

CALCIDIUS ON PLATO'S *TIMAEUS*

This is the first study to assess in its entirety the fourth-century Latin commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* by the otherwise unknown Calcidius, also addressing features of his Latin translation. The first part examines the authorial voice of the commentator and the overall purpose of the work; the second part provides an overview of the key themes; and the third part reassesses the commentary's relation to Stoicism, Aristotle, potential sources, and the Christian tradition. This commentary was one of the main channels through which the legacy of Plato and Greek philosophy was passed on to the Christian Latin West. The text, which also establishes a connection between Plato's cosmology and Genesis, thus represents a distinctive cultural encounter between the Greek and the Roman philosophical traditions, and between non-Christian and Christian currents of thought.

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TIMAEUS

Greek Philosophy, Latin Reception, and Christian Contexts

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Acknowledgments

Slow academia, not hurried along by grant proposals for multi-year projects, or other extraneous considerations. On February 2, 1991 (it says on the flyleaf) I bought a copy of Waszink's edition of Calcidius' work in one of the second-hand bookstores in Berkeley – I forgot which one. It was the first relatively expensive scholarly work I bought for myself. I was approaching my Ph.D. exams at the end of that spring semester, and in the process of coming up with a dissertation topic. Ultimately, the final chapter of the published version of the revised dissertation was devoted to Calcidius (Reydam-Schils 1999). But I could not let go of the work because it had raised so many issues worth pursuing – or at least, so I thought.

Thus for the next twenty years or so I kept returning to Calcidius to explore further one aspect or another of the commentary and the Platonism it represents. As I say in the book, since Waszink's monumental edition our scholarly understanding of the commentary tradition in Antiquity has deepened considerably, there has been a revival of interest in the philosophical currents from the first century BCE to the end of the second century CE, and our understanding of what it meant to be a Christian in the fourth century CE has also been considerably enriched. Without these broader scholarly developments, this book would not have been possible. In the early stages of the project I also benefited greatly from exchanges of ideas with David Sedley, John Dillon, Carlos Lévy, Stephen Gersh, and Anna Somfai, and at a later stage from crucial interactions with Charlotte Köckert, Béatrice Bakhouché, John Magee, Christina Hoenig, and George Karamanolis. The last four were present at a workshop on Calcidius I organized at the University of Notre Dame in the spring of 2015. I am deeply grateful to Philippe Hoffmann for having given me the opportunity to deliver a series of four seminars on Calcidius at the École Pratiques des Hautes Études in Paris in the spring of 2004. Some of the material presented in this book was developed during multiple research

stays from 2005 to 2007 at the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, funded by a grant from the Alexander von Humboldt foundation, and graciously hosted by Michael Erler. I also learned much about later Platonism from Irmgard Männlein-Robert in that period.

Given the time it took me to crystallize these views on the commentary and its relation to the translation, many people need to be thanked, and I have tried to do them justice in the notes to each chapter. But I would be sorely remiss if I did not explicitly thank here Kirsten Anderson and Alexander Pierce, two graduate students from the Notre Dame Theology department, for their invaluable assistance, as well as the reviewers for Cambridge University Press, and Michael Sharp and his team at the press (with a special thanks to Nigel Hope for his copy-editing). The Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts needs to be thanked for its financial support in the final stage of the manuscript preparation.

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Abbreviations

- LS A. A. Long and D. Sedley (eds.), *The Hellenistic Philosophers*.
2 vols. Cambridge University Press, 1987
- SVF H. F. A. von Arnim. *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. 4 vols.
Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1924