

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
LATER GREEK AND
EARLY MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

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EDITED BY A. H. ARMSTRONG



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PREFACE

The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy was originally planned in connexion with W. K. C. Guthrie's *History of Greek Philosophy*, but has developed on rather different lines, and is not exactly a continuation of that work. It is an independent survey designed to show how Greek philosophy took the form in which it was known to and influenced the Jews, the Christians of East and West and the Moslems, and what these inheritors of Greek thought did with their heritage during, approximately, the first millennium A.D. The length of the period and the extreme variety and complexity of the subject-matter made it impossible for any one man to deal adequately with the whole, so it was decided to return to the older Cambridge pattern of a composite history by several hands, and I was asked by the Syndics to undertake the planning and editing of the whole work, and to write the Part on Plotinus.

The period covered extends from the fourth century B.C. to the beginning of the twelfth century A.D., from the Old Academy to St Anselm. All divisions of the history of philosophy into periods are somewhat arbitrary, but the points chosen for ending the later Parts of this volume appeared to us good stops in themselves, and the thought covered in the volume as a whole does seem to have a certain degree of unity, as is more fully explained in the introductory chapter. It is hoped that the philosophy of the thirteenth century and the later Middle Ages in the West, with later Jewish, Moslem, and Byzantine developments, will some day be dealt with in another Cambridge volume. As for the beginning, there is a good deal of chronological overlapping with Professor Guthrie's work, but little real overlapping of subject-matter. In order to explain the genesis of the Neoplatonism of Plotinus, the central and dominant form of Greek philosophy in our period, it was necessary to go back to Plato. But a reading of Professor Merlan's chapters will soon show that in dealing with Plato, the Old Academy, Aristotle and the Stoics, he has confined his attention to their influence on the thought of Plotinus, and has considered other questions about their philosophies only in this context. It was agreed that Merlan

Preface

should only deal with the Greek background of the thought of Plotinus, excluding Philo the Jew and the Gnostics, whose influence on Neoplatonism has sometimes been thought to be considerable. Philo and the Gnostics are treated in what seemed to me a more appropriate context in Professor Chadwick's Part, and the question of the relationship between Gnosticism and the philosophy of Plotinus is touched upon incidentally in my own Part. The decision to deal with it in this way is perhaps the most controversial of the many decisions which I have had to take about what to include and what to exclude and where particular subjects are to be treated, and I must take full editorial responsibility for it (I arrived at it, of course, because I do not consider that the influence of the Gnostics, or of Philo, on Plotinus was of great importance).

In a composite work of this kind, everything depends on the degree of co-operation and understanding which can be established between those taking part in the work. No editor could have had more willing and intelligent collaboration than I have had from the other contributors to the volume. Its virtues are mostly due to them; for its defects, which I am sure are many, I am responsible. I am most grateful to all concerned at the Cambridge University Press, and especially to Mr A. L. Kingsford, for their continual help at every stage in the preparation of this volume; they have made the task of an inexperienced and naturally inefficient editor easier than I ever expected. I am also very grateful to the Abbot and community of Downside Abbey, who allowed me to do much of my editorial work in their excellent theological library. And I most sincerely thank the successive secretaries of the School of Classics in the University of Liverpool for all their help with typing and correspondence.

A. H. A.

Liverpool

1965

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the notes throughout the volume:

<i>CC</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>PG</i>	Migne, <i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PL</i>	Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
<i>SVF</i>	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>

The abbreviations used in the notes of each Part will be found at the beginning of each Part.

References to Plotinus throughout the volume are in the following form: Ennead and treatise number [number in Porphyry's chronological order] chapter number and, where appropriate, Bréhier–Henry–Schwyzer line number, e.g. II 9 [33] 9, 35–9. References to *PG*, *PL* and *RE* are by volume and column number.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The additional notes in the 1970 reprint are collected on pages 692–693, and are referred to in the original text by asterisks.