarchically ordered kinds.<sup>196</sup>

We must, however, always distinguish three different principles and the levels of things corresponding to them. “The king of all” (or alternatively “the Father” and “Horomazes”) is the source of being for everything else, but the things on the first and second level of created things are identical with “the Second” (or “the second intellect” and “Mithra”) and “the Third” (or “the Sun” and “Ahriman”). Everything that has been caused by some higher principle is thus divided into the things that are eternal (τὰ αἰώνια), those that are in time, but everlasting and never perish (τὰ ἔγχρονα μὲν, αἰδία δέ), and finally those that are mortal (τὰ θνητά). This means that while the first principle is the originator of everything else, the things on the second and third level have also further causes – the second and third principle respectively. Only what is “closest” to “the King of All” and has no other cause is eternal. Where the second or even the third principle is implied and it is not just the highest god who is the immediate creator, but the lower, second or the third principles, the things thus generated are “in time, but everlasting” or even “mortal”. Further details of this metaphysical system will become clearer in the subsequent exposition here. Now it may be, nevertheless, mentioned that in the *Laws* the first principle is called “pre-eternal (προαιώνιος)” because, being the immediate cause of eternal things, it must be even “before the eternity”.<sup>197</sup>

In chapter 5 of book I of the *Laws* Plethon distinguishes the analogous degrees of divinity (θεϊότης). The foremost place belongs to Zeus, the first and ultimate principle of everything else that is not caused by any higher principle. After him Plethon posits the gods located in the second and third place according to their lesser divinity, “the children and creations and the children of children and creations and creations of Zeus”. The supreme god orders and governs (κατακοσμεῖ) everything “and especially human affairs” through the second and third gods, each of them having assigned a larger or smaller field they preside over. Due to their degree of divinity the gods of the second order are immediately next to Zeus. They are the so-called supracelestial

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<sup>195</sup> Plato, *Ep.* II 312e, transl. in: Cooper-Hutchinson (altered), p. 1638. Although in the modern times the authenticity of this text has been often doubted, for Plethon, who was relying on the ancient Platonic tradition, it was an important summary of Plato’s metaphysics. For the history of its interpretation cf. Saffrey’s and Westerink’s introduction to Proclus, *Theol. Plat.*, II, pp. xx-lix (*Histoire des exégèses de la Lettre II de Platon dans la tradition platonicienne*). Plethon belongs to those Platonists who conceive the relation between the three orders of things mentioned by Plato as hierarchical rather than trinitarian. Cf. also Tambrun-Krasker’ commentary to *Or. mag.*, pp. 153-155, and Dörrie (1970).

<sup>196</sup> *Or. mag.* 19.5-22.

<sup>197</sup> *Leg.* 96 [III,15].

gods (*ὑπερουράνιοι θεοί*) that are “completely detached from bodies and matter”. Translated into the philosophical terms, they represent Platonic “pure forms (*εἶδη ... εἰλικρινῆ*)”, that exist “themselves by themselves (*αὐτὰ καθ’ αὐτά*)” and “the immovable intellects (*νόες ἀκίνητοι*)”, that are “always and in every respect (*περὶ πάντα*) active by one simultaneous intellectual act in which they mutually conceive themselves (*ἅμα μιᾷ τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἐκάστους νοήσει ἐνεργούς*)”.<sup>198</sup> The gods of the third order are located “inside this cosmos (*ἐντὸς οὐρανοῦ τοῦδε*)” and they are “rational and immortal living beings (*ζῶα λογικά τε καὶ ἀθάνατα*) composed of the infallible souls and unageing and undefiled bodies. In other words, they are stars and other heavenly bodies and daemons.<sup>199</sup> Next, after the gods of the third order, there is apparently that part of the world in which we and other mortal creatures live. As Plethon’s account makes clear, the common feature of the gods of all three orders is their perpetual existence, which can never terminate (nor begin).<sup>200</sup> Thus in contrast to sensible things, that begin and cease to exist at their due time, everything that is divine, has a permanent existence, regardless whether it is self-caused, as the first principle, or caused and sustained by some higher cause, as in the case of the second and third gods.

In chapter 15 of book III of the *Laws* further characteristics of the tripartite world created by the first principle are added to those we have seen above in the commentary to the *Magian Oracles*. – The highest part of reality, the realm of Forms, is wholly and completely eternal (*αἰώνιον*) and immovable (*ἀκίνητον*), and since there is neither the past, nor the future in it, everything is present on this level of reality simultaneously (*τὸ σύμπαν ἐνεσθηκὸς αἰεί*). The second part, the realm of the gods inside the cosmos, exists already in time (*ἔγχρονον*) and motion, but it is everlasting (*αἰδῖον*) and has neither the beginning in time (*οὔτ’ ἂν ἠρμημένον χρόνον*), nor will it ever cease to exist (*οὔτ’ ἂν ποτε παυσόμενον*). Finally, the lowest part of the universe exists in time (*ἔγχρονον*) and is mortal (*θνητόν*), because there the beginning and the end of life is determined by time (*ἀρχὴν τε τῷ χρόνῳ τοῦ βίου καὶ τελευτὴν ἴσχον*). Plethon infers that because there are three entirely different kinds of the essences (*οὐσίαι*), three principally different types of generation (*γενέσεις*) must similarly exist. There is therefore an analogy between the generation and the essence, and the essence and the generation.<sup>201</sup> Thus if any of the eternal essences proceeds from Zeus, the first principle, which alone is caused by himself (*μόνος δὴ τῶν πάντων αὐτός δι’ αὐτόν*) and which is the pre-eternal (*προαιώνιος*) cause of the eternal Forms, all such essences must be similarly eternal. This is because an eternal substance, being eternal as a whole (*ἔπειτα ἅπαντα ἂν αἰώνιος εἶη*), cannot be caused partly by a pre-eternal

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* 44-46 [I,5].

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* 52 [I,5].

<sup>200</sup> According to Plethon, the lowest of gods are daemons (*cf. Leg.* 176 [III,34]), presumably because the ensuing human soul is already connected to the body that is mortal.

<sup>201</sup> *Cf. Leg.* 242 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

principle (ἐκ προαιωνίου) and partly by something that is not pre-eternal any more. Thus Zeus, the first pre-eternal principle, generates the eternal essence in its whole. He has subsequently charged (ἐπιτρέποι) its immediate product with the creation of what exists in time, but is everlasting, and similarly, this one has been further put in charge of the creation of what is temporal and mortal. Thus each kind of essence is created by another, immediately preceding superior essence (ἀπὸ τῆς ἐαυτῆς προσεχῶς ὑπερχειμένης ἐκάστης) and, according to its own character, has its appropriate type of causation.<sup>202</sup> However, as it is evident, the higher level of reality does not cease to be in a certain sense present in the lower ones created by its activity. – Although the first principle “charges” the essence generated immediately by it with the creating of the subsequent ontological level, being the highest cause, it is always present in it as the first and utmost principle of everything else.

The text of chapter 5 of book I of the *Laws* offers yet another perspective on the division of reality, which has a close parallel in two passages in sections IV and X of the treatise *On the Differences*. The first place is reserved, again, to Zeus, the highest god in the *Laws*, or “the superessential (ὑπερούσιον) One of the Platonists” in the *Differences*, in both cases the first principle that is “supremely one (ἄκρωξ ἔν)”, so united that in it even the distinction between its essence (οὐσία), activity or actuality (πραξις/ἐνεργία),<sup>203</sup> and potentiality (δύναμις) cannot be traced. In the intellects (νόες) or Forms (εἶδη) the essence (οὐσία) is already distinguished from the activity-actuality (πραξις/ἐνεργία), but it is permanently active or actualised and there is no distinction between it and the potentiality (δύναμις).<sup>204</sup> The intellects and Forms thus “possess all their attributes (τὰ προσόντα) permanently in the present, not potentially (δυνάμει) but actually (ἐνεργίᾳ)” and they are therefore “immovable (ἀκίνητά)”.<sup>205</sup> For this level of reality the distinction between attributes and the essences is also alleged, whereas the same is not true about the superessential One.<sup>206</sup> In the soul (ψυχή) the essence (οὐσία), activity-actuality (πραξις/ἐνεργία), and potentiality (δύναμις) is distinguished because it is not always active (ἐνεργόν) and often remains in the state of “the pure potentiality (ψιλῆ δύναμις)”.<sup>207</sup> Or alternatively, this is so because “the soul moves (κινουμένη) from one thought (νόημα) to another, and the human soul from thinking (νοεῖν) to not-thinking (μὴ νοεῖν) as well as, in contrast, from not-thinking to thinking, and so it does not always possess knowledge of things, nor possesses it entirely in actuality but rather potentially”.<sup>208</sup> In the body (σῶμα) the essence (οὐσία) is further divided into form (εἶδος) and matter (ύλη) that is not only movable (κίνητη),

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.* 94-96 [III,15], cf. 180 [III,34].

<sup>203</sup> The term ἐνεργία is being used in the *Differences*, πραξις in the *Laws*.

<sup>204</sup> *Leg.* 54 [I,5], *De diff.* IV 326.31-327.4, X 337.7-26.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.* IV 326.35-37, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 198.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.* X 337.19-23.

<sup>207</sup> *Leg.* 54 [I,5].

<sup>208</sup> *De diff.* IV 326.37-327.4, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 198, cf. *Or. mag.* 18.4-6 [ad XXXI].



but also dissoluble (*σκεδαστή*), and divisible into infinity (*μεριστή ἐπ' ἄπειρον*).<sup>209</sup> The matter thus appears to be a specific kind of potentiality that in contrast to the potentiality in the soul can even cease to exist and may be divided *ad infinitum*. Similarly, this potentiality, in the case of matter and the body even dissoluble and divisible, seems to be passive, that is, able to suffer a change under the impulse of something else, whereas in the soul the potentiality, as distinguished from the activity, appears rather as an active potentiality that is able to cause some outward effect.

In section X of the *Differences* the division described above is supplemented with the reflections on the unity, multiplicity, and infinity. Because the superessential god (*ὁ ὑπερούσιος θεός*) is supremely one (*ἄκρως ἓν*), there is no multiplicity (*πληθός*) within him. It appears only on the level of the intelligible order (*ὁ νοητὸς διάκοσμος*), “but it is finite (*πεπερασμένον*) and in no way infinitive (*οὐδαμῆ ἄπειρον*), either potentially or actually (*οὔτε δυνάμει οὔτε ἔργῳ*)”. In the sensible world (*ὁ αἰσθητὸς κόσμος*) the infinity (*ἀπειρία*) appears due to the presence of matter (*ὑλη*) “to which, in the first place, the infinite is attributed (*πρώτως τὸ ἄπειρον πρόσεστιν*)”. Although matter, as everything in the sensible world, has its cause (*αἰτία*) in “the other world (*ἐκεῖθεν*)” of the Forms, “the cause there”, being one of the ideal entities, “is not itself infinite (*οὐ κακέῖ ἄπειρον οὔσα*)”.<sup>210</sup> As Plethon claims in the *Laws*, the Forms and daemons closer to the first principle, which is itself “purely one (*εἰλικρινῶς ἓν*)”, are in lesser number they are, and *vice versa*.<sup>211</sup>

Plethon thus descends from the absolute oneness of the first principle across the intelligible Forms and the Soul to the infinite and plural matter. The nature of the difference between the first principle or the first god, and the intelligible order of the Forms or the second gods, seems to be well understandable. If there is something distinct from the first principle conceived as “supremely one”, it must necessarily be many. (And that there exists something that is distinct from the One is obvious from our experience of the sensible world that is apparently many.) On the level of the order of the Forms this multiplicity is, however, still “finite”, well defined, and delimited. In order to explain the nature of this first level of the finite multiplicity, Plethon presupposes two distinctions that may be traced inside it – the difference between the essences and attributes of the Forms and the difference between their essences and their activity-actuality. Because the essence (*οὐσία*) appears as an independent principle first on the level of the Forms which are already multiple, this may explain why, as we have seen, the first principle, which is the

<sup>209</sup> *Leg.* 54 [I,5].

<sup>210</sup> *De diff.* X 337.7-13, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 207 (altered).

<sup>211</sup> *Leg.* 56 [I,5]. We have left here aside a similar account on the progressive differentiation of reality that Plethon gives in his letter to Bessarion (*Ad Bess.* I. 459.13-460.5), because it seems to be to a large extent an interpretation of a philosophical conception of Proclus, being originally inspired by a Proclean question posed by Bessarion (*Ad Gemist.* I 455.5-456.22).

immediate creator of the Forms, is sometimes described as “super-essential (ὑπερ-οὐσιος)”. In other words, the One is placed above being because, as completely united, it has no distinguishable and independent essence that would determinate its nature.

However, from the passages quoted so far, the details of Plethon’s conception of essence (οὐσία) and attributes (προσόντα) as well as the precise nature of their distinction are not altogether clear and other texts have to be introduced to make it understandable. When Plethon uses the concept of attribute, he certainly means a permanent quality or a typical feature of some essence as opposed to accident that is temporal and contingent.<sup>212</sup> This, nevertheless, does not necessarily mean that an attribute is simply identical with its essence although the close relation of these two is quite natural. In the *Reply to Scholarios* it is thus claimed that the essence as compared to attribute has more being (ὄν), which is, nonetheless, the common genus for both.<sup>213</sup> In the *Laws* the Forms, in spite of their plurality, are said to be indivisible as to their essence (ἀμέριστα τὴν οὐσίαν).<sup>214</sup> Similarly in the already quoted passage from chapter 5 of book I of the *Laws* Plethon further explains that every Form has its essence from Zeus itself, “the indivisible from the indivisible (ἀμερῆ ἔξ ἀμεροῦς)”. The essence of each Form “has in itself beforehand (προειληφύται) collectively and individually (συλλήβδην τε καὶ καθ’ ἓν) every plurality (ὁπόσων γ’ ἂν πλειόνων) that each [Form] is the cause (αἴτιος) of in the things under it (τοῖς ὑφ’ αὐτόν). With the only exception of Poseidon, the eldest of them, they order and arrange among themselves (διατίθεσθαι τε καὶ κοσμεῖσθαι) attributes (τὰ δὲ προσόντα), one from another (ἄλλους ὑπ’ ἄλλων), because the king and the Father has established a mutual community (κοινωνία) of the goods of his children among themselves. This is the greatest thing and the good that he has made to them (αὐτοῖς ... ἐμπεποιήκει), after the community with himself (ἢ ἑαυτοῦ κοινωνία).”<sup>215</sup>

From this account it thus seems that each Form has its proper position in the intelligible order, but at the same time it reflects in itself the rest of the Forms because the intelligible world is constituted by the mutual relations of the Forms among themselves. The alleged distinction between essence and attribute, that is the source of the (finite) multiplicity of the Forms, appears to be analogous to their being one and many at the same time. The Forms have certain common features – they are eternal, changeless entities, being the gods of the second order that are the models and causes of the sensible world. These are the main characteristics of their “indivisible” essence by which they are in some way similar to Zeus and which are common to all of them, that is, to the essence of the Forms. Furthermore, as we will see later on, the Forms are not equal,

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<sup>212</sup> For the use of the verb *προσεῖναι* and its derivatives cf. *Leg.* 102 [III,15], 114 [III,15], *De diff.* X 337.32, X 338.35, *Contra Schol.* XIX 416.21, XXIII 434.13, XXIX 472.2, XXXI 500.21.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* XXIII 434.13-14.

<sup>214</sup> *Add.* 119v.4-5.

<sup>215</sup> *Leg.* 46-48 [I,5], cf. *ibid.* 102 [III,15], *Ad Bess.* I 459.13-19.

but some are “higher”, “closer to the first principle”, and more general, while other “lower”, “closer to the sensible world”, and more specific. However, each Form has also its own specific characteristic, it is a general Form of a thing, quality or feature, and this is what should be most probably understood under the attributes proper to the Forms. Because, as it has been said, the Forms are models and causes of the things in our sensible world created by their specific causation, attributes are thus perhaps in some way identical with their activity. This is perhaps the meaning we should finally give to the ambiguous “activity-actuality (*πρᾶξις/ἐνεργία*)”, at least on the level of the Forms. In the *Differences* Plethon thus maintains that they exercise their activity in the sensible world.<sup>216</sup> Moreover, as he tells us elsewhere, there is no distinction between the potentiality and actuality in them, the specific essence and the attribute of each Form being determined by its position in the intelligible order, not by the actualisation of the specific potentiality inherent in its essence.<sup>217</sup> In this interpretation of Plethon’s rather partial and mysterious statements, the distinction between essence and attribute traceable in the Forms would mean that the essence describes the common nature of the Forms, that is, what makes a Form to be the Form, whereas attribute determines the specific characteristics of each Form, that is, of what this is the Form, or what it is a model and cause for.

In the sensible world, as we have seen, a further distinction between the potentiality and activity-actuality appears. As it has been already hinted at, the Aristotelian concept of potentiality (*δύναμις*) seems to be twofold here since it can either mean an active potentiality to act, or a passive potentiality to be acted upon.<sup>218</sup> In the case of the soul we have to do with the active potentiality only – the soul is either active or not. In section IV of the *Differences* Plethon seems even to distinguish several different kinds of souls: “In the soul, however, they [i.e. Platonists] distinguish essence (*οὐσία*) and potentiality (*δύναμις*) and activity-actuality (*ἐνεργία*), because the soul moves from one thought to another, and the human soul from thinking to not-thinking and from not-thinking to thinking, and so does not always possess knowledge of things nor possesses it entirely in actuality (*ἐνεργία*) but rather potentially (*δυνάμει*).”<sup>219</sup> According to this account, the soul of a higher kind, presumably the world-soul or the soul of the gods of the third

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<sup>216</sup> *De diff.* X 341.39-342.1.

<sup>217</sup> Dimitrakopoulos (2004), pp. 29-38, argues that the distinction between *οὐσία* and *πρᾶξις/ἐνεργία* is inspired by the Thomism of Plethon’s alleged teacher Demetrios Kydonos. However, although there might be some documents (excerpts and notes) proving some interest of his in Thomas Aquinas and, despite all Dimitrakopoulos’ effort to support his claim, it still remains uncertain whether Plethon was really influenced by this Latin and Aristotelian philosopher. Furthermore, the distinction in question does not seem to be the same as the one between *essentia* and *esse/actualitas* by Thomas. – Whereas *ἐνεργία* may be both activity-action and actuality, *πρᾶξις* can have only the first of these two meanings and the usage of this word thus seems irreconcilable with the Thomistic distinction between essence and its being or actuality. Although Dimitrakopoulos quotes a number of Thomistic texts, including some alleged Plethon’s excerpts (pp. 147, 153-4, n. 475, 155-159, 165) in none of them, however, *πρᾶξις* appears, and *ἐνεργία* is being constantly used.

<sup>218</sup> The similar distinction may be found in *De diff.* IX 334.8-12.

<sup>219</sup> *De diff.* IV 326.37-327.4, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 198 (altered).

order, cannot think everything at once but moves from one thought to another. The human soul, on the contrary, “moves” from the state in which its activity is not exercised but remains in potentiality, to that in which this potentiality is actualised. On the lowest level of the sensible world, in the body, there exists further distinction between the infinitely divisible matter (ὑλη) and form (εἶδος), in other words, between the passive potentiality (to be acted upon) that is not actualised and its actualisation. Where the bodily principle prevails, all the actualisation can, however, be only temporal because due to the infinity of matter nothing can exist permanently in the same state and everything is necessarily doomed to extinction. The world of bodies is not divine any more, because as we know, the main feature of the gods of all the orders, is that, being eternal or everlasting, they enjoy the existence without a beginning or an end.

#### 4. Zeus, the First Principle<sup>220</sup>

Plethon calls the first principle of everything by diverse traditional names derived from different sources. Thus in the *Laws* he names it Zeus, which is a familiar name of “the Father of gods and men” of ancient Greek mythology. The designation “Father (πατήρ)” can be found in the original text of the *Magian Oracles*, which Plethon comments, but also in Plato’s *Timaeus*.<sup>221</sup> The name “creator (δημιουργός)” is apparently also borrowed from the same dialogue,<sup>222</sup> whereas the title “king (βασιλεύς)” appears in Plato’s *Second Letter*<sup>223</sup> discussed by Plethon in his commentary to the *Magian Oracles*.

As we have seen, he conceives the first principle to be “supremely one (ἄκρως ἓν)”<sup>224</sup> without any trace of the plurality, being the perfect unity of essence, actuality-activity, and potentiality. This is similar to his description of Zeus as “purely one (εἰλικρινῶς ἓν)”<sup>225</sup> or “the One itself (αὐτοέν)”<sup>226</sup> that exists in “the supreme simplicity (ἄκρα ἀπλότης)”<sup>227</sup>. Plethon goes even so far to claim that the first principle cannot be “many and one at the same time (οὐ πολλά τε ὁμοῦ ... καὶ ἓν). Because, even if it were a kind of one composed of things that are all similarly uncreated (οὐτ’ ἂν ἐξ ὁμοίως τῶν πάντων ἀγενήτων ἓν τι συστήναι), it would still need something different and higher that would hold it together (ἕτεροῦ γὰρ δέοιτο καὶ κρείττονος

<sup>220</sup> For a detailed discussion of this aspect of Plethon’s philosophy cf. Zografidis (2003).

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *Or. mag.* V 1.10, VII 1.14, XII 2.7, XXX 4.1, XXXIII 4.6, XXXIV 4.8, Plato, *Tim.* 28c3, 37c7, 41a7, 42e7, 50d3, 71d5, cf. Brisson (2003), pp. 114-117.

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Plato, *Tim.* 28a6, 29a3, 41a7, 42e8, 68e2, 69c3.

<sup>223</sup> Plato, *Ep.* II 312e1-2.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. further *Or. mag.* 16.16 [ad XXVIIIb].

<sup>225</sup> *Leg.* 46 [I,5], 170 [III,34].

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* 132 [III,34], 184 [III,34], 202 [III,35].

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.* 100 [III,15].

ἅμα τοῦ συνέξοντος). Nor if [it were one composed of] something uncreated and other things that already proceed from it (οὐτ' ἂν ἐξ ἐνός μὲν ἀγενήτου, τῶν δ' ἄλλων ἀπὸ τούτου ἤδη προϊόντων), they would not yet proceed with a nature akin (οὐ ... ἔτι συμφυᾶ ... προϊοί) to the first principle. The latter is itself by itself (τὸ αὐτὸ δι' αὐτὸ ὄν), whereas those are already by something different and thereby distinguished (τὰ δι' ἕτερον ἤδη ὄντα, καὶ τοσοῦτω διακρινόμενα).<sup>228</sup> Thus, according to Plethon, the principle which is really the first, that means, uncreated by any higher cause, has to be one (ἓν) without any distinguishable individual parts (πολλά). Similarly it cannot be one complex of several first, (seemingly) uncreated entities because even in such case the structure of this composition would be different than its parts, and would be, in fact, a higher cause of them. This is because, for Plethon, a structure is responsible for the unity and therefore the very existence of an entity that is one and many at the same time. The situation is just the same in the second proposed alternative where some parts of the first principle are created by another higher, but similarly intrinsic cause. It is in the very nature of the first principle, which is an utmost cause of everything else, that it has to be “by itself” and uncreated. The parts in question, being created by something else, thus exist thanks to the One, and for this reason they cannot be identified with the first principle and have to be something different and lower than their cause. To conclude, according to Plethon, the first principle is thus not only one, but also “most identical with itself (ὁ ὅτι μάλιστα αὐτὸς αὐτῷ)”.<sup>229</sup>

This absolute unity and identity makes the first principle radically different from everything else that is created by its activity. Because the first principle is absolutely one, being different from the other things that are many, in the *Differences*, as it has been already mentioned, it is called “super-essential (ὑπερ-ούσιος)”, in contrast to the things that have their distinguished essences (οὐσίαι) and in which there is a distinction between their essence and activity. The first principle is also called by an obviously hyperbolic expression “true being that really is (ὄντως ὦν τῷ ὄντι)”,<sup>230</sup> because it is not just ordinary being, but the “being itself (αὐτοῶν)”,<sup>231</sup> the source of all being. This is what Plethon obviously has in mind when he claims in a letter to Bessarion that the being (τὸ ὄν) should be ascribed also to the first cause (τὸ πρῶτον αἴτιον), because it cannot be assigned to anything more appropriately than to what is itself by itself (τὸ αὐτὸ δι' αὐτὸ ὄν).<sup>232</sup> By this statement Plethon presumably means that the first principle is the ultimate source of all being and as such it can be also called in a certain sense being. However, there is the insurmountable difference between the One and Many, grounded in the very fact that the first principle “is itself

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* 170 [III,34].

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.* 46 [I,5], cf. *Add.* 119.12-15.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.* 46 [I,5], 168-170 [III,34].

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.* 132 [III,34], 168 [III,34], 202 [III,35], 216 [III,35]. For the metrical reasons Plethon uses sometimes a slightly different form αὐτοῶν.

<sup>232</sup> *Ad Bess.* 460.33-461.1.

by itself (τὸ αὐτὸ δι' αὐτοῦ ὄν)<sup>233</sup> and “in every respect and altogether uncreated (ἀγέννητος πάντη τε καὶ πάντως ὄν)”,<sup>234</sup> that means, not produced by any higher cause. For these reasons Zeus may be described as “transcendent (ἐξαιρέτος)”,<sup>235</sup> “eminent (ἐξοχος)”,<sup>236</sup> “of incomparable superiority (ἀσύμβλητος ὑπεροχή)”,<sup>237</sup> or “impossible to be counted (οὐκ ἐνάριθμος) among other gods”.<sup>238</sup> The address “you great, really great and more than great (σὺ μέγας, μέγας τῶ ὄντι καὶ ὑπέρομεγας)”<sup>239</sup> also gradually intensifies the insurmountable difference between him and his creation. As it has been mentioned above, Plethon speaks of Zeus as being “pre-eternal (προ-αιώνιος)”, that means, even before and beyond the eternity of the most immediate of his creation – the Forms.<sup>240</sup>

Not only these, but also some other expressions quoted above, bring Plethon close to the Platonic tradition of negative theology that attempts to describe the more perfect degrees of reality through indirect means.<sup>241</sup> This is so because the pre-eminence of the first principle, grounded in its absolute unity, identity, and self-subsistence, cannot be expressed in an incomplete and partial description which we are only capable of in our imperfect speech and reasoning which by its nature is always necessarily plural. Good examples are the *Magian Oracles* XXVIII and XXXIII. According to Plethon’s commentary, the latter (“The Father has snatched himself away; / not even shutting off his own fire in his intellectual power (δύναμις νοερά).”<sup>242</sup>) affirms the absolute difference of the first principle from the things created by it. He describes “the Father” as “transcendent (ἐξαιρέτος)” and not limited in any way because he is uncreated and itself by itself. He is “wholly incommunicable to something other (ὅλως μεταδοτὸν ἐτέρῳ ὄν)” due to his envy, but because it is simply impossible.<sup>243</sup> There is only an ostensible contrast between this utterance and the *Oracle* XXVIIIb (“There is indeed something intelligible (πινοητόν), which you must understand by the flower of intellect (νοεῖν νόου ἀνδρῆ).”) that follows immediately after XXVIIIa (“Learn what is intelligible (μάνθανε τὸ νοητόν), for it exists outside the intellect (νόου ἔξω ὑπάρχει).”).<sup>244</sup> As we know, in the commentary to this *Oracle* Plethon emphasizes the need to acquire actually (ἐνεργεία) the cognition of the intelligible things (τὰ

<sup>233</sup> *Leg.* 56 [I,5], *Or. mag.* 18.16-17 [ad XXXIII].

<sup>234</sup> *Leg.* 46 [I,5], 156-158 [III,34], *Zor. Plat.* 262, cf. τὸ πάμπαν ἀγέννητον, *Or. mag.* 18.16 [ad XXXIII], *Ad Bess.* I 459.30.

<sup>235</sup> *Leg.* 24 [I,1], 44 [I,5], 152 [III,34], 182 [III,34], *Zor. Plat.* 262, *Or. mag.* 18.14 [ad XXXIII], *Decl. brev.* 22.8, *Contra Schol.* XII 404.1, XVII 414.3, XXX 486.25, cf. ἡ αὐτοῦ θεότης τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἐξήρηται, *Or. mag.*, 18.17 [ad XXXIII].

<sup>236</sup> *Leg.* 202 [III,35], 204 [III,35], 206 [III,35], 214 [III,35], 218 [III,35], 220 [III,35].

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.* 170 [III,34].

<sup>238</sup> *Contra Schol.* XII 404.1, XVII 414.3.

<sup>239</sup> *Leg.* 132 [III,34], 182 [III,34], 200 [III,34].

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.* 96 [III,15].

<sup>241</sup> Pace Tambrun-Krasker (2002), pp. 7-9, 147-150, 314-317, (2003).

<sup>242</sup> *Or. mag.* XXXIII 4.6-7, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 53.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.* 18.14-19 [ad XXXIII], cf. *Decl. brev.* 22.8-9.

<sup>244</sup> *Or. mag.* XXVIIIa-b 3.17-18, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 53, cf. also the *Oracle* XXIV 3.11 and Plethon’s commentary to it (15.9-12).

νοητά), the images (αἱ εἰκόνες) of which have been sown in us by the creator and exist potentially (δυνάμει) in our soul.<sup>245</sup> He obviously means here acquiring the knowledge of the intelligible Forms that, according to Platonists, are “outside” us, as the *Oracle* says, and may be known in the recollection.

In the commentary to the following *Oracle* XXVIIIb Plethon then makes one step further (or higher) and accounts for the cognition of the first principle: “The highest god, being supremely one (ἐν ἄκρως), cannot be known (νοεῖν) in the same manner as the other intelligible things (νοητά), but through the flower of intellect (τῷ τοῦ νοῦ ἄνθει) or through the highest and unitary [part] (τῷ ἀκροτάτῳ καὶ ἐνιαίῳ) of our intellection (νοήσις).”<sup>246</sup> The “flower of intellect” is an influential metaphorical image introduced by the original *Chaldaean Oracles*<sup>247</sup> and commented and philosophically systematized by the later Neoplatonists, especially Proclus. According to them, the flower of intellect is the principle of our unification with the higher realities, sometimes even, identified with “the one in us (τὸ ἐν ἐν ἡμῖν)”, the principle of the unification with the One itself, the utmost principle of everything.<sup>248</sup> The very same idea seems to be present also in Plethon’s commentary to the *Oracle* XXVIIIb. Similarly to the differentiation of the basic levels of reality in the *philosophia perennis*, also here he distinguishes the supremely united One from the intelligible Forms, constituted already as a kind of finite plurality. Whereas the intelligible can be known through the intellect, this is not possible in the case of the One that is even above the limited plurality of the realm of the intelligible Forms. It can be only approached “through the flower of intellect”, that is, “through the highest and unitary [part] of our intellection (νοήσις)”. According to this statement, the flower of intellect seems to be for Plethon the most perfect, that means, the most united cognitive act. Similarly to the One, we and our intellect are also in a certain sense united one, the one composition of many parts, and for this reason we may also presuppose the existence of “the one in us” corresponding to the One, the first principle of all. Despite the absolute transcendence of the One claimed in the *Oracle* XXXIII, the analogy that exists between it and “the one in us” thus enables us to know in a very specific sense also the One. Such knowledge has to obviously overcome the profound difference between the supreme One and the plurality of its creation, because it must go even beyond the plurality of the intelligible world, to which we have an access through our intellect. It must therefore be a kind of supra-intellective, mystical union with the first principle.<sup>249</sup> For this reason Plethon may also claim in the *Oracle* XXXIV that the “image ... of the god (ἄγαλμα ... τοῦ θεοῦ)” cannot be seen through eyes (οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς ὁρατόν) and what appears to those who are being initiated (τὰ

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.* 16.10-14 [ad XXVIIIa].

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* 16.15-17.2 [ad XXVIIIb].

<sup>247</sup> *Or. Chald.* I.1, II.2, cf. the commentary ad I.1 in: Majercik (1989), p. 138.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Majercik (1989), pp. 30-45, Rist (1964), C. Guérard (1987), Beierwaltes (1979), pp. 367-382.

<sup>249</sup> *Pace* Tambrun-Krasker’ commentary *ad loc.*, p. 134.

δὲ τελουμένοις φαινόμενα), whether it is “thunderbolt, fire or something else”, are only symbols (σύμβολα) and “not some nature of the god (οὐ θεοῦ τις φύσις)”.<sup>250</sup>

Thanks to “the flower of intellect” we can thus know the main features of the first principle. – As an ἀρχή in the twofold sense this notion was understood in ancient Greek philosophy, it creates and subsequently directs everything. This first aspect of Zeus fits well with his description as “the creator (δημιουργός)” and “the Father (πατήρ)” mentioned above.<sup>251</sup> Being absolutely one, he is compared to a father that gives birth to the other gods (that means, the Forms) without any mother (ἀμήτωρες) because there is nothing that might join him in the creation as a by-cause (συναίτιον) of the female kind (ἐν θήλειος λόγῳ). The “female” is here – as Plethon explains – the principle that supplies matter (ύλη) to things, and for this reason this principle is completely absent when Zeus creates the Forms.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, because of his supreme simplicity (ἡ ἄκρα ἀπλότης) and because he has the potentiality to realize whatever he wills (βούλεσθαι τε ἅμα καὶ δύνασθαι), there is no difference between creating (δημιουργεῖν) through the intellective act (σύν τε νοήσει), and generating (γεννᾶν) through nature (σύν τε αὖ τῷ πεφυκέναι) within him.<sup>253</sup> Zeus is therefore similarly called also “the Father himself (αὐτοπάτωρ)”<sup>254</sup> or “before Father (προπάτωρ)”.<sup>255</sup> As the creator of everything he is also “supremely good (ἄκρως ἀγαθός)”,<sup>256</sup> “the good itself (αὐτοαγαθός)”,<sup>257</sup> and “the exceeding good (ἀγαθοῦ ὑπερβολή)”.<sup>258</sup> The *Magian Oracle* V thus may assert: “For nothing imperfect (ἀτελές τι) rolls from the principle of the Father (πατρικὴ ἀρχή)”,<sup>259</sup> whereas in the *Oracle* XXXIV Plethon further claims, that the Father, just because being himself supremely good (ἄκρως αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς ὢν), is not the cause of the evil for anybody (οὐδ’ ἂν κακοῦ αἴτιος εἴη οὐδενί), but, in contrast, being the cause of the goods for all, he is loved by everybody (ἀγαπᾶτο ὑπὸ πάντων).<sup>260</sup>

The other aspect of Zeus acting as an ἀρχή is expressed by the aforementioned epithet “king (βασιλεύς)” who – as we will see – directs everything in such a way that he may be also called “the highest and most powerful necessity of all (ἡ μεγίστη πασῶν ἀναγκή καὶ κρατιστή)”. Whereas everything else is determined (ὀριζόμενον), Zeus is not, because although everything else is determined by its higher cause, this cannot be true about him – there is no

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<sup>250</sup> *Or. mag.* 15.10-12 [ad XXIV].

<sup>251</sup> Cf. further *Or. mag.* XXIX 3.19 with Plethon’s commentary (17.3-4).

<sup>252</sup> *Leg.* 92 [III,15].

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.* 100 [III,15].

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.* 46 [I,5], 152 [III,34], 158 [III,34], 170 [III,34], 200 [III,34], 204 [III,35].

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* 204 [III,35].

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.* 66 [II,6], 144 [III,34], 154 [III,34], 170 [III,34], 172 [III,34], 180 [III,34], 242 [III,43: *Epinomis*], *Or. mag.* 19.3 [ad XXXIV].

<sup>257</sup> *Leg.* 132 [III,34], 150 [III,34], 168 [III,34].

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* 242 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>259</sup> *Or. mag.* V 1.10, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 51 (altered), cf. also Plethon’s commentary *ibid.* 6.11-14.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* 19.2-4 [ad XXXIV].



further cause of his existence and he himself is the first principle. To conceive Zeus as an all-determining necessity, which is by itself and not by anything other, is, as Plethon adds, appropriate to the first principle because what is necessary is “better” than what is not.<sup>261</sup>

From this account it is furthermore obvious why Plethon must be inevitably critical towards Aristotle’s conception of the first principle acting as “the first unmoved mover”. Indeed, the *Differences* begins with the denial that Aristotle would have ever espoused the conception of God as a productive cause of the world, which is the first and most important argument against his philosophy, being compared here to that of Plato. (“First, then, Plato’s view is that God, the supreme king (βασιλεύς), is the creator (δημιουργός) of every kind of intelligible and separate essence (ἡ νοητὴ τε καὶ χωριστὴ οὐσία), and hence of our entire universe. Aristotle, on the other hand, never calls God the creator of anything whatever, but only the motive force (τὸ ... κινητικόν) of all this heaven.”<sup>262</sup>) In Plethon’s eyes Aristotle’s philosophy is thus fallacious in two respects. – First, it does not presuppose the existence of the creator god as an eternally operating productive cause of the world, but conceives him only as the final cause. It thus means that the world, which, according to Aristotle, is eternal, has no cause of its existence. Second, Aristotle’s philosophical astronomy, by postulating a series of planetary spheres and their corresponding intellects that act as their movers, clearly implies that the god as the first mover is on the same ontological level as the rest of the moving intellects, and for this reason it lacks the transcendence that, as we have seen, is one of the most important features claimed for the first principle by Plethon.<sup>263</sup>

## 5. Supracelestial Gods, the Forms

After the first principle of all, Plethon, following Plato, postulates the world of the intelligible Forms that is the model of our sensible world. The One is thus not an immediate creator of the cosmos, this is the ideal model, in which plurality already exists.<sup>264</sup> As Plethon says, “the proponents of the Forms do not suppose that the god which is supremely good (ὁ ἄκρω ἀγαθὸς θεός) is the immediate creator (δημιουργὸς προσεχής) of this universe (ὅδε ὁ οὐρανός) but rather of another prior nature (φύσις) and essence (οὐσία), more akin to himself, eternal (αἰωνία) and being always in the same state (ἀεὶ τὲ καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσα), and that he

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<sup>261</sup> *Leg.* 66 [II,6].

<sup>262</sup> *De diff.* I 321.23-27, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 192 (altered).

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.* I 322.4-323.4, cf. *Contra Schol.* VII-IX 384.14-392.9, X-XX 392.18-419.19.

<sup>264</sup> *De diff.* X 336.20-26.

created the universe not by himself (*αὐτὸς δι' αὐτοῦ*) but through that essence (*οὐσία*).<sup>265</sup> The reason for postulating it might be our experience of plurality inside the world of the Forms in intellection, in which our different intellectual acts correspond to different Forms with distinguished essences and attributes, in contrast to the first principle that is absolutely one and simple. However, Plato's works and the *Magian Oracles*, discerning between the first, higher god and creator and the second, lower one,<sup>266</sup> must have had also an important influence on Plethon in this point. In the *Oracles* the Forms are called “charms (*ἵγγες*)”, the name taken from the original *Chaldaean Oracles*.<sup>267</sup> They are characterised as “inflexible intellectual upholders (*νοεροὶ ἀνοχεῖς ἀκαμπεῖς*)” because they sustain in being the incorruptible part of the sensible world.<sup>268</sup> According to Plethon, the name “charms” indicates that “the things here attach to them because of the desire for them (*τῷ ἐρωτικῶς εἰς ἑαυτὰ τὰ τῆδε ἀναρτᾶν*)”.<sup>269</sup> They are therefore both the generative source of our world as well as the goal to which the things, created and sustained by them, revert.

In a similar way as when he discusses the first principle, Plethon must defend his conception against the criticism of Aristotle. For the purpose of this work we may skip the details of Plethon's refutation of Aristotle's arguments against the Platonic Forms and to concentrate just on the way this theory is presented and developed by him. In section III of the *Differences* Plethon refuses the priority of the particular to the universal (*τὸ ἀπλῶς καθόλου ἐλαττοῦν τοῦ κατὰ μέρος*) or, more precisely, Aristotle's distinction found in the *Categories* between the first and the most principal essences of particulars (*οὐσίαι μὲν πρῶται καὶ κυριώταται αἱ καθ' ἕκαστα*) and the species and genera that are the essences of the second and lower kind only (*τὰ δ' εἶδη τὲ καὶ γένη αὐτῶν δεύτεραι τὲ οὐσίαι κακείνων μείους*).<sup>270</sup> For Plethon, this is clearly unacceptable and he claims that there is no difference between “every man (*ὁ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος*)” and “all men (*οἱ πάντες ἄνθρωποι*)”. The latter are different from “all particular men (*οἱ καθ' ἕκαστον πάντες ἄνθρωποι*)” only because in the first case humans are taken together (*ὁμοῦ*) and in the second separately (*χωρῖς*). From this perspective it thus makes no sense to consider the particular men (*οἱ καθ' ἕκαστον ἄνθρωποι*) to be more principal than every man (*ὁ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος*) although Aristotle may perhaps seem to prefer to argue for the priority of the particular.<sup>271</sup> In contrast to him, Plato claims that the god (*ὁ θεός*) orders (*διατιθεῖς*) the particular men (*οἱ καθ' ἕκαστον ἄνθρωποι*) for the sake of the whole human nature (*τῆς ὅλης ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως ἔνεκα*) and the latter, in turn, for the sake of the whole rational nature (*τῆς ὅλης λογικῆς ἔνεκα φύσεως*). In

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.* X 336.20-23, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 207 (altered).

<sup>266</sup> This distinction is apparent most patently from *Or. mag.* XXX 4.1-2.

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Tambrun-Krasker's commentary to *Or. mag.*, p. 143.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.* XXXII 4.5, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 53, cf. 18.10-12 [*ad* XXXII], *Decl. brev.* 21.7-8.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.* 21.9-10.

<sup>270</sup> *De diff.* III 324.28-31, cf. Aristotle, *Cat.* V 2a11-19.

<sup>271</sup> *De diff.* III 325.2-10.

general, according to Plethon, the part is made by the God for the sake of the whole (ὅλως μέρος ἔνεκα ὅλου ... ἀπεργαζόμενον), and not *vice versa*. Similarly “the knowledge of the universal (ἡ τοῦ καθόλου ἐπιστήμη)” is superior to that of the particular (τοῦ κατὰ μέρος), as Aristotle also thinks, and “nor could it be superior unless its subject were superior because possessing a greater degree of being (εἰ μὴ μᾶλλον τὸ ὄντος καὶ διὰ τοῦτο βελτίονος ἦν).”<sup>272</sup>

Plethon goes forth in his argumentation against Aristotle explaining that a species exists in every respect “more” in the whole than in the parts (τὸ δ’ εἶδος πανταχῆ ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς μέρεσι) and the universal is more in actuality than the particular (ἐνεργία δὲ μᾶλλον τὸ καθόλου ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ κατὰ μέρος). The difference between the universal and the particular consists in the fact that the universal is taken from all things universally (καθόλου ἐπ’ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων λαμβανόμενον) and hence, it is itself in actuality as well as it comprehends actually all the particulars (αὐτό τε ἐνεργία ἐστὶ καὶ τὰ κατὰ μέρος ἅπαντα ἐνεργία περιέχει). The particular, in contrast, is itself also in actuality (τὸ δὲ κατὰ μέρος αὐτὸ μὲν ἐνεργία ἐστὶ), but has not in itself the universal universally (τὸ δὲ καθόλου ἐν ἑαυτῷ οὐ καθόλου ἔχει), “but only so much [of the universal] as properly belongs to it (ἀλλ’ ὅσον μόνον ἀκείνου προσήκει).”<sup>273</sup> To sum up, the universal is something accomplished, the particular unaccomplished (τέλειον μὲν τὸ καθόλου, ἀτελὲς δὲ τὸ κατὰ μέρος).<sup>274</sup> Thus in his refutation of Aristotle that has just been presented here, Plethon simultaneously explains his own perspective, which stands at the background of his version of the theory of Forms. – The universal is not just an “emptier” abstraction from particulars and their complex sensible existence. On the contrary, for Plethon, the universal is a sum of all the particulars subsumed under it and has therefore more being than they do.

The main passage where Plethon deals with the Forms is, nevertheless, the closing and by far the largest section X of the *Differences*, in which he argues against Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s theory of Forms contained in chapter 9 of book I of the *Metaphysics*.<sup>275</sup> At the beginning of Plethon’s argument the main views about the Forms held by the Platonists are first explained. The relation of the intelligible model to particulars created by it is that of a specific kind of homonymy, not synonymy, as Aristotle would claim.<sup>276</sup> In his *Categories* the latter distinguishes between the things that are homonymous because they have only a name in common, and those that are

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.* III 325.11-20, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 196 (altered).

<sup>273</sup> Transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 197.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.* III 325.26-34.

<sup>275</sup> Cf. n. 799.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.* X 334.33-335.15, apart from this passage, Plethon devotes to the criticism of Aristotle’s conception of homonymy also the whole section II (323.5-324.27) of the *Differences*. For the problem of homonymy in Plethon’s philosophy cf. Tavardon (1977).

synonymous sharing furthermore the same definition.<sup>277</sup> Plethon does not accept this distinction. As he says in yet another passage of the *Differences*, Aristotle says that if particulars share their Forms, there must be another different Form for both because otherwise there would be no community between them and they would be just homonymous.<sup>278</sup> Plethon argues against this objection claiming that the mutual relation between the Forms and particulars still need not be synonymous in the way that would enable Aristotle to refuse the theory of separated Forms and to identify them with particulars. Some things that are homonymous have indeed nothing in common, other have. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that there is no similarity among them, for instance, such as between Lysander or Herakles and their statues. At the same time, it is evident that the model and the image are something radically different and cannot be therefore considered as synonymous.<sup>279</sup>

In his letters to Bessarion Plethon describes the relation of the separated Forms to sensible things as “the participation according to the cause only (μετοχή ἢ κατὰ μόνην τὴν αἰτίαν)” so that the producer transmits something of its characteristic to the product (τὸ παράγον ... τῶν αὐτοῦ τινος τῷ παραγομένῳ μεταδιδόν) even if it remains separated itself by itself (καὶ ἂν χωρὶς αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μένοι).<sup>280</sup> In his main argument against Aristotle’s conception of homonymy in section II of the *Differences* he furthermore claims that “if all things proceed from one, and the supremely one, numerous and innumerable though they be (εἰ γὰρ ἀφ’ ἑνὸς ἅπαντα πρόεισι, καὶ ἄκρως ἑνὸς, καὶ πολλὰ τε ἦ καὶ παμπληθῆ), it is still impossible that they all have not something one mutually in common (ἀμύχανον ὁμῶς μὴ οὐ καὶ ἓν τι ἔχειν καὶ κοινὸν ἅπαντα ἀλλήλοις)”. This, however, can only be being (τὸ ὄν) and if it were homonymous in the sense required by Aristotle, it would not be any longer one.<sup>281</sup> Unlike in the latter’s philosophy in which there is no ultimate creator, everything is thus subsumed here under the one common genus (ἐνὶ ... κοινῷ περιλαμβάνειν γένει) according to the principle, taken from Aristotle’s philosophy, namely, “one is a cause of one (ἓν μὲν ἑνὸς αἴτιον)”, but in this case the “indivisible one (ἓν ἀμερές)” or, alternatively, “one without parts” is not a cause of anything that is similarly indivisible, but of the one which is divisible (μεριστόν), that means, the one which has parts.<sup>282</sup> This, however, does not mean that there is no hierarchy among the things created by the first principle. Each genus is indeed by definition (λόγω) participated by its species in the same manner (ἐπίσης ὑπὸ τῶν εἰδῶν μετέχεται τῶν ἑαυτοῦ). In reality (τῷ πράγματι), however, the rational animal (ζῷον τὸ λογικόν) is “more (μᾶλλον)” because the rational life is more than the

<sup>277</sup> Aristotle, *Cat.* I 1a1-12.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. *idem*, *Met.* I 991a2-8.

<sup>279</sup> *De diff.* X 335.12-18, 339.16-28.

<sup>280</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 460.9-11.14, II 465.27-466.2.

<sup>281</sup> *De diff.* II 324.19-23, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 195 (largely altered), cf. *Contra Schol.* XXIII 432.14-21, *Ad Bess.* I 460.31-461.5.

<sup>282</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXIII 432.1-9.

irrational one (ἄλογος), the latter being an imitation (μίμημα) of the former. Similarly immortal essence (ἡ ἀθάνατος οὐσία) is more than the mortal one (θνητή), which imitates it in the perpetual succession of the mortal creatures that are always different (ταῖς ἀεὶ ἑτέρων διαδοχαῖς μιμεῖται), and an essence (οὐσία) is more than its attribute (τὸ προσόν), the common genus of both being the being (τὸ ὄν). In general, each genus is thus always divided into some more perfect and less perfect species (ὅλως τε ἅπαν γένος ἐς τελεώτερόν τε τι ἀεὶ καὶ ἀτελέστερον εἶδος διαιρούμενον), and, in reality – not by definition – is participated more by the more perfect ones.<sup>283</sup>

According to the second Plethon's point in section X of the *Differences*, the Platonists postulate an independent and separate world of the Forms in order to solve the problem of cognition of the rational structures (λόγοι) in sensible things. The soul comprehends them in itself in more precise and perfect way than they exist in the sensible objects. Plethon seems to mean here that in a cognitive act we conceive some general, and hence also eternal and invariable Form. This must be, however, squared with the fact that the process of cognition begins from a particular that is prone to changes and variations, being just one of many instances of the general principle and less perfect compared to it. According to Plethon, it is thus impossible that the soul derives this perfected universal directly from a particular, which is an imperfect instance of it. Nor is it possible that it makes it up itself – the soul cannot conceive something that does not exist in reality and the false beliefs emerge just from a wrong combination of the existing things. The only possibility, which remains, is that such cognition comes from outside the soul, from some higher and more perfect nature (φύσις), in other words, from the realm of separated and intelligible Forms.<sup>284</sup>

Finally, according to the proponents of the Forms, if many things (πολλά) have “something one and identical (ἔν τι καὶ ταυτόν)” in common, this cannot happen just spontaneously (ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου), simply because the things cannot be ordered (τετάχθαι) spontaneously. If therefore the things have “something one and identical” in common, “by itself (καθ' αὐτό)” and not as an accident (οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός), there must “stand over them some transcendent one (ἔν τι ἐξαίρετον ἐφεστάναι)” that bestows the identity on the many (πολλά).<sup>285</sup> An accident, or a coincidental event (συμβεβηκός) in fact appears as a result not of one cause, but of a meeting of several ones (πλείονων αἰτίων συνόδῳ), “each of which can be referred to the other world”, and thus they can be also rationally known thanks to the formal causes that are interconnected in it.<sup>286</sup> For this reason there are necessarily not only the Forms of substances, but also accidents can be

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.* XXIII 432.27-434.14, cf. *Ad Bess.* I 461.5-14.

<sup>284</sup> *De diff.* X 335.25-36.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.* X 336.3-9.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.* X 336.40-337.3, 338.10-14, transl. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 207, 209.

deduced from the intelligible model as a composition of several causes.<sup>287</sup> Similarly, the things, such as numbers or magnitudes, (potentially) infinite in our world, have only one Form as their intelligible model because, as we already know, the Forms are not in any way infinite, but limitedly and finitely plural.<sup>288</sup>

Analogically, what a Form is the representation and cause of, is not a part of its nature. Hence, the Form of the irrational is not itself irrational and the Form of moving things does not itself move. According to the explanation proposed above, the nature or essence of the Forms seems to be just their being Forms, and not their attribute, that is, the specific action by which they “form” the sensible world. Plethon further claims that, apart from the Forms of essences (*οὐσίαι*) and attributes (*προσόντα*), there are also the Forms of relations (*σχέσεις*) because “even in the other world things must be related to each other, so that relations in this world must be images of relations in the other”. Similarly, the Forms must have attributes.<sup>289</sup> Due to the distinction between their essence and attributes, the Forms serving as the intelligible model of our world thus seem to be not only diverse and plural, but they are also mutually interconnected. The vexed question whether the human artefacts (*τὰ ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπων σκευαστά*) have their corresponding ideal Forms, or not, is solved by Plethon by the localisation of artefacts into the Form of man (*ἐν τῷ ἐκεῖ ... ἀνθρώπου εἶδει*) where they are “comprehended in one (*καθ’ ἐν περιέχουσθαι*)” and wherefrom they are received by the thought (*τῆ διανοίᾳ*) of individual craftsmen (*δημιουργοί*).<sup>290</sup>

The already mentioned example of statues of Lysander and Herakles helps us to understand the nature of the Forms and their relation to particulars. According to Plethon, Plato postulates an analogy (*ἀνάλογον ... τιθεῖς*) between the intelligible model and its particular realisations, which is similar to the relation of images in the water and shadows of sensible things to the sensible things themselves.<sup>291</sup> A spatial object can naturally produce several plane reflections (*εἰδῶλα*) on the water or several shadows at the same time that reflect partially its original complexity. In the similar way, the Forms are more general, and therefore ontologically more complex or higher entities than the things which they are the models of and which are thus somehow “comprehended” in the Forms. Aristotle must be wrong if, in his polemic against

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.* X 338.31-339.16.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* X 337.3-7, *cf.* 337.34-338.1, 338.27-30, *cf.* the parallel in the *Laws* where the mathematical objects subsist “in a kind of one (*καθ’ ἐν τι*)” in Hera, *Leg.* 114 [III,15].

<sup>289</sup> *De diff.* X 337.14-19, translation Woodhouse (1986), p. 208.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.* X 338.6-10, *cf.* 340.38-341.11. An interesting parallel may be found in the *Laws* (114 [III,15]) where artefacts are said to be present in Pluton, or, in other words, in the Form of the human soul, *cf.* also *infra*. In section VII of the *Differences* (332.19-22) Plethon distinguishes two kinds of art (*τέχνη*), the divine and the human one, which “both use the intellect (*νῶ ἄμφω χρωμένω*)”. The human produces artefacts (*τὸ σκευαστὸν πᾶν*), the divine the things originated by nature (*τὰ φύσει πάντα γιγνόμενα*).

<sup>291</sup> *De diff.* X 338.3-6.

Plato, he infers from the theory of Forms that there must be as many intelligible models as there are the sensible things we have the knowledge of.<sup>292</sup>

As we have already seen, there are not only the Forms of species (*εἶδη*), but also the Forms of infinite things, such as numbers or magnitudes, artefacts and accidents.<sup>293</sup> Similarly, even if we are able to think of something that has ceased to exist, this does not mean that there are the Forms of the perished things.<sup>294</sup> For the Platonists, particulars, either already perished, or yet non-existent correspond always just to one Form, from which the soul can derive its knowledge even about the thing that is not existing any more.<sup>295</sup> In other words, nothing prevents us to accept that there are several particular sensible realisations of one general intelligible model. The analogical relation must be, however, applied also to the ideal world. Plethon touches briefly upon the problem when answering Aristotle's arguments, according to which the Forms are both models and images as it is apparent in the case of genus and species. For Plethon, the solution is, however, again simple – nothing prevents a species to be an image of a genus and at the same time a model for sensible things, “just as a painter might paint an image of a statue which is itself an image, and a reflection (*εἶδωλον*) of it again might be reflected on water.”<sup>296</sup> The more specific Forms – species – therefore seem to be comprehended in the more general and complex Forms – genera.

Plethon further replies to Aristotle's argument positing “one over many” which implies that if everything has its ideal model, then we have to postulate also the Forms of negations (*ἀποφάσεις*),<sup>297</sup> by claiming that there are no Forms of such things. “The privations (*στέρησεις*) and failures (*ἀποτεύγματα*) and whatever falls away into non-being (*τὸ μὴ ὄν*)” cannot be, strictly speaking, caused by the intelligible Forms, being rather produced by the absence (*ἀπολείψει*) of the cause. The same must be inferred also about the negations produced by the absence of the cause that is the foundation of the contrary affirmations (*τῷ γὰρ τοῦ τῶν καταφάσεων τῶν γε ἀντικειμένων αἰτίου καὶ ταύτας ἀπολείπεσθαι, ἀποφάσεις ἀποβαίνειν*).<sup>298</sup> Plethon similarly refuses Aristotle's conception of formal cause inherent “in each sensible thing (*ἐν τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐκάστω*)” since this is not a cause (*αἴτιον*) but a product (*ἔργον*) and effect (*ἀποτέλεσμα*) of some other cause, similarly as the matter in a singular thing is an offshoot (*ἀπόκριμα*) and effect (*ἀποτέλεσμα*) of the matter of the whole heaven (*ἡ τοῦ παντὸς οὐρανοῦ*

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<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.* X 335.37-39.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* X 337.29-338.15.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.* X 335.39-336.1.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.* X 338.20-24.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.* X 340.28-37, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 211 (altered).

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.* X 335.21, 336.2-3, 9-16.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.* X 336.35-40, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 207 (altered), *cf.* X 338.15-20, *Contra Schol.* XXIII 434.18-21, *Ad Bess.* I. 461.14-15.

ὑλη). The real formal causes are thus to be again placed into the separate intelligible Forms.<sup>299</sup> The Forms therefore operate as the causes on which the general character or qualities of things depend. This effect, however, may be only positive and as we have seen, the absence of the formal causality is responsible for the existence of negative entities and imperfections present in our world.

There is some further information about the Forms that may be supplemented on the basis of section X of the *Differences*: “And they [the proponents of Forms] make an assemblage of all these Forms of all kinds and their intellects (ἐκ πάντων τὲ καὶ παντοίων εἰδῶν συντιθέντες νῶν τε τῶν αὐτῶν), and place a single perfect intellect over the whole of the intelligible cosmos (κόσμος νοητός), assigning to it the second place in the sovereignty of the universe after the God that is supremely good (ἄκρωσ ἀγαθός).”<sup>300</sup> Furthermore, as regards the question of the presence of the Forms in the intellect of the Sun, that is assumed by Aristotle, but denied by Plethon, according to the latter, the proponents of the Forms would argue in the following way:<sup>301</sup> “And we divide the totality of the separated Forms (χωριστὰ εἶδη) into those which are by themselves (ἰκανὰ αὐτὰ δι’ αὐτῶν) capable of achieving their results (τὰ ἔργα ἐξεργάζεσθαι) and those which are not so capable, assigning the former as examples and causes to eternal things here (τοῖς τῆδε αἰδίοις παραδείγματά τε καὶ αἴτια) and the latter to perishable things here (τοῖς τῆδε φθαρτοῖς), since the latter need the co-operation of the Sun to prepare material for them, but when they have taken hold of their material they are able to operate on it by themselves (αὐτὰ δι’ αὐτῶν).”<sup>302</sup> These passages cannot be apparently understood from the text of the *Differences* only and we therefore must turn to another Plethon’s work that offers different perspective on the problem of the Forms, namely the *Lams*.

As we already know, in this Plethon’s most important treatise the world of the Forms is described with a help of a peculiar pagan theology. It is also here where Zeus appears as the highest god and, accordingly, the highest principle. We have seen that, in contrast to his absolute unity, the Forms, or the gods of the second order, represent the multiplicity that is nevertheless finite and well delimited. Also, whereas Zeus, being their immediate cause, is pre-eternal (προαιώνιος),<sup>303</sup> the lower level of intelligible reality, which exists continuously, is eternal (αἰώνιοι) and the distinction between the past (οἰχόμενον) and the future (μέλλον), or the state that is before (πρότερον) and after (ὑστέρον) does not apply to it. To be eternal, that is, to exist as a whole at once and always (τὸ ὅλον ἅμα τε καὶ ἀεί) is thus the same as remaining forever

<sup>299</sup> *De diff.* X 342.10-17.20-21.22-23.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.* X 336.27-30, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 207 (altered).

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.* X 341.11-342.1.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.* X 342.1-7, transl. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 212-213.

<sup>303</sup> *Leg.* 96 [III,15].



(μένοντες τε αεί) and being immovable (ἀκίνητοι).<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, the eternal Forms cannot be determined by a place or a position in space (οὐτ' ἂν τόπων θέσιν ἔχοντι περιληπτοὺς εἶναι). According to Plethon, the things determined by a position in space are connected with bodies, whereas the Forms “have the essence without bodies”. Their proper position is determined by the order (τάξις) of intelligible reality where “each has obtained the middle place between the higher and lower ones”.<sup>305</sup> As we already know, this is because they have been created by Zeus without any use of the female principle, and for this reason they are completely devoid of matter.<sup>306</sup> Through “the ordering of Zeus (τῷ βασιλεῖ Διὶ κατεσκευάσθαι)”, the hierarchy of the Forms-gods is produced, together forming “a kind of one big and saint (ἓν τι μέγα καὶ ἅγιον), intelligible, complete (ὁ νοητός τε σύμπας), and supracelestial ... order (ὑπερουράνιος ... διάκοσμος), that is always (αεί) and that is full of all goods”. In it the second gods constitute a self-sufficient number (ἐς ἄριθμόν τινα αὐτάρκη συνεστῶτεν), into which nothing needs to be added (ἐγγενέσθαι).<sup>307</sup>

To explain the nature of this intelligible order Plethon uses a comparison with number. A certain number of the Forms (evidently larger than one) is a finite plurality and at the same time a united sum. Plethon develops this paradoxical character of the world of the Forms further. – The intelligible order is “divided according to each of them in the best way by the most precise division (διακεκριμένος μὲν καθ' ἐκάστους αὐτῶν ὡς κάλλιστα ἀκριβεστάτη διακρίσει) so that each of them is, as much as it is possible, perfect and self-sufficient (ὡς τελεώτατος ... καὶ αὐτάρκης κατὰ δύναμιν)”.<sup>308</sup> Thus not only the world of the Forms is self-sufficient in the sense that it is closed and so perfect that nothing else from outside may or should be added to it, but each of its components, too, existing in its specific conditions (κατὰ δύναμιν), is a perfect entity. However, although the Forms are self-sufficient, they are not absolutely separated one from another, but they together form a complex whole. The intelligible order is thus “at the same time united by the mutual communion of goods (ἡνωμένος δ' ἅμα τῇ ἀλλήλων κοινωνίᾳ τῶν ἀγαθῶν) and most friendly towards itself (φίλτατος αὐτὸς αὐτῷ)”.<sup>309</sup> The “goods” come naturally from Zeus, the highest god, which is the principle and creator of the Forms or the second gods. Plethon explains that they are “a kind of one from all [of them] (τὸ ἐξ ἀπάντων ἓν τι)” because they proceed from one principle (ἓκ τε μιᾶς προϊόντες ἀρχῆς) and they revert to the same end (ἐς ταῦτόν αὖ τέλος). This is the first principle or Zeus, the Father and creator of everything, who is, as we know, himself “supremely one (ἄκρω εἶς)”. There thus seems to be a

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.* 48 [I,5], cf. 54 [I,5].

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.* 48 [I,5].

<sup>306</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 92 [III,15].

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.* 50 [I,5].

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, cf. 46-48 [I,5], 98 [III,15], 172 [III,34].

certain sort of similarity between the perfect unity of the first principle and the overall unity of the intelligible order established across the plurality of the individual Forms. Because Zeus is their principle and goal, all the second gods are subordinated to him willingly (*σὺν εὐνοίᾳ*), they have customary and friendly relations among themselves (*ἀλλήλοισι συνήθεις τε εἶναι καὶ φίλους*) and they think the same (*ταὐτὸν φρονοῦντες*). Thus some gods, according to their rank (*ἡ ἀξία*), lead (*ἡγούμενοι*) the “younger (*νεώτεροι*)” or lower gods and, in turn, they themselves follow the “elder (*πρεσβύτεροι*)” or higher gods, so that, as Plethon concludes, everything in the world of the Forms is in the state of perfect order and arrangement (*εὐνομίας τε ἄκρας καὶ εὐκοσμίας μεστά*).<sup>310</sup>

To sum up, according to Plethon, the world of the Forms or the second gods is perfect in several ways. – The Forms do not change or develop in time because they are eternal and detached from matter, which is, as we know, the source of infinity, change, or even the potential dissolution of things. Furthermore, each of the Forms has its proper place in the hierarchical arrangement of the intelligible order that is itself perfect, a “self-sufficient” whole, to which nothing needs to be further added. Due to this unity within the plurality of the individual Forms the intelligible order is akin to the perfect unity of the first principle. The Forms are “self-sufficient” not only because they together form the whole of the intelligible order, but also each of them, possesses, “as much as it is possible”, its own perfect degree of “self-sufficiency”, having its proper place determined by the hierarchy of the Forms and their mutual relations and dependency. The intelligible order, composed of a finite plurality of the Forms into a perfect united whole, thus represents the fullness of being on its own level of reality.

Plethon expounds this conception of the intelligible order in chapter 5 of book I of the *Laws*. In chapter 15 of book III he explains in more detail how the Forms are created by the First principle and the character of their mutual relations. As it has been mentioned above, Zeus produces them without contribution of the female principle, which means that the Forms, too, are not connected with matter. He subsequently makes use of the gods previously originated from him for the creation of the others, one of another (*τοῖς ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ Ζεὺς ἄλλω ἐς ἄλλου γένεσιν συγχεῖτο ἄν*), during which they serve as an example (*παράδειγμα*), not as the female principle. Zeus has thus generated Poseidon, who is the highest of the gods of the intelligible order, using himself as an immediate example (*ἑαυτῷ ἀμέσῳ παραδείγματι χρώμενος*), and the rest of the second gods as an image, one god of another, of those previously generated from him (*τοὺς δ' ἄλλους πάντας ἄλλον ἄλλου θεοῦ τῶν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ γεννῶ ἄν εἰκῶ*). This creation is compared by Plethon, inaccurately, as he himself emphasizes, to the creating of images through

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<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.* 50 [I,5].

several mirrors (τῆ δια πλειόνων ἐνόπτρων εἰδωλοποιίᾳ). If a body, which in this comparison represents the first principle, is seen in this manner, it produces one immediate reflection of itself, but other reflections are produced already one from another (... *κάνταῦθα τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὁρώμενον, ἐν τι ἄμεσον ἑαυτοῦ εἰδῶλον συστήσάν πως, τὰ ἄλλα ἤδη πάντα ἄλλο ἅπ' ἄλλου συνίστησιν εἰδῶλον*).<sup>311</sup> Plethon, however, claims that the comparison with the mirror is inaccurate, because we need several mirrors to produce the images, and so he uses once more a comparison with number. If we think of a unit (τὴν μονάδα ἐνοῶμεν), representing the first principle that is supremely one, it will successively generate every other number by adding the previous ones into the composition of the number that is being created (ὡς τὸν ἀριθμὸν σύμπαντα αὕτη ἄλλον ἐς ἄλλου σύστασιν προσλαμβάνουσα γεννᾷ) and thus other by-cause (συναίτιον ἕτερον) is not needed. However, this comparison is also inaccurate and does not describe satisfactorily all the aspects of the process of the creation of the Forms because the addition of numbers may potentially proceed to infinity (ἐς ἄπειρον αὕτη [ἢ γένεσις] πρόεισι τῆ δυνάμει), whereas the intelligible order is both, actually and potentially, a limited multitude (καὶ ἔργῳ καὶ δυνάμει ἐς ὠρισμένον τι περαίνουσα πλήθος). “Zeus”, in fact, “does not add a previously created Form (τὸ ἤδη γεγονός εἶδος οὐ προσλαμβάνων), but he divides it (διαίρων) and unfolds what is inside it collectively and in one (τὰ αὐτῷ συλλήβδην τε καὶ καθ' ἐν ἐνόητα ἀναπτύσσοντα), taking one thing off, leaving another (τὸ μὲν ἀφαιρῶν, τὸ δὲ λείπων)”. Plethon further explains that Zeus makes this division according to the contradictions (κατὰ ἀντιφάσεις διαίρων), which means, first, that he leaves no middle between the parts originated through the division (οὔτε μέσον ἂν λείποντα οὐθένων οὐθέν) and, second, that these divisions cannot proceed to infinity and must stop at some point (οὔτ' ἐπ' ἄπειρον ἂν ἐνὸν τὰς τοιαύτας προχωρεῖν διαιρέσεις, παύεσθαι ποτε διαιρέσεως τῆς τοιαύτης). Thus “the limited multitude of the Forms is generated (ὠρισμένον τέ τι γεγεννηκὸς εἰδῶν)”, and they together constitute one system composed of all and diverse Forms (καὶ ἐς ἓν τι αὐτὸ σύστημα πάντων τε καὶ παντοίων εἰδῶν πλήρες συστησάμενον).<sup>312</sup>

The passage we have just gone through is apparently very important for the understanding of Plethon's conception of the intelligible order. As we know, the more abstract Forms are not “emptier” than the less abstract ones, but, on the contrary, the higher or more general a Form is, the more being it has. For Plethon, the lower and less general Forms are comprehended, united, or implicated in the higher ones and they must be “unfolded” by the division into more specific ideal entities. Plethon's theory of Forms also presupposes that the higher Forms contain in themselves simultaneously otherwise mutually excluded contradictions, differentiated only in

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.* 92-94 [III,15].

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.* 94 [III,15].

their “division” into the more specific ones. Also the first principle must implicitly contain in its supreme oneness everything that is produced in the creation of both the Forms of the intelligible order and the things within the sensible world. As for the Forms, if they are not just abstractions from sensible particulars, somehow devoid of the complexity of sensible things, they must comprehend simultaneously in their immovable eternity everything that originates in the sensible world and gradually evolves in time. Thus the richness of various features, appearing across the changes of the sensible world that might be even sometimes mutually exclusive, is simultaneously present in the corresponding Form in the similar way as the mutual contradictions among some Forms are co-present in the higher ones.

As we have seen above, Plethon continues in this passage of the *Laws* (III,15) by arguing that each level of reality, distinguished by its specific ontological character (unmoved eternal, moving everlasting and temporal mortal essence), must have its corresponding superior cause.<sup>313</sup> If all the Forms had exactly the same essence (*ἅπαντα τὰ κατὰ ταύτην τὴν οὐσίαν εἶδη*), were mutually equal (*ἀλλήλοις ἴσα*), and none of them superior (*προὔχον*) or inferior (*λειπόμενον*) to the rest, it would mean that it is exclusively Zeus who produces the whole intelligible order (*ἐκ Διὸς μόνως*). But, as Plethon claims, “first, because of the perfection of all parts, it was necessary that this essence was generated as full of all and diverse Forms (*ἔδει δὲ πρῶτον μὲν πάντων τε καὶ παντοίων εἰδῶν ταύτην γενέσθαι τὴν οὐσίαν πλήρη, τῆς παμμεροῦς ἔνεκα τελειότητος*)”. Second, each Form is “one and only-begotten (*ἓν τε καὶ μονογενές*)”, the composition of the Forms (*σύστημα*) being “a kind of whole made up of all Forms and one through their communion (*τὸ ἐξ ἀπάντων ὅλον τέ τι καὶ ἓν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ*)”, so that it is, both in its parts and in whole, as similar as possible to its generator (*ἵνα δὴ κατὰ τε μέρη καὶ ὅλον ἅμα ... τῷ γενῶντι ὡς οἰκειότατα αὕτη ἢ οὐσία ἔχοι*).<sup>314</sup> In order to be as similar as possible to the first principle, the intelligible order thus must not be homogenous, but paradoxically diverse in order to express the richness of the perfection of its supremely united creator on its lower ontological level by the plurality of diverse Forms. Each of them is “only-begotten”, that is, unique since, as it is said elsewhere, the first principle does not create anything “superfluous (*περίεργον*)”.<sup>315</sup> Because the Forms must be distinguished among themselves, this means that there must exist also a difference depending on the ontological perfection of the Forms, which is in fact determined by the place of a Form in the intelligible order and by its distance from the first principle. There cannot be two Forms that possess the same perfection because in the relations

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<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* 94-96 [III,15].

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.* 96-98 [III,15].

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.* 100 [III,15].

within the intelligible order it would mean that they are in the same place and in the same position within it, which is for Plethon obviously impossible.

He thus explains that, as we have already seen, Zeus first generates one entity that is made as an image of himself only (*πρωτον μεν εν γε τι εαυτου μονως εικω πεποιημενος γεννη*) and that is also the highest (*κρατιστον*) Form of the intelligible order. The next Form is made again as an image of the first one (*ετερον τουτου αυ εικω*) and subsequently all the Forms are made as an image one of another (*ταλλα ηδη αλλο αλλου εικω*). Among the Forms, created in this way, each is then necessarily gradually less perfect than the previous one (*λειπομενα δε εκαστα εκαστων*) in the very same way as in the case of images (*ωσπερ και εικονες εισιν*) where a copy is deficient in comparison with its original.<sup>316</sup> All Forms together constitute a whole united as much as possible (*το εξ απαντων αυ ολον τε τι και εν, η ενεχωρει*). However, among the plurality of individual Forms there cannot be other unity than that of a communion (*τη κοινωνια*). As we know, the Forms are thus mutually different (*ετερον εκαστον γιγνοιτο ειδος*), but at the same time connected together through a communion based on the relation between model and the image (*κοινωνια τις ειη εικονι τε και παραδειγματι*). Furthermore, species are not only the images of genera (*ου μονον των γενων τα ειδη εικονες ειεν αν*), but also of those (higher) species that have originated by mutual division out of this genus (*αλλα καν αυτων των γε απο ταυτου τινος γενους αντιδιαιρουμενων αλληλοις ειδων*). Because they are always divided into those that are more and those that are less perfect (*εξ τελεωτερα τε αττα αει και ατελεστερα διαιρουμενων*), the less perfect are images of the more perfect ones (*θατερα τα ατελεστερα των τελεωτερων εικονες ειεν*). Hence, what exists in time (*το εγχρονον*) is an image of that what is eternal (*το αιωνιον*), the mortal (*το θνητον*) of the immortal (*το αθανατον*), and the irrational (*το αλογον*) of the rational (*λογικον*), and so forth.<sup>317</sup> In this communion (*κοινωνια*) the lower realities receive, as much as it is appropriate to them, their attributes (*τα προσοντα*) from the higher ones so that they are lower, but not entirely different (*υποδεεστερα τε ... και αμα ουκ αλλοτρια*).<sup>318</sup>

Zeus as the first principle produces the essence of each eternal Form, nevertheless, due to their mutual communion (*της τε αλληλων αυτων κοινωνιας ενεκα*) he uses the previously created Forms when producing the later ones as examples of them only (*παραδειγμασι μονον*

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<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.* 98 [III,15], Plethon then continues by comparing the generation of the intelligible order by Zeus with the human generation and the gradually increasing distance in the similarity among the children begotten by the father (*ibid.* 98-100 [III,15]).

<sup>317</sup> *Cf. Contra Schol.* 432.25-434.12.

<sup>318</sup> *Leg.* 100-102 [III,15]. This statement only seemingly contradicts another and quite solitary passage (*ibid.* 94 [III,15]), in which it is claimed that Zeus does not “use” any second god during the generation of the others (*ο Ζευς το των υπερουρανιων τουτων θεων πληθος γεννη, και ουτε αλλω [εξ] την αλλου γενεσιν συγχρωμενος ...*). However, in the present passage Plethon in fact claims that it is Zeus himself too who is responsible for the creation of the essence of each Form and he then uses the previously generated Forms as tools for the creation of the subsequent ones.

τοῖς ἤδη οἱ προγεγεννημένοις ἄλλοις ἐπ’ ἄλλων γένεσιν συγχρώμενος). The images are always present in the examples and the examples in the images according to their similarity (κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα). However, in the intelligible order the difference is also present (καὶ ἄμα ἐτερότης), “because the different is always the cause of the different (τῷ ἕτερον ἐτέρου αἰεὶ ... αἴτιον ... γίγνεσθαι)”. As we know, Zeus himself is thus the cause of one Form only (καθ’ αὐτὸν μὲν τοῦδ’ ἐνὸς δὴ), and then, using it as an example, he creates a different one (σὺν δὲ τῷδε τῷ παραδείγματι ἐτέρου αὖ τοῦδε) and so forth “till the completion of all and whole system (ἄχρι τῆς τοῦ παντός τε καὶ ὅλου συστήματος πληρώσεως)”. Zeus thus himself produces the essences of all Forms (παράγων δ’ οὕτω αὐτὸς τὰς οὐσίας ἐκάστοις αὐτῶν) because he only can create the intelligible order of the Forms, “the highest realities that together form this whole eternal essence (τὰ κράτιστα ..., οἷα δὴ ἢ αἰώνιος αὕτη σύμπασα οὐσία ἐστί)”. The further ordering (ἐπικόσμησις) of attributes (τὰ πρόσοντα) is then entrusted to a different principle, that is, to the Forms themselves, the higher ones ordering (κοσμήσοντα) the lower ones. There is a limit (πέρας) in the communion of the second gods who “all together compose a kind of one system and one order, the most beautiful possible” (ἐς ἓν τι ἅπαντες σύστημα καὶ κόσμον ἓνα τὸν κάλλιστον ἐκ τῶν ἐνότων συνεστᾶσι).<sup>319</sup>

In a letter to Bessarion Plethon further explains that each separated intellect (ὁ χωριστὸς νοῦς), that is, Form, which is already a kind of one that is plural (ἤδη πεπληθυσμένον τι ἓν) was produced by the first principle. Its highest part, however, immediately produces the rest of the separated intellect (τὸ κράτιστον ἐκάστου ... ἀμέσως παράγοντα τὸ λοιπὸν πᾶν), producing it already through itself (δι’ αὐτοῦ ἤδη τοῦ κρατίστου αὐτοῦ παράγειν). Thus each intellect is produced by the first cause, but at the same time it is also “self-produced (αὐτοπαράγωγον)”, producing by one its part the remaining one (μέρει τὸ λοιπὸν ἑαυτοῦ μέρος παράγων).<sup>320</sup> Although it is not entirely clear whether “the highest part” of each Form is one and by this it is similar to its producer, it seems very probable. If it were so, the highest part would be thus responsible for establishing the unity in the plurality which is already present in each intellect and which consists in the distinction between essence and attribute or activity.

The passage from the *Laws* we have just gone through thus treats again the crucial problem of the constitution of the (limited) plurality out of the absolute unity of the first principle. First, Plethon’s statement, according to which “the different is always the cause of the different”, implies, that everything what is caused by a superior principle must be different from it and so more plural. Every product of a cause, which is therefore always necessarily inferior to it, thus, as we move down in the hierarchy of the levels of reality, gradually decreases from the primary unity

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.* 102 [III,15].

<sup>320</sup> *Ad. Bess.* I. 459.13-19.

into plurality. However, although the intelligible order is already plural by its very nature, its unity is established by the fact that it proceeds from one source absolutely united within itself, the first principle, whose image it is and whose nature it shares. The mutual unity of the Forms, which are many, each of them being different from the rest and self-sufficient, is due to their communion based on the manner in which they are created. While the essence of each Form or its “higher part”, including the essence of the whole intelligible order, must be “produced” by the first principle alone (because otherwise they would not be all eternal), their attributes are “ordered” by Zeus who makes use of the higher or more general Forms as the models for the lower ones which are images of them, related to their examples by mutual similarity. As we have seen, Zeus thus generates Poseidon as the first and highest Form and then by using him as an example or, from another point of view, by dividing him he produces the lower Forms. These are present in Poseidon collectively but differentiated among themselves according to the mutual contradictions contained implicitly already in the highest Form. This is most probably what Plethon means by the ordering of attributes that is not due to Zeus but to the Forms themselves and their mutual relations and hierarchical structure. However, Zeus is naturally involved in both these aspects of the creation of the intelligible order, in the first one directly, in the second one indirectly and through the mediation of the higher Forms. Elsewhere, as we have seen, Plethon claims that the highest part of the Form, produced directly by Zeus, subsequently produces the rest of itself. This supplements the conception presented in the *Laws*. – A Form is self-produced although, from a different point of view, also determined by its relations to the other Forms and therefore ordered within the overall structure of the intelligible order.

The unity of the eternal intelligible order is thus established by the mutual relations of similarity as well as by their common source in the pre-eternal first principle. However, equally important is also the mutual intellection of the Forms among themselves. The Forms are not only intelligible examples (εἶδη) of sensible things, but they are themselves also the intellects (νόεσι).<sup>321</sup> Similarly, in the *Magian Oracles* immediately after the Father, who is the first principle here, “the second god” is placed, called “the paternal intellect (πατρικὸς νοῦς)”<sup>322</sup> or “the second intellect (δευτέρου νοῦς)” by the *Oracles*.<sup>323</sup> This “second intellect” is apparently Poseidon, the highest Form of the *Laws* created by Zeus as the first.<sup>324</sup> It is obvious that the Forms cannot know the sensible world, which they have no means to perceive, but, being intellects, their cognition must be necessarily

<sup>321</sup> Cf. *De diff.* IV 326.33, X 336.27-30, 337.21-22, *Contra Schol.* XXV 440.15, XXX 486.14-16, *Or. mag.* 10.7-9 [*ad XIV*], 17.15-18.3 [*ad XXXI*], *Leg.* 46 [I,5], 120 [III,31].

<sup>322</sup> *Or. mag.* VI 1.11, cf. also 7.2-3 [*ad VI*], and 9.12-14 [*ad XII*], 16.6 [*ad XXVII*], *Decl. brev.* 21.5-7.

<sup>323</sup> *Or. mag.* XXX 4.1-2, cf. also 17.6-8 [*ad XXX*], and *Decl. brev.* 21.5-7.

<sup>324</sup> The designation “the second intellect” is to be, however, understood as the intellect that has been placed at the second ontological level of reality, not as the second intellect with an implication that it follows after some first one – as we know, the First principle is not an intellect in the same sense as the Forms are.

directed towards the intelligible order, that is, the other Forms. Each Form thus contemplates the others (and itself) thanks to its capacity of intellection through which the whole intelligible order is in a certain sense present in it. Such interpretation is supported also by a statement from the *Laws*, quoted already above, according to which the supracelestial gods are the Forms or “the immovable intellects (νόεσ ἀκίνητοι)” that are “always and in every respect (περὶ πάντα) active by one simultaneous intellectual act in which they mutually conceive themselves (ἅμα μιᾷ τῇ ἐαυτῶν ἐκάστους νοήσει ἐνεργούσ)”.<sup>325</sup> Such an intellectual act, through which each Form knows and in a certain way contains in itself the other ones, helps, once more, to establish the intelligible order, in which the whole and each part of it is reflected in every other part. Its unity is thus, first, due to the way it is created – by its generation from one principle, which creates it in such way that the Forms are produced both directly from it as well as one from another while at the same time sharing the similarity common to them all. Second, the unity of the intelligible Forms, which are also the intellects, is established by their mutual cognition through the act of intellection.

Plethon therefore distinguishes two types of similarity. First, the one between the higher and lower levels of reality, because the world generated in time is made in an image of the intelligible order, which is again produced as an image of the first principle. Second, the relations among the Forms are based also on the similarity between the model and image. As we have learned above, Plethon thinks that the lower Forms are implicitly comprehended in the higher ones and they are created by “the dividing” of genera into species. This is just a different perspective on the mutual similarity among the hierarchically ordered Forms and their reciprocal model-image relations. As we know, the limited plurality of the intelligible order is due to the difference between the essence and the attribute (and the activity) of the Forms. The account of their constitution seems to further support the earlier suggestion that by the essences of the Forms created directly by Zeus Plethon means their common nature of eternal entities serving as models for the world generated in time. Attributes thus represent the “specific nature” of the Forms that makes it different from the rest of them, in other words, what is a certain Form model or example of. All the attributes are thus implicitly present already in the first Form, but unfolded only in the lower ones by Zeus who uses the first Form as an example when creating the others. The main goal of the producing and ordering of the intelligible model, which is necessarily many, is, however, to create a plurality that is the most perfect and united possible. This means that the number of unchangeable Forms is limited and their composition is completed in such a way that nothing else can be added and they together constitute a perfect whole of the intelligible order.

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<sup>325</sup> *Leg.* 46 [I,5], *Add.* 119v.5-7.



## 6. Differentiation of the Forms

As we have seen, in spite of all their mutual similarity, the Forms are not the same but gradually more and more deficient in their being. In the *Laws* each of the gods of the second order is said “to preside over a different, larger or smaller, part of this universe (ἄλλος μὲν ἄλλω μείζονι ἢ μείονι τοῦ παντός τοῦδε μέρει ἐπιστήσας).”<sup>326</sup> The Forms are thus divided into the “greater (μείζους)” ones that are ordered by a smaller number of the Forms higher than themselves (οἱ ὑπὸ μὲν ἐλλατόνων ἂν κοσμούμενοι) and that exercise bigger effects and cause more (αὐτοὶ δὲ πλείω τε ἂν δρῶντες ... καὶ μείζω) “in this universe (ἐν τῷ παντὶ τῷδε)”. On the contrary, those Forms that are “lesser (μείους)” and capable of having fewer effects and cause less (ἐλάττω μὲν καὶ μείω δρῶντες) are ordered by a bigger number of the higher Forms (αὐτοὶ δ’ ἂν ὑπὸ πλείονων κοσμούμενοι). The Forms are thus divided into two principal groups according to their generality, the higher and lower ones. – The first are the legitimate genus of the Olympian gods of the second order (τὸ μὲν γνήσιόν τι θεῶν γένος), they have more being and in the sensible world they are therefore able to produce primarily the things that are everlasting (αἰδίων καὶ αὐτὸ ἔτι γόνιμον), that means, the gods of the third order. The other group is generated in the same manner but it is much inferior in its rank and potentiality (τῆς δὴ δυνάμεώς τε καὶ ἀξίας πολλῶ που λειπόμενον). It is able to produce only the things that are mortal and that are not everlasting any more (θνητῶν ἤδη καὶ οὐκέτι αἰδίων). Plethon calls it the illegitimate genus of Titans (Τιτάνων τι γένος νόθον), dwelling in Tartarus.<sup>327</sup>

### a. Olympians

As we already know, in his commentaries to the *Magian Oracles* Plethon calls the highest Form, which was produced by Zeus as first and which presides over all the other supracelestial gods,<sup>328</sup> “the second god (δεύτερος θεός)”, “the power of the Father (πατρὸς δύναμις)”, “the intellectual power of the Father (δύναμις πατρὸς νοερά)”, “the paternal intellect (νοῦς πατρικός)”.<sup>329</sup> He is the immediate creator of the soul,<sup>330</sup> and this is why, according to Plethon, the people tend to call

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<sup>326</sup> *Leg.* 46 [I,5].

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.* 48-50 [I,5], cf. 52-54 [I,5], 172-174 [III,34].

<sup>328</sup> Cf. *Or. mag.* 17.7-8 [ad XXX], *Decl. brev.* 21.6-7.

<sup>329</sup> *Or. mag.* VI 1.11, XII 2.7, XXVII 3.16, XXX 4.1-2, XXXIII 4.6-7 and 7.2 [ad VI], 9.12-13 [ad XII], 16.6 [ad XXVII], 17.7-8 [ad XXX], 18.10 [ad XXXII], 18.14-15 [ad XXXIII], *Decl. brev.* 21.5-6.

<sup>330</sup> *Or. mag.* 7.2-3 [ad VI], 9.15-16 [ad XII], 16.6-7 [ad XXVII].

him the first god instead of the second one, considering him to be the utmost creator of the universe and not knowing that there is even higher god than him.<sup>331</sup>

In the *Laws* Plethon compares the generation of the Forms by Zeus to the human procreation. Despite the differences among the diverse human laws and customs the intercourse (*μίξις*) between parents and their children is unanimously prohibited by all the people. Similarly, the first principle cannot mingle with the lower ontological level of the Forms and hence, in the creation of the Forms makes use of those created previously, employing them not as a female principle, with which he would beget the rest of the Forms, but as an example (*ἐν παραδείγματος, οὐκ ἐν θήλειος λόγῳ συγχρωῖτο ἄν*). The same is true of the distinction between the Forms and the things of the sensible world – they can never join to produce together something else.<sup>332</sup> However, the human generation naturally differs from the divine one because the children exist on the same ontological level as their parents whereas the result of the creation of Zeus as well as of the gods of the second order (the Forms) is always located one step lower on the scale of being than their principle. As we will see, the comparison with the human generation is used by Plethon throughout all his explication of the constitution of the intelligible order as described in the *Laws*.

Unlike in the *Magian Oracles*, the highest Form, which is the supreme god of the second order and of the Olympian gods, is called Poseidon there. The reason why Plethon reserves this function in the ideal world for the ancient Greek god of the sea is neither clear, nor based on an ancient tradition.<sup>333</sup> F. Masai tentatively suggests that he may etymologically analyse the name Ποσειδῶν into Πόσις εἰδῶν, “the master” or, more precisely, “the husband of the Forms”.<sup>334</sup> Be it as it may, in Plethon’s philosophical mythology Poseidon is the second highest god after Zeus, the “eldest (*πρεσβύτατος*)” of them all, generated “without mother (*ἀμήτωρ*)”, “charged (*ἐπιτετρέφθαι*) with the leadership (*ἡγεμονία*)” of the second gods.<sup>335</sup> As we know, having been generated as the first of them all, Poseidon is an image (*εἰκῶν*) of Zeus as similar to him as much as possible (*κατά γε δὴ τὸ ἐγχοροῦν*).<sup>336</sup> Poseidon is thus “ordered (*κοσμούμενος*)” by Zeus alone and he then “orders (*κατακοσμεῖν*)” the whole intelligible order, namely, as we have seen, the

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<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.* 17.11-13 [ad XXX].

<sup>332</sup> *Leg.* 86-88 [III,14], 92 [III,15], 118 [III,15]. The biological comparison of generation of the Forms with the human generation is apparent also from the title of the whole chapter III,15 dedicated to the description of the individual gods of the second order, p. 92: *Περὶ θεῶν γενέσεως διὰ μέσης τῆς περὶ γονέων ἐκγόνοις οὐ μίξεως ὑποδέσεως* (“On the generation of the gods, based upon the postulate of a prohibition of sexual intercourse between parents and children”, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 324).

<sup>333</sup> *Cf.* Gantz (1996), pp. 62-63.

<sup>334</sup> Masai (1956), pp. 279-280, *cf.* also Masai’s later remarks in: *Néoplatonisme* (1971), p. 394.

<sup>335</sup> *Leg.* 46 [I,5], 56 [I,5], 134 [III,34], 156-158 [III,34], 174 [III,34], 204 [III,35], *cf. Add.* 119.17 *sqq.*, *Zor. Plat.* 262.

<sup>336</sup> *Leg.* 174 [III,34], *cf. Add.* 119.17-19.

attributes that are distributed throughout the hierarchical structure of the secondary gods in the dependence on their mutual relations.<sup>337</sup>

We have already mentioned that, according to Plethon, the lower Forms are implicitly contained in the higher ones. For this reason, Poseidon, the highest of them all, is the Form *par excellence*, not any concrete Form of this and that (εἶδος γε ὧν, οὐ τόδε δὴ τι, οὐδὲ τόδε), but “the genus itself of the Forms-species that contains in one and collectively all the Forms (αὐτὸ τὸ σύμπαντα εἶδη καθ’ ἓν τε καὶ συλλήβδην περιειληφὸς γένος εἰδῶν)”. He is thus, after Zeus, the most important actual cause of every form in our world (τοῦ τῆδε ἔργου εἶδους παντὸς αὐτὸν εἶναι μετὰ Δία τὸν αἰτιώτατον) and in the *Laws* he is connected with the male principle that provides the generated things with form (τὴν ... ἄρρενα εἶναι φύσιν τὴν τοῖς γεννωμένοις τὸ εἶδος ἐπιφέρουσαν). In contrast, Hera, the Form that follows immediately after Poseidon, is the Form of matter. Poseidon thus contains in himself actually all the Forms and at the same time he is also the actual cause of every form in our world (τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἔργου ἔν γε ἑαυτῷ ἅπαντα ἔχοντα εἶδη, καὶ τοῦ τῆδε ἔργου εἶδους παντὸς αὐτὸν γίνεσθαι αἴτιον). Similarly, Hera does not contain in herself other Forms which are present in her potentially, but actually, because, as Plethon seems to presuppose, there is no matter or potentiality in the intelligible order (τὴν δὲ ἔργου αἴτιον καὶ αὐτὴν ἅπαντα κεκτημένην εἶδη). In contrast to Poseidon, Hera is not any longer the actual cause of any form in the sensible world, she is just the cause of the “eldest”, that is, primary matter that contains all forms (again, those originating in the sensible world are meant) potentially and not actually (οὐκέτι καὶ τοῖς τῆδε ἔργου οὐδοτουοῦν εἶδους αἰτίαν γίνεσθαι· ἀλλ’ ὕλης μάλιστα τῆς πρεσβυτάτης, ἢ αἴτιον ἅπαντα εἶδη δυνάμει, οὐκ ἔργου, ἐστίν· ἔργου γὰρ οὐ μόνον οὐχ ἅπαντα). Analogically to Poseidon, Hera is the female principle (τὴν ... θήλειαν που εἶναι φύσιν). Plethon uses the image of a male providing a form and a female providing matter to their common offspring, which – however misleading and inaccurate it can be – is intended to demonstrate the roles that the two highest Forms play in the creation of the world. (This seems to be exactly the reason why Plethon uses the polytheist imagery of ancient Greek mythology with the divinities divided into gods and goddesses.) Because they are both Olympians, that is, the higher gods among those of the second order, by their intercourse they produce primarily the everlasting things in the sensible world.<sup>338</sup>

Poseidon, who, as we have just seen, is the (ideal) Form of all the (sensible) form, is thus alternatively described also as “Form itself (αὐτοεἶδος)”, “limit itself (αὐτοπέρας)”, or “beauty itself (αὐτοκαλόν)”. Poseidon is called “the limit of the perfection of all the generation of things”

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<sup>337</sup> *Leg.* 46-48 [I,5].

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* 104-106 [III,15], cf. *Zor. Plat.* 262.

(πέρας τῆς τῶν ὄντων συμπάσης γενέσεως τελειότητος)<sup>339</sup> which implies a conception according to which a Form defines the limits of each thing and determines its perfection into the most beautiful shape. The beauty is thus – in a very much traditional way – made dependent on a perfect form and limit in the similar manner as in Latin the adjective *formosus* (beautiful) is derived from the word *forma*. As the highest ideal producer of the sensible world, Poseidon is called also “the father of this heaven (οὐρανοῦ δὲ τοῦδε πατήρ)” and “the second creator (δημιουργὸς δεύτερος)”,<sup>340</sup> that is, the second after Zeus, the first principle and the highest cause of all. Despite minor divergences (the identification with the “intellective power of the Father”), this corresponds well to the position of the second god in the *Magian Oracles*.

In the case of Hera it is not also entirely clear why Plethon chose exactly this mythological name for the second highest Form. In the ancient Greek religion Hera certainly represents the highest female goddess, but she is usually the spouse of Zeus, and not of Poseidon.<sup>341</sup> As we know, for Plethon, the position of the first principle, which is supremely one, is so exceptional and elevated that it simply cannot enter into a contact with anything else. However, on the lower level of the Forms, where the plurality is already present, Poseidon as the second father, creator, and immediate representative of Zeus, may perhaps also substitutionally serve as the husband of Hera. As it has been just said, in the highest divine couple of the gods of the second order, Poseidon as the (second) father is the Form of form, Hera as the mother is the Form of matter and their common offspring is the sensible world created on the lower, third level of reality.<sup>342</sup> However, Hera herself is also a Form and for this reason, similarly to Poseidon, she is called “mother without mother (ἀμήτωρ μήτηρ)”,<sup>343</sup> which means that she is generated without a contribution of a material principle. As the Form of matter she is responsible for the production of the body (σῶμα) of all things created in the sensible world.<sup>344</sup> She is also the principle of mathematics. As Plethon claims, “the mathematical number and the mathematical magnitudes are both present as attributes in one in the goddess Hera (καὶ ἀριθμὸν τὸν μαθηματικὸν καὶ μεγέθη τὰ μαθηματικὰ καθ’ ἓν τι τῆ θεῶ Ἥρα ἐκάτερον αὐτοῦ προσόντε)”. This should not be surprising for us, because we have already seen above the passage in which Plethon says that by its very nature the number may be extended to infinity that is, as we know, connected with matter. Whereas the mathematical objects are present in Hera “in one” as in their principle, “the soul receives them already extended, being a kind of shadows and reflections of the divine things (τὴν ψυχὴν ἤδη αὐτὰ ἐκτάδην ὑποδέχεσθαι, σκιάς μὲν που τῶν θείων καὶ εἰδῶλα ἅττα ὄντα)

<sup>339</sup> *Leg.* 158 [III,34], 174 [III,34].

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.* 134 [III,34].

<sup>341</sup> *Cf.* Gantz (1996), pp. 61-62.

<sup>342</sup> *Leg.* 134 [III,34], *cf.* 174 [III,34].

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.* 154 [III,34].

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.* 136 [III,34].

that, nevertheless, have led people up to the precise knowledge of them (πρὸς δ' ἀκριβῆ κακείνων ἀνθρώποις ἐπιστήμην ἀναγωγόντα).<sup>345</sup> This sentence thus seems to be a summary of Plethon's philosophy of mathematics. The mathematical objects are in fact present "in one", that is, undeveloped in Hera that is their principle, being the Form of matter. They cannot be placed into Poseidon, the higher Form of form, because, by their very nature the numbers and magnitudes expand and develop to infinity. At the same time, they are highly abstract and more perfect than the sensible world where our soul belongs, so that their cognition must be based on an ideal principle which is thus necessarily represented by the goddess of matter. They therefore occupy an intermediate position between the sensible and intelligible world, in a certain sense similar to Plato's *Republic*.<sup>346</sup>

In Plethon's hymn dedicated to her Hera is also called "the seat for forms here (ἔδρη τοῖς τῆδ' εἰδέσσιν)", which is a designation that appears already in Plato's *Timaeus* in the connection with the space (χώρα) that is the primordial background for the generation of our sensible world.<sup>347</sup> However, in this dialogue it is not an ideal principle, but, on the contrary, something that is altogether different from the intelligible world and that subsists as a principle which is independent on it.<sup>348</sup> Hera is thus an ideal model and the source of matter in our world derived directly from her.<sup>349</sup> This is a rather peculiar doctrine by Plethon, which is, however, as we will see, crucial for his philosophical system.

We are told much less about the other gods of the second order. Apart from the division between Olympians and Titans, the higher and the lower ones, mentioned above, there is another distinction among them that helps to differentiate their proper function. – In Plethon's comparison that should be again considered as "a mere image (εἰκὼν τις μόνος)" only because it is true in the proper sense of the word just in the sensible world, all the second gods are either males (ἀρσένες), or females (θηλείαι) – gods or goddesses. As in the case of two highest Forms, Poseidon and Hera, the "male" Forms are responsible for form and activity (δραστικόν) in the sensible world, while the "female" ones for matter and passivity (παθητικόν).<sup>350</sup> This distinction is kept consequently throughout the whole *Laws*, although in few cases it is not entirely sure why certain Forms are connected with the "male" gods or *vice versa*. (The most important examples, where Plethon's motivation is far from being clear, is the female Dione, the Form of fixed stars, in comparison to the males Tithonos and Atlas, the Forms of planets and stars in general, or the

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.* 114 [III,15], a similar account of mathematics may be found in the *Differences* X 337.37-338.6, in both passages in the connection with the problem of human artefacts.

<sup>346</sup> *Cf.* the position of the mathematical objects in Plato's analogy of the divided line, *Resp.* 509d-513e.

<sup>347</sup> *Leg.* 206 [III,35], *cf.* Plato, *Tim.* 52a8-b1: ἔδραν δὲ παρέχον ὅσα ἔχει γένεσιν πᾶσιν.

<sup>348</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 47e-53c.

<sup>349</sup> *Cf.* Tambrun-Krasker (2002), pp. 320-328, Karamanolis (2002), pp. 75-76.

<sup>350</sup> *Leg.* 116-118 [III,15], 146 [III,34].

male Pan, the Form of irrational animals in comparison to the female Demeter, the Form of plants.)

As Plethon also claims, each god has a different nature (*φύσις*), higher or lower, more or less general, and each of them administers its own appropriate part of our world (*τῆς ἑαυτοῦ προσηκούσης ἐν τῷδε παντὶ ἕκαστος μοίρας προστατεῖν*).<sup>351</sup> The third highest god is thus Apollon who in the metaphysical system of the *Laws* is the ideal bestower of identity (*ταυτότης*) in our sensible world. According to Plethon's hymn dedicated to him, he introduces the unity into the things that are mutually different (*ἄλλα τε ἀλλήλοισιν / εἰς ἐν ἄγεις*) and, moreover, he establishes "one harmony" in the universe with many parts (*τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ, τὸ πούλυμερές περ / πούλυκρεκὸν τε ἕν, μιῇ ἀρμονίῃ ὑποτάσσεις*). Similarly, he produces the concord (*ὁμονίῃ*) in the souls, from which the prudence (*φρόνησις*) and justice (*δίκη*) originate. For bodies he is the source of health (*ὑγίεια*) and beauty (*κάλλος*).<sup>352</sup> We may note that the traditional etymology of the name of this god is indeed A-pollon (*ἀ-πολλοί*), "not many" and therefore "simple (*ἀπλοῦς*)" and one.<sup>353</sup> If Apollon is the Form of identity, his twin sister Artemis must be naturally the patron of difference (*ἐτερότης*). In Plethon's hymn dedicated to her she contains everything in one (*παρειληφύα ... ἐν τε τὸ σύμπαν*) and then she "divides it completely" into the plurality of forms, (*εἶτ' ἐς τοῦσχατον ἄλλη καὶ ἄλλη διακρίνεις / ἐς μὲν πλείω εἶδεα*), up to the each individual Form (*ἐς δέ θ' ἕκαστ' ἐξ εἰδέων*). She thus proceeds from the wholes to the parts and limbs (*ἕκ τε ὄλων αὖ ἐς μέρε' ἄρθρα τε*). Because she also separates the souls from their attachment "to the worse" (*ἕκ τῆς πρὸς τὸ χερείον σφων διακρίσιος*), that is, to the body, Artemis is entreated to bestow on bodies the power (*ἀλκή*) and temperance (*σωφροσύνη*), strength (*ἰσχὺς*) and soundness (*ἀρτεμῖη*).<sup>354</sup> From this last of her gifts Plethon also obviously derives the etymology of her name.

After the first two divine couples, Zeus and Hera, Apollon and Artemis, three gods follow that together form an independent group. Hephaistos is the patron of the rest (*στάσις*) and "the remaining in the same (*ἢ ἐν ταύτῳ μονή*)". He provides everything with "a place (*χώρη*)", "seat (*ἔδρη*)", and "everlastingness (*ἀϊδιότης*)".<sup>355</sup> Dionysos, or alternatively Bacchos, is the giver of "self-motion (*αὐτοκινησία*)" and "draught, the leading up towards more perfect (*ὄλκή, ἢ τε ἐς τὸ τελεώτερον ἀναγωγή*)". Furthermore, in Plethon's hymn dedicated to him, he is called "the creator of all rational souls (*ψυχῶν λογικῶν γενέτωρ πασάων*)", celestial, daemonic, or human. He is the cause of "the motion, which drags due to the desire for the good (*κίνησις ἐσθλοῦ*)"

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.* 158 [III,34].

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.* 208 [III,35].

<sup>353</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *De Is.* 381f, *De E* 388f, 393b-c. Cf. also Plato, *Crat.* 405c.

<sup>354</sup> *Leg.* 160 [III,34], 208 [III,35].

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.* 160 [III,34], 212-214 [III,35].

ἐλκομένη γε ἔρωτι)”.<sup>356</sup> Finally, Athena is “the motion and pushing caused by different things (ἡ ὑφ’ ἐτέρων κινήσεως τε καὶ ὤσεως)” and “the separation of what is superfluous (τοῦ τε περιέρχου ἀπόκρισις)”. In Plethon’s hymn dedicated to her she is said to administer and to create “form that is not in any respect separated from matter (εἶδος οὐδαμᾶ ὕλης / χωριστοῦ προστατέεις)”.<sup>357</sup>

The most important point here, though only hinted at, seems to be the approximation of the soul and self-motion under the patronage of Dionysos. In contrast to it stand “the forms not separated from matter”, that is, the bodies connected with the motion caused by the different things under the patronage of Athena. These are the two kinds of motions we can encounter in the sensible cosmos. Similarly to book X of Plato’s *Laws* or his *Phaedrus*,<sup>358</sup> here too, the soul is self-moving, its motion is caused by the soul itself and it is motivated – under the leadership of Dionysos – by its yearning for the good. For this reason it is more perfect than the motion of bodies that are moved “from something different”, either from inside, by the soul, or from other bodies in the sensible world. Although, as Plethon says, this motion is not able to move towards the good any more, it is still capable of separating what is “superfluous”, that is, presumably bad. Above these two types of motion Plethon places the rest – under the patronage of Hephaistos – that bestows the proper place and everlastingness to things.

The seven highest gods of Plethon’s *Laws* seem to correspond to, at least, some of the most general ontological distinctions, “the greatest genera (μέγιστα τῶν γενῶν)” borrowed from Plato’s *Sophist* and perhaps also from the *Philebus* (limited, unlimited, identity, difference, motion, and rest).<sup>359</sup> Plethon’s hymn to the Olympians: “... you, seven gods, who are higher / than the others, following only after the eminent [Zeus], ruling on high. / The other who dwell in Olympus ... (... ἐπτὰ θεοὶ τοὶ κρέσσονές ἐστε / τῶν ἄλλων πάντων μετ’ ἄρ’ ἔξοχον ὑψιμέδοντα / Ἄλλοι δ’, οἳ ῥα Ὀλυμπον ναίετε ...)”<sup>360</sup> along with the title of lost chapter 10 of book II: “*On the seven eldest gods and the other supracestrial gods* (Περὶ θεῶν τῶν τε ἐπτὰ πρεσβυτάτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.* 160 [III,34], 210-212 [III,35].

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.* 160 [III,34], 210 [III,35].

<sup>358</sup> Plato, *Leg.* X 893b-899d, *Phaedr.* 245c-246a.

<sup>359</sup> The differentiation of being into Poseidon and Hera seems to have been inspired by Plato’s *Philebus* (23c-27c) and the distinction that is made there between the limited (τὸ πέρας), the principle of unity, and unlimited (τὸ ἄπειρον), the principle of multiplication, which are both mixed into the third kind, the things that are generated “into being” (γένεσις εἰς οὐσίαν). As for motion, differentiated here into the two kinds under the patronage of Dionysos and Athena, along with rest and the previous twin gods representing the identity and difference, they seem to correspond to four out of five “greatest genera (μέγιστα τῶν γενῶν)” from Plato’s *Sophist* (248e-259b). The remaining last kind, being, is certainly a gift of the first principle alone but, as we have seen, it cannot be simply identified with Zeus because he is superessential, above all being, and being itself rather than being in the ordinary sense. We have rather look for it on the level of the intelligible order, where being should be most probably connected with Poseidon and Hera, the highest couple of the secondary gods, which as the Forms of form and matter represent and create the two main components of every sensible thing. Being might have been therefore divided between them in the same way as the motion is divided between Dionysos and Athena. This all, however, remains only a conjecture.

<sup>360</sup> *Leg.* 206 [III,35].

ὑπερουρανίων)»<sup>361</sup> suggest that the seven highest gods of the second order together form a closed system that is somehow separated from the other Forms. Such distinction among the Olympian gods may indeed reflect the difference between the highest genera that are the principles of the most general features of sensible things, and the Forms that are also capable of producing the everlasting sensible entities, which are, however, lower and more concrete. The other Olympian gods mentioned by Plethon are indeed, in the first place, the source of the celestial gods of the third order that are, as we know, located inside the cosmos. First of them is Atlas who administers stars in general (κοινῆ) after whom Plethon places Tithonos, who is more specifically (ἰδίᾳ) charged with planets,<sup>362</sup> and Dione, who produces the fixed stars. Then Hermes is mentioned, who is the creator of terrestrial daemons (δαίμονες ... χθόνιοι) and “the whole lowest and servant divine kin”, and, finally, Pluton who is the originator of the immortal, principal part of our nature (ἡμῶν δὲ τοῦ ἀθανάτου, τῆς ἡμετέρας φύσεως κυριωτέρου μέρους), that is, of the human soul.<sup>363</sup> According to Plethon’s hymn dedicated to him, Pluton “possesses in one everything that would happen / or occur to us divided (πάντα καθ’ ἓν, τὰ κεν ἄμμι διακριδὸν ἐγγίγνοιτο / ἠδὲ ἐνείη, ἔχων)”. This may mean not only all the possible variations and differences of the human kind, but also the fate of all people, which is perhaps hinted at in the verses: “do administer well also us / always here, and ever when you lead us up from here (εἴ προσταπέεν καὶ ἡμέων / πάμπαν τ’ ἐνθάδε, ἠδ’ ἐνθενδ’ ἀνάγων αὖ αἰέν)”. Around Pluton there are quite naturally gathered heroes, “the nature that surpasses us (φύσις ἡμέων γ’ ἢ προέχουσα)”, and “the good and virtuous friend of ours”.<sup>364</sup> For Plethon, this god is the ruler of the place where all souls return after the death. Nonetheless, in the *Laws* he is not any longer the dark lord of Hades and his position among the Olympian gods suggests that his role has been transformed primarily to that of the patron of the human soul who is responsible for both their creation and their fate after the death of the mortal bodies they have been assigned to. As in the case of Hera there is another specific function in his competence. – Having been put in charge of everything that is connected with man (εἶδους τοῦ ἀνθρωπείου προσέστηκε), he contains in himself, similarly to what is claimed in the *Differences*, also all Forms of human artefacts. That is because “he posses all human things present in himself in a kind of one (σύμπαντα ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ καθ’ ἓν τι, τὰ γε ἀνθρώπεια πράγματα, ἐνόντα)”. If somebody is to make a thing he thus “receives by his thought (ταῖς διανοίαις ὑποδέχεται)” what is present in Pluton “in a kind of one (καθ’ ἓν τι)” as “already separate and each of them [receives] something different (χωρὶς

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.* 10, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 323 (altered).

<sup>362</sup> In another passage of the *Laws* (178 [III,34]) each planet is said to have its appropriate Form (ἄλλο πρὸς ἄλλο εἶδος τῶν αἰωνίων ἰδίον τε καὶ προσεχές), Plethon perhaps just do not feels the need to enumerate all the planets in this place.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.* 160 [III,34].

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.* 220 [III,35].



ἤδη ἕκαστον, καὶ ἄλλον ἄλλο)”. Artefacts thus do not exist in themselves separated each from other (οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸ κατ’ αὐτὸ εἶδος χωρὶς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ὑφεστηκέναι), but must be derived from the Form of man, or, more precisely, of the human soul.<sup>365</sup>

The lowest Olympian gods are the gods of the elements. These are naturally close to the passive matter and for this reason they are represented by goddesses. However, the elemental masses as a whole are not generated, nor ever perish, but they just undergo the perpetual change. For this reason they have to be connected with the Olympians. – In general (κοινῇ) they are represented by Rhea. More specifically (ἰδίᾳ) Leto creates aether that is warm (θερμόν) and separative (διακριτικόν), Hecate air that is cold (ψυχρόν) and connecting (συνεκτικόν), Tethys the water that is wet (ὑγρόν) and dissolving (διάρρύντον), and, finally, Hestia earth that is dry (ξηρόν) and fixing (πηκτόν).<sup>366</sup> From Plethon’s text it seems that this list of legitimate children of Zeus is complete and no other may be added.<sup>367</sup> At any rate the Forms he enumerates as the Olympian gods describes adequately everything in the sensible world that is immortal and divine, that means, exists in time but is everlasting.

## b. Titans (Tartarus)

After the Olympian gods Plethon places Titans, the illegitimate children of Zeus, or the lower Forms that are so distant from the first principle that are not capable of producing immortal thing any more and they are therefore the source of being subdued to generation and corruption only. The highest two gods among them is Kronos and Aphrodite, which have the role analogous to those of Poseidon and Hera among the Olympians. Kronos is thus the highest god in Tartarus and, similarly to Poseidon, he is the “eldest (πρεσβύτατος)” of them all and charged with the leadership (ἡγεμονία). As we will see, together with the Sun, the highest god of the sensible world, he is responsible for “the creation of all the mortal nature (ἡ συμπίασης τῆς θνητῆς φύσεως δημιουργία)”. Kronos and Aphrodite create the mortal things together in a similar way (παραπλησίως) as Poseidon and Hera create the everlasting ones. – The first one bestows form on them, the second one matter. Plethon explains that what is meant here is not “the eldest and indestructible (πρεσβυτάτη τε καὶ ἀνώλεθρος)” matter, but that which is “separated from the eldest bodies and other elements (σωμάτων τῶν γε πρεσβυτάτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων στοιχείων γιγνομένων ἀποκρινομένη)” and which receives (ἐπιφερομένη) “the forms subsisting in the whole bodies (τὰ εἶδη, ἃ γε ἐν τοῖς ὅλοις ὑπάρχοντα ἐτύχανεν σώμασιν)”, obviously the bodies

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.* 114 [III,15], cf. *De diff.* X 338.6-10.

<sup>366</sup> *Leg.* 160 [III,34], cf. *De diff.* VI 331.2-12, *Contra Schol.* XXIX 472.6-12.

<sup>367</sup> Cf. “Οὔτοι πάντες Διὸς βασιλείως γνήσιοί τε καὶ κράτιστοι γεγονότες παῖδες ...”, *Leg.* 160 [III,34].

composed of matter and form. For this reason these forms are mortal (*θνητά*) and the matter connected with Aphrodite is “the most proper matter each time given to the mortal bodies (*οἰκειοτάτη αὐτῇ ὕλη σώμασι τοῖς γε θνητοῖς γίγνεται ἐκάστοτε*)”.<sup>368</sup> In Plethon’s philosophy two kinds of matter are thus to be distinguished. – The first one is produced by Hera and, more specifically, the Olympian gods that are the patrons of the elements (Rhea, Leto, Hecate, Tethys, and Hestia). It is everlasting, because it can never cease to exist, being the Aristotelian first (“the eldest”) matter, which undergoes changes during the creation of sensible things, that are composed of it.<sup>369</sup> The other one is the matter that is mortal and that is administered by Aphrodite. It is present in the bodies composed of forms and matter and it is not any more the indeterminate first matter being specified by the body in which it is present. However, this concrete composition of form and the specified matter is always unstable and ceases to exist with the destruction of the body which is composed out of it. To sum up, the mortal matter is produced (or literally “separated (*ἀποκρινομένη*)”) from the indefinite first one – which receives only the primary determination into the four elements – through the connection with a form. Exactly this concrete determination that later disintegrates again into the primary undefined matter is presided over by Aphrodite. Plethon describes this goddess also as the “patron of the succession of everlastingness in the mortal things (*τῆς ἐν θνητοῖς τῇ διαδοχῇ αἰδιότητος προστάτις*)”.<sup>370</sup> He obviously means her role in securing the succession of forms from one individual to another across the series of generations. As we will see later on, in this manner humankind has its share in the everlasting being. Perhaps this is also the reason why, for Plethon, this Form is associated with Aphrodite, the ancient goddess of love. We may only speculate what role is assigned to the world-soul, to which we will get later on, in forming the elementary masses.

After Kronos and Aphrodite, the highest couple, there follow also other Titans, appearing in the *Laws*. In contrast to the Olympians, Plethon’s text suggests that not all gods that create sensible things are enumerated by him here.<sup>371</sup> It is because the Olympians who are higher and closer to Zeus are less in number than the rest of the gods who are more numerous, being further from the first principle that is purely one (*εἰλικρινῶς ἓν*).<sup>372</sup> It would be indeed tedious or perhaps even impossible to go through all the Forms of species, attributes, qualities, and so forth, which appear in the sensible world. Each of the Titans is thus responsible for his appropriate part of the “mortal nature”, Kronos and other “co-creators (*συνδημιουργοί*)” of this world, however, still belong, along with the Olympians, among the supracelestial gods of the second order, whose

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.* 108 [III,15], 164 [III,34], cf. 212 [III,35].

<sup>369</sup> *Cf. Ad quaes.* 67-88.

<sup>370</sup> *Leg.* 164 [III,34].

<sup>371</sup> *Cf. ... ἄλλοι τε σύμπαντες οἱ κατὰ μέρη, οἱ μὲν μείζω, οἱ δὲ μείω, τῶν θνητῶν ἕκαστα διειληφότες, ibid.*

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.* 56 [I,5].

essence is eternal (ἐν αἰωνίῳ τέως τῇ ὑμετέρῃ οὐσίᾳ).<sup>373</sup> Plethon unfortunately mentions only Pan that is the patron of the Form of irrational animals (τῆς τῶν ζώων τῶν ἀλόγων προεσθηκῶς ἰδέας), Demeter that does the same for plants (τῆς τῶν φυτῶν), and, as it has been just said, the unspecified rest of the Titans, which have been put in charge of the higher or lower of the mortal things. One of them is also Kore that is a patron of our mortal part (ἡ τοῦ ἡμετέρου θνητοῦ προστάτις θεός). When mentioning her, Plethon alludes to the ancient myth in which Kore (or Persephone) is abducted by Pluton who otherwise belongs to the Olympians. Their union – “concluded under the commands of the Father Zeus (τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς Διὸς θεσμοῖς μηχανώμενος)” – thus establishes the connection (κοινωνία) between the Olympus and Tartarus.<sup>374</sup> As we will see, this unique connection of these two different parts of the ideal world, profoundly determines the position of man in the cosmos as described in Plethon’s philosophy. Human being is thus conceived as the connection of the soul and the body that is at the same time the boundary between the immortal and mortal parts of the sensible world.

### c. Table of the Gods of the Second Order

The structure of the intelligible order or the second gods or Forms, as described by Plethon in his *Laws*, may be summarized in the following table:

Position	Males	Females
<u>Olympians</u>		
1.	Poseidon – form (εἶδος)	
2.		Hera – matter (ὑλη)
3.	Apollon – identity (ταυτότης)	
4.		Artemis – difference (ἐτερότης)
5.	Hephaistos – rest (στάσις)	
6.	Dionysos – self-motion (αὐτοκίνησις)	

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.* 134-136 [III,34].

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.* 164 [III,34], cf. 212 [III,35], 220 [III,35].

- |     |                          |  |
|-----|--------------------------|--|
| 7.  |                          | Athena – the motion by different things (ἡ ὑφ’ ἐτέρων κίνησις) |
| 8.  | Atlas – stars in general |  |
| 9.  | Tithonos – planets       |  |
| 10. |                          | Dione – fixed stars  |
| 11. | Hermes – daemons         |  |
| 12. | Pluton – the human soul  |  |
| 13. |                          | Rhea – elements in general                                     |
| 14. |                          | Leto – aether  |
| 15. |                          | Hecate – air   |
| 16. |                          | Tethys – water   |
| 17. |                          | Hestia – earth   |

Titans (Tartarus)

- |     |                          |                                      |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 18. | Kronos – mortal form     |                                      |
| 19. |                          | Aphrodite – mortal matter            |
| 20. | Pan – irrational animals |                                      |
| 21. |                          | Demeter – plants                     |
| 22. |                          | Kore – the human body <sup>375</sup> |

## 7. Sensible Cosmos

### a. Gods of the Third Order

As it has been already mentioned several times, our sensible cosmos has been created as an image of the intelligible order of the Forms under the leadership of Poseidon. He, imitating the first principle and forming this heaven (τόνδε τεκταινόμενος τὸν οὐρανόν), has made “for Zeus” the

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<sup>375</sup> The order of the last three gods (20-22) as well as the definite number of the Titans (the lower Forms) is obviously neither certain nor complete. Kore, the patron of human body mentioned by Plethon in the last place (*ibid.* 164 [III,34]), should be, for instance, because of its more complex constitution, probably placed above irrational animals and plants.

cosmos that is the most beautiful as possible (ὡς κάλλιστα αὐτὸν ἔξοντα ἀπεργάσαιτο). He has thus produced the gods of “the third nature (τρίτη ... θεῶν τις φύσις)” and placed them inside the heaven (αὐτῷ ἐγκαθίστησι).<sup>376</sup> Having been created by the Forms that are themselves, in turn, created by the first principle, they are called “the children of children of Zeus (οἱ δὲ παίδων τε παῖδες)” and “the works of the works (ἔργα ἔργων)” of his.<sup>377</sup> These gods of the third order, who “observing closely [the heaven], sustain and at the same time order it (ἐγγύθεν αὐτὸν σώζοιέν τε συνόντες, καὶ ἅμα κοσμοῖεν)” are “already composed of the soul and the body (ψυχῇ ἤδη καὶ σώματι συμπεπηγότες).<sup>378</sup> Due to the adjoining bodies (διὰ τὰ συνόντα σφίσι γεγονέναι σώματα) these gods are already determined by a place and a position (καὶ τόπῳ δ’ ἤδη θέσιν ἔχοντι τοὺς θεοὺς τούτους περιληπτοί).<sup>379</sup> In another passage Plethon, nevertheless, further distinguishes the intellect (νοῦς) inside the soul of the Sun, which apparently applies to all souls in general. It is said to have been created by Zeus and transmitted down to the highest star with the help of Poseidon, who is himself the creator of the soul of the Sun, whereas Hera is the producer of its body. We have apparently to do here with an idea that the intellect must have been created by the same principle (Zeus) as have been the Forms that are, as we know, not only intelligible entities, but themselves also the intellects. Then Poseidon has submitted (ὑπεξευχώς) the solar body to the soul and the soul to the intellect. Due to its double nature the Sun thus serves as the common boundary (ὄρος or, alternatively, πέρας) as well as a bond (σύνδεσμος) between the Forms and the sensible world. Its position is thus to a certain extent similar to that of Poseidon, who is the first in the intelligible order, the leader (ἡγεμών) of the whole heaven (οὐρανός), and the creator of all the mortal nature (θνητῆ φύσις) that is contained in it.<sup>380</sup> As we will see later on, the intellects of the Sun is not any more separated from the sensible world, as are the intelligible Forms which are, for Plethon, at the same time also the intellects, but participated (μεθεκτός) by the Sun. The difference between these two types of intellect consists in the fact that the participated one cannot act upon something different without the mediation of a body.<sup>381</sup> As it seems, the same is true also about the other intellect participated by the souls in the sensible world, including the human one.

If the Sun is such a bond between these two levels of reality, it, similarly to the other gods of the third order, naturally must be corporal. As gods, they, however, differ from the rest of sensible things by their permanent existence. In order to create the heaven of the sensible

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.* 174 [III,34].

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.* 46 [I,5], cf. Plato, *Tim.* 40b-41a.

<sup>378</sup> *Leg.* 174 [III,34].

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.* 56 [I,5].

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.* 136-138 [III,34], 164-166 [III,34], 178 [III,34], *Add.* 120.1-4, Plethon probably derived the conception of the middle position of the Sun from Julian, *Or. Sol.* 135c, 138c-142b, 132d-133a, cf. Lacombrade’s introduction, pp. 84-87.

<sup>381</sup> *Leg.* 110 [III,15], cf. 178 [III,34], *De diff.* X 341.30-32.

cosmos, Poseidon, the Form itself, “uses” himself together with the rest of the intelligible essence (ἐαυτῷ τε καὶ συμπάσῃ τῇ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν οὐσία ... χρώμενος), which is “in every respect and altogether separated from matter (τῇ ὕλης πάντη τε καὶ πάντως χωριστῇ)”, as an example (παράδειγμα) for sensible things. Inside the heaven he thus creates the forms of sensible things (εἶδη μὲν καὶ τῷδε ἐνεποιεῖ τῷ οὐρανῷ) and composes it from them (συνετίθει ἐξ εἰδῶν αὐτόν). However, these forms are not more entirely separated (πάντη χωριστά) any more, but grounded in matter (ἐφ’ ὕλης ... βεβηκότα). They are the images of the Forms contained in the intelligible order (εἰκόνας) and made in the resemblance to them (πρὸς ἐκεῖνα ἀφωμοιωμένα). The matter is, as we know, provided by the Olympian Hera, the source of the matter for the things that are everlasting, and the Titan Aphrodite, the Form of the matter for the mortal ones. Two kinds of sensible things are thus produced. – The lower one is entirely inseparable and tied to matter (τὸ μὲν πάντη ἀχώριστόν τι τῆς ὕλης ... καὶ ταύτης ἐξημμένον) and equal to all the irrational species (τὸ ἄλογον δὴ εἶδος σύμπαν). The higher one is “not any more” tied to matter, but, on the contrary, “it has matter tied to itself (αὐτὸ ἔχον αὐτὴν ἐξημμένην)”. Although it is not separated actually (ἔργῳ μὲν οὐ χωριστόν), it is separated and may exist “as itself” potentially (τῇ δὲ δυνάμει χωριστόν τέ τι καὶ αὐτὸ ὄν). For this reason it is also more akin to the essence that exists by itself, that is, to that of the supracelestial Forms. In contrast to the irrational beings, all these descriptions belong to the rational soul (ἢ ψυχὴ δὴ ἢ λογικὴ).<sup>382</sup>

The beings with the rational soul are further divided into the three kinds according to the precision of their knowledge.<sup>383</sup> The first one has the proper knowledge of everything (τὸ μὲν πάντων τέ τι ἐπιστημονικόν) and this is the legitimate (γνήσιον) celestial genus of stars. The second kind has only the right opinion of everything (ὀρθοδοξαστικὸν δὲ πάντων) because “it cannot attain the proper knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of it” and this is the illegitimate and terrestrial genus of daemons (νόσον τέ τί ... καὶ χθόνιον ... γένος δαιμόνων). It represents the lowest genus of gods, which, when it is needed, serve to the higher ones (θεῶν τε ἔσχατον πάντων, καὶ τοῦτοις ὄπη δέοι ὑπηρετικόν). Finally, at the third and lowest place, immediately after the daemons, the fallible kind (ἀμαρτητός) is placed, which is not any more a “proper offspring” of Zeus (σπουδαῖος ἐαυτοῦ ἔκγονος) and which is our human soul (ἢ γε ἡμέτερα ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχὴ).<sup>384</sup> This hierarchy is further strengthened by the fact that the human souls are ordered by the superior, divine ones (ψυχαὶ αἶ γε ἡμέτεραι ὑπὸ ψυχῶν τῶν ἐαυτῶν προχουσῶν θεῶν

<sup>382</sup> *Leg.* 174-176 [III,34].

<sup>383</sup> *Cf.* the title of lost chapter II,12: *Κοινὴ τις ἀπόδειξις τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς τριῶν εἰδῶν* (“*General proof of the three species of the soul*”), *ibid.* 10, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 323 (altered).

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.* 176 [III,34], *cf.* 52 [I,5].

κοσμούμεναι), proceeding, nonetheless, from the same source and sharing with them everlasting essence (οὐσία αἰδῖος).<sup>385</sup>

The kind of the irrational beings (ἄλογον εἶδος) is constituted of the four “eldest” kinds of bodies (τέτταρα τὰ πρῆσβύτατα ... σωμαίων εἶδη), that is, out of the four elements, fire, air, water, and earth that together form the whole “body” of the visible world.<sup>386</sup> In section VI of the *Differences* Plethon argues against Aristotle and in support of the Platonists, claiming that there exist only these four elements and not five (the fifth one is supposed to be aether). Fire and earth are located at the most opposite places (ἐναντιώτατα ἔχειν πρὸς ἀλλήλῳ), fire being the lightest (κουφότατον) because of the tenuity of its texture (μανότης), and thus rising up (πᾶσιν ἐπιπολάζον). Earth, in contrast, is the heaviest (βαρυτάτη) due to its density (πυκνότης) and therefore sinking down (πᾶσιν ὑφισταμένη). Air and water are in the middle of these two, because their tenuity and density is middle in comparison with them. A similar disposition holds true for their motion (κίνησις), locomotion (φορά), and rest (στάσις). – Being at the opposite extremes, earth is thus immovable (ἀκίνητος), whereas fire is in the perpetual motion (ἀεικίνητον). Water is even more movable than earth, and air more than water, but less than fire. However, due to its perpetual motion, it can move only in a circle (κύκλῳ), because everything that moves straight (ἐπ’ εὐθύ) must necessarily sometimes stop. Aether is thus made of this element, as it is everything that is the upper body and that is in the proper sense of the word (ιδίως) called heaven (οὐρανός).<sup>387</sup> Plethon then rejects Aristotle’s possible objection, according to which fire can move only in a straight line (similarly to the otherwise motionless earth). As he argues, it may happen solely when it is moving back to its proper place (οἰκεῖος τόπος).<sup>388</sup>

In the same passage of the *Differences* Plethon also claims (once again to refute an argument by Aristotle) that, because the elements are destructible in their parts (τῶν τεττάρων ... τούτων σωμαίων ἀπάντων κατὰ μέρος φθειρομένων), the Platonists deny that there is any body, even that of stars, which is by itself indestructible (καθ’ αὐτὸ ἀφθαρτον σῶμα),<sup>389</sup> since every body is divisible (μεριστόν), dispersible (σκεδαστόν), and dissoluble (διαλυτόν). However, there are bodies considered to be indestructible even by the Platonists. They are not, nevertheless, indestructible by themselves (οὐ καθ’ αὐτὰ ἀφθαρτα), but thanks to the presence of the soul, by which they are “immortalized (ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι)”.<sup>390</sup> In the *Reply to Scholarios* Plethon also admits that the elements as a whole are indestructible (τῶ μὲν ὅλῳ ἀνώλεθρον), although destructible in

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.* 104 [III,15].

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.* 176 [III,34].

<sup>387</sup> *De diff.* VI 330.7-25, the summary of the passage is based partly on the translation in: Woodhouse (1986), p. 201, where the references to Aristotle’s *De caelo* and other writings are also provided (pp. 201-202, nn. 50-56).

<sup>388</sup> *De diff.* VI 330.25-331.2, cf. *Contra Schol.* XIX 472.1-4.

<sup>389</sup> What is meant here, is the body composed of the four elements first mentioned in *De diff.* VI 331.4: οὐδ’ ὅπου οὐν αὐτῶν [i.e. τῶν τεττάρων ... τούτων σωμαίων] πάντη ἀφθάρτου ὄντος.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.* VI 331.2-12.

their parts (τοις δὲ μέρεσι φθαρτόν), but he still claims that even if stars are virtually indestructible, this is not because of their peculiar fiery matter, but because their bodies are entirely “immortalized” “by the Forms that are much more divine than form of fire”,<sup>391</sup> apparently the one immanent in them. The Forms that are meant here are obviously the five lowest Olympians from the *Lams* – Rhea (responsible for the elements in general), Leto, Hecate, Tethys, and Hestia (responsible for aether, air, water, and earth respectively).<sup>392</sup> There is thus no special matter out of which the everlasting part of the world would be formed and even in stars matter circulates flowing in and out.<sup>393</sup> It is not also entirely clear why in the first passage the soul is the cause of the indestructibility of stars, whereas in the second one it is their immanent form. Perhaps Plethon just stresses in both cases a different aspect of the same problem – stars are “immortalized” by their souls, whose immortality is in turn secured by the corresponding Form.<sup>394</sup> More important is that both passages agree on the question why the elements have their Forms placed among the Olympians that produce only the things that are everlasting and not liable to destruction. – The elemental masses are indeed “indestructible as a whole”. However, they also change as the things composed of them are generated and perish, and for this reasons they are “destructible in parts”. Providing matter for sensible things, they are administered by the goddesses, who, as we know, are the patrons of matter and passivity.

Because, despite their everlasting being, the gods of the third order (stars and daemons) as well as the human soul belong to the sensible cosmos, they have to be placed in an appropriate body. Their souls are thus put into “the vehicles (τὰ ὀχήματα)”,<sup>395</sup> made of the element that is, the most beautiful and “contains the tiniest matter in the biggest mass (ἐλαχίστην ἐν μεγίστῳ ὄγκῳ κεκτημένον ὕλην)”, that is, fire. Stars are thus made of the fire which is bright (λαμπρόν) and fiery (φλογῶδες), whereas the “vehicles” of daemons and the human souls of the one that is invisible (ἀόρατον) and aethereal (αἰθέριον). At the same time this theory helps to explain how the bodies are connected to the souls of the “three genera of immortal and rational things”, the “eldest” ones of those created.<sup>396</sup> Their bodies are also called “unaging (ἀγήρεια)” and “unmixed (ἀκήρατα)”,<sup>397</sup> the second characteristic being obviously derived from the fact that they are made of the pure fire. What is remarkable, is the claim, required also by the need to explain the obvious phenomena that the matter in stars, being of the higher quality than that of daemons and the human souls, is in fact more visible. Perhaps it is so because, for Plethon, the fire of stars is both

<sup>391</sup> *Contra Schol.* XIX 472.6-12.

<sup>392</sup> *Leg.* 160 [III,34].

<sup>393</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXIX 472.12-474.20, *Ad quaes.* 58-88.

<sup>394</sup> *Cf. Contra Schol.* XIX 474.25-30, and the discussion below.

<sup>395</sup> For the origin and later usage of the so-called astral body *cf.* Dodds (1933), Sorabji (2005), pp. 221-229, for Plethon’s variant of this traditional Neoplatonic doctrine *cf.* Nikolaou (1982).

<sup>396</sup> *Leg.* 176 [III,34].

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.* 52 [I,5].



bright and warm, whereas that of daemons and humans is just warm (as it is, for instance, evident in the case of breath) and is not visible any more. However, as we will observe later on, the situation in the case of the human soul, which, unlike the gods of the third order, cannot fully profit from the pure existence, is still more complicated.

Such is a basic outline of the sensible cosmos as presented by Plethon in the main text of the *Laws*. In the appendix to the book, the ensuing *Epinomis*, Plethon supplements few other important features. The universe (τὸ πᾶν) must be, first, “everlasting together with Zeus (ἀϊδίον τῷ Διί)”. Second, it is the most beautiful possible (ὅ τι δὴ κάλλιστον ἐκ τῶν ἐνόητων γεγονός), that is, it remains forever in the same state (ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ μένει ἐς τὸν πάντα αἰῶνα καταστάσει) and it cannot change the shape that has been once assigned to it (ἐκ γε δὴ τοῦ καδάπαξ αὐτῷ ἀποδεδειγμένου σχήματος ἀπαρακίνητον). This is because it is impossible that the god who is the best (βέλτιστος ὃν ὁ θεός), either at some moment does not produce his work (μὴ παράγειν ποτὲ τοῦργον τὸ αὐτοῦ), or does not create anything well (μηδ’ εἶ ποιεῖν μηδοτιοῦν). For Plethon, something that is itself the best must, as much as possible, always necessarily give a share of its own good to the other things (θεοὶ γὰρ ἂν τὸ αὐτὸ βέλτιστον καὶ ἄλλοις τοῦ οἰκείου ἀγαθοῦ ἐς ὅσον τε ἐγχωρεῖ καὶ ἀεὶ μεταδιδόναι). This is the traditional Platonic concept of *bonum diffusivum sui*, according to which the supreme good, due to its goodness, cannot refrain from creating something different and yet similar to itself. Plethon develops this train of thought further. – If it is really so that the god “creates and produces well” (εἶ τε ποιοῦν καὶ παράγων), it means that he can never create something with a limited potentiality (ἐνδεδεστερόν ποτε τῆς δυνάμεως εἶ ποιῆσαι). Nor can he originate such a work that is worse than the best possible. Given this, if Zeus changed a thing among those, which have been established by him (τῶν καθεστηκότων εἴ τι Ζεὺς παρακινήσειε), he would thus, earlier or later, make also the whole universe worse. Even if only a parcel of the cosmos changes, “either because before it was not usual for it to change, or it changes differently than it is usual (καὶν μόριόν τι αὐτοῦ μεταβάλλη, ἢτοι οὐ πρότερον μεταβάλλειν εἰωθός, ἢ οὐκ ἐς τὸ εἰωθός μεταβαλόν)”, it is impossible that together with this parcel a whole shape of the universe does not change as well (ἀμήχανον μὴ οὐ καὶ ὅλον αὐτῷ συμμεταβαλεῖν τὸ σχῆμα).<sup>398</sup> Further on, Plethon goes even so far to claim that in the eternal cosmos the similar periods as well as “lives” and “actions” repeat again and again, and there cannot happen anything new.<sup>399</sup> In the *Differences* as well as in the *Reply to Scholarios*, while criticising Aristotle, he distinguishes between the creation in time (τῷ χρόνῳ) and by cause

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.* 242-244 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.* 256 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

(τῇ αἰτίᾳ). The universe is then claimed to be created by a higher cause, even although it is everlasting and did not originate at a concrete moment of time.<sup>400</sup>

For Plethon, it is thus impossible to keep the whole universe if all its parcels do not remain in the same state (ὡσαύτως).<sup>401</sup> This naturally does not mean that the change is completely excluded from his universe. The key term in his argumentation against the possibility of the change of the world to the worse state than before is apparently the word “usual (εἰωθός)”. The universe may change, but as far as we presuppose that its producer is good, it cannot happen in the way that is not “usual”. That means – it cannot divert from the laws determining the regular processes in it just because of a pure chance. This thought, as we will see, opens the way for Plethon’s doctrine of fate, which ensures that, despite its apparent changes, the sensible world remains always in the state that is the best possible. In contrast to the “inner” transformations of the cosmos, including even the generation and the corruption of things, the cosmos as the whole as well as the human soul, cannot have either a beginning or an end. According to Plethon, it has no beginning in time (χρόνῳ τε ἡργμένος) because to be everlasting (αἰδῖον) and to extend into both directions is simply “much more perfect and beautiful (πολὺ τελεώτερον καὶ κάλλιον)”.<sup>402</sup> For the same reason it also cannot ever perish. As it has been said at the beginning, the universe, together with the soul, must thus be coeternal with the principle by which they both have been created.

## b. Stars and Daemons

In Plethon’s philosophy the Sun together with the Moon form a pair analogous to Poseidon and Hera among the Olympians, and Kronos and Aphrodite among the Titans.<sup>403</sup> It has an eminent position among stars and sensible things in general because it is the boundary and bond between the sensible and intelligible world. As such it has an important role in the creation of the sensible world to which it also belongs. Together with Kronos and the other Titans or Forms, which are less general and capable of producing the perishable things only, the Sun creates the whole mortal part of the sensible world.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> *De diff.* I 322.8-19, *Contra Schol.* VII-VIII 386.15-392.9, X 392.18-398.15.

<sup>401</sup> *Leg.* 244 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.* 258-260 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. *Zor. Plat.* 266.

<sup>403</sup> *Leg.* 106-108 [III,15].

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.* 164-166 [III,34], 178 [III,34], 244-246 [III,43: *Epinomis*], *Add.* 120.4-9.

Plethon argues at length against the opinion<sup>405</sup> that the Forms of the mortal things are to be placed into the intellect of the Sun and that they do not subsist anywhere by themselves (ἐν νῶ ἔχοντα τῷ ἑαυτοῦ τὰ τῶν θνητῶν ταῦτα εἶδη, διανοητὰ τε καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ οὐδαμοῦ ὑφιστατότα). – In this conception the Sun would produce every mortal thing in the same manner as craftsmen have the forms of artefacts (τὰ τῶν σκευαστῶν εἶδη) in their minds.<sup>406</sup> However, according to Plethon, this comparison in fact clearly shows that such solution of the problem of the Forms is simply impossible. This is because artefacts, as we may observe, proceed towards their perfection only when the craftsmen are present and work on them. If, on the contrary, they are left half-finished they do not proceed any more to anything (οὐκέτι οὐδὲ προχωροῦντα ἐς οὐδέν), “because the craftsmen have carried away (συναποφερόντων) from them not only their hands, but also these examples (τὰ παραδείγματα)”. Artefacts are thus perfected (τελειούμενα) according to an amount of the work (κατὰ λόγον τὸν τῆς μεταχειρίσεως) exerted each time upon them by the craftsmen. We do not, in contrast, observe that the things produced by nature (τὰ δὲ φύσει ταῦτα συνιστάμενα) are either perfected or living (τελειούμενα, οὐδέ γε ζῶντα) in the dependence on the approaches and the retreats of the Sun. If it were really so, everything would be either diurnal (ἐφήμερα), or annual (ἐπέτεια), by which Plethon apparently means the influence of the motion of the Sun during the day or during the year. Furthermore, nothing would proceed to the perfection during night (νύκτωρ). This cannot be obviously true because some plants and fruits often ripen, that is, are perfected (τελειούμενα), also at night. Plethon similarly refuses the possibility that it is just the intellect of the Sun, without its body (ἄνευ τοῦ ἑαυτῷ συνόντος σώματος), that produces such effect. He argues that, in contrast to the separated Forms, the intellects that are participated (μεθεκτοί) by the body, as it is the case of the intellect of the Sun, cannot act upon other bodies in any way (οὐδ' ἂν ὅτιοῦν δρᾶν ἔς γε ἕτερα σώματα) in the absence of the body connected to them (ἄνευ τῶν σφίσι συνόντων σωμάτων). The bodies that are able to have an effect on the other ones have to be in a certain position towards the things that are being affected (θέσεως δεῖν τοιαῦδε ἢ τοιαῦδε πρὸς τὰ πεισόμενα).<sup>407</sup>

Another possibility considered by Plethon is that the things which are being perfected (τὰ τελειούμενα) might be perfected by themselves (αὐτὰ ἂν ὑφ' αὐτῶν τελειοῦσθαι). He finally refuses this solution too because no potentiality may pass over to the actuality (οὐδεμίαν γὰρ ἂν δύναμιν ἐς ἐνέργειαν χωρεῖν) if it is not pushed forward by some other actuality preceding the former (μὴ οὐχ ὑφ' ἑτέρας ἐνεργείας πρᾶσβυτέρας προβιβαζομένην). In other words, nothing

<sup>405</sup> In the *Differences* (341.11 *sq.*) he connects this idea with Aristotle who “clearly makes the Sun the cause of generation of whatever comes into existence”, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 212 (altered), cf. Aristotle, *Met.* XII 1071a15, *De gener. et corr.* II 336b17-19.

<sup>406</sup> *Leg.* 108 [III,15], cf. *De diff.* X 341.11-19.

<sup>407</sup> *Leg.* 108-110 [III,15], cf. *ibid.* 178 [III,34]: “Ἥλιον ... νῶ τῶν μεθεκτῶν τούτων τῷ κρατίστῳ [Ποσειδῶν] ὑπεξευχώς.

that is perfect only potentially (τὸ δυνάμει τέλειον) might ever become such also actually (ἔργῳ) if it is not pushed forward to a perfection by something that is already actually perfect. The last possibility, which Plethon, nevertheless, also refuses, is a theory that the principle that is responsible for the perfection of things is the heat received from the Sun (ἢ ὑπὸ Ἡλίου θερμότης) or that some other affection (τι ἄλλο πάθημα) absorbed by all the mortal things (ἐναπειλημμένον ἂν ἐκάστοις τῶν θνητῶν) might be the cause of such perfection each time when the Sun retreats (τελειοῦν αὐτὰ καὶ τοῦ Ἡλίου ἐκάστοτε ἀποχωροῦντος). According to Plethon, the perfecting principle must precede the thing that is being perfected (πρᾶτον γὰρ που τό γε τελειοῦν τοῦ τελειομένου εἶναι δεῖ) but no affection may precede form or essence in general (εἶδους δὲ καὶ ὄλως οὐσίας οὐδὲν πάθημα πρᾶτον). In other words, to what is further added or what happens (τό γε προσγιγνώμενον) may not precede what it is each time added or in what it happens (ᾧ ἂν ἐκάστοτε προσγίγνηται).<sup>408</sup> The last argument apparently presupposes the distinction between an essence (οὐσία) and the affections (παθήματα) that modify it without changing radically its specific character. Such affections are, however, entirely dependent on the essence “in which” they are. If we return to Plethon’s example of the Sun shining on a fruit, the essence of the fruit is modified by the heat only at the moment when this is happening and it is therefore impossible that the Sun would have produced an effect that is independent of the essence and that remains separately in the fruit and gradually modifies its essence later, when the Sun is absent.

From these considerations Plethon concludes that there must be some Forms subsisting by themselves (εἶδη ἅττα καθ’ ἑαυτὰ ὑφ’ ἑσθηκότα) in the supracaelestial space (ἐν τῷ ὑπερουρανίῳ ὄντα χώρῳ), that is, outside the sensible world, because, as we have just seen, the forms contained in the intellects participated by the bodies cannot act upon something when the bodies are absent. Such Forms, however, are not always capable of producing the things “here” by their mutual co-operation only (ταῦτα μετὰ μὲν ἀλλήλων μόνων οὐκέτι οἷα τε εἶναι παράγειν, ἅπτ’ ἂν παράγοι τῆδε). Only those that are “elder” (τὰ πρᾶτον) are able to do so, producing the Sun, Moon and other immortal things in our world. Other, the lower Forms, need a contribution of the Sun, the Moon, and “the gods around it” to be able to produce the sensible world.<sup>409</sup> Similarly to the two other divine pairs on the higher level of the intelligible Forms, the Sun is said to bring to the mortal thing a form from “the Forms and gods of Tartarus” (τὸ ... εἶδος ἕκ τε εἰδῶν καὶ θεῶν τῶν Ταρταρίων ἐπιφέρων), while the Moon provides them with matter. They are thus the highest male and female gods in our heaven.<sup>410</sup> In the *Differences* Plethon further claims that the Sun connects (προσάξων) matter with the Forms, whereas the Moon is not mentioned at

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.* 110-112 [III,15], *De diff.* X 341.15-39.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.* 112 [III,15], *De diff.* X 341.39-342.5

<sup>410</sup> *Leg.* 106-108 [III,15].

all.<sup>411</sup> The role of the heavenly bodies thus seems to be that of the transmitters that bring forms from the supracelestial order down to the sensible things, which are under their direct influence. The Sun does this in the case of those that are rather active and “formal” while the Moon in the case of those that are passive and “material”. When something that is produced in such a way already acquires certain constitution (*σύστασις*), at this moment the lower Forms of the mortal things, “themselves by themselves”, are able to perfect and preserve it for some time (*αὐτὰ οἶα τ’ εἶναι ἤδη δι’ αὐτῶν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ τινα χρόνον τελειοῦν τε καὶ σώζειν*). The more perfect Forms are more able to do this, the less perfect less. Plethon then concludes that for the reasons given it is not necessary to suppose that the mortal things are perfected and preserved according to a degree the Sun approaches to the Earth or retreats.<sup>412</sup> In another passage he further specifies that Kronos and the other Forms, which preside over the creation of sensible things (*Κρόνος τε καὶ νόες οἱ ἄλλοι προεστηκότες χωριστοί*), “take over everything” from the Sun (*οἱ παρὰ τοῦ Ἡλίου παραλαμβάνοντες ἕκαστα*), “which is the beginning of their generation and life (*τῆς τε γενέσεως καὶ τοῦ βίου κατάρχοντος αὐτοῖς*)”<sup>413</sup>

The difference among the Forms in this passages is thus naturally analogous to the one between the Olympian gods and Titans we know from the *Laws*. As we have also seen, Plethon uses this division in order to explain the difference which he situates between the everlasting and the mortal part of the sensible world. The higher part of it is thus generated by the higher part of the intelligible order without a contribution of any other principle, whereas the lower one is produced by the lower Forms with a necessary assistance of the Sun and planets. These are, according to Plethon, “the brothers (*ἀδελφοί*)”, or “attendants (*ὄπαδοί*)” of the Sun that participate in the creation of the mortal things, they administer it jointly, and each has assigned a patronage and leadership over certain part of daemons (*δαίμονες οἱ χθόνιοι*) and the human souls. They have also the same tripartite nature, being composed of the intellect (*νοῦς*), the soul (*ψυχή*), and the body (*σῶμα*), and they, too, ensure a communion (*κοινωνία*) or a bond (*συνδεσμός*) between the supracelestial order and the heaven.<sup>414</sup> As we already know, the souls of stars are connected to their bodies by “the vehicles” or aethereal bodies which are even higher (*κρείττους*) and which are bright because of the amount of the active potentiality in them (*διὰ μέγεθος δραστηκῆς δυνάμεως λαμπρὰ ταῦτα σώματα*).<sup>415</sup> Apart from the Sun, Plethon names also the Moon (*Σελήνη*), Venus (*Ἐωσφόρος* or *Φωσφόρος*), Mercury (*Στίλβων*), Saturn (*Φαίμων*),

<sup>411</sup> *De diff.* X 342.5-7.

<sup>412</sup> *Leg.* 112-114 [III,15]. Plethon uses the example of a projectile that moves forward by itself due to the effect described in the Aristotelian physics as *ἀντιπερίστασις* (*ibid.* 112 [III,15]).

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.* 120 [III,31].

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.* 178 [III,34], cf. 136-138 [III,34], 154 [III,34], 166 [III,34]. Cf. also the title of lost chapter II,14: *Περὶ τῶν τῶν ἐπτὰ ἀστέρων δυναμείων* (“*On the potentialities of the seven planets?*”), *ibid.* 10, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 322 (altered).

<sup>415</sup> *Or. mag.* 11.14-16 [ad XIV].

Jupiter (Φαέθων), and Mars (Πυρόεις).<sup>416</sup> Whereas the wandering stars, planets, and especially the Sun and the Moon, play an active part in the producing of the world, the only thing that we are told about the fixed stars, which circulate regularly, is that they have been created in order to contemplate what (really) exists (ἐπί τε θεωρίαν τὴν τῶν ὄντων), probably the intelligible Forms, and to praise their creator ([ἐπί] ὕμνον τὸν σόν).<sup>417</sup> This is in some way similar to Plato's *Timaeus* where humans are supposed to contemplate the motions of stars.<sup>418</sup>

In contrast to stars, daemons are the terrestrial genus (χρόνιον γένος δαιμόνων) of the gods of the third order and the lowest of all gods.<sup>419</sup> Contrary to the wide-spread Christian conception according to which they are malicious beings, Plethon does not regard them as evil powers. This is clear from the titles of two lost chapters of the *Laws* (II,19: “*That daemons are not evil* (Ὄς οὐ πονηροὶ οἱ δαίμονες εἰσιν)”, 20: “*Refutation of the calumnies against daemons* (Ἐλεγχοὶ τῶν κατὰ δαιμόνων διαβολῶν)”<sup>420</sup>) and it is also claimed by the *Magian Oracle* XIX (“Nature persuades that there are pure daemons / and the fruits even of evil matter are worthy and good (Ἡ φύσις πείθει εἶναι τοὺς δαίμονας ἀγνοῦς / καὶ τὰ κακῆς ὕλης βλαστήματα χρηστὰ καὶ ἐσθλά)”<sup>421</sup>). In the commentary to this *Oracle* Plethon explains that it is so because everything that has proceeded from the god, which is the good itself, must be also good (ἀπλῶς πάντα τὰ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτοαγαθοῦ ὄντος προεληλυθότα χρηστὰ εἶναι), including matter. This must therefore be even more true of daemons that surpass the matter, from which the world is made, by the rational part of their nature (τῷ τε λογικῷ τῆς φύσεως), that is, by the intellect which does not mingle with the mortal nature (καὶ τῷ πρὸς τὴν θνητὴν φύσιν ἀμίκτω).<sup>422</sup> Also their aethereal bodies are nobler than the human ones and their souls are “unmingled with the mortal nature (ἀμίκτοι τῇ γε θνητῇ εἶναι φύσει)”<sup>423</sup>. In his letter to Bessarion Plethon claims that whereas “Proclus derives matter from the first cause (τὴν ὕλην Πρόκλος μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου αἰτίου παράγει)”, “Plotinus [derives] from the second intelligible essence, following after the first [cause], the doctrine that there are evil daemons (Πλωτῖνος [παράγει] δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον [αἴτιον] δευτέρας καὶ νοητῆς οὐσίας τὴν περὶ δαιμόνων πονηρῶν δόξαν)”. However, as Plethon claims in the same letter, Plato, Pythagoras and others did not accept this doctrine of the Egyptian origin. Furthermore, the same doctrine about the good daemons is expressed in the *Oracle* XIX, which

<sup>416</sup> *Leg.* 166 [III,34], 210 [III,35], cf. *Meth.* 52, 56, 58, for the “Chaldaean” names of planets used by Plethon both in the *Laws* and his astronomical treatise cf. Cumont (1935).

<sup>417</sup> *Leg.* 176-178 [III,34].

<sup>418</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 90a-d.

<sup>419</sup> *Leg.* 52 [I,5], cf. 138 [III,32], 166 [III,34], 214 [III,34]. Plethon derives his conception of daemons possibly from Plato, *Epin.* 984d-e, *Symp* 202d-e.

<sup>420</sup> *Leg.* 10, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 324 (altered).

<sup>421</sup> *Or. mag.* XIX 3.1-2, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 52 (altered).

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.* 14.2-11 [*ad* XIX].

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.* 11.11-14 [*ad* XIV].

he also quotes there.<sup>424</sup> It is not, however, entirely clear why the doctrine about the evil daemons should have originated in Egypt, perhaps it is because Plotinus came from there, as well as Min who, according to Plethon, was not in fact the real sage, in contrast to Zoroaster.

In the *Laws* daemons are further described as the creatures that are at the service of other higher gods (θεοῖς τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπηρετικὴ [μοῖρα]) and that are adjoining (προσεχής) to our nature. They are infallible (ἀναμάρτητος) and have no experience of the evil (κακῶν τις ἀπαθείης).<sup>425</sup> This is probably to be understood in the sense that, as we have seen above, daemons, although unable to acquire the proper knowledge, still have the right opinion of everything. Furthermore, as we know, they are in fact good, and for this reason, being a kind of the higher creatures that are closest to us, they are also the source of all our good. In the hymn dedicated to them Plethon enumerates all their functions. – Some of them are responsible for the purification of men (οἱ μὲν καθαιρόντες), others “lead them up (οἱ δ’ ἀνάγοντες), guard (τοὶ δὲ φρουρεῦντες), or preserve them (σώζουσιν)”, and still others are able to “correct easily their intellect (ῥεῖα μάλ’ ὀρθοῦντες νόον)”.<sup>426</sup> In another passage of the *Laws*, apart from the purification, another function of daemons is “to cure (θεραπευτικῶς)” humans.<sup>427</sup> This is perhaps to be understood as making them “good and beautiful (καλοὶ κάγαθοί)”.<sup>428</sup> As Plethon makes clear in his commentary to the *Magian Oracle* XX, the correcting or punishing daemons (αἱ κολαστικαὶ δαίμονες) divert humans from their vice (τῷ ἀπάγειν τῆς κακίας αὐτούς) and bind them to the virtue (τῇ ἀρετῇ ἐγκαταδοῦσαι).<sup>429</sup>

## 8. Nature Mortal and Human

### a. The Soul and the Human Situation

The daemons are the lowest reality that have the everlasting being and do not perish, which, as we know, is Plethon’s definition of divinity. Men, on the contrary, due to their mortal body, do not belong among gods, including even those of the third order, who are the lowest of all. However, for Plethon, man is also partly a divine creature since his nature is in fact twofold, composed of the body and the immortal soul. In the *Epinomis*, to prove this claim, he uses an

<sup>424</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 459.4-11. The negation οὐ in the text of the letter to Bessarion (ἡ φύσις οὐ πείθει εἶναι τοὺς δαίμονας ἀγνοῦς, *ibid.* 459.10-11) seems to be added by a mistake of the textual tradition, cf. the same text in *Or. mag.* XIX 3.1-2.

<sup>425</sup> *Leg.* 138 [III,34], cf. 166 [III,34], 188 [III,34], 198 [III,34], 200 [III,34], 214 [III,35].

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.* 214 [III,35].

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.* 188 [III,34].

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.* 200 [III,34].

<sup>429</sup> *Or. mag.* 14.13-14 [*ad* XX].

axiom he states beforehand, according to which actions must be analogous to their essences and essences to their actions (τὰ ἔργα ταῖς οὐσίαις, καὶ τὰς οὐσίας τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς σφετέροις ἀνάλογον δεῖν).<sup>430</sup> This is because man is apparently capable of the actions that are animal (θηριώδη), but also of those that are close to the divine ones (τῶν θεῶν παραπλήσια), that is, the contemplation of being and even of acquiring the notion of Zeus. Man is thus composed of two kinds (εἶδεε), animal (θηριώδης) and mortal (θνητόν) one, but also that which is immortal (ἀθάνατον) and akin to gods (τοῖς θεοῖς συγγενές).<sup>431</sup> Plethon thus conceives the human nature (φύσις) as “not unmingled (οὐκ ἀκήρατος)”, that means, as necessarily attached to the mortal body, but still immortal (ἀθάνατος). Its attachment to the mortal nature is required for “the completion of the universe (τῆς τοῦ παντός πληρώσεως ἔνεκα)” and its “union (εὐαρμοστίας or ἀρμονίας)”. In order that the descending ontological structure of Plethon’s universe is complete, there must be some “boundary (μεθόριον)” and “bond (σύνδεσμος)” between the immortal and unmingled nature of gods and the perishable and mortal one.<sup>432</sup> The universe (τὸ πᾶν) cannot be divided or torn asunder (διασπασμένον), and must together form one composition (ἐν τι τῷ ὄντι σύστημα). Similarly to the things that differ significantly between themselves, but at the same time are, as much as it is possible, connected together by some boundaries (μεθορίοις τισὶν ἐκ τῶν ἐνόντων συνηρημόσθη), the mortal things are bound to the immortal ones by the boundary located into man (τῷ κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῦτον μεθορίῳ συνεδέσθη). Plethon then argues, that if they were united permanently, the mortal part of the human being would be immortalised because of the continuous contact with its immortal part (ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὸ ἀθάνατον ἀεὶ συνουσίας ἀπαθανατιζόμενον) and man would not any longer play the role of the common boundary, necessary for the completion of the universe. Both these natures cannot be also connected just once (ἅπαξ ... ὠμιληκός) and then released for the rest of time (τὸν λοιπὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον ἀπήλλακτο). This is because the boundary between the immortal and mortal things would thus exist only at one moment and not forever (ἅπαξ γεγονὸς, οὐκ ἀεὶ μὲν ὄν μεθόριον). It would not therefore unite these two parts of the universe permanently (οὐδ’ ἀεὶ θνητὰ ἀθανάτοις συναρμόττον), which is necessary for its perfection, but the union (ἡ ἀρμονία) would cease with the death of the body. According to Plethon, we have to conclude that the immortal nature is partly (παρὰ μέρος) connected (κοινωνεῖν) to the mortal one, and partly, when the mortal body is destroyed, it exists by itself (καθ’ αὐτὸ τε ἐκάστοτε γίγνεσθαι) and lives apart

<sup>430</sup> *Leg.* 242 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.* 246 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. 248 [III,43: *Epinomis*], *Zor. Plat.* 266, *Or. mag.* 9.2-5 [ad XI], 9.16-18 [ad XII], *Ad quaes.* 91-132. Cf. also Benakis introduction to *Ad quaes.*, pp. 340-343.

<sup>432</sup> *Leg.* 138-140 [III,34], cf. 142-146 [III,34], 182-184 [III,34], 194 [III,34], 196 [III,34], 250 [III,43: *Epinomis*], *Zor. Plat.* 266, *Or. mag.* 9.5-10 [ad XI], *Decl. brev.* 21.15-18, *Ad quaes.* 128-132, *Contra Schol.* XXVII 456.24-458.8. Cf. also Matula (2003).



(καὶ ζῆν χωρίζ). This happens forever in the infinite time (καὶ τοῦτο οὕτω τὸν ἀεὶ χωρεῖν καὶ ἄπειρον χρόνον).<sup>433</sup>

The position of man, as it is apparent also from the vocabulary employed by Plethon, is similarly exclusive as that of the Sun, which is, as we have seen above, also a boundary (ὄρος) and bond (σύνδεσμος) of the intelligible order and the sensible world. In an important passage from the *Epinomis* Plethon discusses the problem of the duration of the soul in the connection with the duration of the whole cosmos, which, as we have seen, is, according to him, everlasting and has no beginning in time. The soul, having its specific function of the boundary between the mortal and immortal part of the cosmos, must be, first, also everlasting and, second, it must undergo successive reincarnations in order not to remain either permanently connected to the body, or, on the contrary, altogether disconnected from it. This is exactly the way the human soul contributes to the unity and harmony of the whole cosmos.<sup>434</sup>

Plethon explains in more depth how such a union of mortal and immortal nature is possible in his commentary to the *Magian Oracle* XIV. According to him, the Pythagoreans and the Platonists believe that the human soul is neither an essence entirely separated from the whole body (οὐ πάντη τις χωριστὴ οὐσία παντὸς σώματος), nor entirely unseparated (οὐ δ' αὖ πάντη ἀχώριστος), but partly separated and partly unseparated (τῆ μὲν χωριστή, τῆ δ' ἀχώριστος). This means that the soul is potentially separated (τῆ μὲν δυνάμει δήπου χωριστή) from the body, but actually always unseparated (τῷ δ' ἔργῳ ἀεὶ ἀχώριστος). Plethon now describes in short the basic division on which his metaphysics is based. – The Pythagoreans and Platonists distinguish three kinds (εἶδη) of being: The first is entirely separated from matter (τὸ μὲν πάντη χωριστὸν ὕλης) and identical with the supracelestial intellects (οἱ νόες δὴ οἱ ὑπερουράνιοι). The second is entirely unseparated (τὸ δ' ἀχώριστον πάντη) because it has not the essence that subsists by itself (οὐ τὴν γε οὐσίαν καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑφεστηκυῖαν ἔχον), but it is dependent on matter (τῆς ὕλης δὴ ἐξημμένην) and therefore disperses and perishes together with it. In contrast to the intellects, this kind is irrational (ἄλογον). Finally, the third kind is that between the previous ones (μεταξὺ τούτων) and this is the rational soul (ἡ ψυχὴ ... ἡ λογικὴ). The intermediate position of it is due to its specific nature. It differs from the supracelestial intellects by its permanent connection with matter (τῷ ἀεὶ ὕλῃ συνεῖναι) whereas from the irrational kind by the fact that it is not dependent on it (τῷ μὴ αὐτὴν τῆς ὕλης ἐξῆφθαι), but, on the contrary, in this case, as we have already seen, matter is permanently dependent on the soul (τὴν ὕλην ἑαυτῆς ἀεὶ ἔχειν ἐξημμένην).<sup>435</sup>

Plethon then claims that the soul subsists potentially itself by itself (αὐτὴ ἰδία ἑαυτῆς καὶ καθ' αὐτὴν τῆ γε δυνάμει ἔχουσα ὑφεστηκυῖα) and, similarly to the supracelestial intellects, it is

<sup>433</sup> *Leg.* 250-252 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. *Zor. Plat.* 266.

<sup>434</sup> *Leg.* 258-260 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. *Zor. Plat.* 266, *Contra Schol.* XXV 442.20-444.27. Cf. also Bargeliotis (1979).

<sup>435</sup> *Or. mag.* 10.4-15 [ad XIV].

“indivisible (ἀμερής)”, that is, without parts. At the same time it is akin to them (συγγενής) because it is also capable of attaining “the knowledge and contemplation of being (τῆς τῶν ὄντων δὴ γνώσεως καὶ θεωρίας)”, up to the highest god himself (ἄχρι καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀνωτάτω Θεοῦ) and for this reason we may assume that it is indestructible (διὰ τοῦτο ἀνώλεθρον).<sup>436</sup> It is thus said to be the immediate (προσεχής) creature of the highest Form of the intelligible order.<sup>437</sup> The common feature of both the soul and the supracelestial kind is naturally the intellect that enables us to know the Forms and that is, as participated (μεθεκτός), present in the souls. As we know from the discussion of the *Magian Oracle* XXVIII, the knowledge of the highest god, which is supremely and perfectly one, is possible thanks to the flower of intellect, the most supreme and united part of us.

The soul thus conceived is permanently connected with the aethereal body (σώματι ἀεὶ συνεῖναι αἰθερίῳ) as to its vehicle (οἶον ὀχήματι ἑαυτῆς), which is a doctrine elaborated in the various forms by the Neoplatonists.<sup>438</sup> According to Plethon, the soul immortalizes the aethereal body by the immediate contact (συναπαθανατίζουσα καὶ αὐτὸ τῇ προσεχεῖ ἐπαφῇ). This vehicle is itself without the soul (ἄψυχον καθ’ αὐτό), but it is ensouled by another, irrational kind of the soul (ἀλλ’ ἐμψυχῶσθαι καὶ αὐτό, τῷ ἐτέρῳ τε καὶ ἀλόγῳ ψυχῆς εἶδει). The Pythagoreans and Platonists call this kind of soul an image of the rational soul (ψυχῆς λογικῆς εἰδωλον), which is “adorned” with imagination and perception (φαντασία τε δὴ κεκοσμημένον καὶ αἰσθήσει). This kind of the soul thus “sees and hears the whole through the whole (ὅλον δι’ ὅλου ὁρῶν τε καὶ ἀκοῦον)”, being responsible for every perception. Other irrational faculties that are related to these two are also located into it. Plethon, however, claims that because the imagination is the most eminent capacity of the aethereal body, it is through it that the irrational soul is permanently connected to the whole aethereal body. At a certain moment the human soul is connected through this body also to the mortal nature. It happens during the conception when the aethereal body as a whole is connected to the whole life spirit of the embryo (ὅλον ὄλω τῷ τοῦ ἐμβρύου ζωτικῷ πνεύματι). They might be interwoven due to their mutual kinship consisting in fact that the aethereal body is also a kind of spirit (πνεῦμα). The souls of daemons, although otherwise not much different from the human ones, are more “noble” and “use nobler vehicles because they are not mingled with the mortal nature (γενναιοτέροις ὀχήμασι χρωμένους, ἀμίκτους τῇ γε θνητῇ εἶναι φύσει)”. As we know, the souls of stars which are even higher (κρείττους) use also more powerful vehicles (κρείττη), that is, the bodies which are bright because of the amount of the active potentiality (διὰ μέγεθος δραστηκῆς δυνάμεως λαμπρὰ

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.* 10.15-20 [ad XIV].

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.* 9.2-4 [ad XI], 9.14-18 [ad XII].

<sup>438</sup> Cf. Dodds (1933), Sorabji (2005), pp. 221-229.

ταῦτα σώματα).<sup>439</sup> According to *Reply to Scholarios*, the human soul uses “the fiery spirit (πνεῦμα πυρῶδες)” of the aethereal body as a middle (τὸ μέσον) connecting it to the body.<sup>440</sup> We may also note that, as he claims in his letters to Bessarion, the relation of the soul to the body is for Plethon an example of “the participation according to attachment (μετοχή ἢ κατὰ πρόσληψιν)” or “according to entanglement (κατ’ ἐπιπλοκὴν μέθεξις)”, in which a producer, mover or, generally, principle (τὸ παράγον ἢ κινοῦν ἢ ὅλως ἄρχον) attaches to itself the thing that is ordered “under it” (προσλαμβάνον ἑαυτῷ τὸ ὑφ’ ἑαυτοῦ διατιθέμενον).<sup>441</sup>

As we have just seen, according to Plethon, the human soul is divided into two parts, the rational and irrational one. The irrational one is called the image (εἰδῶλον) of the rational soul and while the latter is responsible for thinking, the former is charged with imagination, perception, and other irrational faculties. However, in order to be able to receive the stimuli coming from the sensible world outside, the irrational soul must be naturally connected with the body. It is not, however, connected to the body directly, but through “the vehicle of the soul” or the “aethereal body”, made, as we know from the *Laws*, from the finest matter, that is, fire which is bright and fiery in the case of stars, but invisible in the case of daemons and humans. Being at the same time also a spirit (πνεῦμα), as such it is connected with the life spirit we have received at the moment of our birth. Plethon’s theory of the relation of the soul to the body is summarised in his commentary to the *Magian Oracle* XVa: “[The Oracle] calls the image of the soul the irrational part that is dependent on the rational and that is attached to the vehicle (εἰδῶλον ψυχῆς καλεῖ, τὸ ἐχόμενον τοῦ λογικοῦ ἄλογον, ὃ τοῦ ὀχήματος αὐτῆς ἐξῆπται). It says that ‘even this image has its portion in the entirely light place (ἔστι καὶ εἰδῶλω μερὶς εἰς τόπον ἀμφιφάοντα)’, because the soul never puts away its adjoining vehicle (οὐ γὰρ ἀποτίθεται ποτε ψυχὴν τὸ ἑαυτῆς προσεχές ὄχημα)”.<sup>442</sup> From the second part of this quotation it is also clear what is Plethon’s solution of the long-lasting discussion among Neoplatonists concerning the immortality of the aethereal body.<sup>443</sup> – The soul never puts away its aethereal body, which is thus also everlasting.

We are not unfortunately told whether in the division of the soul in Plethon’s commentary to the *Magian Oracles* the rational soul is identical with the participated intellect (μεθεκτὸς νοῦς), which is, as we know, according to the *Laws*, present in stars, daemons and men. We may, nevertheless, perhaps assume it on the basis of Plethon’s commentary to the *Magian Oracle* XVII, which has been already mentioned above in the connection with the “common notions”: “‘The paternal intellect’ (ὁ πατρικὸς νοῦς), that is, the immediate creator of the essence of the soul (ὁ

<sup>439</sup> *Or. mag.* 10.20-11.16 [ad XIV], cf. *Decl. brev.* 21.18-21, *Leg.* 186 [III,34], *Contra Schol.* XXV 440.15-17.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.* XXIX 474.25-30.

<sup>441</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 460.11-15, II 466.2-3.

<sup>442</sup> *Or. mag.* XVa 2.12, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 53 (altered), *ibid.* 12.8-11 [ad XVa].

<sup>443</sup> Cf. Dodds (1933), pp. 319-320, Sorabji (2005), pp. 227-228, Tambrun-Krasker (1999), p. 43.

τῆς τῆς ψυχῆς δηλαδὴ οὐσίας προσεχῆς δημιουργός), ‘has sown’ also ‘the symbols to the souls’ (οὗτος ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐνέσπειρε καὶ τὰ σύμβολα), or the images of the intelligible Forms (ἤτοι τὰς τῶν νοητῶν εἰδῶν εἰκόνας), from which each soul always acquires reasons of things (ἐξ ὧν τοὺς τῶν ὄντων ψυχὴ ἐκάστη ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἀεὶ κέκτηται λόγους).<sup>444</sup> The “symbols in souls,” mentioned by the *Oracle* are thus interpreted by Plethon as the “images of the intelligible Forms”.<sup>445</sup> Thanks to the participated intellect “sown” into it, the human soul is therefore capable of knowing the Forms, or, as Plethon puts it, of “acquiring the reasons of things”, in other words, of finding out the rational reasons explaining the nature of the world. These are also most probably the “common notions (κοινὰ ἔννοιαι)” from the beginning of the *Laws*.

As we have just seen, man is endowed with the rational soul serving as the boundary between the immortal and mortal nature. In a chapter of the *Laws* Plethon considers at length the question whether there are other mortal creatures that are also rational. If they really did exist, it would obviously bring a difficulty for him because there would be more boundaries similar to those in humans. He claims that in the case of animals acting according to reason, for instance, “the government of the bees, the economy of ants, or the skilful hunting of spider (μελιττῶν τε πολιτεία, καὶ μυρμηκῶν οἰκονομία, ἥπου καὶ ἀράχου εὐμηχάνου θήρα)”, we must inquire whether they do this using their own thought (ἰδίᾳ ... χρώμενα διανοίᾳ), or some higher than the human one, lower, or similar. If they used some higher thought, it would be higher in all or more things than that of men (κατ’ ἀνθρωπον), nevertheless, this does not seem to be true. If they relied on a thought that is worse, they would not always attach themselves exclusively to one activity each accomplishing it in the best possible manner, which is something that is appropriate to the perfect thought and higher than man. If it were similar to human thought it would neither attach itself just to one activity, nor would it be worse in most things than the human one. For Plethon, it is thus clear that animals do not “use” their proper thought (ἰδία δianoia), but that of “the soul governing this heaven (ἡ τοῦδε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἡγουμένης ψυχῆς)” and of the separated intellects (νόες χωριστοί) which preside over them from outside (ἔξωθεν ἐφεσθηκότες) and to which the soul “attaches everything here (οἷς ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτὴ ἕκαστα προσάγει)”. The world-soul is thus responsible not only for the actions of animals but also of the things lacking perception (ἀναίσθητα), such as, for instance, the tendrils of a vine and a pumpkin, or a magnet and the reactions of certain metals.<sup>446</sup>

Plethon thus seems to be talking here about the relation of particular things that – in contrast to stars, daemons, and humans – are without the intellect, to their corresponding separated intellects that are identical with the Forms. This relation is mediated through the world-

<sup>444</sup> *Or. mag.* 16.6-9 [ad XXVII], cf. XXVII 3.16, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 52 (altered).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. Tambrun-Krasker’s commentary *ad loc.*, p. 132.

<sup>446</sup> *Leg.* 80-82 [II,26], cf. 122 [III,31].

soul that is therefore responsible for the actions of the beings lacking their proper intellect and soul. In another passage from the *Laws* Plethon places the “soul governing this heaven” into the Sun, which, together with Kronos and other separated intellects, presides over sensible things and is a leader of the things that are devoid of intellect. The actions that are in these Forms united (καθ’ ἐν ἐνόντα) become distinguished (διακριδόν) in the things governed by them. Being led by the separated intellects and by the world-soul, animals cannot do anything inappropriate (οὐ περιέργωγος ποιεῖ). For this reason their actions are more correct (πολύ ὀρθότερον) than those of men who use their own fallacious thought and opinion (ἰδίᾳ διανοίᾳ τε καὶ δόξῃ χρῆσθαι, ἀμαρτητῆ μέντοι αὐτῆ).<sup>447</sup> However, according to Plethon’s conception of the civil virtues (πολιτεία) exposed in the *On Virtues*, they are limited in their relation to what is common (κοινόν) and to the whole. The plants and the whole nature lacking perception (ἢ ἀναίσθητος φύσις) as well as the soul (ἄψυχος) thus exist without the mutual relation among themselves (ἥμιστ’ ἀν ἐπικοινωνοίῃ ἀλλήλοις), whereas animals already have a kind of the social existence, the more perfect being those living in herds (ξυναγελαζόμενα). Man differs from all the animals by his life in community (κοινότης βίου), whereas the “higher genera” live probably in even “a more common way” than him (τά τε αὖ κρείττω που γένη κοινότερον ἔτι ἀνθρώπου βιοῖ ἂν κατὰ τὸ εἰκός), and this is why man should, as much as possible, assimilate himself to them (τοῖς αὐτοῦ τελεωτέροις γένεσιν εἰς δύναμιν ἀφομοιούμενος).<sup>448</sup>

Another function of the world-soul is the measurement and differentiation of the time of the universe. According to Plethon, in contrast to the higher eternal levels of reality, “time begins from the soul that governs this universe (χρόνον γὰρ ἄρχεσθαι μὲν ἀπὸ ψυχῆς τῆς τοῦδε ἀν ἡγουμένης τοῦ οὐρανοῦ)”. Time is “the first always moving entity” that measures the action of the soul (πρῶτον τὸ ἀεὶ κινητὸν αὐτῆ μετροῦντα τῆς πράξεως). “It already goes through all the soul and the bodily nature (χωρεῖν δ’ ἤδη διὰ πάσης ψυχῆς τε καὶ σωμάτων φύσεως)” and it is defined by Plethon in Platonic terms as “an image of eternity (εἰκόνα αἰῶνος γεγονότα)”.<sup>449</sup> The main character of its nature is that “it has always passed and it is not any more (τὸ μὲν ἀεὶ οἴχεται τε καὶ οὐκέτι ἐστί) and at the same time it will be and it is not yet (τὸ δὲ μέλλει τε ἔτι καὶ οὐπω ἐστί)”. It is thus “always in the present moment and now (ἔστι δ’ ἐν ἀκαρεῖ ἀεὶ τε καὶ νῦν) which, however, by becoming always different and different (ὃ δὴ, ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο ἀεὶ γιγνόμενον), divides time into that which has passed and that which is to be (τόν τε οἰχόμενον καὶ μέλλοντα διορίζει χρόνον)”.<sup>450</sup> In another passage Plethon defines time in a rather

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.* 120 [III,31].

<sup>448</sup> *De virt.* [B,11] 12.1-23.

<sup>449</sup> *Cf.* Plato, *Tim.* 37d.

<sup>450</sup> *Leg.* 56 [I,5], *cf. Add.* 119v.18-22.

Aristotelian way as “the measure of the motion (κινήσεως ... μέτρον)”,<sup>451</sup> but this only completes the definition just mentioned. Time is thus the motion derived from the world-soul and, permeating the whole universe, it is, similarly to it, also without beginning and end, being differentiated by the periodical motions of the heavenly bodies.<sup>452</sup>

## b. Fate and Freedom

The philosophy of Plethon is notoriously famous for its determinism.<sup>453</sup> In section VIII of his *Differences*, two axioms are stated, which are said to be presupposed by those who think that everything is determined and “occurs necessarily (ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἅπαντα ... γίνεσθαι)”. According to the first one, “whatever occurs must necessarily do so from some cause (ἅπαν τὸ γιγνόμενον ὑπ’ αἰτίου τινὸς ἀναγκαῖον ἂν εἶναι γίνεσθαι)” and, according to the second, “every cause must produce whatever effect it may have in both a necessary and a determinate way (ἅπαν αἴτιον ὃ τι ἂν θρώη ἀνάγκη τὲ καὶ ὠρισμένως αὐτὸ θρῶν)”. Aristotle, as Plethon claims, in order to avoid the consequences that follow from these two axioms and that lead to the assumption of the universal determinism, decides not to accept the first axiom, because he needs the second one “when he speaks about the everlasting motion (ἐν τοῖς περὶ αἰδίου κινήσεως)”. According to him, there are thus things that occur without any cause (γίνεσθαι τι τῶν γιγνομένων καὶ αἰτίου χωρὶς) and his rejection of the first axiom is contrary to what is otherwise accepted by “all wise men and laymen”. In Plethon’s eyes this, furthermore, clearly leads to atheism, since “in accepting this [first] axiom, men are adopting the first and readiest of all beliefs in the deity”, since thus they attempt to explain everything that has no visible cause by the existence of the divine. Plethon then also tries to show that the denial of the first axiom is in contradiction with what Aristotle says elsewhere.<sup>454</sup>

The similar conception of determinism is presented also in the *Laws* too. As we know, Plethon says at its very beginning that the book comprises the ethics according to the Stoics,<sup>455</sup> having quite evidently their famous doctrine of fate in mind. The main exposition of this doctrine, which seems to be in fact a quite natural outcome of the refutation of the third type of atheism mentioned at its beginning, is to be found in chapter 6 of book II entitled “*On Fate (Περὶ εἰμαρομένης)*”, a text that very probably circulated separately and was by far the most copied part

<sup>451</sup> *Leg.* 48 [I,5], cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* IV 220a24-26, 220a32-221a1.

<sup>452</sup> Cf. *Add.* 120.9-23.

<sup>453</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 186-200, Bargeliotis (1975), Arabatzis (2005).

<sup>454</sup> *De diff.* VIII 332.24-334.4, transl. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 203-204 (altered), cf. *Contra Schol.* XXX 488.10-16, XXXI 492.10-498.25.

<sup>455</sup> *Leg.* 2, cf. *Ad Bess.* I 462.11-13.23-27.

of the *Laws*.<sup>456</sup> Plethon provides here a series of arguments in support of determinism, beginning with the question whether all future events are determined and fixed by fate (πότερα δὲ ὄρισται τε καὶ εἴμαρται ἅπαντα τὰ μέλλοντα), or whether there are some that are not determined and proceeds indeterminately and randomly by chance (ἀλλ' ἀορίστως τε δὴ καὶ ἀτάκτως χωρεῖ, καὶ οὕτως ὅπως ἂν τύχοι). Plethon's answer is that everything must be determined because of the two reasons that are basically the same as both axioms he proposes in the *Differences*. If something were not determined (εἰ γὰρ ὅτιοῦν οὐχ ὀρισμένως γίγνοιτο), it would be either without a cause, or a cause would not produce its effect in the determinate and necessary way (ἢ οὐχ ὀρισμένως αὐτὸ, οὐδὲ σὺν ἀνάγκῃ τὸ αἴτιον ἀπεργάσεται), which is both impossible. It would be even more impossible, if somebody claimed that gods can change their decision about future events and would accomplish something different than they intended previously, either because they have been moved by human prayers or gifts (εἴτε ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων λιταῖς ἢ τισι δώροις παραπειθόμενοι), or because they have been affected in some other way (εἴτε δὴ καὶ ἄλλως γέ πως αὐτὸ πάσχοντας). This is naturally the third type of atheism from the beginning of the *Laws*. Furthermore, similarly as in the *Differences*, here too, Plethon claims that rejection of these two reasons on which the determinism is based leads to atheism. Those who refuse to accept the necessity and fate in future events, risk two things. They are either forced to deny entirely that gods exert a providence on the “things here” (τῆς προνοίας ὅλως τῶν τῆδε ἐκβάλλειν τοὺς θεούς), or to admit that gods are the cause of the things that are worse, and not the best possible (ἢ καὶ τὴν τῶν χειρόνων αὐτοῖς αἰτίαν ἀντὶ τῶν ἐκ τῶν δυνατῶν βελτίστων περιάπτειν). This is because, as Plethon claims, the things decided by them later are worse than what was decided first (μὴ οὐ θάτερα ἀεὶ, ἥτοι τὰ πρότερον ἢ ὕστερον αὐτοῖς ἐγνωσμένα, χείρω τῶν ἐτέρων εἶναι).<sup>457</sup>

Plethon considers these two ways of denying fate impossible from many reasons. In his theology all future events are eternally fixed by fate and ordered as much as possible (καὶ τὰ μέλλοντα ἅπαντα εἴμαρταί τε ἐξ αἰῶνος καὶ τέτακται, ὡς δυνατὸν αὐτοῖς), “being ordered and determined under Zeus, the one king of everything”. He is the only one who is not determined (ὄρισται) by anything else since everything that is determined is determined by its cause and there is not any higher cause than him. Zeus, being the first principle of all, is thus greater (κρείπτων) than to be able to be determined and he remains always in the same state (μένει τε ἀεὶ καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὡσαύτως). As the first principle, Zeus equals with the “the highest necessity” that is itself by itself and “by nothing else” (καὶ τὴν μεγίστην πασῶν ἀνάγκην καὶ κρατίστην, αὐτὴν δι' αὐτὴν οὔσαν ἀνάγκην, οὐ δι' οὐδὲν ἕτερον, αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ κεκτημένος). This is because

<sup>456</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. xc-xci, n. 3, Masai (1956), p. 396, n. 1, Woodhouse (1986), p. 318.

<sup>457</sup> *Leg.* 64-66 [II,6].

necessity is better than non-necessity and for this reason the greatest necessity must be attributed to the one, who is the supremely good (*ἄκρωτος ἀγαθός*). “This same thing”, that is most probably the necessity, is then communicated in the second degree to the things that follow immediately after Zeus (*τοῖς γε προσεχῶς προϊούσιν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ταῦτό τοῦτο δευτέρως μεθ’ ἑαυτὸν παρέχεται*), and thus everything, without an exception, is determined by the first principle which is the cause of all.<sup>458</sup>

Another reason why future events must be determined, is that otherwise they could not be known in advance (*οὐδ’ ἂν προεγινώσκετο*), not only by humans, but also by any god, because there cannot be a knowledge of anything which is entirely indeterminate (*πάντη ἀόριστον*) and about which it is not possible to determinate truly whether it is to be or not. Gods in fact know future events because they determine them and they are always present in them as their cause, even before they happen. They thus know the things because they order (*διατιθέναι*) them and because they are their cause, not because they are themselves in some way affected by the “things here” while disposing them. This is because gods cannot be affected by something that is lower and non-existing. They are thus not only the causes of future events, but have also a perfect knowledge of them determining them fully in advance. Plethon further adds a comment that gods reveal the future to some men, who then try sometimes to avoid their fate, but gods, knowing and ordering all, foresee even this so that such human attempts to avoid one’s lot only support the universal necessity.<sup>459</sup> Plethon’s universal determinism is possible because of his conception of the generation of matter in the sensible world. As we have seen, it is not an independent or semi-independent principle but it is derived directly from its intelligible Form, Hera. In this type of metaphysics the causality, descending from the first principle down the lower levels of being, establishes a universal determinism, in which everything has its specific cause. At the same time this means that in this situation the supremely good creator is not hindered by anything else in producing a world that is the best possible.<sup>460</sup>

This, however, provokes a further question discussed at length by Plethon in the same chapter of the *Laws*. – One may ask whether, given the assumption of the universal determinism, human freedom as well as divine justice are not undermined because gods cannot punish the unjust, if these are such “by necessity”. A more specific objection then could be raised, namely, that, despite the general determination of everything, humans are their own masters (*κυρίους ἂν ἑαυτῶν εἶναι*) because there is “the prudent part (*τὸ φρονοῦν*)” in them which rules over “the major part” of them (*τι ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἄρχον . . . , τὸ δὲ πολὺ ἀρχόμενον*) and which, being by its

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.* 66-68 [II,6].

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.* 68-70 [II,6], cf. *Ad Bess.* I 463.3-19.

<sup>460</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 226-244, Bargeliotis (1976), pp. 120-125, Tambrun-Krasker (2002), pp. 320-328.



nature their best part, is also the governing one (*κύριον*). However, as Plethon claims, it is impossible to deny that even this prudent part of us may be determined by something else.<sup>461</sup> In his letter to Bessarion, he treats this problem, which he connects, once more, with Aristotle's attempt to deny fate, in a more detail. He first, considers the possibility that our ability to decide between two alternatives (*τὸ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα τοῦτο ἐνδεχόμενον καὶ ἀμφίροπον*) depends on our will (*βούλησις*). However, as regards the will, there are two possibilities. – It may “move” without any apparent cause (*ἢ φάντων ὑπὸ μηθενὸς ἂν αἰτίου τὴν βούλησιν ἡμῶν κινεῖσθαι*) and altogether randomly (*ἀλλ' εἰκῆ μάτην*), which is, nonetheless, unacceptable for Plethon. Or, alternatively, our will is moved by some good, even if it is just an apparent one (*ὑπ' ἀγαθοῦ ὄντος ἢ καὶ φαινομένου*), but in such case it will be in fact determined by some necessity (*σὺν ἀνάγκῃ ... κινεῖσθαι*). As Plethon concludes, our will thus cannot be self-moved (*αὐτοκίνητος*), if it seems to be always moved either by our prudent part (*τὸ φρονοῦν ἡμῶν*) or by the good (*τὰγαθόν*).<sup>462</sup> Similarly to the intellects, which are, as we have seen, “self-produced (*αὐτοπαράγωγον*)”, our soul, too, as a whole, is self-moved (*ἢ δ' ὅλη ἡμῶν ψυχὴ αὐτοκίνητος*), moving by one its part the rest (*μέρει τὸ λοιπὸν ἑαυτῆς κινούσα*).<sup>463</sup>

To return back to the *Laws*, according to Plethon, our prudent part is not an independent principle of our action since it seems to “follow the external things (*τοῖς ἔξω πράγμασι φαίνοιτ' ἂν ἐπόμενον*)”, that means, it is apparently influenced by the stimuli coming from outside.<sup>464</sup> In the letter to Bessarion he further explains that “the moving part in us itself (*αὐτὸ τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν κινουῦν*)” is in fact moved by “the external things that surround us (*ὑπὸ τε τῶν ἔξωθεν ... περιισταμένων ἡμᾶς πραγμάτων*)”. Moreover, being capable of “the divine interpretation (*οἶον τε γίγνηται τῆς θείας ἐξηγήσεως*)”, it is not also without the contact with the divine (*καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῦ θείου ... μὴ ἀπολείπεσθαι*), which thus also exercises an influence upon it. This all is due to our prudent part that, influenced by the opinions received from outside (*δόγμασι τοῖς ἑαυτῶ ἔξωθεν ἐγγιγνομένοις*), moves the rest of the soul, namely, will, desire (*ὄρμη*), and the passions that are connected with both of them (*τὰ τοῦτοι αὖ ἐπόμενα πάθη*). Other emotions, enumerated by Plethon, which are submitted to the influence of the prudent part in us, are joy (*χαρά*) – “the inner one, and not that coming through perception (*χαρά τε δὴ ἢ ἔνδον, οὐ ἢ δι' αἰσθήσεως*)” –, “the similar kind of irritation (*ἀγανάκτησις ὡσαύτως*)”, hope (*ἐλπίς*), fear (*δέος*), appetite (*ἐπιθυμία*), spirit (*θυμός*), and fantasy (*φαντασία*). According to Plethon, these things were called to be “upon us (*ἐφ' ἡμῖν*)” since they depend upon the prudent part, the highest one in us (*ἐπὶ τῷ κυριωτάτῳ ἡμῶν ὄντα τῷ φρονοῦντι*). The prudent part itself neither depends

<sup>461</sup> *Leg.* 70-72 [II,6].

<sup>462</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 461.28-36.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.* I 459.18-23, 461.36-462.2.

<sup>464</sup> *Leg.* 72 [II,6].

upon another part of ours (οὐτ' ἐπί τῳ ἄλλῳ τῶν ἡμετέρων), nor itself upon itself (οὐτ' αὐτὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ).<sup>465</sup>

Let us now turn to the second reason why, according to Plethon, our prudent part is determined as everything else in the world. “Even if it is not affected by the same things in the same way in all the people (εἰ καὶ μὴ ὡσαύτως ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις τὸ φρονοῦν τοῦτο ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν πραγμάτων φαίνεται διατιθέμενον), it is not correct to assume that it does not follow the things necessarily (οὐκ ἂν ὀρθῶς τις οἰηθεῖη μὴδ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἂν ἔπεσθαι αὐτὸ τοῖς πράγμασιν)”, namely, that it is not, after all, determined by necessity. The prudent part is in fact always affected according to its individual nature (φύσις) and, moreover, according to its training (ἄσκησις). The same impulse (προσπίπτου) thus provokes different affections (τὰ παθήματα) in different humans according to the nature of their prudent part, which, however, in fact furthermore depends on gods. As for training, it is dependent on the opinion (δόξα), namely, that the training in the virtue is a desirable thing. Such opinion must be, nonetheless, present in us in advance, which means, that also here the contribution of a god is necessary since without it nobody in fact capable of acquiring it. Plethon thus concludes that people are their own masters insofar they are able to rule over themselves by their prudent part. However, they are furthermore ruled by gods, who determinate the preconditions of their prudent behaviour. In other words, people are free and at the same time they are not.<sup>466</sup>

At this moment Plethon feels a need to precise what, in the conditions just described, he considers to be freedom (ἐλευθερία). According to him, it is wrong to define it as opposed to necessity (ἀνάγκη), since this necessity cannot be slavery (δουλεία), which always presupposes domination (δεσποτεία). It makes in fact no sense to distinguish between slavery and domination when we speak of the “eldest” necessity, which is identical with Zeus, who, being the principle of everything else, is the only necessity that is by itself. If slavery really equalled with being ruled over (τῷ ἄρχεσθαι) and freedom with not being determined (μὴ ὀριεῖται) by anything from outside, nobody would be then free, not only among the people, but also among gods with the sole exception of Zeus alone who rules and orders everything else. But if this is really so, such slavery is nothing dreadful, since serving to the good, which, too, is ultimately identical with Zeus, is profitable and pleasant even for a slave. This is because a servant of the good does not experience anything else than the good (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν ἄλλ' ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἀπολαύσειε τις δουλεύων ἀγαθῷ). Plethon therefore refuses the definition of slavery and freedom, which may be presumably objected to him and according to which these two terms are identical with hindering or allowing somebody to live as he wishes (τῷ κωλύεσθαι ἢ μὴ κωλύεσθαι τινα ζῆν ὡς

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<sup>465</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 462.3-13.

<sup>466</sup> *Leg.* 72-74 [II,6], cf. *Ad Bess.* I 462.13-21. Cf. also *ibid.* 462.21-463.3.

βούλεται). Plethon then restates the whole problem. – For him, everybody in fact wishes in the first place to do well and to be happy (πράττειν τε εὖ καὶ εὐδαιμονεῖν), and so the one who is doing well, is hence also free, either ruled over or not, because he lives as he wishes. In contrast, the one who is not doing well (κακῶς δὲ πράττων τις), does not live as he wishes, and, consequently, is not free. The people who do not do well (κακῶς δὲ πράττειν) are in fact in such state because they have become unjust (κακοὶ γεγονότες). For this reason nobody wishes to become unjust since it also means not to do well. The unjust become such only because they behave in an unjust manner unwillingly (ἄκοντες), the only one who is free being therefore a person who is just.<sup>467</sup>

In another letter to Bessarion, Plethon, while commenting some Platonic passages, claims that Plato connects fate (εἰμαρμένη) and necessity (ἀνάγκη) with “the most prudent soul (ἡ φρονιμωτάτη ψυχή)”. However, the imprudent (ἄφρων) one, too, is not exempt from necessity since, as Plato constantly shows, no one is unjust willingly (οὐδεὶς ἐκὼν κακός), but the unjust become such since they err (ἐξαμαρτάνοντες). If they do it unwillingly, this must be then caused by some necessity (ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης τινός). Plethon then distinguishes between two senses in which the necessity may be understood. – In the first one it means “everything that cannot be otherwise (πᾶν τὸ μὴ ἐνδεχόμενον ἄλλως σχεῖν)”, in the second, more specific (ἰδίως) one, it designates force (βία). It would be, nonetheless, wrong, along with “the liberation” of the soul from the second type of necessity, to refuse also the other, “more divine” one, which is in our willing (ἐν τῷ ἐκουσίῳ) and intellect (κατὰ νοῦν). It is rather so that “the good which is much prior (πολύ πρότερον ἀγαθόν) with necessity which it directs (σὺν ἀνάγκη, ἣν ἂν ἄγῃ)” directs also the soul, being the highest and most active of all causes (αἰτίου παντός αὐτὸ ὄν κράτιστόν τε καὶ δραστικώτατον). According to Plethon, those who refuse all necessity do not note that they make the good feeble and the soul behave randomly (τῷ μὲν ἀγαθῷ ἀσθένειαν, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ ματαιότητα προσάπτοντες), since they think that in the case when the soul senses something good (συνιῆσα ἔσθ’ ὅτε ἀγαθοῦ ὁτουοῦν ψυχή) which seems better than other things (τούτου ἐτέρων ἀμείνους φαινομένου), “it will choose everything else” than just the thing that seems to it to be better (πᾶν μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ ἄμεινον ἑαυτῇ φαινόμενον αἰρεῖσθαι).<sup>468</sup> Plethon thus argues that the soul always decides for the alternative that appears to be the best or the most profitable for it and for this reason necessity is always implied in the human conduct. This necessity is, nonetheless, ultimately determined by the good itself so that the decisions made by humans prove, in the end, to be always the best and most profitable for them. Those who err in their moral conduct, are unjust, which, according to Plethon, means that they are “not doing well”.

<sup>467</sup> *Leg.* 74-76 [II,6]

<sup>468</sup> *Ad Bess.* II 466.8-467.3

This must be probably understood as that they have turned away from the good under the influence of some other cause that is only seemingly good.

In the remaining part of this chapter *Laws* thus Plethon explains that if gods punish some people, they want only to correct their errors (τὰ ἀμαρτήματα ἐπανορθοῦντες). However, man is unable not to err because he is composed of the divine and perishable nature (ἔκ τε θείας καὶ ἐπικήρου φύσεως σύνθετον). Sometimes he is led by the divine part in him (κατὰ τὸ θεῖον τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ) to the assimilation (ἀφομοίωσις) with what he is akin to (τὸ συγγενές) and then he is doing well and is blessed (εὖ τε πράττειν καὶ μακαρίως ζῆν). At another time, in contrast, he is pulled down by the mortal part and is not doing well any more. In such case gods attempt to help such person by correcting him, sometimes even by punishments (διὰ τῶν κολάσεων ... ἐπανόρθωσις). Plethon compares this to a bitter medicine that is applied during the illness of the body since, here too, the main aim is to make people to do better and “to participate in freedom instead of slavery”. This may be done even by punishing them if, in some difficult cases, this is necessary for somebody’s good.<sup>469</sup> As we know, those who are responsible for correcting people are daemons. However, Plethon never excludes, that it may be also just the very circumstances determined by fate directed by gods.

### c. Ethics and Cult

The problems just described are naturally closely related to ethics. Plethon develops his moral philosophy most systematically in a short separate treatise *On Virtues*.<sup>470</sup> Nevertheless, as we will see, its content is undoubtedly close to the theories appearing as a part of the *philosophia perennis* in the *Laws* and other Plethon’s treatises. At the beginning of the text the virtue is defined as “the disposition according to which we are good (ἔξις καθ’ ἣν ἀγαθοί ἐσμεν)”. However, as Plethon immediately adds, in reality the only one who is good is the god (ὁ θεός) and people become good only by following him as much as it is possible for human being (ἐπόμενοι θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ). Plethon then proceeds by classifying virtues according to their main functions in human life. Man may be, first, conceived as existing himself by himself (αὐτός τις καθ’ αὐτόν) and as such he is defined as a rational animal (λογικόν τι ζῷον), whose main characteristic is prudence (φρόνησις). Second, in the relation “to the other (πρὸς ἕτερον)”, that is, “to the different things (πρὸς ἄλλ’ ὅτιοῦν τῶν ὄντων)”, his behaviour is regulated by justice (δικαιοσύνη). In the relation to what belongs to man himself (πρὸς τι τῶν αὐτοῦ), which is not

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<sup>469</sup> *Leg.* 76-78 [II,6].

<sup>470</sup> For a detailed interpretation of this treatise cf. Tambrun-Krasker’s commentary to *Or. mag.* For a discussion of Plethon’s ethics cf. also Masai (1956), pp. 245-263, Arabatzis (2003), Tambrun-Krasker (2005).

any more what we are by ourselves, but “the worse part by us (τὸ χεῖρον τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν)”, Plethon names, third, courage (ἀνδρεία), which he associates with “violent affections (περὶ μὲν τὰ βίαια τῶν παθημάτων ἔχον)”, and, fourth, temperance (σωφροσύνη), associated with “the voluntary ones (περὶ δὲ τὰ ἐκούσια)”.<sup>471</sup>

In the following text Plethon further explains the origin as well as character of individual virtues and orders them from the least to the most perfect one. The lowest virtue (IV) is temperance (σωφροσύνη). The god in fact does not lack anything (τῷ ὄντι ἀνεπιδεής), being the most perfect and, as much as it is possible, self-sufficient (τελεώτατός τε ὢν καὶ ὡς οἶον τε μάλιστα αὐτάρκης). Although it is impossible for man to attain such a perfect state, when he lacks and desires only few things, he becomes the most similar to the god and “belongs to himself at most” (ἐλαχίστων μὲν οὖν δεόμενος, θεῷ τε ὁμοιότατα ἴσχει, καὶ κράτιστα αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ). Temperance is thus “the self-sufficient disposition of the soul (ἕξις ψυχῆς αὐτάρκης)” which attempts to meet this moral demand.<sup>472</sup>

Moreover, the god is also immovable (ἀκίνητος), a quality that is, again, impossible for humans to attain in its perfect form. The following virtue (III), courage (ἀνδρεία), is therefore “the disposition of the soul that is immovable by violent passions during life (ἕξις ψυχῆς ἀκίνητος ὑπὸ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον βιαιῶν παθημάτων)” and that protects men from being “moved” by evil things (ἀπὸ τῶν κακῶν).<sup>473</sup>

Furthermore, according to Plethon, each of us is in the first place a work of god (ἡμῶν ἕκαστος γέγονε πρῶτον μὲν θεοῦ τι ἔργον) that is not much different, but in a sense relative and akin to its creator (οὐ πάνυ τοι ἀλλότριον, ἀλλὰ πη οἰκειόν τε καὶ συγγενές). At the same time Plethon claims that we are only a particle of some other parts that are larger than us and that constitute this universal whole, which is composed as one from many (ἔπειτα μόριον ἄλλων τε ἡμῶν μειζόνων μερῶν τοῦδε τοῦ παντός ὅλου τε καὶ ἐνός ἐκ πολλῶν ὄντος) and in which each place is filled in such a way to be profitable for both, the particle and the whole (χώραν ἡντινοῦν ἀποπληρώσων ἕκασταχοῦ, ὡς ἂν ὅτι μάλιστα αὐτῷ τε καὶ τῷ ὅλῳ ἔμελλε συνοίσειν). For this reason we may not leave the place assigned to us by the god, but we must remain in it, as much as it is possible. From these considerations Plethon derives also his claim that each particle must be in an agreement with what it is the part of, and not in a disagreement (μόριον δὲ ἅπαν ὁμολογοῦν τε ἐκείνῳ οὐπερ ἂν μόριον εἶη, καὶ μὴ διαφωνοῦν), in order to behave according to nature and do well (κατὰ φύσιν τε καὶ εὖ μάλιστ’ ἂν πράττοι). And because everybody is a member of a family, community, city, nation, or a part of this universe in general (ὅλως τότε τὸ πάντος), he must give what is due (ἀποδιδούς τὰ προσήκοντα) to his neighbours and to the god

<sup>471</sup> *De virt.* [A,1] 1.3-16.

<sup>472</sup> *De virt.* [A,2] 1.17-2.13.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.* [A,2] 2.14-22.

as well. The next virtue (II), justice (*δικαιοσύνη*), is thus “the disposition of soul, which maintains what is due to each of us himself, according to what we are, in relation to everybody (*ἕξις ψυχῆς σφύζουσα τὸ προσήκον αὐτῷ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ὅπερ ἐσμέν, πρὸς ἕκαστον*)”.<sup>474</sup>

Finally, because, as we have seen, man is by himself (*καθ’ αὐτόν*) “a reasonable animal (*λογικόν τι ζῶον*)”, one of his main tasks is to contemplate each existing thing and the mutual relations among them (*θεωρήσων τί τέ ἐστι τῶν ὄντων ἕκαστον, καὶ πῆ ποτε πρὸς ἄλληλα ἔχει*). Thus the most perfect virtue (I) is prudence (*φρόνησις*), the disposition by which the soul contemplates the real being how it is (*ἕξις ψυχῆς θεωρητικῆ τῶν ὄντων, ἧπέρ ἐστὶν ἕκαστα*),<sup>475</sup> presumably the intelligible Forms or, as it is claimed in the *Reply to Scholarios*, the highest god (*ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀνωτάτω θεωρία τε καὶ νόησις*).<sup>476</sup> As we will see, we can find a parallel for such a classification of virtues in Plato’s *Laws*.<sup>477</sup> As for Plethon, these four virtues are, according to him, general, each of them being further divided into three specific ones. The resulting system of virtues, all rationally deduced according to the principles presented above, may be systematized in the following way:

Virtue (ἀρετή)			
<u>general virtues</u>			
I. prudence (φρόνησις)	II. justice (δικαιοσύνη)	III. courage (ἀνδρεία)	IV. temperance (σωφροσύνη)
<u>specific virtues</u>			
1. religiousness (θεοσέβεια)	2. piety (ὀσιότης)	10. high spirit (εὐψυχία)	9. moderation (μετριότης)
4. the understanding of nature (φυσική)	3. the civil virtues (πολιτεία)	11. nobleness (γενναιότης)	8. liberality (ἐλευθεριότης)
5. good counsel (εὐβουλία)	6. honesty (χρηστότης)	7. mildness (πραότης)	12. propriety (κοσμιότης)

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.* [A,2] 3.1-21.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.* [A,2] 3.22-4.5.

<sup>476</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXVIII 466.5-11.

<sup>477</sup> Plato, *Leg.* I 631c-d, 632d-650b, XII 963a-964b

The excellence of the specific virtues rises up, analogously to the generic ones, in the following order: (1.) religiousness (*θεοσέβεια*), (2.) piety (*ὀσιότης*), (3.) the civil virtues (*πολιτεία*), (4.) the understanding of nature (*φυσική*), (5.) good counsel (*εὐβουλία*), (6.) honesty (*χρηστότης*), (7.) mildness (*πραότης*), (8.) liberality (*ἐλευθεριότης*), (9.) moderation (*μετριότης*), (10.) high spirit (*εὐψυχία*), (11.) nobleness (*γενναιότης*), and (12.) propriety (*κοσμιότης*).<sup>478</sup> Similarly to what is claimed in the *Laws* in the discussion of fate, for Plethon, the right nature (*φύσεως*) and divine contribution (*θεία μοίρα*) is necessary in order to acquire virtue, because without this it is impossible to achieve any good. The same is true also about understanding (*λόγος*) and knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), as well as practice (*μελέτη*) and training (*ἄσκησις*). Plethon's ethics is in fact highly intellectual. – If we lack some goodness, we are imperfect (*ἀτελής*). In order to acquire it, we must, first, have the understanding (*λόγος*) of each virtue, that means, what is good for man, in which sense and how (*οἶόντε ἐστὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, καὶ ὅπη καὶ ὅπως ἀγαθόν*). After having gained such understanding and knowledge (*λόγου δὲ καὶ ἐπιστήμης μετασχών*), we will be even more perfect (*τελεώτερος*) if we acquire also practice and training (*μελέτην τε καὶ ἄσκησιν προσλαβών*). And if we make a habit of mingling the pleasant with the best (*τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθους ἡδὺ τῷ ἀρίστῳ ἐγκαταμίξας*), we may consider the pleasant, the best and the blessed to be the same (*ταυτόν ἡδὺ τε καὶ ἄριστον καὶ μακάριον ἀποφήνας*). The most important thing is to avoid by every means badness (*παντὶ τρόπῳ φευκτέον ... κακίαν*).<sup>479</sup> Thus, as Plethon argues against Aristotle and Scholarios, the final goal (*τὸ τέλος τὸ ἔσχατον*) of ethics is the good (*τὸ καλόν*) which is altogether independent on the pleasure (*ἢ ἡδονή*) that may possibly accompany it.<sup>480</sup>

It has been said already at the beginning of this chapter that the general principles of the ethics presented in the *On Virtues* are in accordance with the moral principles that we find in the perennial philosophy. The chief and common desire that all the people are said to share is thus to live happily (*εὐδαιμόνως ζῆν*) even though they do not pursue it in the same way.<sup>481</sup> The main ethical precept of the human behaviour as stated by Plethon in the *Laws* is the assimilation (*ἀφομοίωσις*) with or the imitation (*μίμησις*) of the divine world and its goodness.<sup>482</sup> He goes even so far as to claim that humans imitate the eternal divine world by the procreation of children that ensures the succession of the human generations in the mortal world, thus attaining in a certain sense immortality. Moreover, Gods gave us the generative ability and the capacity to cause something similar (*ἐτέρου τοῦ ὁμοίου τῷ χρωμένῳ γεννητική τις πρᾶξις καὶ αἰτία*), both

<sup>478</sup> *De virt.* [B,14] 14.16-15.10, for the definition of the individual virtues cf. 5.14-13.26 [B,1-13].

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.* [B,14] 14.1-15, cf. *De diff.* V 328.5-8.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.* V 329.9-330.6, cf. *Contra Schol.* XXVIII 460.4-466.23. Cf. also *Leg.* 148 [III,34].

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.* 242 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.* 74 [II,6], 144 [III,34].

these characteristics being proper to gods, which we thus imitate in the procreation of children. The only difference is that immortal gods produce again immortal creations, whereas mortal beings produce, of course, only mortals. For Plethon, marriage and sexual love is not therefore anything shameful (*αἰσχρόν*), but, on the contrary proper (*σπουδαῖον*) and venerable (*σεμνόν*). As he claims, whether an activity (*πραξις*) is shameful or not depends in fact on whether it is accomplished well (*καλῶς πραττομένη*) or not.<sup>483</sup> This is certainly the reason why, as we have seen in the *Address to Manuel*, Gemistos was particularly hostile to monks that lived in celibacy and, according to him, did not contribute by anything to the common welfare. On the basis of these considerations Plethon also argues for the prohibition of the intercourse between parents and their children. This is because, as we know, the human procreation imitates the divine generation of the lower degrees of reality by the higher ones and, similarly to the three successive orders of gods, the successive human generations must not also mingle together.<sup>484</sup>

The most eminent activity how humans can get close (*θάτερα ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἔργων τοῖς τῶν θεῶν παραπλήσια*) to the god is the contemplation of what (really) exists (*ἡ τῶν ὄντων θεωρία*), presumably the intelligible Forms. The peak of it is identified with acquiring the notion of Zeus (*ἡ κεφάλαιον ἡ Διὸς ἔννοια*), which is the utmost boundary that even the gods themselves can reach (*ἄχρι ἧς ἐσχάτης καὶ αὐτοὶ θεοὶ ἐξικνοῦνται*). From this contemplative ability it is also apparent that human beings are, at least in a part, similar to gods and that they, too, have share in immortality. At the same time the human happiness (*τὸ γε εὐδαιμον ἀνθρώπων*) consists also in this capacity.<sup>485</sup> The understanding of the nature of things leads certainly to the acceptance of one's destiny allotted by gods. Those who have acquired it neither blame gods for anything, nor wish their lot were different.<sup>486</sup> As Plethon states in brief in the *Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato*, the human souls are akin to gods (*θεοῖς ἡ ψυχὴ ἡμῶν οὔσα συγγενής*), and because of this kinship the good is also the proper goal of our life (*ὡς τὸ καλὸν ἡμῶν, οἰκείως τῇ πρὸς θεοὺς συγγενείᾳ, τὸ προσῆκον τοῦ βίου τέλος*), our happiness being located in our immortal part (*τὸ εὐδαιμον ἡμῶν, ἐν τῷ ἀθανάτῳ ἡμῶν*).<sup>487</sup> In his commentary to the *Magian Oracle X*, Plethon further claims that the potentiality of virtue remains always in us impassible and undetachable (*ἀπαθῆ γὰρ καὶ ἀναπόβλητον ἐν ἡμῶν τὴν τῆς ἀρετῆς*

<sup>483</sup> *Leg.* 86-90 [III,14], cf. Plato, *Leg.* IV 721b-c, cf. Webb (1989), p. 217.

<sup>484</sup> Cf. chapter III,15 of Plethon's *Laws* (*Leg.* 92-118): *Περὶ θεῶν γενέσεως διὰ μέσης τῆς περὶ γονέων ἐκγόνοις οὐ μίξεως ὑποθέσεως* ("On the generation of the gods, based upon the postulate of a prohibition of sexual intercourse between parents and children", transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 324), for the prohibition of the acts against the nature and the punishments for them cf. *ibid.* 86 [III,14], 124 [III,31].

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.* 246-248 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. 144 [III,34].

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.* 146 [III,34].

<sup>487</sup> *Zor. Plat.* 266-268, cf. *Leg.* 144, *Contra Schol.* XXVII 456.24-26.



ἀεὶ δύναμιν ὑπάρχειν), even when its activity ceases (κὰν ἡ ἐνέργεια αὐτῆς ἀποβλητῆ ᾗ).<sup>488</sup> The stability of the virtue thus seems to be founded in the immortal soul.

However, in the same treatise we are told that we should not neglect our body and take care of it.<sup>489</sup> The matter which it is composed of is good as everything else created by the god that is good itself (αὐτοαγαθός). If it seems to be bad, it is not by its essence (τῇ οὐσίᾳ), but because it is in the last place among all essences and therefore of them all it participates in the good at least (τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἐπ’ ἐλάχιστον μετέχουσα).<sup>490</sup> In the commentary to the *Oracle* II (“Incline not downwards: below the earth lies a precipice / that drags down beneath the sevenfold steps, below which / is the throne of dread Necessity (μηδὲ κάτω νεύσης, κρημνὸς κατὰ γῆς ὑπόκειται, / ἑπταπόρου σύρων κατὰ βαθυμίδος, ἣν ὑπο δεινῆς / ἀνάγκης θρόνος ἐστὶ),<sup>491</sup> Plethon interprets “the earth” as the mortal body (θνητὸν σῶμα). The “sevenfold steps” are, according to him, the fate determined by planets (ἡ ἐκ τῶν πλανήτων εἴμαρμένη), that is, the seven planets that exert (astrological) influence upon the human life. We are, nevertheless, told that “under this fate, the dreadful and unchangeable necessity is founded (ὑφ’ ἣν καὶ δεινὴ τις ἰδρῦσθαι καὶ ἀπαράτρεπτος ἀνάγκη).” Plethon warns against following such kind of necessity because it is wholly connected with matter and the human beings, who, as we know, are situated on the boundary of purely material and psychical worlds, should always behave according to the intellect, that is, the higher part of them, while at the same time we are also invited not to neglect our lower part, the mortal body.<sup>492</sup> However, similarly to the *Laws* and the *Differences*, the *Oracle* IV plainly states that humans are not capable of changing their individual fate.<sup>493</sup> Rather than denying his conception of universal determinism, Plethon thus seems to be emphasizing here, once more, the importance of the rational life in contrast to the one that is too much influenced by the body.

In the commentary to the *Oracle* I Plethon describes the journey of the soul between life and death. Being immortal, it descends from “above” (ἄνωθεν τε κατιέναι), and then, connected with matter, “it serves for some time to the mortal body by making it alive and by ordering it as much as it is possible (τῷ θνητῷ τῷδε σῶματι θητεύουσα, ἥτοι ἐπὶ τινα χρόνον ἐργασομένη αὐτῷ, καὶ ζώωσούσα τε καὶ κοσμήσουσα ἐκ τῶν δυνατῶν)”. Afterwards, when it departs again from “here to there” (αἴθρις ἐνθένδε ἐκεῖσε ἀποχωρεῖν), the soul can go to several places (πλειόνων δ’ ἐκεῖ ὄντων τῇ ψυχῇ χώρων) – either to the one entirely bright or to the entirely dark (τοῦ μὲν ἀμφιφαιοῦς, τοῦ δ’ ἀμφικνεφοῦς), or to some between, partly light and partly dark

<sup>488</sup> *Or. mag.* 8.14-15 [ad. X], cf. *Decl. brev.* 21.11-15.

<sup>489</sup> *Or. mag.* 12.13-16 [ad XVb], *Decl. brev.* 21.23-22.1, cf. *Or. mag.* 12.4-6 [ad XIVa], *Decl. brev.* 21.23-22.8, *Leg.* 246-252 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.* XIX 14.2-8, *Decl. brev.* 22.4-6.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.* II 1.5-7, transl. Woodhouse (1956), p. 51.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.* 5.15-6.4 [ad II]. Cf. also the title of lost chapter II,14: *Περὶ τῶν τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων δυναμῶν* (“On the potentialities of the seven planets”), *Leg.* 10, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 322 (altered).

<sup>493</sup> *Or. mag.* IV 1.9 with Plethon’s commentary 6.9-10.

(τῶν δὲ τινῶν μεταξὺ τούτων, ἑτεροφανῶν τε δὴ καὶ ἑτεροκνεφῶν). If the soul has come from the entirely bright place and serves well during its stay on earth, it will return to the same place. If it has not, it will come to the one which is worse, in dependence on the previous life. Plethon further explains that, according to the *Oracles*, in addition to the sacred speech about religiousness (ἱερός λόγος περὶ τῆς θεοσεβείας), initiation (τελετή) is also needed to lead the soul up (ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀναγωγή).<sup>494</sup> In the *Oracles*, the task of the initiation is said to bring the soul closer to the divine, symbolized by the light, fire, or thunderbolts. However, Plethon talks about it in a very abstract way, saying that it is practised by the intellect which the soul has received from “the entirely bright place”.<sup>495</sup> At the same time we are told that to those who are being “initiated (τελούμενοι)” phantoms appear, “apparitions without any substance (φαινόμενα ἀνυπόστατα), not conveying any truth” since they originate in our mortal body and its irrational passions (σύμφυτα πάθη ἄλογα) not yet sufficiently ordered by reason (οὐπω ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου ἰκάνως κατακεκοσμημένα).<sup>496</sup> As we know from elsewhere, the soul should not let itself dominate by the body,<sup>497</sup> and so the initiation seems to mean the liberation of the soul from the domination of its body and its turning towards the divine with a help of reason rather than some magical or theurgical ritual.

Plethon’s ethics is thus connected closely not only with metaphysics but also with eschatology, very much present already in the original *Chaldaean Oracles*. It is noteworthy that its peak is said to be in the assimilation with the divine, either in the human (ethical) action or in the contemplation of reality up to the highest god. As we have seen, the nature of Plethon’s ethics is intellectual, virtues are deduced and classified in a systematic way and rational understanding is needed even for the acquiring of them. Also the initiation appearing in the *Magian Oracles*, as interpreted by Plethon, is intellectual in its character. The double nature of man, however, provokes a specific problem. – If our happiness and virtue is to be placed into our reason, it is the rational soul that should determine our action, and not the body, through which the passions and stimuli from the sensible world come to us. This means that in Plethon’s philosophy there is a certain ambivalence as regards our body. As everything that has been created by the first principle it is good and we should care of it. Nonetheless, at the same time, it is composed of matter, which is the lowest of all the creation, and, being less perfect than our rational part, it may sometimes lead us astray and thus disturb our acting according to the rational ethics, which at the same time equals with our relation to the divine.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.* 4.11-5.13 [ad I], cf. 7.9-11 [ad VII], 8.2-6 [ad VIII], *Decl. brev.* 21.10-11.

<sup>495</sup> *Or. mag.* 7.9-11 [ad VII], 13.5-7 [ad XVII], 15.5-8 [ad XXIII], 15.14-16 [ad XXIV], cf. 5.15 [ad II], 9.16 [ad XII], 17.4 [ad XXIX], 18.16 [ad XXXIII].

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.* 13.9-15 [ad XVIII], cf. *Decl. brev.* 22.2-4.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.* 5.19-6.4 [ad IV], 12.3-6 [ad XIV].

The rituals that are described by Plethon at the end of *Laws* are also related to the problems just discussed and for our purposes may be summarised only briefly here.<sup>498</sup> The core of his cult consists in reciting or singing of somewhat artificial allocutions and hymns to gods which, especially in the case of the allocutions, contain rather rational theology than poetical exaltation of the divine.<sup>499</sup> Moreover, Plethon gives detailed instructions when and how to perform the allocutions written in prose and resembling Julian's *Oration to the Sun King* or perhaps also Plato's *Timaeus* by their form, as well as the hymns composed in metre. There is one allocution to be recited in the morning, three in the afternoon, and one in the evening. The proper place of the ritual as well as the proper gestures and utterances of a herald directing it are specified too. The allocutions are followed by the hymns to various gods that differ according to whether they are performed daily, monthly, or yearly, their usage at the proper time being also determined by Plethon.<sup>500</sup>

A very interesting part of Plethon's ritual prescription is the calendar, which he proposes with his usual emphasis on rationality and regularity.<sup>501</sup> The months and years should be fixed "according to nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*)", that is, in the relation to the motion of the Moon and Sun respectively. The beginning of the year should be located to the winter solstice,<sup>502</sup> the beginning of the month to the New Moon. Plethon then develops a calendar based on the year consisting of twelve months to which sometimes the thirteenth, intercalated one must be added. The months may have either 30 or 29 days, being called "full (*πλήρεις*)" or "hollow (*κοῖλοι*)" respectively. Remarkable is the fact that the months do not bear the traditional names, either ancient Greek or Byzantine and they are just numbered.<sup>503</sup> The days of the month are also numbered according to the five or six sacred days which fall on: (1) the first one (the new moon), (2) the eighth, (3) the fifteenth (the full moon), (4) the twenty-second, (5) the twenty-ninth, and, in the full month, (6) the thirtieth day of the month and thus the month is at the same time also divided into four seven-day weeks.<sup>504</sup> It is interesting for us that Plethon associates these sacred days with the gods. – (1) The first of them is thus dedicated to Zeus, (2) the following one to

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<sup>498</sup> For a thorough treatment with a discussion of Plethon's possible sources cf. Anastos (1948), pp. 252-269.

<sup>499</sup> *Leg.* 132-228 [III,34-35], one more allocution missing in the modern edition of the *Laws* and some more text may be found in *Add.* 99.1-7, 108v.1-3, 114.2-7, 118v.21-123.17.

<sup>500</sup> *Leg.* 228-240 [III,36], the rest of the chapter may be found in *Add.* 132.5-133.3.

<sup>501</sup> *Leg.* 58-60 [III,36], some more text, missing in the modern edition of the *Laws*, may be found in *Add.* 133.4, 133v.7-134.4. In the edition of the *Laws* this chapter is classified wrongly as I,21, cf. Masai (1956), p. 395, n. 2. Theodore Gaza had to have the supplementary text in *Add.* at his disposal as it is apparent from some of his reports of Plethon's calendar in: Gaza, *De mens.* 1168B-C, 1193D, 1197D, 1200D, 1201A-B, 1208A-C, 1209C, 1213B-C, the last two passages being obviously based on the text absent from the edition, but contained in *Add.*, cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. xcii-xciii.

<sup>502</sup> Plethon was probably influenced in this point by Plutarch, *Aet. Rom.* 268c-d, who attributes it to Numa, cf. Anastos (1948), p. 206, Tihon's commentary to *Meth.*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>503</sup> Gaza criticises Plethon for this, *De mens.* 1168B-C.

<sup>504</sup> *Leg.* 58-60 [III,36], for a detailed reconstruction with a discussion of Plethon's possible sources cf. Anastos (1948), pp. 188-252, and also Tihon's and Mercier's commentary to *Meth.*, pp. 178-18, 235-236, 275.

Poseidon and the Olympians, (3) the next one to “all gods after Zeus of the second rank (σύμπαντες οἱ θεοὶ μετὰ Δία ἀξίαν δὲ δευτέραν)”. (4) The fourth sacred day is dedicated to the Sun, Kronos, and “all gods after the Olympians”, that is, to the Titans and the gods of the sensible order, (5) the following one to Pluton, “specifically out of the other gods (ἰδίᾳ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν)”, and at the same time to the remembrance of heroes and “other deceased friends and relatives of ours”. (6) Finally, the sixth sacred day should be devoted to our self-examination (ἐπὶ τῇ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπίσκεψι) and correction of our errors, deficiencies, and faults (τῶν γε ἡμαρτημένων, ἐκλελειμμένων τε δὴ καὶ πεπλημμελημένων ... ἐπανορθώσει). In the “hollow months” the two last sacred days are celebrated at once. In the first month of the year the second day is further dedicated to Hera and the third one to Poseidon, whereas at the end of the year there are also some other feasts, the third day before the end of the year being dedicated again to Pluton and the remembrance of the deceased.<sup>505</sup>

On the example of Plethon’s calendar and its sacred days we can observe the rational and regular form it has as well as certain artificiality present in the cult proposed by the *Laws*. The most important day of each month is certainly the first one, the new moon (1), which is, as we have just seen, dedicated to Zeus, the first principle and the highest cause of all. Other sacred days, according to their importance, are the new moon (3) that is dedicated to the gods of the second order, the eighth day of the month (2) when the feast of the Olympians gods is celebrated, and the twenty-second day (4) dedicated to the Titans and the gods of the third order. At the end of the monthly and yearly cycle Pluton is quite understandably worshiped and the deceased remembered, whereas at the beginning of the year the two highest gods of the second order, Hera and Poseidon, each has its own sacred day, following after the one dedicated to Zeus. This disposition is thus obviously due rather to the mathematical and astronomical calculations than to a religious tradition in which the sacred days may have originated due to some previous accidental events or customs that have nothing to do with a rational conception of the world. Moreover, in devising his religious calendar Plethon was evidently influenced by the *Laws* of Plato, which is a problem we will get to later on.<sup>506</sup>

## 9. Conclusion II: Plethon’s Platonism

Now we may gather up and connect together the diverse parts of Plethon’s “perennial philosophy” we have just gone through and try to provide a kind of global overview of it. – As

<sup>505</sup> *Add.* 133v.7-134.4, *cf.* 121.9-18.

<sup>506</sup> Plato, *Leg.* VIII 828a-d, *cf.* Webb (1989), p. 217.

we have seen, Plethon begins his philosophical quest with the question about human happiness, which is, however, impossible to achieve without the knowledge of the nature of man as well as of the universe which he is necessarily a part of. Plethon systematically distinguishes and classifies diverse possible solutions and by refuting the Protagorean and Pyrrhonian scepticism he concludes that it is possible to decide by means of reason among the conflicting opinions on the world, man, and the right ethics. The only true wisdom is “the perennial philosophy” advocated throughout the ages by different lawgivers and philosophers (opposed to the poets and sophists). It may be acquired thanks to the rational “common notion” containing truth about reality and by the grace of gods universally accessible to all the people. Plethon bases his version of *philosophia perennis* on the “Magian” (Chaldaean) Oracles and Plato’s philosophy that, according to him, mutually agree and contain the same truth because the structure of the world as described by them seems to be the same.

In the perennial philosophy reality is thus divided into “pre-eternal” first principle, the eternal intelligible order of the Platonic Forms, which are at the same time also the intellects, and the sensible world. Within this lowest, ontological level there is a further division between the higher, everlasting part, and the lower one that is mortal and created by the partial contribution of the everlasting heaven. Everything that is immortal and that possesses permanent existence is conceived by Plethon as divine and at the same time as a principle for something else. The higher principle is always the cause and the source of being for everything that is lower, acting either directly or through other, lower entities which are caused by it and which are thus a kind of the auxiliary principles for the higher ones. We thus get a structure of reality, in which “the gods of three orders” are distinguished, that is, the first principle, the Forms, and the heavenly bodies taken together with daemons. They serve as principles for the corresponding three different levels of reality. – The first principle produces everything else and is directly involved in the creation of the Platonic intelligible Forms. These Forms, in turn, cause the existence of the sensible world, whereas the higher, everlasting part of it is, along with the lower Forms, responsible for the generation of the lower, mortal part. The division within the sensible world between heaven and the lower part of it thus has its model in the intelligible order, in which the Forms are correspondingly divided into the higher ones that are capable of producing the higher part of the sensible world and the lower Forms that generate its lower part.

When elaborating this metaphysical system divided into the three, or from another point of view four levels, Plethon naturally faces the problem how to account for the differentiation of complex reality from one source. He thus conceives the first principle as supremely one, so united that within it no distinction can be traced. The intelligible order of the Forms is the limited plurality that is unchangeable, in contrast to the sensible world that changes, or in other words, it

is differentiated not only by the internal relations among the entities contained in it, but also by the processes and developments in time. Furthermore, the lower, mortal part of the sensible world is not only attached to matter as the higher one, but entirely dependent on it. Because, for Plethon, matter is the source of infinity, the plurality of the lower part of the world is not limited, but undetermined, which is also a reason for the perpetual and incessant generation and corruption of the things within it. Plethon attempts to explain the degressive differentiation and pluralisation of reality by the multiplication of the main ontological distinctions on each level of it. There is no real plurality in the first principle, whereas in the Forms there is already a difference between their essence, common to them all, and their diverse attributes, which correspond to the diverse activities of the Forms, that is, their various abilities to act upon or to create something else. The essence thus constitutes a Form as Form, that is, as one of the intelligible entities which are models of the things in our sensible world, whereas the attribute determinates what a Form is Form of. In the soul located in the higher part of the sensible world and closely connected with time, there is a further distinction between the (active) potentiality to act and the activity itself. In contrast to the Forms, the activity of the soul is not therefore eternal but it begins at a certain moment of time and ends at another. Finally, in the body the distinction between the active potentiality to act and the passive potentiality to be acted upon appears. This is due to matter which is potentially divisible into infinity and thus, as we have seen, it is the source of the unlimited plurality. For this reason it also causes that the things constituted of it are mortal because being ontologically “unstable” it cannot provide them with a permanent existence and they thus necessarily begin and cease to exist.

The first principle that is named *Zeus* in the *Laws* and that both creates and sustains everything else, is described by Plethon as supremely one, perfectly united, simple, and identical with itself. As such it is also transcendent to everything other. However, according to Plethon, it is possible for man to know and to unite with it through “the flower” of intellect thanks to which he can transcend his rational knowledge that, being based on the realm of the differentiated intelligible Forms, is still necessarily plural.

The main presupposition necessary for the correct understanding of Plethon’s conception of intelligible Forms is that the one which is more general and universal is not “emptier” in its content but, on the contrary, it comprehends in itself “in one” everything that it is cause and principle of. For this reason it is also necessary to postulate the world of the Platonic Forms parallel to this sensible one because otherwise it would not be impossible to explain how the rational knowledge that we are capable to attain and that is always general and universal could have been derived from the singular sensible particulars. This principle must be applied not only to the relation of particulars to its corresponding Form, but also to the Forms themselves, among

which the more general contain in themselves already the more specific ones. The Forms are not only differentiated by their mutual distinctions but they constitute a united whole located outside space and time. This is due to their origin since the first principle that creates them by “dividing” the highest of them, which is the Form of Form, and does so according to the differences contained “implicitly” in it. Thus the whole intelligible order is established, in which each Form has its proper place and which is “closed” because it is so perfect that no other intelligible entity may be added to it. The lower Forms are thus the images of the higher ones in the similar way as the sensible particulars are the images of them. Seen from the different perspective concentrating on the distinction between the essence and attributes of the Forms, as for their essence they are all created by Zeus whereas during the creation they distribute among themselves their various attributes, that means, they mutually differentiate among themselves according to what they are a model of and what is their proper identity. The intelligible order is thus a kind of whole in which each part or each Form reflects in itself the rest. This is further strengthened by the fact that each of the Forms is not only an intelligible entity but also an intellect that conceives in an intellectual act the rest of them.

There are two main perspectives by which the Forms may be further distinguished. First, it is the division between the higher ones that are models of the main ontological characteristics of the sensible world, such as form, matter, identity, difference, rest, self-motion, motion from different, and everything that is everlasting. Plethon identifies these Forms with the Olympian gods, whereas the lower ones that are capable of producing mortal things only are, according to him, Titans, the god of the Tartarus. Another division that permeates through both parts of the intelligible order, the higher as well as the lower one, is the polarisation into the “male” and “female” Forms, that is, those that provide the things with an attribute that is a kind of active and determined form and those that are, in contrast, rather connected with undetermined and passive matter. We may also surmise that this is perhaps the reason why Plethon, when exposing his philosophy, uses ancient Greek polytheist mythology, in which male and female principles join together in order to generate something else. In this case the common offspring is identical with our world created at the lower ontological level than the Forms.

Into the higher, everlasting part of our world the gods of the third order are situated, namely, the Sun and the Moon along with other stars and planets and daemons. Each of them have an independent soul for which a participated intellect is provided directly by the first principle. The matter which they consist of depends on this rational soul and not *vice versa* and in their case it therefore cannot be the cause of the dissolution of these everlasting entities. The Sun is a boundary between the Forms and the sensible world and, as it has been already mentioned, together with other stars, it is responsible for the creation of the mortal things in its lower part,

providing them with matter. The lower Forms (Titans) would be otherwise unable to produce them themselves, but, on the other hand, the Sun itself cannot produce them too and thus the contribution of the immaterial Forms is always necessary. Daemons, who are, besides other tasks, charged with correcting people, are good, similarly to the whole cosmos, which is the best possible. It has not been created in time and it is thus everlasting “in both directions”, which means that it has been existing since the infinite time and will continue to exist for the infinite time. The mortal part of the cosmos is constituted of four elements, each of them being permanent as a whole. Within it the world soul is active, its motions establishing time, and, as every other soul, it is also everlasting. The main structure of the body of the cosmos is thus also everlasting, only the parts and particles within this permanent structure, that is, the individual things dependent on the body, begin and cease to exist. This is because they have not their proper individual soul that would maintain them in existence when their bodies cease to exist.

On the point of contact of the higher and lower part of the universe Plethon places the human nature which is thus the necessary boundary and the bond between them required by his whole metaphysical system. For this reason there are two Forms that are the models of human being – Kore, a lower, Titanic one, which supplies the body, and Pluton, a higher, Olympian one, which provides the soul. Unlike stars, possessing the proper knowledge, and daemons, with the right opinion, the human soul is already located so low on the scale of being that it is fallible. It is connected to the body through the higher part of it, the so-called astral body that mingles together with the lower, irrational part of the soul. Unlike the higher souls of the gods of the third order, the body is thus apparently not wholly dependent on the human soul that, being furthermore at the boundary of two radically different natures, cannot make it forever eternal. Similarly to the other souls, the human soul, nevertheless, also has a “participated” intellect and is coeternal with the cosmos. Its intermediate position between the mortal and immortal nature forces it to undergo periodical reincarnations, required also by the fact that there can only be a limited number of the immortal souls which thus have to return again and again to make the bodies alive.

According to Plethon, the sensible world in its entirety is derived from the intelligible Forms that are the cause of everything in it, including even matter that has also its corresponding Form (in fact two, one of the matter in general and other of the mortal one). It is not therefore a principle that would be independent on the world of the Forms. This necessarily leads to a conclusion that everything has its cause in the intelligible order and, furthermore, that everything is wholly determined by it. For Plethon, only the first principle is thus free and for this reason there is no room for man’s free will. However, he claims that the human freedom consists in an concord with the world that is created as the best possible and although our potentiality to act



virtuously is also dependent on whether we are given this ability by gods or not, this does not mean that we should not be in agreement with their will if we are able to know it. Plethon deduces and classifies rationally the human virtues and the highest good for him is the imitation of the divine order (including a rather peculiar idea of imitating the Forms by the procreation of children) and the contemplation of it with its summit at the first principle, on which all also the fate of an individual man after death depends. The knowledge of the structure of reality, just described, as well as the rational ethics based on it thus enables Plethon to decide between the alternatives classified at the beginning of the *Laws* with which his quest for the human happiness began.

It is thus apparent that Plethon's philosophy presupposes a very concise metaphysical system that, despite its peculiar theology is much more rational than just religious in the traditional sense of the word. The same is concluded also by P.O. Kristeller: "We may note in Plethon's Platonism a strongly rationalistic character and the apparent absence of that mystical or spiritualistic element that is so prominent and central in the thought of the ancient Neoplatonists and of many Renaissance Platonists."<sup>507</sup> It is often claimed – by Kristeller in the same passage too<sup>508</sup> – that Plethon was heavily influenced by Proclus. This is already a suggestion of Scholarios who accused him of deliberate not mentioning this main inspirer of his philosophy in the line of the great philosophers at the beginning of the *Laws* which we have seen above (the Seven Sages, Pythagoras, Parmenides, Timaeus of Locri, Plato, Plutarch, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus). For Scholarios the situation is clear. – It is Proclus from whom Plethon derived his own doctrine about the plurality of gods and "the generations, orders, differences, and activities in this universe, of the human souls ... and stars ..." According to him, Plethon tried to conceal this source of his philosophy, but it is nevertheless easy to detect it.<sup>509</sup> This claim of Scholarios is simply ridiculous. Plethon's *Laws* was apparently a book that was not written for a wide public and there is no sense in trying to conceal something in a text that is itself esoteric. Furthermore, the polytheism contained in it was just enough or even more likely to raise the suspicion of a Byzantine reader than a marginal mention of Proclus. However, this Neoplatonist philosopher had a very bad reputation in Byzantium and it is clear that by mentioning him Scholarios attempts to discredit the author of the *Laws*.<sup>510</sup> Although he might have been really convinced that this was the real source of his philosophy, we should not rely on this Plethon's main philosophical opponent who obviously did not study it in depth and did not know it thoroughly. In contrast,

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<sup>507</sup> Cf. Kristeller (1972), p. 98.

<sup>508</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. lxxx-lxxxii, n. 2, Anastos (1948), pp. 289-299, Kristeller (1972), p. 97, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 72-77, Hankins (1991), p. 200.

<sup>509</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 153.22-34.

<sup>510</sup> For the general Byzantine opinion of Proclus cf. Parry (2006).

there is no apparent reason why we should not take the list of the philosophers at the beginning of the *Laws* seriously.

In fact, although it is perhaps possible to observe some outward similarities between the philosophy of Proclus and Plethon's perennial philosophy, more significant divergences may be, nevertheless, pointed out. There are thus apparent differences as regards the concrete doctrines, for instance, that of the vehicle of the soul<sup>511</sup> or the origin of matter.<sup>512</sup> As we have seen, following Plato, Plethon is critical to the ancient Greek poets and their depiction of gods, whereas Proclus, defending the traditional polytheism, attempts to reconcile Plato's philosophy with Homer, Hesiod, and other poets that are criticised in the *Republic*.<sup>513</sup> For Plethon, the poetic account of gods, including even Plato's own myths, is not by any means a higher revelation, but, on the contrary, an imprecise or false conception of the divine that must be corrected by rational thought. He also does not seem to have a slightest interest in theurgy although he comments the *Chaldaean Oracles* that are the main source of Proclus' theurgical practice.<sup>514</sup> Thus, as we have seen, Plethon's explanation of the *Oracles* is always rather philosophical, than mystical, religious or theurgical. Although we know that Plethon was interested in Proclus' hymns,<sup>515</sup> there are only few similarities between them and his own, their main purpose not being, again, theurgy, but simply the exaltation of the divine.<sup>516</sup> It may be also argued that Plethon was inspired by Proclus in his attempt to identify the gods of the ancient Greek religion with the metaphysical principles. However, Proclus identify the ancient gods primarily with henads, not with the Forms as Plethon does, he does not call the first principle after any of the ancient gods, whereas, for Plethon, it is Zeus, and despite some similarities that may be perhaps pointed out, their pantheons are, after all, also different.<sup>517</sup>

Finally, the structure of reality in Plethon's philosophy is far less complicated than in Proclus,<sup>518</sup> who by postulating subtle distinctions between the multiple levels of his hierarchical metaphysics became a kind of the forerunner of medieval scholasticism. This is clearly apparent from the discussion between Gemistos and his pupil Bessarion. Bessarion asks his teacher for an explanation of some problems provoked by his study of the Platonic tradition and apparently

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<sup>511</sup> Cf. Nikolaou (1982).

<sup>512</sup> Cf. Tambrun-Krasker (2002), pp. 320-328, for the comparison of Proclus' and Plethon's philosophy cf. *ibid.*, pp. 310-330.

<sup>513</sup> Proclus, *In Plat. Remp.* [VI] I,69.23-154.10.

<sup>514</sup> Cf. des Places' introduction to *Or. Chald.*, pp. 41-46 and Lewy (1978).

<sup>515</sup> Cf. Diller (1956), p. 37, Mioni (1985), p. 159, Berg (2001), pp. 5-8, and also Anastos (1948), p. 267.

<sup>516</sup> Cf. Berg (2001), pp. 86-111.

<sup>517</sup> Cf. Dodds' commentary to Proclus, *Inst. theol.*, pp. 257-260, 278-279, 282-283, Saffrey's and Westerink's introduction to Proclus, *Theol. Plat.*, I, pp. ix-lxxvii, Berg (2001), pp. 38-40.

<sup>518</sup> For the overview of Proclus's metaphysical system cf. Dodds' commentary to Proclus, *Inst. theol.*, p. 282, and Wallis (1972), pp. 138-158.

relies in the first place on Proclus whom he frequently refers to.<sup>519</sup> In his reply Gemistos claims that one should not think that the philosophers mentioned by Bessarion agree (*συμφωνεῖν*) on everything, they are in accord (*συνάδειν*) in the things that are “greater and more important (*τὰ μείζω καὶ κυριώτερα*)”, nevertheless, there are also things on which they disagree (*διαφωνεῖν*). Plato thus places the creator of the world immediately next to this heaven (*προσεχῆ τοῦδε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τίθεται δημιουργόν*), Proclus, however, transforming Plato’s philosophy to be in accordance “with the myths of Orpheus”,<sup>520</sup> conceives him “as fourth [beginning] from the first cause (*τέταρτον ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου τίθεται αἰτίου*)”. Plotinus, “with regard to many poets”, claims that the creator is third, according Julian (the Apostate), “following probably Maximus”, he is the second.<sup>521</sup> This seems to be also the position of Plato, who says in his account of the creation of the soul in the *Timaeus*<sup>522</sup> that “the soul was generated as the best of the generated things by the best of the intelligible and eternal realities (*τὴν ψυχὴν ... τῶν νοητῶν ἀεὶ τε ὄντων ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀρίστην γεγονέναι τῶν γενηθέντων*)”. According to Plethon’s rather dark statement, Proclus thus distorts Plato’s original conception and he – unnecessarily – elevates the intelligible order to the higher level of reality (*τὸ τῶν νοητῶν ἀεὶ τε ὄντων τῷ ἀνωτέρῳ κῶλῳ οὐδὲν τοιαύτης προσθήκης δεομένῳ συνάπτων*), whereas the level of reality created in the *Timaeus* directly by the intelligible order is located far from “the best” cause (*τὸ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἐπιθεῖς λείπων τοῦ τινων ἀρίστου*).<sup>523</sup> In other words, for Plato, the immediate creator of the sensible world is the second highest cause following just after the first one, which is the highest principle. As we have seen, according to Plethon’s interpretation, the same doctrine is contained in the *Magian Oracle XXX*, where the first god, the creator of the intelligible order, and the second one, the immediate creator of the sensible world, are distinguished.<sup>524</sup> In the *Lams* Plethon identifies the second god with Poseidon, the highest Form. However, Proclus and Plotinus places him in the fourth or third position respectively, starting from the highest principle, which means that they postulate other independent ontological levels of reality between the creator of the world and the first cause of everything. Proclus, furthermore, does this by elevating the Forms up on the scale of being, further from the soul located into the sensible world. Moreover, according to Plethon, Proclus derives matter from the first cause, while, as we have seen, Plotinus deduces from the second intelligible essence the doctrine about the evil daemons that originally comes from Egypt. As we know too, in this point Plato as well as *Magian Oracles* disagree. According to Plethon, there are also different opinions concerning fate (*ἢ εἰμαρμένη*), “some of these men”

<sup>519</sup> Bessarion, *Ad Gemist.* I, cf. Hankins (1991), pp. 441-444.

<sup>520</sup> Plethon derives this claim possibly from Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* [I,4] 20.6-25, [I,5] 25.24-26.22.

<sup>521</sup> Plethon derives this claim possibly from Julian, *Or. Sol.* 132c-d.

<sup>522</sup> Plato, *Tim.* 37a1-2.

<sup>523</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 458.21-459.4.

<sup>524</sup> *Or. mag.* 17.6-13 [ad XXX].

refuse this doctrine, some accept it.<sup>525</sup> Furthermore, Proclus thinks that the first principle is only one and good (τὸ ἓν μόνον καὶ ἀγαθόν), whereas Julian attributes to it also being (τὸ ὄν).<sup>526</sup>

Similarly, in the *Reply to Scholarios* Plethon asserts that there are divergences among the Platonists concerning the question whether Plato and Aristotle differ just on the level of words, or whether they really advocate different doctrines. According to him, it was Simplicius only who attempted to show that there is a general agreement not only between Plato and Aristotle but also among other ancient Greek (Hellenic) philosophers, of which Parmenides is specially mentioned. Simplicius does this in fact in order to attack the Church, showing that all the pagan philosophers are of the same opinion, while the Christians hold many mutually opposing doctrines. However, as Plethon claims, there were many ancient Platonists who argued against Aristotle, for instance, Plotinus and Proclus.<sup>527</sup>

It is well known that Plethon distinguishes sharply between the philosophy of Plato and that of Aristotle, as may be best seen in his *Differences* which is one of his most original achievements.<sup>528</sup> In this he differs from his pupil Bessarion who is, furthermore, as we have just seen, more interested in Proclus than his teacher seems to be.<sup>529</sup> But not only this – from the passages we have just gone through it is apparent, that Plethon is also able to distinguish among different forms of Platonism, as advocated by diverse Platonists, and similarly able to decide to what extent they are in accordance with the philosophy of Plato as it was reconstructed by him. He is thus in a certain sense a forerunner of modern scholarship that attempts to trace the divergences among the individual Platonists and to reconstruct the development of Platonism as a complex movement which covers many varying opinion concerning some problems. However,

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<sup>525</sup> *Ad Bess.* I 459.4-12.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.* I 460.34-461.1.

<sup>527</sup> *Contra Schol.* II 370.7-23. On the problem of the harmony between Plato and Aristotle by the late Neoplatonists and the development of this idea cf. Gerson (2005), (2006), Karamanolis (2006), Sorabji (2006).

<sup>528</sup> Karamanolis (2002), pp. 264-267, argues that Plethon was inspired in his anti-Aristotelism by the Platonist Atticus and that he based his *Differences* on Eusebius' *Praep. evan.* XV,4-13, which contains Atticus' fragments. This claim must be seen in the broader context of the ancient problem of the philosophical agreement between Plato and Aristotle, which Karamanolis traces in depth and detail in his other book (Karamanolis (2006)). He thus shows that, among the ancient Platonists, Atticus, in his radical criticism of Aristotle, was really exceptional. However stimulating and important this suggestion certainly is, it, nevertheless, provokes some questions and doubts. First, although the structure and topics in Eusebius and the *Differences* are really very similar, they are not identical, and this is even more true about the argumentation contained in both these texts. Atticus' criticism of Aristotle is also rather general, whereas Plethon quotes directly from his works, cf. the notes to Woodhouse's translation of the *Differences* based on Lagarde's unpublished thesis (Woodhouse (1986), pp. 191-214). Second, Plethon never mentions either Atticus, or Eusebius, which is really strange if this was really the source of his anti-Aristotelism. Instead, as we will just see here, he names Plotinus and Proclus who, unlike Simplicius, were, as he claims, critical towards Aristotle. (But cf. the excerpts of Atticus from Eusebius attributed to Plethon by Dedes (1981), pp. 76-77.) Third, Eusebius' Christian perspective, in which Atticus' fragments are used, is entirely alien to Plethon's perennial philosophy since Plato is subordinated there to the revelation given to the Jews.

<sup>529</sup> For Bessarion's Platonism influenced strongly by Proclus and his role in the Plato-Aristotle controversy in the XV<sup>th</sup> century Italy cf. Hankins (1991), pp. 217-263, for the reception of Proclus' philosophy in Byzantium and the early Renaissance Italy and Bessarion's role cf. Saffrey's and Westerink's introduction to Proclus, *Theol. Plat.*, I, pp. cli, cliv-clx, and VI, pp. xlix-lxxii. It is important to note that claim about Plethon's importance for the renewal of the interest in Proclus is based here, once again, on Scholarios' testimony (introduction to *Theol. Plat.*, I, pp. clviii-clx). Cf. also Saffrey (1965), pp. 536-547.

at the same time, there is an important difference because, as we know, Plethon does not share the belief of modern scholarship in historical development. He, in contrast, presupposes the existence of the perennial philosophy accessible to everybody across the ages thanks to the rational reasoning, with which certain thinkers are in accord or, on the contrary, more or less deviate from it. Plethon himself thus advocates a form of Platonism that is, in comparison with the later development after Plotinus, relatively simple, because he seems to rely much on the letter of the original texts of Plato and tries to interpret it with a help of the *Chaldaean Oracles* that themselves contain a version of Platonic philosophy as developed in the II<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.<sup>530</sup> And, *vice versa*, he bases his explanation of the *Oracles* on the conceptions he derives from the text of Plato's dialogues, thus to some extent abandoning the previous exegetical tradition of this text originated by the Neoplatonists. This does not mean that he is not much influenced by some of their particular doctrines, as for instance, the conception of the aethereal body and the flower of intellect, while as far as the overall structure of his metaphysical system is concerned, the most important contribution of the Neoplatonists is certainly the postulating of the One as the highest principle of everything.<sup>531</sup> However, in spite of all this as well as his belief in the existence of the one perennial universal philosophy, his ability to see the differences where the previous, but also subsequent tradition presupposes the homogeneity of the doctrine is indeed exceptional and admirable.

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<sup>530</sup> Cf. des Places' introduction to *Or. Chald.*, pp. 7-18, Hadot (1978), pp. 703-706, Majercik (1989), pp. 1-5.

<sup>531</sup> Cf. Dodds (1928), Rist (1967).

W.B. Yeats

BYZANTIUM

The unpurged images of day recede;  
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;  
Night resonance recedes, night walkers' song  
After great cathedral gong;  
A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains  
All that man is,  
All mere complexities,  
The fury and the mire of human veins.

Before me floats an image, man or shade,  
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;  
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth  
May unwind the winding path;  
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath  
Breathless mouths may summon;  
I hail the superhuman;  
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,  
More miracle than bird or handiwork,  
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,  
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,  
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud  
In glory of changeless metal  
Common bird or petal  
And all complexities of mire or blood.

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit  
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,  
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,  
Where blood-begotten spirits come  
And all complexities of fury leave,  
Dying into a dance,  
An agony of trance,  
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.

Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,  
Spirit after Spirit! The smithies break the flood.  
The golden smithies of the Emperor!  
Marbles of the dancing floor  
Break bitter furies of complexity,  
Those images that yet  
Fresh images beget,  
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.

1930

*(The Winding Stair and Other Poems, 1933)*

### *III. The Question of Religion*

#### **1. Becoming Pagan**

The usual conclusions of modern scholarship (after the pioneer work of C. Alexandre)<sup>532</sup> concerning Gemistos' religious beliefs may be summarized as follows:

1. Gemistos, who had a vivid interest in ancient thought and culture already since his early youth, was further influenced by his polytheist Jewish teacher Elissaeus, with whom he spent some time at the Ottoman court.<sup>533</sup> Moreover, M. Tardieu, followed by B. Tambrun-Krasker, has suggested that Elissaeus was an adherent of Persian *falsafa* and more specifically of the school of Suhrawardī, which is thus supposed to be the source of Gemistos' unusual emphasis on the importance of ancient Zoroaster.<sup>534</sup>

2. After his return from abroad and the expulsion from Constantinople, Gemistos settled down in Mistra at the court of the Despot of Morea. There, in addition to other duties, he was active as a teacher and established a circle of his pupils who shared with him his pagan beliefs. The *Laws* was presumably intended as a kind of sacred book for this pagan religious community.<sup>535</sup>

3. During his visit to Italy in 1438-1439 Gemistos gave lectures on Platonic philosophy to the humanists there. He was perhaps inspired by their admiration and, having been called by them the second Plato, he changed his name to Plethon. Thus, for I.P. Mamalakis, this was a radical turning point of his career. – Being moved both by the futility of the discussions at the Council and the enthusiasm of his Italian listeners for the polytheistic Platonism, he became a real pagan only there. According to Mamalakis, although apparently interested in the ancient authors, before his journey to Italy Gemistos remained always an orthodox Christian.<sup>536</sup> According to other scholars, he was a polytheist already before the Council of Florence and his position was only somehow radicalised there.<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>532</sup> There are, however, some scholars who think that Gemistos was a Christian, cf. Ruggiero (1930), pp. 117-118, n. 2, Kristeller (1959), pp. 511-512, (1972), pp. 97-98, Wind (1967), pp. 244-248, Hankins (1991), pp. 197-205 (with other references, p. 197, nn. 74-75). For different opinions about Gemistos' beliefs throughout history cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 378. For the early tradition of the non-pagan interpretation of the *Laws* cf. Masai (1956), p. 404 with the n. 3. Cf. also Codoñer (2005) who argues that Gemistos attempted to reach a compromise philosophical position between ancient paganism and Christianity.

<sup>533</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 55-60, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 23-28

<sup>534</sup> Cf. Tardieu (1987), pp. 142-148, Tambrun-Krasker's commentary to *Or. mag.*, pp. 41-43.

<sup>535</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. lxxxii-lxxxiv, Masai (1956), pp. 300-314, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 32-47.

<sup>536</sup> Mamalakis (1939), p. 176, cf. also pp. 123, 222-223, and Mamalakis (1955), pp. 521-525, Knös (1950), pp. 113-122.

<sup>537</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 327-346, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 154-170, 186-188.

4. It is generally accepted that Gemistos wrote, at least the largest part of his *Laws* if not the whole book after 1439.<sup>538</sup> Moreover, it is generally assumed that he fully agreed with the doctrines contained in it and for this reason the outwardly Christian *Reply to the Treatise in Support of Latins* on the procession of the Holy Spirit written at the same time is usually treated as an example of the hypocrisy and an attempt to conceal the real beliefs of its author.<sup>539</sup>

To consider Gemistos' personal philosophical and religious opinions we will have to go in the following chapters through all these conclusions point by point and examine each of them separately.

## 2. Gemistos' Mysterious Teacher

The only report we have about Gemistos' early life and education is provided by Scholarios. The two passages we are interested in, are contained in two letters, written some time during the years after the death of Gemistos. The first one is addressed to Theodora, the wife of Demetrios Palaiologos, the contemporary Despot of Morea. Here Scholarios informs about the results of his examination of the book found after the death of Gemistos and gives the reasons why it had to be destroyed. In the second letter sent to the Exarch Joseph, written after the burning of it, Scholarios then justifies his decision. In both cases he feels the need to explain how and where Gemistos learnt his paganism:

“Before he had acquired the maturity of reason and education and the capacity of judgment in such matters – or rather, before he had even devoted himself to acquiring them – he was so dominated by Hellenic ideas that he took little trouble about learning traditional Christianity, apart from the most superficial aspects. In reality it was not for the sake of the Greek language, like all Christians, that he read and studied Greek literature – first the poets and then the philosophers – but in order to associated himself with them; and so in fact he did, as we know for certain from many who knew him in his youth.

It was natural in the case of a man under such influence, in the absence of divine grace, that through the daemons with whom he associated there should have come a tendency towards an ineradicable adherence to error, as happened to Julian and many other apostates. The climax of his apostasy came later under the influence of a certain Jew with

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<sup>538</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 401-404, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 318-321, 357.

<sup>539</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 391-392, Masai (1976), Woodhouse (1986), pp. 271-273.



whom he studied, attracted by his skill as an interpreter of Aristotle. This Jew was an adherent of Averroes and other Persian and Arabic interpreters of Aristotle's works, which the Jews had translated into their own language, but he paid little regard to Moses or the beliefs and observances which the Jews received from him.

This man also expounded to Gemistos the doctrines of Zoroaster and others. He was ostensibly a Jew but in fact a Hellenist [pagan]. Gemistos stayed with him for a long time, not only as his pupil but also in his service, living at his expense for he was one of the most influential men at the court of these barbarians. His name was Elissaeus. So Gemistos ended up as he did.

He tried to conceal his true character, but was unable to do so when he sought to implant his ideas among his pupils, and he was dismissed from the City by the pious Emperor Manuel and the Church. Their only mistake was that they refrained from denouncing him to the public, and failed to send him into dishonourable exile in barbarian territory, or in some other way to prevent the harm that was to come from him.”<sup>540</sup>

“You first learned about Zoroaster, having no previous knowledge of him, from the polytheist Elissaeus, who was ostensibly a Jew. Departing from your own country, you lived with him in order to benefit from his famous teaching at a time when he enjoyed great influence at the court of the barbarians. Being what he was, he met his end in the flames, just like your Zoroaster.”<sup>541</sup>

The main problem with Scholarios' report is obvious – he has to defend his decision to destroy the *Book of Laws* and to show by all the possible means, that its author, once an important and respected person – especially after the Council of Florence, where, as we will see, Gemistos as one of the few supported consistently the anti-Latin side, while Scholarios failed to do the same – was in fact a secret pagan and enemy of Christianity. As we have just learnt from Scholarios, his apostasy was supposedly caused by his early education, his stay with Elissaeus, and proved by his forced departure from Constantinople to Mistra. Another significant problem with Scholarios' report is the time distance. As we know, Gemistos died as nearly one hundred years old man, so some events that are described must have happened already some eighty years ago. When Scholarios, our only source of the information about Elissaeus, claims “we know for certain from many who knew him in his youth”, it is queer why he does not name his sources and, needless to say, it is not sure whether these sources themselves are really reliable after so much time passed.

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<sup>540</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Theod.* 152.26-153.15, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 24 (altered).

<sup>541</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 162.8-12, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 25.

It was not certainly difficult for Scholarios to surmise that Gemistos, an outstanding authority on ancient culture, literature, science, and philosophy, was a fervent student of ancient texts in his early youth and no informer would have been in fact needed to conjecture this. The report about Gemistos' banishment from Constantinople is more problematic, as Scholarios himself shows when he regrets that he was not sent to exile outside the empire. In the last days of Byzantium Mistra was in fact the second important centre of the Empire as well as the capital of the semi-independent despotate of Morea<sup>542</sup> and Gemistos' settling there may be well explained by other reasons. – In 1407 the Despot Theodore I (1383-1407) died and his brother, the Emperor Manuel II (1391-1425), sent his son to Mistra to become the Despot Theodore II (1407-1443, born around 1396). Now, Gemistos, who seems to be in Constantinople still around the year 1405, after which date he is reported to teach Mark Eugenikos,<sup>543</sup> appears some time during the following years in Morea at the court of the young Despot, where, as Theodore II later mentions, he was sent by the Emperor himself to serve him.<sup>544</sup> This is in accord with Scholarios' report about Gemistos' banishment from Constantinople “by the pious Emperor Manuel”, however, the reason for his moving to Mistra seems to be entirely different. It rather seems that Gemistos was in fact sent to Mistra to help the young Despot who had just acceded to the throne there.

It is sometimes claimed that he was the general judge in Mistra, be it as it may, it is clear that he definitely had some important position at the Morean court.<sup>545</sup> Furthermore, there is no evidence that he would have been suspect to the Emperor in any way, nor that he would have fallen into disgrace in Constantinople. – On the contrary, shortly after 1407 he wrote a “Preface (Προδευωρία)” to the funeral oration by the Emperor Manuel on his brother, Despot Theodore.<sup>546</sup> This is the first dated text by Gemistos preserved to us and in fact a great honour from the Emperor. As we have also seen, in the subsequent years, some time during 1414-1418, he wrote three famous texts with his proposals of the reforms in the Peloponnese. The first one, the *On the Isthmus*, is in fact a report about the state of the despotate, or rather an analysis of its problems, and was written for the Emperor Manuel shortly before his visit there.<sup>547</sup> As we know, the reformatory *Addresses*, written in the following years, were directed to both, the Despot and the

<sup>542</sup> For the outline of the history of Morean despotate cf. especially Zakythinis (1932), (1953).

<sup>543</sup> Cf. John Eugenikos, *Acol. in Marc. Eugen.* 213.17-24, cf. Masai (1956), p. 59, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 28-29.

<sup>544</sup> Theodore II Palaiologos, *Bull. arg.* 106.1-4: Ὁ οἰκεῖος τῆ βασιλείᾳ μου κῆρ Γεώργιος ὁ Γεμιστὸς ἦλθε μὲν πρό τινων χρόνων ὀρισμῶ τοῦ ἁγίου μου αὐθέντου καὶ βασιλέως τοῦ πατρὸς μου, τοῦ αἰοδίδμου καὶ μακαρίστου, καὶ εὕρισκεται εἰς τὴν δουλοσύνην ἡμῶν ...

<sup>545</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 87, Baloglou (2002), pp. 35-36, on the basis of Filelfo (*Ad Sax.*): *magistratum gerit nescio quem*, and Charitonimos (*In Gemist.* 379): Καὶ μὴν καὶ δικαιοσύνη τοιαύτη τις ἦν τῷ ἀνδρὶ, ὡς λῆρον εἶναι Μίνω ἐκεῖνον καὶ Ῥαδάμανθυν τούτῳ παραβαλλομένους. Οὐκ οὐκ ἠχθῆσαν γοῦν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τι τῶν ἐκείνῳ δοκούντων, ἀλλ' ὡς θεία ψῆφος τὸ τούτῳ δόξαν ἦν. Στέργοντες δ' οὖν ἄμφω καὶ προσκυνοῦντες ὃ τε ἠττηθεὶς καὶ ὁ νικήσας ἀπήεσαν, καὶ τοι μὴ οὕτω πεφυκότος τοῖς ἄλλοις συμβαίνειν καὶ τοῦτ' εἰκότως, οἶμαι.

<sup>546</sup> *Proth.*, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 88-92.

<sup>547</sup> *De Isthmo*, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 100-101, Baloglou (2002), p. 97.

Emperor.<sup>548</sup> This all leads rather to the conclusion that Gemistos was in fact charged with a mission in the Peloponnese by Manuel II in order to help his son in his difficult task and not that he fell into disgrace and was banished from the City because of some nonconformist beliefs. Also the rewards and honours he got during his stay in Mistra confirm that he was far from being an outcast there and his position at the Morean court must have been very important. Five bulls by the Emperor of the Despot have thus been preserved in which a land is assigned to Gemistos or the acquisitions are confirmed for his sons.<sup>549</sup> If he had been suspected of paganism, would it all have been possible? It is also hardly thinkable that such an unfaithful person would be even invited as an advisor to the Council in Italy where the traditional faith was at stake, as happened later at the end of the 1430s. And it is also highly improbable that in a relatively small city as Mistra was at that time, it would have been possible to carry out any major pagan activity in such a way that the Despot either did not know about it or was even willing to tolerate it.

Equally problematic is Scholarios' account of Elissaeus, the alleged teacher of Gemistos. The corruption of a Christian by a Jew was a kind of *locus communis* in the Middle Ages and Gemistos, in fact, does not anywhere speak about or hint at his studies with anybody like Elissaeus.<sup>550</sup> Moreover, what Scholarios says about Elissaeus is rather puzzling. He is supposed to be:

1. An interpreter of Aristotle, an adherent of Averroes and other Persian and Arabic commentators of the Stagirite.
2. The one who introduced "Gemistos to the doctrines of Zoroaster and others".
3. A Jewish heretic and only "ostensible Jew", but, in reality, Hellenist (pagan) and polytheist.
4. An important person at the Sultan court, but finally "he met his end in the flames (*πυρὶ τὴν τελευτὴν εὗρετο*), just like ... Zoroaster".

<sup>548</sup> *Ad Man., Ad Theod., cf.* Woodhouse (1986), pp. 92-98, 102-108.

<sup>549</sup> They are edited in: LAMBROS III, pp. 331-333, IV, pp. 19-22, 104-105, 106-109, 192-195, *cf.* Zakythinos (1953), pp. 122-123, 199.

<sup>550</sup> Woodhouse (1986), p. 65, quotes in the connection with Elissaeus two passages from the *Reply to Scholarios* in which Gemistos talks about the Jews. However, the first one is Gemistos' reply to another passage by Scholarios (*Pro Arist.* 4.21-25), where it is already said that "it is possible to hear from the Latins and Jews (*ἔξεστι ἀκούειν Λατίνων τε καὶ Ἰουδαίων*)", who know Averroes' writings, about the erroneousness of Gemistos' explanation of his thought. Scholarios' text, in fact, reacts to the beginning of the *Differences* where Gemistos criticizes Averroes but where only the Westerners (*οἱ πρὸς ἑσπέραν*) are mentioned in the connection with him (*De diff.* 321.4-13). Gemistos then answers with the sentence which is often quoted as his allusion to Elissaeus: "But we have learnt, oh dear, from the wiser Italians and Jews what Averroes teaches about the soul. (*Καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὦ γὰρ, παρὰ τε Ἰταλῶν τῶν σοφωτέρων καὶ Ἰουδαίων ἔστι ὧν πεπίσμεθα τὰ περὶ ψυχῆς ἀνθρωπίνης*)" (*Contra Schol.* IV 374.15-24). It is difficult to be certain whether Elissaeus is really meant here. – Given the context and rather angry tone of Gemistos' *Reply to Scholarios*, it seems that rather not. Another passage from the *Reply to Scholarios*, mentioning an unknown empire that is sometimes invoked by the Jews, is simply too general and depreciative, that it is highly improbable that Elissaeus could be meant (*ibid.* 418.1-5). For the attempts to identify Elissaeus *cf.* Tihon's commentary to *Meth.*, p. 7-8 with the n. 8.

To start from the last point – it is extremely improbable that Elissaeus was burnt, because this kind of punishment was only scarcely used by both the Ottomans and Byzantines.<sup>551</sup> Elissaeus' death thus need not necessarily be a punishment for the heresy, but perhaps just an accident<sup>552</sup> or perhaps the eternal damnation of the Jewish heretic in hell is what Scholarios has in mind. Because he definitely makes a connection between Elissaeus' death and Zoroastrian cult of fire, the whole story about the death of Gemistos' teacher might be, after all, just a spectacular rhetorical comparison.

As for the other points, it is obviously a question whether at the Sultan court, either in Brusa or Adrianople, some time in the 1380s or a bit later, there could live someone who was (1) an Aristotelian, (2) a Zoroastrian, and (3) an ancient polytheist at the same time. These three aspects of Elissaeus' personality as described by Scholarios seem to be mutually exclusive. – The Aristotelians are not usually polytheists and Zoroastrianism is different from the Greek polytheism. Perhaps we should not go so far as to the conclusion that Scholarios simply made the whole story up and we may admit that Gemistos could really study with a certain Elissaeus. In this case it would be more probable to suppose that he was a Jewish Aristotelian, only later identified as Zoroastrian and polytheist by Scholarios, who was trying to prove that Gemistos was a heretic and pagan since his earliest years basing his claim mainly on Plethon's *Laws*. (As he puts it: "This man also expounded to Gemistos the doctrines of Zoroaster and others.") It has been, however, suggested that Elissaeus was in fact an adherent of *falsafa*, and more specifically of the school of Suhrawardī, representing the Eastern and Persian current in the Islamic philosophy and in many features different from its Western, Averroist branch. According to Scholarios' report, in which Arabic and Persian commentators of Aristotle are mentioned together, Elissaeus was supposed to know both traditions. A combination of otherwise irreconcilable aspects of his personality might have been allegedly possible in the framework of Islamic philosophy of the Eastern, Persian type.<sup>553</sup>

It is thus perhaps more useful to make an attempt to determine the influence which Elissaeus might have exerted on Gemistos. First, there is an obvious difference of opinions between them. – Gemistos was a determined Platonist while his teacher is supposed to be an Aristotelian commentator. As we have seen, Gemistos knew Aristotle well enough to write a competent critique of him and this knowledge he could have perhaps acquired thanks to his teacher. The problem is that Gemistos' exegesis of Aristotle is based much more on the very

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<sup>551</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 27.

<sup>552</sup> Cf. Tihon's introduction to *Meth.* p. 8.

<sup>553</sup> Cf. Tardieu (1987), pp. 142-148, Tambrun-Krasker's commentary to *Or. mag.*, pp. 41-43.

good knowledge of the primary Greek texts<sup>554</sup> than on supposedly syncretic philosophy of Elissaeus combining together – apart from other things – Aristotelism with Neoplatonism and the Greek and Persian religious traditions.<sup>555</sup> In his *Differences*, as we know, Gemistos, in contrast, argues against Aristotle because of his alleged atheism.<sup>556</sup> Furthermore, it seems that Gemistos did not know any Persian.<sup>557</sup> Out of the Islamic thinkers he mentions Averroes, but he criticizes him for his doctrine about the mortality of the human soul and his negative influence on the understanding of Aristotle in the West, who, thanks to the commentaries of Averroes, is considered as the supreme sage there and his atheism is concealed.<sup>558</sup> Avicenna “the Arab” is also invoked in the *Differences*, being described as the one who understood Aristotle’s mistake and although he, too, similarly to Aristotle, assigned the separated intellects to stars and spheres, he did not make the same with God and left him transcendent.<sup>559</sup> In other words, Gemistos not only strongly disagrees with Averroes but he also observes a difference between the teachings of Avicenna and Aristotle. This he could not certainly learn from Elissaeus, who is supposed to be relying on the Islamic commentaries of Aristotle and especially Gemistos’ last point is, again, dependent on his knowledge of the original texts. Also his criticism of Averroes reflects rather the situation in Italy where the *Differences* were written and he has thus here presumably the Latins, not his former Jewish teacher in mind. In general, it is difficult to prove that Gemistos was influenced by the Islamic culture in any substantial way and it seems that in his philosophy he always relies primarily on the ancient Greek sources.<sup>560</sup> Furthermore, Suhrawardī’s “philosophy of illumination” seems to be entirely absent from Gemistos’ thought,<sup>561</sup> and even in his short text, or rather excerpt on Muhammad, which we have seen above, all the information is derived from his Byzantine predecessors.<sup>562</sup>

There has been, however, suggested a possibility that Gemistos was influenced by Elissaeus and the Eastern Islamic philosophy of Suhrawardī and his disciples in one point that is extremely important for his conception of the perennial philosophy. There does not seem to be a direct ancient parallel for, first, his placing of Zoroaster to the leading place among the ancient sages,

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<sup>554</sup> In the *Differences* Gemistos thus quotes from various Aristotle’s texts, cf. the notes to Woodhouse’s translation of this treatise based on Lagarde’s unpublished thesis, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 191-214.

<sup>555</sup> Cf. Corbin (1946), (1964), pp. 284-304, Ziai (1997).

<sup>556</sup> In section I of the *Differences* (321.23-323.4).

<sup>557</sup> Woodhouse (1986), pp. 25-26.

<sup>558</sup> *De diff.* 321.7-13, *Contra Schol.* IV 374.15-24, XXX 488.25-31. cf. n. 550.

<sup>559</sup> *De diff.* I 322.37-323.4.

<sup>560</sup> Cf. Anastos (1948), 268-303. In contrast, Suhrawardī could not definitely know Plato’s dialogues, nor probably the original texts of Aristotle, but just the works of Islamic Peripatetics, cf. Walbridge (2000), pp. 88-97, 127-137.

<sup>561</sup> Cf. Corbin (1964), pp. 286-299, Ziai (1997), pp. 782-783, Walbridge (2000), pp. 19-29. What might be perhaps, after all, seen as a parallel between Gemistos and Suhrawardī is their shared criticism towards Aristotelism. However, unlike Gemistos, Suhrawardī, as it seems, undertakes it in order to advocate the “real” Aristotle, that is, the one that has been created by the Neoplatonic reinterpretation of his works, against the traditional Islamic Peripatetics, cf. Corbin (1964), pp. 290-291, 295, Ziai (1997), pp. 782-783, Walbridge (2000), pp. 117-185, 225-229.

<sup>562</sup> Cf. Klein-Franke (1972), pp. 3-4.

and, second, for his identification of the *Chaldaean Oracles* with the writings of Mages, the disciples of Zoroaster. For this reason it has been claimed that such a parallel in fact can be found in the Persian philosophy, to which Gemistos was allegedly introduced by Elissaeus. Unfortunately, so far there has not been presented a text from this tradition, in which Zoroaster would have the same sovereign position of the first and wisest Sage in the succession of the wise men, religious thinkers, and philosophers as in Plethon's *philosophia perennis*. In fact, although in this current of Persian thought, also for the patriotic reasons, Zoroaster appears, the foremost place is rather reserved to Hermes.<sup>563</sup>

It is therefore in this case, too, more probable that Gemistos relies here on the ancient Greek sources<sup>564</sup> which he perhaps just pushes one step further.<sup>565</sup> As we know, he derives his conviction about Zoroaster's antiquity from Plutarch and he could find further support of the astonishingly early date of his life (5000 years before the Trojan war) also in Diogenes Laertius.<sup>566</sup> This seems to be actually one of the reasons, if not the most important one, why he considers him to be the most ancient known sage and lawgiver. Moreover, already the ancient Neoplatonists were interested in the *Chaldaean Oracles* because they considered the doctrines contained in them to be similar to those in Plato's dialogues.<sup>567</sup> There is an ancient tradition, which brings the Mages close to the Chaldaeans. Furthermore, the traditional Greek etymology of Zoroaster's name, a one component of which seems to be star (*ἀστῆρ*), along with his alleged astronomical interests (he is sometimes claimed to be the inventor of astronomy) could also help to associate him and the Magi with the Chaldaeans, famous for their astronomical and astrological knowledge.<sup>568</sup> They are definitely identified in the biographies of Pythagoras, who, as we have seen, provides for Gemistos a connection through which, with a help of his pupils, the

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<sup>563</sup> Cf. Corbin (1946), pp. 18-19, 22-26, Walbridge (2000), pp. 7, 29-35, (2001), pp. 17-50. The parallel between Gemistos' emphasizing of the significance of Zoroaster and the school of Suhrawardī was suggested by Corbin (1964), p. 285-6 ("Les grandes figures qui dominent la doctrine sont celles d'Hermès, de Platon et de Zoroastre-Zarathoustra. D'une part donc, il y a la sagesse hermétiste (déjà Ibn Wahshīya faisait état d'une tradition nommant les *Isbrāqīyān* comme une classe sacerdotale s'originant à la soeur d'Hermès). D'autre part, la conjonction entre Platon et Zoroastre qui, en Occident, s'établira, à l'aube de la Renaissance, chez le philosophe byzantin Gémiste Pléthon, est ainsi déjà le fait caractéristique de la philosophie iranienne au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle."), cf. p. 346. The suggestion that this parallel is in fact a result of a direct influence through the mediation of Elissaeus, is due to Tardieu (1987), pp. 146-148, cf. Tambrun-Krasker's commentary to *Or. mag.*, pp. 41-46. Stausberg (1998), pp. 40-41, disagrees and thinks that Gemistos' "Zoroastrianism" is to be derived from the ancient Greek sources. Furthermore, Walbridge (2000), pp. 7, 27-35, 83-125, 223-224, (2001), pp. 13-16, 57-64, 107-110, tries to show that Suhrawardī is himself influenced by ancient Greek philosophy, and more particularly Platonism, in the form it has been absorbed in the Islamic thought and argues against convincingly against Corbin's attempts to see him as an inheritor of ancient Persian tradition.

<sup>564</sup> Cf. Nikolaou (1971), pp. 334-341.

<sup>565</sup> Cf. Bidez-Cumont (1938) I, pp. 158-163.

<sup>566</sup> *Contra Schol.* V 378.11-380.1, *Or. mag.* 19.20-22, Plutarch, *De Is.* 369b, Diogenes Laertius I,2, cf. Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 7-9 (B 1). Cf. also Kingsley (1990)

<sup>567</sup> Cf. des Places' introduction to *Or. Chald.*, pp. 18-46. The *Oracles* were not quoted by the Neoplatonists always as "*Chaldaean*", cf. Lewy (1978), pp. 443-447, Brisson (2000), pp. 119-120, although Psellos on whom Plethon relies in his edition does so (*Or. Chald.* 153-186).

<sup>568</sup> Cf. Bidez-Cumont (1938) I, pp. 6-7, 30-38, II, pp. 17-21, 23-25 (B 6-9, B 11), Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* I,8, cf. Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 67-70 (D 2). On Zoroaster's astronomical interests cf. further Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 161-163, 174-190, 193-197, 208-227, 227-230 (O 14-15, 39-46, 52, 79-83, 85). Cf. also Kingsley (1995).

teachings of the Zoroastrian Mages reached Plato. The source on which Gemistos bases the connection of Zoroaster and the Chaldaeans may be therefore Porphyry and Iamblichus, who both, in contrast to Proclus, are named in the line of the real philosophers at the beginning of the *Laws*. In Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* the Chaldaeans appear together with "Zaratos" who all Pythagoras allegedly met in Babylon, according to Iamblichus, Pythagoras was there in contact with the Mages.<sup>569</sup> Also Lucian, a widely read school author, mentions Pythagoras' alleged stay in Babylon, where he was supposed to meet "the Mages, the disciples and successors of Zoroaster (οἱ Μάγοι οἱ Ζωροάστρου μαθηταὶ καὶ διάδοχοι)".<sup>570</sup> As for the doctrines, many points on which, as we have seen above, the "Magian" Oracles are claimed by Plethon to agree with Plato, are in fact also recorded about Zoroaster and the Persian Magi. According to Herodotus and Strabo, an author extensively studied by Gemistos,<sup>571</sup> Persians venerated Zeus.<sup>572</sup> In Diogenes Laertius they are also said to believe in the immortality of the human soul and, according to Porphyry, they even taught reincarnation.<sup>573</sup> As it is claimed by Plutarch, they maintained the doctrine about the existence of daemons as the third kind between gods and humans.<sup>574</sup> Moreover, in his commentary Plethon claims that in the *Magian Oracles* the image of fire is used to designate the divine,<sup>575</sup> which agrees well with the notorious veneration of fire by Zoroastrians.<sup>576</sup>

This all fits well into an extremely favourable picture of Zoroaster we find in the *Alcibiades I* by Plato. According to him, the young Persians are so successful because they are educated by the special instructors. These are presumably the followers of Zoroaster because the first of them teaches the youths magic, that means, the wisdoms of Mages (*μαγεία*), invented by "Zoroaster, son of Horomazes", which consists in the veneration of gods (*θεῶν θεραπεία*) and, moreover, he instructs them how to rule (*τὰ βασιλικά*).<sup>577</sup> Plethon, too, always emphasizes that Zoroaster is not only a sage, but also an eminent lawgiver and the same may be similarly claimed about Pythagoras along with his followers whose political activities in Southern Italy are well known.<sup>578</sup> Moreover, there is an ancient tradition recorded by Proclus (who, nevertheless does not agree with it), according to which Er, the hero of the myth about reincarnation related in book X of

<sup>569</sup> Porphyry, *Vita Pyth.* 12, Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* 19, cf. Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 37-38 (B 27).

<sup>570</sup> Lucian, *Men.* 6.6-8, the texts about Pythagoras' studies with the Mages were collected and commented by Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 17-21, 35-40 (B 6-B 9, B 25-B 30), cf. Nikolaou (1971), pp. 319-327.

<sup>571</sup> Cf. Diller (1937), (1956), pp. 27-29, 31-35, Mioni (1985), pp. 136-137, 158, 386, 417, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 181-186 with further references.

<sup>572</sup> Herodotus, *Hist.* I,131, Strabo, *Geogr.* XV,3,13.

<sup>573</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* I,9, Porphyry, *De abst.* IV,16,2, cf. Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 67-70 (D 2).

<sup>574</sup> Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 441f, based on Plato, *Symp.* 202e, cf. Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 16-17 (B 5), for Plethon's general interest in Plutarch cf. Diller (1954), Mioni (1985), p. 385.

<sup>575</sup> *Or. mag.* 5.16 [ad II], 9.16 [ad XII], 17.4 [ad XIX], 18.15-16 [ad XXXII], *Decl. Brev.* 21.4.

<sup>576</sup> Cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* III,16, Strabo, *Geogr.* XV,3,13-14, and even Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 162.11-12. Cf. also Bidez-Cumont (1938) I, p. 161.

<sup>577</sup> Plato, *Alc.* I 121e-122a.

<sup>578</sup> Gemistos' interest in Plato's activities in Italy is proved by his *Diod. Plut.* 16,4-17,1 18,2-20,5, 22,1-3, 41,1-2.

Plato's *Republic*, is identical with Zoroaster.<sup>579</sup> We have furthermore seen that, for Plethon, the structure of reality in the myth of the Magi from Plutarch, in the *Magian Oracles*, and in the second letter attributed to Plato is the same. Connecting together these or some other ancient texts, Plethon may have perhaps “rediscovered”, but in fact rather created an ancient tradition, according to which the most ancient sage was Zoroaster, whose followers, the Mages, wrote down his doctrines in the *Chaldaean Oracles*, and revealed his wisdom to Pythagoras, through whom and his followers it reached Plato. An immensely important role in developing this conception must be also obviously attributed to the fact that, as it has been just suggested, all the important representatives of this tradition, that is, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, and Plato were both philosophers as well as lawgivers. This is not, for instance, the case of Orpheus, mentioned by Gemistos only *en passant*,<sup>580</sup> or Hermes Trismegistos, not mentioned at all, who would be other potential candidates for the greatest sage of all time. By this conception of the *philosophia perennis* Plethon influenced other thinkers in the Renaissance and later,<sup>581</sup> the first of them being most probably Francesco Filelfo in 1464, a humanist who knew Gemistos personally<sup>582</sup> and may be counted among his admirers if not pupils.<sup>583</sup>

To sum up, it is not certainly excluded that there was some Elissaeus whom Gemistos knew. If he really existed, he was most probably a Jewish Aristotelian, but his alleged polytheism is extremely unlikely and it seems to be a later conjecture of Scholarios. Even if he had told Gemistos about Zoroaster, which is also quite improbable, it would have remained upon his pupil to place this sage in the foremost place in the perennial philosophy, for which he was trying to find a support in the ancient Greek sources. Thus the influence that Elissaeus might have exerted on Gemistos, who did not share with him even his probable Aristotelism, is indeed scanty and he certainly cannot be seen as the decisive impulse for Gemistos' apostasy, as Scholarios claims. If Gemistos was really a pagan, it had to be the result of his studies of ancient thought rather than of the influence of his mysterious teacher.

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<sup>579</sup> Proclus, *In Plat. Resp.* [XVII] II,109.7-11.5 (*ad* Plato, *Resp.* X 614b), *cf.* Bidez-Cumont (1938) II, pp. 158-161 (O 12-13). *Cf.* also Eusebius, *Praep. evan.* XIII,13,30.

<sup>580</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXI 420.10-11, *Ad Bess.* I 458.25-26.

<sup>581</sup> *Cf.* Stausberg (1998), for Plethon's role in the tradition of *prisca theologia* culminating in Ficino *cf.* Vasoli (1994), (1999), pp. 11-50, (2001).

<sup>582</sup> Filelfo, *Vers. in Gemist., Ad Gemist., Ad Sax.*

<sup>583</sup> Hankins (1991), p. 93, considers him to be in this a forerunner of Marsilio Ficino. However, the text he publishes to support his claim seems to be, at least partly, dependent on Plethon's conception of the ancient wisdom and of the role that Zoroaster, Pythagoras, and Plato play in it, *cf.* Filelfo, *Ad Dom.* 21-24, 250-271, *cf.* furthermore Kraye (1979), pp. 121-124. Both Plethon and Filelfo thus, for instance, mention Plutarch and his dating of Zoroaster's life. It is therefore probable that Filelfo knew either Plethon's commentary to *Magian Oracles* or his *Reply to Scholarios* in which both Zoroaster and the perennial tradition, similar to that in his text, appear, *cf.* Stausberg (1998), 137-139. For the relation of Gemistos to Filelfo *cf.* Knös (1950), pp. 138-140, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 158-159. Plethon could possibly influence also John Argyropoulos, *cf.* Field (1987), pp. 315-316, Stausberg (1998), pp. 140-141.



### 3. Witnesses

Gemistos' contemporaries that might in any way serve as a testimony for his religious beliefs, can be divided into three groups. – First (a), his direct pupils who for some time studied in Mistra and, being in a close contact with him, should naturally know much about his beliefs. Second (b), his distant admirers who although very sympathetic to him actually neither studied, nor were in any substantial contact with him. Third (c), all his adversaries who, accusing him of paganism, being usually motivated by their different philosophical position, do that always “from outside”, since none of them was in close relations with him. It is certainly flattering for Gemistos that, as it seems, there was nobody who would have been a close friend, associate or pupil of his and at the same time would have radically criticised or doubted his personality, philosophy, or Christianity.

#### a. Pupils

The main problem with Gemistos' close associates is that there is in fact difficult to find anybody influenced in any way by his alleged paganism. His most notable pupils are Mark Eugenikos and Bessarion,<sup>584</sup> both monks and later Orthodox Metropolitans of Ephesus and Nicaea respectively, whose views became radically opposed during the Council of Florence, which they both attended and played extremely important part in. Eugenikos thus was the main critic of the proposed Union, refused to sign the final decree, and after the return to Constantinople acted as the head of the anti-Unionist party. Bessarion, in contrast, gradually became the main proponent of the Union, taking a firm pro-Latin stand, and finally was created a Cardinal in Italy, later being even a candidate for the pope.<sup>585</sup>

Nobody can deny the firm Orthodox views of Eugenikos that certainly do not show any trace of paganism.<sup>586</sup> The same must be said about his brother John, who finally became the bishop of Lacedaemon. However, he also showed great interest in Gemistos' treatise *On Virtues* and wrote a warm letter to its author whom he knew relatively well and evidently did not suspect of heresy.<sup>587</sup> Bessarion is a more puzzling case.<sup>588</sup> Although, here too, it is impossible to deny his firm Christian faith, he is certainly influenced by the Platonism of his teacher as well as his vivid

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<sup>584</sup> Cf. Syropoulos, *Mem.* [V.30] 284.25-27, John Eugenikos, *Acol. in Marc. Eugen.* 213.21-22, Bessarion, *Ad Dem. Andr.* 469.1-2.

<sup>585</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 32-33, Gill (1964), pp. 45-64.

<sup>586</sup> On Mark Eugenikos cf. Gill (1964), pp. 55-64, and Constas (2002).

<sup>587</sup> John Eugenikos, *Ad Gemist.*, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 29, 38-39, 179-180, 225.

<sup>588</sup> On Bessarion cf. Mohler (1923), Labowsky (1967), Mioni (1991), and Fiaccadori (1994).

interest in ancient Greek culture.<sup>589</sup> As a sign of their common inclination to ancient polytheism Bessarion's letter of consolation to Demetrios and Andronikos, the sons of Gemistos, is often quoted which is filled with a pagan imagery:

"I have learned that our common father and master has shed every earthly element and departed to heaven, to the place of purity, joining the mystical chorus of Iacchus with the Olympian gods. I too rejoice to have studied with such a man, the wisest that Greece has produced since Plato (leaving Aristotle out of account). So if one were to accept the doctrines of the Pythagoreans and Plato about the infinite ascent and descent of souls, I should not hesitate even to add that the soul of Plato, having to obey the irrefragable decrees of Adrasteia and to discharge the obligatory cycle, had come down to earth and assumed the frame and life of Gemistos".<sup>590</sup>

However, this does not necessarily mean that Gemistos or Bessarion in fact were pagan Platonists as it is sometimes assumed.<sup>591</sup> What is important to note is the concession "if one were to accept" which makes from the reincarnation hinted at in the letter a mere theoretical possibility.<sup>592</sup> The exalted and "pagan" tone of the text may be explained simply as a homage to the great interpreter of the ancient philosophy that Gemistos certainly was. In an earlier letter to his former teacher Bessarion, while asking about some problems of Platonic philosophy, calls him: "nowadays the only initiator and initiated into the divine knowledge of the Platonists (ὁ μόνος τανῦν τῆς Πλατωνικῆς ἐποπτείας μυσταγωγὸς καὶ μύστης)"<sup>593</sup> and in another one written after Gemistos' death an expert on "not only the Platonic [wisdom] but also that of those men who inquire into the divine things (οὐδ' ὄση μόνον Πλατωνικὴ [σοφία] τε καὶ τῶν τὰ θεῖα ἐρευνησαμένων ἐκείνων ἀνδρῶν)".<sup>594</sup> Bessarion's "pagan" funeral speech on Gemistos may be therefore just an eulogy for the great teacher of ancient philosophy written in an elevated and classicising style and full of mythological hints, that he used on other occasions too, including the verses on his dead teacher he also composed.<sup>595</sup> Nevertheless, as we have seen, the pagan allusions are limited by the due reservation. Furthermore, being probably intended for a public presentation, the consolation letter should not be certainly read as the expression of a secret ideology of neo-paganizing circle, but rather as a public tribute.<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Cf. Hankins (1991), pp. 217-263.

<sup>590</sup> Bessarion, *Ad Dem. Andr.* 468.14-469.8, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 13.

<sup>591</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. lxxxiii-lxxxiv, n. 1, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 13-16.

<sup>592</sup> Cf. Wind (1967), pp. 256-258.

<sup>593</sup> Bessarion, *Ad Gemist.* I 456.35.

<sup>594</sup> *Idem*, *Ad Secund.* 470.12-13.

<sup>595</sup> *Idem*, *Vers. in Gemist.*

<sup>596</sup> *Idem*, *Ad Secund.* 470.6-7, cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 14.

There are two other funeral orations on Gemistos, by Hieronymos Charitonos and by certain monk Gregorios, however, as it is clear from their texts, only the latter really studied with him.<sup>597</sup> Although the orations are often quoted as a proof of his paganism,<sup>598</sup> there is, nevertheless, no direct and unambiguous clue to claim this, and in the one written by Gregorios, who seems to be his pupil, even a series of the Church Fathers is quoted.<sup>599</sup> For the comparison with Bessarion's consolation letter it is interesting to note that in both orations Gemistos is called "initiator into the secret and divine things (ὁ τῶν ἀπορρήτων καὶ θείων μυσταγωγός)",<sup>600</sup> and "the one who was much occupied with the secret and divine things, the initiator into the lofty celestial doctrines (ὁ τῶν ἀπορρήτων πολυπράγμων καὶ θείων, ὁ τῶν ὑψηλῶν οὐρανίων δογμάτων μυσταγωγός)",<sup>601</sup> in the both cases, again, in the context of Gemistos' teaching. Similarly, Francesco Filelfo extols Gemistos in his verses from 1439 as "the head of the sages, an embodied statue of virtue which shines for the Danaans with the knowledge of all learning ...". Although he uses the expression "by Zeus (νῆ τὸν Δία)", it seems, again, to have rather rhetorical than religious function, leaving aside the fact that Filelfo does not seem to have properly studied with Gemistos or stayed some longer time in Mistra.<sup>602</sup> It therefore seems that his pupils and admirers were used to talk about him in a rather exalted and antiquated style, but this does not necessarily mean that they had anything more than their "initiation" into the ancient Greek culture and philosophy in mind.

We can learn from Bessarion's relation to Gemistos also from the letters<sup>603</sup> which he wrote in the first half of the 1430s (before 1436) while staying with him in Mistra<sup>604</sup> and which were addressed most probably to Scholarios, with whom he was on friendly terms at that time.<sup>605</sup> Gemistos (although not mentioned by his own name) seems to appear in Bessarion's correspondence at least twice. He is praised as an excellent teacher, persuasive like Odysseus, surpassing Nestor by his language, and able to penetrate to the utmost depth of thought, not speaking about all his outstanding virtues and the extremely kind approach to his pupils.<sup>606</sup> In a

<sup>597</sup> Charitonos, *In Gemist.* 385, cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 7.

<sup>598</sup> In order to prove Gemistos' paganism Alexandre added them to his edition of the *Laws* as appendices XIII-XIV, cf. also Woodhouse (1982), pp. 8-12.

<sup>599</sup> Gregorios, *In Gemist.* 390, 392, cf. Monfasani (1992), pp. 58-59.

<sup>600</sup> Charitonos, *In Gemist.* 377.

<sup>601</sup> Gregorios, *In Gemist.* 388.

<sup>602</sup> Filelfo, *Vers. in Gemist.*, cf. Knös (1950), p. 139.

<sup>603</sup> The early Bessarion's writings were collected by the author himself in the *Mar. Gr.* 533 (=788), for the description of the manuscript and the dating of the texts cf. Mohler (1923), pp. 51-55, Loenertz (1944), pp. 116-121, Saffrey (1964), pp. 279-292, Stormon (1981), Mioni (1985), 421-423, Mioni (1991), pp. 25-46, Rigo (1994), pp. 33-37.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. Mohler (1923), p. 45, Loenertz (1944), Labowsky (1967), p. 687.

<sup>605</sup> Cf. Loenertz (1944), pp. 133-142, it seems that Bessarion later erased Scholarios' name from the heading of his letter (*Ep.* I).

<sup>606</sup> *Ep.* I 417.23-418.7, IV 426.30-31, for the identification of Gemistos in Bessarion's letters cf. Mohler's notes *ad loc.* Loenertz (1944), p. 140, n. 2, Mioni (1991), p. 35, n. 2, disagree and think that the Despot Theodore II is meant, however, the description provided by Bessarion in his letter suits definitely Gemistos better and the expression ὁ θαυμαστός δεσπότης (417.29) need not necessarily designate the Despot of Morea. Gemistos is perhaps mentioned

word, Bessarion was really enchanted by Gemistos when he studied with him, however, his letters from this period are otherwise all uniformly and indisputably Christian in their tone. Similarly to his other texts, the consolations and the letter to Constantine XI Palaiologos, written at around the same time and discussed above, Christian themes are predominant, and even if Plato and other ancient classical writers are sometimes incidentally mentioned, there seems to be no trace of the pagan and polytheistic influence of his former teacher.<sup>607</sup>

What is, nevertheless, more difficult to explain is Bessarion's later silence regarding his otherwise much admired teacher whom he extols so much in the letters written on him after his death and also in the verses. A possible conclusion may indeed be that of J. Monfasani: "But Bessarion was not revealing his own views here [i.e. in his letter of consolation to Gemistos' sons], but delicately acknowledging those of his departed mentor. It is no accident that in his massive *In calumniatorem Platonis* where he meticulously refuted George of Trebizond's criticisms of Plato point-by-point, Bessarion never took up George's culminating attack on Plethon's neo-paganism. George's whole prior discussion of Platonism built up to this finale, and to have stopped short of answering it was tantamount to admitting its truth."<sup>608</sup> Indeed, in his famous response to Trebizond's *Comparisons of Philosophers Aristotle and Plato*, Bessarion mentions "Plethon" (not Gemistos) only once as a contemporary Platonist (ὁ Πλήθων, ἀνὴρ ἐφ' ἡμῶν γεγονώς καὶ τὰ Πλάτωνος ἀποδεχόμενος), just to refuse his criticism of Aristotle in one of the discussed points.<sup>609</sup> He talks about "Plethon" in a similar way also in his treatise *On the Nature and Art* intended as a response to another text by Trebizond, and in a short paper *Against Plethon on Substance* which were both written during the Plato-Aristotle controversy in the second half of the 1450s.<sup>610</sup> With the exception of the private conversation recounted by Kabakes,<sup>611</sup> there thus seems to be no text by Bessarion written in the years following Gemistos' death in which he would have talked about his former teacher in a personal way. In all Bessarion's contributions to the Plato-Aristotle controversy "Plethon" is always mentioned either as someone who originated the discussion of the problem in question (by his *Differences*),<sup>612</sup> or as somebody whose criticism of a certain point of Aristotle's philosophy, however ingenious it can be, may be finally refuted from another, properly Aristotelian position.<sup>613</sup> On the other hand, mentioning Gemistos as Bessarion's former teacher was not certainly a taboo because this was repeatedly done in the

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also in VIII 430.12.32, cf. Mohler's note *ad loc.* However, in this case by ὁ θειότατος ἡμῶν ἡγεμῶν τε καὶ δεσπότης Bessarion may simply mean the current Despot of Morea, cf. Mioni (1991), p. 40, n. 21.

<sup>607</sup> *Ep.* I-XII 416-439, for the ancient texts that Bessarion could probably study in Mistra cf. Mioni (1991), pp. 50-56.

<sup>608</sup> Monfasani (1992), p. 56, cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. lxxxix-xc, n. 4, Knös (1950), pp. 144-146, Hankins (1991), p. 92.

<sup>609</sup> Bessarion, *In calumn.* 272.22-32, (Latin version: 273.16-19).

<sup>610</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1976), pp. 152-170, 201-229, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 364-372.

<sup>611</sup> Cf. n. 645.

<sup>612</sup> Cf. Bessarion, *De nat.* 92.4-14.23-26 (Latin version: 93.6-13.25-27), *Adv. Pleth.* 149.3-10.

<sup>613</sup> Cf. *idem*, *De nat.* 98.14-17.26-28 (Latin version: 99.16-21), 128.23-26 (Latin version: 129.29-33), *Adv. Pleth.* 149.21-25, 150.8-11.

laudatory speeches on the Greek cardinal, both during his life and after his death, in order to prove his excellent education (in particular, specialized mathematical studies are usually mentioned).<sup>614</sup> Bessarion also avidly collected Gemistos' works and manuscripts, including some of the most important autographs. In his collection there were thus some chapters of the *Laws*, and, furthermore, Bessarion possessed a copy of the *Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato* with the exactly similar pagan doctrines.<sup>615</sup> Moreover, his close associate, Theodore Gaza,<sup>616</sup> who was otherwise very critical towards Gemistos,<sup>617</sup> had at least a chapter of the *Laws* at his disposal, the one that is otherwise preserved in the manuscript owned by Kabakes.<sup>618</sup> We may therefore ask how much Bessarion knew about the *Laws* and what he thought of it.

The most obvious reason why Bessarion might have been so reluctant to speak about his former teacher, were obviously his political ambitions. In 1455, at the start of the heated discussion among the Greeks about Plato and Aristotle, he was even close to become pope.<sup>619</sup> The charge of paganism, by which Scholarios marked Gemistos in the East, was in the eyes of the contemporaries a very serious accusation and, as we will see, Trebizond's anti-Platonic attacks, motivated by his lunatic and apocalyptic visions and published in Latin, made it known also in Italy. It must have been very uncomfortable for Bessarion and this is presumably the reason why he took so much care to refute Trebizond's objections in detail in the two treatises just mentioned and to defend the doctrines of the ancient Platonists that had only started to be known in the West. For the cause of Platonism there it was not so much important to defend Gemistos, but to disperse any doubts about its compatibility with Christianity, in other words, to refute convincingly Trebizond. The reputation of Bessarion's teacher thus might have been sacrificed to this goal.

Another reason why Bessarion probably did not feel the need to invoke his teacher more often, especially during the Plato-Aristotle controversy, was that he was far from being his uncritical devotee. In fact, there were two points in which he strongly disagreed with him. The first one, as we will see later on, was their radically different, but in both cases very consequent and honest views on the Union of the Eastern and Western Churches. The other one was obviously Gemistos' radical anti-Aristotelism. Bessarion, in contrast to his teacher, was firmly convinced of the deep agreement between the philosophical opinions of these two thinkers,

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<sup>614</sup> Platina, *Paneg.* cv, Capranica, *Acta* 406.33-407.3, Apostolis, *In Bess.* cxxxiii.

<sup>615</sup> *Mar. Gr.* 406 (=791), ff. 138-139<sup>v</sup>, thus contains chapter III,31: *Περί δικῶν* (*Leg.* 120-128.10), cf. Mioni (1985), pp. 157, 159, whereas *Mar. Gr.* 519 (=773), ff. 94<sup>v</sup> -95<sup>v</sup>, 98<sup>v</sup>-102, chapters II,6: *Περί εἰμασμένης* (*Leg.* 64-78), III,43: *Epinomis* (*ibid.* 240-260), cf. Mioni (1985), pp. 388. For *Zor. Plat.* in Bessarion's manuscripts, cf. Mioni (1985), p. 159 (*Mar. Gr.* 406 (=791)). Cf. also Mioni (1991), pp. 170-172.

<sup>616</sup> On Gaza cf. Geanakoplos (1989), pp. 68-90, Bianca (1999), for his philosophy and role in the Plato-Aristotle controversy cf. Monfasani (2002).

<sup>617</sup> Cf. especially Gaza, *Ad Bess.* 196, Labowsky's introduction to this text, pp. 185-186, and Monfasani (2002).

<sup>618</sup> That is *Add.*, cf. n. 837.

<sup>619</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1976), p. 137.

diverse only apparently, and in this he was close to their Neoplatonic commentators.<sup>620</sup> In the short paper mentioned above, he thus claims: “Aristotle and Plato and Plethon say the same, being at one in their thoughts even though the first two have differed in their words (ἢ Ἀριστοτέλη καὶ Πλάτωνα, ταὐτὸ δ’ εἶπεῖν καὶ Πλήθωνα, τοῖς νοήμασι ... συμφώνους, κὰν ῥήμασι διενηνόχαστον)”.<sup>621</sup> A similar moderated position is apparent from his letter to Michael Apostolis, who was, as we will see, one of the most fervent “distant” admirers of Gemistos and who passionately defended his Platonism against Theodore Gaza, partly in order to gain Bessarion’s favour.<sup>622</sup> However, the response was rather cold – Bessarion makes clear that he praises “Plethon”, along with Plato and Aristotle, for his wisdom and many virtues, but at the same time criticizes him for his condemnation of Aristotle.<sup>623</sup> In short, Bessarion admires Gemistos for his teaching of Platonism and mastery of ancient philosophy, but disagrees with his – from Bessarion’s point of view – one-sided and extreme critique of Aristotle, attempting to find his own independent position in the Plato-Aristotle controversy.<sup>624</sup> His interest in Aristotle, apart from his other Aristotelian studies, is also proved by the fact that in the second half of the 1440s he made a new Latin translation of his *Metaphysics*.<sup>625</sup> This seems to be more important reason for Bessarion’s reservation towards his former teacher than Gemistos’ alleged paganism.

It is difficult to be sure who were other pupils of Gemistos, the only one who is certain is the historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles, but also in his case it is difficult to prove that he was influenced by the supposed paganism of his teacher.<sup>626</sup> There are, nevertheless, some similarities between them. Laonikos perhaps changed his original name Nikolaos to a more “classical” form and he also uses the name Hellen in the positive sense for “Greek” and not for “pagan”.<sup>627</sup> Even more noteworthy is that Laonikos does not seem to be much interested in religious matters and thus, for instance, does not speak about Christian God interfering by miracles in the history of nations, as it was usual in the Byzantine historiography. Instead he introduces fate (τύχη or εἰμαρμένη) that punishes the arrogance (ὑβρις) of nations, being somehow connected with God (θεός) or the divine (τὸ θεῖον).<sup>628</sup> This would be indeed an important similarity with Gemistos’ own thoughts expressed not only in his *philosophia perennis*, but also in his “public philosophy”. What, however, speaks against Laonikos’ possible deviation from the Christian faith is an

<sup>620</sup> Cf. Hankins (1991), pp. 236-263.

<sup>621</sup> Bessarion, *Adv. Pleth.* 150.10-11, transl. Taylor, p. 125 (altered), cf. *De nat.* 128.23-26 (Latin version: 129.29-33).

<sup>622</sup> Apostolis, *Ad Gazae*, cf. Geanakoplos (1962), pp. 85-88.

<sup>623</sup> Bessarion, *Ad Apost.* 511.11-13, 512.7-9.25-34, 513.3-6.13-14.

<sup>624</sup> Cf. Taylor (1924), pp. 120-121, 125-127.

<sup>625</sup> Cf. Mioni (1991), pp. 120-126, 136-148.

<sup>626</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 33, 40, 223, Nicoloudis (1996), pp. 42, 44-45. Cyriac of Ancona met both of them in Mistra in the summer 1447 (*Ep.* V,2), cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 223, 227-8. Chalkokondyles does not mention Gemistos in his historical work, not even when he talks about the Council of Florence and the negotiations of Greeks in Italy (cf. *Hist.* I.5.16-6.12, II.67.18-69.24).

<sup>627</sup> Cf. Nicoloudis (1996), pp. 58-60.

<sup>628</sup> Cf. Turner, (1964), pp. 358-361, Nicoloudis (1996), p. 63.

apparent amazement he shows when he talks about the alleged polytheism of the contemporary Bohemians and their veneration of the Sun and fire, Zeus, Hera, and Apollon.<sup>629</sup> (We have to do here with the obvious misunderstanding of the Czech Hussite movement.) Bohemians are mentioned together with the Samots (Σαμῶται) who are also polytheists and venerate Apollon and Artemis.<sup>630</sup> Other examples of polytheism are located in the Far East – in India and in “Chataie (Χαταίη)”, where Hera, Apollon and Artemis are venerated, the last one even by the human sacrifices.<sup>631</sup> This leads Chalkokondyles to the conclusion that Bohemians are the only nation in Europe which does not profess any religion “we know now” (ἐκτὸς γενόμενον ταῖς ἐγνωσμέναις ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ παρόντι θρησκειαῖς), that is, “the one of Jesus, Muhammad, and Moses”, which dominate (διακατέχειν) the major part of the known world.<sup>632</sup> Also elsewhere he similarly claims that the world is divided between Christianity and Islam, which struggle among themselves, whereas other religions have not managed to acquire such power and domination.<sup>633</sup> It would be tempting to conclude, that, for Laonikos, in contrast to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which are the religions based on a revelation, there exist also some original and natural religion, which can be still found in some remote parts of Europe and in the Far East. Unfortunately, it is difficult to claim this just on the basis of the hint he provides in his text. What is important for us, is the obvious distance he expresses towards the alleged contemporary polytheism, which, according to him, survives only in rather exotic parts of the world and which is described by the names of the ancient Greek gods used also by Gemistos in his *Book of Laws*. If Laonikos was really influenced by the opinions of his teacher, these must have been rather those we know from Gemistos’ public philosophy that situates itself above different contemporary monotheistic religions and acceptable, after all, for any of them, and not the outright pagan and polytheist *philosophia perennis*.<sup>634</sup>

In the overview of Gemistos’ pupils possibly influenced by his alleged paganism we should perhaps mention also a heretic called Juvenal who was executed around 1450 on the accusation of polytheism.<sup>635</sup> According to Scholarios, who writes about him in a letter to Manuel Raoul Oises, he was connected to a certain brotherhood (φρατρία) in the Peloponnese,<sup>636</sup> and Scholarios’ suspicion that he was close to Gemistos is well demonstrated by his using of some expressions from Plethon’s *Laws* he knew already at that time.<sup>637</sup> However, despite all this, Scholarios fails to

<sup>629</sup> Chalkokondyles, *Hist.* I,124.8-22, II,180.18-21, 186.21-187.4.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.* I,124.4-7.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.* I,153.10-16.

<sup>632</sup> *Ibid.* I,124.14-17.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.* I,95.21-96.3.

<sup>634</sup> Cf. Harris (2003).

<sup>635</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 300-304, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 35, 225, 271-272, 315-318.

<sup>636</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Ois.* 477.1-2, 479.17-19, cf. Masai (1956), p. 304.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.* 479.19-30, cf. *Leg.* 2-4, and perhaps also 130-132 [III,32], cf. *Appendix X.4-6*.

prove that Juvenal was really a pupil or a close associate of Gemistos, because otherwise he would have said it openly.<sup>638</sup> Due to the lack of any evidence there is thus no reason why we should connect Juvenal with Gemistos or his humanist circle in Mistra as it is often done.

## b. Admirers

One of the most outstanding admirers of Gemistos was certainly Demetrios Raoul Kabakes.<sup>639</sup> He and another enthusiast for his philosophy, Michael Apostolis, were very much active in collecting and editing of the remnants of his *Book of Laws* burnt by Scholarios<sup>640</sup> and obviously interested in its pagan content. Furthermore, the roots of Kabakes' family lay also in the Peloponnese and he is therefore usually claimed to be a pupil of Gemistos.<sup>641</sup> This, nevertheless, seems to be hardly possible. Kabakes is notorious for his barbaric spelling of ancient Greek that is not far from phonetic record of the contemporary spoken language, which rather points against the possibility that he received education from Gemistos who emphasised the classical and Attic models.<sup>642</sup> He was a fervent worshiper of the Sun since the age of seventeen, as he claims, and an admirer of Julian the Apostate (but also of Virgin Mary). However, as it has been shown, heliolatry is quite difficult to reconcile with the kind of polytheism contained in the *Laws* and there is thus no wonder that Kabakes complains that Gemistos did not use Julian's text.<sup>643</sup> If he really became a worshipper of the Sun at the early youth, it would have to be already before he supposedly met Plethon. Even when the latter appears to him in a dream<sup>644</sup> or Kabakes talks about him with Bessarion,<sup>645</sup> who would have been his younger colleague if he had really studied

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<sup>638</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 35, 225, Monfasani (1992), p. 59.

<sup>639</sup> On Kabakes cf. Keller (1957), pp. 366-370.

<sup>640</sup> Cf. Masai-Masai (1954), p. 554, Masai (1956), p. 398, n. 1, Woodhouse (1986), p. 363.

<sup>641</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 34-35.

<sup>642</sup> Cf. Keller (1957), p. 367, Monfasani (1992), p. 58, n. 65.

<sup>643</sup> Cf. Bidez (1929), p. 70-71, 76-79, Grégoire (1929-1930), pp. 733-734, Keller (1957), p. 368, Medvedev (1985), pp. 737-749, Woodhouse (1986), p. 35, Monfasani (1992), pp. 57-58 *contra* Garin (1958), pp. 195-196. Gemistos was certainly interested in Julian's *Oration to the King Sun* which probably influenced his conception of the Sun, placed in the middle position between the intelligible order of the Forms and the sensible world. However, he never identifies the higher levels of reality with the Sun as Julian does, cf. e.g. *Or. Sol.* 133a-134d.

<sup>644</sup> Cf. Lambros (1907), p. 336: Τῇ παρελθοῦσι νικτὴ ἴδον κατόναρ· ὅτι εἰς τόπον τινὰ συνευρέθημεν μετὰ τοῦ φιλοσόφου Πλήθωνος καὶ οὐπω τινὸς ἄλλου λόγου ῥιζέντος, φησὶ πρὸς ἐμὲ Πλήθων, τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἤπες· ἐγὼ δὲ σινεστάλην καὶ ἀφικρόμην σιοπὸν, δοξάζον εἶνα λέξι καὶ τί πλέον πρὸς τὸ να καταλάβω τί καὶ πρὸς τί βουλετε ὅπερ ἔφη· ὅμος οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἤρικεν· ὅς ἐν ὀλίγο δὲ, ἐγέρθηκα: δημήτριος.

<sup>645</sup> Mercati (1937), pp. 173-174, n. 2: Ὀμηλοῦντος ἐμοῦ ἐνταῦτα περὶ τὴν σκολὴν τῆς τραπέζης, μετὰ τοῦ ἐνδοξοτάτου γαρδυναλίου ἐκίνου κυρ. Βισαρίονος· ἐρέθει λόγος περὶ τοῦ Πλήθωνος· καὶ ἠρότισα τον ἐγὼ· ἐμένῃ ἢ πρόληψις ἦν ὀρίζεις πολλάκις περὶ τοῦ Γεμηστοῦ, ἢ χαριζόμενος, τὰ ὀρίζεις. ἀπεκρίθη ὅτι οὐδὲν ἔλεγον χαριζόμενος, ἀλλὰ θέλω σε ἠπὴν μετὰ ἀληθείας καὶ νῦν ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ Πλοτίνου τὸν κερὸν, ὃς ἦν πρὸ χιλίων τετρακοσίων ἐτῶν, σοφότερον ἄνθρωπον οὐδένα ἐποίησεν ἢ Ἑλλᾶς τοῦ Πλήθωνος. Δημήτριος. (With the marginal note by Kabakes: Πλάτων· Πλοτίνος· Πλήθων.) Cf. also Scholarios' letter to Kabakes from around 1450 (according to its editors) where he informs the latter about their current relations with Gemistos (*Ad Cab.* 457.29-458.3.13-19, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 314-315). This is certainly a very weak hint, but would it have been necessary



with Gemistos,<sup>646</sup> he does not seem to be acquainted with the famous philosopher, whom he evidently admired so much, more than superficially, and there appears to be always a certain distance between him and Gemistos as well as Bessarion.<sup>647</sup>

Another enthusiast admirer of Gemistos, Michael Apostolis,<sup>648</sup> went even as far as to write to him expressing his devotion for Plato and asking to be accepted as a pupil.<sup>649</sup> Then he sent two letters to John Argyropoulos,<sup>650</sup> who, although most probably was not a close associate of Gemistos, knew him from Italy and, as we will see, whose treatise supporting the Western position in the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit became the target of Gemistos' own treatise. The letters in which Apostolis asks Argyropoulos for an intervention by Gemistos are often quoted as the evidence of the paganism of the latter, because they are full of polytheist imagery and the admiration for the ancient polytheism. However, there is obviously no certainty that their paganizing content is identical with Gemistos' own beliefs. Furthermore, after all, both Argyropoulos and Apostolis proclaimed themselves Christians.<sup>651</sup> It is also noteworthy that Apostolis attempted to gain the favour of the famous teacher of Platonism by proving that it was him who had managed to get a copy of Scholarios' *Defence of Aristotle* in order to send it to Gemistos.<sup>652</sup> As we have seen, at the end of this treatise there is a passage attacking Plethon, the presumed author of the *Differences*, because of his paganism and some lines of the *Laws* are quoted. It is therefore possible that Apostolis' imagination was in fact stimulated by this text of Scholarios, who, however, as we will see, at this moment was not sure about what he should think about Gemistos' beliefs. We have already mentioned that later, during the Plato-Aristotle controversy, Apostolis attempted to defend Gemistos' against Gaza, but was rather harshly silenced by Bessarion, who disagreed with the extreme anti-Aristotelian position which they both shared.

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if Kabakes had been really in touch with Gemistos? The letter also shows that, unlike Gemistos, Kabakes was not suspected from paganism by Scholarios, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 314-315.

<sup>646</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 33-35.

<sup>647</sup> However, the letters to Kabakes from Scholarios (*Ad Cab.*) and Kamariotes (*Ad Cab.*) show that his interest in Gemistos' philosophy preceded the latter's death. It is interesting to note, that, as it has been said in a note above, both these opponents of Gemistos did not suspect Kabakes of heresy at the time when the letters were written.

<sup>648</sup> On Michael Apostolis cf. Geanakoplos (1962), pp. 73-110.

<sup>649</sup> Apostolis, *Ad Gemist.* 370-371.

<sup>650</sup> *Idem*, *Ad Arg.* I-II 372-375, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 40-41, 224-225. On Argyropoulos cf. Field (1987), Geanakoplos (1989), pp. 91-113.

<sup>651</sup> Monfasani (1992), pp. 56-57.

<sup>652</sup> Apostolis, *Ad Gemist.* 370. Apostolis proves his claim by describing the copy of Scholarios' book he managed to obtain for Gemistos. It was divided into two parts, the beginning and the end (*μαρτυρεῖ μου τῶ λοιπῶ τοῖν λόγων τῷ λόγῳ, τὸ μὲν πέρας, τὸ δ' ἀρχὴ ὄντε*). The manuscript Gemistos used was indeed incomplete and divided into the beginning and the end with the middle part missing, cf. Lagarde's note to *Contra Schol.*, p. 369, n. 6, Mioni (1972), p. 223. For this reason Gemistos complains that he has not got the book by Scholarios in its entirety (*Contra Schol.* I 368.12).

There were perhaps some other admirers of Gemistos in Italy,<sup>653</sup> for instance, Cyriac of Ancona,<sup>654</sup> but, as it has been mentioned above, only Francesco Filelfo, who was, moreover, in a direct contact with him, seems to be influenced by his teaching without, however, showing any pagan tendencies exceeding the usual humanist interest in the ancient past.

### c. Adversaries

Gennadios Scholarios is certainly Gemistos' most notable adversary.<sup>655</sup> He accused him of paganism still during his life and he is our most important source for almost everything that is usually claimed about Gemistos' polytheism. His first attack against Gemistos came around 1444 in his *Defence of Aristotle* that was written as a response to the *Differences*.<sup>656</sup> At the end of his treatises Scholarios mentions that he has in his possession parts copied from the book about the best legislation based on the pagan beliefs and written by certain Plethon and asks its author to provide the whole book in order that he may learn what is really contained in it.<sup>657</sup> Scholarios' treatise was destined and sent to the rather pro-Unionist Despot Constantine who was ruling in Mistra at that time (1443-1449) and who, as Constantine XI, was to become the last Byzantine emperor (1449-1453).<sup>658</sup> It is thus possible that Scholarios was trying to discredit Gemistos at the court in Mistra and warn the Despot against him. However, as we will see, Gemistos received the treatise directed against him only about five years after it had been written, so it is possible that the Despot simply did not care about what Scholarios says or even did not read his treatise at all.<sup>659</sup> It may be also noted that Scholarios' position at the court that, unlike him, supported the Church Union, was rather uncertain at that moment.<sup>660</sup>

At the same time Scholarios wrote a letter to Mark Eugenikos, a former pupil of Gemistos and the first teacher of Scholarios. After the Council of Florence Eugenikos was the leader of the anti-Unionist party in Byzantium and after his death was succeeded (probably June 1445) by

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<sup>653</sup> Masai (1956), pp. 315-346, attempts to show the enormous influence Plethon and his teaching in Italy had on humanists and philosophers there Woodhouse (1986), pp. 154-170, Monfasani (1992), pp. 52-56, and Hankins (1991), pp. 436-440, are, however, rather sceptical in this point. It seems indeed that Gemistos' perennial philosophy was discussed more among the Greeks than among the Latins who were not still ready to understand the kind of Platonism he was professing during his stay at the Council. Nevertheless, this still does not exclude that he left mighty impression there as a person if not as a philosopher. Cf. also Knös (1950), pp. 132-142, 153-157, Garin (1958), pp. 216-219, Hankins (1991), pp. 436-440, Gentile (1994), 822-831.

<sup>654</sup> Cyriac of Ancona, *Ep.* V,2, 55, Zeno, *Ad. Cyr.* 329-330 with Bertalot's and Campana's introduction, pp. 322-323, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 21, 130, 165, 223, 227-228.

<sup>655</sup> On Gennadios Scholarios cf. Gill (1964), pp. 79-94, Turner (1969), and Tinnefeld (2002).

<sup>656</sup> Turner (1969), p. 430, Monfasani (1976), p. 206, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 237-238.

<sup>657</sup> Scholarios, *Pro Arist.* 114.18-33, 115.20-30, cf. *Appendix X.1* and Woodhouse (1986), pp. 264-266.

<sup>658</sup> *Idem*, *Pro Arist.* 1.5, *Ad Gemist.* 118.31-33, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 219, 221, 308-309.

<sup>659</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 238-239.

<sup>660</sup> Cf. Turner (1969), pp. 431-434.

Scholarios.<sup>661</sup> In his letter the latter asks him for the approval of the *Defence of Aristotle* since it is Eugenikos who should obviously know the truth about his former teacher.<sup>662</sup> It is thus clear that at this point Scholarios was not still sure about what to think about Gemistos – he admits his scholarly as well as personal qualities, but he is shocked by what he has heard about him and by the parts of the *Laws* he has at his disposal. We do not unfortunately know what was Eugenikos’ answer. Did he die before he was able to provide any? Or was he just too busy in his fight against the Unionist that he did not just have time to answer to Scholarios’ letter? Or was he simply unable to decide? We might also suppose that Scholarios, remaining unsure about Gemistos, did not made his treatise accessible for the general public, but distributed it only in a limited circle of his associates. Gemistos indeed complains that he asked for it several times but managed to get it only surreptitiously – in fact, as we already know, it was sent to him by Michael Apostolis – and asks Scholarios why he writes against him, if he has no confidence in his treatise and do not want to send him a copy.<sup>663</sup> What can be thus only claimed for sure is that at the moment Scholarios was still trying to test the orthodoxy of Plethon by mentioning his allegedly pagan book at the end of his attack against his another work, *On the Differences*.

The second attack came when Gemistos, some time around 1449, published his *Reply to the Treatise in Support of Latins*, where he criticised Western theological conception of the procession of the Holy Spirit and which we will discuss later on. Scholarios sent then to him a lengthy letter in which he seemingly congratulates him. At the same time it is obviously the second test of Gemistos’ orthodoxy because it rather illogically contains a passage that, in the context of the fierce condemnation of polytheism appearing in fact already in Gemistos’ text, quotes few expressions from the *Book of Laws* together with denouncing those who would try to revive similar ideas.<sup>664</sup> From this writing as well as from a roughly contemporary Scholarios’ letter to Oises concerning Juvenal it is thus clear that Scholarios had at the moment the beginning of the *Laws* at his disposal.<sup>665</sup> However, it is far less certain that he knew any more about the book because in this case he would have surely attacked Gemistos more directly and openly. The relations between them thus, as it seems, remained, at least outwardly, friendly (“Gemistos wrote to me kindly”, says Scholarios in his letter to Kabakes, and at the beginning of his letter to Gemistos himself he also mentions that he is glad about him not being angry that he has sent his treatise in defence of Aristotle to the Emperor).<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 237-238, 268, Gill (1964), pp. 222-232, Constan (2002), p. 413, Tinnefeld (2002), p. 478.

<sup>662</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Eugen.* 117.18-21, cf. *Appendix X.2* and Woodhouse (1986), pp. 267-268.

<sup>663</sup> *Contra Schol.* I 368.5-370.6.

<sup>664</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Gemist.* 125.18-23, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 277-279.

<sup>665</sup> Scholarios, *Ad. Ois.* 479.17-40, cf. *Appendix X.4*.

<sup>666</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Cab.* 457.29-458.3.13-19, *Ad Gemist.* 118.30-33.

Probably around the time when he received the letter from Scholarios concerning his treatise against Latins, Gemistos, however, finally got also his *Defence of Aristotle*. He reacted to this attack by his equally fierce *Reply to Scholarios' Defence of Aristotle*, to which we will come back later on. Gemistos, similarly to Scholarios, did not care about showing his treatise to the author of the criticised text, but sent a copy of it just to Constantine XI, now the Emperor, something about which Scholarios complains failing to notice the fact that he has done the very same before.<sup>667</sup> He claims some years after the event took place that when Gemistos received his second attack contained in the letter of congratulations, he much grieved “and gave up hope that his best legislation would ever prove effective after this, since we would outlive him and could nullify it either in the flames or by the pen, whichever we might choose”.<sup>668</sup> However, this does not help much to understand why Gemistos virtually at the same time when he received the letter of Scholarios did not hesitate to answer to his first attack and warning contained in the *Defence of Aristotle* in such a resolute and uncompromising way as it is apparent from many passages of the *Reply to Scholarios*.<sup>669</sup> Although Scholarios promises in his letter to Gemistos not to continue with the polemics about the priority of Plato and Aristotle,<sup>670</sup> whereas later he claims that the “fate of our country” prevented him from doing so,<sup>671</sup> he in fact never really attempted to answer properly. The end of the whole story is well known. – When after the fall of Constantinople Scholarios became patriarch, he, as he himself admits, wrote several times to Theodora, the wife of Demetrios, the Despot of Morea, about “the book of Gemistos or Plethon”,<sup>672</sup> who had died not long before. The rulers in Mistra managed to confiscate it and, although asked by many, refused to let to make copies from it, but sent it to Scholarios for examination.<sup>673</sup> Scholarios thus finally got the book he was seeking for such a long time, and after a brief inspection, he condemned it to the flames. After some hesitation and exchanges with Theodora, he himself took care of its public burning, presumably some time after 1460,<sup>674</sup> sparing just some explicitly

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.* 118.31-33, 119.5-17, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 278-279.

<sup>668</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 156.21-24, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 281 (altered).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 308.

<sup>670</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Gemist.* 151.6-10.

<sup>671</sup> *Idem*, *Ad Jos.* 156.15-16.

<sup>672</sup> *Idem*, *Ad Theod.* 151.31-4152.1, cf. the lamentation over the destruction of Plethon's book written by some of his admirers (Kabakes?) in: ALEXANDRE, p. 410: ... πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐπίσταμαι καὶ ἂ συνέβησαν κατὰ προδοσίαν εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν βιβλίον καὶ συγγραφὴν παρὰ τοῦ δεισιδαίμονος ἀνδρὸς μετὰ τῆς γυναικωνίτιδος ἐκείνης πρὸς τὸν διπλοῦν καὶ κακοήθη καὶ ἀμαθῆ ἄνθρωπον. It is perhaps Theodora, whom Gemistos has in mind when he reproaches Scholarios for boasting about his success with an otherwise unspecified shameful woman (*Contra Schol.* 382.4-5, cf. Lagarde's n. 40 *ad loc.*, Alexandre (1858), p. xlvii, n. 1).

<sup>673</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 157.27-32. This situation is described by Trebizond writing in 1456 and 1457 respectively: *Sed multa certe invenientur, si libri in lucem emergerent. Nam, ut ferunt, a Demetrio Peloponnesium principe sive ab uxore, ut alii aiunt, ipsius vel cremati vel reconditi sunt. (Adv. Gazam 340.24-27.) Nam librum quem de his rebus composuit, post ... exitum eius ..., ne publice legeretur et multis officeret, a Peloponnesi principe Demetrio, sicut fertur, ereptus celatusque est. Quare nisi diligenter ab iis qui similibus rebus praesunt quaesitus igni tradatur, ... maior clades generi humano futura est quam Machumetus inuexit. (Comp. III (penultimate chapter = LEGRAND III, pp. 287-288))*

<sup>674</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. xliii-xlv, xlix, Astruc (1955), pp. 259-262, which is based on Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 158.27-35: Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἔδει πάντα φανεροῦσθαι τῷ χρόνῳ, καὶ ἦν μὲν τὸ βιβλίον τοῦ Γεμιστοῦ τεθνεώτος παρὰ τοῖς ἄρχουσι

pagan parts of it in order to support his judgment. At the same time, perhaps by the authority of patriarch, he issued an order under threat of the excommunication that all the copies of it potentially made by Gemistos' pupils must be equally destroyed.<sup>675</sup>

Scholarios claims that he was sure about the true character of Gemistos for a long time and heard about his working on the book, which took many years, from many trustworthy people whereas he himself had some clear proofs already before the Council in the Peloponnese and also later in Italy.<sup>676</sup> From Scholarios' behaviour towards Gemistos, we have just followed in detail, it is apparent that the main reason why he suspected him of being pagan was certainly the *Book of Laws*. As we have seen, he possessed some parts of it at least around 1444 when he tried to test Gemistos' orthodoxy and possibly also to prompt the authorities to take measures against him. However, apart from the *Laws*, which he had finally managed to acquire and destroy, he did not have many other proofs for his accusation. As we have seen, he thus can only claim that since his early years Gemistos was interested in the ancient literary and philosophical authors, and especially in Proclus – whom Gemistos, however, deliberately do not mention – not only because of the style and general education, but also because of the ancient paganism. He explains Gemistos' apostasy from Christianity by his studies with the Jew Elissaeus, his alleged polytheist teacher, and mentions that the Emperor Manuel II sent Gemistos off Constantinople because of his heretical ideas.<sup>677</sup> The problem with these two proofs of his pagan beliefs is, that they are just too remote and Scholarios could know them only indirectly by hearsay and that they are not, as we have seen above, not really reliable. If the assumption that Apostolis really learned about his alleged paganism from the end of *Defence of Aristotle* is true, Scholarios remains with his suspicion towards Gemistos, that is, furthermore, based primarily on few lines from the *Laws*, completely isolated.

At the same time, it is sure that Scholarios is being, at least to some extent, tendentious. Although the main reason of his attacks against Gemistos seems to be indeed the suspicion of paganism, there are also other, personal reasons for his hostility. First, it has been assumed that both held the office of General Judge – Scholarios in Constantinople and Gemistos in Mistra – which may have possibly provoked their mutual rivalry.<sup>678</sup> What is, however, more sure is the bad conscience of Scholarios after the Council of Florence. While, as we will see, Gemistos, together with his pupil Eugenikos, took a decisive anti-Unionist position, Scholarios was more reluctant

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τῆς Πελοποννήσου (διπτῶν δὲ ὄντων, τοὺς εὐσεβεστέρους τε καὶ μείζους φημί), οὐκ εἶχον δὲ ἀγνοεῖν τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ γεγραμμένων τὴν ἀτοπίαν, ἐβούλοντο μὲν αὐτίκα πέμπειν ἡμῖν, καὶ πολλοῖς ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἐκγράφειν οὐκ ἤξιουν διδόναι· ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν καιρῶν τουτὶ κωλυθέντες, ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν αὐτοὶ καὶ παρ' ἐλπίδας ἡμῖν ἦγον φέροντες, καὶ διπλοῦν ἡμῖν ἠνεγκαν πένθος, τὸ μὲν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, ἀποναμένους τῆς κοινῆς συμφορᾶς, ἐξ ὧν ἄλλοι προπετέστερον βουλευσάμενοι κατεπεράξαντο· τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τῷ βιβλίῳ.

<sup>675</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 171.8-11.34-172.10, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 355-360.

<sup>676</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 155.30-156.1.

<sup>677</sup> *Idem.*, *Ad Theod.* 152.26-153.15, *Ad Jos.* 162.3-162.31.

<sup>678</sup> Cf. Zakythinis (1953), p. 131, Masai (1956), p. 63, n. 2, Turner (1969), p. 429, (1976), p. 57.

and tried to stand between the both sides, if he was not at some moment even supporting the Latins. However, after his return home he became a devotee of Mark Eugenikos and finally, as it has been already mentioned, even succeeded him as the head of the anti-Unionist party.<sup>679</sup> It is just no wonder that Gemistos regarded Scholarios as an inconsistent opportunist in the religious questions and did not hesitate to say it in full in his *Reply*.<sup>680</sup> What is, nevertheless, certainly the main reason why Scholarios looked at Gemistos with animosity, was his critique of Aristotle. Scholarios was not only Aristotelian in the traditional Byzantine style, but at the same time he was also strongly influenced by the Western scholastics. He thus did not observe the traditional distinction between the secular philosophy of Aristotle and the sacred theology of the Fathers, as it was usual in Byzantium,<sup>681</sup> but, in contrast, he attempted to introduce to Byzantium rational speculative theology according to the Western models and based on the works of Philosopher. In this situation, Gemistos published his the *Differences* in which he claimed that Plato was superior to Aristotle and, furthermore, hinted that the former was also closer to the Christian faith.<sup>682</sup> Such opinion was certainly very uncomfortable for Scholarios and may have perhaps even equalled with a heresy in his eyes.

Another important critic of Gemistos, who attacked him probably just shortly after his death, was Matthew Kamariotes. He was formerly an enthusiastic admirer of his treatise *On Virtues*, even expressing a wish to see its author, which was unfortunately impossible.<sup>683</sup> Some time around 1455 he finished a treatise<sup>684</sup> refuting the determinism contained in Plethon's *Laws*. He had obviously at his disposal chapter 2 of book II, devoted to the problem of fate.<sup>685</sup> It seems that this text circulated separately<sup>686</sup> – most probably because it has been copied from the *Laws* without the knowledge of its author – and was never officially published. (Scholarios at least does not mention it anywhere.)<sup>687</sup> Kamariotes was, however, a pupil of Scholarios, so it is probable that he learned about Gemistos' polytheism from this source,<sup>688</sup> and this information was just confirmed by the text on fate, which he somehow managed to obtain and which he denounced in his treatise. From his previous wish to see Gemistos mentioned above it, nevertheless, seems that he did not know him personally.

<sup>679</sup> Gill (1964), pp. 222-232, Turner (1976), pp. 428-438.

<sup>680</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXVII 452.20-454.3.

<sup>681</sup> Cf. Benakis (1990).

<sup>682</sup> Cf. Turner (1969), pp. 424-428, 430-431.

<sup>683</sup> Kamariotes, *Ad Cab.* 311-312.

<sup>684</sup> *Idem*, *In Pleth.*, cf. Astruc (1955), 259-261.

<sup>685</sup> However, Kamariotes makes clear that it was the only text by Plethon he had at his disposal, *In Pleth.* 208-210: ὡς κἀντεῦθεν ἡμῖν γίνεται δῆλον καὶ ἕτερα αὐτῷ πεπραγμᾶτευται, ἡσέβηται δὲ μᾶλλον εἰπεῖν οἰκειότερον, βιβλία πάντα πάσης ἀσεβείας ἀνάμυστα. εἰ καὶ μήπω τῶν ἄλλων οὐδὲν οὐδὲ ὤπται ἡμῖν, μηδὲ ὀφθαίη, πυρὶ πάντων ζήλω εὐσεβείας παραδοθέντων ὑπὸ παντός, ἵνα μὴ καὶ εἰς ἕτερον ἀγῶνα λόγων ἀναγκασθῆμεν καταστῆναι. μόνω δὲ τῷ περὶ εἰμαρμένης ἐντύχομεν, καὶ ὡς παρασκευῆς εἶχομεν, ἀπηντήσαμεν πρὸς αὐτό ...

<sup>686</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. xc-xcii, Masai (1956), pp. 197-198.

<sup>687</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), p. 396, n. 1, Monfasani (1992), p. 48, n. 16.

<sup>688</sup> Cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 362-363.

Scholarios was the most important opponent of Gemistos in the Greek East, George of Trebizond was to play a similar role in the Latin West.<sup>689</sup> Most probably in 1456 and 1457 he wrote in Latin two important treatises<sup>690</sup> that contain an account of Gemistos' paganism and that are often accepted as a reliable source of information about it. For many reasons they deserve to be quoted in full. In 1456 in the treatise against Bessarion's associate, Theodore Gaza, Trebizond relates:

“There lived in the Peloponnese a certain man who was utterly impious and irreligious, by name Gemistos. During his lifetime he perverted many from faith in Christ to the foulest beliefs of the pagans; and on his death, which took place about two years ago, he left some books whose theme was *De Republica*, which laid down to his own satisfaction the foundations of his whole profanity. For he thought to bring it about through his writings and his eloquence that one day all men would adhere to his follies. Thus he preached, while still living, that within a few years after his death all nations would revert to the true theology of Plato. Whether it was from devilish inspiration or from the ungodliness of powerful friends that he convinced himself of this, I do not know. But much would certainly be discovered if the books came to light. It is said that they were burned or hidden by either Demetrios, prince of the Peloponnese, or his wife.”<sup>691</sup>

Two years later in his famous *Comparisons of Philosophers Aristotle and Plato* he gives even more details:

“A second Muhammad (*Machumetus*) has been born and brought up in our time who, unless we take care, will be as much more destructive than the first as Muhammad was himself more destructive than Plato.” Then Trebizond introduces Gemistos, praises his abilities and mentions that he has changed his name to Plethon, “so that we should more readily believe him to have come down from heaven, and thus the sooner adopt his doctrine and law”. He also wrote new customs of life, in which there is much against the Catholic faith. “It is known that he was so much a Platonist that he claimed that nothing other than what Plato believed about the gods, the soul, sacrifices to the gods or daemons, and all the rest, great and small, was true, and he dared to write it without restraint. I myself heard him at Florence – for he came to the Council with the Greeks – asserting that the whole world

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<sup>689</sup> On George of Trebizond *cf.* Monfasani (1976).

<sup>690</sup> *Cf.* Monfasani (1976), pp. 162-170.

<sup>691</sup> Trebizond, *Adv. Gazam* 340.15-27, transl. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 365-366.

would in a few years adopt one and the same religion, with one mind, one intelligence, one teaching. And when I asked: ‘Christ’s or Muhammad’s?’ he replied: ‘Neither, but one not differing from paganism.’ I was so shocked by these words that I hated him ever after and feared him like a poisonous viper, and I could no longer bear to see or hear him. I heard, too, from a number of Greeks who escaped here from the Peloponnese that he openly said, before he died, almost three years from now, that not many years after his death both Muhammad and Christ would be forgotten and the real truth would shine through on all the shores of the world.”<sup>692</sup>

The problem with George Trebizond’s testimony is that it is burdened with his hatred towards Plato (he was a firm Aristotelian) and to Cardinal Bessarion and his humanist circle that he believed to conspire against him. The two testimonies, just quoted, must be therefore read in this particular context. – Trebizond’s *Comparisons*, one of the main proofs that is usually quoted to illustrate Gemistos’ paganism, certainly deserves the verdict, according to which it “has an excellent claim to rank among the most remarkable mixtures of learning and lunacy ever penned.”<sup>693</sup> It starts with a relatively reasonable criticism of Plato, but at the end it culminates with an apocalyptic vision in which Trebizond claims that Christian faith is threatened by four succeeding Platos – Plato himself, Muhammad who received his education from a Platonic monk, and Gemistos Plethon, who recently preached the pagan Platonism. The fourth Plato is not named, but it may well be Bessarion, who almost became a Pope in 1455.<sup>694</sup> It therefore seems that Trebizond, apart from expressing his indignation over the news of the recently found neo-pagan book which was perhaps really genuine, attempts to involve Gemistos in his own previous personal quarrels with the circle of Bessarion and the cardinal himself, using his former teacher as a means to discredit him.

These are not, however, the only problems with Trebizond’s testimony. First, both accounts were obviously written after Gemistos’ book was confiscated and handed to Scholarios under the charge of paganism, which must have certainly provoked a scandal and attracted public attention to its author, already dead at that time. From the first text we do not, in fact, learn much more than anybody in Mistra or perhaps Constantinople would have known (but naturally not in Italy). Trebizond even does not mention here that he met Gemistos some years ago and knew about his polytheistic beliefs, as he claims later, which is strange, but still not impossible to

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<sup>692</sup> Trebizond, *Comp.* III (penultimate chapter = LEGRAND III, p. 287), transl. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 168, 366-367 (altered, cf. Monfasani (1976), p. 163, (1988), p. 119). Cf. also the English summary of the whole passage in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 366-368.

<sup>693</sup> Hankins (1991), p. 236.

<sup>694</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1976), pp. 79-84, 90-97, 108-109, 152-162, Hankins (1991), pp. 236-245.



accept. More important is thus the second text, where Trebizond speaks about his personal encounter with Gemistos. The way he describes it is, nevertheless, highly untrustworthy. First, it is far from certain that Trebizond was at that time in Florence.<sup>695</sup> We may also ask why he did not warn against such a dangerous person, as Gemistos in his eyes had been, earlier, but published the truth about him only after Scholarios publicly denounced his paganism. Furthermore, as we have seen, if Gemistos was really a pagan, he must have been very successful in concealing his true beliefs from the people around him, including the participants in the Council. But why then he would have so openly talked to Trebizond whom he scarcely knew? The conversation reported by Trebizond thus can be, at best, an *ex post* interpretation of some his, certainly more cautious and innocent, talk with Gemistos.<sup>696</sup> Furthermore, it is clear from another passage in which, similarly to Kabakes, he attributes to Gemistos the belief in the Sun and the heliolatry that Trebizond was not in fact properly informed about the type of the paganism described in the *Laws*.<sup>697</sup> Despite all his unreliability, what is still sometimes accepted as a true point of Trebizond's narrative is Gemistos' belief in the revival of paganism in the near future.<sup>698</sup> However, the similar prophetic vision is in fact already contained in the first Trebizond's text quoted above and the problem is that it is not really compatible with Gemistos' and Laonikos' conception of the history, in which fate, quite indifferently to any concrete religion, saves the just, and punishes the unjust. The belief in the recent revival of paganism suits certainly much better the apocalyptic and eschatological fears of Trebizond who even considered himself a prophet and many times in his life professed clear visions of the future, in which Plato and Aristotle had also their specific roles.<sup>699</sup>

To illustrate further this side of his character, we may quote two other, much later texts, in which he speaks about Gemistos and his connection to Bessarion. The first one is an address to the sultan Mehmet II, written in Greek probably in 1476, in which Trebizond undertakes a rather difficult task to persuade the triumphant conqueror of Constantinople to embrace Christianity:<sup>700</sup>

“Then also occurred at Rome the apostasy from Christ to Plato at the instigation of Cardinal Bessarion, who is honoured as pious by Pope Paul and by all his own people because he lives his life according to Plato and who is held in reverence by the Venetians and by King Ferrante of Naples as a saint and a wise man, or rather one should say, as an

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<sup>695</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1976), pp. 39-40.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>697</sup> Trebizond, *Adv. Gazam* 302.38-303.4, *Comp.* III (penultimate chapter), cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 367-368.

<sup>698</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1992), pp. 59-61.

<sup>699</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1976), pp. 35, 49-53, 85-103, 128-136, 140-141, 148, 183-184.

<sup>700</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

apostle and evangelist of Plato himself, and of Gemistos, who strove to paganize the Eastern Church by his own writings.”<sup>701</sup>

In 1466 he warned Sigismondo Malatesta, who, as we know, two years ago transferred the remains of Gemistos from Mistra to his paganizing temple in Rimini, against the dangerous influence the philosopher may have even after his death:<sup>702</sup>

“I told Sigismondo that unless he threw out of his city the Apollo who lives in the corpse of Gemistos, something bad would befall him. He promised to do it. He left it undone. Sickness brought him to the brink of death in Rome. He sent for me the hour he was stricken so that through the vain predictions of the astrologers I might tell him what would happen to him. Putting my trust in God, I sent the message: ‘In eight days he will be well.’ After the prophecy came true, I told him that the disease had struck him because he retained in his home the corpse of Gemistos. He promised again that as soon as he returned to Rimini, he would cast it into the sea. I praised his resolution and urged him to do it lest worse happen to him. He returned to Rimini. Again he left it undone. Again he became ill. Before I learned about it, he died [9 Oct. 1468 – J.M.]. I wrote to his wife and children why this had occurred and added that unless they fulfilled what he had promised, worse would befall them.”<sup>703</sup>

It therefore seems that the testimony of Trebizond on Gemistos is not only highly tendentious as it is the case of Scholarios, but also extremely unreliable and, in fact, it is doubtful whether it contains any independent information about his alleged paganism at all.

Having gone through the testimony of the most important contemporaries associated in diverse ways with Gemistos, we may conclude that, strangely enough, those who most resolutely accuse him of paganism or, on the contrary, admire him for it, were not, in fact, in a close contact with him and they base their accusation or admiration on the fragmentary information they had. Gemistos’ direct pupils, in contrast, do not provide any substantial evidence for his alleged paganism. Furthermore, it is highly improbable that there was any neo-pagan circle in Mistra because, again, there is no evidence that anybody of them would have been a member of it or directly influenced in this way by their allegedly pagan teacher. There are also further external indications pointing strongly against the existence of a paganizing circle in Mistra or any

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<sup>701</sup> Trebizond, *De div.* 571 (*cap.* 3), transl. *ibid.* 565-566 (*cap.* 3).

<sup>702</sup> Monfasani (1976), p. 214.

<sup>703</sup> Trebizond, *Ad Bess.* 171-172 (*cap.* 38), transl. Monfasani (1976), p. 214 (altered).

Gemistos' pagan activity there. – First, it is highly improbable that any Despot of Morea would have tolerated any unorthodox activity by Gemistos and his pupils. On the contrary, as we have seen, during his roughly forty years long stay in Mistra, Gemistos was allowed to take part in the governing of the despotate, he received several times the land in reward for his services, he was also invited to participate in the Council, and, moreover, he was buried according to the Orthodox custom.<sup>704</sup> Second, even if an extremely well concealed circle of neo-pagans really had existed in Mistra, it would have supposedly included also Gemistos' sons as well as other relatives and close associates.<sup>705</sup> In such case it is difficult to imagine, that after the death of Gemistos the *Laws*, allegedly a sacred book of a secret society, could ever have been seized by the Despot and his wife and also, as we will see, that there would have been only one copy of it. We thus have to conclude, that if Gemistos had been really a pagan polytheist, it had to be his personal belief only.<sup>706</sup>

#### 4. Change of Name

What is usually invoked as a proof of Gemistos' paganism is the change of his name to Plethon, which should have supposedly happened in 1439 in Florence during his lectures on Plato to the humanists. The name itself, which is just a classicised form of Gemistos, certainly associates its bearer with Plato.<sup>707</sup> But not only this – because, as we have seen, the metaphysical system of the *philosophia perennis* requires that the human soul is repeatedly reincarnated, “Plethon” could be also understood as the second Plato in the sense of a new reincarnation of the soul of the “divine philosopher”.<sup>708</sup>

In order to trace how this “pagan” pseudonym progressively begun to be used, we must naturally rely only on Gemistos' autographs (the manuscripts written in the hand of the author), or on the texts within which it appears, not on their headings or titles that may be easily a result of later alterations. The text in which the name “Plethon” is usually thought to be used for the

<sup>704</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), p. xxxix, Woodhouse (1986), p. 7.

<sup>705</sup> Masai (1956), pp. 306-309 *contra* Woodhouse (1986), p. 363.

<sup>706</sup> Already Kamariotes notes that Gemistos was very successful in concealing his real opinions, *In Pleth.* 218: καθὸ Πλήθων ὑπέρβαλε· βεβιωκῶς μὲν αὐτὸς ἐν ἀβελτερίᾳ παντοία, ὑπόκρισιν δ' ἐσχάτην παρὰ πάντα τὸν αὐτοῦ βίον ἐπιδειξάμενος, καὶ βιβλία τοιαῦτα καταλελοιπῶς, ἃ το γ' εἰς αὐτὸν ἤκον, πάντας ἔμελλε τῆς μακαριότητος ἀποσχοινίζειν καὶ τὰ γὰρ τοῦ, ἵνα μὴδ' ἀποθανὼν γοῦν παύσαιτο τῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων λυμαινεσθαι γένει· εἰ μὴ κἀνταῦθα μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον, παρόσον ζῶν μὲν ἔτι, δεδιῶς καὶ ὑποκρινόμενος, τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον λάγω βίον ἔζη κρυπτόμενος, καὶ μόνοις ἐκείνοις τὸν ἴον τῆς κακίας ἐγγέων, ὅσοι ἀμαγέπη αὐτῷ ἐπλησίαζον. ... ἐκρύπτετο οὖν ἔτι ζῶν, μὴ φωραθεὶς ἀσεβῶς, δίκην ἀποτίσῃ, ἣν εἰκὸς ἀποτινύειν τοὺς ἀπόνοιαν νενοσηκότας, καὶ ἐσχάτην ἀσέβειαν. ἀποθανὼν δὲ, οὐκέτι οὐδ' ὑποκρίνεται, ἀνέδην οὕτω πᾶσι νομοθετῶν, ἃ τοῖς καὶ ὀπηοῦν προσέχειν, ἢ τετολμηκόσιν, ἢ τολμῶσιν, ἢ καὶ ἅμα ἀπεύχομαι ...

<sup>707</sup> Cf. Schultze (1874), pp. 72-73, Masai (1956), pp. 384-386, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 186-188.

<sup>708</sup> Cf. Bessarion, *Ad Dem. Andr.* 469.3-8.

first time is the *Differences*, written in Florence during the Council.<sup>709</sup> However, at the beginning of the autograph, which has been preserved to us, only George Gemistos appears as the name of the author.<sup>710</sup> Thus the usage of the surname Plethon is not in fact documented until the *Defence of Aristotle*, written by Scholarios around 1444.<sup>711</sup> It is similarly absent from the headings of the autographs of the *Reply to Scholarios*<sup>712</sup> and appears in the text of this treatise in the two passages that are direct quotations from Scholarios only.<sup>713</sup> Other early occurrences are two letters of Apostolis to Argyropoulos<sup>714</sup> and Kamariotes' book,<sup>715</sup> the former written still during Gemistos' life, the latter probably shortly after his death. These three texts have been discussed above and we have seen that they all depend in some way on Scholarios. It is noteworthy that even he, when writing to Eugenikos, does not talk about Plethon, but about Gemistos.<sup>716</sup> There is no other reliable evidence that the name "Plethon" was publicly or privately used during Gemistos' life with just one important exception, which is the *Book of Laws*. According to Scholarios' thorough description provided in order to justify his decision to burn it and the reliability of which we have no reason to doubt, it was entitled: "*Plethon's First Book of Laws (Πλήθωνος Νόμων συγγραφῆς βιβλίον πρῶτον)*" and similarly in the case of the other two books.<sup>717</sup> As we have seen, at the end of the *Defence of Aristotle* Scholarios makes clear that he possesses a part of the *Laws*, presumably its beginning with the heading declaring its author. It is therefore possible that he consciously connects together the excerpts from the polytheistic book, which has first aroused his suspicion against Gemistos, with the recently published *Differences* and wrote his reply to this treatise using the name "Plethon", and not "Gemistos" under which it had appeared. This intrigue was intended to enable him to test Gemistos' real beliefs, about which, as we know, he was far from sure at this time. To a Byzantine with the classical Greek education it had to be undoubtedly clear that both names mean the same. Scholarios, in the *Defence of Aristotle*, however, pretends not to be certain whether this identification is correct. He claims that he has also heard a rumour about the book on "the best legislation" and that he has parts of it at his disposal. As he further says, the book containing it is reputedly signed by the name of Plethon, either as an attempt to conceal the identity of its author or because of his predilection for the classical word forms. He states openly that the *Differences* criticising Aristotle is not in fact so important as this book, which would be

<sup>709</sup> Masai (1956), pp. 384-385.

<sup>710</sup> *De diff.* 321.1, cf. Mioni (1985), p. 385.

<sup>711</sup> Scholarios, *Pro Arist.* *passim*.

<sup>712</sup> Cf. *Contra Schol.* 368.1 Lagarde, (= 1 Maltese), cf. Mioni (1972), p. 223, Mioni (1985), p. 385.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.* 372.2, 384.15.

<sup>714</sup> Apostolis, *Ad Arg.* I 373, *Ad Arg.* II 375.

<sup>715</sup> Kamariotes, *In Pleth.* *passim*. There is only one passage where Kamariotes uses the name Gemistos, *ibid.* 2: ὑφ' ὧν [= πονηρῶν δὲ πνευμάτων], ὡς εἰκόσ, καὶ Πλήθων ἐλληνικώτερον δῆθεν, ἐκ Γεμιστοῦ, τὴν ἀρχὴν ὀνομασθῆναι δεδίδακται ...

<sup>716</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Eugen.* 117.8.

<sup>717</sup> *Idem*, *Ad Jos.* 159.10-11.

certainly interesting to see.<sup>718</sup> It therefore really seems that Scholarios connects the recently published critique of Aristotle, whose author, Gemistos, is well known and which is in his eyes itself impious, with his information about the *Laws* written by a certain Plethon. This is confirmed by Scholarios' appeal to Gemistos. He wants him to declare that he is not Plethon, nor does he know of any Plethon writing against Christian faith, which would dispel any suspicion and refute his accusers.<sup>719</sup> If both treatises had been published under the name of Plethon, or this had been a well-known surname, Scholarios would not have had to ask this.

It therefore seems that the name Plethon was neither used publicly before Gemistos' death,<sup>720</sup> nor was his work published under it and that it was restricted solely to the *Laws*. From there or from his informers who somehow managed to see it Scholarios learnt about this name and used it throughout the *Defence of Aristotle*. From this source it became known to Apostolis as well as to Kamariotes. The latter either learnt Gemistos' secret from his teacher Scholarios himself or from the same source from which he had the chapter on fate, another text that had been surreptitiously copied from the *Laws*.

However, in the years following Gemistos' death, during the Plato-Aristotle controversy that took place among the Greek émigrés in Italy in the second half of the 1450s,<sup>721</sup> the situation changes and the texts written in Greek at that time mention exclusively Plethon.<sup>722</sup> One of the possible strands, through which this name became known might have been Kamariotes' *On Fate*, in which, as we know, the name Plethon already appears. Thus in the late 1450s Theodore Gaza wrote a treatise with a similar name,<sup>723</sup> where Plethon is mentioned. More important is that during the controversy Gemistos is never mentioned as a person influential at the court of Mistra, an eminent humanist, and teacher, or someone suspect of polytheism,<sup>724</sup> but rather as an extreme Platonist and radical anti-Aristotelian. He thus appears as an abstract character, rather than a living person and a late colleague of the debaters. The *Differences* and the *Reply to Scholarios*, the autographs of which, as we have seen, have "Gemistos" written in their headings, had to be

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<sup>718</sup> *Idem, Pro Arist.* 114.17-33.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.* 115.20-30.

<sup>720</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), p. 52.

<sup>721</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1976), pp. 152-170, 201-229, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 364-372.

<sup>722</sup> Cf. Bessarion, *Adv. Pleth.* 149.2.3.6.22.24, 150.9.10, *Ad Apost.* 511.4.10.13, 512.8.28.31, 513.13, *De nat.* 92.4.5.9.12.24, 98.16.26, 128.25 (Latin version: 93.10.25, 99.19, 129.30), *In Calumn.* 272.23.30 (Latin version: 273.16), Gaza, *Ad Bess.* 196, *De fato* 243.22.25, 244.21, *Adv. Pleth.* 153.3.10, 154.12.15.17, 155.12.19.30.34, 156.18.33, 157.1.12.26.29.32.34, 158.8, Apostolis, *Ad Gazæ* 161.13.15.22.29, 162.10.11.12.20.26.27, 164.5.11, 167.34, 168.5.8.18.35, 169.1.26.30, Kallistos, *Def. Gazæ* 171.10.27.29.33, 172.2.8.14.19.40, 174.3.16.19.20.21.24.26.31, 176.7, 178.20.22.35, 180.28, 182.3, 183.9.10, 187.24, 189.25.27.36.37, 190.3.29, 195.29, 196.4, 198.36.39, 202.32.33, 203.23. Cf. also early Arabic translation of the *Laws* where "Plethon" does not even appear at all, and only Gemistos is mentioned as the author, Nicolet-Tardieu (1980), pp. 39-40, Tardieu's appendix to *Or. mag.*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>723</sup> Gaza, *De fato*, cf. Monfasani (1976), p. 211.

<sup>724</sup> Not a really important exception is Andronikos Kallistos, who claims that Plethon does not represent a real Platonic theology, because this was genuinely Greek and Plethon's book is reported to be influenced by Zoroaster (*Def. Gazæ* 178.19-24). Kallistos might have learnt this detail already from Scholarios' *Defence of Aristotle* and even in his treatise Plethon is rather an abstract person than somebody who lived just few years ago.

gradually subsumed under the name “Plethon”, which, due to its form, was naturally very appropriate to designate a determined Platonist. However, the situation is much different when the concrete personality is meant. In this case Gemistos always comes to the fore, sometimes just with a note that he changed his name to Plethon. Trebizond thus always speaks about Gemistos, who was guilty of paganism, and only in the second place about Plethon.<sup>725</sup> Similarly, although Kabakes writes about Plethon in his personal notes, in their conversation with Bessarion they talk about Gemistos.<sup>726</sup>

It therefore seems that the name “Plethon”, which was originally restricted to the *Book of Laws*, was later, basically due to its similarity with Plato, gradually used to designate the author who with his two anti-Aristotelian treatises *On the Differences* and *Reply to Scholarios* started the whole controversy about the priority of Plato or Aristotle.

## 5. Fight for Orthodoxy

Gemistos’ *Reply in Support of Latins* is directed against the work of John Argyropoulos whom he knew well from the Council of Florence.<sup>727</sup> With a certain degree of probability we may suppose that the treatise was written around 1449 when its addressee Luke Notaras became a minister of the new (and last) Byzantine emperor Constantine XI (1449-1453) and it is likely that both parties active at that time in Byzantium, the Unionists, defending the recently signed agreement with Rome, as well as the anti-Unionists, attempted to influence the politics of the new government. Probably in this situation Gemistos was, as he says, asked (*ὑὸν κελευσθεῖς*) to defend his previous stand at the Council, or perhaps he wished to answer to the Unionist treatise by his colleague from the Council discussions himself. His reply is most probably to be dated to around 1450.<sup>728</sup> Both Scholarios<sup>729</sup> and Bessarion<sup>730</sup> then reacted to his work.

We cannot go into all the details of the theological reasoning about the Trinity developed by both thinkers, but it is certainly useful to look closely at the key arguments of Gemistos. The main target that is contested by him is Argyropoulos’ argument introduced to support the Latin position, according to which the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son alike (the problem of the *filioque*). To assure the common consubstantiality (*ὁμοούσιος*) as well as the

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<sup>725</sup> Trebizond, *Adv. Gazam* 302.39, 340.16, *Comp.* III (penultimate chapter = LEGRAND III, pp. 287-289) with the mentioning of the change of Gemistos’ name (“*is vulgo Gemistus a semetipso Pleton est agnominatus*”), *De div.* 571 (*cap.* 3), *Ad Bess.* 171-172 (*cap.* 36-39.41).

<sup>726</sup> Cf. nn. 644, 645.

<sup>727</sup> Woodhouse (1986), pp. 40-41.

<sup>728</sup> Masai (1956), p. 391, Turner (1976), pp. 61-63, Woodhouse (1986), pp. 270-272, Monfasani (1994), p. 841.

<sup>729</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Gemist.*

<sup>730</sup> Bessarion, *Contra Gemist.*

same “perfections (τελειότητες)” of the first two divine persons, Argyropoulos postulates the following principle: things with different potentialities must have also different essences (ὧν γὰρ αἱ δυνάμεις διάφοροι καὶ αὐτὰ ἂν εἶεν ταῖς οὐσίαις διάφορα), which is obviously not true about the Father and the Son.<sup>731</sup> Gemistos apparently takes this “axiom (τι ἀξίωμα)” as representing the official Latin theology. He admits that it is intended to ensure Son’s role in the procession of the Holy Spirit because if the Son did not participate in it, he would have different potentiality and, consequently, also essence than the Father. However, he criticises rather maliciously the axiom as “much convenient” for Hellenic, that is pagan, theology (Ἑλληνικῆ θεολογία καὶ μάλα φίλιον), but fundamentally opposed to the Church (τῇ δὲ Ἐκκλησίᾳ πολεμιώτατον).<sup>732</sup> This and other details as well as the overall tone of his treatise show that Gemistos does not attempt to argue against Argyropoulos only, but against Latin and pro-Unionist theology in general.

To support his criticism, he first explains that Hellenic theology (Ἑλληνικῆ θεολογία) places one God in the uppermost place of all things (ἓνα Θεὸν τὸν ἀνωτάτω τοῖς οὐσιν ἐφιστάσα). This God is himself indivisible one (ἄτομον ἓν), in contrast to the plurality of his children, of whom some are higher and some lower and each has assigned a bigger or smaller part of this universe (ἄλλον ἄλλω αὖ μείζονι ἢ μείονι τοῦ παντός τοῦδε μέρει ἐφίστησιν). Nevertheless, none of them is either equal to the Father, or similar to him because all the other essences are much lower in their divinity (θεότης). They are also called gods as well as children and the works of the highest God since the Hellenic theology does not distinguish between God’s generation and creation (οὐκ ἀξιοῦσα ἐπὶ γε τοῦ Θεοῦ γεννήσεως δημιουργίαν διακρίνειν), will and nature (βούλησιν φύσεως), or, “in general”, between activity and essence (μηδ’ οὐσίας ἐνέργειαν). The Hellenic theology presupposes that the children of the highest God are different in their divinity being lower essences (ἐτέρας δ’ οὖν θεότητος τε καὶ οὐσίας ὑποδεστέρας οἱ τοῦ ἀνωτάτω Θεοῦ παῖδες) and bases this claim on the axiom in question. According to it, the greatest difference of the potentialities may be found between the thing that exists itself through itself and the one that exists through something different (κρίνουσά τε μεγίστην δυνάμεων διαφορὰν τὴν τοῦ αὐτοῦ δι’ αὐτὸ ὄντος πρὸς τὸ δι’ ἕτερον ἢδη ὄν). As Gemistos claims, this is, nonetheless, unacceptable for the Church because, if we admit the axiom introduced by Argyropoulos, it would necessarily lead to a conclusion that the first two divine persons have different essences. This is because the Father has a potentiality to be himself through himself and is really so (ὁ μὲν αὐτὸς δι’ αὐτὸν δύναται τε εἶναι καὶ ἐστίν), whereas the Son, apart from other

<sup>731</sup> Argyropoulos, *De proc.* 118.10-119.6, cf. Monfasani (1994), pp. 842-843.

<sup>732</sup> *Contra Lat.* 300.

differences between them, is not any more himself through himself, but through the Father (*ὁ δ' οὐκέτι αὐτὸς δι' αὐτὸν, διὰ δὲ τὸν Πατέρα ἐστίν*).<sup>733</sup>

According to Gemistos, there is, in fact, one essence (*οὐσία*) of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, but three different persons, each distinguished from the other two by its individual properties (*ιδιότητες*). There are thus some features that are common to each of them – essence (*οὐσία*) and nature (*φύσις*), creation of the world (*ἡ δημιουργία τῆς κτίσεως*), providence (*πρόνοια*), being the principle of the universe (*ἡ τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχή*), and so on. However, there are likewise also some properties that cannot be attributed to all of them alike and which belong to one or two individual persons of the Trinity only. Such is also the property of “having been caused (*τὸ ... αἰτιατόν*)” that is not common to the whole Trinity but just to the Son and the Spirit, who have been caused by generation (*γεννητῶς*) and procession (*ἐκπορευτῶς*) respectively. As a result of these considerations Gemistos states a different axiom which he claims to be compatible with the teaching of the Church (*οὐ τῶν τῆ Ἐκκλησίας πολεμίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ μάλα φίλιον*) and according to which nothing can produce himself but what is being produced must be different from its producer or, more generally, what is being caused must be different from its cause (*οὐκ ἔστιν ὅ,τι αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ δύναται προβάλλειν, ἀλλ' ἕτερον ἀεὶ δεῖ εἶναι τοῦ γε προβάλλοντος τὸ προβαλλόμενον, καὶ ὅλως αἰτίου αἰτιατόν*).<sup>734</sup> This conclusion then enables Gemistos to show that the Spirit must be produced not by the essence common to all the divine persons but by one or two other members of the Trinity. If he were produced by the essence which is common (*κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν κοινὴν οὔσαν*) to them all, he would produce himself, which is impossible (due to the axiom just stated by Gemistos), or he would have a different essence, which would be heretical. However, if the Spirit were produced by both the Father and the Son alike their persons would be somehow coalesced (*συναλοιφή*), which means that we would get a Holy Dyad. Conversely, if he were produced by two different acts, or the Son served as a by-cause (*συναίτιον*) to the main production by the Father, the Spirit would suffer an inner division (*διαφνή*) and the result would be a Tetrad. This is because if the Father were not capable of producing the Spirit himself and had to be supported by the Son, the Spirit would have from each of them something different (*τὸ μὲν τι ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τὸ δ' ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἴσχον*).<sup>735</sup> According to Gemistos, his views are supported by various saints and theologians (he mentions John of Damascus, Dionysius Areopagite, Justin Martyr, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Cyril of Alexandria, who are, as he claims, often misunderstood or misinterpreted by the Latins). Another support he finds in the Scripture he quotes.<sup>736</sup>

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<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.* 302-303.

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.* 304.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.* 305-306.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.* 307-309.



Gemistos then complains that the manner by which the Council of Florence achieved the Union of the Eastern and Western Church was not fair – “because in Italy, when our delegates concluded the Union, they were not defeated by arguments to conclude it, but we know how the Union was concluded (ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ, ὅτε οἱ ἡμέτεροι ἐκείνοις συνέθεντο, οὐ τῷ λόγῳ ἠττηθῆναι καὶ συνέθεντο, ἀλλ’ ἴσμεν ὃν τρόπον συνέθεντο)”. Some of them joined the Latin side because they thought it would be profitable for Byzantium. However, not everything that seems profitable in the end really proves so and sometimes, on the contrary, it can even cause a great damage. Furthermore, such approach in fact equals with not believing that the God cares about human affairs (τὸν Θεὸν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων προνοεῖν). Many Byzantines, nonetheless, share this belief because their affairs are in a bad state for a long time and thus there is no wonder that the God let their enemies to prosper and leaves them to perish, since many of their enemies have the opinion that he cares about human affairs embedded more firmly in their souls. The impiety in this point cannot be counterbalanced by a piety in another one since one either accepts the belief that the God presides over us (ἐφιστάναι ἡμᾶς), or refuses it. But then it is natural that God let such people perish, as can be shown on many examples from the past – the nations prosper or perish according to whether they attach to the opinion about the divine providential care (σὺν τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ προνοίας δόξῃ), or refuse it. The proof of this is that those who keep their oath prosper, while those who break it perish. The Byzantines cannot be saved unless we correct every wrong opinion about the God, not by concluding a Union with the Latins.<sup>737</sup> In other words, the contemporaries of Gemistos are in his eyes guilty of the second type of atheism he, as we have seen, systematically criticizes since his very first works.

The treatise about the procession of the Holy Spirit is certainly very difficult to put into the context of other Gemistos’ writings. Most interpreters tend to think that he is trying to gain favour of the anti-Unionist party and hide his own opinion here, having in fact no serious interest in the problem of the Trinitarian debate.<sup>738</sup> Scholarios seems to be also of the same opinion and, as we have seen, the long letter of congratulation he sent to Gemistos with many tirades against the ancient Greek polytheism should be most probably read as a hidden threat and (the second) attempt to find out what his real religious beliefs were.<sup>739</sup> Scholarios must have been certainly convinced that the main intention of the treatise seemingly consecrated to the problems of Christian theology is just to dispel the suspicion he expressed in *Defence of Aristotle*, which, as it is

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<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.* 309-311.

<sup>738</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 321, 325-327, Woodhouse (1986), p. 273, Monfasani (1994), p. 833-834.

<sup>739</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Gemist.*, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 278-282.

clear from his letter, was already known to Gemistos at this moment who, moreover, had just finished his *Reply to Scholarios*.<sup>740</sup>

However, if it were really so, it would not be very wise of Gemistos to talk about the Hellenic theology at the beginning of his treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit instead of concentrating strictly on the problems of the Christian religion. Furthermore, if he is not being serious here in criticizing Hellenic theology and in reality accepts it as his own, his behaviour is hardly understandable. – Why, when attending the Council, he simply did not join the Latins if their theology is really closer to the Hellenic beliefs as he asserts in the treatise in question and defended the anti-Unionist side instead? Is not it possible that, despite his alleged paganism, he in fact adhered to the Orthodox position clearly professed in it and intended his treatise as a contribution to the theological discussion that was going on after the Council till the end of the Byzantine Empire? Bessarion's opposition to Gemistos' argumentation may perhaps help to settle this question and it shows, once again, that it is not only Argyropoulos' treatise, but wider theological problems which are at stake. His reply has not got a form of a finished text, but consists of short remarks that probably originated as marginal notes to Gemistos' treatise and were then obviously sent back to him because Gemistos reacts to them in a short letter.<sup>741</sup> Bessarion resolutely and quite naturally refuses the axiom that, according to Gemistos, lies behind the fallacy of the Latins. – He thus claims that, what may be attributed to one divine person in the Trinity must be indeed common also to the other two, but only under the condition that it is not in a contradiction with some of its individual property (*ιδιότης*). The axiom contested by Gemistos should thus be restated as follows: what has the same essence, has indeed the same potentiality too, unless this potentiality contains something which is in a contradiction with the individual property of one of them [i.e. the persons of the Trinity] (*τὰ αὐτῆς οὐσίας καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἐστὶ δυνάμει εἰ μὴ τι τοιοῦτον ἐκείνη περιέχοιτο τῇ δυνάμει ὃ τῇ τινος ἐκείνων ἀντίκειται ιδιότητι*).<sup>742</sup>

We may skip Bessarion's technical argumentation and just mention that he wonders why Gemistos was silent in Italy<sup>743</sup> and claims that Byzantines at the Council did not listen to rational arguments.<sup>744</sup> Interesting is also the final comment directed to Gemistos' remark that the enemies of the Christians have more firmly embedded in their soul the belief about the divine providential care (*προνοεῖν*). Bessarion, in order not to be impolite, as he says, refuses to speak against the opinion that those “who follow the Arabian sophist”, that is, Muhammad, “will due to their piety

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<sup>740</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Gemist.* 118.31 *sqq.*

<sup>741</sup> Monfasani (1994), pp. 838-841.

<sup>742</sup> *Contra Gemist.* 1, 5.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.* 21.

<sup>744</sup> *Ibid.* 22.

... prevail over those who are called after Christ”, that means, the Christians.<sup>745</sup> In his answer to Bessarion Gemistos leaves it to the readers to decide whether Bessarion says something reasonable (τι καὶ νοῦν ἔχον) or “whether he managed to penetrate into what is usually for you”, that is, presumably the Latins and Unionists, “impenetrable (ἄλλως ἐς τὰ εἰωθότα ὑμῖν ἄδυστα καταδύεις)”. He then explains that he was silent in Italy because he thought that it was not appropriate for him to speak about these matters there leaving it to the priests (τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν) and now he has written his treatise because he was “asked” to do so (νοῦν κελευσθεῖς). During the Council they would not have even allowed him to speak because the present patriarch was often saying that the unordained persons should not discuss theological issues. Furthermore, Mark Eugenikos, who was sufficiently arguing about these matters was never defeated but only ordered to be silent so that the Unionists might achieve what they wanted. At the Council there were other things that were unjust and those who concluded the Union were not persuaded by arguments because when they came back to Greece they retracted what they had agreed on, “with an exception of very few and I will be silent about what our people think of them because of you”.<sup>746</sup>

What is remarkable in this discussion between Gemistos and his pupil, who gradually became the main proponent of the Union, is certainly its agitated tone. Gemistos seems to be entirely engaged in the problem of the Procession of the Holy Spirit as well as of the Union, something we would not expect of somebody who tries to hide his secret pagan beliefs and is not, in fact, interested in Christian theology and politics at all. As we have just seen, at the end of his letter he goes even so far as to offend his pupil who despite all the criticism is otherwise very polite to him, and generally behaves as somebody who think that the suppressed and silenced truth is on his side. Unlike the original treatise, Bessarion’s comments and Gemistos’ reply were not intended for the general public, so it is improbable that Gemistos just pretends here to be scandalized by the Latins merely in order to conceal his real opinions. Conversely, when Bessarion argues with Gemistos, it seems that he considers him to be a perfectly orthodox Christian, with just a small reservation concerning the providential care that might favour the enemies of the Christians, which is otherwise a theme appearing also in his teacher’s public philosophy. We should also note that this debate took place just few years before Gemistos’ death after which Bessarion sent to his sons the famous letter of consolation filled with the paganizing imagery and which we have already discussed above. Thus, although he shares Gemistos’ admiration for the ancient culture and appreciates his knowledge of it, Bessarion at the

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<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.* 24.

<sup>746</sup> *Contra Bess.* 311-312.

same time seems to regard him as a faithful member of the anti-Unionist party and does not appear to hesitate about the sincerity of his Christian faith.

Indeed, if we go back to the discussions at the Council of Ferrara-Florence,<sup>747</sup> it is obvious that Gemistos is critical towards Catholics and especially towards their position in this dogmatic dispute from the very beginning.<sup>748</sup> In the texts related to the Council he appears in a slightly more significant way only in the *Memoirs* of Sylvester Syropoulos, written some time after 1444,<sup>749</sup> where he is often called the sage Gemistos (ὁ σοφὸς Γεμιστός). He is recorded there to recall in Ferrara a warning he gave to the Emperor twelve years before that during the voting at a possible council in Italy the Byzantines would risk to be outvoted by the Latin majority.<sup>750</sup> Along with his former pupil, the anti-Unionist Mark Eugenikos, he proposes to begin the discussions about the procession of the Holy Spirit with the question whether the addition of the *filioque* to the Latin text of the Creed is justified, and not by the problem of the Western doctrines because, according to them, the former was the main cause and the origin of the schism.<sup>751</sup> He replies to cardinal Cesarini, who has presented the text of the Acts of the Seventh Council containing the *filioque*, that if it has been really a genuine part of the Creed since that time, he does not understand why Thomas Aquinas and other Latin authors would have spent so much time defending the justifiability of its addition and why they never mention that it is so ancient.<sup>752</sup> Before proceeding to the discussion of the Western doctrine he advises the Byzantine delegation to adopt a careful tactic preparing themselves well beforehand for the probable argumentation of the Latins and allowing the discussion only if the reasons of the Greek party are stronger.<sup>753</sup> Furthermore, when asked by the patriarch whether the Catholics or the Orthodox are right in this matter, according to Syropoulos, he answered:

“None of us should be in any doubt about what our side is saying. For see, we hold our doctrine in the first place from our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and secondly from the

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<sup>747</sup> For the role Gemistos played at the Council in Ferrara and Florence and in Italy in general *cf.* Woodhouse (1986), pp. 130-188.

<sup>748</sup> V. Laurent, J. Gill and C.M. Woodhouse think that at one point during the negotiations Gemistos submitted, on the demand by the Emperor, a written declaration in favour of the compromise with the Latins. They claim this on the ground that all the members of the Greek delegation were asked to do so and only Mark Eugenikos is said to refuse. (Laurent (1952), Gill (1959), pp. 260-261, Gill (1964), p. 258, Woodhouse (1986), p. 174.) However, this is only an argument *ex silentio* and, on the basis of our records, we cannot be sure whether Gemistos really agreed with the *filioque* at a certain point, perhaps even forced by the Emperor. We have also keep in mind, as he himself later writes to Bessarion, that he did not feel authorised to discuss the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit (*Contra Bess.* 312). Be it as it may, even if he was really forced to agree with the aforementioned compromise, he would not probably have felt obliged by this involuntary consent.

<sup>749</sup> Gill (1959), p. xi, *cf.* Gill (1964), p. 149

<sup>750</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VI,19] 312.1-17, *cf.* Woodhouse (1986), pp. 111-112.

<sup>751</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VI,21] 316.27-30, *cf.* Woodhouse (1986), pp. 140.

<sup>752</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VI,31] 330.17-332.8, *cf.* Woodhouse (1986), pp. 141-142.

<sup>753</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VII,16] 366.13-22, *cf.* Woodhouse (1986), p. 144.

Apostle; and these are the foundations of our faith on which all our teachers base themselves. Since therefore our teachers adhere to the foundations of the faith and do not deviate in the slightest, and since the foundations are absolutely clear, no one should have any doubt about what they say. If anyone is in doubt about these matters, I do not know how he can prove his faith. For even those who disagree with us do not doubt what our Church holds and proclaims, since they admit that what we say is valid and wholly true, and they feel obliged to prove that their own views coincide with ours. So no one who belongs to our Church should be in any doubt about our doctrine, when even those who differ from us are not. As for the Latins' doctrine, there is nothing unreasonable about calling it in question, and doing so perhaps where it is subject to examination and proof, for it would be another matter where their doctrine is completely irreconcilable with our own.”

As Syropoulos relates, Gemistos said to the patriarch more in the similar manner about the procession of the Holy Spirit in order to reassure him about the position of the Eastern Church.<sup>754</sup> Furthermore, when, before the discussion about the purgatory, the Emperor asked the Byzantine delegation to free themselves of the preconceptions and not to consider the Latin doctrine to be false, nor the Greek one to be true, but doubt similarly both until they are examined, Gemistos, according to Syropoulos said to “us” and especially to his pro-Unionist pupil Bessarion:

“In all the years I have known the Emperor, I never heard a more deplorable remark from him than what he has just said. For if we are to be doubtful about the doctrine of our Church, there is no reason to believe its teaching; and what could be worse than that?”<sup>755</sup>

And just before the beginning of the discussions about the Procession of the Holy Spirit, Gemistos is supposed to say: “This day will bring us either life or death.”<sup>756</sup> Whenever he then – very rarely – took part in the discussions he is always recorded to adopt a rather anti-Union stand,<sup>757</sup> and once was even offended by George Amiroutzes when he was trying to defend Eugenikos who violently disputed with this pro-Unionist Greek. According to Syropoulos, “everybody was amazed that the Emperor did not thereupon rebuke Amiroutzes for his insolence, nor did he say a word of consolation to the good Gemistos (ὁ πάντ’ ἄριστος

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<sup>754</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VII.17] 366.23-368.7, transl. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 144-145.

<sup>755</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VII.18] 368.8-16, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 145, cf. [VII.28] 380.24-27.

<sup>756</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VII.21] 370.24, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 146.

<sup>757</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [VIII.34] 420.19, [VIII.39] 426.10.15, cf. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 172-173.

Γεμιστός)”.<sup>758</sup> Finally, in order to express his disagreement, he, together with Scholarios, joined the Despot Demetrios and left Florence before the official signing of the Union.<sup>759</sup>

In Syropoulos’ *Memoirs*, written about five years after the Council, Gemistos, who appears only scarcely in his narrative and cannot certainly be regarded as one of the most important participants, is thus portrayed as an honest and rather sympathetic figure. This is not surprising since Syropoulos’ chronicle was intended to support the anti-Unionist cause and to excuse the failure of the Byzantine delegation. For this reason the heroes of the day are the firm anti-Unionists, especially Mark Eugenikos, but also to a certain degree his teacher Gemistos, who did not yield the pressure of the Latins. The point which is important for us is that Syropoulos regards Gemistos as perfectly orthodox as it is shown by his few interventions which the historian records and which have been quoted here at length. It might be, again, objected that Gemistos was only trying to conceal his real pagan inclinations by a pretended Orthodox zeal. This explanation is, however, once again, not very convincing. Adopting, along with Eugenikos, an anti-Unionist position, he certainly did not please very much the Emperor who desperately needed the union of the Churches in order to get the military help from the West. If Gemistos were just an opportunist, we might, once more, expect that, in contrast, he would have adopted a pro-Latin stand or would have simply remained silent as far as the religious beliefs were concerned. In fact, in Syropoulos’ account we see that he was highly critical towards the Latins, declaring himself firmly persuaded of the truth of the Orthodox side, and especially interested in the problem of the addition of the *filioque* as well as the procession of the Holy Spirit. He is thus very consequent in his interest in this dogmatic question since the very beginning until his treatise written at the end of the 1440s and, as it appears, he is also absolutely serious. It might be perhaps suggested that his motivation for adopting such a firm Orthodox stand may still be just a result of his pagan philosophical beliefs, namely, his conviction about the providential care of the God that must not be abused by the mistrust and unjust behaviour and that is expressed also in the texts just discussed. This opinion is certainly behind both his treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit and what, according to Syropoulos, he says and does at the Council. Nevertheless, this does not manage to explain why the Trinitarian theology seems to him relevant at all, and why, as we have seen, the Latin position, claimed by him to be more close to the Hellenic beliefs, should be rejected.

Another important philosophical treatise written by Gemistos at this time, the *Reply to Scholarios*, fits also well to the picture just sketched. Its addressee, who, as we have seen, intended his *Defence*

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<sup>758</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [IX.12] 446.17-21, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 173.

<sup>759</sup> Syropoulos, *Mem.* [IX.25] 460.22-25, cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 175.

of Aristotle as a test of Gemistos' orthodoxy and a means how to frighten and discourage him from his alleged pagan activities, must have been probably surprised by the fierceness of the counter-attack. The author of the *Reply to Scholarios* certainly does not seem to be scared by his accusation, as might have been somebody with a bad conscience who tries to hide his secret beliefs. In the *Differences* he takes rather neutral position towards specific religious questions although he makes clear that he does not necessarily agree in everything with Plato.<sup>760</sup> Here, in contrast, Gemistos repeatedly points out that, compared to Aristotle, Plato's philosophy is more in accord with Christianity, without, again, maintaining the same in all the points.<sup>761</sup> There are thus some passages in which he distinguishes between Platonism and Christianity or speaks in favour of the latter. As we have seen above, Simplicius is presented in this treatise as someone who conceived his doctrine about the harmony of Plato and Aristotle against the Church.<sup>762</sup> Although elsewhere<sup>763</sup> Gemistos accepts Plutarch's claim that Zoroaster lived 5000 years before the Trojan war, he says here that this dating is not credible (οὐ πιστόν)<sup>764</sup> obviously because it would be in a conflict with the traditional Byzantine date of the creation of the world.<sup>765</sup> He mocks Scholarios, who accuses him of writing his treatise against the Christians, by saying that if he really adheres to an Aristotelian axiom he defends, it means that he belongs to the Arian and not to "our" (καθ' ἡμᾶς) Church.<sup>766</sup> In the reply to a Scholarios' reproach, he says that he know well which divine inspirations (ἐνθουσιασμοί) and which human reasoning (λόγοι ἀνθρώπινοι) should be accepted and which should not.<sup>767</sup> Gemistos also shows certain distance towards Plato's doctrine of the reincarnation which, similarly to what he claims in the *Laws*,<sup>768</sup> is for him here a necessary conclusion if one maintains both the eternity of the world and the immortality of the human soul (the number of the souls has to be finite and so they have to descend into bodies again and again). However, at the same time he does not refuse it explicitly and only tells Scholarios to leave it to more competent critics.<sup>769</sup> This all may support an impression that also here Gemistos talks as a Christian who just comments Plato's philosophy.

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<sup>760</sup> *De diff.* X 334.22: "without following Plato on this subject [i.e. the theory of Forms]", transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 205.

<sup>761</sup> *Contra. Schol.* II 370.7-23, IV 374.24-376.10, VIII 390.3-392.9.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.* II 370.7-23.

<sup>763</sup> *Or. mag.* 19.20-22, *Leg.* 252 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>764</sup> *Contra Schol.* V 378.16-18.

<sup>765</sup> In his astronomical treatise Gemistos dates the return of Herakleidai, which according to tradition took place only few decades after the fall of Troy, to 1103 BC ("1102"), cf. Merciers' commentary to *Meth.*, pp. 228-229. This would mean that Zoroaster lived earlier than 6600 BC. However, at the same time he accepts 5508 BC as the traditional Byzantine date of the creation of the world, *ibid.* 64, 68, 78, cf. also his correspondence with Bessarion, *Ad Gemist.* II 464.37, and Grumel (1958), pp. 219-220. Cf. also Tambrun-Krasker (2001), p. 175, Codoñer (2005), p. 99.

<sup>766</sup> *Contra Schol.* VIII 390.3-392.9.

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.* IX 392.10-17.

<sup>768</sup> *Leg.* 250-252, 256-260 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>769</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXV 442.20-444.27.

We have thus seen, that if we were to judge just from Syropoulos' account of Gemistos' behaviour at the Council, his treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit, and from the *Reply to Scholarios* (including boldness of its tone), the necessary conclusion would be that we have to do with an Orthodox Christian. Gemistos thus seems to be interested, mainly for the religious reasons, in Trinitarian theology, he consistently defends it at the Council as well as later in a special treatise, he is also critical of the conditions under which the Union was concluded, and he is treated as a serious Christian by his pupil Bessarion. The last one is for us an extremely important testimony for assessing Gemistos' orthodoxy, because, being a close associate of his, he had to know very well about his religious beliefs whereas, as we have seen, he shared with him the admiration for ancient thought, not even hesitating to resort to "paganizing" imagery without, however, showing any trace of real paganism.

There is, however, one serious thing that speaks against Gemistos' Christianity, namely, his *Laws*, written in an apparently very pagan tone, being, as we have seen, the source of Scholarios' accusation. Before reaching the final conclusion on Gemistos' religious beliefs we have therefore examine the intentions behind this, definitely very unusual, text.

## 6. The Book

In order to understand well the *Laws* of Plethon (and not, as we have seen, by Gemistos) it is, first, appropriate to summarize what we know about this text. According to Scholarios, who provided its detailed description before he let it burn, it was divided into three parts or books in the ancient sense of the word. Each of them was preceded by a long list of the topics treated in it (*ὑποδέσεις ... πολλαί, καθάπερ ἐν πίνακι*), which correspond exactly to that edited at the beginning of the modern edition of *Laws*.<sup>770</sup> Each book had also a heading: "*Plethon's First Book of Laws (Πλήθωνος Νόμων συγγραφήs βιβλίον πρῶτον)*" and so forth,<sup>771</sup> all beginning with the same general introductory sentence.<sup>772</sup> We are told by Scholarios that "the whole book was written in his hand".<sup>773</sup> It was therefore Gemistos' autograph and the source for all the copies which seems to have been sometimes made, with his consent or not. When Scholarios was destroying it, he spared just the list of topics, which were bound to the boards of the book (*τοὺς τῶν ὑποδέσεων πίνακας μόνους ἀφήκαμεν ταῖς σανίσι μένειν προσδεμένους*), and the hymns to "his gods" in

<sup>770</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 157.37-159.12, cf. *Leg.* 6-14.

<sup>771</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 159.10-12, cf. *Leg.* 16.

<sup>772</sup> *Τάδε συγγέγραπται περὶ νόμων τε καὶ πολιτείας τῆς ἀρίστης, ἣ ἂν διανοούμενοι ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἄττ' ἂν καὶ ἰδία καὶ κοινῇ μετιόντες τε καὶ ἐπιτηδεύοντες, ὡς δυνατόν, ἀνθρώπων κάλλιστά τε καὶ ἀρίστα βιῶεν, καὶ ἐς ὅσον οἶόν τε, εὐδαιμονέστατα*, Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 159.13-17, cf. *Leg.* 16.

<sup>773</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Jos.* 171.37.



order to justify the decision he had made. He tore off the rest (τὸ δ' ἄλλο πᾶν ἀποσπασθέν) and burnt it in public.<sup>774</sup> From Scholarios' description, we can also try to estimate the approximate length of the book. According to his testimony, it took him entire four hours, “the shortest part of one day”, to “go through (ἐπήλθομεν)” the whole book.<sup>775</sup> He also says that the chapters about offerings, hymns, and allocutions (τὰ δὲ περὶ θυσιῶν καὶ ὕμνων εἰς τοὺς αὐτοῦ θεοὺς καὶ προσρήσεων), that means, presumably chapters III,34-39 in the modern edition, constituted “almost one third of the book (τὸ τρίτον σχεδὸν τοῦ βιβλίου μέρους)”.<sup>776</sup> We may perhaps suppose, that the huge chapters III,34-36, which have been preserved in their entirety, and which are apparently a part of the text spared by Scholarios,<sup>777</sup> represent the majority of “almost one third” of the *Laws*. What is missing from it are only three technical chapters (III,37-39) on the right offering, the titles of which we know from the list of topics and which seem to be much shorter than the hymns and especially the allocutions. If the entire chapter III,36 on calendar,<sup>778</sup> which is also very technical, has roughly a little more than 10 pages of the modern edition, the length of chapters III,37-39 should not then exceed 30 pages, and even this number may be somehow exaggerated. Now, in the modern edition chapters III,34-36 have some 70 pages, and so, if we add other 30, “almost one third of the *Laws*” will equal with about 100 pages. It therefore seems that the whole book was a little longer than 300 pages<sup>779</sup> whereas the modern edition have 130 pages, which means that we have some 43 percent of the book, that is, nearly a half of it.<sup>780</sup> The allocutions to gods is a very long chapter, and so, if the text of only 15 chapters out of 101 listed in the list of topics is preserved,<sup>781</sup> this would mean that most of those that have been lost had to be really short.<sup>782</sup> On the whole, we thus have not as bad knowledge of Gemistos' book as it is often assumed, because it seems that a substantial part of it has come down to us. This enables us to guess that the missing parts of the book were probably not so much different (for instance more open for an interpretation that would be in better agreement with Christianity) than the rest.<sup>783</sup>

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.* 171.37-172.3.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.* 160.4-5, cf. Monfasani (1992), pp. 49-50.

<sup>776</sup> *Ad Theod.* 154.22-23.

<sup>777</sup> *Leg.* 58-60 [III,36], 132-240 [III,34-36], together with *Add.* 118v.21-123.17 and 240.13-133.4, cf. Masai (1956), pp. 395, n. 2, 399-400. In the manuscript tradition the allocutions and the hymns seem to form a compact and independent whole. For instance, the *Additus* 5424, kept in British Library, starts with them (101-134) and the beginning of the book, including the table of the topics and some preserved initial chapters, follow only afterwards (134v-146). Furthermore, the early translation of the *Laws* into Arabic includes exclusively these three chapters, cf. Nicolet-Tardieu (1980), pp. 45-49.

<sup>778</sup> In the Alexandre's edition only a part of it is published (cf. the references in the preceding note).

<sup>779</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1992), pp. 49-50, where the approximate length of *The Book of Laws* is estimated to about 240 pages on the basis of the speed of Scholarios' reading.

<sup>780</sup> There are roughly 12-13 unpublished pages from chapters III,34 and 36 preserved in *Add.*, which, for our purposes, were calculated into the length of what was “almost one third” of the *Laws*.

<sup>781</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), pp. 394-400.

<sup>782</sup> Cf. Schultze (1874), pp. 121-122, Masai (1956), p. 395, n. 1, Monfasani (1992), p. 50.

<sup>783</sup> Cf. Monfasani (1992), pp. 49-52, *contra* Kristeller (1972), p. 97.

Another feature of Plethon's book is its apparently unordered composition. Already Scholarios complains about the disorder of the list of topics, which, according to him, is not a sign of a wise man.<sup>784</sup> The themes in the chapter headings as well as in the extant texts often recur, the digressions and repetitions of the same thought in the later chapters are also frequent. This is in contrast to other Gemistos' writings which usually have an elaborated and meticulous composition (perhaps with the exception of the *Differences* written during a very short time in Florence, the structure of which would be perhaps closest to the disorder in some chapters of the *Laws*). Furthermore, from the list of topics it seems that book I formed a closed whole with a clear arrangement – after an introduction (chapter I,1-5) Plethon provides a general description of the levels of reality (6-13) including man, then he discusses ethics (14-16), and political and religious prescriptions (17-26), after which he concludes the whole book with the chapters devoted again partly to metaphysics (27-31). Book II begins once more with the similar themes that were discussed already in book I and from the list of topics it seems that they are treated in more detail. However, ethical and political chapters, that is, the legislation proper, are absent. They reappear in book III, which starts with two chapters that “take up again (*Ἀνάληψις*)” the reasoning about fate and the immortality of the human soul. After ethics (3-13) there is a series of chapters devoted to practical legislation (14-20), which are followed by the chapters on theological and metaphysical questions (21-23), once more, ethics (24-28), economics (29-30), and punishments (31). The whole book III ends with the chapters on gods and their veneration, including the allocutions and hymns to them (32-42), the very last chapter (43) being *Epinomis*, which brings Plethon's *Laws* close to Plato's dialogue bearing the same name.<sup>785</sup> It has been suggested that book I and books II-III were in fact two separate units,<sup>786</sup> however, this does not explain why they were both contained in the same manuscript and numbered, as it is confirmed also by Scholarios, from I to III. It seems therefore more probable to suppose that we have to do here with a kind of a loose composition, where the chapters, although organized in a certain order, are to some extent self-sufficient. This is certainly true about the allocutions and hymns or the *Epinomis*. It also seems that chapter II,6 *On Fate* circulated as a separate treatise, because, as we have seen, Kamariotes had it at his disposal. It has been assumed that it was diffused in a close circle of Gemistos' associates, however, it seems improbable that it would have been ever officially published during Gemistos' life.<sup>787</sup> Its content was – as the rest of the *Laws* – apparently

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<sup>784</sup> Scholarios, *Ad Theod.* 154.12-13, 157.37-158.1.

<sup>785</sup> *Leg.* 6-14.

<sup>786</sup> Masai (1956), pp. 402-404, thus on the basis of the presumed development of Gemistos' ethics, distinguishes two successive redactions, the first (book I) before the Council of Florence, the second (books II-III) after it. Tambrun-Krasker (1998), p. 273, goes as far as to proposing that “chaque livre du *Traité des lois* correspond donc plutôt à une étape ou à un niveau de son programme d'enseignement”. Cf. also Monfasani (1992), pp. 50-51.

<sup>787</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. xc-xcii, Masai (1956), pp. 197-198.

pagan<sup>788</sup> and it is also probable that Scholarios would have mentioned or used it in some way, when he was trying to unveil the mystery of his paganism.<sup>789</sup> As we have seen above, it is similarly clear, that Scholarios somehow got hold of the beginning of the *Book of Laws*. This all supports the conclusion that the *Book of Laws* was a collection of rather independent essays. They were, however, on the whole united by the same philosophical views and ordered according to certain pattern (into book I and books II-III).

We may also suppose that there was just one manuscript of the *Laws*, written in Gemistos' hand, from which some copies had been made. It seems that by burning just this exemplar Scholarios successfully managed to prevent the diffusion of the book any further – we do not know about any other burning and the first editors of it, Kabakes and Apostolis, tried to collect as many fragments as possible to reconstruct the text.<sup>790</sup> If there was just one original manuscript, that is, the personal exemplar of Gemistos, from which some semi-independent parts circulated separately, we may then perhaps conclude that the composition of the *Laws* was evolutive. When Gemistos finished the individual chapters, he might have transcribed them in his personal exemplar and progressively arranged them into three books. This conclusion could be possibly supported by the fact that, as we have seen, according to Scholarios, each book had its independent list of topics at its beginning.<sup>791</sup> (Gemistos might have left a blank page at the beginning of each book on which he progressively added the titles of the finished chapters, which he had transcribed into the manuscript.)

This leads to another important question concerning the date when the book was written. It is often assumed, that Gemistos was working on the *Laws* most intensively after his return to Mistra from the Council.<sup>792</sup> We have nevertheless seen that the change of his name to Plethon, which appears at the heading of each books, has probably nothing to do with this event and with the publication of the *Differences*. There is in fact no reason which would exclude the possibility that Gemistos had started writing it much earlier, before his journey to Italy.<sup>793</sup> On the contrary, placing this work into his last years brings some significant difficulties. – The book would have had to be written when he was supposedly over eighty and certainly very old. Although we know that he was literarily active until his last days and was able to compose such a long treatise as the *Reply to Scholarios* or to discuss with Bessarion on the procession of the Holy Spirit, not mentioning other shorter, occasional texts, the book of the *Laws*, nonetheless, exceeds all these

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<sup>788</sup> Exactly due to its pagan tone, Johannes Sophianos while translating it into Latin for the Cardinal Nicholas Cusanus, quite significantly “skips a mention of Zeus, and consistently renders the plural *θεοί* with the singular *deus*”, Kristeller (1970), pp. 26-27.

<sup>789</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), p. 396, n. 1, Monfasani (1992), p. 48, n. 16.

<sup>790</sup> Cf. Masai-Masai (1954), p. 554, Masai (1956), p. 394, n. 6, p. 398, n. 1, Woodhouse (1986), p. 363.

<sup>791</sup> *Leg.* 2-14.

<sup>792</sup> Cf. Alexandre (1858), pp. xix-xxi, Masai (1956), pp. 401-404, Woodhouse (1986), pp. ix, 318-321, 357.

<sup>793</sup> Cf. Masai (1956), p. 401, Theodorakopoulos (1977), pp. 19-20.

works by its enormous length. Furthermore, if we locate the most important part of Gemistos' literary activity after the year 1439, there will not remain much texts written before this date. Was he so absorbed by his political and teaching obligations, that he had no time for writing down his philosophy? This is only hardly credible.

We have seen that Scholarios had certainly some passages from the beginning of the *Laws* at his disposal around 1444. If the *Laws*, at least in their part, were really written before the Council of Florence, we may perhaps be thus able to detect some thought or text parallels between various chapters of his book and other texts by Gemistos that we are able to date more or less certainly.<sup>794</sup> If the composition of the *Laws* was indeed evolutive, as it has just been suggested, we should be able to observe the progress of Gemistos' work.

(I) The first obvious parallel that may be pointed out is the classification of the three types of atheism and corresponding three basic principles concerning the divine, inspired by book X of Plato's *Laws*, that, as we have seen, appears in the *Address to Theodore* from 1416-1418 and in the *Laws* I,1. In both cases the similar vocabulary is used, nevertheless, although the texts contain the same doctrine they are not identical.<sup>795</sup> (II) Another parallel is rather a similar motive appearing in two different texts, not a close textual similarity. In the oration *On Cleope* from 1433 it is claimed that God would not have given us the ability to know him, by which we are somehow akin to him, as well as the desire for everlastingness, if we had not been capable of achieving it. It is, similarly, asserted in the *Laws* I,3 that gods would not have made us able to inquire into the divine things, if it would have been a vain task.<sup>796</sup>

(III) The next parallel is much more obvious. – In the *Differences* IV and X from 1439 as well as in the *Laws* I,5 not only similar words, but also expressions are used to describe the gradual differentiation of reality. The only difference is, as we have seen above, that while in the first text the Greek word ἐνεργία is used to designate actuality, in the second one it is πρᾶξις which is, however, ἐνεργός. Moreover, in the *Differences* X the attributes (τὰ προσόντα) are distinguished from the essences of the Forms and, as we have seen, it is not at first sight clear how this distinction is related to the one between their activity and essence that appears both in the *Differences* IV and in the *Laws*. In the latter text the problem of the attributes of the Forms is discussed separately in a different context in the same chapter only few pages earlier.<sup>797</sup> Given the fact that the same motive of the gradual differentiation of reality appears in the *Differences* in two distinct passages (in section IV and X) and considering a short time and an improvise manner in which, as we are told by Gemistos himself, this treatise, based on his lectures to the Italian

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<sup>794</sup> The parallel passages are reprinted and arranged together in the *Appendix* at the end of this work.

<sup>795</sup> *Ad Theod.* 125.3-126.7, *Leg.* 22-24 [I,1], cf. *Appendix* I.

<sup>796</sup> *In Cleop.* 172.14-173.8, *Leg.* 40 [I,3], cf. *Appendix* II.

<sup>797</sup> *De diff.* IV 326.31-327.4, X 337.3-28, *Leg.* 46-48 [I,5], 54 [I,5], cf. *Appendix* III.

humanists, was written,<sup>798</sup> we may conclude that the *Laws* are here the source for the *Differences*, rather than *vice versa*. Gemistos most likely used one and the same text of the *Laws* twice, in section IV and X of the *Differences*, and in both cases he replaced the original *πρᾶξις* (activity) that is *ἐνεργός* (active) by *ἐνεργία* (activity-actuality), which is an obvious counterpart of *δύναμις* (potentiality). At the same time he added to the distinction between essence and its activity appearing in the *Laws* another one between essence and its attribute that he had taken from other part of the same chapter. This is also the reason why the passages in the *Differences* are less clear than those in the *Laws*.

(IV) The fourth parallel, between the *Differences* X and the *Laws* III,15 is even closer than the previous one and many common expressions or even identical phrases and sentences appear. In both of them the problem of the existence of the ideal model for human artefacts and the status of mathematics in the relation to the world of the Platonic Forms are jointly treated. However, the argumentation in the *Laws* proceeds more naturally. – While discussing the different orders of gods and especially the Forms, Plethon suggests a possible objection that the Forms of the mortal things may be located into the intellect of the Sun and he compares it to a craftsman who has in his mind the form of a thing which he is working on. Then, as we have seen, he argues at length against this conception, and finally shows that the Forms of artefacts are to be placed into Pluton, the Form of the human soul, where they are supposed to exist simultaneously and collectively (“in one”). He then compares their manner of being to mathematical entities that exist “in one” in Hera, the Form of matter, but may be extended to infinity in the human thought. Compared to the gradual argumentation in the *Laws*, the composition of the *Differences*, in which the same formulations are used, is much more fragmentary. The location of the human artefacts to the Form of man and the subordination of the mathematical infinity to one ideal Form, in which it is contained simultaneously, is also mentioned jointly, but in the reversed order. Both these points belong to a series of several succinct counter-arguments against Aristotle’s objections to the Platonic Forms taken from chapter 9 of book I of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.<sup>799</sup> Moreover, the conception, according to which the

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<sup>798</sup> *Contra Schol.* XXIV 438.3-9: “That work was not composed as a result of thorough research ... but at a time when I had been indisposed at Florence and was unable for several days to go out of the house where I was staying; perhaps, too, because I was bored, and was trying at one and the same time to relieve my boredom and to do a favour to those who were interested in Plato. Thus I wrote that work in the briefest form ...”, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 156.

<sup>799</sup> The relation of the *Differences* to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* may be summarized in the following table:

<u><i>De diff. X</i></u>	<u><i>Met. A 9</i></u>
335.19-22	990b11-14
335.39-40	990b14
338.27-28	990b19-20
338.31-32	990b28-29
339.16-18	991a2-3.5-6
339.28-31	991a9-11

Forms are to be located into the intellect of the Sun, by which the argumentation in the *Laws* begins, is also discussed in the *Differences* and the similarity of both texts is, once again, very close. It appears almost at the end of section X, among the replies to various critical arguments by Aristotle that have not in fact much in common.<sup>800</sup> It thus seems that also here the *Differences* depends on the *Laws* and not *vice versa*. Due to the textual similarity, we may perhaps conclude that Gemistos most probably used parts of the long passages of the *Laws* III,15 when he was composing the *Differences* or in this case he was obviously even copying directly the text. It is also interesting to note that in section X of the *Differences* the passage inspired by the *Laws* I,5, discussed above, and the first one dependent on the *Laws* III,15 (artefacts and mathematics) follow closely one after another. This may suggest that Plethon was borrowing argument from the different parts of his secret book and perhaps also other texts, either by him or by other authors (especially Aristotle), which he had at his disposal when working on the *Differences*.<sup>801</sup> This treatise is thus indeed an occasional writing that in a specific form of the systematic refutation of Aristotle's philosophy seems just to summarize and present in rather improvised and succinct way Gemistos' favourite ideas and considerations.

(V) Another parallel is the argument for the immortality of the human soul based on the occurrence of the human suicide that may be found in both Gemistos' funeral orations, the *On Cleope* from 1433 and the *On Helen* from 1450, but also in the *Epinomis*, the closing part of the *Laws* (III,43).<sup>802</sup> Both orations have many features, including textual affinities, in common with the secret book, especially the later one, seems, as we will see further on, dependent on it. It is, however, more difficult to establish its relation to the earlier oration that may, in fact, have been an impulse for writing the final section of the *Epinomis*, in which Plethon may have used also some text from it – actually just one sentence.

(VI) The sixth parallel is by far the most complex and the common motive here is the composed nature of man that consists of a mortal and an immortal part, akin to the divine. Gemistos develops this thought in a rudimentary form as early as in the *Address to Theodore* from 1416-1418, but also in the oration *On Cleope* from 1433 and tentatively at the beginning of the *Laws* (I,1).<sup>803</sup> In the case of the *On Cleope* it is the same passage that was discussed as the second parallel, which has some, but not really strong connection to the *Laws* I,3. The beginning of the

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340.21-24	991a12-14
340.28-30	991a29-b1
340.38-341.4	991b4-9

(cf. the nn. 78, 81, 88, 89, 91, 92, 99, 101, 103 of Woodhouse's translation in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 206-212).

<sup>800</sup> *De diff.* X 337.34-338.10, 341.11-342.7, *Leg.* 108-114 [III,15], cf. *Appendix IV*.

<sup>801</sup> Karamanolis (2002), pp. 264-267, argues that Gemistos based his treatise on Atticus' criticism of Aristotle contained in Eusebius' *Praep. evan.* XV,1-16.

<sup>802</sup> *In Cleop.* 173.9-174.4, *In Hel.* 278.4-279.2, *Leg.* 248 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. *Appendix V*.

<sup>803</sup> *Ad Theod.* 126.7-23, *In Cleop.* 172.14-173.3, *Leg.* 26 [I,1], cf. *Appendix VI.1-3*.

*Laws* is again very systematic and its composition is well ordered – could it thus be that Gemistos had already written the beginning of the *Laws*, which has, as we have seen here when discussing the first parallel, some affinities to the *Address to Theodore*, and then he recalled some thoughts contained in them when writing the *On Cleope*? Our evidence is unfortunately very weak. The same motive of man composed of a mortal and an immortal part can be found also in the *Response to John VIII Palaiologos* written most probably shortly after 1439. There are some significant textual similarities between it and the *Epinomis* (the *Laws* III,43) that has also close affinities to the *On Helen* from 1450.<sup>804</sup> The text of the secret book is, again, the most systematic of these all, the argumentation there being well-ordered, and it is thus highly probable that both remaining texts relies on it. This would mean that the *terminus ante quem* for the composition of this closing part of the *Laws* are the years immediately following Gemistos’ visit to Italy and the publication of the *Differences*, if it is not, as we have seen during the discussion of the fifth parallel, already the oration *On Cleope* from 1433 that takes a formulation from the *Epinomis*.

The resemblances with the *On Helen* are even more important for the proper understanding of the text praising the dead empress. In the *Epinomis* the passage begins with stating three “axioms”. The first one presupposes that there is one God that is supremely good and, as we have seen, the eternity of the world is finally derived from this presupposition. In the second one the analogy of the generation (*γέννησις*) and the essence (*οὐσία*) is claimed from which Plethon derives the division of reality into a tripartite structure: (1) the gods of the second order, some of whom are mentioned as well as the difference between the legitimate and illegitimate ones, (2) the gods of the third order, and (3) the mortal things.<sup>805</sup> Finally, the third axiom asserts a similar analogy between the essence and its action (*ἔργον*) on which the argumentation for the immortality of the human soul, capable of the action akin to the divine, is based. The structure in the *On Helen* is exactly similar, although only the last axiom is mentioned here. – Gemistos talks first about God that is supremely good. In the second place he mentions the nature between us and him which may exist, as we know from the discussion of the *On Helen*, in one genus or in many genera. Finally, he uses the third axiom as well as many other formulations from the *Epinomis* to prove the immortality of the human soul. It is thus clear that Gemistos used exactly this text when he was writing the funeral oration. The original structure based on the three initial axioms remained the same while some its parts were left out. What is also noteworthy is the correspondence between the gods of the second order and “some other nature between him and us”. This definitely rather strange passage is sometimes treated as the proof that in his last years

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<sup>804</sup> *Ad quaes.* 335.91-339.133, *In Hel.* 275.4-278.4, *Leg.* 242-248 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. *Appendix* VI.4-6. Other – not so close parallels – are suggested in Benakis’ introduction and appendix to *Ad quaes.* 340-344, 369-375.

<sup>805</sup> *Cf. Leg.* 96 [III,15].

Gemistos professed pagan beliefs.<sup>806</sup> However, in fact, it seems, that, using it for his specific purposes, he just reformulated an earlier text that in its original form was even more pagan (the names of the ancient Greek gods appear in the *Epinomis*).

(VII) Moreover, the second and third axiom (the essence is analogous to the generation and the essence is analogous to the action respectively) have several more or less close parallels in various texts, such as the *Differences X*, the *Reply to Scholarios XXIII*, and the *Reply to the Treatise in Support of Latins*,<sup>807</sup> the last of which has been discussed above.

(VIII) There is also an important parallel between the calendar contained in chapter III,36, in which, as we have seen above, the right order of the sacred days is determined and Gemistos' astronomical treatise (*A Method of Fixing the Sun, Moon, Conjunctions, Full Moons, and Period of Planets*).<sup>808</sup> This text exists in two variants, the first one, anonymous and identified as probable Gemistos' work (proto-Plethon) by its editors, originated presumably in Constantinople at the beginning of the XV<sup>th</sup> century<sup>809</sup> whereas the second one very likely in the Peloponnese in 1433. This would mean that the first version was written before Gemistos moved to Mistra where he revised it substantially in 1433.<sup>810</sup> Now, chapter III,36 of the *Laws*<sup>811</sup> shares with both version the same definition of the month and year, which is, furthermore, written in very similar formulations. It is, however, interesting to note that there are some formulations that are closer to the first version whereas other to the second one or even missing in proto-Plethon.<sup>812</sup> This may be perhaps best explained by situating the origin of this part of the *Laws* between the composition of both version of the astronomical treatise. Gemistos might have used proto-Plethon when he was working on this chapter of the *Laws* in which he elaborates in more detail than in the astronomical treatises his rational calendar<sup>813</sup> and than, in turn, copied some of the formulations from the *Laws* to a new version of his astronomical treatise. If this conclusion is true, it would mean that chapter III,36, which is one of the last chapters of the *Laws*, was written before 1433.

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<sup>806</sup> Mamalakis (1939), pp. 222-223, Woodhouse (1986), p. 312.

<sup>807</sup> *De diff.* X 340.5-21, *Contra Schol.* XXIII 430.18-432.11, *Contra Lat.* 300, 302-303, *Leg.* 242 [III,43: *Epinomis*], cf. *Appendix VII*.

<sup>808</sup> *Meth.* 132, 40-42, *Leg.* [III,36], cf. *Appendix VIII*.

<sup>809</sup> Cf. Tihon's and Mercier's introduction and commentary to *Meth.*, pp. 33-36, 216-217, 274.

<sup>810</sup> Cf. Tihon's and Mercier's introduction and commentary to *ibid.*, pp. 20-22, 33, 216, 274.

<sup>811</sup> Wrongly classified as I,21 in the modern edition of the *Laws*, cf. Masai (1956), p. 395, n. 2.

<sup>812</sup> Notable is also the specification of the winter motion of the Sun *πρὸς νότον* in the second version, but missing in both proto-Plethon and the *Laws*, which caused much confusion in the understanding of the passage in the latter Gemistos' treatise, cf. Tihon's commentary to *ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>813</sup> Cf. Tihon's commentary to *ibid.*, pp. 178-183.



We will have to come back to the last parallel (IX) between the *Laws* III,15 and the *Reply to Latins* later on.<sup>814</sup>

The gradual development of Plethon's *Laws* may be thus demonstrated in the following table, where the individual chapters of the *Laws* and other Gemistos' writings that may be dated with some precision are compared.<sup>815</sup> (The close textual parallels, including the same expressions or whole phrases are underlined):

Parallel	<i>Laws</i>	Other writings	Date of composition
(I)	I,1	<i>Address to Theodore</i>	1416-1418
(VI)	I,1	<i>Address to Theodore</i>	1416-1418
		<i>On Cleope</i>	1433
(II)	I,3	<i>On Cleope</i>	1433
(III)	<u>I,5</u>	<u>Differences IV, X</u>	<u>1439</u>
(IX)	III,15	<i>Reply to Latins</i>	c. 1450
(IV)	<u>III,15</u>	<u>Differences X</u>	<u>1439</u>
(IV)	<u>III,15</u>	<u>Differences X</u>	<u>1439</u>
(VIII)	<u>III,16</u>	<u>Method (proto-Plethon)</u>	<u>1400s</u>
	<u>III,16</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>1433</u>
(VII)	III,43 ( <i>Epinomis</i> )	<i>Differences X</i>	1439
		<i>Reply to Scholarios XXIII</i>	c. 1449
		<i>Reply to Latins</i>	c. 1450
(VI)	<u>III,43 (<i>Epinomis</i>)</u>	<u>Response to John VIII</u>	<u>shortly after 1439</u>
		<u>On Helen</u>	<u>1450</u>
(V)	<u>III,43 (<i>Epinomis</i>)</u>	<u>On Cleope</u>	<u>1433</u>
		<u>On Helen</u>	<u>1450</u>

We may thus conclude that it seems highly probable that Gemistos began to work on his *Laws* some time before his journey to the Council in Italy. We may also quite plausibly surmise that he used his surname Plethon already before 1439 because, as we know, it was written at the beginning of each book of this treatise. It would be really tempting to claim that he actually began to conceive an ideal philosophical constitution, elaborated in the *Laws* into much detail, in 1416-

<sup>814</sup> *Contra Lat.* 302-303, *Leg.* 100 [III,15], cf. *Appendix IX*. Cf. also the title of lost chapter III,22 of the *Laws*: *Περί Διός, ὡς οὐδὲ λόγῳ διάκρισις τις ἐν αὐτῷ ἔστιν* ("On Zeus, and the non-existence of division in him, even in thought"), *Leg.* 14, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 324 (altered).

<sup>815</sup> Some of the parallels proposed here have been already noted by Theodorakopoulos (1977), pp. 19-20.

1418 when he was proposing his Platonic reforms for the despotate. We have found only rather weak parallels with the *Address to Theodore* but still, some motives are very similar in both texts. As we have seen, in the *Differences* some passages from the *Laws* are adopted and transformed, including chapter III,15 that is already near the end of this treatise. Its closing part, the *Epinomis*, has also quite significant textual parallels with the text that was written with some degree of certainty in the first years after 1439 and there is, furthermore, also less certain possibility that the text from 1433 somehow depends on the *Epinomis*. As can be also surmised on the basis of its comparison with two version of Gemistos' astronomical treatise, chapter III,36 was written before 1433. The *Laws* thus may have been written in a period of roughly twenty years between the second half of the 1410s, when Gemistos first started to speculate about the ideal state-order, and the time around 1440, when, as it seems, he had already written the most part of it (certainly chapter III,15 and very probably also III,36).<sup>816</sup> It is, furthermore possible, that he finished the *Epinomis* or he was working on it in 1433 when he was writing the *On Cleope*.

This conclusion is naturally based on several assumption discussed above – that the writing of the *Laws* was gradual and evolutive and that, as it seems, Plethon never radically reworked the composition of this treatise but just added new chapters, which could sometimes even stand by themselves as short independent treatises, into a broader but not really too strict and well-ordered plan apparent from the table of topics. This is probably also the case of the *Epinomis* that although may be seen as a wholly independent text, was obviously projected as the closing chapter to the *Laws* and appears in the table of the topics, originally placed at the beginning of book III as well. The assumption that Plethon worked on the *Laws* exactly in this manner is also supported by the repetition of the themes that was noted already by Scholarios. As we have seen, Gemistos was apparently accustomed to use the arguments and philosophical considerations contained in the *Laws* during the composition of his other texts that are more succinct and dense. It is thus well possible that the *Laws* were for him a kind of an exercise book in which he developed his Platonic thought at length. As it is obvious from the table of the topics as well as from the reconstruction of the *philosophia perennis* provided above, in the *Laws* he returned to the same thoughts again from a different perspective and sometimes added new features to them, thus gradually developing his own version of Platonism. Even the allocutions and hymns, accompanied by the instructions for the right cult of gods could be thus perhaps seen as an attempt to find other than purely philosophical approach to the ancient polytheism and to demonstrate what sort of poetry is appropriate for the veneration of gods. In other words, the

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<sup>816</sup> According to Marcus Antonius Antimachus (born in 1473), who although writing many years after the events, had very good sources of information, Gemistos, while staying in Florence, was amusing himself with composing verses (Gyraldus, *De poet.* 48.16-49.11), cf. Woodhouse (1986), p. 178. The only poetry by Gemistos we have are the hymns that have been incorporated into the *Laws* as chapter III,35. This would again mean that the closing parts of Plethon's book were written some time around the Council.

*Laws*, especially in their philosophical passages, seem to be rather a working-book than a sacred book. Although it is most probably a text that contained personal and private thoughts of Gemistos, we cannot also exclude a possibility that he used some its parts in his teaching and this might have been perhaps the reason why they probably circulated as separate treatise.

### 7. Conclusion III: Pagan or Christian?

After we have gone through the evidence about Gemistos' alleged paganism, it seems that we may accept most of the following points made by P.O. Kristeller: "According to the testimony of several contemporary enemies, which has been accepted by most recent scholars, Plethon ... planed to restore the pagan religion of Greek antiquity. In the preserved fragments of his chief work, the *Laws*, he speaks at length of the ancient deities and their worship. Yet, the work was destroyed after Plethon's death by his enemy Scholarios, who preserved only these paganizing passages in order to justify his action, and I suspect that the complete text of the work might have suggested an allegorical and less crude interpretation of the same passages. The part Plethon took in the Council of Florence, his theological opposition to the Union of the Greek and Latin Churches, and, finally, the unqualified admiration shown for Plethon by his pupil Cardinal Bessarion tend to cast some doubt on the supposed paganism of Plethon. On the other hand, Plethon always maintained a strict separation between his philosophy and Christian theology and never tried to harmonize them."<sup>817</sup>

Indeed, the story of Gemistos' paganism seems to be, if not created, then much exaggerated and widely diffused by his Aristotelian enemies, Scholarios and Trebizond, and zealously accepted by some of his quite eccentric admirers, whereas the direct pupils of his do not support it in any way, rather speaking against it by their firm Christianity. Furthermore, it is highly probable that there was no secret pagan society in Mistra and the *Laws*, the only evidence on which the accusation of polytheism was based from the very beginning, are in fact a private writing of Gemistos, most likely not intended for the publication. He may have started to work on it at the same time when he presented his proposals for the reforms of the Peloponnese, which have much in common with them and represent a similar genre of writing – rather utopian reflections on the human happiness, the nature of the things, and the corresponding state-order based on it. The *Laws* begun when Gemistos was writing his public political speeches in the 1410s, thus may have been a more theoretical background for the practical proposals of his

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<sup>817</sup> Kristeller (1972), p. 97, cf. also his reservations about Gemistos' paganism as reconstructed by Masai (1956) in a review of this book in: Kristeller (1959), pp. 511-512.

public philosophy that were certainly aimed at solving the concrete situation of the contemporary Peloponnese, but at the same time, as we have seen, they were also based on Plato's philosophy.

Although it does not seem that the theology contained in the *Laws* should be interpreted allegorically in the proper sense of the word, as it has been suggested by Kristeller, it is nevertheless true that the "traditional" names of ancient Greek gods appear there as a description of the philosophical principles based on the rational thought. They are thus not intended to represent a living pagan religious tradition, but they should rather help a philosopher-lawgiver to provide the people with the proper philosophy that would cover both religion as well as the political constitution. Plethon chooses ancient Greek mythology most probably due to its "biological" polarisation to the male and female divinities that together produce some other entity of the lower kind and for this reason they can represent better his metaphysical system than, for instance, asexual Christian angels and saints. It is not furthermore excluded that when he introduces pagan mythology Plethon tries to find out and explain, how the Greeks managed to develop their rich religious ideas, which would be thus due to the influence of the common notions, reflecting directly the Forms and standing behind as well as universally forming every human knowledge.

However, there is an important difference between his Platonism presented to the contemporary Byzantine public and that of the *Laws* and the whole perennial philosophy. Whereas in the first case we have to do with a rational philosophy that is formulated so generally that it can be accepted by any important monotheistic religious tradition of his time (that is, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), in the other one we are confronted with a kind of Platonism that necessarily leads to conclusions close to the ancient pagan Neoplatonism. There are three main divergences that make the *philosophia perennis* irreconcilable with Christianity: (1) the absence of the doctrine of the Trinity – the first God is conceived as "supremely united" and there is no plurality in it, (2) the eternity of the World, and (3) reincarnation. As we have seen, the last two doctrines are connected together and made dependent on the goodness of the first principle which forces us to conclude that the creation of the universe is eternal and proceeding in the best possible way. The hierarchies of gods and the usage of ancient pagan names of gods were perhaps the most disturbing feature of the perennial philosophy for a contemporary Byzantine, as it may well be seen on the example of Scholarios. They could be, however, easily reconciled with the contemporary Christian theology presupposing similar hierarchies of angels and divine beings, especially if the usage of ancient Greek names in the theology of the *Laws* is required largely due to the practical reasons and not by the ancient pagan ritual customs. The problem which is, however, difficult to overcome is that while the commentaries or the explanation of the teaching of Plato and Zoroaster that may be naturally produced by a Christian scholar who does

not share all their beliefs, the style of the *Laws* is more personal and less detached. It is claimed here that they represent present an ideal legislation based on reason, including the controversial points mentioned above. Moreover, as we know, this work contains not only a theology that makes use of the ancient Greek pagan gods, but also a collection of allocutions and hymns to them as well as the description of rituals. Finally, it ends with an obvious attack on the Christian doctrine of the creation of the world in time and the redemption of the soul, or, more precisely, some “contemporary sophists” are criticised for denying the eternity of the world and the reincarnation.<sup>818</sup> In fact this criticism touches not only Christianity, but also other monotheistic religion influential in Gemistos’ time. This attack is really strange because anywhere else in the texts on the perennial philosophy no comparable criticism appears.

Even this, nevertheless, does not necessarily mean that Gemistos accepted the doctrines contained in the *Laws* as his own. We have seen that he uses his surname “Plethon”, exclusively and only in this peculiar treatise. Furthermore, this name is not only a more classical form of Gemistos, but reminds us also of Plato. Similarly to him, the author of the famous *Laws*, Gemistos wrote a work with the very same name. Moreover, Plethon’s *Laws* clearly imitates its model and it takes some themes from it as well. – As we have mentioned, its closing part is *Epinomis*, which is named after a dialogue traditionally attributed to Plato and is intended as a kind of appendix to his *Laws*. It has been also mentioned several times that there is a parallel between book X of this dialogue concerning the three types of atheism and Plethon’s treatise.<sup>819</sup> Furthermore, as it is clear from the table of topics at its beginning<sup>820</sup> as well as the themes appearing during our previous discussion, Plethon attempts to fulfil the duties of the lawgiver that Plato states in book I of his *Laws*.<sup>821</sup> This passage seems to be very important indeed. – In the text that immediately precedes virtues are classified in the similar manner as the four general virtues in Plethon’s ethical treatise and it seems that the large part of book III of his *Laws* was also originally dedicated to the discussion of the same four virtues.<sup>822</sup> Plato then claims that all other instructions that people get from the lawgiver observe (*βλέπειν*) these virtues, while human affairs (*τὰ ἀνθρώπινα*) observe the divine ones (*τὰ θεῖα*), which, in turn, observe the leader intellect (*ὁ ἡγεμῶν νοῦς*).<sup>823</sup> This is because, as it has been stated by Plethon before, the human goods (*ἀνθρώπινα ἀγαθὰ*) depend on the divine ones (*θεῖα*).<sup>824</sup> The laws are also said to be

<sup>818</sup> *Leg.* 256-260 [III,43: *Epinomis*].

<sup>819</sup> Plato, *Leg.* X 884a-907b, especially 650b, vs. *Leg.* 24 [I,1], cf. Webb (1989), p. 217.

<sup>820</sup> *Leg.* 6-14.

<sup>821</sup> Cf. Webb (1989), pp. 217-218.

<sup>822</sup> Plato, *Leg.* I 631c-d, vs. *De virt.* 1.8-16, 4.2-3, *Leg.* 12-14. Lost chapter III,4 was dedicated to prudence (*φρόνησις*), III,7-9 to courage (*ἀνδρεία*), III,10, 12-13 to temperance (*σωφροσύνη*), III,25-26 to justice (*δικαιοσύνη*), and III,27-28 to virtue and badness in general. Cf. also Plato, *Leg.* I 632d-650b, XII 963a-964b.

<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.* I 631d.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.* I 631b.

promulgated for the sake of what is the best (τοῦ ἀρίστου ἕνεκα).<sup>825</sup> This all is in a very good agreement with the general principles of Plethon's legislation. More specifically, it is a duty of a lawgiver to supervise marriage as well as the procreation and education of children while elsewhere Plato, similarly to his Byzantine follower, says that in this manner humankind attains in a certain sense immortality.<sup>826</sup> Moreover, the lawgiver must regulate economics and determinate the punishments of those who commit something against the law, and even the need to organize appropriately the burial of the dead is mentioned. All these topics were treated also by Plethon.<sup>827</sup> Of the other parallels that could be perhaps further pointed out, one of the most important is certainly Plato's statement about the infinity of time (χρόνου ... ἀπειρία) during which many diverse cities appear and perish.<sup>828</sup> This is certainly close to Plethon's conception of *philosophia perennis* existing throughout the eternity of the world.

The *Laws* thus may be quite probably a thought experiment, or a kind of game, in which Gemistos identified himself with his more classical *alter ego* Plethon, a second Plato or the reincarnation of his. During such a game Plethon was obviously "experimenting" with various Platonic motives and arguments, developed them extensively, but, as we have seen in the case of his political speeches on the Peloponnese, only some of them he was, in fact, willing to put into practice. Even the *Laws*, as it is claimed at its beginning, is in fact supposed to contain the philosophy of Zoroaster and Plato, the only difference in comparison with Plethon's commentaries to someone's else thought being that it is written in a more personal style. – The arguments, that, as we have seen, were then used occasionally also elsewhere, are developed here in the intellectual game and self-stylisation during which the author does not respect the scholarly distance to someone else's philosophy, but, on the contrary, attempts to develop it further in a creative way. Also the allocutions and hymns to gods might be perhaps understood as Plethon's attempt to imitate ancient religious poetry and to transform it to be in accordance with philosophical reasoning. Moreover, here too, he seems to imitate Plato, who at the beginning of book VIII of the *Laws* proposes that the festivals and sacrifices should be devised and in the

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.* I 628c.

<sup>826</sup> *Ibid.* I 631d-e, IV 721b-d, vs. *Leg.* 86-90 [III,14]. The title of lost chapter III,5 of Plethon *Laws* is *Περὶ παιδῶν ἀγωγῆς* ("On the education of children"), *Leg.* 12, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 324. Furthermore, chapter III,14: *Περὶ τῆς τῶν γονέων ἐκγόνοις οὐ μίξεως* ("On the prohibition of sexual intercourse between parents and children") was originally followed by III,16: *Περὶ τῆς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ γυναικῶν πλειόνων συνοικήσεως* ("On polygamy of one man with several women") and III,17: *Περὶ τῆς κοινῶν γυναικῶν χρήσεως* ("On the use of public women"), *Leg.* 12, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 324. For the family legislation cf. also Plato, *Leg.* VI 772d-776b, for the sexual restrictions cf. *ibid.* VIII 835b-842a.

<sup>827</sup> *Ibid.* I 632b-c, vs. *Leg.* 120-130 [III,31]: *Περὶ δικῶν* ("On judgements"), transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 324. Cf. also the titles of lost chapters of Plethon *Laws* – I,18: *Περὶ κληρονομιῶν* ("On inheritances"), I,19: *Περὶ τῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους συμβολῶν* ("On mutual contracts"), I,24: *Περὶ δικῶν* ("On judgements"), I,25: *Περὶ ταφῆς* ("On burial"), I,26: *Περὶ θεραπείας τῶν οἰχομένων* ("On the cult of the dead"), III,19: *Περὶ μιᾶς τῆς ἐν οἰκίᾳ τῇ αὐτῇ κτήσεως* ("On the unity of property in a single household"), III,20: *Περὶ τῆς παρὰ τὰς τελευτὰς ἐκάστων οὐκ οἰκοφθορίας* ("On avoiding the dispersal of property on the death of individual owners"), III,29: *Περὶ τοῦ ἐν δωρεαῖς πρέποντος* ("On propriety in making gifts"), III,30: *Περὶ τῶν ἐς τὸ κοινὸν ταμειῶν εἰσφορῶν* ("On contributions to the public treasury"), *Leg.* 8, 12-14, transl. Woodhouse (1986), pp. 323-325. For the regulation of economics cf. also Plato, *Leg.* VIII 842b-850c, for the burials cf. XII 958c-960b.

<sup>828</sup> Plato, *Leg.* III 676b-c.

religious calendar, based on the regular mathematical character of the motions of celestial bodies, there ought to be twelve feasts consecrated to the twelve gods. The last month is to be dedicated to Pluto, quite similarly to Plethon's calendar, in which, too, as we have seen, this god, along with remembrance of the deceased, is symbolically venerated at the end of the year.<sup>829</sup> Furthermore, a little earlier Plato says that the appropriate form, including tune, metre, and rhythm of the religious songs and dances, should be determined. Plethon, again, fulfils this in his *Laws* by providing detailed instructions for the proper composition as well as the performance of the hymns and allocutions, which, as we know, he himself devises too.<sup>830</sup> Also the priests (ἱερεῖς) who are occasionally mentioned by Plethon as presiding over the religious ceremonies and whose life was presumably regulated in a lost chapter have their parallel in Plato's *Laws*.<sup>831</sup> Finally, Plethon's criticism of some Christian doctrines in the *Epinomis*, that is not even formulated directly and explicitly, might be also a kind of exercise, in which the ultimate consequences of the principles on which Plethon's *Laws* are based are drawn, or it was perhaps written for the students of Gemistos attending his lectures on ancient Greek philosophy in order to show them different philosophical conceptions than the Christian ones.

Another reason why the significance of the *Laws* for determining Gemistos' religious beliefs may be to some extent restricted, is the fact that it was probably composed at an earlier date than usually supposed. The evidence based on the parallels with some other of his writings indicates that Gemistos may have ceased to work on them either before his visit to Italy in 1438-1439, or shortly afterwards. It certainly seems that at the Council he adopted a decisive Orthodox and anti-Unionist stand and probably at the end of the 1450s he wrote his only theological treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit and then discussed it with Bessarion. The *Reply to Scholarios* have also some rather Christian formulations. If the *Laws*, written possibly much earlier, is really the source of the disturbing passage in the oration *On Helen* in which the higher spiritual natures are mentioned – and which is therefore used as the evidence for the polytheism of the elderly Gemistos –, it seems that all the major texts we have from the time after the Council points to the conclusion that he was a firm Christian, and even the passage in question has been radically reformulated to be in accordance with Christianity.

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<sup>829</sup> *Ibid.* VII 809c-d, 818c-d, VIII 828a-d, vs. *Leg.* 58-60 [III,36], *Add.* 133v.7-134.3. Cf. also the titles of lost chapters of Plethon *Laws* – III,33: *Περὶ προσευχῆς* ("On prayer"), III,37: *Τίσι τῶν θεῶν τίνα θυτέα* ("Appropriate sacrifices to particular gods"), III,38: *Ἐπὶ τίσι πράξεσι, τίσι τε θεῶν καὶ ὅπως θυτέα* ("In what circumstances, to which gods, and in what way sacrifices should be made"), III,39: *Ὅπως ἔχουσι τῶν θυσιῶν μεταληπτέα* ("With what predisposition men should take part in sacrifices"), III,40: *Περὶ ἀκριβείας τῶν πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς* ("On exactitude in matters relating to the gods"), III,41: *Κατὰ τίνων εὐκτέα τοῖς θεοῖς* ("To what ends prayers should be addressed to the gods"), III,42: *Περὶ μαντείων* ("On oracles"), *Leg.* 14, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 325.

<sup>830</sup> Plato, *Leg.* II 653d-671a, VII 798d-803c, vs. *Leg.* 132-240 [III,34-36], *Add.*

<sup>831</sup> *Leg.* 8, 126, 230-232, 252, *Add.* 132v.19.24, vs. Plato, *Leg.* 759a-760a, X 909d-e. The title of lost chapter I,22 is *Περὶ ἱερέων καὶ βίου αὐτῶν* ("On priests and their way of life"), *Leg.* 8, transl. Woodhouse (1986), p. 323.

Gemistos' treatise on the Holy Spirit is certainly very important. He claims there that "Hellenic", that is pagan, theology postulates the highest God that is "indivisible one (ἄτομον ἓν)" and that it does not distinguish between generation (γέννησις) and creation (δημιουργία), will (βούλησις) and nature (φύσις), and "in general" between essence (οὐσία) and activity (ἐνέργεια). At the same time Gemistos describes, keeping an apparent distance, a kind of polytheism that is similar to constitution of the gods of the second order in the *Laws*.<sup>832</sup> This passage also corresponds to the *Laws* III,15 in which, as we have seen, Plethon claims that in Zeus, due to his supreme simplicity (ἄκρα ἀπλότης), there is no distinction between generation and creation, as well as a difference between will and nature.<sup>833</sup> Although the textual parallel is not very close, it is still possible that Gemistos had this chapter of the *Laws* in mind when he was writing the former text or perhaps we have to do here with the distinctions he was accustomed to mention together. As we have seen, the difference between nature and its activity, which is absent from the *Laws*, is the backbone of the treatise against the Latins.<sup>834</sup> From the treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit it thus seems that within the first principle which, unlike in the *philosophia perennis*, need not be "indivisible one", but may contain some plurality, there are three distinctions, by which, according to Gemistos, Christianity differs from Hellenic theology. This opens a possibility for developing a theology that would be similarly rational as the perennial philosophy, but different from it. The distinction between generation and creation enables to conceive the Trinitarian dogma in which the Son is generated in a process different from the creation of the world, and therefore he can exist on the same ontological level as the Father and not on a lower one. The distinction between will and nature can explain why God decided to create the world at a certain moment in time and why he does not have to produce it, by the goodness of his nature, continuously and eternally. Because, as we know, the doctrine about the reincarnation of the soul depends closely on that of the eternity of the world, all three problematic divergences between the *philosophia perennis* and Christianity would be thus solved. Finally, as we have seen during the discussion of the treatise against the Latins, the last distinction between essence and activity enables Gemistos to conceive appropriately – or from his point of view in the only possible way – the procession of the Holy Spirit. As it therefore seems, in this treatise Gemistos tentatively indicates an alternative conception to the *Laws*, being obviously well aware of the subtle points in which the difference between the *philosophia perennis* and Christianity consists, but, unfortunately, does not develop it in a more substantial way.

The possible reason for Gemistos' reluctance to go further in this direction that may also explain other unclear points concerning his philosophical and religious position, seem to be

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<sup>832</sup> *Contra Lat.* 302-302, cf. *Appendix* IX.1.

<sup>833</sup> *Leg.* 100 [III,15], cf. *Appendix* IX.2.

<sup>834</sup> Cf. *Appendix* VII.



really, as suggested above by Kristeller, the “strict separation” between the rational philosophy and Christian theology. Perhaps, according to Gemistos, it is due to Christian revelation and not to reason, on which the perennial philosophy is based, that we learn about the distinctions inside the first principle from which the Trinitarian dogma, the creation of the world in time, and a conception of the soul that would be alternative to its periodical reincarnation, may be potentially deduced. The distinction between “our”, Christian philosophy (ἡ καθ’ ἡμᾶς φιλοσοφία) and the “external, pagan one (ἡ ἕξωθεν or ἡ θύραθεν φιλοσοφία) is certainly traditional in Byzantium<sup>835</sup> and it is perhaps this distinction which Gemistos has in mind when he mentions in the *Reply to Scholarios* that he knows well which divine inspirations (ἐνθουσιασμοί) and which human reasoning (λόγοι ἀνθρώπινος) should be accepted and which should not.<sup>836</sup> We must not also forget that Gemistos was in the first place a scholar and teacher of ancient philosophy, not a professional theologian. As we have seen, he complains to Bessarion that being layman he was not allowed to speak at the Council. Nonetheless, the problem is that he does not seem to make any attempt to reconcile his “perennial philosophy” with Christianity – perhaps he did not want to or was not capable of it.

However, what he was able to do very well was to formulate some basic principles acceptable not only to the polytheist Platonism, but also to the monotheistic religions of his time, including Christianity. As we have seen, his main divergence from the contemporary Christian beliefs that was found unacceptable by Bessarion, was his stressing of fate or necessity involved in history and transcending concrete religions about which he repeatedly talks and by which he influenced perhaps also one of his pupils, the historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles. These general Platonic conceptions were, after all, the philosophy he presented as his own to the public and not the thoughts he was developing in the *Laws*. As for this book, we may surmise that he was perhaps so fascinated by the Platonic philosophy that sometimes, when working on it, he just – from a rigid and conservative Christian perspective – dared to go rather too far. Although we can perhaps never be sure about his real intentions behind composing the *Laws*, it is highly probable that it was a work written earlier than in his last year when he seems to act as a firm Orthodox and anti-Unionist. To decide about his religious position, we thus should not listen so much, as it is often done, to his enemies accusing him of the paganism or to rely on his rather queer book that was written out of the motives and in the context that are not entirely clear to us, but rather to Gemistos himself. – As we have seen, when he was asked or forced by the circumstances to choose, he declared himself an Orthodox Christian and we should accept and respect this as the most plausible statement about his faith.

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<sup>835</sup> Cf. Benakis (1990), Hankins (1987), pp. 8-13, Parry (2006), pp. 228-229.

<sup>836</sup> *Contra Schol.* IX 392.14-17.

W.B. Yeats

THE SECOND COMING

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

(*Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, 1921)

## Appendix

(The textual similarities between the other Gemistos' texts and the *Lams* are underlined.)

### I

#### 1. *Ad Theod.* 125.3-126.7

Καὶ πολιτείας μὲν σπουδαίας νόμοι οὗτοί τε καὶ τοιοῦτοι ἕτεροι  
καὶ μείζους καὶ ἐλάττους, ὧν περ κεφάλαιον ἀπάντων τὰ περὶ τὴν  
5 τοῦ θείου δόξαν ἠκριβῶσθαι καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ, μάλιστα δ' ἐκεῖνα  
τρία τε καὶ κυριώτατα, ἐν μὲν εἶναί τι θεῖον ἐν τοῖς οὔσι,  
προὔχουσαν τινὰ τῶν ὄλων οὐσίαν, δεύτερον τὸ θεῖον τοῦτο καὶ  
ἐπιμελὲς εἶναι ἀνθρώπων, ἅπαντά τε τὰ ἀνθρώπεια ὑπὸ τούτου  
10 καὶ μείζω καὶ ἐλάττω διοικεῖσθαι, τρίτον κατὰ γνώμην τὴν αὐτοῦ  
διοικεῖν ἕκαστα ὀρθῶς αἰεὶ καὶ δικαίως, μὴ ἐξιστάμενον μηδαμῇ  
τοῦ περὶ ἕκαστον καθήκοντος, μήτ' οὖν ἄλλως μήθ' ὑπ' ἀνθρώ-  
πων δώροις ἢ τισιν ἄλλοις δωπευόμενόν τε καὶ παρατρεπόμενον.  
Οὐ γὰρ οὖν ἐνδεὲς εἶναι ἀνθρώπων, οἷς ἔχουσιν οὕτως ἔπεται καὶ  
15 τὸ τὰς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀγιστείας δυσίας τε καὶ ἀναδήματα μέτριά τε  
καὶ ἀπ' εὐσεβοῦς τῆς γνώμης τελεῖν, ὁμολογίας ὄντα ξύμβολα τοῦ  
ἐκεῖθεν ἡμῖν εἶναι τὰγαθὰ καὶ μήτ' ἐκλείποντας ἢ τοῖν δυοῖν ἢ  
θατέρου γοῦν τοῖν προτέροιον εἶδοῖν τῆς ἀσεβείας ἐνεχομένων  
δόξαν παρεχεσθαι, μήθ' ὑπερβολαῖς δαπανῶν τοὺς τε ἰδίους οἴκους  
20 καὶ τὰ κοινὰ φθειρόντας ὥ; τι πλέον ποιήσοντας τῇ πολυτελείᾳ  
τῶν ἀπαρχῶν τε καὶ ἀναδημάτων, μηδ' ἀπαρχομένων ἔτι, ἀλλ' ὡς  
ὠνούμενων δόξαν παρεχομένους τῷ τρίτῳ εἶδει τῆς ἀσεβείας  
ἐνέχεσθαι· ταῖς δὲ τοιαύταις δόξαις ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ δημοσίᾳ νομιζο-  
μέναις καὶ κρατούσαις ἀμήχανον μὴ οὐ καὶ ἀρετὴν ἔπεσθαι πᾶσι  
παρ' οἷς ἂν τύχωσι κεκρατηκυῖαι καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν περὶ τὸ καλὸν  
126 σπουδῆν. Κακία δὲ πᾶσα καὶ τὰ μεγάλα ἀνθρώποις ἀμαρτήματα  
ἀπὸ τῶν ἐναντίων γίνεταί· αὖ δοξῶν· γίνονται γὰρ αἰεὶ τῶν  
ἀνθρώπων ἔνιοι οὐκ ὑγιῶς περὶ ταῦτα ἔχοντες, οἳ μὲν οὐδ' εἶναί τι  
τὸ παράπαν θεῖον ἐν τοῖς οὔσι νομίζοντες, οἳ δ' εἶναι μὲν, φρον-  
τίξουσιν δὲ μηδὲν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, οἳ δὲ καὶ εἶναι καὶ ἐπιμελεῖσθαι,  
παραιτητὸν δ' εἶναι καὶ τισὶ δυσίαις καὶ ἀναδημασι καὶ εὐχαῖς  
κηλούμενον μὴ ἀκριβοῦν ἐκάστοτε τὰ δίκαια.

#### 2. *Leg.* I.1, pp. 22-24

Ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ περὶ τῆς τῶν ἄλλων αὖ φύσεως, ὅπη  
ἔχει, οὐκ ὀλίγη πρὸς γε ἀλλήλους τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἢ ἀμ-  
24 φισβήτησις ἔστι μὲν ὧν οὐδ' εἶναι θεοὺς τὸ παράπαν [24]  
οἰομένων τῶν δ', εἶναι μὲν, τῶν δ' ἀνθρωπίνων οὐκ ἂν  
προνοεῖν πραγμάτων τῶν δὲ, προνοεῖν μὲν θεοὺς τῶν  
πάντων, τῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, εἶναί γε  
μὴν πρὸς τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς τοὺς αὐτοὺς καὶ τῶν κακῶν αἰ-  
τίους τῶν δὲ, κακοῦ μὲν οὐδενός, τῶν δὲ ἀγαθῶ μόνων  
αἰτίους τοὺς θεοὺς εἶναι. Καὶ τῶν μὲν παραιτητῶν οἰο-  
μένων εἶναι καὶ ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων παρατρεπτῶν ἐφ' οἷς καὶ  
αὐτοὶ κρίναντες μελλήσωσιν ἀποτελεῖν τῶν δὲ ἀπαρα-  
τρέπτους τε πάντη ἡγουμένων καὶ ἀμεταστρέπτους,  
γνώμη αἰεὶ τῇ σφετέρᾳ καθ' εἰμαρμένην χωρούση ἕκαστα

ἀποτελοῦντας, ἧ ἂν ἐκ τῶν ἐνότων βέλτιστα ἔξειν  
μέλλοι.

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## II

1. *In Cleop.* 172.16-173.8

Οὐκ ἂν οὖν τὸν θεὸν  
15 οὐτ' ἂν ἀλλοτρία τε πάντα καὶ θνητῇ φύσει ἑαυτὸν γνωρίζειν,  
ἀλλά πη καὶ οἰκεία κοινωνεῖν γὰρ ἂν δέοι τὸ γιγνώσκον τῷ  
173 γιγνωσκομένῳ, τὰ δὲ κοινωνοῦντα καὶ οἰκεία πη ἀλλήλοις δέοι ἂν  
εἶναι, οὐτ' ἂν αἰδιότητος ἐπιθυμίαν ἐνδέμενον τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ  
ἔπειτα ἀτελεῖ τε ἂν αὐτὴν καὶ μάταιον ἀπολιπεῖν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλο  
οὐδὲν τῶν μεγάλων καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἀτελεῖς ἂν ἀπολιπεῖν τὸν θεόν,  
5 ἀλλὰ τελεσφόρα τε πάντα ποιεῖν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς καὶ ἔς τι προσῆκον  
ἑαυτοῖς πέρας ἔς αἰεὶ ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ γοῦν ἀποβαίνοντα· ὥστ' ἂν  
καὶ κατ' ἄμφω τούτῳ, τὴν τε τοῦ θεοῦ δόξαν τὴν τε τῆς αἰδιότητος  
ἐπιθυμίαν, αἰδιὸν ἂν τὴν γε ἀνθρωπίνην εἶναι ψυχὴν.

2. *Leg.* I.3, p. 40

Οὐ μὲν δὴ οὐδ' ἐκεῖνο ὑπολογιστέον, ὃ αὖ φασὶ τινες,  
35 ὡς καὶ περὶ ὁτοιοῦν τῶν ἄλλων ἡμῖν ἢ τις ἀληθείας  
κατάληψις, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὡς περὶ τῶν θείων ἀνθρώποις οὔσι  
προσῆκοι διασκοπεῖν πραγμάτων, ὡς οὐτ' ἂν εἰσομένοις  
σαφές οὐδὲν περὶ αὐτῶν, ἅτε δὴ κρειττόνων ἢ καθ'  
ἡμᾶς, οὐτ' ἂν αὐτοῖς θεοῖς φίλον τοῦτο ἐπιτηδεύουσι,  
40 περιεργάζεσθαι τε δὴ καὶ πολυπραγμονεῖν τὰ αὐτῶν. Οὐ  
γὰρ ἂν θεοὶ μάτην ἡμᾶς τῶν γε σφετέρων τούτων ἐποιοῦν  
ζητητικούς, εἰ μήτε ἐβούλοντο καὶ ζητεῖν ἂν περὶ αὐτῶν  
ἡμᾶς, μήτε τινὰ καὶ ἔξιν τοῦ εἶσεσθαι ποτ' ἂν σαφές τι  
περὶ τῶν τοιοῦτων ἔμελλον παρέξειν. Καὶ μὴν ὁμοίως  
45 ἂν ἄτοπον εἶη ὁποτερονοῦν, ἢ μὴδ' ὅτιοῦν ἂν περὶ τῶν  
τοιοῦτων ἡμᾶς διανοομένους, ἐν ἴσῳ ἂν τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ  
ἀλόγοις βιοτεύειν, ἢ τὰ προστυχόντα εἰκῆ ἂν καὶ ἀβα-  
σανίστως παραδέχεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε οὕτως ἔχοντας  
τῆς σπουδαζομένης ἂν εὐδαιμονίας τυχεῖν.

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## III

1. *De diff.* IV 326.31-327.4

Οἱ μὲν οὖν περὶ Πλάτωνα τὸ μὲν ὑπερούσιον ἐν ἄκρως ἐν  
εἶναι τίθεται, οὔτε οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ, οὔτε δύναμιν, οὔτε ἐνεργίαν  
διακρίνοντες. Τὰ δὲ μετ' αὐτὸ εἶδη τε καὶ νοῦς οὐχ ὁμοίως ἀπλῶς  
ἔχειν ἀξιούσιν, ἀλλ' ἐνεργίαν ἤδη αὐτῶν τῆς οὐσίας διακρίνουσι,  
35 δύναμιν δ' οὐ πάνυ τοι τῆς ἐνεργίας, διὰ τὸ ἀκίνητα ὄντα, μὴ δ'  
ὅτιοῦν δυνάμει, ἀλλ' ἅπαντα ἐνεργίᾳ αἰεὶ ἑαυτοῖς ἔχειν παρόντα  
τὰ προσόντα. Ψυχῆς δ' ἤδη καὶ οὐσίαν καὶ δύναμιν καὶ ἐνεργίαν  
327 διακρίνουσι, διὰ τὸ κινουμένην ἀπὸ νοήματος ἐπὶ νόημα, τὴν δ'  
ἀνθρωπίνην καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ νοεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ μὴ νοεῖν ἢ μὴ νοεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ

νοεῖν, μὴ αἰεὶ ἢ μὴ πᾶσαν ἐνεργίᾳ ἀλλὰ καὶ δυνάμει ἔχειν μᾶλλον τὴν τῶν ὄντων γυνῶσιν.

2. *De diff.* X 337.3-28

5  
10  
15  
20  
25

Οὐδέ  
γε τῶν ἀπειρῶν ἐν τι καθ' ἕκαστον ἐκεῖ εἶναι αἴτιον· ἀλλ' ἐν τι πάντων τῶν τῆδε ἐς ἀπειρίαν ἤδη ἐκπιπτόντων ἐκεῖ εἶναι τὸ αἴτιον εἶδος. Οὐδαμῆ γὰρ ἀπειρίας τῆς κατὰ τὸ ποσὸν τοῖς ἐκεῖ μετεῖναι. Ἀλλὰ τῷ μὲν ὑπερουσίῳ θεῷ οὐδ' ὄλως πλήθους· ἀκρως γὰρ δὴ ἐν αὐτὸν εἶναι. Τῷ δὲ νοητῷ τούτῳ διακόσμῳ πλήθος μὲν ἐνεῖναι, πεπερασμένον δ' αὐτὸ εἶναι καὶ οὐδαμῆ ἀπειρον, οὔτε δυνάμει οὔτε ἔργῳ. Τῷ δ' αἰσθητῷ τῷδε κόσμῳ τὴν ἀπειρίαν ἤδη, ὡς ἐνδέχεται, ἐγγεγονέναι διὰ τὴν ὕλην, ἣ πρώτως τὸ ἀπειρον πρόσεστιν, ἐκεῖθεν μὲν καὶ ταύτην ἔχουσαν τὴν αἰτίαν, οὐ μέντοι κάκεῖ ἀπειρον οὔσαν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ τῶν τῆδε ἀλόγων ἄλογον κάκεῖ εἶναι τὸ εἶδος, οὐδέ γε τῶν κινουμένων κινούμενον. Τῶν γε μὴν τῆδε οὐσιῶν, τῶν τε ταῖς οὐσίαις καθ' αὐτὰ προσόντων καὶ σχέσεων ἐκεῖ εἶναι τὰ εἶδη τὲ καὶ παραδείγματα· τῶν μὲν σχέσεων, ὅτι οὐδὲ τάκεῖ ἄσχετα πρὸς ἄλληλα· τῶν οὖν ἐκεῖ σχέσεων τὰς τῆδε δεῖν εἶναι εἰκόνας· τῶν δὲ προσόντων, ὅτι οὐδ' ἄνευ προσόντων τάκεῖ. Τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὑπερουσίου ἐνός, ἅτε ἀκρως ἐνός ὄντος, οὔτε οὐσίαν οὔτε προσὸν οὔτε ἐνεργίαν οὔτε δύνάμιν διακεκρίσθαι. Τῶν δ' εἰδῶν τε καὶ νῶν τούτων, ἅτε οὐκ ἐκείνῳ παρισουμένων, προσόντα μὲν οὐσίας διακεκρίσθαι, ἐνεργίας δὲ δύνάμιν οὐδέπω. Ἀλλὰ τοῖς τῆδε ἤδη πρὸς τῆ ἑτέρα καὶ ταύτην τὴν διάκρισιν ἀποδεδόσθαι, ὥστ' ἂν τάκεῖ μέσως πως ἔχειν τοῦ τε ὑπερουσίου ἐνός καὶ τῶν τῆδε καὶ αἰσθητῶν. Οἷα μὲν οὖν καὶ ὅπως ἔχοντα τὰ εἶδη οἱ τιθέμενοι ἀξιούσιν, εἶναι, εἴρηται ἡμῖν ὡς διὰ βραχυτάτων τὲ καὶ ἐν κεφαλαίοις εἰπεῖν.

3. *Leg.* I.5, pp. 46-48

48

Καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐξ αὐτοῦ Διὸς προσεχῶς γεγεννημένους ὑπερουρανίους θεοὺς εἶναι, δευτέρους θεότητι, σωμάτων μὲν καὶ ὕλης πάμπαν ἀφειμένους, εἶδη δ' ὄντας εἰλικρινῆ αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ, καὶ νοῦς ἀκινήτους, αἰεὶ τε καὶ περὶ πάντα ἅμα μιᾷ τῆ ἑαυτῶν ἐκάστους νοήσει ἐνεργούς· οὓς οὐσίαν μὲν ἐκάστους ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἴσχειν τοῦ Διὸς, ἀμερῆ μὲν ἐξ ἀμεροῦς, ἅπαντα δ' ἐν ἑαυτῇ συλλήβδην τε καὶ καθ' ἐν προειληφυῖαν, ὀπίσσω γ' ἂν πλειόνων αὐτὸς ἕκαστος τοῖς ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν αἴτιος ἦ. Τὰ δὲ προσόντα, ἔξω ἐνός τοῦ πρεσβυτάτου αὐτῶν Ποσειδῶνος, ἄλλους ὑπ' ἄλλων διατίθεσθαι τε καὶ κοσμεῖσθαι, τοῦ βασιλέως τε καὶ πατρὸς κοινωνίαν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ παισὶν ἀλλήλοις τῶν ἀγαθῶν μεμηχανημένου· ὃ δὴ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀγαθῶν μετὰ γε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ κοινωνίαν τὸ κράτιστον ἐμπεποιήκει. Καὶ Ποσειδῶ μὲν, ὑπ' αὐτοῦ Διὸς μόνου κοσμούμενον, τοὺς ἄλλους ἅπαντας κατακοσμεῖν· τῶν δ' ἄλλων μείζους μὲν εἶναι τοὺς ὑπὸ μὲν ἐλαττόνων ἂν κοσμουμένους, αὐτοὺς δὲ πλείω τε ἂν δρωῶντας ἐν τῷ παντὶ τῷδε καὶ μείζω· μείους δὲ τοὺς ἐλάττω μὲν καὶ μείω δρωῶντας, αὐτοὺς δ' ἂν ὑπὸ πλειόνων κοσμουμένους.

Εἶναι δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τούτου τὴν τε οὐσίαν  
καὶ πρῶξιν ταῦτόν καὶ ἀλλήλοιν ἤκιστ' ἂν διακεκριμένω·  
ἄκρως γὰρ δὴ ἐν εἶναι, καὶ οὐδαμῇ ἂν ἕτερον αὐτόν αὐ-  
τοῦ. Νῶ δὲ διακεκρίσθαι μὲν ἤδη πρῶξιν οὐσίας, ἐνεργὸν  
δὲ καὶ τούτῳ ἀεὶ καὶ οὐδαμῇ ἂν ἀργὸν προσεῖναι αὐτήν,  
ὥστ' ἂν καὶ τὰ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ὧν ἂν μηδενὶ οὐ συγγενεῖ  
συναιτίῳ κεκρημένος αἴτιος γίγνοιτο, αἰῖδια ἔτι προῖέναι.  
Ψυχῇ δ' ἤδη, πρὸς τῷ τῆς οὐσίας τε καὶ πράξεως διακε-  
κριμένω, καὶ μὲν τι ἐνεργὸν, τὸ δὲ πλεῖστον ἀργὸν ἂν  
ἐκάστοτε λείπεσθαι τῆς πράξεως, ἐς ψιλὴν δὴ τινα ἀπο-  
πίπτον δύναμιν. Σώματι δὲ πρὸς πᾶσιν ἂν τούτοις καὶ  
τὴν οὐσίαν διακεκρίσθαι ἤδη ἐς εἶδος δὴ τι καὶ ὕλην, οὐ  
κινητὴν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ σκεδαστὴν δὴ τινα ἤδη φύσιν  
καὶ μεριστὴν ἐπ' ἄπειρον.

## IV

## 1. De diff. X 337.36-338.10

ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν ἐς πε-  
35 περασμένα εἶδη τὰ τῆδε διακρινομένων ἐν ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ εἶδει,  
τῶν δ' ἐς ἀπειρίαν ἤδη ἐκπιπτόντων ἐν ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἀπείροις.  
Αὐτίκα τῷ τῆδε ἀριθμῶ παντὶ διὰ τὴν ἀπειρίαν ἐν τῷ ἐκεῖ εἶδος  
ἐφιστᾶσιν, ἐνιαῖον τὲ καὶ καθ' ἐν ἅπαντα περιέχον τὰ τῷ τῆδε  
40 ἀριθμῶ διακεκριμένως τὲ καὶ καθ' αὐτὰ συμβαίνοντα. Καὶ  
338 ἐπὶ τῶν τοῖς μεγέθεσι συμβαινόντων ὡσαύτως αὖ ἐν τῷ ἐκεῖ  
εἶδος τοῦ μεγέθους καὶ ἀμερές. Ἄφ' ὧν τὴν ψυχὴν ἐλλαμπο-  
μένην τὸν μαθηματικὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ μαθηματικὰ μεγέθη ἐκ-  
τάδην ὑποδέχεσθαι, σκιάς τε καὶ εἰδῶλα νοητῶν ὄντα, ἢ καὶ  
5 Πλάτων ἀξιῶ ἀνάλογον αὐτὰ τιθεῖς πρὸς τὴν νοητὴν οὐσίαν ἢ  
τὰ τῆδε ἐν τε ὕδασι εἰδῶλα καὶ σκιάς τῶν αἰσθητῶν πρὸς  
αὐτὰ τὰ αἰσθητά. Καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ τὰ ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων σκευαστὰ  
ταῦτα ἐν τῷ ἐκεῖ φασι ἀνθρώπου εἶδει καθ' ἐν περιέχεσθαι·  
ὁθεν τῇ διανοίᾳ τοὺς δημιουργοὺς ἄλλα ἄλλους ὑποδεχομένους,  
καὶ διανοητὰ πρότερον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὰ τῶν σκευῶν εἶδη ἐκάστων  
10 διαμεμορφωκότας, οὕτω τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς ἐγχειρεῖν.

## 2. De diff. X 341.11-342.7

[... τὰ φύσει γιγνόμενα ...] Ἀλλὰ φαίη ἂν  
ἴσως Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῷ ἡλίου νῶ καὶ τούτων τὰ παραδείματα  
ὑφισταῖναι, καὶ οὐκ ἔτι δεῖν ἑτέρου παραδείγματος καθ' ἑαυτὸ  
ὑφεστηκότος οὐδενός. Δῆλον γὰρ ὡς τὸν ἡλίον τῶν γιγνομένων  
15 τῆς γενέσεως Ἀριστοτέλης αἴτιον τίθεται. Πρὸς οὖν ταῦτα  
που οἱ τὰ εἶδη τιθέμενοι ἐροῦσιν· ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐωρῶμεν ὡς Ἀρι-  
στότελες, ὡσαύτως τὰ τε σκευαστὰ ταῦτα ὑπὸ τῶν σφετέρων  
δημιουργῶν δημιουργούμενα, καὶ τὰ φύσει γιγνόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ  
ἡλίου, συνεχωροῦμεν ἂν σου τῷ λόγῳ. Νυνὶ δ' ὀρώμεν τὰ μὲν  
20 σκευαστὰ ταῦτα, ἕως μὲν ἂν ὑπὸ τῶν δημιουργῶν δημιουργῆ-  
ται παρόντων τὲ καὶ ἀπτομένων τῶν ἔργων, καὶ αὐτὰ προχω-  
ροῦντα ἐς τὴν τελειότητα τὴν ἑαυτῶν· καταλειφθέντα δ' ἡμι-

25 τελή ὑπὸ τῶν δημιουργούντων, οὐκ ἔτι προχωροῦντα ἐς οὐδέν,  
ἅτε τῶν δημιουργούντων οὐ τὰς χεῖρας μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ  
παραδείγματα ταῦτα ἑαυτοῖς συναποφερόντων. Τῶν δὲ φύσει  
γιγνομένων τὰ πλεῖστα ὀρῶμεν καὶ τοῦ ἡλίου ἀποκεχωρηκός  
αὐτὰ ἔτι ἐς τὴν τελειότητα τὴν ἑαυτῶν προχωροῦντα· ὃ μάλιστα  
 30 ἐνδὸν γίγνεται ἐν τοῖς ταχὺ τελειούμενοις φυτοῖς τε καὶ καρ-  
ποῖς. Ἄ καὶ νύκτωρ οὐδὲν ἦττον ἢ μεθ' ἡμέραν φαίνεται τελειού-  
μενα. Τὸν μὲν οὖν ἡλίον νοῦν οὐκ ἂν αὐτὰ ἔτι τελειοῦν· οὐ γὰρ  
ἂν τοὺς μεδεκτοὺς τούτους νοῦς ἄνευ τῶν σφίσι συνόντων σωμά-  
των οὐδ' ὅτιοῦν δρᾶν ἔς γε ἕτερα σώματα. Τὰ δὲ γε σώματα  
πάντα καὶ δέσεώς τινος δεῖσθαι καὶ σχήματος πρὸς τὰ πεισό-  
 35 μενα, ὃ τότε ἂν τὸν ἡλίον πρὸς αὐτὰ μηκέτι ἔχειν. Μηκέτι δ'  
ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου τότε ἂν τὰ τοιαῦτα τελειούμενα, οὐδ' ἂν αὐτὰ  
δι' αὐτῶν τελειοῖτο· οὐδὲ μίαν γὰρ δύναμιν ἐς ἐνεργίαν προ-  
χωρεῖν, μὴ οὐχ ὑφ' ἐτέρας ἐνεργίας προβιβαζομένην, οὐδ' ἂν  
τὸ δυνάμει τέλειον καὶ ἔργῳ ποτε τέλειον γίνεσθαι, μὴ οὐχ  
ὑφ' ἐτέρου τοῦ ἔργῳ τελεωτέρου προβιβαζόμενον. Διὰ ταῦθ'  
 40 ἡμεῖς, φήσουσι, τὴν ἐνεργίαν ταύτην, τὴν τότε δὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα  
 342 τελειοῦσαν, τοῖς εἶδεσιν τούτοις ἀπονέμομεν. Καὶ διχῆ τὰ σύμ-  
παντα χωριστὰ εἶδη διαιροῦντες ἔς τε ἰκανὰ αὐτὰ δι' αὐτῶν  
τὰ ἔργα ἐξεργάζεσθαι ἔς τε οὐχ ὡσαύτως ἰκανὰ, ἐκεῖνα μὲν τοῖς  
 5 τῆδε αἰθίοις παραδείγματά τε καὶ αἴτια ἐφίσταμεν, ταῦτα δὲ τοῖς  
αὐτοῖς προσάξοντος, ἐπειδὴ δὲ λάβοιτο τῆς ὕλης, δρώντα καὶ  
αὐτὰ δι' αὐτῶν ἔτι ἐς αὐτήν.

3. *Leg.* III.15, pp. 108-114

Ἴσως γὰρ ἂν τις οἰηθεῖη  
τὸν Ἥλιον ἐν νῶ ἔχοντα τῷ ἑαυτοῦ τὰ τῶν θνητῶν  
ταῦτα εἶδη, διανοητά τε καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ οὐδαμοῦ ὑφε-  
στηκότα, ὃν τρόπον καὶ ἀνθρώπων οἱ δημιουργοῦντες τὰ  
τῶν σκευαστῶν εἶδη, οὕτω τῶν θνητῶν αὐτὸν ἕκαστα  
παράγειν. Ἄλλ' ἡμεῖς γε ὀρῶμεν οὐχ ὡσαύτως τὰ τε σκευ-  
αστὰ ταῦτα ὑπὸ τῶν δημιουργούντων ἀποτελούμενα,  
τά τε φύσει συνιστάμενα ταῦτα τῶν θνητῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ  
 110 Ἥλιου. Τὰ μὲν γὰρ που σκευαστὰ ἅπαντα, ἕως μὲν ἂν  
αὐτοῖς παρῶσιν οἱ δημιουργοῦντες καὶ ἐργάζονται, ὀρῶμεν  
καὶ αὐτὰ ἐς τὴν τελειότητα προχωροῦντα τὴν ἑαυτῶν,  
καταλειφθέντα δὲ ποτε ἡμιτελή ὑπὸ τῶν δημιουργούν-  
των, οὐκέτι οὐδὲ προχωροῦντα ἐς οὐδέν· ἔτι τε κατὰ  
λόγον τὸν τῆς μεταχειρίσεως, ἢ ἂν αὐτὰ οἱ δημιουργοῦν-  
τες ἐκάστοτε ἐργάζονται, καὶ αὐτὰ ἅπαντα αἰεὶ τελειού-  
μενα. Τὰ δὲ φύσει ταῦτα συνιστάμενα, οὐ πρὸς τὸν  
αὐτὸν ἅπαντα λόγον τῶν τε προσόδων καὶ ἀποχωρήσεων  
τῶν τοῦ Ἥλιου ὀρῶμεν τελειούμενα, οὐδέ γε ζῶντα. Ἦ  
γὰρ ἂν ἅπαντα ἐφήμερα, ἢ γοῦν ἐπέτεια ἦν; ἔτι τε νύκ-  
τωρ οὐδὲν ἂν αὐτῶν προχώρει ἐς τελειότητα. Νῦν δ'  
ὀρῶμεν καὶ νύκτωρ συχνὰ ἐπιδήλως τελειούμενα φυτὰ τε  
καὶ καρπούς. Τὸν μὲν οὖν Ἥλιον, οὐκ ἂν ὡσαύτως τε-  
λειοῦν ἕκαστα, προσάγοντά τε καὶ ἀποχωροῦντα. Οὔτε  
γὰρ ἂν νοῦν τὸν αὐτοῦ, ἄνευ τοῦ ἑαυτῷ συνόντος σώμα-  
τος, αὐτὰ τελειοῦν. Οὐ γὰρ τοὺς γε μεδεκτοὺς τούτους  
νοῦς, ἄνευ τῶν σφίσι συνόντων σωμάτων, οὐδ' ἂν ὅτιοῦν  
δρᾶν ἔς γε ἕτερα σώματα· τοῖς τε αὖ σώμασι πᾶσι, τοῖς

τι δράσουσι, καὶ θέσεως δεῖν τοιαῦδε ἢ τοιαῦδε πρὸς τὰ  
 πεισόμενα. Οὐδ' αὖ τὰ τελειούμενα αὐτὰ ἂν ὑφ' αὐτῶν  
 τελειοῦσθαι· οὐδεμίαν γὰρ ἂν δύναμιν ἐς ἐνεργεῖαν χω-  
 ρεῖν, μὴ οὐχ ὑφ' ἑτέρας ἐνεργείας πρεσβυτέρας προβιβαζο-  
 μένην· οὐκ ἂν οὖν οὔτε τὸ δυνάμει τέλειον, καὶ ἔργω  
 ποτὲ τέλειον γίγνοιτο, μὴ οὐχ' ὑφ' ἑτέρου τοῦ ἔργω ἤδη  
 τελείου ἐς τὴν τελειότητα προβιβαζόμενον. Ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἂν  
 τὴν ὑπὸ Ἡλίου θερμότητα ἐγγεγονυῖαν, ἢ τι ἄλλο πά-  
 ρθημα, ἐναπειλημμένον ἂν ἐκάστοις τῶν θνητῶν, τελειοῦν  
 II 2 αὐτὰ καὶ τοῦ Ἡλίου ἐκάστοτε ἀποχωροῦντος· πρεσβύ-  
 τερον γὰρ που τό γε τελειοῦν τοῦ τελειομένου εἶναι δεῖ·  
 εἶδους δὲ καὶ ὅλως οὐσίας οὐδὲν πάθημα πρεσβύτερον, τό  
 γε προσγιγνόμενον, τούτου, ὧ ἂν ἐκάστοτε προσγίγνη-  
 ται. Λείπεται δὴ, εἶδη ἅττα καθ' ἑαυτὰ ὑφ' ἑσθηκότα, ἐν  
 τῷ ὑπερουρανίῳ ὄντα χώρῳ, ταῦτα μετὰ μὲν ἀλλήλων  
 μόνων οὐκέτι οἶά τε εἶναι παράγειν, ἅπτ' ἂν παράγοι·  
 τῆδε, ὡσπερ που τὰ πρεσβύτερα αὐτῶν, ἃ δὴ Ἡλιόν τε  
 καὶ Σελήνην, τὰ τ' ἄλλα ἀθάνατα τῶν τῆδε παράγει·  
 ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς Ἡλίου τε καὶ θεῶν τῶν περὶ Ἡλιον, ἐπὶ  
 τὸ παράγειν, ἅπτ' ἂν καὶ αὐτὰ παράγειν θεοί, κοινωνίας  
 δεῖσθαι· ἐπειδὴ μέντοι τι ταύτη παραχθῆ, καὶ σύστασίην  
 τινα ἤδη λάβη, τότε δὴ καὶ αὐτὰ οἶά τ' εἶναι ἤδη δι'  
 αὐτῶν αὐτὸ ἐπὶ τινα χρόνον τελειοῦν τε καὶ σώζειν· καὶ  
 τὰ μὲν καὶ αὐτῶν τελεώτερα, καὶ μάλλον ἂν αὐτὸ δύνα-  
 σθαι· τὰ δ' ἀτελέστερα, ἤττον. Διὰ τοι ταῦτα, οὐ πρὸς  
 τὸν αὐτὸν ἅπαντα λόγον τῶν τε προσόδων καὶ ἀποχω-  
 ρήσεων τῶν τοῦ Ἡλίου τελειοῦσθαι τὰ θνητὰ, οὐδέ γε  
 σώζεσθαι. Συμβαίνειν τε αὐτοῖς παραπλήσιόν τι τρόπον  
 τινὰ, οἷον καὶ τοῖς ἀφιεμένοις· καὶ γὰρ καὶ ταῦτα ἀφε-  
 ρεῖν μὲν ἂν οὐδαμῶς, μηδεὶν ἀφιέντος· ἐπειδὴ μέντοι  
 τις ἀφῆ ὅτιοῦν αὐτῶν, παραλαμβάνοντα ἤδη τὸν ἀέρα  
 αὐτὸ ἐπὶ τινα χρόνον φέρειν τῆ ἀντιπεριστάσει, οὐ τοῦ  
 γε ἀφεικότος προσαπτομένου ἔτι, οὐδέ κινουῦντος. Τὰ μὲν  
 οὖν ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων σκευαστὰ, σώζεσθαι μὲν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἂν  
 αὐτὰ ἢ φύσις σώζῃ, διὰ τὸ ἐκ φυσικῶν τινων σωμάτων  
 ἕκαστα αὐτῶν συντίθεσθαι· τελειοῦσθαι δὲ πρὸς λόγον ἀεὶ  
 II 4 ἐκάστοτε ἐργάζονται· εἰ μὴ ὅ,τι περ ἂν αὐτῶν, συμπέψεώς  
 τινος θεόμενον, τῆ φύσει αὖ καὶ ταύτη ἐπιτρέποιτο. Τὰ  
 δὲ πολλὰ ἐκείνως εἰκότως τελειοῦσθαι· οὐ γὰρ εἶναι αὐ-  
 τοῖς τὰ παραληψόμενά τε καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τελειώσοντα,  
 ἅτε τῶν δημιουργούντων σὺν τῶν χειρῶν τῆ ἀποστάσει  
 καὶ τὰ ἐν ταῖς διανοίαις εἶδη, οἷς τέως παραδείγμασι  
 χρώμενοι εἰργάζοντο, ἀπαγόντων τῶν δημιουργουμένων.  
 Οὐ γὰρ αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ εἶδος χωρὶς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ὑφε-  
 στηκέαι, ἀλλ' ἐν θεῷ τῷ Πλούτωνι, ὃς εἶδους σύμπαντος  
 τοῦ ἀνθρωπίου προέστηκε, σύμπαντα ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ καθ'  
 ἐν τι, τὰ γε ἀνθρώπεια πράγματα, ἐνόντα, καὶ ταῦτα  
 ὡσαύτως καὶ καθ' ἐν τι τοὺς δημιουργούντας χωρὶς ἤδη  
 ἕκαστον, καὶ ἄλλον ἄλλο, ταῖς διανοίαις ὑποδέχεσθαι.  
 Ὡσπερ που καὶ ἀριθμὸν τὸν μαθηματικὸν καὶ μεγέθη τὰ  
 μαθηματικά καθ' ἐν τι τῆ θεῷ Ἡρᾷ ἐκάτερον αὐτοῖν  
 προσόντε, ἢ καὶ ἀπειρίας ἀπάσης προέστηκε τῆς κατ'  
 αὐτὰ, διὰ τὸ καὶ ὕλης τὴν αὐτὴν προεστάναι, τὴν ψυχὴν  
 ἤδη αὐτὰ ἐκτάδην ὑποδέχεσθαι, σκιάς μὲν που τῶν θείων



καὶ εἶδωλα ἅττα ὄντα, πρὸς δ' ἀκριβῆ κάκεινων ἀνθρώ-  
ποις ἐπιστήμην ἀναγωγότατα. Τὰ μὲν οὖν σκευαστὰ ἀν-  
θρώποις εἰκότως ταύτη τελειοῦσθαι. Τὰ δὲ φύσει συνιστά-  
μενα, ἅτε πρὸς παραδείγματα καθ' ἑαυτὰ ὑφεστηκότα  
συνιστάμενα, εἰκότως αὖ οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν ἅπαντα  
λόγον τῶν τε προσόδων καὶ ἀποχωρήσεων τῶν τοῦ Ἥλιου  
τελειοῦται, ὄντων αὐτοῖς καὶ τῶν παραδειγμάτων τούτων,  
τῶν μὲν τελειωτέρων, τῶν δὲ ἀτελεστέρων τινῶν, καὶ τῶν  
μὲν μᾶλλον ἂν δυναμένων καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τελειοῦν τὰ  
ἀπὸ σφῶν, τῶν δ' ἥττον τὸ τοιοῦτο δυναμένων.

## V

### 1. *In Cleop.* 173.9-174.4

10 Ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν αὐθαιρέτων θανάτων τοῦτο τις λογί-  
σαιτο· οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν ἀλόγων αὐτὸ αὐτὸ φαίνεται κτεῖνον ἐκ προ-  
νοίας, τῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων εἰσὶν οἱ ἑαυτοὺς ἀποκτινύουσιν. Εἰ δὲ  
μηδὲν ἔστιν ὃ ἂν τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ὄλεθρου ἐφίοιτο· τὰ γὰρ ἄλογα,  
εἰ καὶ μὴ αἰδιότητος ἐφίεται διὰ τὸ μηδὲ συνιέναι τοῦ τοιοῦτου,  
15 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐπὶ τὸν ἑαυτῶν ὄλεθρον σπεύδει ἐκόντα εἶναι· οὐκ ἂν οὖν  
οὐδ' ἢ ψυχῆ ἢ ἀνθρωπίνῃ ἐπὶ τι τοιοῦτον ὄρμα, εἴ γε καὶ αὐτῇ  
ὄλεθρον φέρειν ἂν ὃ τοῦ σώματος ἔμελλε θάνατος, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ  
174 μηκέτ' ἂν ἑαυτῇ λυσιτελεῖν τὸν μετὰ τοῦ σώματος νομίση βίον  
κτείνασα τοῦτο ἢ καὶ τοῖς κτεῖναι ἂν ἐθέλουσι προεμένη ὑπὲρ τοῦ  
μηδὲν τι τῶν αἰσχυρῶν καὶ βλάβην ἂν ἑαυτῇ οἰσόντων συγχωρῆσαι,  
αὐτῇ δηλαδὴ οἴχεται ἀπιούσα.

### 2. *In Hel.* 278.4-279.2

5 Καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ αὐτοὺς ἀποκτινύντες  
εἴτε δὴ εὐλόγως τοῦτο θρωῶντες εἴτε μὴ· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἂν διαφέρει  
τὸ τοιοῦτο πρὸς ὃ βουλόμεθα ἐνδείξασθαι· δηλώσειαν ὡς ἐκ δυοῖν  
ὁ ἀνθρωπος σύνθετός ἐστιν οὐσίαι, καὶ τῆς μὲν ἀθανάτου, τῆς  
δὲ θνητῆς. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν ὃ αὐτὸ ἐπὶ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ὄλεθρον  
πέφυκεν ὄρμα, ἀλλ' ἅπαντα τοῦ εἶναι τε καὶ σώζεσθαι κατὰ δύνα-  
10 μίν γε οὐ μεδίεται. Οὐκ ἂν οὖν οὐδ' ὁ ἀνθρωπος αὐτὸς αὐτὸν  
279 ἀποκτινύς τῷ θνητῷ αὐτὸ τὸ θνητὸν κτείνει, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ  
ἀθανάτῳ τὸ θνητὸν.

### 3. *Leg.* III.43 (*Epinomis*), p. 248

Ὡς γε μὴν ἐκ δυοῖν ὁ ἀνθρωπος συντέθειται εἶδοι, καὶ ἐξ ἑτέρου ἡμῖν, οὐδὲ τούτου ἀμφιλόγου, ἀποδείκνυ-  
ται ἀξιώματος, τοῦ μηθοτιοῦν τῶν ὄντων εἶναι, ὃ ἂν  
αὐτὸ ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτοῦ ὄλεθρον ὀρμήσειεν, ἀλλ' ἅπαντα  
τοῦ σώζεσθαι τε καὶ εἶναι ἐς δυνάμιν γε μὴ μεδίεσθαι.  
Τοῦτο γὰρ λαμβάνουσι τὸ ἀξίωμα, καὶ ἔπειτα αὖ τῶν  
ἀνθρώπων τοὺς αὐτοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀποκτινύντας ἐπιβλέ-  
πουσιν, ἐναργεστάτως καταφαίνεται οὐ τὸ θνητὸν ἡμῶν ὄν  
τὸ αὐτὸ αὐτὸ ἀποκτινύν, ἀλλὰ τι ἕτερον τούτου τε  
κρεῖττον, καὶ οὐ συναπολούμενόν γε, ἅτε οὐδ' ἂν τούτου  
ἐξημμένον, οἷά περ τὰ θνητὰ ἅπαντα εἶδη, ἃ δὴ τῶν

parallel *In Hel.*

σωμάτων τέως οἷς ξύνεστιν ἐξημμένα, τούτοις καὶ λυο-  
 μένοις συνδιόλλυται· οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἂν αὐτῶ οὐ μόνον γε  
 οὐκ ἐς τοσοῦτον, ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἂν ἐπὶ σμικρόν τι ἀντέβαινεν,  
 εἰ αὐτοῦ ἐξήπτο· ἀλλ' οὐσίαν ἰδίαν τε ἔχον καὶ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς  
 ὑφεστηκυῖαν, ὃ ἐπειδὴν μηκέτι ἑαυτῶ λυσιτελεῖν τὸν  
 μετὰ τοῦ θνητοῦ βίον οἰήσῃ (εἴτ' ὀρθῶς, εἴτε καὶ μὴ, τοῦτο  
 οἰήσεν· οὐδὲν γὰρ διαφέρει) κτεῖνάν γε αὐτὸ, ὡς ἄλλο ὄν,  
 ἄλλου, κακοῦ δὴ δόξαντος καὶ οὐκ εὐχεροῦς συνοίκου,  
 ἀπαλλάσσεται.

parallel In Cleop.

## VI

### 1. Ad Theod. 126.7-23

Ἐκ τούτων ἄρα τούτων  
 δυοῖν ὄντων ἀλλήλοισιν ἐναντίον εἶδοῖν τῶν περὶ τὸ θεῖον δοξῶν,  
 οἷόν περ ἀπὸ πηγαῖν, δύο βίου προαιρέσειε πρόϊτον ἐναντιωτάτω  
 10 ἀλλήλοισιν, ἢ μὲν τῶν μόνον ἢ μάλιστα τὸ καλὸν τιθεμένων ἀγαθόν,  
 ἢ δὲ τῶν τὴν ἡδονὴν τέλος τοῦ βίου ποιουμένων. Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐστὶν  
 ὁ ἄνθρωπος ξύνθετός τις φύσις ἔκ τε θείας οὐσίας καὶ θνητῆς,  
 ὡς δοκεῖ δὴ πᾶσι καὶ Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων τοῖς γε καὶ ὁσονοῦν  
 νοῦ μετέχουσι, καὶ τὸ μὲν θεῖον αὐτοῦ ἢ ψυχὴ ἐστὶ, τὸ δὲ θνητὸν  
 15 τὸ σῶμα, οἷ μὲν, ἂν τῶ ἐν αὐτοῖς θεῖω κεκρατηκότι ἐπισπώμενοι  
 τὰς τε περὶ τὴν ξυγγενῆ οὐσίαν ἡκριβωκότες εἶεν δόξας καὶ ἀρετῆν  
 καὶ τὸ καλὸν παντὸς τοῦ βίου προστήσαιντο, πάντα ἀγαθὰ ἐν  
 ἀνθρώποις ἀπεργάζονται, οἷ δ' ἂν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐν αὐτοῖς θνητοῦ καὶ  
 20 θηριώδους κρατηθέντες τὰς τε περὶ τὸ θεῖον δόξας ἀμαρτάνοιεν  
 καὶ ἡδονῇ τὸ πᾶν δοῖεν τοῦ βίου, τὰ μεγάλα αὐτῶ πανταχῇ ἀπεργά-  
 ζονται κακά· οἷν μεταξὺ αὐτῶ καὶ οἷ τε περὶ δόξαν ἐσπουδακότες  
 καὶ οἷ περὶ χρήματα, δόξης μὲν ἀρετῆς καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ οὐσίας  
 εἰδῶλου, χρημάτων δὲ παρασκευῶν ἐφ' ἡδονάς.

### 2. In Cleop. 172.14-173.3

Οὐκ ἂν οὖν τὸν θεὸν  
 15 οὐτ' ἂν ἀλλοτριὰ τε πάντα καὶ θνητῆ φύσει ἑαυτὸν γνωρίζειν,  
 ἀλλὰ πῃ καὶ οἰκεία κοινωνεῖν γὰρ ἂν δεοῖ τὸ γιγνώσκον τῶ  
 173 γιγνώσκομένῳ, τὰ δὲ κοινωνοῦντα καὶ οἰκεῖα πῃ ἀλλήλοισι δεοῖ ἂν  
 εἶναι, οὐτ' ἂν ἀιδιότητος ἐπιθυμίαν ἐνδέμενον τῶ ἀνθρώπῳ  
 ἔπειτα ἀτελεῖ τε ἂν αὐτὴν καὶ μάταιον ἀπολιπεῖν.

### 3. Leg. I.1, p. 26

Παραπλήσια δὲ  
 καὶ περὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως διαφορομένων, [τῶν μὲν]  
 τῇ ἄλλῃ θνητῇ τε καὶ θηρίων φύσει παραπλησίαν καὶ τὴν  
 ἀνθρωπείαν οἰομένων, οὐδὲν ἐκείνων σεμνότερον ἐν ἑαυτῇ  
 οὐδὲ θεϊότερον κεκτημένην τῶν δὲ καὶ ἐς τὴν θεῖαν τε  
 δὴ καὶ πάντα ἀκήρατον ἀναγόντων ταῖς ἐλπίσι τῶν δὲ  
 μέσσην δὴ τινα ἔχειν τε νῦν καὶ αἰεὶ ἔξειν χώραν τῆς τε  
 θείας καὶ ἀθανάτου καὶ αὐτῆς θνητῆς τὸν ἄνθρωπον νομιζόν-  
 των, μικτὴν ἐξ ἀμφοῖν.

Ὡς δ' ἄλλως οὐ καλῶς ὁ ὅρος σύγκειται, δοκῶν κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ τὸν ἄνθρωπον λογικόν τε ὁμοῦ ἀποφαίνειν καὶ θνητόν, ἔστιν εἰπεῖν. Ἄλλ' οὗτος μὲν ὁ ὅρος ὑπὸ τῶν περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Ἀφροδισιέα εἴη ἂν  
 337 συντεθειμένος, ἐκεῖνος δ' ἂν ἀμείνων ἀνθρώπου εἴη ὅρος, τὸν ἀνθρω-  
 95 πον εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον θνητῇ κοινωνεῖν φύσει πεφυκός· τὸ γὰρ λο-  
 γικόν, κὰν ἐν τῷ ἀθανάτῳ ζῶω περιέχοιτο, ὡς οὐδὲν γε ὄν ζῶον ἀθάνα-  
 τον, ὃ μὴ καὶ λογικόν ἐστι, τὴν δ' οὐσίαν τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ τοιοῦτος  
 ὅρος ἐν τῷ θείῳ τε αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ ἢ θέμις μάλιστα ὀρίζων κὰν κάλ-  
 λιστα ἔχοι· τῷ γὰρ ὄντι οὐχ ἀπλοῦν τι εἶδος ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ἀλλ' ἐκ δυοῖν  
 100 εἰδοῖν σύνθετον ὄν, θείου τε δὴ καὶ θηριώδους, δηλὸς γίγνεται, ἐν ἐ-  
 ἀξίωμα λαβοῦσιν οὐκ ἀμφίλογον νοῦ ὅσονοῦν μετέχουσιν ἀν-  
 θρώποις, ὡς τῶν αὐτῶν τῷ εἶδει ταῦτόν καὶ ἔργον πάντων θέοι εἶναι καὶ  
 παραπλήσιον καὶ τὰ μέγιστα τι τῶν ἔργων διαφέροντα καὶ ἀπὸ μέγα  
 τι διαφερόντων προβάλλεσθαι εἰδῶν. Τῶν γοῦν θηρίων ἐκάστοις οἱ  
 105 αὐτοὶ βίοι τοῖς γε ὁμοειδέσι καὶ παραπλήσιοι, λέουσι, βουσί, λύκοις,  
 ἐλάφοις, καὶ οὐκ ἂν τις ἴδοι ἐν οὐδέσιν αὐτῶν βίου ἀξίαν τινὰ λόγου  
 διαφορᾶν, ὁμοειδέσι γε οὔσι. Ταῦτόν δ' ἂν πιστεύοιμεν τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ  
 καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπου θειοτέρων εἰδῶν.

Τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις ὁρῶμεν πάμπολυ διαφέροντας τοὺς βίους καὶ  
 110 τοὺς μὲν θείῳ βίῳ τινί, τοὺς δὲ θηριώδεσι χρωμένους, ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ  
 τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐκ θηριώδους βίου εἰς τὸν κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ θεῖον μεταβάλ-  
 λοντας, τοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θείου εἰς τὸν θηριώδη, ἐπειδὴν μὴ ἐπιση-  
 115 μῆ τις τὴν ἀρετὴν, ὃ ὅξῃ δὲ μόνῃ ὁρθῇ ἀνευλόγου ἡρημέ-  
 νος τύχη. Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀπλοῦν τι εἶδος ἦν ὁ ἀνθρώπος, εἰ μὲν θηριώδεις,  
 θηριώδει ἂν ἅπαντες ἀνθρώποι καὶ τῷ βίῳ ἐχρῶντο, εἰ δὲ θεῖον, θείῳ  
 ἂν ἐχρῶντο καὶ τῷ βίῳ ἅπαντες. Νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οἱ μὲν θείως, οἱ δὲ θηριω-  
 δῶς φαίνονται ζῶντες, οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ καὶ ποικίλλοντες τὸν βίον, τότε  
 μὲν τοῖς θείοις, τότε δὲ τοῖς θηριώδεσι προσνέμοντες σφᾶς τῶν ἔργων,  
 δηλὸς ἐστὶν ἐκ δυοῖν εἰδοῖν, θείου τε δὴ καὶ θηριώδους, ὁ ἀνθρώπος  
 339/  
 120 συντεθειμένος, καὶ τότε μὲν ἂν τοῦ θείου κρατοῦντος τὰ θεῖα αἰρούμε-  
 νος ἔργα τε καὶ βίον, τότε δ' ἂν τοῦ θηριώδους ἐπὶ τὰ θηριώδη ἀποκλί-  
 νων, κατὰ ἵπποτα τινέ, τὸν μὲν ἐγκρατῆ τοῦ γε ἵππου, τὸν δ' οὐ μάλα  
 ἐγκρατῆ, οἷον ὁ μὲν ἄτε τοῦ ἵππου κρατῶν κὰν τὴν ἑαυτῷ προκειμένην  
 πορεύοιτο ὁδόν, ἄγων αὐτὸς οἱ ἂν θέοι μάλιστα τὸν ἵππον, ὁ δ' ἕτερος  
 125 ὁ οὐκ ἐγκρατῆς ἐκεῖνος ὑπὸ τοῦ ἵππου ἐκφερόμενος ἄλλη τε ἂν καὶ  
 ἄλλη πλανῶτο καὶ ποτε καὶ ἐς βάραθρόν τι ἐμπίπτων διαφθείροιτο·  
 καλλίστη γὰρ ἂν αὕτη εἴη εἰκὼν τῶν κατὰ τὸν ἀνθρωπὸν πραγμάτων.

Εἰ δ' οὖν ἐκ δυοῖν εἰδοῖν, τοῦ μὲν θείου τοῦ δὲ θηριώδους, σύνθε-  
 130 τόν τι χρῆμα ὁ ἀνθρωπός ἐστιν, ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ παντός ἀρμονίας καὶ  
 ἀθανάτου τε καὶ θνητῆς ἐν ἡμῖν μίξεως τῷ θεῷ μεμηχανημένον, κὰν  
 τὸ κυριώτατον αὐτοῦ τῆς οὐσίας ἐν τῷ θείῳ τούτῳ αὐτοῦ εἴη, ἀλλ' οὐ  
 κατὰ τοὺς περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον ἐν τῷ θηριώδει καὶ θνητῷ. Τόσαῦτα δὴ  
 ἡμῖν καὶ ἐς τὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰρήσθω ὅρον.

Ἐπειτα μὴ πρὸς  
 5 τὴν τῶν θηρίων ἡμῶν μόνον ὁρῶν τις κοινωνίαν καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν  
 οὐσίαν τῇ τῶν θηρίων παραπλησίαν οἰέσθω ἡμᾶς ἔχειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ  
 πρὸς τὰς ἑτέρας ἡμῶν πράξεις τε καὶ θεωρίας ἀποβλέπων ἡγεῖσθω  
 καὶ τινὰ ἡμῖν ἐνεῖναι ἑτέραν οὐσίαν πολὺ τῆς θηρίων ταύτης  
 θειοτέραν. Ἐχει γὰρ ὠδί.

10 Θεὸν μὲν τινα ἕνα τοῖς ὅλοις ἐφεστάναι δημιουργόν τε αὐτῶν  
 ὄντα καὶ παραγωγὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἄκρως ἀγαθὸν εἶναι οὐδείς ὅστις  
 οὐ νομιεῖ ἢ αὐτὸς ἐννόησας ἢ τῶν οὕτως ἀξιούτων ἀκούων μὴ  
 συγχωρήσας, εἰ μὴ σφόδρα τις διεφθόρει τὴν διάνοιαν, οὐδ' ὡς  
 276 τούτου καὶ ἡμῶν μεταξὺ εἴη τις ἂν καὶ ἄλλη φύσις, εἴτε δὴ μία  
 τῷ γένει, εἴτε καὶ ἐς πλείω διακεκριμένη γένη, ἡμῶν μὲν κρείττων,  
 ἐκείνου δὲ καὶ πάνυ λειπομένη, οὐκ ἔστιν αὖ ὅς οὐ καὶ τοῦτο  
 νομιεῖ. Οὐ γὰρ ἀξιώσει τις τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔργων τὸ κράτιστον  
 ἡμᾶς γε εἶναι. Ταύτας δὴ τὰς ἡμῶν κρείττους φύσεις οὐδείς ὅστις  
 5 οὐ νοῦς ἂν φαίη εἶναι ἢ καὶ ψυχὰς τινὰς τῶν ἡμετέρων κρείττους.  
 Εἰ δὲ τοιαῦται ἐκείναι αἱ φύσεις, τί ἂν ἄλλο αὐτῶν τὸ κυριώτατον  
 εἴη ἔργον καὶ πρᾶξις ἢ ἡ τῶν ὄντων θεωρία καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῇ ἢ τοῦ  
 τῶν ὄλων δημιουργοῦ ἔννοια, ἣς τοῖς τυγχάνειν πεφυκόσιν οὐδεμία  
 τις ἂν ἄλλη γένοιτο κρείττων πρᾶξις οὐδὲ μακαριώτερα, ἣς καὶ  
 10 ἄνθρωπος πρὸς τῇ ἄλλῃ τῶν ὄντων θεωρίᾳ καὶ ταύτης δηλὸς ἐστι  
 τυγχάνων.  
 Οὐκοῦν οὐ μόνον τοῖς θηρίων ἔργοις κοινωνοῖ ἂν ἄνθρωπος  
 καὶ τὰ θηρίων πράττοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς τῶν κρειττόνων ἡμῶν  
 γενῶν, εἰ τῆς αὐτῆς αὐτοῖς θεωρίας ἐς δύναμιν καὶ αὐτὸς ἄπτεται,  
 277 τὰ δὲ κοινωνοῦντα τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ ταῖς οὐσίαις ἀνάγκη κοινωνεῖν.  
 Ἐνάλογον γὰρ δεῖ ἔχειν οὐσίας τε ἔργοις καὶ ἔργα οὐσίαις.  
 Ὅσπερ οὖν τις τοῖς θηρίων ἔργοις κοινωνοῦντα ἄνθρωπον ὁρῶν  
 καὶ οὐσίαν τῇ θηρίων παραπλησίαν τίθεται αὐτὸν κεκτήσθαι,  
 5 καλῶς ἀξιῶν οὕτω καὶ τοῖς τῶν κρειττόνων ἡμῶν γενῶν κοινω-  
 νοῦντα ὁρῶν ἔργοις καὶ οὐσίαν παραπλησίαν τῇ ἐκείνων ἔχειν  
 ἀξιούτω, ὡς οὐχ οἶόν τε ὄν μὴ οὐκ ἀπὸ παραπλησίας τῆς οὐσίας  
 παραπλήσια καὶ τὰ ἔργα εἶναι καὶ ἐκ δυοῖν οὐσίαις τὸν ἄνθρωπον  
 νομιζέτω συντεθεῖσθαι, τῆς μὲν θείας τινός, τῆς δὲ θηριώδους,  
 10 καὶ ταύτης μὲν θνητῆς, τῆς δὲ θείας ἡμῶν ἀθανάτου, εἴ γε καὶ  
 ἢ τῶν κρειττόνων ἡμῶν γενῶν ἀθάνατος. Οὐδαμῇ γὰρ ἂν εὐλογον  
 εἴη ἄκρως ἀγαθὸν ὄντα τὸν θεὸν καὶ φθόνου ἕξω παντὸς μὴ οὐ  
 πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ ἀθανάτους τὰς ἐγγυτέρω ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίας  
 παραγαγεῖν. Εἰ δ' ἐκείναι ἀθάνατοι, κἂν ἡμῶν ὅσον τῆς οὐσίας  
 278 αὐταῖς παραπλήσιον ἀθάνατον εἴη, ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἂν ποτε γένοιτο θνη-  
 τὸν ἀθανάτῳ παραπλήσιον οὐδ' ἐφ' ὅσονοῦν τὸ πεπερασμένην γε  
 ἔχον τὴν τοῦ εἶναι δύναμιν καὶ ἐπιλείπουσαν τῷ ἀνεπίλειπτον  
 ἔχοντι καὶ ἄπειρον.

6. Leg. III.43 (Epinomis), pp. 242-248

Οὐ δὲ,

κυριωτάτου τε ὄντος καὶ κοινοῦ ἐπιθυμήματος, ἅπαντες  
 μὲν ἄνθρωποι ἐφίενται, ζητοῦσι δ' αὐτὸ οὐκ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ  
 ἅπαντες βίῳ, ἀλλ' ᾧ ..... ἀποδέδεικται ἕκαστα ἀπ' ἐν-  
 νοιῶν τε καὶ ἀξιωματῶν οὐκ ἀσθενῶν τινων καὶ ἀμφιλό-  
 γων, ἄλλων τε δὴ, καὶ τριῶν μεγίστων ἐκείνων, ἐνὸς μὲν,  
 τοῦ ὡς ἡ ἀρχὴ αὕτη τῶν πάντων, ὁ μέγιστος θεός, ὃν γε  
 ἡμεῖς πατριῶ φωνῇ Δία καλοῦμεν, ἄκρως ἀγαθός ἐστιν, οὐ-  
 δεμιᾶς αὐτῷ ἀγαθοῦ ὑπερβολῆς μὴ οὐκ ἐς ὅσον οἶόν τε  
 βελτίστῳ εἶναι λειπομένης· ἐτέρου δὲ, τοῦ τὰς τε οὐ-  
 σίας ταῖς γεννήσεσι ταῖς αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰς γεννήσεις ταῖς  
 οὐσίαις ἀνάλογον ἔχειν δεῖν· καὶ τρίτου, τοῦ καὶ τὰ  
 278 ἔργα ταῖς οὐσίαις, καὶ τὰς οὐσίας τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς σφετέ-  
 ροις ἀνάλογον δεῖν καὶ αὐτὰ ἔχειν.

Τούτων γὰρ ὑποκειμένων ἀξιωματῶν βεβαίων, ἐκ μὲν  
 τοῦ πρώτου, ἀλλὰ τε ἡμῖν τῶν καλῶς ἐχόντων δογμα-

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των ἀποδείκνυται, καὶ ὡς τὸ πᾶν ἅμα μὲν αἰδῖον τῷ Διὶ γέγονεν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ ὅ τι δὴ κάλλιστον ἐκ τῶν ἐνό-  
των γεγονὸς, ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ μένει ἐς τὸν πάντα αἰῶνα  
καταστάσει, ἔκ γε δὴ τοῦ καθάπαξ αὐτῷ ἀποδειγμένου  
σχήματος ἀπαρακίνητον. Οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐγκωροίη, ὅ,τι περ  
βέλτιστον ὄντα τὸν θεὸν ἢ μὴ παράγειν ποτὲ τοῦργον τὸ  
αὐτοῦ, μὴδ' εὖ ποιεῖν μηδοτιοῦν (δέοι γὰρ ἂν τὸ αὐτὸ  
βέλτιστον καὶ ἄλλοις τοῦ οἰκείου ἀγαθοῦ ἐς ὅσον τε ἐγκ-  
χωρεῖ καὶ ἀεὶ μεταδίδοναι), ἢ εὖ τε ποιῶντα καὶ παρά-  
γοντα, ἐνδεέστερόν ποτε τῆς δυνάμεως εὖ ποιῆσαι, καὶ  
χειρόν ποτε ἔξον τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔργον ἀποδοῦναι, ἢ οἶον ἂν  
γεγονὸς ὅ,τι δὴ κάλλιστον εἴη. Δῆλα γὰρ δὴ ὡς τῶν κα-  
θεστηκότων εἴ τι Ζεὺς παρακινήσειε, καὶ τὸ πᾶν, εἴτ' ἔτι,  
εἴδ' ὕστερον, χειρόν γε ἔξον ἀποδοίη. Ἐπεὶ κἂν μόριόν  
τι αὐτοῦ μεταβάλῃ, ἢτοι οὐ πρότερον μεταβάλλειν  
εἰωθὸς, ἢ οὐκ ἐς τὸ εἰωθὸς μεταβαλὼν, ἀμήχανον μὴ οὐ  
καὶ ὅλον αὐτῷ συμμεταβαλεῖν τὸ σχῆμα. Τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ  
σχῆμα, μὴ οὐχὶ πάντων ὡσαύτως μερόντων τῶν μορίων,  
οὐχ οἶόν τε σώζεσθαι.

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Ἐκ δὲ δὴ ἀξιώματος τοῦ δευτέρου ἢ τῶν θείων πρα-  
γματῶν ἡμῖν διαφαίνεται κατάστασις. Διαιρούσης γὰρ  
τῆς τῶν πάντων οὐσίας ἐς τέ τινα ὁμοίον τε ἀεὶ καὶ  
κατὰ πάντα τὰ αὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσαν, ἐς τε τὴν ἐς  
χρόνον μὲν κινήτην, αἰδῖον δὲ, καὶ ἐς τρίτην τὴν θνητὴν,  
ἐπειδὴ ἐκάστη οὐσία γεννήσεως ἰδίας καὶ τῆς γε ἀνάλο-  
γον αὐτῇ ἐξούσης δεῖ, τὴν μὲν τῆς πρώτης γέννησιν τῇ  
ἀρχῇ τῶν πάντων ἀπονέμομεν, τῷ Διὶ τὴν δ' αὖ τῆς  
δευτέρας τῷ τῆς πρώτης ταύτης κορυφαίῳ οὐσίας Ποσει-  
δῶνι, χρωμένῳ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τοῖς γνησίοις ἄλλῳ ἐπ'  
ἄλλο συνεργοῖς τὴν δὲ τῆς τρίτης τῶν τε τῶν Διὸς  
νόθων πρεσβυτάτῳ Κρόνῳ, καὶ Ἡλίῳ τῶν Ποσειδῶνος  
γνησίων τῷ κρατίστῳ, χρωμένοι νυν καὶ τούτοις ἄλλῳ  
ἐπ' ἄλλο, Κρόνῳ μὲν τῶν συμπάντων νόθων ἀδελφῶν,  
Ἡλίῳ δὲ τῶν ἑαυτῷ ὁμοιοτέρων τῶν γνησίων, Πλανήτων  
διὰ τὴν πλεοναχῆ φορὰν καλουμένων.

Ἐκ δ' αὖ τοῦ τρίτου ἀξιώματος τὰ περὶ τῆς φύ-  
σεως ἡμῖν τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀποδείκνυται, ὡς ἐκ δυοῖν  
ὅ γε ἄνθρωπος σύνθετός ἐστιν εἰδοῖν, τοῦ μὲν θηριώδους  
καὶ θνητοῦ, τοῦ δὲ ἀθανάτου τε καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς συγγενοῦς.  
Ἐπεὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἔργοις ὁ ἄνθρωπος, τοῖς μὲν θηριώδεσι,  
τοῖς δὲ καὶ τοῖς τῶν θεῶν παραπλησίσι χρώμενος φαίνε-  
ται, ἀνάγκη που καὶ τῶν ἔργων τούτων ἑκατέροις οὐσίαν  
ἰδίαν τὴν ἀνάλογον ἔξουσαν ἀποδίδοναι. Ὡς δ' ἔτι θά-  
τερα ἀνθρώπῳ τῶν ἔργων τοῖς τῶν θεῶν παραπλήσια,  
καὶ ταῦτα αὐτῶν τοῖς σπουδαιοτάτοις, ἐναργές οὔτε γὰρ  
τοῖς θεοῖς τῆς τῶν ὄντων θεωρίας ἄλλο σπουδαιότερον  
φήσομεν εἶναι ἔργον, ἢς κεφάλαιον ἢ Διὸς ἔννοια ὅ τε  
ἄνθρωπος φαίνεται τῆς τε ἄλλης αὐτοῖς θεωρίας τῶν  
ὄντων κοινωνῶν, καὶ οὐδὲ τῆς Διὸς ἐννοίας ἀπολειπόμε-  
νος, ἄχρι ἢς ἐσχάτης καὶ αὐτοῖς θεοῖς ἐξικνοῦνται. Δέοι ἄρα  
ἂν αὐτῷ καὶ οὐσίας τῇ τῶν θεῶν παραπλησίας τῆς καὶ  
τοῦργον παραπλήσιον ἀποδωσούσης, καὶ ἀθανάτου δὴ,  
εἴ γε καὶ οὐσία ἀθάνατος ἢ τῶν θεῶν οὐ γὰρ ποτ' ἂν  
θνητὸν γένοιτο ἀθανάτῳ παραπλήσιον οὐδ' ἐφ' ὅσονοῦν  
οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲ συμβλητὸν ὅλως τὸ πεπερασμένην ἔχον τὴν

248 τοῦ εἶναι δύνάμιν καὶ ἐπιλείπουσαν τῷ ἀνεπίλειπτον  
 ἔχοντι καὶ ἄπειρον. Διὰ ταῦτα δὴ καὶ ἐν τῶν πράξεων  
 τῶν τῆ πρὸς θεοὺς συγγενείᾳ προσηκουσῶν τῆ ἀποδόσει,  
 καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐπὶ πολλοῖς ἄλλοις ἐπιεικέσι διδασκάλοις τό γε  
 εὐδαιμον ἀνδρώπῳ ἀποφαίνομεν, ὃ καὶ τῆς βίβλου ἡμῖν  
 τῆσδε ἔργον, ὡς εὐδαιμονεστάτους τοὺς τοῖσδε τοῖς  
 λόγοις προσέχοντας ἐκ τῶν ἐγχωρούντων ἀνδρώπῳ ἀπερ-  
 γάζεσθαι.

## VII

1. *De diff.* X 340

5 Ἄλλὰ φαίη ἂν τις  
 ὡς τῷ πρεσβυτάτῳ θεῷ μόνῳ οἶεται ταύτην ἂν προσήκειν τὴν  
 αἰτίαν. Ἄλλὰ τοῦτο ἄλλῳ μὲν ἐνεῖη ἂν εἰπεῖν, Ἀριστοτέλει  
 δ' οὐκ ἔνεστιν εἰπεῖν. Διὰ τί; ὅτι αὐτὸς ἂν ὑφ' αὐτοῦ περιτρα-  
 10 πείη εἰ τοῦτ' εἴποι. Πυνθάνομαι γὰρ δὴ τοσοῦτον τῶν αὐτῷ  
 προσκειμένων, τί δὴ ποτε οὐ τῷ αὐτῷ θεῷ καὶ τὰς κινήσεις  
 ἀπάσας τὰς κατ' οὐρανὸν ἀπένειμεν, ἀλλ' ἄλλο ἄλλη κινουῖν  
 κινήσει ἐφίστησιν, ἢ δῆλον δὴ ὅτι δι' ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἀξίωμα τὸ αὐτοῦ,  
 ὃ αὐτὸς που ἀξιοῖ, ἐν ἐνὸς αἴτιον εἶναι. Δῆλα δὴ ὅτι διὰ τὸ αὐτὸ  
 15 ἀξίωμα καὶ πλείω πλείοσιν οὐσαις ταῖς αἰθίοις οὐσαις ἐφίστη  
τὰ παράγοντα, εἴ γε εἶναι τι αὐτῶν ὅλως αἴτιον ὦρον· ἅ γε,  
 ἅτε εἰκόνας ἑαυτῶν παράγοντα, οὐ γὰρ ἂν πάμπαν γε ἀπεικίότα  
 καὶ αὐτὰ παραδείγματα ἦν αὐτοῖς. Καὶ οὕτως ἂν τῷ τῶν εἰδῶν  
 λόγῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐνταῦθα γοῦν συνεχώρει. Νῦν δὲ δῆλός ἐστιν  
 οὐκ οἰόμενος, εἶναι τι αὐτῶν αἴτιον παραγωγόν. Ἄλλ' οὕτω τὲ  
 20 καὶ τοιαύτας ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου εὐρημένας, κινεῖσθαι μόνον  
 πρὸς τι τέλος καὶ τὸν θεόν.

2. *Contra Schol.* XXIII 430.18-432.11.

20 Εἰ γὰρ ἀρκεῖ καθάπαξ ἡ πρώτη πάντων αἰτία πρὸς τὸ  
 προάγειν πάντα τὰ ὅπως αὐτῆς μετέχοντα τῷ ἀπείρου εἶναι  
 δυνάμει, τί δεῖ „τοῦ κοινοῦ ὄντος“; Καὶ συνάγειν δὲ ἅπαντα  
 πρὸς ἐνότητα ἰκανή ἐστὶν ἢ τῆς πρώτης αἰτίας ὁμοιότης ἐν τοῖς  
 πράγμασιν ἰδρυμένη, εἴπερ κατὰ τινα ἀναλογίαν καὶ τάξιν  
 προήχθησαν, ἥτις ἐν τῷ πῆ μὲν κοινωνεῖν, πῆ δὲ διαφέρειν αὐτὰ  
 ἀλλήλων συνέστηκεν ἐν αὐτοῖς.  
 25 Ἄλλ' οὐ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλει τοῦτ' ἔνεστιν εἰπεῖν, ὅς ἐν ἐνὸς αἴτιον  
 εἶναι ἀξιοῖ· δι' ὃ δὴ καὶ ταῖς κατ' οὐρανὸν κινήσεσι πλείοσιν οὐσαις  
ἄλλο ἄλλη κινήσει κινουῖν ἐφίστησιν, ἵνα δὴ μὴ ἐν κινουῖν πλείους γε  
 432 εὐθύς κινήσεις κινῆ. Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἀφ' ἐνὸς αἰτίου καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης τὰ  
 ὄντα ἅπαντα παρήγε, καὶ ἐφ' ἐν αὐτὰ γένος καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνήγεν, ἵνα  
 καὶ ἐν ἐνὸς αἴτιον κατὰ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἀξίωμα ἦν· νῦν δὲ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἀφ'  
 ἐνὸς αἰτίου τὰ ὄντα παράγειν, ἢ μὴ δὲ παράγειν ὅλως, εἰκότως καὶ  
 5 ὠήθη μηδὲν οἱ προσίστασθαι πρὸς γε τὸ μὴ ἐφ' ἐν γένος τὰ ὄντα  
 ἀναγαγεῖν. Ἡμεῖς δ' οἷς βεβαιότατα ἀφ' ἐνὸς θεοῦ τὰ ὄντα παρήχθαι  
 τὲ καὶ παράγεσθαι δοκεῖ, οὐδ' ἂν δυναίμεθα μὴ οὐ καὶ ἐνὶ αὐτὰ  
 κοινῶ περιλαμβάνειν γένει, ἵνα δὴ καὶ ἐν μὲν ἐνὸς αἴτιον ἦ· οὐ  
 μέντοι γε καὶ ἀμερὲς ἀμεροῦς, ἀλλὰ ἀμερὲς ἐν, ἐνὸς μὲν, μεριστοῦ δέ.  
 10 Οὐ γὰρ μεμπτόν τὸ Ἀριστοτέλους τοῦτο ἀξίωμα, ἦν αὐτῷ καλῶς τις  
 καὶ ἐπισταμένως χρῶτο.

3. John Argyropoulos, *De proc.* 118.10-119.5.

10 Ὅστε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον εἰκότως ἐκ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύσθαι λέγε-  
ται δι' υἱοῦ κατὰ τὴν ξυνεπτυγμένην θεολογίαν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκ μό-  
νου πατρὸς, ἵνα μὴ νομίζοιτο ὁ υἱὸς αὐτῶ ἀνόμοιος, μὴ τὰς αὐτὰς  
ἔχων τελειότητας τῷ πατρὶ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μὴδ' ὁμοούσιος, ὅπερ  
15 οὐδαμῶς ἀπέοικε τῇ τοῦ Ἀρείου αἰρέσει, τὸν υἱὸν ἀλλοτριούση  
τῆς θείας φύσεως τοῦ πατρὸς· ὧν γὰρ αἱ δυνάμεις διάφοροι καὶ  
αὐτὰ ἂν εἶεν ταῖς οὐσίαις διάφορα· οὐδ' αὖ ἐξ υἱοῦ, ἵνα μὴ πάλιν  
ὁ υἱὸς ἀρχὴ νομίζοιτο ἀναρχος καντεῦθεν πάλιν ἀλλότριος τῆς  
πατρικῆς οὐσίας καὶ φύσεως, πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἵνα μὴ υἱωνὸς νομί-  
20 ζοιτο τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ υἱὸς αὖ πάλιν τοῦ  
119 υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ· ἦν γὰρ ἂν καὶ ὁ υἱὸς αὖ πάλιν πατήρ· πρὸς δὲ καὶ  
ἵνα μὴ νομίζοιτο τι τῷ υἱῷ προσεῖναι ὡς παρακτικὴ δύναμις τοῦ  
ἀγίου Πνεύματος, μὴ τὸ αὐτὸ ὂν τῷ ἀριθμῷ κὰν τῷ θεῷ καὶ πα-  
τρὶ. Ἐπειράγεται γὰρ καὶ τούτῳ πάλιν αὖθις τὸ τῆς οὐσίας ἀνό-  
μοιον, ἃ δὴ πάντα ἀνόσια καὶ ἀθέμιτα καὶ πόρρω τῆς τῶν Χρι-  
5 στιανῶν ἐκκλησίας καὶ πίστεως.

4. *Contra Lat.* 300, 302-303

300

Τὸ ὑπὲρ Λατίνων βιβλίον τὸ ἐς ἡμᾶς ἦκον, ἄρχεται  
μὲν τοῦ τῇ σφετέρᾳ ἀμύνειν δόξῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ τὸν Πατέρα  
τοῦ προβολέως προεπινοεῖσθαι. Ἐπὶ γοῦν  
ταύτῃ τῇ ὑποθέσει, καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης ὀρμώμενοι, καὶ ὃ  
βούλονται οἴονται οἱ τὸ βιβλίον συνθέντες συμπεραίνειν,  
ταύτῃ ἀκολούθως καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ὑπάρ-  
ξεως ἀξιοῦντες προεπινοεῖσθαι· καὶ ἐντεῦθεν προσλαμβά-  
νοντες καὶ τι ἀξίωμα, τῇ μὲν Ἑλληνικῇ θεολογίᾳ καὶ  
μάλα φίλιον, τῇ δὲ Ἐκκλησίᾳ πολεμιώτατον, ὡς ὧν  
μὲν αἱ δυνάμεις διάφοροι, καὶ αὐτὰ ἂν εἴη ταῖς οὐσίαις  
διάφορα, οἴονται οὖν δεῖν καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν, ἅτε προεπινοούμενον  
τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ὑπάρξεως, κοινωνῆσαι τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ  
τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος προβολῆς, ἵνα μὴ τῆς προβλητικῆς  
δυνάμεως οὐ κεκοινωνηκῶς, καὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ διενέγκῃ. Καὶ  
οὗτοι μὲν οὕτω.

302

Τοῦτο μὲν οὖν, οὕτως ἐχέτω. Τὸ δ' ἀξίωμα ἐκεῖνο, τὸ,  
Ὡν αἱ δυνάμεις διάφοροι, καὶ αὐτὰ ἂν εἶναι ταῖς οὐσίαις  
διάφορα, πῶς οὐ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὡς γ' ἡμῖν ἀνωτέρω εἴρη-  
ται, πολεμιώτατον; Ἡ μὲν γὰρ Ἑλληνικὴ θεολογία ἕνα  
θεὸν τὸν ἀνωτάτω τοῖς οὐσιν ἐφιστάσα, καὶ ἄτομον ἕν,  
καὶ ἔπειτα πλείους αὐτῷ παιῶν διδοῦσα, πρὸς ἑαυτὰς τε  
ἄλλους ἄλλων καὶ ὑποδεστέρας, οὐς καὶ ἄλλον ἄλλῳ αὖ  
μείζονι ἢ μείονι τοῦ παντὸς τοῦδε μέρει ἐφίστησιν, ὅμως  
οὐδένα αὐτῶν τῷ πατρὶ ἴσον, ἢ γοῦν παραπλήσιον ἀξιοῖ  
εἶναι. Καὶ γὰρ ἑτέρας τε ἅπαντας οὐσίας καὶ πολὺ ὑπο-  
δεστέρας ποιεῖ, καὶ θεότητος ὡσαύτως. Πρὸς γοῦν τῷ  
303 παιῶν τε τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ θεοῦ καὶ αὐτοὺς καλεῖν, ἔτι  
καὶ ἔργα ἅμα τοῦ αὐτοῦ Θεοῦ καλεῖ, οὐκ ἀξιοῦσα ἐπὶ γε  
τοῦ Θεοῦ γεννήσεως δημιουργίαν διακρίνειν. ὅτι μὴδὲ  
βούλησιν φύσεως. ὅλως δὲ εἰπεῖν, μὴδ' οὐσίας ἐνέργειαν.  
Ἐτέρας δ' οὖν θεότητός τε καὶ οὐσίας ὑποδεστέρας τοὺς

τοῦ ἀνωτάτω Θεοῦ παῖδας ἢ γε Ἑλληνικὴ θεολογία ποιεῖ, οὐδενὶ ἄλλω ἢ ἐκείνῳ ἐπερειδομένη τῷ ἀξιώματι, ὡς ὧν αἱ δυνάμεις διάφοροι, καὶ αὐτὰ ἂν εἴη ταῖς οὐσίαις διάφορα, κρίνουσά τε μεγίστην δυνάμεων διαφορὰν τὴν τοῦ αὐτοῦ δι' αὐτὸ ὄντος πρὸς τὸ δι' ἕτερον ἢ ἄλλῳ ὄν. Ἡ μέντοι Ἐκκλησία τοῦτο τὸ ἀξίωμα δῆλῳ ἐστὶν οὐ προσιεμένη. Οὐ γὰρ ἂν τὸν Υἱὸν τῷ Πατρὶ ἴσον, ἢ οὐσίας τῆς αὐτῆς, εἰ τὸ ἀξίωμα τοῦτο προσίετο, ἀπέφαινε. Πῶς γὰρ ἂν ὁ Πατήρ τοῦ γε Υἱοῦ οὐ διάφορος εἴη τὴν δύναμιν, εἰ ὁ μὲν αὐτὸς δι' αὐτοῦ δύναται τε εἶναι καὶ ἐστίν. ὁ δ' οὐκέτι αὐτὸς δι' αὐτὸν, διὰ δὲ τὸν Πατέρα ἐστίν· ἔτι δὲ, καὶ εἰ ὁ μὲν γεννητικός, καὶ ἴσου γεννητικός, ὁ δ' οὔτε ἴσου, οὔτε οὐκ ἴσου γεννητικός, ὡστ' ἂν μηδὲ τῆς οὐσίας εἶναι τῆς αὐτῆς, εἰ ὧν αἱ δυνάμεις διάφοροι, καὶ αὐτὰ ἂν εἴη ταῖς οὐσίαις διάφορα; Ἀλλὰ Λατῖνοι μὴ ἀξιώματι τῇ γε Ἐκκλησίᾳ πολεμιωτάτῳ τὴν σφετέρην προεπέτειάν τε καὶ καινοτομίαν συνιστάντων, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀρχῶν τοῦτο πειράσθων δεικνύναι. Εἰ δὲ μὴ οἷοί τ' εἰσὶν, ἡμεῖς δὴ δεῖξομεν οὐ ταῖς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀρχαῖς συνωδὸν ὄν αὐτοῖς τὸ καινοτόμημα.

5. *Leg.* III.43 (*Epinomis*), p. 242

Οὐ δὴ,

κυριωτάτου τε ὄντος καὶ κοινοῦ ἐπιθυμήματος, ἅπαντες μὲν ἄνθρωποι ἐφίενται, ζητοῦσι δ' αὐτὸ οὐκ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἅπαντες βίῳ, ἀλλ' ὧ ..... ἀποδέδεικται ἕκαστα ἀπ' ἐννοιῶν τε καὶ ἀξιωματίων οὐκ ἀσθενῶν τινων καὶ ἀμφιλόγων, ἄλλων τε δὴ, καὶ τριῶν μεγίστων ἐκείνων, ἐνὸς μὲν, τοῦ ὡς ἢ ἀρχὴ αὕτη τῶν πάντων, ὁ μέγιστος θεὸς, ὃν γε ἡμεῖς πατριῶ φωνῇ Δία καλοῦμεν, ἄκρω ἀγαθός ἐστιν, οὐδεμιᾶς αὐτῷ ἀγαθοῦ ὑπερβολῆς μὴ οὐκ ἐς ὅσον οἷόν τε βελτίστῳ εἶναι λειπομένης· ἐτέρου δὲ, τοῦ τὰς τε οὐσίας ταῖς γεννήσεσι ταῖς αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰς γεννήσεις ταῖς οὐσίαις ἀνάλογον ἔχειν δεῖν· καὶ τρίτου, τοῦ καὶ τὰ ἔργα ταῖς οὐσίαις, καὶ τὰς οὐσίας τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς σφετέροις ἀνάλογον δεῖν καὶ αὐτὰ ἔχειν.

## VIII

1. *Meth.* 132 (proto-Plethon)

Νυχθημέρον ἐστὶ χρόνος μιᾶς ἡλίου περι γῆν περιφορᾶς· μὴν δὲ χρόνος μιᾶς σελήνης περιόδου τε περι τὸν ζῳδιακὸν καὶ ἐπικαταλήψεως ἡλίου· ἐνιαυτός δὲ χρόνος μιᾶς ἡλίου περι τὸν ζῳδιακὸν περιόδου.

Νυχθημέρου μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴν ποιούμεθα τὰς μέσας νύκτας· τηνικαῦτα ὁ ἥλιος ὑπὸ γῆν τὸ πλεῖστον ἀποστάς αὐθις ἐπὶ τὸ φανερόν ἡμῖν ἡμισφαίριον προσιέναι ἄρχεται· καὶ ἅμα ἢ μὲν ἀνωμαλία ἢ τῶν νυχθημέρων πολὺ ἐλάττων κατὰ μέσας νύκτας τε καὶ μεσημβρίας ἀρχομένων ἢ κατὰ τὰς ἡλίου ἀνατολάς τε καὶ δυσμάς· αἱ δὲ μέσαι αὖ νύκτες τῆς μεσημβρίας ἀμείνους εἰς νυχθημέρου ἀρχὴν ὡς ἂν οὕτω τῆς μὲν ἡμέρας ὀλοκλήρου τε καὶ μιᾶς μενούσης, τοῦ δὲ χειρόνος τοῦ νυχθημέρου μέρους τῶν νυκτῶν διαιρουμένου, καὶ τοῦ μὲν τῇ παρεληλυθυῖα, τοῦ δὲ τῇ ἐπιούσῃ



ἡμέρα ἀποδιδόμενου.

Μηνὸς δὲ ἀρχὴν τὴν σύνοδον· τηνικαῦτα γὰρ καὶ τὸ σελήνης φῶς ἀφ' ἡμῶν τὸ πλεῖστον ἀποστραφέν, πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὖ ἄρχεται ἐπιστρέφειν.

Ἐνιαυτοῦ δὲ ποιούμεθα ἀρχὴν τὰς χειμερινὰς τροπὰς· τηνικαῦτα γάρ τοι καὶ ὁ ἥλιος τὸ πλεῖστον ἡμῶν ἀποκεχωρηκῶς προσιέναι αὖ ἄρχεται καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν αὖξειν, ἐλαχίστην τέως περὶ αὐτὰς τὰς χειμερινὰς τροπὰς γενομένην. Πρώτη μὲν οὖν μηνὸς ἡμέρα, ἢ ἀπὸ μέσων νυκτῶν τῶν πρώτων μετὰ σύνοδον ἀρχομένη, ἣν καὶ νομηνίαν καλοῦμεν· τῶν δὲ μηνῶν ὁ μὲν πλήρης, τριάκοντα ἡμερῶν, ὁ δὲ κοῖλος, ἑννέα καὶ εἴκοσι γιγνόμενος ἡμερῶν.

Ἔτους δὲ πρῶτος μὴν ὁ ἀπὸ συνόδου τῆς πρώτης μετὰ χειμερινὰς τροπὰς ἀρχόμενος, καὶ τῶν ἑτῶν τὸ μὲν δωδεκάμηνον, τὸ δὲ καὶ τρεῖσκαιδεκάμηνον, ἐμβόλιμος δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος τρεῖσκαιδέκατος μὴν.

## 2. Meth. 40-42.

Νυχθήμερόν ἐστιν ἡλίου μία περὶ γῆν περιφορὰ καὶ ἡμέρα δὲ τὸ ὅλον νυχθήμερον λέγεται.

Μὴν ἐστι σελήνης μία περὶ τὸν ζωδιακὸν περιόδός τε καὶ ἐπικατάληψις ἡλίου.

Ἐνιαυτός ἐστιν ἡλίου μία περὶ τὸν ζωδιακὸν περίοδος καὶ ἔτος δὲ ὁ ἐνιαυτός λέγεται.

Νυχθημέρου μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴν τὰς μέσας νύκτας ποιούμεθα, μηνὸς δὲ τὴν σύνοδον, ἐνιαυτοῦ δὲ τὰς χειμερινὰς τροπὰς. Περὶ μὲν γὰρ χειμερινὰς τροπὰς ἀφ' ἡμῶν τὸ πλεῖστον ὁ ἥλιος πρὸς νότον ἀποκεχωρηκῶς ἡμῖν αὖ ἄρχεται προσιέναι· περὶ δὲ σύνοδον τὸ τῆς σελήνης φῶς ἀφ' ἡμῶν τὸ πλεῖστον ἀποστραφέν, πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὖ ἄρχεται ἐπιστρέφειν. Μέσων δ' αὖ νυκτῶν, ὁ ἥλιος ἀφ' ἡμῶν ὑπὸ γῆν τὸ πλεῖστον ἀποστάς, πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὖ ἄρχεται ἐπανιέναι. Ἄμα δὲ συμβαίνει καὶ ἀπὸ μὲν μέσων νυκτῶν ἢ μεσημβρίας τὰ νυχθήμερα ἀρχόμενα πολλῶ ἐγγυτέρω εἶναι τῶν ὀμαλῶν, ἢ περὶ ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν ἢ δυσμῶν ἡλίου. Ἀπὸ δ' αὖ μέσων νυκτῶν τοῦ νυχθημέρου ἀρχεσθαι ἄμεινον ἢ περὶ ἀπὸ μεσημβρίας ἵνα μὴ ἡμῖν ἢ αὐτῇ καὶ μία ἡμέρα διασπῶτο, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τοῦ νυχθημέρου χείρονος μέρους τῆς γε νυκτὸς διαιρουμένης, ἢ μὲν ἐσπέρα τῇ οἰχομένη ἡμέρα, ὁ δ' ὄρθρος τῇ ἐπιούσῃ λογίζοιτο.

Αὕτη μὲν οὖν ἢ περιέχουσα τὴν σύνοδον ἡμέρα ἑννη καὶ νέα καλεῖται, ἢ δὲ μετ' αὐτὴν εὐθύς νομηνία ἢς ἡγοῦνται μέσαι νύκτες αἱ μετὰ σύνοδον εὐθύς, ἀφ' ἧς ἤδη τὰς λοιπὰς τοῦ μηνὸς ἡμέρας ἀριθμεῖν, τοῦ ὅλου μηνὸς τριάκονθήμερου μὲν γιγνομένου πλήρους καλουμένου, ἑννέα δὲ καὶ εἴκοσι ἡμερῶν κοίλου.

42

Τῶν δὲ τοῦ ὅλου ἔτους μηνῶν, νέος μὲν μὴν οὗ ἡγεῖται σύνοδος ἢ μετὰ χειμερινὰς εὐθύς τροπὰς· μεθ' ὃν δεύτερος καὶ τρίτος καὶ ἐξῆς ἄχρι δωδεκάτου· εἰ δὲ τρεῖσκαιδεκάμηνον τὸ ἔτος γίγνοιτο, ἐμβόλιμος καλεῖται ὁ τοιοῦτος τρεῖσκαιδέκατος μὴν.

## 3. Leg. III,36, pp. 58-60

..... Καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ μῆσι καὶ ἔτεσι τοῖς γε κατὰ φύσιν χρῆσθαι, μῆσι μὲν κατὰ σελήνην ἀγομένοις, ἔτεσι δὲ πρὸς τὰς ἡλίου τροπὰς, καὶ τούτων τὰς χειμερινὰς, ἀποκαδι-σταμένοις, ὅτε τὸ πλεῖστον ἡμῶν ὁ ἥλιος ἀποκεχωρηκῶς τῆς πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὖθις ἄρχεται προσόδου. Ἐννη μὲν οὖν καὶ νέαν ἄγειν, ἢ ἂν ἡμέρα ἡλίῳ ἢ σελήνῃ συνιοῦσα ὑπὸ

τῶν ἀστρονομίας ἐμπειροτάτων κρίνεται. Τὴν δ' ἐξῆς νομηνίαν, ἣς ἂν ἡγοῖντο μέσαι νύκτες αἰ μετὰ τὴν τοῖν θεῶν εὐδύς σύνοδον, ἀφ' ἣς τὰς λοιπὰς ἀπάσας ἡμέρας τοῦ μηνὸς ἀριθμεῖν, τοὺς μὲν πλήρεις τε καὶ τριακονδημέρους ἄγοντας τῶν μηνῶν, τοὺς δὲ κοίλους τε καὶ μιᾶ τῶν ἐτέρων ἡμέρα λειπομένους. Καὶ γὰρ αὐτὰ καὶ τῶν νυκτῶν ἐκάστων τὴν μὲν ἐσπέραν τῆ οἰχομένη ἡμέρα, τὸν δ' ὄρθρον τῆ ἐπιούση λογίζεσθαι, καὶ τὰς μέσας νύκτας ἀμφοῖν εἶναι ὅρον τοῖν ἡμέραιν. Ἀριθμεῖσθαι δὲ καὶ ὧδε τὰς μηνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμέρας· μετὰ μὲν νομηνίαν, δευτέραν ἰσταμένου, καὶ τρίτην, καὶ ἐξῆς, ἐς τὸ πρόσω ἰόντι ἄχρις ὀγδόης· μετὰ δ' ὀγδόῃ ἰσταμένου ταύτην ἐβδόμην αὐτὸν μεσοῦντος, εἶτα ἕκτην, καὶ ἐξῆς, ἀναστρέψαντι ἄχρι δευτέρας, μεθ' ἣν διχομηνίαν· εἶτα δευτέραν αὐτὸν φθίνοντος, καὶ τρίτην, καὶ ἐξῆς, ἐς τὸ πρόσω αὐτὸν ἰόντι ἄχρις ὀγδόης· μεθ' ἣν αὐτὸν ἐβδόμην ἀπιόντος, εἶτα ἕκτην, καὶ ἐξῆς, ἀναστρέψαντι αὐτὸν ἄχρι δευτέρας· μεθ' ἣν ἔτην, εἶτα ἔτην τε καὶ νέαν, τοῦ μηνὸς πλήρους γιγνομένου· ἣν δὲ κοῖλος ὁ μὴν γίγνηται, μετὰ δευτέραν ἀπιόντος ἔτην τε καὶ νέαν εὐδύς. Τοῦ δ' ἔτους νέον μὲν μῆνα ἄγειν οὗ ἂν ἡγοῖτο σύνοδος ἢ μετὰ χειμερινὰς εὐδύς τροπᾶς, ἀφ' οὗ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀριθμεῖν μῆνας, τὰ μὲν δωδεκάμηννα, τὰ δὲ καὶ τρισκαιδεκάμηννα ἄγοντας, τὸν ἐκ τῶν ἐμβολίμων γε ἐκάστοτε μῆνα ἐπεμβάλλοντας, ἐπειδὴν ὁ γε δωδεκατος τῶν χειμερινῶν μὴ ἐφίκηται τροπῶν. Ἡλιοτροπίοις δὲ τισιν ἐς τὸ ἀκριβέστατον κατεσκευασμένοις κατὰ δύναμιν τὰς ἡλίου κρίνειν τροπᾶς .....

## IX

### 1. *Contra Lat.* 302-303

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ Ἑλληνικὴ θεολογία ἕνα Θεὸν τὸν ἀνωτάτω τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἐφιστᾶσα, καὶ ἄτομον ἔν, καὶ ἔπειτα πλείους αὐτῷ παῖδας διδοῦσα, προύχοντάς τε ἄλλους ἄλλων καὶ ὑποδεεστέρους, οὓς καὶ ἄλλον ἄλλω αὐτὸν μείζονι ἢ μείονι τοῦ παντὸς τοῦδε μέρει ἐφίστησιν, ὅμως οὐδένα αὐτῶν τῷ πατρὶ ἴσον, ἢ γοῦν παραπλήσιον ἀξιοῖ εἶναι. Καὶ γὰρ ἐτέρας τε ἅπαντας οὐσίας καὶ πολὺ ὑποδεεστέρας ποιεῖ, καὶ θεότητος ὡσαύτως. Πρὸς γοῦν τῷ παῖδας τε τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ θεοὺς καὶ αὐτοὺς καλεῖν, ἔτι καὶ ἔργα ἅμα τοῦ αὐτοῦ Θεοῦ καλεῖ, οὐκ ἀξιοῦσα ἐπὶ γε τοῦ Θεοῦ γεννήσεως δημιουργίαν διακρίνειν. ὅτι μὴδὲ βούλησιν φύσεως, ὅλως δὲ εἰπεῖν, μὴδ' οὐσίας ἐνέργειαν.

### 2. *Leg.* III.15, p. 100

Τὸν δὲ Δία τῆ ἄκρα ἀπλότητι οὐκ ἄλλως μὲν γεννᾶν, δημιουργεῖν δ' ἂν ἄλλως· οὐδὲ γεννᾶν μὲν ἕτερα, ἕτερα δ' ἂν δημιουργεῖν· ἀλλὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ δημιουργεῖν ὁμοῦ καὶ γεννᾶν, σύν τε νοήσει τῆ τοῦ οἴα ἂν γενέσθαι ἕκαστα θεοί, γεννῶντα, σύν τε αὐτῷ πεφυκέναι ὡσαύτως παράγειν αἰεὶ τὰ παραγόμενα, δημιουργοῦντα. Ἄνθρωπον μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν τοὺς παῖδας,

οίους διανοοῖτο ἐκάστοτε, γεννᾶν· τὴν δ' οἰκίαν καὶ  
τᾶλλα σκευαστὰ δημιουργεῖν ἂν, οἷα διανοοῖτο, ὁπότε  
δὴ καὶ διανοοῖτο. Τὸν δὲ Δία, πεφυκότα ἀεὶ οὕτως,  
ὥστε βούλεσθαι τε ἅμα καὶ δύνασθαι, τοιαῦτα ἀπεργά-  
ζεσθαι ἕκαστα, οἷα ἂν πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ὅλου ἔργου τελειό-  
τητα κάλλιστα τε ἔξοντα καὶ ἄριστα εἶδοι, εἰκότως, καὶ  
δημιουργεῖν τε ὁμοῦ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ γεννᾶν.

## X

### 1. Scholarios, *Pro Arist.* 114.17-33, 115.20-30

114

Ἐπειτα καὶ τῇ ἡμετέρῃ περὶ τοῦ θείου πίστει ἀμύνειν καὶ τοῖς ταύτῃ  
ἀνδισταμένοις ἀπεχθῶς ἔχειν ἱεροὶ νόμοι κελεύσιν· αὐτὸς δὲ τοιαύτην  
τινὰ ἐδέξατο διαβολὴν ὑπὸ πλείστων, οἱ πιθανοὶ δοκοῦσιν, καὶ συγγράμματι  
20 αὐτοῦ ἐντυχεῖν τῷ ἰσχυριζόμενοι, νομοθεσίαν ἀρίστην ἐπαγγελλομένῳ· οὗ  
καὶ ἐκγράψαντες μέρη τινὰ δεικνύουσιν τῆς παλαιᾶς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀνάπλευ  
φλυαρίας· δοκεῖ δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἡ τῶν λόγων ἰδέα συνηγορεῖν, ἣν χαλεπὸν  
ἐστὶ πιστεῦσαι μὴ εἶναι τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐκείνου, τῷ γε τὰ τοιαῦτα κρίνειν  
ἐπισταμένῳ, ἐπιγεγράφαι τέ φασι τῷ βιβλίῳ Πλήθωνα, εἴτε τοῦ λαθεῖν  
25 ἔνεκα, εἴτε τῷ πάνυ φροντίσαι τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἐπιγραφῇ τοῦ  
τῶν ὀνομάτων ἑλληνισμοῦ, εἴτε καὶ ἄλλης τινὸς αἰτίας εἶνεκα· πλείους  
γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐξηγοῦνται· ἐμέλησε δὲ αὐτοῖς πάνυ ταῦτα εἰδέναι.

Τοιαῦτα τινὰ περὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς πολλοὶ λέγουσιν, οἷς οὐ ῥᾶδιον ἀπιστεῖν,  
καὶ τούτων μάλιστα ἡ τῆς πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλη εὐνοίας ἔνεκα ἐπαχθέστερον  
30 αὐτῷ ἐν τῷδε τῷ συγγράμματι χρῆσθαι προήχθη. Εἰ μὲν οὖν οὕτω  
ταῦτ' ἔχει, καὶ ἔστι μὲν τι Πλήθωνος βιβλίον ἀρίστην νομοθεσίαν ἡμῖν  
ἐκτιθέμενον, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ Πλήθων ὡς ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἡμῖν τοῦτο πεμ-  
πέτω·

115

Ἰκανώτατον δὲ σημεῖον ἡμῖν τῆς αὐτοῦ μὲν εὐσεβείας, τῶν δὲ συ-  
κοφαντῶν πονηρίας παρέξεται, τῶν φίλων τινὶ ἐπιστείλας, ὡς οὔτε Πλήθων  
αὐτὸς ἐστὶν, οὔτ' οἶδε τινὰ Πλήθωνα κατὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας ποτὲ θρησκείας  
συγγεγραφότα, οὔτε τινὰ νομίζει καὶ ὄντιν οὖν τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ δογμάτων  
καὶ νόμων βέλτιόν τι καὶ ἱερώτερον θείων ἀποδεδειγμένων εὑρεῖν δύνασθαι,  
25 καὶ ὅτι τὴν ἑλληνικὴν δεισδαιμονίαν ἡγεῖται κατὰπτυστον, καὶ τοὺς  
ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἐξηπατημένους καταγελάστους. Τούτοις τοίνυν τοὺς συκοφάντας  
ἐλέγξας, οἷς μόνοις ἡμᾶς πείσαι δυνήσεται, ἀλλὰ τε πλεῖστα καὶ μέγιστα  
κερδαινεῖ καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐν τῷ παρόντι συγγράμματι λόγων αὐτὸς ἀκούσεται  
μετ' ἐπαίνου, τῶν δὲ λοιδοριῶν οὐκέτι, ἀλλ' ὃν οἱ συκοφάνται συνεσκεύασαν  
30 Πλήθωνα·

### 2. Scholarios, *Ad Ephes.* 117.8-21

Οὐδὲ τῷ Γεμιστῷ τοίνυν ἠνώχλησα ἂν ποτε, μὴ τοῦ συνειδότος  
ἔνδοθεν ἐρεθίζοντος. Οἶσθα δ' ὅπως περὶ γε τὰ τοιαῦτα χρῆ διακεῖσθαι,  
10 εἰ μὴ τὴν Ἀναξαγόρου μέλλοιμεν ὑφίστασθαι σύγχυσιν. Καίτοι τινὲς αὐτὸν  
μὲν εὐσεβεῖν φασὶν ἐν τῇ περὶ τοῦ θείου δόξῃ, καὶ μήτε διδάσκειν μήτε  
συγγράφειν νομοθεσίαν τινὰ καινότεραν, ἐν ἣ τὰ ἡμέτερα διασύρεται,  
ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς ὑπὸ βασκανίας αὐτῷ τοιαύτην φήμην ἐγείρειν, οὐ ὁ χρόνος  
ἐλέγξει λίαν ἀπατωμένους. Ἄλλως δὲ χρήσιμος ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ τῇ μὲν εὐγε-  
15 νεστάτῃ τῶν Ἑλλήνων φωνῇ οὐδενὸς ἂν ἠττηθείη, ἧς καὶ Κικέρωνα καὶ

πολλοὺς ἄλλοὺς ἐκ τῆς ὑπεροχίας ἴσμεν Ἀθήνησιν ἐπιμεληθέντας· καίτοι, τῆς ἐγγχωρίου Μούσης ἐμπεπλησμένοι, πάνυ τι καλὸν ἄδειν ἠπίσταντο. Πόλλα δὲ τῆς ἄλλης σοφίας ἔχει συνειλοχῶς· ἠδῶν δὲ ἔνεκα καὶ γένοιτο τοῖς νεωτέροις παράδειγμα, οἷς ἀρετῆς τι μέλει γνησίως. Οἶσθα τὸν ἄνδρα  
 20 πλέον ἐμοῦ. Διὰ ταῦτα τοίνυν ἀπεσχόμην ἂν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὧν κατ' Ἀριστοτέλους συγγέγραφεν.

3. Scholarios, *Ad Gemist.* 125.7-33

Καὶ ὡς παρα-  
 δείγμασι οὖν αὐτοῖς κεχρημένοι καὶ κανόσιν ἀδιαψεύστοις τῶν σωφρο-  
 νεστέρων περὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας εὐζωΐας ἐλπίδων, οὐκ ἂν Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ  
 10 Πλάτωνος ὑπεραλγοῖμεν ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναιρουμένων· χαίρομεν δ' ἂν καὶ  
 τῆς ἐς τὰ κρείττω τῶν μαθημάτων ἀμβλύτητος σφίσι ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκ Χριστοῦ  
 φωτισθέντων ἐλεγχομένης. Καίτοι καὶ συγγνώμην αὐτοῖς τινα νεμόντων  
 ἀκήκοα λόγων ἰερωτέρων ἐγώ. Ἄλλ' εἴ τινες νῦν τὰ σαπρὰ Ἑλλήνων  
 15 ἀνεοῖεν ληρήματα, τούτους φασὶν ἐν ἀσυγγνώστῳ καλινδεῖσθαι τῷ  
 ψεύδει. Μετὰ γὰρ τὴν λαμπρὰν τῆς μοναρχίας ἀπόδειξιν, ἣν ἐκεῖνοι μὲν,  
 ταῖς ἐπεισαγωγαῖς τῶν ψευδωνύμων ἀναιροῦντες θεῶν, τοῖς λόγοις μόνους  
 ἐτίμων, ὁ δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ συμφυῆς καὶ οὐσιώδης Λόγος, μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
 γεγεννημένος, ἀναμφισβητήτως καὶ καθαρώς πιστεύειν ἐδίδαξε, ποῦ νῦν  
 20 ὅσιον αὐδῆς θεοποιεῖν καὶ τὴν ἀλόγιστον ἐκείνην θεοποιῖαν ἀναζωπυρεῖν  
 ἀπεσβεσμένην πειρᾶσθαι, καὶ θεῶν τινων ἀναγνωρισμοὺς ἐκ φιλοσοφίας  
ὑπὲρ τὴν ποιητῶν διάστροφον γνώμην καὶ ἀγιστείας εὐσταλεῖς, ὡς αὐτοί  
 φασι, καὶ νόμους ἠδῶν καὶ διαίτης ὑφ' ἡγεμόνι Ζωροάστρη καὶ Πλάτωνι  
καὶ τοῖς ἐκ Στοᾶς, καὶ τοιαύτην τιὰ λόγων ὁμίχλην αὐδῆς συνάγειν; ἥς  
 25 ταῖς τῆς ἱερᾶς διδασκαλίας ἀκτῖσι θείως ἐσκεδασμένης, πρὸς τὰς τῆς  
 ὑπερφουῶς ἀληθείας αὐγὰς ἢ τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσις ἀνεβλέπειν. Ἐκεῖνα  
 μὲν οὖν εἰ συμβαίη μοι ἐς χεῖρας πάντα ἐλθεῖν, φλυαρίαν ὄντα δεῖξω  
 μακρὰν, καὶ πολλοὶ δεῖξουσιν· ἀλλὰ γένοιτο κάμοι τοῦτον ἐνστήσασθαι  
 τὸν ἀγῶνα, καὶ μὴ πῦρ, ἀλλὰ λόγους μᾶλλον ἀληθείας ἐπαφεῖναι τοῖς  
 30 γράμμασιν, ὡς τοῖς γράψασι μᾶλλον πρέποντος τοῦ πυρός. Εἰ δ' ἄλλο τι  
 περὶ ἡμῶν δοκοίη τῷ κρείττονι, ἦγε πρόθεσις πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἐξαρκέσει.  
 Ὅτι δὲ μὴ συκοφαντῶ τετολμηκέναι τὰ τοιαῦτα τινος, καὶ τινος ἄλλου  
 χαίρειν αὐτοῖς, νῦν μὲν αὐτοί τε συνοῖδασι καὶ πολλοὶ μετ' αὐτῶν· δείξει  
 δὲ καὶ πᾶσιν ὁ χρόνος ὁ φανερῶν τὰ τέως κρυπτόμενα.

4. *Ad Ois.* 479.17-40

Ἀλλὰ πάλιν εἰς Πελοπόννησος ὁ δυσσεβῆς Ἰουβενάλιος  
 καταφεύγει· ἔγνω γὰρ τὴν νῆσον αὐτὴν προσφουεστέραν οὔσαν τοῖς πονηροῖς  
 20 αὐτοῦ σπέρμασιν· καὶ φανερῶς αὐτόδι λυττᾷ κατὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ σωτηρίας,  
 τοσοῦτον ἀφρονέστερος τῶν διδαξάντων γενόμενος, ὅτι περ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν  
 τὸν ἐλληνισμόν ἐκδικοῦσι καὶ λόγοις καὶ συγγραφαῖς, γενεαλογίας θεῶν  
 καὶ ὀνομασίας ἀχράντους ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν καὶ ἀγιστείας εὐσταλεῖς, ὡς  
 αὐτοί φασιν, καὶ πολιτείας καὶ πάντα δὴ τὰ κατασεσηπότα καὶ σβεσθέντα  
 25 λόγων καὶ δογμάτων καὶ ἔργων καὶ τῆς εὐσεβεστάτης θρησκείας ἡμῶν  
 οὐκ ἀνέδην οὔτω καὶ φανερῶς λέγειν ἢ συγγράφειν ἐτόλμησαν, εἰ καὶ  
 τὴν καθάραισιν τῶν ἱερῶν πραγματεύονται, δι' ὧν ἐξαιροῦσι τὰ βέβηλα  
 καὶ τιμῶσι. Διὸ καὶ λανθάνοντες τοὺς πολλοὺς τιμῶνται καὶ τιμώμενοι  
 30 αἱ πάνυ καλῶς. Ὁ δὲ κατὰ τῶν θείων κινήσας γλῶτταν ἀκόλαστον  
 ἄξιον εὔρετο τῆς αἰσχίστης αὐτοῦ ζωῆς παρὰ τῶν εὐσεβῶν τοῦ βίου  
 τὸ τέλος.

Τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν εἰσιν οὐκ ὀλίγοι· καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐνίους αὐτῶν

35 ἐνεδειξάμεθα τοῖς δυναμένοις κωλύειν ἢ ἀτιμοῦν, ἢ ἐλαύνειν, ἢ βυθῶ  
παραπέμπειν. Ἄλλ' ὡ τῆς ἀνοχῆς σου, Χριστέ βασιλεῦ, καὶ ὕλη δίδοται  
μᾶλλον αὐτοῖς τοῦ βλάπτειν ἑτέρους καὶ ῥίπτειν τῆς ἀσεβείας τὰ σπέρ-  
ματα, τοῖς δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ περὶ τῶν ἱερῶν δογμάτων χώρα δίδοται λέγειν,  
καὶ τολμῶσι θεολογεῖν τὰ χριστιανῶν, ὥσπερ οἱ τοῖς βεβήλοις δυσσεβῶ  
40 ὑπὸ πολλῆς ἀδείας ἐμπυρριχίζοντες, οἱ Διὸς καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Κρόνου  
καὶ τοιαύτης κορύζης ἀνάπλεω τὰς ψυχάς.

5. *Leg.*, pp. 2-4

## ΠΛΗΘΩΝΟΣ

### ΝΟΜΩΝ ΣΤΓΓΡΑΦΗ.

Ἡ βίβλος ἤδη περιέχει,

Θεολογίαν μὲν τὴν κατὰ Ζωροάστρην τε καὶ Πλάτωνα,  
ὀνομαζομένων τῶν διὰ φιλοσοφίας ἀναγνωριζομένων θεῶν  
τοῖς πατρίοις τοῖς Ἑλλησι θεῶν ὀνόμασιν, ἐλκομένοις  
ἐκάστοις ἐκ τοῦ οὐ πάνυ τοι συνωδοῦ φιλοσοφία, διὰ  
τὰς ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν διαστροφάς, ἐπὶ τὸ ὡς μάλιστα  
δὴ φιλοσοφία συνωδόν·

Ἡθικὰ κατὰ τε τοὺς αὐτοὺς σοφοὺς καὶ ἔτι μὴν  
τοὺς Στωϊκοὺς·

Πολιτείαν δὲ Λακωνικὴν, ἀφηρημένου μὲν αὐτῆς τοῦ  
ἄγαν τῆς σκληραγωγίας καὶ τοῖς γε πολλοῖς οὐκ εὐ-  
παραδέκτου, προστιθεμένης δὲ τῆς ἐν τοῖς ἄρχουσι μά-  
λιστα φιλοσοφίας, τοῦ κρατίστου δὴ τούτου τῶν  
Πλατωνικῶν πολιτευμάτων·

4 Ἄγιστείας εὐσταλεῖς, καὶ οὔτε περιέρχους, οὐδ' αὖ  
τοῦ δέοντος ἐκλιπεῖς·

Φυσικὰ δὲ δὴ κατὰ Ἀριστοτέλην τὰ πολλά.

Ἄπτεται δὲ πῶς ἡ βίβλος καὶ λογικῶν ἀρχῶν, ἀρ-  
χαιολογίας τε Ἑλληνικῆς, καὶ πῃ καὶ ὑγιεινῆς δι-  
αίτης.

6. *Leg.* III.32, pp. 130-132

Καὶ πρῶτόν γε αὐτῶν περὶ τῶν  
τῶν θεῶν ῥητέα τε ὀνομάτων, καὶ ἐπιδεικτέα, ὡς οὐ μεμ-  
πτῶς ἡμεῖς τοῖς πατρίοις θεῶν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τῶν διὰ φι-  
λοσοφίας ἀναγνωριζομένων κεχρημέθα θεῶν. Οὔτε γὰρ που  
λόγοις αἰεὶ ἐχρῆν ἅπτ' ὀνομάτων σημαίνειν τοὺς θεοὺς·  
οὐ γὰρ καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς ῥᾶδιον τὸ τοιοῦτο· οὔτ' αὐτοὺς  
καινὰ ὀνόματα θεμένων, ἢ βάρβαρα ἐπαγαγομένους, ἐνὸν  
πατρίοις χρῆσασθαι. Ἀλλὰ φαίη ἂν τις, ὡς κατακέχραν-  
ται ταῦτα τὰ ὀνόματα ὑπὸ τῶν τοὺς μύθους τῶν ἐκ  
φιλοσοφίας περὶ θεῶν λόγων ἀπωδοὺς πλασασμένων ποιη-  
τῶν, καὶ οὐκέτι δὴ ἐχρῆν αὐτοῖς κεχρηθῆναι. Ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐ  
132 τοιαύτη ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων φύσις ἢ, οἷα δὴ, ἦν καὶ ἅπαν  
ὀτιοῦν ὄνομα χρανθῆ, καὶ κεχραμμένον αὐτὸ μένειν ἐς αἰεὶ,  
ἀλλ' οἷα μᾶλλον, ἦν μὲν ἐπὶ φαύλης τέ τις καὶ ἐναγοῦς  
δόξης ὄνοματι ὀπωσοῦν χρῆσθαι, κεχράνθαι δὴ αὐτῶ καὶ  
τοῦνομα· ἦν δ' ἕτερος τῶ αὐτῶ ἐφ' ὑγιούς τε καὶ εὐα-

γοῦς χρήσῃται δόξης, ἄχραντον τούτῳ ἤδη καὶ τοῦνομα  
γίγνεσθαι. Οὕτω μὲν γὰρ ἄχραντον ὄνομα, ὡς μηδέποτε  
ὑπὸ μηδενὸς κεχράνθαι, οὐκ ἂν ῥαδίως τις εὕροι. Ἐπεὶ  
καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ Θεοῦ ὄνομα φαίη τις ἂν κεχράνθαι, ὅτε καὶ  
ἀνθρώπων γε ἐνίοις πολλῶν ἀγῶν μεστοῖς ἐπιπε.....

## Manuscript Supplement

(The supplementary texts and information to Alexandre's edition of Plethon's *Laws*)

### Additus 5424<sup>837</sup>

(The following text is a tentative transcription of the parts missing in Alexandre's edition. The punctuation was slightly changed to be more in accord with the sense of the text. Illegible or unintelligible places are marked by dots . ...)

99.1, follows after: *Leg.* 132.11 [III,32] Alexandre

Τρις ἡμέρας ἐκάστης προσαγορεύειν θεούς· πρῶτον μὲν ἔωθεν ἔσ-  
τι ἀναστάντας, ἢ που καὶ ὄρθρον ἔτι τοὺς ὀρθρευμένους· ἔπειτα δὲ  
δείλης μετὰ τε δὴ τὰ καθήκοντα τῶν ἔργων καὶ πρὸ δείπνου·  
εἶδ' ἔσπερας ἐς εὐνὴν ἤδη ἰόντας· ἔτι δ' ἐν μὲν ταῖς ἱερομηνί-  
5 αῖς μακρότεραις, βραχυτέραις δ' ἐν τῶν ἡμερῶν ταῖς  
βεβήλοις χρωμένους τοῖς προσρήσεσι καὶ ἔστων δὴ αἰ  
πρόσρησεις αἶδε·

108v.1-3, a lacuna in: *Leg.* 162.6 [III,34] Alexandre

τῆνδε ἡμῶν πρόσρησιν δειλινὴν ἰλεῶ τε καὶ εὐμενεῖς πρό-  
σεσθε. καὶ οἱ τῆς ἐν χρόνῳ τε καὶ εἰ ὑπαπιούσης αἰδιότη-  
τος τὰ ἔσχατα εἰλήχοτες ἡμεῖς, ...

114.2, follows after: *Leg.* 182.27 [III,34] Alexandre

καὶ ταύτης τῆς προσρήσεως ἐν τῶν ἡμερῶν ταῖς βεβή-  
λοις μετὰ τὸ κῶλον ἐκεῖνο, Καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἅπαντα ὅποσα τε  
καὶ ἐς ὅσον γε ἐνῆν κάλλιστα ἔχοντα παραγαγόντι, ἐξαι-  
5 ροῦντας τὸ μεταξὺ πᾶν χωρίον, ἐπάγειν, Σὺ μέγας τῷ ὄντι,  
καὶ ὑπέρομεγας, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς, ἄχρι τῆς τῆς προσρήσεως τε-  
λευτῆς. \*

118v.21, follows after: *Leg.* 202.2 [III,35] Alexandre

ἅμα πέρωται ἐκ τοῦ παντός αἰῶνος. \* καὶ ταύτης δὲ τῆς  
προσρήσεως ἐν τῶν ἡμερῶν ταῖς βεβήλοις μετὰ τὸ κῶλον  
ἐκεῖνο, Καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ ταῖς μείζοσι τε καὶ τελεωτέραις  
τῶν δωρεῶν, ἃς πρὸς ὑμῶν ἔσχομέν τε καὶ ἔχομεν, ἐξαι-  
II9 ροῦντας τὸ μεταξὺ πᾶν χωρίον, ἐπάγειν, Ἐν οἷς δὴ ἡμῶν  
τῇ ψυχῇ, ἐς ἀρετῆς τε καὶ τοῦ καλοῦ λόγον συλλαμβάνετε,  
καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ, ἄχρι τῆς τῆς προσρήσεως τελευτῆς.  
Ἐσπερινὴ ἐπὶ νηστεία ἐς Δία πρόσρησις \*  
Zeῦ βασιλεῦ, σὺ αὐτοῶν τε ὦν, καὶ πάντη πάντως ἀγέννητος, ἐν  
5 τε εἰλικρινῶς μὴ οὐδαμῇ αὐτὸς σαυτοῦ ἕτερος, καὶ ἀγα-  
θῶν πρεσβύτατός τε ὁμοῦ ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ ἔσχατος, οὐχ ἕτερον τι  
ὦν ἔπειτα ἀγαθὸν ἀλλ' αὐτὸ δὴ τὰγαθόν, καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε παράγεται,  
γενητὸν μὲν τῇ αἰτία, καὶ τῷ ἀπὸ σου εἶναι· ὃν δ' αἰεὶ τῷ ὄλῳ ἑαυτοῦ  
καὶ οὐτ' ἠργυμενον<sup>838</sup> χρόνῳ, οὐτ' ἂν ποτε παυσόμενον· ἔτι τε ἐν μὲν ἐκ  
I0 πολλῶν<sup>839</sup> τε καὶ ἀλλήλοις ὁμολόγων συνεστηκός· ἄριστα δὲ σοι ἐκ  
τῶν ἐνόητων κατεσκευασμένων ἐν τε τῇ αὐτῇ καὶ ἀρίστη κατα-  
στάσει, τὸν ἅπαντά σοι αἰῶνα διασωζόμενον· σὺ τέλος ὦν,

<sup>837</sup> This "Additional manuscript" is in the possession of the British Library, London, having been originally owned by Kabakes, cf. Masai-Masai (1954), p. 554, Masai (1956), p. 394, n. 6.

<sup>838</sup> *Add.*: ἠργυμένων

<sup>839</sup> *Add.*: πολλῶν

τῆ ἄκρα τε μονώσει, καὶ τῷ μηδὲν ἐν σαυτῷ ἄμεινον τε  
 ἕτερον ἕτερου καὶ χεῖρον κεκτῆσθαι, οὐδὲν δὴ ὄλως ἕτερον,  
 15 ἀλλ' ὁ αὐτὸς εἶναι αὐτὸς σαυτῷ καὶ τὸ πᾶν τόδε τέλειον τῆ πάντων  
 τε καὶ παντοίων εἰδῶν πληρώσει· καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀμεινόνων τῶν  
 δ' ὑποδεεστέρων ἀπείργασας· καὶ ὄντως ...· σὺ Ποσειδῶ  
 τὸν μέγαν ἐν τῷ παντὶ τῷδε, τελεώτατον τε τῶν σαυτοῦ  
 20 ἔργων, καὶ σαυτῷ ὅτι ὁμοιότατον γεγέννηκας<sup>840</sup>· τὴν τε τῶν  
 ὄλων τῶνδε ἡγεμονίαν αὐτῷ ἐπιτέτραφας· οὐδ' αὐτὸς,  
 οὐδὲ τῆς ἄχρι ἐσχάτων τῶν ὄντων προνοίας<sup>841</sup> ἀφιστάμενος· ὃς καὶ  
 δύναμιν, αὐτῷ τε καὶ ὅτῳ ἄλλῳ ὁμοίον τι σχῆμα περιτέ-  
 θεικας, τὴν τε τοῦ ἡγεῖσθαι δίδως, ἔτι τε παράγειν,  
 119V ἄττ' ἂν καὶ δι' αὐτῶν σοι γεγονέναι δέοι<sup>842</sup> καὶ πᾶσιν αὐτὸς  
 περὶ γ' αὐῖ ἕκαστα αὐτοῖς τῶν ἔργων τιθεῖς· σὺ τὸν νοητὸν τε  
 καὶ ὑπερουράνιον σύμπαντα διάκοσμον διὰ σαυτοῦ  
 ὑπέστησας<sup>843</sup>· πάντων τε καὶ παντοίων εἰδῶν τε ἀμερίστων τὴν οὐ-  
 5 σίαν πεπληρωκῶς, καὶ νῶν ἀκινήτων τῶν αὐτῶν· σύμπαν-  
 τα ἅμα τε καὶ δ' ἔργῳ τὰ ὄντα μιᾷ τῆ ἑαυτοῦ ἐκάστου  
 νοήσει θεωροῦντος· θεῶν τούτων ἀπάντων τῆ γε θεότη-  
 τι δευτέρων. ὑπὸ Ποσειδῶνι κορυφαίῳ σφῶν ἐς γε  
 ἕνα τινα ὅτι κάλλιστον συνεστηκότων κόσμον· ᾧ δὴ αἰ-  
 10 ὦνα τοῦ βίου μέτρον ἀποδέδωκας· ᾧ μηδὲν ἐν αὐτῷ παριὸν  
 ἐντεδεικέναι, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ τε ἐνεστηκότα· καὶ ὡσαύτως τε καὶ κατὰ  
 τὰ αὐτὰ μένοντα ἅπαντα· σῆ διατάξει καὶ οὐρανὸς ὄδε,  
 ὑπὸ Ποσειδῶνος ἡδὴ τοῦ μεγάλου, τῶν τε ἄλλων σῶν ἔρ-  
 γων θεῶν, εἰκῶν σοι τοῦ νοητοῦ τε καὶ αἰωνίου διακόσμου  
 15 συνέστη<sup>844</sup>· ἐκ τε ἄθανάτων καὶ οὐτος<sup>845</sup> καὶ θνητοῖς ἡδὴ συντε-  
 θεῖς· ἵνα σοι τέλειον τὸ σύμπαν ἀποτελεσθῆ· ἅπαντα  
 ὅποσα ἐς γένεσιν ἠέκειν ἐνῆν ἀπειληφόσ· ᾧ τοῦ βίου αὐῖ  
 μέτρον ὁ παῖς τε καὶ ἄπειρος ἀποδέδοται<sup>846</sup> χρόνος, αἰῶνος  
 σοι εἰκῶν γεγονώς· οὐ δὴ αἰεὶ, τὸ μὲν ἡδὴ οἴχεται, τὸ δ' ἔτι  
 20 μέλλει· καὶ τὸ μὲν οὐκ ἔστι, τὸ δ' οὐπω ἔστιν· ἔστι δ' ἐν τῷ νῦν τε  
 αἰεὶ καὶ ἀκαρεῖ. ὃ δὴ ἄλλο αἰεὶ καὶ ἄλλο ὁ γιγνόμενον, τὸν τε οἰχό-  
 μενον καὶ μέλλοντα διορίζει χρόνον. σοὶ Ποσειδῶν ὁ μέγας πειθό-  
 μενος, καὶ τὸ τῶν ἄστρον θεῖον ἐν τούτῳ ὑπέστησε γένος ἐκ  
 120 τοῦ ἀρίστου ψυχῆς εἰδούς, καὶ σώματος τοῦ τούτῳ προ-  
 σήκοντος αὐτὸ συνθεῖς· ἐν οἷς καὶ Ἥλιον τὸν μέγαν ὑπέστησε  
 νῶ μὲν τοῦτον θεῖῳ συνεξευκῶς, τῶν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι σοι γεγε-  
 νημένων διακόσμων· τῆς γε ὄλοιον ἐν αὐτῷ τοῖν οὐσίαιν αἰω-  
 νίου τε δὴ καὶ ἐγχρόνου ἔνεκα συνδέσεως· κράτιστον  
 5 δὲ τῶν ἐντὸς οὐρανοῦ θεῶν αὐτὸν ἀποφήνας· καὶ αὐτῶν  
 τε τούτων ἡγεμόνα· καὶ τῆς θνητῆς φύσεως συμπάσης μετὰ τοῦ ταύτης  
 ἰδία ἀρχοντός τε καὶ προστάτου Κρόνου δημιουργόν· συνεργόν  
 αὐτῷ καὶ ἐξ ἄλλου πρὸς τὰδ' ἔργα δούς· οἷς καὶ αὐτοῖς, ὁμοίαν  
 μὲν, ἴδιαν δ' οὐκέτι τὴν σύστασιν ἀποδεδώκει· ὃς καὶ τὸν ἅπαντα ἡ-  
 10 μῖν ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ ἀπειροῖς περιόδοις μέτρων χρόνον οὐ πάντα  
 ἡμέραν μὲν καὶ νύκτα τε ὁμοῦ τῆ ἑαυτοῦ ἐκάστη σὺν τῷ παντὶ  
 αἰθέρι περιφορᾷ περαίνων· ἡμέραν μὲν οἷς ἂν ὑπὲρ γῆν ἐκάστο-  
 τε γίγνηται, φῶς ταῖς ὄψεσι ὅτι πλεῖστον τε παρέχον καὶ κάλλιστον,

<sup>840</sup> Add.: γεγέννηκας

<sup>841</sup> Add.: προνοίας

<sup>842</sup> Add.: δέοις

<sup>843</sup> Add.: ὑπεστήσας

<sup>844</sup> Add.: σινέστη

<sup>845</sup> Add.: οὐτος

<sup>846</sup> Add.: ἀποδέδοτε



15 νύκτα δ' οἷς ἂν ὑπὸ γῆν. ἀμοιβαδὸν μὲν παραχωροῦντε ἀλλήλοιν  
 ταῖς δ' αὐξήσεσι τε καὶ μειώσεσι, τὸ ἴσον ἐκάστοτε ἐν κόσμῳ,  
 ἀφαιροῦντε τε ἂν Ἥλιον καὶ προστιθέντε ἐν τῷ μέρει. μῆνα δὲ  
 τῆ ἑαυτοῦ τε καὶ Σελήνης συνόδῳ ἐκάστη, ἣν Ἥλιου δὴ τού-  
 του δευτέραν τῆ δύναμει, ὁ τούτων σοι δημιουργὸς συνέστησε·  
 20 νύκτωρ ἐκάστοτε φαίνουσιν, ὅποσον τε μὲν καὶ ὁπότε, ἠνίκα  
 τε ἂν αὐτῆ καθῆκῃ. ἐνιαυτὸν δὲ, τῆ ἑαυτοῦ περὶ τὸν ζω-  
 οφόρον τε καὶ λοξὸν ἐκάστη περιόδῳ· ἣ καὶ τὰς ὥρας, τῷ  
 προσάγειν τε ἡμῖν καὶ ἀπάγειν, αὖ πως καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ παρέχεται·  
 120V σοῖς θεσμοῖς, ὁ σὸς οὗτος παῖς πρεσβύτατος Ποσειδῶν, τῆς  
 τε τοῦδε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ δημιουργίας ἠγούμενος, καὶ τὸ δαιμόνων ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπέ-  
 στησε φῦλον· τοῦ τε τῶν ἄστρον καὶ ἡμῶν ἦδη . . . ἔσχατον  
 τοῦτο θεῶν φῦλον γεγεννηκώς· μετὰ γὰρ ταῦτα τῶν θεῶν τὰ γένη,  
 5 σῆ προνοία ὁ αὐτὸς Ποσειδῶν, καὶ ψυχὰς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἐν τῷ  
 αὐτῷ οὐρανῷ, μεθόριόν τι τῶν τε αἰθίων καὶ ἅμα ἐνδεδεχέσι ἀεὶ  
 τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς χρώμενον παντοδαπῶν θεῶν γενῶν, τῶν τε πάμπαν  
 ἐπικηρον ὑπέστησεν· αἰθίας μὲν καὶ αὐτὰς, καὶ ἀγαθοῖς παρα-  
 πλησίοις μὲν πως τοῖς τῶν θεῶν, οὐκέτι δ' ἐνδεδεχέσι χρω-  
 μένας, ἀλλ' ἀποβλητοῖς τε καὶ ἀναλήπτοις αὖ, καὶ ὅλως δι-  
 10 αλείπουσιν· ἐπεὶ σοι ἔδει καὶ τοιοῦτου τινὸς ἐν τῷ παντὶ  
 τῷδε εἶδους, ἵνα πλήρες τέ σοι καὶ γ' ἔστι καὶ τέλειον ἰ-  
 κανῶς ἀποτελεσθῆ. ἔτι δὲ, ἐν τε καὶ αὐτὸ πρὸς αὐτὸ  
 ἠρμοσμένον· οὐ πλείστον τῶν γενῶν ἀλλήλων διεστηκότων, ἀλλὰ  
 15 κατὰ σμικρὸν ὑπ' ἀλλαπτόντων καὶ πη καὶ ἀλλήλοισ ἐν τοῖς μέσοις ἐ-  
 αυτῶν κοινωνούντων· οἶαι σοι καὶ αἰ ἡμέτεραι αἶδε ψυχαὶ  
 συστήσασιν, καὶ τοῖς θνητοῖς τοῖσδε σώμασι ἐνδεταί γεγό-  
 νασιν· τὸ τε ἀθανάτου τε καὶ θνητῆς μοίρας διεστηκός,  
 ἐν ἡμῖν συνάγον τί τε, καὶ ἐς ταυτὸν τι συνδοῦνται· ὡς μηδὲ  
 20 ταύτη ἔτι τῷ φύσει διεστηκοίτην. ἀλλὰ γίγνοιτό τις αὐτῶν  
 καὶ μίξις· τῶν ἀθανάτων τοῦ τοῖς θνητοῖς προσεχεστάτου, διὰ  
 τῶν ἀγαθῶν τὴν οὐκ ἐνδεδεχῆ μετουσίαν, τοτὲ μὲν ἐς θνητὸν  
 ἐνδουμένου σῶμα, τοτὲ δ' αὖ ἀπαλλακτομένου τε καὶ καδ' αὐ-  
 τὸ βιοῦντος. καὶ τούτου οὕτω ἀμοιβαδὸν<sup>847</sup> ἀεὶ τὸν ἅπαντά τε  
 καὶ ἄπειρον χρόνον χωροῦντος, ὡσπερ καὶ μόνως τὸ τοιοῦτον  
 121 συμβαίνειν οἶον τ' ἦν. ἐνταῦθα σὺ ἡμῖν τοῦδε τοῦ παντός δι-  
 ἀ Ποσειδῶνος τε καὶ τῶν σῶν μακαρίων παίδων θεῶν τέταχας  
 ἣ καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν χώραν· καὶ σοι χάριν ἅπασαν ὅσην οἶοι  
 τ' ἔσμεν ἱεμεν· τῶν τε ἄλλων πάντων τε καὶ παντοίων ἀγαθῶν, ἄγε ἡμῖν  
 5 δεδώρησαι τε καὶ δωρῆ ἐκάστοτε, καὶ μάλλιστά τε καὶ δια-  
 φερόντων, ἧς καὶ ἡμῖν μεταδέδωκας θειότητος· ἐπεὶ καὶ  
 ἄγε ἡμῖν διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην χώραν ἀμαρτάνεται, τούτων ἐπα-  
 νόρθωσιν αὖ ἐκάστοτε, καὶ ἐς τὰς τῆ θειότητι ἡμῶν προση-  
 κούσας πράξεις ἐπάνοδον προσέειμας· καὶ νῦν, τῆδε τῆ  
 10 ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ μεθόριον μηνὸς τε οἰχομένου, καὶ νέου αὖ ἰσταμένου  
 ἄγομεν, ἀλλήλοιν τοῖν θεοῖν συνιόντοιν, πρὸς δὲ, καὶ ἐνι-  
 αυτοῦ, τοῦ μὲν, τελευτῶντος, τοῦ δὲ, ἀρχομένου, ἄρτι ἡλίῳ τε-  
 τραμμένῳ τε τὰ χειμερινὰ, καὶ ἡμέραν ἡμῖν ἐξ ἑλαχί-  
 15 τῆς γεγενῆ . . . αὔθις αὔξοντι, τῆς σελήνης συνιούσης, ταύτης  
 τῆ ἡμέρᾳ ἐπίσκεψιν τινα ἡμῶν τε αὐτῶν πεποιημένοι καὶ  
 τῶν ἦδη ἡμῖν βεβιωμένων, τῶν τε ἡμαρτημένων τε καὶ ἐλλελει-  
 μμένων τε δὴ καὶ πε πλημμελημένων ἡμῖν κατεγνωκότες, λύσιν  
 τε αὐτῶν αὐτοῦ μὲν, καὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπανόρθωσιν. τὴν οὖν ἐσπερι-

<sup>847</sup> Add.: ἀμοιβαδὸν

20 νήν τήν δε ἡμῶν προσευχήν προσέμενος, τήν τε ἐς γόνατα κλίσιν,  
 καὶ νηστείαν πανήμερον, ἃ δὴ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς σύμβολα, ἔρωτάς τε  
 τοῦ ἐς σέ, καὶ δουλείας πασῶν δικαιοσύνης τε ὁμοῦ καὶ τοῖς δου-  
 λείουσι συμφορωτάτης τιθέμεδα, λῦσον μὲν τῶν δι' εὐφροσύ-  
 νην προσγεγονότων ἡμῖν κακῶν, ἀγαθῶν δὲ, τά τε παρόντα ἐμπεδῶν  
 I2IV τά τε μὴ παρόντα, προσήκοντα δὲ πη πρόφθες· λόγον ὀρθόν, καὶ  
 ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ κακῶν γνώμονα, διὰ θεῶν, οἷς σοι τὰ τοιαῦτα  
 ἐπιτέτραπται, παριστάς ἡμῖν· ὅς δὴ κράτιστος μὲν ἀμαρτη-  
 μάτων τε καὶ ψυχῆς κακίας καθαρτῆς· κράτιστος δ' ἀγαθῶν πο-  
 ριστῆς τε καὶ φύλαξ· καὶ δίδου σὺν τῶν ἡμέρων τε καὶ μηνῶν  
 5 καὶ ἐνιαυτῶν ταῖς περιόδοις τῶν μὲν καλῶν ἐπίδοσιν  
 ἐκάστοτε ἴσχειν· τῶν δ' ἡμαρτημένων τε καὶ ἀμαρτανομένων ὡς  
 ταχεῖαν τήν ἀπόλυσίν τε, καὶ ἐς τὸ θεῶν αὐδῆς ἐπάνο-  
 δον.<sup>848</sup> ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἐστὶ ἀναμαρτήτους<sup>849</sup> πάμπαν<sup>850</sup> διατελεῖν, τοιαύ-  
 τήν τινα τήν φύσιν εἰληχότας· ἀλλ' ὡς ἐλάχιστα μὲν διαμαρ-  
 I0 τάνειν, ὡς τάχιστα δ' ἐπανορθοῦσθαι, καὶ καθορθοῦν  
 ὡς πλείστα τε καὶ μέγιστα εὐχόμενοι, εἰδότες ἐν τῇ τε ἀρε-  
 τῇ καὶ τῷ καλῷ τὸ εὐδαιμόν τε καὶ μακάριον καὶ ἡμῖν ἀπο-  
 δεδομένον· ἕως τὸν ἀπὸ σοῦ πεπρωμένον τοῦ βίου τοῦδε χρόνον  
 ἐκπλήσαντες, ἐς ἐκεῖνον ἀφικόμεδα τὸν βίον, τὸν ἀμεί-  
 I5 νω τε δὴ καὶ θειότατον, τοῦ τε ἐκ τοῦ θνητοῦ τοῦδε σώμα-  
 τος ἀπηλλαγμένον ὄχλου. εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῆς τῶν ὅλων ἕνεκα ἐν ἡ-  
 μῖν κοινωνίας σοῖς θεσμοῖς τῷ θνητῷ τῷ τῷδε ἐνδεδέμεδα,  
 ἀλλὰ καὶ χρόνος ἡμῖν ἀποδέδοται, ἐν ᾧ τὸ θεῖον ἡμῶν καθ' αὐ-  
 τὸ ἐν τῷ μέρει ἐκάστοτε γιγνόμενον, θειότερας τε καὶ ἐαυτῷ  
 20 μᾶλλον τι προσηκούσης ἀψεται ζωῆς· τοῦ μὲν ὁμοφύλου  
 τοῖς προαποικημένοις, ὧν καὶ νῦν γε δὴ ἐνδένδε ὡς ἕ-  
 καστος μνεῖαν τινα ποιοῦμεδα, συνοργιάσον· θεῶν  
 δὲ τοῖς ἡμῶν ἐγγυτέρω πεφυκόσιν ἐναργέστερον συνε-  
 σόμενον· διδαχθησόμενόν τε ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἃ θεοὶ, καὶ πάντα  
 I22 κάλλιον τε καὶ ἄμεινον προᾶξον· ὡς μὴ ἀεὶ κακῶν τῶν ἐκ τοῦ  
 θνητοῦ τοῦδε ἀναπίμπλαιτο, ἀλλ' ἔχοι τι καὶ βίῳ πολλῷ τοῦ-  
 δε κρείττονι καὶ θειοτέρῳ χρῆσθαι· τά τε ἄλλα, καὶ χρόνου μήκει  
 τὸν τῆδε οὐ σμικρῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι· ἅτε πεφυκότες ἂν τῶν  
 5 χειρόνων τὰς ἀμείνους ἐκ γούν τῶν δυνατῶν πράξεις πολυ-  
 χρονωτέρας ἀπονέμειν· καὶ ὅλως τῶν κακῶν πολὺ μείζω τάγαθὰ·  
 ἀλλ' ἐκεῖσε μὲν ἡμῖν, ᾧ δέσποτα, ἀφικομένοις, δέσποτα τῶν ἀ-  
 πάντων, ἐπειδὴν καὶ ἡμῖν καθήκη, δοίης ἡρώων τε τοῖς ἐκεῖ, ἰλέως  
 τε καὶ εὐμενέσι συμμίξαι, τῇ θειοτάτῃ τε καὶ προυχούσῃ τοῦ  
 I0 ἡμετέρου γένους φύσει· δι' ὧν τῷ τῆδε ἐπιδημούντων βίῳ, μεγάλων  
 ἀρχαῖ ἀγαθῶν τῷ κοινῷ ἡμῶν ἐκ σοῦ ἐκάστοτε ἐπιπέμ-  
 πονται· ἔτι τε προγόνοις τε καὶ γονεῦσι· σοῦ τε ἡμῖν καὶ θεῶν  
 εἰκόσι, τῇ ἡμῶν τοῦ θνητοῦ αἰτία γεγονόσι, συνοίκοις,  
 συντρόφοις οἷς τισὶ νοοῦ φράτορσι· ἄλλοις οἰκείοις· οἳ  
 I5 ἂν ἐς τὴν θειοτέραν τε ἐκείνην ζωὴν καὶ μακαριότεραν, προ-  
 αφιγμένοι τύχωσιν ἡμῶν· ἔτι ἐταίροις τε καὶ φίλοις πᾶσι  
 πολιτῶν τε τοῖς τε ἄλλοις καὶ τοῖς τῶν κοινῶν ἡμῶν καλῶς  
 προστάσι· τοῖς δὲ καὶ τὸν τῆδε βίον ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κοινῶν τε  
 καὶ ὁμοδόξου γένους ἐλευθερίας ἀποβεβληκόσιν· ἢ τῶν  
 20 καθεστηκότων τε καὶ εὐ ἐχόντων σωτηρίας· ἢ οὐκ ὀρθῶς  
 ἐστὶ ὧν κεκινημένων ἐπανορθώσεως· τούτων τοῖς καλοῖς κά-  
 γαθοῖς καὶ ἡμῶν συντάξαις· καὶ συνορτάξαι τε καὶ σύμπαντα

848 Add.: ἐπάνωδον

849 Add.: ἀναμαρτίτους

850 Add.: πάπαν

γυρίζειν δοίης ὑπὸ Πλούτωνί τε τῷ ἡμετέρῳ προστάτῃ,  
 καὶ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν τοῖς ἡμῶν ἐπιμεληταῖς. ἐορτῶν τε καὶ πανη-  
 122V γύρευον τὴν καλλίστην καὶ θειοτάτην τὴν τῶν τε ὄντων, καὶ σοῦ  
 τοῦ πρεσβυτάτου τῶν πάντων αἰτίου ἐναργεστέραν θεωρίαν.  
 ἐν δὲ τῷ παρόντι δοίης, τῶν γε ἡματημένων λελυμένων, πρῶτα  
 5 μὲν καθαρούς τε καθαρῶς· καὶ σοί τε καὶ παισὶ τοῖς σοῖς θε-  
 οῖς ἀρεστῶς, τήνδε τὴν ἱεροουργίαν ἀγιστείσας, καὶ ἔπειτα  
 ἀπὸ ταύτης γενομένους, δεῖπνον τε κοσμίον ἐλέσθαι, καὶ κοίτην  
 ἀμόλυτον τινα καταδαρθεῖν, ἀναγκαιοτάτας πρὸς τὴν τοῦ  
 θνητοῦ ἡμῶν τοῦδε [σώματος]<sup>851</sup> ἐς τὸν ἀπονενεμημένον αὐτῷ χρόνον σω-  
 τηρίαν πράξεις· καὶ ὀνείρων τε ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἐπιπέμψει<sup>852</sup>  
 10 ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμῖν ἂν συμβησομένων ἐνίων ψυχαγωγηθέντας,  
 κακῶν τε ἐξαναστάντας ἀπαθεῖς, ὁσίους ὁσίας σοὶ ἐορτάσεις·  
 καὶ μῆνα τε τόνδε καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν οὗ ἐπιβαίνομεν, καὶ τὸν  
 λοιπὸν βίον ἀμέμπτους κατὰ δύναμιν, καὶ ἧ σοὶ φί-  
 15 λων, καὶ θεοῦς τε σοὺς παῖδας ὡς πρέπει σεβομένους, δι' ὧν  
 σοὶ ἧ προσήκει τὰ ἡμέτερα κατακοσμεῖται, καὶ σὲ  
 ἐπεὶ τὸν τῶν ὄλων ὑμνοῦντας ἀρχηγέτην· ὃ αὐτοπά-  
 τορ Ζεῦ, ὃ θεῶν ἀμητόρων σοὶ γεγεννημένων τῶν γ' ὑπερ-  
 ουρανίων προσεχὲς πάτερ· ὃ τῶνδε τῶν πάντων, τῶν  
 20 μὲν, ἀμέσως, τῶν δὲ, διὰ τούτων, τῶν γε ἐκ σοῦ ἤδη προῖ-  
 ὄντων πρεσβύτατε δημιουργέ· ὃ αὐτοκράτορ τε  
 τῷ ὄντι καὶ αὐτοτελεῖ βασιλεῦ· ὑφ' οὗ μόνου ἀνυπευ-  
 δύνου τοῖς πᾶσιν ἐφεστῶτος ἅπασα ἀρχὴ εὐδύνε-  
 ται· ὃ κυριώτατε τῶν πάντων δέσποτα· σὺ μέγας, μέγας τῷ  
 123 ὄντι καὶ ὑπέρομεγας· καὶ σου τὰ πάντα τῆς δυνάμεως  
 καὶ κλέους πλέα· ἀλλ' ἰλαδί τε δὴ, καὶ σῶζε· ἄγε τε σὺν τῷ  
 παντὶ τῷδε καὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα, ὅπη σοὶ ἄριστα ἐγνωσταί τε καὶ  
 περὶ ἡμῶν, καὶ ἅμα πέπρωται ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος. \*  
 5 ταύτην τὴν πρόσρησιν ἐν γε ταῖς ἄλλαις ἀπάσαις ἔναις  
 τε καὶ νέαις καὶ νηστείαις, πλήν τῆς μηνὸς νέου ἡγουμένης,  
 ἐξαιροῦντας τὸ περὶ ἐνιαυτοῦ, τοῦ μὲν, τελευτῆς, τοῦ δ', ἀρ-  
 χῆς ὄλον κῶλον, καὶ ἔτι τοῦ κῶλου ἐκείνου, καὶ μῆνα  
 τε τόνδε καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν οὗ ἐπιβαίνομεν, τὴν τοῦ ἐνιαύτου  
 10 φάσιν, οὕτω διεξιένοι. ἐν μὲν τοῖς δυοῖν μηνὸς τοῦ τε-  
 λευταίου νηστεῖαιν, τοῖν πρὸ τῆς ἔνης τε καὶ νέας, καὶ ὄλον  
 τε τοῦτο, τὸ κῶλον ἐξαιρεῖν, καὶ ἔτι πρότερον, τὸ περὶ τοῦ μεσορίου  
 τοῖν μηνῶν ἡμέρας. \* αὗται πρόσρησεις ἐς θεοὺς μέτριοι  
 ἔστων· ὧν κυριωτάτη μὲν τῶν δειλινῶν ἢ τρίτη ἢ ἐς τὸν  
 15 βασιλέα Δία· μεθ' ἣν ἢ ἐπὶ νηστείας αὕτη ἐσπερινή ἢ ἐς Δία.  
 εἰδ' ἢ ἐωδινῆ· εἰδ' ἢ καθήμερινῆ<sup>853</sup> ἐσπερινῆ, εἰδ' ἢ πρώτη τῶν  
 δειλινῶν· ἔπειθ' ἢ τῶν δειλινῶν δευτέρα. \*

132.5, follows after: *Leg.* 240.13 [III,36] Alexandre

5 μετὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐκάστοτε, ἡνίκ' ἂν ὕμνοι οἵτινες οὖν ἄδωνται,  
 ἀδήσεται· ἐσάπαξ μὲν ἐκείνων ἀδομένων, καὶ οὗτος ἐσάπαξ,  
 δις δ' ἐκείνων, οὗτος γε ἐστρίς· οὕτω μὲν οὖν ταῖς προσκυνήσεσιν  
 ἐκάστοτε, οὕτω δὲ ταῖς προσρήσεσιν, οὕτω δὲ τοῖς ὕμνοις. τῶν τε  
 ἀνθρώπων τοὺς σπουδαιότερους χρῆσθαι οἷς γε μὴν ὄκνος ἂν τις προσῆ, τούτους  
 10 ἐκλείποντας ἂν καὶ ὅλας τὰς προσρήσεις, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τῶν ἡμερῶν  
 ταῖς βεβήλοις, τοῖς γε ὕμνοις μόνοις ἐπὶ ταῖς προσκυνήσεσι χρῆσθαι·

<sup>851</sup> *addidi*, cf. *Leg.* 138.19-20 [III,34] Alexandre

<sup>852</sup> *Add.*: ἐπιπέμψει

<sup>853</sup> *Add.*: καθήμερινῆ

τοὺς δὲ δὴ καὶ ἔτι αὖ ὀκνηροτέρους, ἢ καὶ ὄλως γραμμάτων ἀπείρους,  
 ἐκλείποντας ἂν ἤδη καὶ τοὺς ὕμνους, αὐταῖς γοῦν ταῖς προσκυνήσεσι  
 καὶ μόναίς προσαγορεύειν τοὺς θεούς· ὅτω μὲν ἂν ἀνθρώπων νόσος τις προ-  
 15 σίστηται, πρὸς γε τὸ μὴ εὐμέτρως προσκυνεῖν, κἂν αὐτὰ τὰ πρόσ-  
 φδέγματα τῶν προσκυνήσεων ψιλὰ ἀδόμητα ἐξαρχεῖν, τῷ γε  
 δὴ οὕτω πως ἔχοντι· ἐὰν περ καὶ ἅπαντα ταῦτα ἐκλείπηται,  
 ὅ τοι οὗτος που αὐτῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς ῥαθυμοτάτοις, καὶ τοῦ γε ἀσεβεῖν  
 ὀλιγωροτάτοις ταπτόμενος, καὶ ὡς μάλιστα ἂν ἐν δίκῃ τάττοιτο· καὶ  
 20 μὲν δὴ καὶ προσαγορεύοντα ἕκαστον τοὺς θεούς, οὕτως ὡς βούλοιτό  
 τε δὴ καὶ δύναιτο, τελευτῶντα καὶ χεῖρα τὴν δεξιὰν φιλεῖν ὑπτίαν.  
 ἐν δ' ἄτρω, ἢ εἴ που καὶ ἄλλοθι ἢ τῶν νόμων τῶνδε προκέοιτο βίβλος,  
 καὶ ταῦτ' ἀπτόμενος, ἐπ' ἐξόθω ἤδη ὄντα, τὴν χεῖρα οὕτω φιλεῖν·  
 ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν, οἷσπερ ἂν ἀδυνασία τις, ἢ καὶ ὄκνος προσῆ· τοῖς  
 132V γε μὴν ἐντελεῖς ἐς θεούς ταύτας πρόσρησεις ποιεῖν αἰρουμένοις, κάκεῖνο  
 ἔτι μετὰ γε δὴ τοὺς ὕμνους τὸ κήρυγμα κηρύττεσθαι· διὰ τε  
 καὶ θεοὺς προσειρηκότες τε καὶ ἀγιστεῖσαντες κατὰ νόμον,  
 ἀπολυόμεθα ἤδη βελτίους τῇ ἐντεύξει τῆς πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὡς ἕκαστοι  
 5 γεγεννημένοι. Διὸς καὶ θεῶν ἐν ἀπάσῃ ἡμῶν πράξει, ἐφ' ὅσον γ' ἂν ἡμῖν  
 ἢ φύσις εἴποιτο, μεμνώμεθα· τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ χείρονος ἡμῶν πρῶ-  
 τα μὴν ἐλευθερίας καὶ ἀπαθείας· ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ ἀρχῆς τῆς κατ' αὐτοῦ,  
 καὶ αὐταρκειας, εὐκοσμίας τε τῆς κατὰ φύσιν, ὅση δύναμις ἀντι-  
 ποιώμεθα· τῆς τῶν πρὸς ἑκάστους σχέσεων, τῇ τῶν καθηκότων ἂν ἀ-  
 10 ποδόσει σωτηρίας, ἢ καὶ ὡς μάλιστα τέλειοι γιγνοίμεθ' ἂν, ἡμῖν  
 μελέτω· ἐν ἀπάσι τε καὶ πάντῃ ἢ ἂν οἶοι τ' ὤμεν, θεοῖς ἐπώμεθα  
 ἤδη καὶ μόνως τῆς ἡμῖν προσηκούσης, ὡς ἑκάστῳ δύναμις, τευ-  
 ξόμεθα καθαριότητος· ἀλλ' ἔτι μὴν καὶ ἐς γόνατε ἄμφω κε-  
 κλιμένοι, τῇ τε τελευταίᾳ εὐχῇ τῆδε προσχόντες, οὕτω ἀπο-  
 15 λυόμεθα. ἐν μέντοι τῶν ἡμερῶν ταῖς βεβήλοις, ἐξαιροῦσι  
 τὰ πολλὰ αὐτοῦ, ὧδε κηρύττεσθαι· διὰ τε καὶ θεοὺς προσειρηκό-  
 τες τε καὶ ἀριστεύσαντες κατὰ νόμον, ἔτι καὶ ἐς γόνατε ἄμφω  
 κεκλιμένοι, τῇ τε τελευταίᾳ εὐχῇ τῆδε προσχόντες, οὕτω  
 ἀπολυόμεθα. ἔπειτα ἢ μὲν ἱερέων τις παρῆ, αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν λεῶν  
 20 τετραμμένον, καὶ ἑστρὶς τῷ χεῖρε ὑπτίῳ ἐπαίρονται, τὴν γε  
 εὐχὴν ἐκείνην ἐπιλέγειν· Ζεὺς ὁ βασιλεὺς, καὶ θεοὶ πάντες,  
 οἱ ἐκ Διὸς ἔφοροι τῶν ἡμετέρων καθεστᾶσι, πάσιν ὑμῖν ἰλέω  
 εἶεν· ἐφ' ᾧ τὸν λεῶν ὑποκρίνεσθαι, δωριστὶ ἄδοντας· εἶεν·  
 εἶεν· εἶεν δὴ καὶ σοὶ θεῖε<sup>854</sup> ἄνερ· ἐὰν δ' ἱερέων μηδεὶς παρῆ, τὸν τῆς προσ-  
 133 κυνήσεως κατάρξαντα ἰδιώτην, καὶ ταύτην ἐπιλέγειν τὴν εὐχὴν.  
 οὐκέτι μέντοι ἐπαίροντα τῷ χεῖρε· πρὸς δὲ, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ ὑμῖν, ἡμῖν  
 λέγοντα· καὶ τοὺς λοιπούς· εἶεν· εἶεν· εἶεν ὑποκρινάμενους, οὕτω ἀπο-  
 λύεσθαι· \*

133.4, *Leg.* 58.1 [III,36] Alexandre

Ἡ τῶν μηνῶν καὶ ἐτῶν τάξις \* (instead of: I,21: Περὶ θεῶν θεραπείας)<sup>855</sup>  
 Καὶ μὲν δὴ, καὶ μῆσι καὶ ἔτεσι, τοῖς γε κατὰ φύσιν χρῆσθαι ...  
 (in: *Leg.* 58.2-60.10 [III,36] Alexandre)

133v.7, follows after: *Leg.* 60.10 [III,36] Alexandre

ἱερομηνίας δ' ἄγειν τάσδε τε καὶ τοσάσδε· πρώτως μὲν καὶ ἀγι-  
 ωτάτην τῶν μηνῶν ἐκάστον ἱερομηνιῶν, νομηνίαν, Διὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ,  
 δευτέραν δὲ, ὀγδόην ἰστάμενον, Ποσειδῶνι τε καὶ θεοῖς τοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις·  
 10 τρίτην, διχομηνίαν, σύμπασι τοῖς μετὰ Δία θεοῖς ἀξίαν δὲ δευ-

<sup>854</sup> *Add.*: θεῖ

<sup>855</sup> *Cf.* n. 858.

τέραν ταύτην μετὰ νομηνίαν· τετάρτην, ὀγδόην φθίνον-  
 τος, Ἡλίω τε καὶ Κρόνῳ καὶ σύμπασι τοῖς μετὰ τοὺς Ὀλυμπίους θεοῖς,  
 πέμπτην, ἔννην, Πλούτωνί τε ἰδίᾳ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ  
 ἡρώων ἅμα, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων φίλων τε καὶ οἰκείων τῶν γε οἰχομένων μνήμην,  
 15 ἔκτην, ἔννην τε καὶ νέαν, ἐπὶ τῇ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπισκέψει τε,  
 καὶ τῶν γε ἡμαρτημένων, ἐκλελειμμένων τε δὴ καὶ πεπλημμελημένων,  
 τότε γοῦν ὡς μάλιστα ἐπανορθώσει. ἦν δ' ὁ μὴν κοῖλος τε ἦ, καὶ  
 ἡ ἔννη ἐκλίπη, τὴν αὐτὴν ἂν ἄγειν ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν, τῷ τε Πλού-  
 20 τῶνι καὶ μνήμη τῇ τῶν οἰχομένων, ἡμῶν τε αὐτῶν τῇ ἐπισκέ-  
 ψει· ἀξίαν δὲ καὶ ταύτην τῆς διχομηνίας οὐ μείω νομίζειν· μηνὸς δὲ  
 δὴ τοῦ νέου, καὶ δευτέραν τε καὶ τρίτην ἰστημένον ἱερομηνίας ἄγειν.  
 Ἦρα μὲν τὴν δευτέραν, τὴν δὲ τρίτην Ποσειδῶνι· καὶ τοῦ τε-  
 λευταίου δὲ, δωδεκάτου γε δὴ ἡ ἐμβολίμου, πλήρους μὲν  
 ὄντος, τρίτην τε ἀπιόντος καὶ δευτέραν· κοίλου δὲ, τετράδα  
 134 τε καὶ τρίτην καὶ δευτέραν· τρίτην μὲν Πλούτωνι τε ἄγοντας ἀν-  
 τί τῆς ἔνης, καὶ ἐπὶ μνήμη τῇ τῶν οἰχομένων· δευτέραν δὲ καὶ  
 ἔννην, ἣ τετράδα τε καὶ β . . . , ἐφ' ᾧ περ καὶ τὴν ἔννην τε καὶ νέαν τῇ  
 ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἐπισκέψει τε καὶ ἐπανορθώσει. \*\*\*

Bruxcellensis 1871-1877

Leg. 86 [III,14] Alexandre, the text missing at the beginning of chapter is contained in:

*Bruxcellensis* 1871-1877, f. 66r, ed. F. Masai:<sup>856</sup>

κοινωνῶν τε αὖ γυναικῶν χρήσεως, ἔτι τε κρεῶν ἐδωδῆς, μιᾶς τε τῆς ἐν οἰκίᾳ τῇ αὐτῇ κτήσεως,  
 τῆς τε παρὰ τὰς τελετὰς (sic) ἐκάστων οὐκ οἰκοφθορίας, περὶ τούτων ἂν ἐκάστου ὡς μάλιστα  
 ἐν καιρῷ εἴη ἐσκέψασθαι, τὰ μὲν αὐτῶν καὶ εἰ ὀρθῶς νομοθετεῖται, τὰ δ' ὀρθῶς ἔχοντα ἂν,  
 ἅτε καὶ πᾶσι σχεδὸν ἀνθρώποις παραπλησίως νομιζόμενα, τῷ ποτ' ἂν λόγῳ καὶ ὀρθῶς ἔχοι,  
 καὶ ...

Leg. 98 [III,15] Alexandre:

αὐτοενί (Masai after *Bruxcellensis* 1871-1877) instead of αὐτογενεῖ (Alexandre's conjecture from  
 αὐτογενής in *Parisinus* 2045)<sup>857</sup>

Masai shows that in Alexander's edition the following chapters of Plethon's *Laws* are placed in  
 the wrong order:

III,36 = I,21 (pp. 58-60) Alexandre<sup>858</sup>

II,26 = II,27 (p. 82) Alexandre<sup>859</sup>

<sup>856</sup> Masai (1956), p. 125, n. 1 ("L'édition de ce fragment par ALEXANDRE, p. 86 est à compléter, par le début grâce à ce texte conservé dans le codex *Bruxcellensis* 1871-1877 (de la main du disciple de Pléthon, Michel Apostolès)"). cf. p. 398, n. 1.

<sup>857</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 2.

<sup>858</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395, n. 2 ("ALEXANDRE, p. 58-60, publie, comme appartenant à ce chapitre, un fragment que le ms de Londres intitule Ἡ τῶν μηνῶν καὶ ἔτων τάξις et situe après le fragment portant le titre du Livre III, ch. XXXVI. Ce témoignage autorisé, auquel s'ajoute l'argument du contexte, doit faire abandonner la solution d'Alexandre. Celle-ci n'avait pour elle qu'une références d'Allatius : « Pletho, primo de legibus » (*De mensura temporum*, p. 140), dont on ne peut contrôler le fondement.").

<sup>859</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397, n. 1 ("Alexandre a cru pouvoir attribuer les dernières lignes de ce fragment au chapitre XXVII. Le ms de Londres prouve qu'il a commis une double erreur : le texte est complet et donne uniquement le chapitre XXXVI.").

### *Abbreviations*

- ALEXANDRE – Pléthon, *Traité des Lois*, introd., ed. C. Alexandre, transl. A. Pellissier, Paris 1858, repr. Amsterdam 1966, Paris 1982 (partial reimpression with a new preface by R. Brague), [Boston] 2004 (Elibron Classics).
- LAMBROS – S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος], *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, I-IV, Ἀθήναι 1924 (I-II), 1926 (III), 1930 (IV).
- LEGRAND I-IV – É. Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, I-IV, Paris 1885 (I), 1885 (II), 1903 (III), 1906 (IV), repr. 1962.
- MOHLER III – L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, III: *Aus Bessarions Gelehrtenkreis. Abhandlungen, Reden, Briefe von Bessarion, Theodoros Gazes, Michael Apostolios, Andronikos Kallistos, Georgios Trapezuntios, Niccolò Perotti, Niccolò Capranica*, Paderborn 1942.
- PG – J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca*, I-ILXI, Paris 1857-1866.
- SCHOLARIOS IV – *Œuvres complètes de Gennade Scholarios*, IV, ed. L. Petit – X.A. Sideridès – M. Jugie, Paris 1935.
- Marc. Gr. – Marcianus Graecus*, cf. Mioni (1972), (1985)

**Gemistos Plethon and His Contemporaries**

**George Gemistos Plethon**

*Ad Bess. I (Ad Bessarionem I) – Βησσαρίωνι (Letter to Bessarion)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 458-463 (= Bessarion, *Ep.* 19).<sup>861</sup>

*Ad Bess. II (Ad Bessarionem II) – Τῷ αἰδησιμωτάτῳ Καρδινάλει Βησσαρίωνι ([Further] Letter to the Most Venerable Cardinal Bessarion)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 465-468 (= Bessarion, *Ep.* 21), ed. and transl. A. Tihon in *Meth.*, pp. 61, 124-127 (the astronomical part).<sup>862</sup>

*Ad deum unum (Ad deum unum supplicatio) – Εὐχὴ εἰς τὸν ἕνα Θεόν (Prayer to the One God)*, ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 273-274 (spurious?<sup>863</sup>).<sup>864</sup>

*Ad Man. (Ad Manuelem) – Εἰς Μανουὴλ Παλαιολόγον περὶ τῶν ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ πραγμάτων (Address to the Emperor Manuel on Affairs in the Peloponnese)*, ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS III, pp. 246-265.<sup>865</sup>

*Ad quaes. (Ad quaesita quaedam responsio) – Πρὸς ἠρωτημένα ἅττα ἀπόκρισις (The Response to Some Inquiries [of John VIII Palaiologos])*, introd., ed. and transl. L.G. Benakis [Λ.Γ. Μπενάκης] in: Benakis (1974), pp. 330-347, 351-376, repr. in: Benakis (2002), pp. 585-602, 607-632.<sup>866</sup>

*Ad Theod. (Ad Theodorum) – Συμβουλευτικὸς πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην Θεόδωρον περὶ τῆς Πελοποννήσου (Advisory Address to the Despot Theodore on the Peloponnese)*, ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS IV, pp. 113-135.<sup>867</sup>

*Add. (Additus) – the supplementary text of the Book of Laws (Leg.) inedited by Alexander and contained in Additus 5424 (in the possession of the British Library, London), its tentative transcription may be found in the Manuscript Supplement.*

<sup>860</sup> The translations and summaries of the primary texts are indicated in the footnotes.

<sup>861</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 233-235 (summary).

<sup>862</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 233-235, French: A. Tihon in: *Meth.* 61 (the astronomical part).

<sup>863</sup> Cf. *supra*.

<sup>864</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), p. 45, German: W. Blum in: Blum (1988), p. 93, Modern Greek: E. Stamou [Ε. Στάμου] in: Πλήθωνος Νόμοι. Γενναδίου Πατριάρχου Ἐναντίον τοῦ Πλήθωνος Γεμιστοῦ, *Αθήνα* 1997, p. 131.

<sup>865</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 102-106 (summary), German: A. Ellissen in: Ellissen (1860), pp. 85-104, W. Blum in: Blum (1988), pp. 173-187, Modern Greek: Ch.P. Baloglou in: Baloglou (2002), pp. 213-241, Russian: B.T. Goryanov [B.T. Горянов] in: Георгий Гемист Плифон, *Речи о реформах*, in: *Византийский временник*, 6, 1953, pp. 397-404

<sup>866</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 230-232 (summary), Modern Greek: L.G. Benakis [Λ.Γ. Μπενάκης] in: *Ad quaes.*, pp. 350-358, repr., pp. 606-614.

<sup>867</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 92-98, German: A. Ellissen in: Ellissen (1860), pp. 105-130, W. Blum in: Blum (1988), pp. 151-172, Modern Greek: Ch.P. Baloglou in: Baloglou (2002), pp. 143-183, Russian: B.T. Goryanov [B.T. Горянов] in: Георгий Гемист Плифон, *Речи о реформах*, in: *Византийский временник*, 6, 1953, pp. 404-414.

- Contra Bess. (Contra Bessarionem)* – Πρὸς τὰς παρὰ τοῦ Βησσαρίωνος ἀντιλήψεις ἐπὶ τοῖς κατὰ τοῦ ὑπερ Λατίνων βιβλίου γραφεῖσιν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἀντιρρητικοῖς (*Reply to Bessarion’s Critical Comments on His Polemical Writing against the Treatise in Support of Latins*), ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 311-312, corr. J. Monfasani in: Monfasani (1994), p. 839, n. 33.<sup>868</sup>
- Contra Lat. (Contra De dogmate Latino librum)* – Πρὸς τὸ ὑπερ Λατίνων βιβλίου (*Reply to the Treatise in Support of Latins*), ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 300-311, corr. J. Monfasani in: Monfasani (1994), p. 839, n. 33.<sup>869</sup>
- Contra Schol. (Contra Scholarii pro Aristotele obiectiones)* – Πρὸς τὰς Σχολαρίου ὑπερ Ἀριστοτέλους ἀντιλήψεις (*Reply to Scholarios’ Defence of Aristotle*), ed. and transl. B. Lagarde in: *Byzantion*, 59, 1989, pp. 355-507 (ed. E.V. Maltese, Leipzig 1988).<sup>870</sup>
- De diff. (De differentiis)* – Περί ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται (*On the Differences of Aristotle from Plato*), ed. B. Lagarde in: *Byzantion*, 43, 1973, pp. 312-343.<sup>871</sup>
- De Isthmo (De Isthmo)* – Πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα [Μανουὴλ περὶ τοῦ Ἰσθμοῦ] (*To the Emperor [Manuel on the Isthmus]*), ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS III, pp. 309-312.<sup>872</sup>
- De virt. (De virtutibus)* – Περί ἀρετῶν (*On Virtues*) [Georges Gémiste Pléthon, *Traité des vertus*], introd., ed., transl., and comment. B. Tambrun-Krasker, Ἀθήναι-Leiden-New York-København-Köln 1987, pp. 1-15.<sup>873</sup>
- Decl. brev. (Declaratio brevis oraculorum magicorum)* – Βραχεῖα τις διασάφησις τῶν ἐν τοῖς λογίοις τούτοις ἀσαφεστέρως λεγομένων (*Brief Clarification of What Is Said in These [Magian] Oracles Less Clearly*) [Oracles Chaldaïques. Recension de Georges Gémiste Pléthon. *La recension arabe des Μαγικά λόγια*, ed. M. Tardieu], introd., ed., transl., and comment. B. Tambrun-Krasker, Ἀθήναι-Paris-Bruxelles 1995, pp. 21-22.<sup>874</sup>
- Diod. Plut. (De Diodoro et Plutarcho)* [Opuscula de historia Graeca] – Ἐκ τῶν Διοδώρου καὶ Πλουτάρχου περὶ τῶν μετὰ τὴν ἐν Μαντινείᾳ μάχην ἐν κεφαλαίοις διάληψις (*On the Events among the Greeks after the Battle of Mantinea*), ed. E.V. Maltese, Leipzig 1989.

<sup>868</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), p. 277 (summary).

<sup>869</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 273-277 (summary).

<sup>870</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 283-307 (summary), French: B. Lagarde in: *Contra Schol.*, pp. 369-501.

<sup>871</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 191-214, German: W. Blum in: Blum (1988), pp. 112-150, Italian: M. Neri in: G. Gemisto Pletone, *Delle differenze fra Platone ed Aristotele*, Rimini 2001.

<sup>872</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 100-101 (summary), German: W. Blum in: Blum (1988), pp. 188-195, Modern Greek: Ch.P. Baloglou in: Baloglou (2002), pp. 131-137.

<sup>873</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 180 (partial summary), French: B. Tambrun-Krasker in: *De virt.*, pp. 19-28, German: G. Schandl in: Blum-Seitter (2005), pp. 25-34, Italian: P. Jerenis, *Trattato delle virtù*, Rimini 1999.

<sup>874</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 53-54, French: B. Tambrun-Krasker in: *Decl. brev.*, p. 36, Modern Greek: M. Kekropoulou [Μ. Κεχροπούλου] in: Γ.Γ. Πλήθων – Μ. Ψέλλος, *Μαγικά λόγια του Ζωροάστρη*, Ἀθήνα 1997, pp. 230-234, E. Stamou [Ε. Στάμου] in: Πλήθωνος Νόμοι. Γενναδίου Πατριάρχου Ἐναντίον τοῦ Πλήθωνος Γεμιστοῦ, Ἀθήνα 1997, pp. 131-136.



- In Cleop.* (*In Cleopam*) – Μονωδία ἐπὶ τῇ ἀοιδίμῳ βασιλίδι Κλέοπη (*Funeral Oration on the Venerable Empress Cleope*), ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS IV, pp. 161-175.<sup>875</sup>
- In Hel.* (*In Helenam*) – Μονωδία εἰς Ἑλένην (Ἵπομονήν) Παλαιολογίναν (*Funeral Oration on Helen (Patience) Palaiologina*), ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS III, pp. 266-280.<sup>876</sup>
- Leg.* (*Legum conscriptio*) – Νόμων συγγραφή (*Book of Laws*), ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 1-260.<sup>877</sup>
- Meth.* (*Methodus*) – Μέθοδος εὐρέσεως ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης, συνόδων καὶ πανσελήνων καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀστέρων ἐποχῆς ἀπὸ κανόνων οὓς αὐτὸς συνεστήσατο (*A Method of Fixing the Sun, Moon, Conjunctions, Full Moons, and Period of Planets by Rules Established by Himself*) [Georges Gémiste Pléthon, *Manuel d'astronomie*], introd., ed., transl., and comment. A. Tihon – R. Mercier, Louvain-la-Neuve 1998.
- Mab.* (*Mahomes Araborum princeps et legislator*) – Μωαμέτης μὲν ὁ ἀραβάρχη τε καὶ νομοθέτης (*Muhammad the Leader and Lawgiver of the Arabs*), ed. and comment. F. Klein-Franke (1972), pp. 3-8, corr. D. Dedes (1981), pp. 66-67.
- Or. mag.* (*Oracula magica magorum Zoroastri cum commentario Plethonis*) – Μαγικὰ λόγια τῶν ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου μάγων – Ἐξήγησις εἰς τὰ αὐτὰ λόγια (*The Magian Oracles of Zoroaster's Magi – The Explanation of the Oracles*) [Oracles Chaldaïques. Recension de Georges Gémiste Pléthon. *La recension arabe des Μαγικὰ λόγια*, ed. M. Tardieu], introd., ed., transl., and comment. B. Tambrun-Krasker – M. Tardieu, Ἄδῃναι-Paris-Bruxelles 1995.<sup>878</sup>
- Proth.* (*Protheoria*) – Προθεωρία εἰς τὸν Ἐπιτάφιον Μανουὴλ Παλαιολόγου εἰς τὸν ἀδελφὸν Θεόδωρον (*Preface to the Funeral Oration of the Emperor Manuel on His Brother Theodore*), ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS III, pp. 3-7 (ed. J. Chrysostomides in: Manuel Paleologus, *Funeral Oration on his Brother Theodore*, I, *Θεσσαλονίκη* 1985, pp. 67-69).<sup>879</sup>

<sup>875</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 114-115 (summary), German: W. Blum in: Blum (1988), pp. 97-104.

<sup>876</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 310-312 (summary), German: W. Blum in: Blum (1988), pp. 105-111, Italian: G. Leopardi, in: *idem*, *Tutte le opere*, ed. F. Flora, II: *Le poesie e le prose*, Verona 1965, pp. 193-198, Serbo-Croatian: D. Anastasijević [Д. Анастасијевић], in: *Браство*, 32, 1941, pp. 50-54.

<sup>877</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 322-356 (translation of some parts, summary of other ones), French: A. Pellisier in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 3-261, German: W. Blum in: Blum-Scitter (2005), pp. 7-23, Modern Greek: E. Stamou [Ε. Στάμου] in: Πλήθωνος Νόμοι. Γενναδίου Πατριάρχου Ἐναντίον τοῦ Πλήθωνος Γεμιστοῦ, Ἀθήνα 1997, pp. 9-126, D.K. Chatzimichail [Δ.Κ. Χατζημιχαήλ] in: Γεωργίου Γεμιστοῦ-Πλήθωνος, Νόμων συγγραφή, Θεσσαλονίκη 2005, Russian: I.P. Medvedev [И.П. Медведев] in: *idem*, *Византийский гуманизм XIV-XV вв.*, Ленинград 1976, pp. 172-241.

<sup>878</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 51-53 (the text of the *Oracles* only, without Plethon's commentary), K. H. Dannenfeldt in: *idem*, *The Pseudo-Zoroastrian Oracles in the Renaissance, Studies in the Renaissance*, 4, 1957, pp. 27-28 (the text of the *Oracles*), French: B. Tambrun-Krasker in: *Or. mag.*, pp. 25-36, Modern Greek: M. Kekropoulou [Μ. Κεχροπούλου] in: Γ.Γ. Πλήθων – Μ. Ψέλλος, *Μαγικὰ λόγια του Ζωροάστρη*, Ἀθήνα 1997, pp. 167-230.

<sup>879</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 88-91 (summary).

*Zor. Plat. (Zoroastri Platonisque doctrinarum recapitulatio) – Ζωροαστρείων τε καὶ Πλατωνικῶν δογμάτων συγκεφαλαίωσις (Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato)*, ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 262-268.<sup>880</sup>

### **Michael Apostolis**

*Ad Arg. I (Ad Argyropulum I) – Ἀργυροπούλω (Letter to Argyropoulos)*, ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 372-373 (ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: *idem, Ἀργυροπούλεια, Ἀθήναι* 1910, pp. 216-217).

*Ad Arg. II (Ad Argyropulum II) – Ἀργυροπούλω ([Further] Letter to Argyropoulos)*, ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 373-375 (ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: *idem, Ἀργυροπούλεια, Ἀθήναι* 1910, pp. 218-219).

*Ad Gemist. (Ad Gemistum) – Γεμιστῶ τῷ Πλήθωνι (Letter to Gemistos Plethon)*, ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 370-371 (ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS II, pp. 233-234).

*Ad Gazae (Ad Theodori Gazae pro Aristotele de substantia adversus Plethonem obiectiones) – Πρὸς τὰς ὑπὲρ Ἀριστοτέλους περὶ οὐσίας κατὰ Πλήθωνος Θεοδώρου τοῦ Γαζῆ ἀντιλήψεις (Reply to Theodore Gaza's against Plethon for Aristotle about Substance)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 159-169.

*In Bess. (In Bessarionem) – Ἐπιτάφιος θρηνώδης ἔχων φοροίμιον ἐπὶ τῷ θειοτάτῳ Βησσαρίωνι τῷ αἰδεσιμωτάτῳ καρδηνάλει τῆς ἁγίας Σαβίνης καὶ παναγιωτάτῳ πατριάρχῃ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (The Lamentable Funeral Oration with a Preamble on the Most Divine Bessarion, the Most Venerable Cardinal of Saint Sabina and the Most Holy Patriarch of Constantinople)*, ed. G.G. Füllerborn in: PG CLXI, pp. cxxvii-cxl.

### **John Argyropoulos**

*De proc. (De processione Spiritus Sancti) – Περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκπορεύσεως (On Procession of the Holy Spirit)*, ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: *idem, Ἀργυροπούλεια, Ἀθήναι* 1910, pp. 107-128.

### **Bessarion of Trebizond**

*Ad Apost. (Ad Michaelum Apostolem) – Μιχαήλω τῷ Ἀποστόλῃ (Letter to Michael Apostolis)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 511-513.

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<sup>880</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), p. 319, French: A. Pellissier in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 263-269, W. Blum in: Blum (1988), pp. 94-96, Modern Greek: E. Stamou [Ε. Στάμου] in: Πλήθωνος Νόμοι. Γενναδίου Πατριάρχου Ἐναντίον τοῦ Πλήθωνος Γεμιστοῦ, Ἀθήνα 1997, pp. 127-129.

- Ad Const. (Ad Constantinum) – Κωνσταντίνω Παλαιολόγω (Letter to Constantine Palaiologos)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 439-449 (= *Ep.* 13) (ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: Lambros (1906), pp. 15-27, LAMBROS IV, pp. 32-45).
- Ad Dem. Andr. (Ad Demetrium et Andronicum) – Δημητρίω καὶ Ἀνδρονίκω, τοῖς τοῦ σοφοῦ Γεμιστοῦ υἱεῦσιν (Letter to Demetrios and Andronikos, the Sons of the Sage Gemistos)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 468-469 (C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 404-405).<sup>881</sup>
- Ad Gemist. I (Ad Gemistum I) – Τῷ σοφῷ καὶ διδασκάλω Γεωργίω τῷ Γεμιστῷ (Letter to the Sage and Teacher George Gemistos)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 455-458 (= *Ep.* 18).<sup>882</sup>
- Ad Gemist. II (Ad Gemistum II) – Τῷ σοφῷ καὶ διδασκάλω Γεωργίω τῷ Γεμιστῷ ([Further] Letter to the Sage and Teacher George Gemistos)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 463-465 (= *Ep.* 20), ed. and transl. A. Tihon, pp. 118-123 (astronomical part).<sup>883</sup>
- Ad Secund. (Ad Nicolaum Secundinum) – Τῷ λογιωτάτῳ ἀνδρὶ Νικολάω τῷ Σεκουνδίνῳ (Letter to the Most Learned Man Nicholas Secundinus)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, p. 470 (ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, pp. 407-408).<sup>884</sup>
- Adv. Pleth. (Adversus Plethonem de substantia) – Πρὸς τὰ Πλήθωνος πρὸς Ἀριστοτέλη περὶ οὐσίας (Against Plethon on Substance)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 148-150 (introd., ed., transl., and comment. in: Taylor (1924)).<sup>885</sup>
- Contra Gemist. (Contra Gemistum) – Ἀντιλήψεις ἐπὶ τοῖς πρὸς τὸ ὑπὲρ Λατίνων βιβλίον γραφεῖσιν ὑπὸ τοῦ [Γεμιστοῦ (?)] [Πλήθωνος (?)] (Reply to [Gemistos' (?)] [Plethon's (?)] Writing against the Treatise in Support of the Latins)*, ed. and transl. J. Monfasani in: Monfasani (1994), p. 848-854.<sup>886</sup>
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<sup>881</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), p. 13 (partial translation).

<sup>882</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 233-235 (summary).

<sup>883</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), p. 236 (summary), French: A. Tihon in: *Meth.*, pp. 122-123 (the astronomical part).

<sup>884</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 14-15 (summary), Italian: E. Mioni in: Mioni (1991), p. 169.

<sup>885</sup> English: J.W. Taylor in: Taylor (1924), pp. 123-125.

<sup>886</sup> The original text was presumably published under the name Gemistos, not Plethon, cf. the discussion *supra*. Italian: J. Monfasani in: *Contra Gemist.*, pp. 848-854.

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### **Niccolò Capranica**

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### **Cyriac of Ancona**

*Ep. (Epistulae) [Later Travels] – Letters [and Diaries]*, introd., ed., and transl. E.W. Bodnar – C. Foss, Cambridge Mass. 2003.<sup>889</sup>

### **John Eugenikos**

*Acol. in Marc. Eugen. (Acoluthia in Marcum Eugenicum) – Ἀκολουθία εἰς τὸν Μάρκον Εὐγενικόν (Akolouthia of Mark Eugenikos)*, ed. L. Petit in: *Studi bizantini*, 2, 1927, pp. 193-235.

*Ad Gemist. (Ad Gemistum) – Τῷ Γεμιστῷ (Letter to Gemistos)*, ed. E. Legrand in: Legrand (1892), pp. 291-292 (ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS I, pp. 154-155).

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<sup>887</sup> Italian: E. Mioni in: Mioni (1991), p. 168.

<sup>888</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 7-12 (summary).

<sup>889</sup> English: E.W. Bodnar – C. Foss in *Ep.*

### Francesco Filelfo

*Ad Dom. (Ad Dominicum) – Ad Dominicum Barbadicum (Letter to Dominicus Barbadicus)*, ed. J. Hankins in: Hankins (1991), pp. 515-523 (text 30).

*Ad Gemist. (Ad Gemistum) – Γεωργίω Γεμιστῶ (Letter to Gemistos)*, ed. E. Legrand in: Legrand (1892), p. 48.<sup>890</sup>

*Ad Sax. (Ad Saxolum) – Ad Saxolum Pratensem (Letter to Saxolus Pratensis)*, ed. C. Alexandre in: ALEXANDRE, p. xx, n. 1 (on the basis of the edition of Filelfo's lettres published in Paris in 1503,<sup>891</sup> bk. v, fol. lvii).

*Vers. in Gemist. (Versus in Gemistum) – Γεωργίω τῷ Γεμιστῶ (Verses to Gemistos)*, ed. E. Legrand in: Legrand (1892), p. 49.<sup>892</sup>

### Theodore Gaza

*Ad Bess. (Ad Bessarionem) – Καρδινάλει Βησσαρίωνι (Letter to Cardinal Bessarion)*, introd., ed., and transl. L. Labowsky, in: *eadem, An Unknown Treatise by Theodorus Gaza. Bessarion Studies IV*, in: *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 6, 1968, pp. 173-198 (some parts of the text).<sup>893</sup>

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*De mens. (De mensibus) – Περὶ μηνῶν (On Months)*, ed. J.-P. Migne in: PG XIX, pp. 1168-1217.

### Monk Gregorios

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### Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus

*De poetis nostrorum temporum*, ed. K. Wotke, Berlin 1894.

### Andronikos Kallistos

*Def. Gazae (Defensio Theodori Gazae adversus Michaellem Apostolium) – Πρὸς τὰς Μιχαήλου Ἀποστόλου κατὰ Θεόδωρον ἀντιλήψεις (Reply of Theodore Gaza to Michael Apostolis)*, ed. L. Mohler in: MOHLER III, pp. 170-203

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<sup>890</sup> French: E. Legrand, in: Legrand (1892), pp. 48-49.

<sup>891</sup> Knös (1950), p. 140, was not able to find this letter in the 1503 edition, to which Alexandre refers, but discovered it in the one from 1513.

<sup>892</sup> French: B. Knös, in: Knös (1950), p. 139.

<sup>893</sup> English: L. Labowsky in: Gaza, *Ad Bess.*, pp. 179-180, 183-184, 185-186, 188, 193-194 (some parts of the text).

<sup>894</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 7-12 (summary).

### **Matthew Kamariotes**

*Ad Cab. (Ad Demetrium Raul Cabacen)* – Τῷ ἐνδοξοτάτῳ καὶ εὐμενεστάτῳ ἄρχοντι ἡμετέρῳ αὐθέντῃ κυρίῳ Δημητρίῳ Ραοῦλ Καβάκη (*Letter to Most Honourable and Kind Ruler, Our Sovereign Lord Demetrios Raoul Cabaces*), ed. E. Legrand in: Legrand (1892), pp. 311-312.

*In Pleth. (Orationes II in Plethonem de fato)* – Ματθαίου τοῦ Καμαριώτου λόγοι δύο πρὸς Πλήθωνα, περὶ Εἰμαρμένης (*On Fate*), ed. and transl. H.S. Reimarus, Leiden 1721, in: Ch. Astruc (1955), pp. 255-259 (the end of the treatise missing in the Leiden edition) 58), pp. lxxxvii-lxxxix, n. 2.

### **John VIII Palaiologos**

*Ad Gemist. (Ad Gemistum)* – Πρὸς τὸν φιλόσοφον Γεμιστόν (*Letter to the Philosopher Gemistos*), introd., ed., and transl. L.G. Benakis [Λ.Γ. Μπενάκης] in: Benakis (1974), pp. 330-347, 349, repr. in: Benakis (2002), pp. 585-602, 605.<sup>895</sup>

### **Theodore II Palaiologos**

*Bull. arg. (Bulla argentea)* - Ἀργυρόβουλλον ἐπικυροῦν τὰς κτήσεις τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ Γεμιστοῦ Φανάριον καὶ Βρύσιν (*Silver Bull Confirming the Possessions of the Sons of Gemistos, Fanarion and Vrysis*), ed. S.P. Lambros [Σ.Π. Λάμπρος] in: LAMBROS IV, pp. 106-109.

### **Bartolomeo Platina**

*Paneg. (Panegyricus)* – *Panegyricus in laudem amplissimi patris d. Bessarionis (Panegyric in Praise of the Most Distinguished Farther Sir Bessarion)*, ed. J. Petit in: PG CLXI, pp. ciii-cxvi.

### **Gennadios Scholarios**

*Ad Cab. (Ad Demetrium Raul Cabacen)* – Τῷ αὐθέντῃ μου τῷ ἀδελφῷ μου κυρῷ Δημητρίῳ Ραοῦλ τῷ Καβάκη (*Letter to My Sovereign and My Brother Sir Demetrios Raoul Kabakes*), ed. L. Petit – X.A. Sideridès – M. Jugie in: SCHOLARIOS IV, pp. 457-458.<sup>896</sup>

*Ad Eugen. (Ad Marcum Ephesium)* – Τῷ [Μάρκῳ Εὐγενικῷ] Ἐφέσου (*Letter to [Mark Eugenikos] Ephesus*), ed. L. Petit – X.A. Sideridès – M. Jugie in: SCHOLARIOS IV, pp. 116-118.<sup>897</sup>

*Ad Gemist. (Ad Gemistum)* – Πρὸς [Γεμιστόν (?)] {Πλήθωνα (?)} ἐπὶ τῇ πρὸς τὸ ὑπὲρ Λατίνων βιβλίον αὐτοῦ ἀπαντήσῃ ἢ κατὰ Ἑλλήνων (*Letter to [Gemistos (?)] {Plethon (?)} Concerning His*

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<sup>895</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 229 (summary), Modern Greek: L.G. Benakis [Λ.Γ. Μπενάκης] in: *Ad Gemist.*, p. 348 Benakis, repr., p. 604.

<sup>896</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 314-315 (summary).

<sup>897</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 267-268 (summary).

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- Ad Jos. (Ad Josephum Exarchum) – Περί τοῦ βιβλίου τοῦ Γεμιστοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς πολυθεΐας* (*Letter [to Exarch Joseph] on the Book of Gemistos and against the Hellenic Polytheism*), ed. L. Petit – X.A. Sideridès – M. Jugie in: SCHOLARIOS IV, pp. 155-172.<sup>899</sup>
- Ad Ois. (Ad Manuelem Raulem Oisen) – Τῷ φρονιμωτάτῳ καὶ εὐσεβεῖ ἄρχοντι κυρῷ Μανουήλ Ραοῦλ Οἰσῆ* (*Letter to the Most Prudent and Pious Sovereign, Sir Manuel Raoul Oises*), ed. L. Petit – X.A. Sideridès – M. Jugie in: SCHOLARIOS IV, pp. 476-489.<sup>900</sup>
- Ad Theod. (Ad Theodoram) – Ἐπιστολὴ τῇ βασιλίσση [Θεοδώρα] περὶ τοῦ βιβλίου τοῦ Γεμιστοῦ* (*Letter to the Empress [Theodora] on the Book of Gemistos*), ed. L. Petit – X.A. Sideridès – M. Jugie in: SCHOLARIOS IV, pp. 151-155.<sup>901</sup>
- Pro Arist. (Pro Aristotele obiectiones) – Κατὰ τῶν Πλήθωνος ἀποριῶν ἐπ’ Ἀριστοτέλει* (*Defence of Aristotle Against the Difficulties of Plethon*), ed. L. Petit – X.A. Sideridès – M. Jugie in: SCHOLARIOS IV, pp. 1-116.<sup>902</sup>

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### George of Trebizond

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<sup>898</sup> The original text was supposedly published under the name Gemistos, not Plethon, cf. the discussion *supra*. English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 278-281 (summary).

<sup>899</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 359-361 (summary), Modern Greek: E. Stamou [Ε. Στάμου] in: Πλήθωνος Νόμοι. Γενναδίου Πατριάρχου Ἐναντίον τοῦ Πλήθωνος Γεμιστοῦ, Ἀθήνα 1997, pp. 137-167.

<sup>900</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 315-318 (summary).

<sup>901</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 278-281 (summary).

<sup>902</sup> English: C.M. Woodhouse in: Woodhouse (1986), pp. 240-266 (summary).

*De div. (De divinitate Manuelis) – Περί τῆς θειότητος Μανουήλ (On the Divinity of Manuel)*, transl. and ed. J. Monfasani in: *Collectanea Trapezuntiana. Texts, Documents, and Bibliographies of George Trebizond*, Binghamton N.Y., 1984, pp. 564-574.

### **Iacopo Zeno**

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### **Diodorus Siculus**

*Bibl. hist. (Bibliotheca historica)*, I-V, ed. F. Vogel – K.T. Fischer (post. I. Bekker – L. Dindorf), Leipzig 1888<sup>3</sup> (I), 1890<sup>3</sup> (II), 1893<sup>3</sup> (III), 1906<sup>3</sup> (IV-V).

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### Abstract

The present work is an attempt to provide a complex exposition of the philosophy of George Gemistos Plethon, a XV<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine Platonist who influenced also contemporary Renaissance thinkers in Italy. The first part of this study treats Gemistos' "public philosophy", that is, his practical proposals for political reforms in the despotate of Morea (in the Peloponnese) on the basis of Platonic principles as well as the funeral orations, which he composed and in which the immortality of the human soul is demonstrated by rational argumentation. The second part is dedicated to the overall reconstruction of Plethon's own version of Platonism or *philosophia perennis*, the perennial rational philosophy, which is common to all the people throughout different ages and the best expression of which is to be found in the works of Plato and Zoroaster (the *Chaldaean Oracles*, according to Plethon). Finally, the third part discusses the religious beliefs of Gemistos – examines the testimonies of the contemporaries, his stand at the Council of Florence, and his treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit as well as the neo-pagan *Laws* which is a kind of his self-stylisation to Plethon, "the second Plato", – with the result that it is rather improbable that Gemistos was a Platonic polytheist as it is often claimed.

### Abstrakt

Tato práce je pokusem o komplexní výklad filosofie Geórgia Gemista Pléthóna, byzantského platonika XV. století, jenž ovlivnil rovněž současné renesanční myslitele v Itálii. První část studie se věnuje Gemistově „veřejné filosofii“, totiž jeho praktickým návrhům na politické reformy v morejském despotátu (na Peloponnésu) na základě platónských principů stejně jako pohřební řeči, jež sepsal a v nichž je racionální argumentací dokazována nesmrtelnost lidské duše. Druhá část je věnována celkové rekonstrukci Pléthónovy vlastní verze platonismu neboli *philosophia perennis*, věčné racionální filosofii, která je společná všem lidem napříč různými věky a jejíž nejlepší výraz lze nalézt v dílech Platóna a Zóroastra (*Chaldejské věštby*, jak se domníval Pléthón). Konečně, třetí část rozebírá Gemistova náboženská stanoviska – zkoumá svědectví současníků, jeho postoj na koncilu ve Ferrare-Florencii a jeho spis o vycházení Ducha Svatého stejně jako novopohanské *Zákony*, které jsou jakousi jeho sebestylisací do Pléthóna, „druhého Platóna“, – s tím závěrem, že je spíše nepravděpodobné, že by Gemistos byl platónský polytheista, jak se často tvrdí.