



GEMMA PLATONICA, ON HEINRICH DÖRRIE'S PHILOLOGICAL PLATONISM

[Heinrich Dörrie, *Der Platonismus in der Antike*. Bd. 1. *Die geschichtlichen Wurzeln des Platonismus*. Bausteine 1-35: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar. Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Annemarie Dörrie. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: fromman-holzboog, 1987]

For any tradition-wise philosopher, to speak of Plato is to speak of origins, to take up the question of the relation of philosophy to the Platonic heritage is to take up the problem of filiation, and to find an answer to that question is to delineate the form of one's philosophizing. Therefore, as we see, philosophers who engage in the question of the relation between Platonism and philosophy find themselves bound by the tradition in which they are working. Yet, if the manifestations of philosophy are to be considered as limited to a literary tradition, those of philosophers who strive for a more synoptic perspective – for a view stretching far beyond a particular tradition – may be searching for someone capable of unfettering them and of helping overcome their peculiar entanglement. This, if philosophy belongs to writing, would be the holder of the keys to the textual tradition: the philologist.

One such philologist was Heinrich Dörrie, the founder of *Der Platonismus in der Antike* (*Platonism in Antiquity*), a monumental eight-volume series, the first volume of which was published in 1987, four years after his passing. He set out the plan of the series as early as 1937, two years after his promotion, being the author of the last dissertation in Latin defended at the University of Göttingen. The work on the series took the rest of his lifetime, including eight years of interment, from 1945 to 1953, in a Soviet prisoner-of-war camp, where his wife, also a philologist, kept sending him short letters, which, due to character limitations, contained nothing but excerpts from Platonic literature to work on.¹ The first volume, *The Historical Roots of Platonism* (*Die geschichtlichen Wurzeln des Platonismus*), was published posthumously by Annemarie Dörrie, the author's wife, in 1987. After over 30 years, the monstrous editorial project is near completion, with volume 8.1-2 (*Die Ethik des antiken Platonismus in Kaiserzeit*) to be published in June 2020 by

¹ See H.-D. Blume, "Heinrich Dörrie †," *Gnomon* 56 (1984): 185-89.

frooman-holzboog and another remaining volume (7.2: *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus [4] Teilband 2: Theologia Platonica*) as well as the final index being currently edited. After Heinrich Dörrie's death, the project was continued by his students, the late Matthias Baltes and Friedhelm Mann. The last volumes are edited by Christian Pietsch. Although the series is often dubbed "Dörrie-Baltes," the introductory notes to volumes 2-7.2 mention more than forty names of collaborators who have contributed in various ways, a loose transgenerational scholastic community centered around the University of Münster, where Heinrich Dörrie served as professor from 1961 until 1983.²

Platonism in Antiquity consists of 300 "building stones" (*Bausteine*) and aims at recollecting and reunifying the reportedly shattered tradition of ancient Platonism by making its textual witnesses available to the contemporary reader. Each building stone pertains to one topic of ancient Platonism and offers a review of crucial quotes from the sources alongside a German translation and commentary. The commentaries are posited separately, thus each volume consists of two parts: *Text and Translation* and *Commentary*.³ Ancient Platonism is conceived of as a partly discontinuous yet fundamental tradition, a thorough spiritual phenomenon the witnesses of which are scattered as loosely as abundantly in the ancient literature from Aristotle up to the *Suda*. Dörrie approaches the text in both an analytic and a synthetic way, presenting, exposing, and summarizing the preserved material, striving to provide an assimilative read – that is, to make his work understandable to the user "rooted in the spiritual world of the twentieth century."⁴ As such, Dörrie's endeavor seems to be of much broader scope and aim than that of a simple archivist. He seeks for a comprehensive introduction to a vast tradition he is recollecting, preserving, and passing down yet with a full conscience that under no circumstances should he expand it or elaborate on it in any way, since, obviously, a twentieth-century German philologist cannot seriously conceive of himself as another ancient Platonist.

The title of the work has raised reasonable controversy, expressed by Thomas Alexander Szlezák in his 2010 review.⁵ Szlezák pointed out that, although Dörrie attempts

² The volumes of *Der Platonismus in der Antike* are as follows (asterisk signifying the *Baustein* number):

1. *Die geschichtlichen Wurzeln des Platonismus*, *1-35, 1987.
2. *Der hellenistische Rahmen des kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus*, *36-72, 1990.
3. *Der Platonismus im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert nach Christus*, *73-100, 1993.
4. *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus [1] Einige grundlegende Axiome / Platonische Physik (im antiken Verständnis) I*, *101-24, 1996.
5. *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus [2] Platonische Physik (im antiken Verständnis) II*, *125-50, 1998.
6. 1-2. *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus [3] Von der »Seele« als der Ursache aller sinnvollen Abläufe*, *151-81, 2002.
- 7.1. *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus [4] Teilband 1: Theologia Platonica*, *182-205, 2008.
- 7.2. *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus [4] Teilband 2: Theologia Platonica*, *206-30, in preparation.
- 8.1-2. *Die Ethik des antiken Platonismus der Kaiserzeit*, *231-52, June 2020.
9. *Index*, in preparation.

³ H. Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, in *Der Platonismus in der Antike*, vol.1, *Die geschichtlichen Wurzeln des Platonismus*. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1987), 48-51.

⁴ Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 14.

⁵ T. A. Szlezák, "Heinrich Dörrie – Matthias Baltes: Der Platonismus in der Antike, Band 1-6.2, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1987-2004," *Gnomon* 82 (2010): 389-404.

to lay out an overview of Platonism during the whole of antiquity (*der Platonismus in der Antike*), it seems that his proper point of concern is rather Middle Platonism – that is, an epoch beginning with Antiochus of Ascalon in the early first century BCE and ending with Ammonios Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus. Yet it is not that Dörrie does not acknowledge the chronological distinction between the Old Academy, Middle Platonism, and Neoplatonism. On the contrary, he gives a concise introductory discussion of the scholarly periodization of Ancient Platonism.⁶ The introduction to the series is devoid of any claims regarding the precise period and circumstances of some supposed historical occurrence of *the* authentic Platonism. Although the *Bausteine* focus mostly on the testimonies to the historical phenomenon of Middle Platonist intellectual culture, it is not the choice of textual material but rather the philosophical definition of what Platonism is, given in the introduction, that accounts for why Dörrie's concept of Platonism seems to pertain mostly to the phenomenon that contemporary scholarship describes as Middle Platonism.

Before proceeding with the presentation of Dörrie's notion of Platonism, which is our primary point of concern, we will briefly outline its formal structure to recognize how it affects and intertwines with the structure of the editorial enterprise. Dörrie deems it unfeasible to deliver a series covering the Platonic literature, whatever its definition, in as thorough and exhaustive a manner as Diels-Kranz or *Stoicorum Veterorum Fragmenta* do it, respectively, with the pre-Socratic and early Stoic literature.⁷ Thus he opposes the approach represented by John Dillon's *The Middle Platonists*, which seeks to grasp this phenomenon in the form of a presupposed historico-prosopographical continuity of a chosen sequence of authors.⁸ His interest is not in the Platonists but in Platonism itself, which brings about a very Platonic tension between the reconstructed Platonism materializing in Dörrie's *Bausteine* and the Platonism predefined by him as an intended subject of the reconstruction. The first definition of Platonism found in the seventy-page-long introduction says that "Platonism should be understood as the philosophy, the proponents of which call themselves Πλατωνικοί – *Platonici*."⁹ Right afterward, we learn that "the surviving material allows no doubt that the passing down of Plato's spiritual heritage was subject to a profound breach in the tradition."¹⁰ The assumption regarding the discontinuity of the tradition is further supported with another one, that of fragmentation. One should not conceive of Platonism as a transgenerational oeuvre of a few distinguished thinkers but rather as a broad cultural phenomenon finding a plethora of textual expressions by authors both acknowledged and anonymous. The cultural institution of diadochy

⁶ Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 33-41.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸ J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977). Dörrie mentions Dillon twice, criticizing him for a prosopocentric approach unapt for the treatment of the subject matter. Moreover, Dörrie states very clearly that "the most important transmissions of Platonism were anonymous; the Platonists who carried these transmissions were traditionalists, not innovators." See Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 47n1; 51n1.

⁹ Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 3-4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

notwithstanding, there is no such thing as any sort of Platonic lineage in purely intellectual terms. Each author conveying an expression of the tradition has some more or less direct access to its intelligible source, yet the access as such cannot be subject to inheritance.¹¹ The relation of various Platonists' ideas to each other and to those of Plato is not mediated through a historical lineage of thinkers nor through any objective external factor or agent. This is precisely why Dörrie has to organize the work around a choice of *Platonicae quaestiones* – and the why both of the aforementioned tension between the conceptual and the textual layers of the work and of the tendency to identify Middle Platonism with ancient Platonism as such. We will understand it better by inquiring into how Dörrie perceives the structure of Platonism, which he metaphorizes as a crystalline one: “It is legitimate to think of Platonism as of a crystal with many facets. It is possible to project the image of the whole from each of these planes, yet there is no single projection that would not present the whole in a foreshortening manner.”¹²

Dörrie's metaphor of Platonism as a crystal with many facets seems very much apt for explaining the fragile structure of his work and its subject. It is a structure of an inherent order that keeps recurring in particular parts of the whole – particular Platonic topics investigated in particular *Bausteine*. The inherence and unity of the structure makes it impossible to present it in a thorough and faithful manner with the help of some external mediation, hence the criticism of Dillon's historico-prosopographical attitude. The order is revealed and uncovered in a study of its particular occurrences, that is, in a textual exposition of the given question. Such a work – which we could quite fittingly metaphorize as the job of the gem cutter – engenders the threat of the precious stone's shattering and crumbling.¹³ First, devoting too much attention to a single issue could effectively result in isolating it from the whole, thus endangering the integrality of the structure. Second, an imprecise cut, a faceting too assiduous, could upset the equilibrium between the parts of the structure and weaken the harmony within them that allows for an unconstrained movement of thought from one issue to another. Dörrie's work of recollecting the tradition is somehow also the work of cutting, and the emphasis on the discontinuity of the tradition

¹¹ This echoes the problem of inheriting virtue, which is particularly important for Plato's early dialogues such as *Protagoras* and *Meno*. Plato's Socrates consequently denies the possibility of inheriting virtue in a purely natural way and points out that it should be attained through education. Since, as Paul Natorp has shown, the virtue theory served as a first step toward the theory of ideas, one could conclude that the problem of inheriting virtue may be expanded toward the problem of inheriting access to the intelligible. See P. Natorp, *Plato's Theory of Ideas: An Introduction to Idealism* (Sankt-Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2004). Regarding the problem of inheriting access to the intelligible, one may argue that Plato's answer to it is his project of institutionalized and politicized education expressed in *The Republic*. Thus, the question arises of whether or not it is possible to inherit access to the intelligible via institutionalized education.

¹² Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 52; see also p. 15: “Platonism is a complex phenomenon; it could be compared to a crystal with many facets. Some facets must necessarily remain unseen for everyone who contemplates it, another appears foreshortened. It is necessary to turn the precious stone around here and there to see it in its whole” (my translation).

¹³ Dörrie puts a strong emphasis on this issue, first accepting in advance possible accusations of crumbling and disintegrating (*Zerbröseln und Zerkrümeln*), then presenting means undertaken to counter the danger of splintering (*Gefahr der Zerfasserung*). He alludes to the Platonic catchword *κατακεκερματισθαι* (“to cut into pieces”) used in the *Sophist* 257c, 258e, *Parmenides* 144b, and others. In the passages cited, the verb *κατακεκερματισθαι* pertains to the nature of the other, the knowledge of the particulars, and the distribution of existence among particular beings. See Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 52, particularly 52n2.

seems to coincide in a very essential way with the daedal splitting of the textual material as a prerequisite for its exposition and reorganization. We are reading, λέγομεν, *wir lesen*, dividing and collecting our very long read.¹⁴

Regarding the supposed identification of ancient Platonism with Middle Platonism, the reasons for such a predilection are to be found in the structure of the work – resembling the presupposed structure of Platonism – and the hermeneutical approach it represents. The first *Baustein* is devoted to Plato's lecture on the Good, the unwritten doctrines serving as a point of departure and the cornerstone of the series.¹⁵ There is a strong emphasis on the terminological distinction between the adjective *platonisch* and the genitive *Platons*, possibly to radicalize the distinction between Plato the founder of the Platonic tradition and Plato the author of the dialogues.¹⁶ The kernel of the tradition remained unwritten; it is described as a “well-founded system” that “for good reasons was never formulated *in extenso* nor recorded.”¹⁷ The obscurity of the origin is indeed a typical characteristic of the tradition broadly understood. Such is also, to continue with the crystallographical metaphor, the origin of the primary nucleation of a crystal, which involves a contingent nucleus from which the formation and growth of a crystal develops rather spontaneously. That would account for the early origination of the Platonic tradition in the milieu of the Old Academy, the direct successors to Plato. The secondary nucleation is a process in which the nuclei are formed from preexisting crystals and may merge into a larger crystalline structure. That is what happens with the tradition in the period of Middle Platonic syncretism. Earlier Platonism is synthesized with vast parts of a Stoic and a Neo-Pythagorean heritage, and a universal spiritual and intellectual form of ancient culture emerges, this being the Platonism of antiquity, the merger of most of the preceding traditions of ancient thought and culture. As for Neoplatonism, one could argue that it is not conceived of as a part of Platonism proper precisely because of the novelty it reportedly involves. In the Platonic tradition as Dörrie conceives of it, the introduction of novelties, νεωτερίζειν, is generally seen as a highly unwelcome subversive act.¹⁸ Although the periodization that includes a distinction between the traditions dubbed Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism does not remain uncriticized or unchallenged, Matthias Baltes argues that the philosophers known to us as the Neoplatonists have already in their own utterances differentiated between the old and the new interpretations of Plato, presenting themselves as innovators.¹⁹

¹⁴ For the etymology of λέγω, see P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1999), 625-26: “λέγω: le sens originel est ‘rassembler, cueillir, choisir’ (Hom.)”; also, R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 1 (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010), 841. For German *lesen*, see F. Kluge, *Etymological Dictionary of the German Language*, trans. J. F. Davis (London, New York: George Bell & Sons – MacMillan & Co., 1891), 214: “The development of the meaning ‘to read’ from ‘to gather’ is indeed analogous to that of Latin *lego* and Greek λέγω, which the High German significations combine”.

¹⁵ H. Dörrie, *1, *Platons Vorlesung über das Gute*, in *Der Platonismus in der Antike*, vol. 1, *Die geschichtlichen Wurzeln des Platonismus* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1987), 74-80; *Text und Übersetzung*, 277-94 (*Kommentar*).

¹⁶ Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 7-8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹ M. Baltes, *Mittelplatonismus*, in *Der neue Pauly*, vol. 8 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2000), 294-300. Szlezák mentions this entry as proof that the editors of the series recognized its misnaming, since Baltes himself “shortly

Here we arrive at the point where a peculiar interplay between a continuity and a discontinuity of the tradition emerges. Neoplatonism, as conceptualized by modern periodization, breaches into the tradition as a newly established lineage of continuity, thus distinguishing and distancing itself from the previous tradition. By contrast, Middle Platonism – also dubbed *Vorneuplatonismus* or *Prae-neoplatonismus* before the coining of the term we use today – lacks such clear historico-prosopographical lineage and continuity. Thus, if we understand Dörrie correctly, it does not introduce any fundamental delineating breach in the tradition.²⁰ Its discontinuity is far more superficial than that which emerges with Neoplatonism. It is a discontinuity of the fragmentation but not of the breach and the reformation. Dörrie's hermeneutics must not feel at ease with any sort of innovators offering a choice between the old and the new interpretation since among its crucial presuppositions are those of a legitimate succession and passing down of the tradition, particularly of its esoteric kernel of the unwritten doctrine.²¹ It despises the modern revisionist hermeneutical attitude and does not seek to discover what Plato thought or what precisely the unwritten doctrine consists of.²² It does not work against the tradition; rather, it seeks to learn with the tradition; it does not dis-cover anything but rather uncovers and re-veals that which ultimately must not be left deprived of cover and veil.²³

To summarize the previous section, Dörrie's main hermeneutical principles are (1) that of the peculiar continuity of the tradition that involves fragmentation but no break, subversion, or revolution; (2) that of the inseparability of substance and hermeneutics; and (3) that of the ἄρρητον as the peak and the kernel of Platonism, which is subject to constant describing and peri-phrasing (*umschreiben*). By the inseparability of substance and hermeneutics, Dörrie possibly means the gradually deepening identification of the interpreter with the

before his death wrote an entry to *Neue Pauly* that discusses the epoch he devoted almost all of his lifetime's work to under the name of *Middle Platonism*.²⁰ Earlier he says that "the blatant *misnomer* 'Der Platonismus' ... luckily did not prevail." See Szlezák, "Heinrich Dörrie – Matthias Baltes," 391.

²⁰ The term *Mittelplatonismus* was introduced by Karl Praechter. See K. Praechter, "Der mittlere Platonismus," in *Friedrich Ueberwegs Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie des Altertums* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1920), 536-68. *Vorneuplatonismus* was proposed by Willy Theiler in 1930; see W. Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1964), 1, 37-40. *Prae-neoplatonismus* was proposed by Cornelia J. de Vogel in 1959; see C. J. de Vogel, *Greek Philosophy. A Collection of Texts with Notes and Explanations*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 340-433.

²¹ See the passage cited already in note 8 when referring to the criticism of Dillon's approach, that is, Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 51n1: "the most important transmissions of Platonism were anonymous; the Platonists who carried these transmissions were traditionalists, not innovators."

²² Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 8: "It is particularly wrong to state that in the age of the Roman Empire the Platonists were conducting their own research striving for their own view of Plato (*Platonbild*) (to presuppose that would mean to project modern methods and modern postulates back onto antiquity)." *Neues Platonbild* is one of the slogans used by the Tübingen School, which is reflected by the titles of numerous publications. See K. Gaiser, *Das Platonbild: 10 Beiträge zum Platonverständnis* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1969); H. Krämer, "Zum neuen Platon-Bild," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 55 (1/1981): 1-18; H. Krämer, "Altes und Neues Platonbild," *Méthexis* 6 (1993): 95-114; H. Krämer, "Das neue Platonbild," in *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, vol. 48 (1994): 1-20.

²³ Regarding the metaphor of the veil as pertaining to scientific discovery, see P. Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. M. Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

tradition he is working on. He bespeaks this question almost marginally while referring to the problem of the systematical presentation of principles. He introduces Porphyry as the only Platonist who had tried to proffer a systematical written utterance peri-phrasing or describing the peak in which Platonic teaching culminates, the result of this being ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά (*Sententiae ad Intelligibilia Ducentes*). Dörrie stresses that these sentences do not pertain to the “constants that occur in the philosophical teaching of Platonism” but rather to the “constants of the self-understanding and self-presentation of Platonism and the Platonists.”²⁴ Right afterward, the aforementioned principle of the inseparability of substance and hermeneutics in Platonism is mentioned – and Dörrie the hermeneutist begins with the thirty guiding sentences (*Leitsätze*) that in a quasi-Porphyrian manner sketch out the concept of Platonism as philosophy and religion.

It will soon become clear to the reader that everything that is spoken of in such an aphoristic manner refers to the highest insight [*höchste Erkenntnis*]. This culminating insight, which is to aphorisms as the top is to the rest of the pyramid, was and remains impossible to grasp or express in any direct utterance, even in a form of some simple textbook. Words can only peri-phrase [*um-schreiben*] the ἄρρητον, in which the Platonic philosophy reaches its climax, this being Plato's major guiding thought to which all his disciples and followers have remained faithful in a most steadfast and unassailable manner.²⁵

“Platonism as Philosophy and Religion: A Sketch in Thirty Sentences,” part 2 of the introduction to *Platonism in Antiquity*, begins with a bold and plain statement: Platonism understands the teaching it represents as philosophy per se. Its unity and exceptionality resemble the unity and exceptionality of the truth. Therefore, the unchangeable wisdom taught by Plato and known by the name of φιλοσοφία was attested even before him by the wise such as Orpheus, Homer, and others [1].²⁶ The Platonists profess many fixed yet general δόγματα regarding the world and its divine principle, the most important of which being that of the Soul as the source of all movement and process; that of the man who is bedwelled by λόγος, accounting for his kinship with the divine; and that of the way of life that allows for an ascent in terms of ethics and understanding. The Platonic confession is devoid of the Augustinian distinction between *fides* and *intellectus*, hence it is both religious and scientific, rational and theological [2]. Each expression about λόγος must be legitimized regarding its accordance with the tradition. The tradition cannot be enriched since λόγος was already fully revealed to the ancient wise, the παλαιοὶ σοφοί. The Platonist's aim is to dwell in the tradition and get more and more assimilated. He or she should never openly introduce some novelties nor present himself or herself as an original thinker [3]. The fixed points are often referred to in a peri-phrastic manner, with the use of so-called winged words, *Geflügelten Worten*, ἔπεα πτερόεντα, these being

²⁴ Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 16-17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁶ The number in brackets refers to the given sentence and concludes its summary. The sentences are found in Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 17-32.

usually shortened metaphors or remarkable expressions from the dialogues.²⁷ The practice of making such allusions to Plato and the ancient wise was passed down from generation to generation, thus forming one of the major manifestations of the Platonic tradition [4]. Platonism mostly ignored many subject fields that were of high interest to Plato, such as mathematics, dialectics, or politics. It kept a strong focus on individual ethics, understood as the cultivation of the divine λόγος that dwells in man and allows for assimilation with the divine. The cornerstone of such an attitude was a radical interpretation of Plato's expression that God is the measure of all things, θεὸς ἡμῖν πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον [5].²⁸ Another fundamental point of focus was Plato's natural philosophy, particularly its formulation in the *Timaeus*, which was subject to scrupulous exegesis attaining an importance incomparable to that of most of Plato's written teaching [6]. The *Timaeus* offered an answer to the question of the principle and cause of all heavenly and earthly processes. The divine character of this cause was the central question of Platonic theology; to seek for a theological-scientific explanation of the phenomena of nature was to seek for an understanding that would allow for sufficient acknowledgement and right veneration of the highest principle [7]. The tradition ultimately developed two interpretations of the *Timaeus*, which offered two theories of principles and two Platonic theologies at variance with one another. The older one is the theory of the three principles (*Dreiprinzipienlehre*): Creator, Paradigm, and Matter. The three principles act simultaneously, the Creation being compared to the act of craftsmanship. Such a theory presumes that the world was created in time and that the Creator is partially dependent on the two other principles, particularly on the higher principle, which accounts for the temporal horizon of the act of creation. *Timaeus* 27c-d serves as the primary textual basis for this theory [8]. In the second interpretation, the divine, on the contrary, does not engage in the world since any scheme and matter necessary for creation remain alien to its eminence. It is rather the World Soul by which creation is carried out. Being a direct creation of the divine, it serves as an intermediary between the divine and the sensible world. Proponents of this theory refer to *Timaeus* 29d ff. and 35a ff. [9]. Over time, the latter interpretation prevailed, and it even became customary to think of the creation story from the *Timaeus* as of a metaphor. The adjective γενητός was interpreted in an atemporal sense, hence Creation was not conceived of as a temporal event. Such exegesis made it possible to preserve the eminence (ὑπεροχή) of the divine, which seemed to be the main point of concern of the parties of the controversy [10]. The full self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) of the divine required that it not participate with or engage in substances, which are alien to it. Thus, it was conceived of as manifesting and realizing itself through the Soul, its perfect hypostasis. The controversy

²⁷ "Winged words" was originally a Homeric idiom (ἔπεα πτερόεντα), occurring in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* 124 times.

²⁸ Plato, *The Laws* 4.716c. Here Dörrie openly says that "man is seen as a being that realizes its kinship with god, ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, through λόγος, and precisely because of that he is in no manner focused on nor related to the institutions of this world" (Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 20). And further on: "Not a single Platonist has ever supported any human entanglement in the world [*Weltbezogenheit*], and it is by no means accepted that man would be attached to or be obligated to society, the state, or another man" (Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 20n2). Here we may find a glimpse of a response to the question of institutionalized education and *The Republic* we mentioned earlier in note 11, a response not only from a Platonist philologist but from a soldier of World War II and a prisoner of war interred for an eight-year period in Stalin's Soviet Union.

regarding the essence of the divine was mediatized and transformed in a controversy regarding the essence of the universal Soul, serving as an intermediary between God and the individual Soul and guaranteeing their essential kinship, συγγένεια [11]. Such binding, despite the superstitions it produced (faith in demons, astrology), resulted in a scientific search for causes and the laws of causality and a rejection of the Stoic strongly immanentistic and materialist theory of causes. The Platonists perceived causality as being of a generally transcendent character but having an immanent manifestation of its legality (*Gesetzlichkeit*) posited in the universal Soul. The Soul is active in the world through λόγος, which serves as its instrument [12]. The Soul is subject both to theological investigation and religious veneration, its functions recognized as the powers that had long been worshipped under the names of traditional gods and goddesses [13]. The Soul has as its task the universal implantation of intellect and order, νοῦς and κόσμος, which results in striving for the understanding of the creation found in particular intellects. Such notable intellects, who undertook an advancement toward universal knowledge, were above all Plutarch and Porphyry [14]. The theory of λόγος, particularly the concept of its realization into the sensibles as the function of the universal Soul, makes Platonism convergent with contemporary Stoicism, particularly with Posidonius of Apamea. The latter's only important claim rejected by Platonism was that of the material character of the causes and powers active in the world, leading to the materialistic identification of λόγος with a fiery πνεῦμα [15]. Λόγος should rather be understood as an active creative principle that allows for a realization of the Soul or Nature (the first term employed by the Platonists, the second, φύσις, by the early Stoics) in the world. The principle striving for such realization is the νοῦς. This initially physical theory involving hierarchy and relation of νοῦς, Soul, and λόγος was passed down by Posidonius, yet he cannot be counted as a Platonist since he conceived of this hierarchy only as pertaining to the material world [16].

Fundamental presuppositions regarding the occurrence of λόγος are its manifestation in the material world – in the mineral, vegetal, and animal worlds – and its expression in the teachings of the ancient wise, παλαιοὶ σοφοί [17]. Hence the main research interests of the Platonists: (1) the philosophical study of Homer, Hesiod, the Seven Sages, and another σοφοί, later supplanted by the study of *Oracula Chaldaica*. These authors are subject to the exegesis reserved for λόγια, the expressions of the oracles; (2) the interpretation of Plato's dialogues aimed at unveiling the λόγος they conceal. Later on, the passages thought of as the expressions of extasis, θεία μανία, gained particular attention; and (3) the philosophical study of religions – of the old customs, rites, cults, and mysteries, particularly those exotic and not Hellenic since it was commonly believed that the barbarians preserved the salvatory truth that Greek culture lost [18]. Platonism thus became a universal phenomenon pervading late antique intellectual and spiritual culture. Its four scientific foundations are natural science; the philology of the sacred texts; the knowledge of the gods, of their veneration, and of the cults; and, finally, the knowledge of the mysteries and revelation. Science is thus centered around λόγος, which leads to communication with the divine, the service of science equaling divine service [19]. Although all sensible phenomena are pervaded by λόγος, only a suitable, well-prepared νοῦς may recognize it and partake in it. Such preparation is attained in a process of training, ἄσκησις [20]. For the sake of allowing no access for the untrained or the profane, λόγος unfolds through riddles, δ'αίνιμάτων,

the solving of which is attained through the understanding of natural phenomena and exegesis of the proverbs of the ancient wise and the interpretation of the mysteries [21]. It is admissible to offer new explanations of and new solutions to these riddles since the plurality of the explanations strengthens the apprentice's ability to receive λόγος and recognize its unity through a variety of explanations that hint at it [22]. Therefore, since λόγος is of divine character, all knowledge and understanding serve for communication with the divine and all philosophy for the salvation of man, σωτηρία [23]. Σωτηρία means saving the soul from an existential threat consisting of a compulsion to live another life under conditions that would not allow for philosophizing, thus excluding the possibility of moving further along the path of salvation. The meaning of σωτηρία could be further radicalized as escaping a reincarnation into an earthly body, the shroud of skin, δερμάτινος χιτών, and heading for an ascension of the Soul into its heavenly home [24].

There's a universal hierarchy in Platonism that pertains to everything, yet all hierarchy stems from a unity and comes back to it, gradually unfolding the orderly and ruling principle, the "king" [25]. The subjective hierarchy pertains to an individual's cognitive faculties. It is so because the limits of individual understanding are delineated by a just Providence, πρόνοια, accordingly to an individual's merit in terms of philosophy during his or her predeceasing life [26]. The objective hierarchy is that of the sensible world and the higher world it resembles, υπερουράνιος κόσμος. The higher world is ruled by νοῦς, which serves as an existential foundation (*Seinsgrundlage*) of all beings (*alles Seienden*), all causality and natural laws in the sensible world being a reflection and image (*Abbild*) of the higher metaphysical order [27]. The recognition of λόγος is possible since the like is known by the like, thus λόγος dwelling in man's Soul acknowledges λόγος present in the world. Following the path of education, ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, the philosopher strives to think of νοῦς as of the epitome of all beings. There are three ways he can pursue: *via negationis* (κατ'ἀφαίρεσιν), *via analogiae* (κατ'ἀναλογίαν), and *via eminentiae* (καθ'ὑπεροχήν). There's controversy regarding a supposed fourth way, *via mystica*, καθ'ἔνωσιν [28].

Since νοῦς is not only the highest concept but also the highest divinity, metaphysics and theology converge toward an inseparable unity [29]. This highest being is necessarily the Good. All the beings that partake in it are necessarily good, above all the Creator, since the aim of creation is the Good. Since being is substantially good and its substance is unchangeable, it can never be subject to degeneration. Thus the question of the origin of evil, πόθεν τὰ κακά, could never be solved by the Platonists, neither by Plotinus nor by Proclus, and Platonism, together with Stoicism, remained a pillar of ancient optimism and staunchly opposed the anxiety expressed during late antiquity in pessimistic doctrines of evil powers or a vicious creator. Platonism was therefore not only a metaphysics or a theology but also a religion in its own right, centered around a belief that there is a Providence, πρόνοια, that attends to the well-being of men with incessant care. Precisely because of the central function of Providence, no Platonic congregation, church, ritual, or sacrament of any sort could ever emerge since it would be plainly blasphemous to try to influence the eminent Providence with the use of any sacral activity.²⁹ Instead of this,

²⁹ That claim, naturally, excludes Neoplatonic theurgy. It is one of the points that met with the late Werner Beierwaltes's indignation in his 1993 review, which is critical of the thirty sentences and Dörrie's notion of

each Platonist is endowed with a different specific effective form of veneration that he or she acknowledges through attaining the recognition of the eminence of νοῦς as the highest principle and of the universal Soul that emerges from it. Veneration is thus inseparable from understanding. The constitutive values of Platonism are εὐλάβεια and εὐσέβεια [30].

To summarize the thirty sentences, the author concludes with a series of short definitory formulas. Being is equal to God, as is ontology to theology. Cosmology and anthropology are synthezized with the Stoic theory of λόγος through the binding of the doctrine of the realization of νοῦς in the world with the concept of universal hierarchy. Yet, such synthesis produces a fundamental problem: the nature of the relation of νοῦς to the world and of the nature of the unfolding of the One into multiplicity. The beginning of Platonism is the search for causality; the end of Platonism is the recognition of the equality of finality and causality in the highest principle, which is both ἀρχή and τέλος, reason and purpose. This highest principle is necessarily the Good, since only the Good can serve as a reason and purpose of all being and all becoming. This highest Good is translated into the world by the νοῦς on the plane of actuality and by the Soul on the plane of potentiality. The Soul is the lowest and the most worldly realization or hypostasis of the νοῦς, effectuating the movement of the heavenly bodies above men and the work of the moral law inside men. The Soul is filled with and guided by λόγος and serves as the main subject of Platonic research and investigation. As its functions are symbolized by the names of the old gods, the Soul endows Platonic religiosity with its object and substance.

These are the outlines of Platonism as philosophy and religion given by Heinrich Dörrie, a philologist. They form the conceptual basis for a reconstruction of the tradition undertaken by him and continued by the efforts of Matthias Baltes and over forty further participants of this gargantuan project. From this theoretical nucleus, the structure of which is briefly drawn above, grows a yet unfinished oeuvre of over 5,000 pages, a philological *Gemma Platonica* in its own right provided by the numerous inheritors of Dörrie's craftsmanship. It is not our concern and far beyond our competence to pursue a critical analysis of the project and its presuppositions. We would only like to stress the deeply philological nature of the series. It is not by accident that the part of the introduction describing the objective of the work (*Zielsetzung dieser Arbeit*) concludes with an invitation to philosophize together,

Platonism. See W. Beierwaltes, "Zur Geschichte des Platonismus (I)," in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 100 (1993): 194-99. Beierwaltes also opposed such claims as that of Platonism's lack of interest in mathematics, dialectics, and politics [5] and Dörrie's statement that it remains controversial whether or not ἐνοσις is a viable means of education and meditation of the νοῦς [28]. He recalls various passages from Neoplatonic authors from Plotinus to Damascius, thus inadvertently confirming that Dörrie's notion of Platonism excludes the Neoplatonists. Beierwaltes's confusion was accurately noticed by Szlezák (see Szlezák, "Heinrich Dörrie – Matthias Baltes," 391). One could further argue that another reason why the Neoplatonists are not counted among *the* Platonists of antiquity is their political and religious engagement resulting from the deepening split between the pagan and the Christian worlds. Neoplatonism wasn't necessarily "a dominant spiritual phenomenon of its epoch," which is an important trait of ancient Platonism as conceived of by Dörrie. Consequently, Dörrie and Beierwaltes also take opposite sides regarding the legitimacy of Christian Platonism, the former dismissing it as an inimical pseudo-assimilatory repulse of Platonism proper, and the latter arguing for its continuity with pagan thought. See Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 5-13.

συμφιλοσοφεῖν.³⁰ It seems that philology as practiced by Dörrie and his inheritors is of a very philosophical character and of a profound philosophical self-understanding, conceiving of its subject, λόγος, not as a textual phenomenon or a word but rather as something unworded, the plentiful textual expressions of which are only its more or less bleakening derivatives. The Platonic statement that the archetype is *hors-texte* results in a transformation of the stemma into some kind of textual rhizome. Such a peculiar structure, determined by an elusive yet all-pervading pattern, has a sort of particular inwardness and closedness-in-itself that makes it oppose any sort of exposition by a subject not willing to immerse in it. It is a self-referent structure of the tradition that allows easily for a philological *cura* but is hardly unfolded in a historicist manner and does not translate well into linear time. For the same reason, it does not seem feasible to pursue a critical analysis of *Der Platonismus in der Antike* from an external position. Again, since the structure of the tradition is self-referential, its critique could be accomplished only through a deep immersion into its structure and pattern – and would ultimately lead to proposals of recomposing the tradition being passed on to us, to taking up the task of rediscovering the order and of cutting the gem anew. Instead, the purpose of this short cultivatory text regarding its subject is rather to peri-phrase it and to reflect upon it – that is, to re-view, *wieder-zu-sehen*.

³⁰ Dörrie, *Zur Einführung*, 15.