ORACULA CHALDAICA. ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

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The Addenda et Corrigenda consist of a) additional bibliography, b) corrections to the discussion of the translation of Marsilius Ficinus, c) three new translations, and d) a commentary; they are arranged in the order of the original article (vol. I, 157–64).

vol. I, 157b28. Add to the Bibliography:

The text of the Oracula Chaldaica is cited below by line number (according to the continuous verse text in Klutstein’s edition) and by fragment number (according to the identical system of numbering in the editions of Des Places and Majercik).

p. 158a6. Add:
In CTC I, 157–58, the translation of the Oracula by Marsilius Ficinus, reported from contemporary sources to have existed, was identified with an anonymous translation (Anonymus A) now preserved in two manuscripts (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana 36.35 and Vatican Library, Ottob. lat. 2996). This identification had previously been made by Bohdan Kieszkowski in his Studi sul platonismo del Rinascimento in Italia (Florence, 1936), who was followed with some reservations by P. O. Kristeller, Supplementum Ficinianum, I, cxlv. Kieszkowski (pp. 155–63) had argued for the attribution of Anonymus A to Ficinus, citing a few superficial similarities between the text of Anonymus A and some passages from the Oracula quoted in Latin translation in Ficinus’ Theologia platonica (the passages are collected in I. Klutstein, Marsilio Ficino, 38–40, Appendice II). A closer comparison of Anonymous A with the passages of the Oracula translated by Ficinus (ibid., passim) reveals that they differ not only in vocabulary and syntax, but also in their understanding of the Greek text. In addition, the style of the two versions differs markedly, for the version of Anonymous A is literal, while that of Ficinus is freer. Hence, in this Addendum we revise what was said in CTC I, 157–58, distinguishing between the lost version of Ficinus and the version of Anonymus A, which survives in the two above-mentioned manuscripts.

The supposed translation of Marsilius Ficinus is attested only by the quotations in Latin from the Oracula preserved in Ficinus’ Theologia platonica, and it is by no means certain that these are quotations from a complete and separately existing Latin translation which has since been lost, and not simply selected passages translated ad hoc by Ficinus to illustrate arguments in the Theologia platonica. In his famous letter to Martinus Uranius (June 12, 1492), where Ficinus lists a number of juvenile translations of the prisci which he had forborne to circulate, he does not make mention of a translation of the Oracula. On the other hand, we know that Ficinus possessed and annotated a manuscript (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 76) which formerly contained the Μαγικὰ λόγια τῶν ἀπὸ Ζωροάστρου μέγαν with the commentaries of Pletho and Psellus (see S. Gentile in Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone, 55–57, no. 43). We have also the testimony of Johannes Pannonius that Ficinus commented on the carmina Zoroasstris (p. 329 below), and as Gentile points out (ibid., 25–26), it is difficult to imagine that Ficinus could have commented on the text without first translating it.

It is, however, reasonably certain that Fici-
anus’ version is not to be identified with that of Anonymus A. The *Theologia platonica* contains twenty-seven quotations from Zoroaster, each translated into Latin and followed by commentary. The translations are not close to the Greek text, and must be considered paraphrases rather than true translations. The divergences from the version of Anonymus A may be illustrated by the two examples given below; for a complete list of Ficinus’ quotations from the *Oracula* with further discussion see Kluststein, *Marsilio Ficino*, passim, esp. 7–15, 38–40 and 44.

1. Zoroaster, lines 13–14, frag. 115
   a) Ficinus, *Theologia platonica* X.8 (Marcel II, 85–86; Opera 236): “Ascendendum tibi ad lumen ipsum et patris radios. Unde infusa est est tibi anima multo mentis lumine circumfusa.”
   b) Anonymus A (Laur. 36.35, fol. 26r): “Oportet te festinare ad lucem et ad patris splendores. Unde missa es, o anima, multam induta mentem.”

2. Zoroaster, line 26, frag. 104
   b) Anonymus A (Laur. 36.35, fol. 26r): “Ne spiritum infeceris, neque profundum reddas epipedon (idest superficiem s.s.).”

Text. [Inc.]: (Theologia platonica XVII.4 [Marcel III, 173; Opera 396] = line 7, frag. 157) Tuum vas bestiae terrae habitant . . . . . [Expl.]: (Theologia platonica II.13 [Marcel I, 126; Opera 114] = line 60, frag. 14) Pater non incutit metum, sed persuasione inducit.

Manuscripts:
See Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum*, v–lv, passim; Paul Oskar Kristeller, “Marsilio Ficino and His Work after Five Hundred Years,” in *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone*, ed. Garfagnini, I, Appendix 3 (“Census of Manuscripts Containing Original Works and Letters of Marsilio Ficino or Copied, Annotated or Owned by Him”), 81–125 passim. (Kristeller’s article has also been printed separately as Marsilio Ficino and His Work after Five Hundred Years, Istituto Nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, Quaderni di “Rinascimento,” fasc. 7 [Florence, 1985], with new pagination; the relevant portions are on pp. 67–111.)

Editions of the Theologia platonica:
1482, Florentiae (Florence): per Antonium Miscominum. H 7075; GW 9881; Goff F–157; NUC. BL; BN; (Cy; DMC; MH).
1491, Venetis (Venice): per Bernardinum de Choris de Cremona et Simonem de Luero insignis Andree Toresani de Asula. With Plato, *Opera*. H 13063; Goff P–772; NUC. BL; (Cy; DMC; NNC; MH).
1525, Venetis (Venice): in aedibus Francisci Bindoni et Maphei Pasini socii, sumptibus vero ac insignis Ioannis Baptiste de Pedranzis Bruxiensis. NUC. BL; BN; (NcD).
1561, Basileae (Basel): per Henricum Petri. In Ficinus, *Opera omnia*. Adams F–412; NUC. (CLSU; NNC; ICU).
1641, Parisii (Paris): apud Guillelum Pele. In Ficinus, *Opera omnia*. BL; BN.

Bibliography:

p. 158a46. Add two new translations:

1a. Anonymus A (Janus Lascaris or Johannes Jucundus Veronensis?)

An anonymous translation of the *Oracula Chaldaica* is found in two manuscripts (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana 36.35 and Vatican
Library, Ottob. lat. 2996), and was published by Bohdan Kieszkowski in 1936 as the hitherto lost translation of Ficinus. As the attribution to Ficinus has now been rejected (see above), the question of the real translator’s identity has been reopened. The Florentine manuscript of the translation has the appearance of a rough draft, and contains numerous authorial corrections; the hand of the same corrector has also intervened in a few places in the fair copy, preserved at the Vatican, which also incorporates the corrections of the Florentine codex. The corrector of the Florentine codex (and hence the translator) has been identified by Sebastiano Gentile (*Marsiilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone*, 26, no. 20, and plate VI) as Janus Lascaris, based on a comparison of the manuscript with an example of Lascaris’ hand found in the Archivio di Stato, Florence (Mediceo avanti il principato 64, fol. 132r, a register of loans from the Medici library). However, Prof. Albinia de la Mare in a private communication to P. O. Kristeller (February 13, 1980) identifies the same hand as that of frater Jucundus Veronensis (fra Giocondo da Verona). Given the similarity of the hands, the attribution to Lascaris seems more convincing, as he (unlike Jucundus) is known to have had an interest in the *prisca theologia*, and the extreme accuracy of the translation seems more in keeping with Lascaris’ superior abilities as a Hellenist.

Text (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana 36.35). [Inc.]: (fol. 26r; lines 1–2, frag. 110) Quere tu anime rivum unde quove ordine / Corpori cum serviveris ad ordinem a quo defluxisti . . . / . . . [Expl.]: (fol. 27r; line 60, frag. 14) Pater non terrem incutit, suadam autem infundit.

Manuscripts:

Editions:

1b. Anonymus B (Bonifatius?)
Another anonymous translation of the *Oracula Chaldaica*, preserved in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Magl. XXX 3, must be added to the other translations listed above and in CTC I, 157–64. Its existence was first disclosed by P. O. Kristeller (*Iter*, I, 140b). The same manuscript also contains a translation of Horapollo written in the same hand, and is likely to be the work of the same translator. Despite CTC VI, 19, however, the Horapollo and the *Oracula* are not dedicated to the same patron, since the preface to Horapollo addresses a “reverendissime pater ac domine,” the usual style for a cardinal, while the preface to the *Oracula* invokes a “Serenissime Rex” and “Rex meus,” who was probably also styled “Mediolanensis dux” (see below). Given the date of the manuscript (s. XV ex.–XVI in.), it is plausible to identify the dedicatee of the *Oracula* as Louis XII of France, who laid claim to the duchy of Milan (1499–1515).

The identity of the translator is inferred from the three–line heading of the text. This heading has been erased, but the first word, “Bonifatii,” is legible, as is the ending, “. . . Mediolanensis Ducem praefatio” (transcription of the heading made *in situ* by P. O. Kristeller on September 23, 1985, correcting some errors in his previous transcription from microfilm and published in *Iter*, I, 140b).

The preface to the *Oracula Chaldaica* is followed by the translation of the text and a Latin commentary. The Latin commentary is a translation of the commentary written in Greek by Pletho.

Praefatio (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XXX 3). [Inc.]: (fol. 310r) Bonifatii . . . (3 lines deleted) Mediolanensis Ducem praefatio. [I]nter omnia antiquae illius sapientiae monumenta quibus plurimum iure credimus semper fuit, vetustiora quaeque et graviora sunt et plus non auctoritatis modo sed etiam maiestatis cuiusdam prae se ferunt, utpote quae si recte accipientur a summo atque augustissimo vero minimum aberrant. . . . At vero beneficio tuo, salutaris humani generis atque rerum conditor, tuo inquam beneficio bene beatque vivendi certissimam rationem divinae vocis tuae oraculo traditam tenemus, et adhuc impie quidam vesani spurcitiarium gurgustis obruti velut ignavi canes in te, Serenissime Rex omnium, latrare non ventur. . . . Ea cum rebus ipsis tum antiquitate ac sapientiae auctorum fame idonea visa sunt, quae durissimam quorumandam frontem contun-
derent atque in tuas piissimas manus venirent. 
Nec vero difficile cognitum erit quam familiaris ac prope hereditaria. magis istis fuerit humanarum divinarumque rerum scientia, si quis (ut alia 
omittam) vel paucula haec eloquia percurret. 
Quae et graeco hac ipsa etate (estate rectius?) in 
latinum tibi summo cum labore vertimus. Nam 
non sensus tantum quaedammodum in ceteris so-
let sed verba etiam plerumque reddere oportuit, 
quae interpres repetebat e carmine, (fol. 311v) 
quo cum enarratione congruerent . . . / . . . 
[Expl.]: Tu scis, Rex meus, in quo mihi post 
Deum opt. omnium rationum mearium vitaque 
omnem spem fixi et locavi, tu bonarum artium 
bonorumque omnium patrone vel magis pater 
prientissime, quamquam est in te summa sapi-
entia, quae haec eloquia nostra leges, non po-
teris non mirari. Interea vero sive Mars dissip-
ator Deo ita volente sive itidem caeli et immissa 
preamant inopia, maius tamen aliquid meus desit-
nabit animus tibi, neque enim alteri posthac aut 
potest aut debet servire quam tibi, a quo et in 
horas maximis beneficis honesti me videam et 
te ante in vita servatus fuerim. Hoc autem 
utrumque homines accipient. Ego tamen ide-
dem repetam: abs te uno, Rex meus, (fol. 312r) 
nec id quidem semel, servatus sum. Sospitem 
facilemque te servet Deus opt. max. Vale. 

Text (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, 
Magl. XXX 3). [Inc.]: (fol. 312r; lines 1– 
2, frag. 110) Tu quaere unde animae via quove 
hinc ordine / postquam corpore clausa suum 
completit munus . . . / . . . [Expl.]: (fol. 320v; 
line 60, frag. 14) Non incutit terrorem pater, sed 
suadam potius infundit. 

Manuscript: 
(Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, 
Magl. XXX 3, fols. 310r–320v (Kristeller, Iter, 
I, 140b). 

p. 160a43. Add a new translation: 

3a. Anonymus C 
An unknown Latin version of the Oracula 
Chaldaica is found in a manuscript, now in Kas-
sel, that was copied in the sixteenth century 
by a Northern hand. The text is preceded by a 
translation of Stephanus Alexandrinus, presum-
ably made by the same translator, which ends 
with the date “Romea ex Bibliotheca Vaticana 
7 Sept. 1570” (fol. 327r). The copyist’s name is 
given at the end of the note on fol. 328r: 

“ descripsi ex manu Jo(hann)is Niotti physici 
Vonius (?).” 

Text (Kassel, Landesbibliothek, 2° Ms. chem. 
3). [Inc.]: (fol. 327v) Ὁ τά λόγια ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ 
Ζωροάστρου. Oracula Zoroastis (sic). (lines 1– 
2, frag. 110) Perquire animae infinitum unde vel 
quo ordine / corpori inserviens ad ordinem a quo 
defluxisti . . . . . [Expl.]: (fol. 328r; line 60, 
frag. 14) Pater non metum inicit sed persuasio-
nem infundit. Finis oraculorum. τῷ θεῷ μόνῳ 
δόξα. 

Manuscript: 
(photos) Kassel, Murhardsche Bibliothek der 
Stadt Kassel und Landesbibliothek (now part of 
the Gesamthochschulbibliothek), 2° Ms. chem. 
3 (misc.), fols. 327v–328r (Kristeller, Iter, III, 
584b). Photostat kindly sent by the library to 
P. O. Kristeller. 

p. 162a37 (translation of Fredericus Morellus). 
Add: 

Manuscript: 
(photos) Hamburg, Staats- und Universitäts-
bibliothek, Cod. philol. 16 c, s. XVI ex.–XVII, 
pp. 1–3, with brief marginal notes, consisting 
principally of sources and loci paralleli, in 
the hand of the scribe (Kristeller, Iter, III, 555a). 

p. 164b32. Add: 

DOUBTFUL COMMENTARY 
1. Marsilius Ficinus 

The evidence that Ficinus wrote a commen-
tary on the Oracula Chaldaica is based entirely 
on the testimony of Janus Pannonius (Janos Va-
radi), who in a letter to Ficinus of ca. 1485 
remarked, “Item [during my previous sojourn in 
Florence] carmina Zoroastris explanavistis (my 
italics) et antequam Florentia huc reirem trans-
ferendo Platonii manum inieceras, isdem, ut 
equidem suspicor, astronomicis auspiciis” (Ficin-
us, Epistolae VIII.18 = Marsili Ficini . . . 
opera [Basel, 1576; rpt. Turin, 1959], 871; cf. 
Kristeller, Supplementum Ficinianum, I, cxxv). 
This seems to refer to a time prior to 1463, when 
Ficinus began his translation of Plato. No such 
commentary by Ficinus on the Oracula Chal-
daica is presently known to exist. For the con-
junctural dates of Pannonius’ studies in Florence, 
see T. Klainczay, Mattia Corvino e l’umanesimo 
italiano (Rome, 1974), 17ff.