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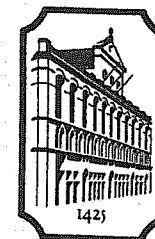
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PLATONIC STOICISM – STOIC PLATONISM
The Dialogue between Platonism and
Stoicism in Antiquity

Edited by
Mauro BONAZZI and Christoph HELMIG



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- DK *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 Bände, griechisch und deutsch von H. Diels, herausgegeben von W. Kranz, 6. Auflage, Berlin: Weidmann, 1951-52 [reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 2004-2005]
- FDS K. Hülser (ed.), *Die Fragmente zur Dialektik der Stoiker*, 4 Bände, Stuttgart / Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1987-1988.
- FHS&G Theophrastus of Eresus, *Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*, text and translation, ed. by W. Fortenbaugh, P. Huby, R. Sharples and D. Gutas, 2 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1991-1992.
- LS A.A. Long / D.N. Sedley (eds.), *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- SSR *Socratis et Socraticorum reliquiae*, collegit, disposuit, apparatus notisque instruxit G. Giannantoni (Elenchos, xviii), 4 vols., Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1990-1991.
- SVF *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, collegit I. ab Arnim, vol. 1-4, Leipzig: Teubner, 1903-1905 [reprinted München: Saur, 2004].

INTRODUCTION

The dialogue between Stoicism and Platonism in Antiquity

MAURO BONAZZI / CHRISTOPH HELMIG*

According to an ancient tradition, Zeno of Citium, founder of the Stoic school had been a pupil of the last head of the Old Academy, namely Polemo, son of Philostratus. The relationship between Polemo and Zeno can be seen as the starting point of a fruitful and intriguing history of mutual influence and enrichment.¹ Polemo is, in the words of John Dillon, the first "bridge figure between Platonism and Stoicism".² Hence, he certainly best introduces the topic of this volume of collected essays on the dialogue between Platonism and Stoicism in the Hellenistic and Imperial Age.

It is a widespread assumption that the relationship between Stoicism and Platonism was limited to open polemics, and one can indeed point to many examples of this.³ However, if we look at the development of Stoicism and Platonism over a long period of time we observe that they *mutually*

* Postdoctoral Fellow of the Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO). The editors of this volume would like to express their gratitude to Prof. Russell Friedman and Prof. Carlos Steel (Leuven) for their advice and indispensable help.

¹ On the possible influence of Polemo on the Stoic school, see DILLON (2003), 156-177, who is rather optimistic on this issue. He suggests that we may discern traces of Polemonic influence in the Stoic doctrine of living according to nature, *oikeiosis*, the concept of God. For the latter see also SEDLEY (2002). On the influence of Plato's *Timaeus* on the Early Stoa and on the Stoics in general see the study by REYDAMS-SCHILS (1999). A concise summary of the "Integration of Platonism" within the Stoic school is provided by SEDLEY (2003), passim and esp. 20-24. On the relationship between Platonism – Stoicism in general see MERLAN (1967), 124-132, KRÄMER (1971), DILLON (1977), HAHM (1977), BARNES/GRIFFIN (1989) and (1997), ANNAS (1999), FREDE (1999b), SEDLEY (1999), BOYS-STONES (2001), and GILL (2003), 51-55.

² DILLON (2003), 177.

³ We know, for instance, of anti-Platonic works by Persaeus, *Against Plato's Laws* (Diogenes Laertius, VIII, 36) and Chrysippus, *On Justice against Plato* (SVF 3.157, 288, 313, 455). Fairly notorious are Plutarch's anti-Stoic writings: *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*, *That the Stoics Talk more Paradoxically than the Poets*, *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions*. See CHERNISS (1976) and the recent editions with commentary by M. Casevitz and D. Babut (CASEVITZ/BABUT [2002] and CASEVITZ/BABUT [2004]). ROSKAM (2005) discusses the Stoic theory of moral progress (*προκοπή*) and its critical evaluation and rejection by Philo of Alexandria, Plutarch of Chaeronea (close reading of *De profectibus in virtute*). Alcinoüs and Amuleius

influenced each other. Such a dialogue required, whether explicitly or not, a certain degree of mutual interest. Therefore, it is probably more correct to speak of varying attitudes that one school betrayed towards the other throughout the different phases of the philosophical debate.

There can be no doubt that the Stoics "did owe a great deal to their predecessors".⁴ Apart from the above mentioned link between Zeno and Polemon, there is ample evidence supporting the claim that Socrates, in particular, had a considerable bearing on the ethical debates of the early Stoics.⁵ This may be explained by the central role that ethics played in Stoic philosophy. Socrates became, according to some Stoics, an archetype for the Stoic sage.⁶ Such an interest in Plato *via* Socrates increased from the mid-second century BC onward, when, as David Sedley remarked, "a new trend in the Stoic school's orientation becomes visible: a revised recognition of its Platonic heritage".⁷ We know, for instance, that Antipater of Tarsus wrote a treatise *On Plato's doctrine that only what is virtuous is good*, in which he argued that several Stoic doctrines were in agreement with what Plato had taught.⁸ This can be understood against the background of the debates on Plato's doctrines between the Sceptic Academy and the Stoic school.⁹ While the Academic Sceptics maintained that Plato was not a dogmatist, it was without doubt crucial for the Stoics to demonstrate that he was the originator of important philosophical views, especially when these views were virtually identical with Stoic tenets.

The new trend, initiated by Antipater, was systematically elaborated on by Panaetius and his prominent pupil Posidonius.¹⁰ More specifically, the latter showed a renewed interest in Plato's *Timaeus*.¹¹ The role of Posidonius is important not only because he made use of Platonic material and

⁴ BRENNAN (2005), 21.

⁵ On this see LONG (1988a), esp. 160-165.

⁶ See SEDLEY (1993) for the use the Stoics made of Plato's portrayal of Socrates in the *Crito* and *Phaedo*. Notably, the early Stoics were sometimes referred to as Socratic (cf. Philodemus, *De Stoicis* XIII, 3).

⁷ SEDLEY (2003), 20.

⁸ SVF 3 (Antipater) 56.

⁹ SEDLEY (2003), 11.

¹⁰ This does not, however, mean that both Posidonius and Panaetius became Platonists. Rather, it may be argued that they integrated Platonic elements into Stoicism, but still remained faithful to the core doctrines of their own school. On this see BONAZZI's contribution in this volume as well as COOPER (1999), TIELEMAN (2003), and GILL (2005).

¹¹ On this see REYDAMS-SCHILS (1995), 85-115.

integrated it into his own philosophical system, but also because of his influence on figures like Philo, Antiochus, and Cicero.¹²

In the Roman Imperial period, the Stoa became the dominant philosophical movement.¹³ For this reason, Platonists could not neglect Stoic doctrines. They were forced to discuss and critically evaluate the widespread and rather popular Stoic material. However, to what extent the Middle Platonists *were* actually influenced by Stoic doctrines is a rather intricate question, because this period, by definition, seems to be the era of "eclecticism".¹⁴ Consequently, it has often been said that Middle Platonists such as Philo of Alexandria or Plutarch of Chaeroneia combined different elements of philosophical schools (especially Stoic and Platonic) that are, in fact, not really compatible. A good example of such an alleged "eclectic" practice is the longlasting debate on the immanence or transcendence of god. Some scholars have claimed that the Middle Platonists were unable to reconcile Platonic transcendence and Stoic immanence. On this view, then, their notion of god was problematic if not contradictory.¹⁵ However, more recent approaches show that we should rather speak of an intelligent *appropriation* of Stoic material. Generally speaking, if we find Stoic material in Philo or Plutarch, it is *re-interpreted* and wholly *integrated* into a Platonic context.¹⁶

Once we come to the Neoplatonists, and so to a period where Platonism clearly was the dominant philosophy, we observe a rather critical attitude towards the Stoic school.¹⁷ This attitude can be detected in all parts of philosophy: epistemology, metaphysics, cosmology, psychology, doctrine of fate

¹² On Philo, see BRITAIN (2001) and GÖRLER (1994a). On Antiochus, see GÖRLER (1994b) and KARAMANOLIS (2006), 44-84, with ample bibliographical references. See, moreover GLUCKER (1978), FLADERER (1996), and the thorough review of the latter by GLUCKER (2002). Cicero's relation and indebtedness to Platonism and Stoicism is studied by GÖRLER (1974) and (2004), GAWLICK/GÖRLER (1994), POWELL (1995), LÉVY (1992) and (2000).

¹³ See GILL'S (2003) concise survey of the Stoic school in the Roman Imperial period.

¹⁴ On the problematic notion of "eclecticism" see DILLON/LONG (1988) and esp. DONINI (1988b). See also the remarks by GILL (2003), 44-50.

¹⁵ For the rather controversial discussions on immanence v.s. transcendence in Plutarch and other Middle Platonists, see DE VOGEL (1953) and (1983), DILLON (1975), DÖRRIE (1976), DONINI (1992), FERRARI (1996) and (1999), and OPSOMER (2001).

¹⁶ As far as Philo is concerned, see RUNIA (1986) and RUNIA (2001). HELMIG (2005) demonstrates that although Plutarch uses many "Stoic" metaphors in his cosmogony, it is entirely Platonic in character.

¹⁷ On the influence of Stoicism on Neoplatonism see, for instance, GRAESER (1972), OPSOMER/STEEL (1999), SORABJI (2000), STEEL (2002), WILBERDING (2006), STEEL (2007).

etc. Neoplatonists usually criticise Stoic materialism, more specifically the copreality of the soul, and also Stoic causality. Plotinus and Ammonius both criticise the concept of *λεκτά*.¹⁸ It is rather striking that although the Stoic notion of *λόγος* plays an integral part in Neoplatonic epistemology and ontology, Plotinus and Proclus openly criticise the *σπερματικοί λόγοι*.¹⁹ In the field of practical ethics, however, the Stoic influence remained dominant. A good proof of the great interest that Neoplatonists took in Stoic ethics is certainly Simplicius' Commentary on Epictetus' *Handbook*.²⁰ This work can also be taken as another example of the fact that especially Roman Stoicism exercised a notable influence on Neoplatonic and also on Christian writers.

It goes without saying that the present volume does not pretend to solve all the problems concerning the relationship between Platonism and Stoicism. We are not striving to provide the reader with a coherent and uniform interpretation of the Stoic-Platonist dialogue. On the contrary, here the *variety* of approaches one school has towards the other is of greatest interest. Therefore, the articles of the present volume focus on several important themes in the Platonic-Stoic dialogue or interaction in Antiquity such as the influence of Plato on Stoic authors (Bénatouïl, Alesse, Aubert, Laurand) and on the presence of Platonism or Plato in Roman Stoicism (Tieleman, Inwood, Gill). Stevens, in turn, convincingly illuminates Stoic and Platonic elements in Vergil's epic.²¹ Finally, there are several contributions that deal with Middle and Neoplatonism (Bonazzi, Sharples, Chiaradonna, and Reydams-Schils).

The collection begins with THOMAS BÉNATOUÏL'S study on "The debate about the scholastic life between Platonism and Stoicism". The author aims to shed light on the views concerning the relationship between leisure (*scholê*) and philosophy in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. More precisely, he concentrates on a criticism voiced by Chrysippus against philosophers who defend the scholastic life. The identification of Chrysippus' targets allows for the reconstruction of his arguments, which are based on a close, dialectical reading of key texts that define the philosopher using

¹⁸ See Plotinus, v 5 [32] 1, 19-40 (fr. 701 FDS) and Ammonius, *In de Interpr.* 17, 20-28 (SVF II 168; fr. 701 FDS).

¹⁹ See Plotinus, IV [28] 4, 39; Proclus, *In Parm.* IV 883, 29-37 and 888, 4-9.

²⁰ The commentary has been recently edited by HADOT (1996) and partly translated into French, see HADOT (2001). A significant part of the commentary has been translated in R. Sorabji's *Greek Commentators on Aristotle* (by T. Brennan and C. Brittain).

²¹ On "Stoicism and Roman Poetry" see also GILL (2003), 56-58 [with references to older literature].

the notions of leisure and theoretical activity: Plato's *Republic*, Book VII, and *Theaetetus*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book x. In a second step, Bénatouïl tries to understand why Stoic ethics play down the value of the scholastic life. Arguments defending the scholastic life and Plato against Chrysippus were elaborated on by the New Academy (which proposed a new conception of the scholastic life inspired by Plato and compatible with scepticism) and by Antiochus of Ascalon.

FRANCESCA ALESSE, in her article "Some Examples of the Relation between Stoic Ethics and Plato", tries to reconstruct the influences of a number of Platonic dialogues on Stoic ethics. The emerging picture is more complex and rich than was first expected. The early Stoics, most notably Zeno and Chrysippus, are first of all interested in the unity of virtues and in the doctrine of the indifferentes (*ἀδιάφορα*), which are taken and adapted from such Socratic dialogues as *Protagoras*, *Euthydemus*, *Laches*, *Gorgias*, and *Meno*. Later, with the Middle Stoics (Antipater of Tarsus and Panaetius of Rhodes) and the Imperial Stoics (Musonius Rufus and Hierocles), the *Republic* plays a more prominent role. This remarkable development betrays a certain polemical attitude. Whereas the older Stoics appear to be concerned with restoring the Socratic heritage, the main aim of later Stoics is to engage in polemics with the presumed heirs of Plato, the Sceptical Academics and Platonists.

SOPHIE AUBERT ("The Stoic reading of Laconism through the filter of Plato") and VALÉRY LAURAND ("The pedagogical function of Eros in Plato and the Stoics") investigate two topics, namely "laconism" (brevity of speech) and Eros; they show how the Stoics developed such notions against the background of the Platonic heritage. In order to emphasize the philosophical relevance of laconism, the Stoics exploited Plato's dialogues such as *Protagoras* and *Phaedrus*. As paradoxical as it may sound, the Stoics appear more Platonic than Plato himself in this specific area in their attempt to create a philosophical rhetoric. No less interesting is the case of the doctrine of Eros. Laurand points out that although the Stoic doctrine of *Eros* is clearly inspired by Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium*, the Stoics nevertheless turned the original doctrine upside down.

In this volume on the intersection of Platonism and Stoicism, special attention is due to the philosophy of the early Roman Empire, following the influence of Posidonius, Antiochus of Ascalon, Eudorus, Cicero, and Arius Didymus, when some thinkers began to consider the two philosophies as a harmonious whole. Various outstanding writers of this period, not only philosophers, best show the relevance and richness of this interaction. One interesting case is Vergil as JOHN STEVENS ("Platonism and

Stoicism in Vergil's *Aeneid*") demonstrates. He observes that the tripartite psychology of Plato is not easily reconciled with Stoic monism. However, in the poetic world of Vergil's *Aeneid* (17 BC) we are offered a unique window into how the Empire's intellectuals adopted elements from each school to form a coherent whole. Consequently, Stevens maintains that the *Aeneid* is organized around the principles of both schools: its structure reflects the Platonic divisions of the soul. Its movement and purpose reflect Plato's theories of erotic and epistemological progress in the two versions of the doctrine of forms, and Stoic moral progress in the doctrine of the passions. Its action is shaped by Stoic doctrines of fate and human agency. And its audience response theory originates in the Platonic dialogue and allegory of *Republic*, as well as in the Stoic theory of virtue and moral progress. Vergil answers Plato's challenge to Homer by showing that poetry fortified by philosophy is capable of educating, and need not inflame the emotions but can teach self-mastery over them.

Returning to philosophy and to Seneca in particular, BRAD INWOOD in his contribution "Seneca, Plato and Platonism: The Case of *Letter 65*", sets out to challenge the widely accepted claim that Seneca, in his *Letter 65*, used early Middle Platonic compendia (exegetical works, doxographies) when composing his works. He argues that if *Letter 65* does not suffice to show Seneca's dependence on such sources, then "no other part of his corpus could do so". References to Plato, Inwood explains, can be accounted for by means of Seneca's firsthand knowledge of Platonic dialogues. According to Inwood, evidence about the nature of philosophical practice at the time of Seneca rather points to the view that Seneca was not a "bookish researcher", but actively engaged in philosophy. Inwood claims that "Seneca's relationship [...] to Platonism is most plausibly understood as the reaction of a Stoic intellectual critically engaged with Plato and in dialogue with Platonically inclined friends." TEUN TIELEMAN, on the other hand, investigates Seneca's references to Plato and the Platonists ("Onomastic References in Seneca. The Case of Plato and the Platonists"), pointing out that Seneca gets most of his material from Plato's dialogues, the biographical tradition, and other sources (such as Cicero's works). As a rule, Seneca operates on the principle that Plato may be mentioned and quoted if he agrees with Stoic doctrine. Here the Roman philosopher follows his Stoic predecessors such as Panaetius and Posidonius. Interestingly, Seneca never mentions the dialogue he is quoting from. Instead, he refers to Plato's works as "Plato says ...". Hence, as with Socrates in the early Stoa, Plato is used as an *exemplum*, he illustrates the philosophical life, in other words he becomes a model to be emulated by those who want to become philosophers.

Turning from Seneca to another prominent Roman Stoic, namely Marcus Aurelius, CHRISTOPHER GILL ("Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*: How Stoic and How Platonic?") maintains that the combination or fusion of Stoic and Platonic elements in his psychology does not prove Marcus' eclecticism. The author argues that in examining ideas in the *Meditations*, we need to take into account the form and purpose of the work, namely practical ethics directed at self-improvement, rather than the presentation of theoretical ideas for their own sake. Generally speaking, Marcus is not so much concerned to integrate ethics with physics and logic or to investigate the theoretical implications of certain ethical assumptions. Closely scrutinizing the use of psychological vocabulary used in the *Meditations*, Gill suggests that, in some cases, phraseology that initially seems to suggest a Platonic-style dualism or tripartition is used as a kind of 'rhetoric' to convey a thoroughly orthodox Stoic ethical message. On the other hand, when employing material that is clearly Stoic in character, Marcus is not so much interested in analysing its theoretical implications, he rather uses it for practical ethical purposes. Hence, Gill contests the widely held view that in his ethics Marcus Aurelius is under the strong influence of the Platonism of the period.

In the period commonly referred to as Middle Platonism, the question as to the mutual influence of Stoic and Platonic doctrines becomes a rather complex one. This is illustrated by MAURO BONAZZI's study of Eudorus ("Eudorus' psychology and Stoic ethics"), who is usually considered a typical case of deeply "stoicized Platonism". However, as Bonazzi argues, the employment of Stoic words and concepts does not imply a sympathy for Stoicism, but displays the more subtle strategy of appropriating concepts and doctrines in order to *subordinate* Stoicism to Platonism. In spite of the apparent similarities, Eudorus' division of the 'ethical discourse' depends on a bipartition of the human soul into rational and emotive components (called *theoria* and *horme*), which proves to be inconciliable with the psychological monism of the Stoics from Zeno to Panaetius and Posidonius. But this can be paralleled with the views of many Platonists of the early Imperial Age, from Antiochus to Plutarch to the pseudo-Pythagorean writings. Moreover, Eudorus' bipartite psychology is further confirmed by Plutarch's testimony in the *De animae procreatione in Timaeo*, where the influence of the Old Academy is evident. Eudorus' aim is to attribute doctrines distinctive of other schools (most notably Stoicism) to Platonism, which appears to be the most important philosophical system. Doing history of philosophy is a way of doing philosophy.

However, in the Middle Platonic tradition we do not always encounter such conscious appropriation. This is shown well by R. SHARPLES, who demonstrates that the Middle-Platonist doctrine of fate is based on Platonic texts and concepts, but developed in the context of Stoic discussions of conditional oracles and co-fated events. He finds evidence for an influence of the Platonists on Stoic discussions, because in a Platonic context the example of the oracle given to Laius, father of Oedipus (see, e.g., Alcinous, *Didasc.* 26 and Calcidius, *In Tim.* 153), which is concerned with a specific instance and not with a general rule, is inappropriate.

In his rich contribution on the use of the Stoic concept of the *κοινὰ ἐννοιαί* found in the work by Alcinous, Galen, Plotinus, and Porphyry, RICCARDO CHIARADONNA provides four rather different examples of an appropriation of a Stoic notion. He maintains that instead of speaking about influence or terminological exchange between the two schools, one should see their relationship as an *interaction* ("interazione"). Such an interaction is a complex historical fact, which encompasses radically different ways of appropriating and adapting Stoic terms and doctrines. Overly generic conclusions should therefore be avoided. Although philosophers of the Imperial Age shared a common background of school doctrines and terminology, this does not entail that all of them made use of it in the same way and for the same purposes. The reception of common Stoic notions in Alcinous, Galen, Plotinus, and Porphyry is actually determined by their respective philosophical approaches.

Finally, GRETCHEN REYDAMS-SCHILS approaches the complex and long debated issue of Calcidius' notion of god and its sources, by comparing the divine triadic structure with texts from Numenius and Philo. The focus of this inquiry is not on divine entities as such, but on the *dynamic relation* between the highest, second, and third god as it emerges from the context of the passage and the commentary as a whole. The second god turns out to be the mind, the will, or the providence of the first; the Demiurge often is the first and second god taken together, though he is affiliated closely with the second god. The third god, or World Soul, has an affinity with both the second god and matter, through two types of soul, a higher, purely noetic type, and a lower life-principle. In conclusion, she suggests that a view of the divine such as Calcidius' has more in common with a Stoic perspective than with Neoplatonism as it developed in the wake of Porphyry.

As we have seen, we are dealing with several rather different perspectives: From Hellenism to Neoplatonism the dialogue between Platonists and Stoics betrays many nuances and cannot be reduced to a simple formula. It is necessary to distinguish between different layers of mutual influence

or interaction. Despite the widespread opinion that this mutual influence is merely 'eclectic borrowing', we have seen that the actual dialogue or interaction between Platonists and Stoics was rather characterised by a wide range of possibilities, ranging from conscious appropriation and the integration of initially alien philosophical elements into the doctrines of the respective schools to open polemics and the rejection of core doctrines. A careful analysis of the history, development, and relationship of the two schools teach us that only by means of the context can we judge whether something is Platonic or Stoic or has been appropriated from one philosophical context to another.

Therefore, we conclude, it is wrong and it would be impossible to reduce the Stoic – Platonist relationship to a simple formula. Rather, it is much more advisable to look at it as a dynamic process that may change according to different historical and philosophical contexts. The present collection of essays should be seen as the first step in this direction and it is hoped that this volume will help to elucidate the difficult relationship between Stoicism and Platonism, between Stoics and Platonists, as well as to promote and encourage further research in the field.

This volume forms part of a major project under the aegis of *Diatribai*, an annual conference on Ancient Philosophy, jointly organized by the Università degli Studi di Milano (Mauro Bonazzi, Pierluigi Donini), Université de Paris IV - La Sorbonne (Carlos Lévy), and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, De Wulf - Mansion Centre (Carlos Steel). The broader aim of *Diatribai* is to study the Platonic tradition in comparison with the most important philosophical schools of the Hellenistic and Imperial age. The first two volumes have already been published: *L'eredità platonica. Studi sul platonismo da Arcesilao a Proclo*, edited by Mauro Bonazzi and Vincenza Celluprica (Naples 2005), and *A Platonic Pythagoras. Platonism and Pythagoreanism in the Imperial Age*, edited by Mauro Bonazzi, Carlos Lévy, and Carlos Steel (Turnhout 2007). Most of the papers which constitute the present volume were first presented at the colloquium on *Stoicismo e platonismo in età ellenistica e imperiale*, held in Villa Feltrinelli at Gargnano (Lake Garda) on April 22-24, 2006. We would like to thank all the contributors and participants for adding to the fruitful and pleasant atmosphere of this colloquium. The next volume of *Diatribai* will be devoted to the much debated relationship between Platonism and Aristotelianism.