



Thessaloniki, August 10, 2007

Report on Mr. Vojtěch Hladký's dissertation
Plato's Second Coming:
An Outline of the Philosophy of George Gemistos Plethon,
submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, Prague.

The dissertation deals with the work of Georgios Gemistos (Plethon), a Greek – Byzantine and Renaissance – philosopher of the first half of the 15th century. Hladký does not intend to present every aspect of Plethon's entire work –philosophical, theological, and political. He wants to understand two important issues in Plethon's work: his *sui generis* Platonism and the relation of his religious beliefs to his philosophical thought. Hladký reconstructs a work that has already been the subject of a lot of scholarship;^{*} however his attempt is a welcome and interesting one because it is the fruit of a focused reading of the entire corpus of Plethon and it readdresses questions that contemporary research seems to leave intact, probably being content with their traditional answers. On the contrary, Hladký dares to challenge these answers, namely about the kind and the sources of Plethon's Platonism and – more boldly – Plethon's alleged paganism.

In order to accomplish this task, the author proposes a suitable classification of Plethon's works that determines the structure of the book. He discerns three groups of works: (1) 'public philosophy', i.e. texts presented publicly as represented Plethon's own thought, (2) 'philosophia perennis', i.e. texts written to interpret others' thought (Plethon's Platonism), and (3) theological work. In the author's perspective, if I understand it right, we have one 'Gemistos' (the historical personality and its public philosophy) and one 'Plethon' (the producer of a version of Platonism). However, as it is clear also from the size of the three chapters of the book, emphasis is given to the two last aspects, whereas Plethon's 'public philosophy' receives a brief treatment.

Hladký's introductory methodological remark that 'the present study will have to concentrate *only* [emphasis mine] on the texts that are somehow relevant for his

* I have the impression that he exaggerates a bit when he states that Plethon's 'version of Platonism has not been sufficiently explored yet' (p. 1); this seemingly contradicts his own right estimation about the abundance of Plethon's secondary bibliography which he finds 'surprisingly rich' (p. 3) and among which many studies deal with this subject. Certainly his divergency from other interpretations is another thing.

philosophy, although those political, religious, and theological treatises that contribute to the understanding of his philosophical thought will be also sometimes discussed here' (p. 2) is somewhat misleading and is not really applied throughout his study. And rightly so. Plethon, as most of the Byzantines, was not a systematic thinker, nor what we today consider as a philosopher with his own system. His philosophical ideas are scattered through all his texts. In fact Hladký himself bases his first Chapter, i.e. Plethon's public philosophy, exclusively on no strictly philosophical texts (political memos and funeral orations), whereas his second task (the relation between religious and philosophical thought) cannot be fulfilled without analysing Plethon's religious writing. A commendable thing in this dissertation is that it uses all the extant sources for the reconstruction of Plethon's thought. Hladký gives attention to all kind of Plethon's writings and he is not limited (as some scholars do) to certain works or, even more, to a certain kind of works (philosophical, theological or political). He also shows sensitivity to the genre of each text he uses and to its particular context.

Another methodological remark (see p. 4) concerns the priority that reasonably Hladký gives to Plethon's texts (Pletho ex Plethone) and his very critical attitude to the external testimonies. This leads him to concentrate on Plethon's own writing and to scrutinize every (friendly or, mostly, hostile) reference to Plethon's personality and thought.

In his slim "**Introduction**" (pp. 1-5) the author just rough out the contour of Plethon's life and he seems to favor Monfasani's late date (1454) for Plethon's death. At the discussion of the date of Plethon's death (p. 2, note 9) the two testimonies of George Trebizond (quoted in length in pp. 146-147) could also be mentioned. Also, the argument for a late date, I think, is not corroborated by the appeal to Scholarios' notice that he had not replied to Gemistos because of 'the fate of our country'. Hladký assumes that if Pletho was already dead Scholarios would refer to this event as a obstacle for his reply. But probably the fall of Constantinople and Scholarios personal fortune are sufficient enough for the delay, being Plethon deceased or not.

Hladký also gives the basic information about Plethon's works, underlines the diversity of his literary production and offers a too short but fair overview of plethonian studies (pp. 3-4).

In **Chapter 1, 'Public Philosophy'** (pp. 7-23) the author exposes the philosophy Gemistos presented publicly as his own and in the case of which it is also probable that he himself adheres to it. There are five texts included in this category and are divided into two groups: (1) an informative letter and two advisory speeches of a political character, written most probably during 1414-1418. *On the Isthmus, Address to Manuel, Address to Theodore* (pp. 7-14). Here Hladký summarizes faithfully the content of the three texts under the subtitle "Platonic reforms", reconstructing a more or less platonizing political and social organization and showing that it must have its foundation on the (right) religious beliefs. He analyses briefly the texts, concentrating

only on theoretical issues and leaving aside Plethon's specific administrative, economic etc. reforms.

Regarding the sources for Plethon's political thought Hladký tends to search only for theoretical ones and mainly for Plato. That is undeniable and well documented but it is not the whole story. The historical context must also be considered (e.g. for Plethon's compromise between monarchy and oligarchy –a political practice to be found in Peloponnese; see Smarnakis *below*); also Hellenistic and middle Platonic conception of king as an imitation of God must be taken account.

Hladký's remarks about Plethon's (and generally Byzantines') use of 'Romans' and 'Hellenes/Greeks' (e.g. p. 9f.) could be helped by studies such as A. Angelou, "'Who am I?": Scholarios' answers and the Hellenic Identity', in C. Constantinides et. al. (ed.), *Φιλέλλην: Studies in Honour of R. Browning* (Venice 1996) 1-19, or S. Vryonis Jr., "Byzantine Cultural Self-Consciousness in the Fifteenth Century", in: S. Čurčić & D. Mouriki (eds.), *The Twilight of Byzantium* (Princeton, N.J. 1991) 5-14.

Plethon's use of the expression "the divine" instead of "the God" (p. 14) is explained as if 'he wanted to leave his claims as general as possible to be accepted by anybody' –an explanation that fits Hladký's main thesis. But within the context of Plethon's public philosophy, i.e. his advisory texts to Byzantine rulers of Peloponnese, is there any sign that he intends to make such universal claims, while at the same time discredits Christian religious customs?

(2) The two funeral orations of Plethon, on the empresses Cleope (1433) and Helen (1450), give Hladký the opportunity to deal with the 'fate of the soul' and the arguments for immortality –a prominent platonic theme (pp. 15-19). His analysis is successful, so I just record my few remarks.

The argumentation for the immortality of the soul need not necessarily 'surprised' Plethon's contemporaries as Hladký supposes (p. 15). It is certainly a platonic theme (though Hladký just refers to *Phaedo* and does not search its sources in Plato or, e.g., in Plutarch) but is also present in the Patristic and Byzantine tradition. One might think of consolations (from Gregory of Nyssa to Demetrius Cydones) or special treatises or chapters on the soul (I mention only the ones by Gregory of Nyssa, Nemesius of Emesa, John of Damascus or even Nicetas Stathatos). If that's the case, what must be shown is that Plethon proceeds in a different manner (e.g. depended exclusively on rational arguments) and that this manner marked a departure from the Christian way of proving immortality. I comment on this just to say that Hladký, as most of scholars, when discussing Plethon's thought seems to set aside his patristic/byzantine background in favour of his platonic one. A different approach would perhaps make stronger Hladký's main claim for Plethon's christianity.

The conclusions of the first chapter ('Platonism in Practice', pp. 19-23) are sound and in their great part convincing. I just make three comments. Hladký correctly finds that in Plethon's account is missing 'the Christian identity of the Byzantines' (p. 20).

However, one might have to admit that to take away the Christian identity from the Byzantines would be inconceivable for them. When Plethon did it he could not but knew that this was intolerable for his compatriots. Hladký then infers that the 'success of a nation does not seem to depend entirely on its religion but rather on its state organization' (p. 20). This may contradict Plethon's conviction that the welfare of a state is based on the right belief about the divine. Besides it is not compatible with the historical example of the Ottomans mentioned two lines below ('they owe their efficient state organization to Muhammad').

Another point is Hladký's view that Plethon in his public philosophy makes a universalistic claim. He is probably right. But to say, as he does, that 'the apparent unimportance of the Christian religion in [Plethon's] conception might perhaps have been troublesome for some of his contemporaries' (p. 22) is too mild an expression! Everyone (Christian, Muslim, Jewish) in the late Middle Ages would reject it, as regards to his own religion. Nor, I think, could be any extenuation of his attitude, such as Hladký proposes: 'we should not forget that, after all, Gemistos was a Platonic philosopher and an interpreter of the ancient Greek tradition, not a professional theologian' (p. 22). We definitely do not forget that but in Late Byzantium no one could legitimately claim that he has licence to relegate freely the Christian religion by virtue of his Platonism or any other capacity. Even today universalistic claims (not only in the field of religion but also in the philosophy of religion) are considered to be a kind of syncretism or underestimate of the religion, especially by the faithful of the three monotheistic religions.

Finally, I think that the absence of a Christian tone in the two funerals, which belong to a genre that is perfectly appropriate for religious purposes, is indicative of Plethon's reluctance (to say the least) to follow the Christian practice. The parallel of Bessarion's consolatory texts, that Hladký accurately reminds (p. 22), shows what a Christian funeral was expected to be even when its author was a scholar and a philosopher.

In the extensive **Chapter 2, 'Philosophia perennis'** (pp. 25-120) the author reconstructs the perennial philosophy, i.e. the rational and unaltered conception of the world, as it can be extracted from Plethon's writings that constitute the major part of his work. Hladký has done a remarkable job here. He exploits fruitfully all the texts available (texts not always easy to disclose their meaning) and presents plethonic thought as a coherent "system", containing metaphysics, cosmology, anthropology and ethics. Many issues are discussed in detail and satisfactory; I mention only a few of them: the central role of reasoning, the common notions, the ontological levels of reality, the knowability of the One, the Forms, human nature and its relation to the transcendence, determinism, virtue and happiness.

He also treats with other minor issues such as the influence of Proclus to Plethon (p. 116f.). Hladký offers good reasons to reject the proposed similarities between the two philosophers, although his characterization of Scholarios' different claim as 'simply

ridiculous' is not a scholarly one. Another good point of the chapter is that it shows Plethon's balanced view on the "agreement" of Aristotle with Plato (p. 199f.)

The central assumption of this chapter is that Plethon just exposes or interprets the doctrines of others, namely the teachings of Zoroaster, the *Chaldean Oracles*, Pythagoras and Plato –all of them being in accordance. It's true that the *Summary* is entitled *Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato* and that at the prologue of the *Laws* the expression is neutral: they expose doctrines according to Plato, Stoics etc. But can we infer from this that these works are not expressing Plethon's own views, much less that they do not seem to contradict Plethon's views in his 'public philosophy'? So a question that perhaps needs further discussion is whether Plethon's 'public philosophy' is compatible with the 'perennial philosophy', and if it is why not to accept that the second also contains his ideas.

Another, perhaps naive, question that remains is why Plethon although he had his own philosophical views (and not being an academic) spent so many years and many hundreds of pages describing others' view, however distinguished they were, as Zoroaster or Plato. Can it be that a very small percentage of his work – in Hladký's perspective – is the testimony for his own views? So we come to the problem of *Laws* that I'll comment on below.

Few further remarks: Hladký rightly observes that the use of ancient Greek names of gods was chosen by Plethon so that 'the perennial philosophy may be more understandable for the majority' (p. 30). We have to ask: what (imagined) majority had Plethon in his mind? The citizens of the Byzantine Empire? More specifically, the inhabitants of Peloponnese? And why these masses would understand better the ancient names of gods and not a version of rational theology that would use the Christian angelology? The historical example existed: Psellos had already attempted to christianize Greek myths by replacing ancient names of gods with Christian names of angels.

Plethon may be addressed to an imagined community of Greeks, bound up with their ancestors and closer to the primordial wisdom as exemplified in *Chaldean Oracles* and Plato. I have the impression that Hladký, concentrated as he is on the philosophical reconstruction of Plethon's thought, somehow overlooks Plethon's historical situation, his political program, his traditionalism, and his insistence on the Greek/Hellenic past. It seems that Plethon is fighting against all: aristotelians, pro-unionists, Christians, Islam –everyone that he considers to be harmful to his "Hellenism".

Chapter 3, 'The Question of Religion' (pp. 122-180), is the more innovating chapter and all its arguments come to the conclusion that Pletho was a firm Christian.* However provocative this statement may be one must admit that Hladký

* Hladký is not alone in this path. Plethon's (Christian) editors before Alexandre (1858), P. O. Kristeller (*Journal of Philosophy* 56 [1959] 512), and J. Hankins (*Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 1

has prepared his case very carefully and he is persuasive in many points he makes. In five sections rich in textual evidence and interpretative efforts Hladký examines thoroughly all the arguments that have been used or assumed by Plethon's contemporaries and/or modern scholars to prove that he Byzantine philosopher was pagan; and gradually he rejects all of them. He is not unaware of the difficulties of presenting Gemistos as a Christian – obviously a *sui generis* Christian –, as a supporter of Eastern Orthodoxy against Latin and even ancient Greek theology.

Certainly Hladký admits that there are in Plethon's writings divergencies from the Orthodox theology: absence of a trinitarian doctrine, eternity of the world, reincarnation; also the criticism of many practices of Christian religion. But he restricts them within the domain of *philosophia perennis*, and in many cases he tends to decrease the importance of the differences. The only (or the main) issue in which Plethon significantly differs from his contemporary Christian beliefs is his emphasis on fate/necessity in history –something that Bessarion had already mentioned.

To achieve his goal Hladký is very cautious, not to say suspicious, with all written sources concerning Plethon, especially in regard to his alleged conversion to paganism (or: his apostasy from Christianity). This careful reading permits him to put in question the influence of Elissaeus on Plethon's religious formation and to argue for the little importance of the incident of the change of Gemistos' name to "Plethon". And, more important, to test the validity of the external testimonies by Plethon's pupils (Markos Eugenikos, Bessarion, Laonikos Chalkokondyles) admirers (Demetrios Raoul Kabakes, Michael Apostolis) and adversaries (Scholarios, Mathaios Kamariotes, Georgios from Trebizond). Hladký shows that almost everyone had his own reasons to create an image of Plethon appropriate for his strategic and tactic in the context of the ideological conflicts after the Fall of Constantinople.

I find that Hladký is right to warn us that the rhetorical tone and function of many propositions that wrote Byzantine scholars of the 15th century must not deceive us so as to take them literary.

Scholarios' attitude to Plethon's book *On Laws* is passed by easily in a manner that perhaps does unjust to the Patriarch. Scholarios (as "Gennadios") did not condemn the book to the flames 'after a brief inspection' (p. 143) but reluctantly and after a time of hesitation and an unsecceful attempt to get rid of the book and the responsibility for its fate. Livanos's monograph (see *below*) is illuminating on this point. The personal reasons for the accusation that Hladký cites are quite plausible but they don't exclude the possibility that the accusation was also true.

Another puzzling issue is Plethon's official fight for Orthodoxy as is testified from his attitude during the Council of Ferrara and his writing against the Latin dogma of *filioque*. Hladký focus appropriately on this short text which is usually left aside but in

[Leiden 1991] 197f.) reject Plethon's supposed paganism, while J. Monfasani (in various studies) is highly critical.

fact it is very important for a proper understanding of Plethon's thought. To his exhaustive discussion one might add that Plethon also had political reasons for rejecting the Latin dogma. Also that when Plethon denies the Latin interpretation for the Son as by-cause of the procession of the Holy Spirit, he also denies the existence of creative causes outside God –something that suits to the “Hellenic theology” (*Contra De dogmate Latino*, in Alexandre, p. 302). So, it seems that defending orthodoxy Plethon defends his heterodoxy.

And finally we come to the case of the *Laws*. One of Hladký's goal is to prove that the composition of the *Laws* started quite earlier that is supposed (c. 1425 for Masai, 1430s for Woodhouse), namely in the 1410s. He supports this claim by juxtaposing texts from the *Laws* and other plethonic texts, and detecting textual similarities –not always very close.

But can this book help us to decide on Plethon's religiosity? As Hladký puts it: ‘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 [*Laws*] that was written out of the motives and in the context that are not entirely clear to us’. I quite agree with the first of Hladký's reservations but as to the second it is difficult for anyone to pass over the *Laws*. In order to make this second point stronger Hladký must offer an analysis that will attribute a new character to the book of *Laws*. And actually he maintains that the *Laws* are a long notebook, ‘a kind of exercise book’ that Pletho was writing for many years. Pletho did not have a secret (pagan) agenda but he was experimenting with philosophy and Platonism in particular.

In fact the *Laws* can be seen as a work-in-progress, an *opus* that cannot be finished, even though its epilogue (*Epinomis*) has been written. If that is the case, then it is indeed an extraordinary one –and I mean as a conception, as a literary strategy (not taking account its content). To accept Hladký's view is to assume that Plethon wrote this extent work just “playing” but then the interpretation of Plethon as a Christian looks plausible. Doing all these in the third chapter Hladký suggests and explores an original perspective to read the *Laws*, albeit a controversial one.

I have to say that I am not totally opposite to a “Christian” re-interpretation of Plethon. It is true that during his life Plethon did not give rise to be considered as a non-christian and that many of his contemporaries behaved towards him as a Christian. I share with Hladký the critical attitude to the stereotype of “paganist Renaissance” and I also doubt about the alleged fraternity at Mistra or the supposed influences of Plethon's paganism to Byzantine scholars. Hladký's conclusion that Plethon ‘is far from being a polytheist in the ordinary sense of the word’ (p. 29) is sound (I have suggested that, in the final analysis, he is monotheist). Could Plethon be a Christian? Perhaps only in a way that a philosopher can be. Even if Plethon was not a pagan, how could we imagine a Byzantine paganism? These are questions that remain open but they are much elucidated by Hladký.

I think that the problem is that Plethon during the *sessiones* of the Ferrara Council realized that it is not possible to establish a rational metaphysics within Christianity and that the other alternative is a version of "Hellenic" (non-Christian) theology" where such kind of metaphysics can be deduced by its principles. And the further problem is, as Hladký remarks, 'that he does not seem to make any attempt to reconcile his "perennial philosophy" with Christianity' (p. 180).

Hladký's whole discussion makes clear a latent contradiction (or at least tension) between Plethon's (a) publicly expressed theoretical views and religious policy and (b) his lonely intellectual undertaking that culminates in the *Laws*. His solution prudently does not appeal to characterizations of Plethon as hypocrite etc. but uses rigorous argumentation, even though his conclusion is *prima facie* unexpected: *Laws* are 'a kind of an exercise book in which [Plethon] developed his Platonic thought at length' (p. 173).

Nevertheless, one cannot but take seriously Hladký final statement: '[W]hen he <sc. Plethon> 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' (p. 180)

The book closes with (a) an extent 'Appendix' (pp. 181-200) that supports the discussion at pages 170f., containing a series of plethonic passages in order to prove the textual similarities between the *Laws* and other texts of Plethon. (b) A valuable 'Manuscript Supplement' follows (pp. 202-208) containing supplementary texts for *Laws* drawn from a London ms. (British Library, *Additus* 5424) –a most welcome offer until the waited new edition of the *Laws* by B. Tabrun-Krasker.

Bibliography: In pages 209-220 the author offers a detailed catalogue of the used texts, very useful because he gathers not only the editions but also the modern translations and the summaries of Plethon's texts.

The ten pages (p. 221-230) of the secondary bibliography that Hladky has made use of is more than sufficient and up to date. Not being hunted by the ghost of a complete bibliography, I only add few specific titles that would have been helpful to him (and that perhaps he can consult if he revises this thesis for publication):

- J. W. Taylor, "Gemistus Pletho as a Moral Philosopher", *TAPA* 51 (1920) 84-100.
J. W. Taylor, *Georgius Gemistus Pletho criticism of Plato and Aristotle*. Wisconsin 1921.
Fr. Masai, "Pléthon, l'Averroisme et le problème religieux", in : P.-M. Schuhl (ed.), *Actes du Colloque Internat. sur le Néoplatonisme* (1969). Paris 1971, pp. 435-46.
D. Dedes, "Θρησκεία και πολιτική κατά τὸν Γεώργιο Γεμιστὸ Πλήθωνα", *Φιλοσοφία* 5/6 (1975-76) 424-441. An important article on Plethon's mixture of religion and politics aptly situated in its historical context.
D Dedes, "Die wichtigsten Gründe der Apostasie des Georgios Gemistos (Plethon)", *Φιλοσοφία* 15/16 (1985-86) 352-375.

- M. Prodrómides, "Pléthon à Mistra: une Renaissance Païenne au XVe siècle", *Cahiers Balkaniques* 24 (1996) 265-281.
- L. Couloubaritsis, "La métaphysique de Pléthon", in: A. Neschke-Hentschke (ed.), *Images de Platon et lectures de ses œuvres*. Leuven 1997, 117-152.
- G. Smarnakis, "Κοινωνικές ιεραρχίες στα κείμενα του Πλήθωνα και τὰ πρότυπά τους", *Σύμμεικτα* 12 (1998) 215-235; on Plethon's political programm.
- D. Burns, "The Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster, Hekate's couch, and platonic orientalism in Psellos and Plethon", *Aries* 6/2 (2006) 158-179; can contribute to the discussion of page 128f.
- C. Livanos, *Greek Tradition and Latin Influence in the Work of George Scholarios* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2006); appeared probably too late to be taken account by the author. See especially Chapter 3 on the relation between Scholarios and Plethon.

Finally, I note the misprints I found mostly in the Greek texts that must be corrected:

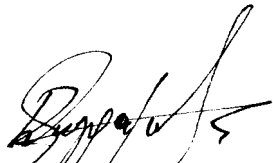
p. 2 note 9: 1355 is obviously 1455 / πεφρονηκώς, → πεφρονηκώς || p. 12, last line: δικοικεῖσθαι → διοικεῖσθαι || p. 16, line 7: τὰ θεῖα → τὰ θεία || p. 30, l. 4: use the ancient Greek <add. names> of gods || p. 33, l. 24: παρατρεπροί → παρατρεπτοί || p. 43, l. 22: ἀκίνητά → ἀκίνητα || p. 51, l. 26/7: ἀναγκή ... κρατιστή → ἀνάγκη ... κράτιστη || p. 62, l. 20: δαιρῶν → διαιρῶν || p. 64, l. 11: ἐν, → ἐν, / l. 22: ἄθανατον → ἀθάνατον || p. 70, l. 11: ὦν, → ὦν, / l. 11: ἐπιεφέρουσιν → ἐπιφέρουσιν || p. 72, l. 22: εἰκῶν τις → εἰκῶν τις / l. 24: ἄρρένες → ἄρρένες || p. 75, l. 14: ἐν, → ἐν, || p. 86, note 407: Ποσειδῶν → Ποσειδῶνι || p. 88, l. 7: ἐπὶ τινα → ἐπὶ τινα / l. 26: συνδεσμός → σύνδεσμος / note 414: δυναμέων → δυνάμεων? || p. 100, l. 10: ἀνάγκη → ἀνάγκη || p. 105, l. 2: ψηχῆς → ψυχῆς / l. 8: θεωρητικῆς → θεωρητικῆς || p. 108, note 492: δυναμέων → δυνάμεων? || p. 125, note 544: → βασιλεία μου... πατρός μου ... μακαριστοῦ / note 545: ἀνδρὶ, → ἀνδρὶ, || p. 134, l. 10: μυσταγωγός → μυσταγωγός || p. 139, notes 644-645: the Greek texts have numerous misprints || p. 150, note 706: αὐτῶ → αὐτῷ || p. 155, l. 2: αὐτόν, → αὐτόν, || p. 157, l. 30: προνοεῖν → προνοεῖν || p. 172, note 814: Διός, → Διός, || p. 207, note 858: ἔτων → ἐτῶν || p. 211, note 874: Μ. Ψέλλός, Μαγικά → Ψελλός, Μαγικά || p. 212, note 878: Μ. Ψέλλός, Μαγικά → Ψελλός, Μαγικά... || p. 213: In Bess. φροίμιον → προοίμιον? / πατριάρχη → πατριάρχ... || p. 217 Ad Gemist. ... κατὰ Ἑλλήνων → Ἑλλήνων || p. 222 Papacostas (1977) ... York Pa.?? / Baloglou (2002) Πληθωνός Περί Πελοποννησιακῶν → Πληθωνός Περί Πελοποννησιακῶν || p. 223 Bargeliotes (1990-1993) Ἐπετηρίς Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν → Ἐπετηρίς τῆς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν... / Benakis - Baloglou (2003) τὴν ἐποχὴ τοῦ ... τὸ θάνατο τοῦ. → τὴν ἐποχὴ του ... τὸν θάνατό του. || p. 224 Brisson (2003) G.J. Reydam-Schils <add. (ed.)> / Constan (2002) ... La Théologie → Théologie || p. 225 Gerson (2006), Aristotle and Other Platonists, & Gerson (2006), The Harmony of Aristotle and Plato, must be renumbered 2006a and 2006b respectively. || p. 227 Mamalakis (1955) Βυζαντινολογῶν → Βυζαντινολογικῶν || p. 228 Monfasani (1988) pp. 116-119 (a review of Woodhouse (1986)), pp. 116-119. || p. 229 Nikolaou (1982) Byzantinistkongreß → Byzantinisten... || p. 230 Tardieu (1987), Pléthon... in: Métis... / Tambrun-Krasker (1992), Allusion → Allusions || p. 231 Tinnefeld (2002) La Théologie → Théologie / Zografidis (2003) Ενολογία → Ενολογία

Some concluding remarks: Hladký's text is well written, his methodology is robust and his argumentation is clear. All the chapters and their divisions are properly organised and orientated towards a piecemeal solution of the posed problems. Another commendable thing in the book is that Hladký is aware of the most part of the

abundant secondary bibliography on Plethon and he constantly presents and discusses (and does not hesitate to argumentatively rejects; e.g. notes 217, 528, 550, 748, throughout Chapter 3) other scholars' interpretation. In this way he shows great familiarity with current research and with the problems concerning Plethon's work –historical, philological, philosophical, theological.

The dissertation that Mr. Hladký has submitted to the Faculty is a scholarly work that testify his research abilities. His analytical skills and his knowledge of Byzantine philosophical texts of the 15th century, his tendency to re-read known texts and to discuss motifs and concepts not usually studied, his constant dialogue with other scholars' views and interpretations (together with his critical attitude) –all these warrant the quality of this work which makes a welcome contribution to the study of Plethon and offers new insights on Late Byzantine intellectual history; and also to the study of the alleged Renaissance paganism.

I gladly recommend the thesis to be accepted.



George Zografidis

Department of Philosophy
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
GR-54124 Thessaloniki
Greece