

# 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*:

Edouard Des Places, *Oracles Chaldaïques, avec un choix des commentaires anciens, texte établi et traduit* (Paris, 1971); Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*, new ed. by Michel Tardieu (Paris, 1978); Ilana Klutstein, *Marsilio Ficino et la Théologie ancienne, Oracles Chaldaïques—Hymnes Orphiques—Hymnes de Proclus* (Florence, 1987); Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldaean Oracles. Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 1989).

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 once 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 Kiezkowski 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. Kiezkowski (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 Anonymus 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 Anonymus 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 μάγων* 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 Pannoniensis that Ficinus commented on the *carmina Zoroastris* (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-

nus' 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 Klutstein, *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

a) Ficinus, *Theologia platonica* XVIII.4 (Marcel III, 193–94; *Opera* 404): “Ne foedes spiritum, neque in profundum exaugeas quod est planum.”

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 persuasionem 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, 1987], 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; (CtY; DLC; MH).

1491, Venetiis (Venice): per Bernardinum de Choris de Cremona et Simonem de Luero impensis Andree Toresani de Asula. With Plato, *Opera*. H 13063; Goff P–772; NUC. BL; (CtY; DLC; NNC; MH).

1525, Venetiis (Venice): in aedibus Francisci Bindoni et Maphei Pasini socii, sumptibus vero ac impensis Ioannis Baptiste de Pederzanis Brixiensis. NUC. BL; BN; (NcD).

1559, Parisiis (Paris): apud Aegidium Gorbium (ex calcog. Ioannis Sauetier). Adams F–424; NUC. BL; BN; (NNC; CtY; ICN). (Reprinted Hildesheim, 1975).

1561, Basileae (Basel): per Henricum Petri. In Ficinus, *Opera omnia*. Adams F–412; NUC. (CLSU; NNC; ICU).

1576, Basileae (Basel): ex officina Henricpetrina. In Ficinus, *Opera omnia*. Adams F–413; NUC. BL; BN; (MiU; CLSU; MH). (Reprinted Turin, 1959, 1962, 1979, 1983).

1641, Parisiis (Paris): apud Guillelmum Pele. In Ficinus, *Opera omnia*. BL; BN.

1964–70, Paris: Société d'Édition “Les Belles Lettres,” 3 vols., ed. Raymond Marcel.

#### Bibliography:

Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum* (Florence, 1937), I, LX, LXXIX–LXXXI, CXLV; Kristeller, “Marsilio Ficino and His Work after Five Hundred Years,” in *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone*, vol. I: *Studi e documenti*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence, 1986), 15–196, at 149–50 (reprinted separately, with some additions and new pagination [see pp. 135–36], as Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, Quaderni di “Rinascimento,” fasc. 7; Florence, 1987); *Marsilio Ficino e il ritorno di Platone. Mostra di manoscritti stampe e documenti*, ed. Sebastiano Gentile, Sandra Niccoli, and Paolo Viti (Florence, 1984), 25–27, no. 20 and pl. 6.

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 Kieszowski 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 (*Marsilio 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 the 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 terrorem incutit, suadam autem infundit.

*Manuscripts:*

See p. 158a34–40. For the Vatican manuscript, add: Kristeller, *Iter*, II, 438a–b.

*Editions:*

1936, Florence: Bohdan Kieszowski, *Studi sul platonismo del Rinascimento in Italia*, pp. 159–61 (attributed to Marsilius Ficinus).

1987, Florence: Ilana Klutstein, *Marsilio Ficino et la Théologie ancienne, Oracles Chaldaïques—Hymnes Orphiques—Hymnes de Proclus*, 116–18.

1b. Anonymus B (Bonifatius?)

Another anonymous translation of the *Oracula Chaldaica*, preserved in Florence, Biblio-

teca 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 “Mediolanensium 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, “. . . Mediolanensium 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) Mediolanensium Ducem praefatio. [I]nter omnia antiquae illius sapientiae monumenta quibus plurimum iure creditum semper fuit, vetustiora quaeque et graviora sunt et plus non auctoritatis modo sed etiam maiestatis cuiusdam prae se ferunt, utpote quae si recte accipiantur a summo atque augustissimo vero minimum aberrant. . . . At vero beneficio tuo, salutaris humani generis atque rerum conditor, tuo inquam beneficio bene beateque vivendi certissimam rationem divinae vocis tuae oraculo traditam tenemus, et adhuc impie quidam vesani spurcitarum gurgustis obruti velut ignavi canes in te, Serenissime Rex omnium, latrare non ventur. . . . Ea cum rebus ipsis tum antiquitate ac sapientiae auctorum fama idonea visa sunt, quae durissimam quorundam frontem contun-

derent atque in tuas piissimas manus venirent. Nec vero difficile cognitu erit quam familiaris ac prope hereditaria magis istis fuerit humanarum divinarumque rerum scientia, si quis (ut alia omittam) vel paucula haec eloquia percurrerit. Quae e graeco hac ipsa etate (estate *rectius?*) in latinum tibi summo cum labore vertimus. Nam non sensus tantum quemadmodum in ceteris solet 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 mearum vitaeque omnem spem fixi et locavi, tu bonarum artium bonorumque omnium patrone vel magis pater pientissime, quamquam est in te summa sapientia, quom haec eloquia nostra leges, non poteris non mirari. Interea vero sive Mars dissipator Deo ita volente sive itidem caelitus immissa premant inopia, maius tamen aliquid meus destinabit animus tibi, neque enim alteri posthac aut potest aut debet servire quam tibi, a quo et in horas maximis beneficiis honestari me videam et ante in vita servatus fuerim. Hoc autem utrumque homines accipiant. Ego tamen identidem repetam: abs te uno, Rex meus, (fol. 312r) nec id quidem semel, servatus sum. Sospitem felicemque 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 compleverit 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 Kassel, that was copied in the sixteenth century by a Northern hand. The text is preceded by a translation of Stephanus Alexandrinus, presumably made by the same translator, which ends with the date “Romae 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 Niotii physici Vonsus (?)”

*Text* (Kassel, Landesbibliothek, 2<sup>o</sup> Ms. chem. 3). [*Inc.*]: (fol. 327v) Τὰ λόγια μαγικὰ 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 iniicit sed persuasio-nem infundit. Finis oraculorum. τῷ θεῷ μόνῳ δόξα.

*Manuscript:*

(photo) Kassel, Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel und Landesbibliothek (now part of the Gesamthochschulbibliothek), 2<sup>o</sup> 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 Federicus Morellus). Add:

*Manuscript:*

(photo) Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 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

I. Marsilius Ficinus

The evidence that Ficinus wrote a commentary on the *Oracula Chaldaica* is based entirely on the testimony of Janus Pannonius (Janos Varadi), who in a letter to Ficinus of ca. 1485 remarked, “Item [during my previous sojourn in Florence] carmina Zoroastris *explanavisti* (my italics) et antequam Florentia huc redirem transferendo Platoni manum inieceras, iisdem, ut equidem suspicor, astronomicis auspiciis” (Ficinus, *Epistulae* VIII.18 = *Marsilii Ficini . . . opera* [Basel, 1576; rpt. Turin, 1959], 871; cf. Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum*, I, CXLV). 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 Chaldaica* is presently known to exist. For the conjectural dates of Pannonius’ studies in Florence, see T. Klaniczay, *Mattia Corvino e l’umanesimo italiano* (Rome, 1974), 17ff.