

Phaenomenologia sub specie Platonis. Editors' Introduction

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1. At the beginning of the *Phaedrus*, as they are walking along the Ilissus, Socrates invites his friend to find together a place where they could both sit down and talk quietly: “Lead on, then, and look out for a good place where we might sit” (229a–b). It is Phaedrus who brings Socrates’ attention to “a tall plane tree” (Ὅρῳς οὖν ἐκεῖν τὴν ὑψηλοτάτην πλάτανον). “What about it?” Socrates replies. “There is shade there and a light breeze and grass to sit on,” explains Phaedrus, “or, if we wish, to lie down on.” It has already been noticed that the “plane tree” (πλάτανος) might entail a reference to the nickname of Aristocles, namely, “Plato” (Πλάτων).¹ Were we to employ this scene to illustrate the purpose of the present volume—thereby sitting down under the same πλάτανος—one could say that it aims at telling the history or counter-history of 20th century phenomenology from the standpoint of Plato, i.e. *sub specie Platonis* (no matter whether the latter is held as a proper name or as a mere catachresis).

In the wake of Brentano and Heidegger, phenomenology has often turned backwards to the history of Ancient philosophy mostly to acknowledge the paramount importance of Aristotle.² Additionally, many prominent Husserl scholars have also rightly insisted on the various aspects of Husserl’s Aristotelian heritage.³ In both cases scholars have equally pointed out the manifold Platonic

¹ See Giovanni Reale’s remarks in his *Introduction to Platone* (1998: xxv–xxvi).

² For a reconstruction of the relations between Brentano, Heidegger and Aristotle, see Volpi (1976; 1984) and Berti (1992).

³ See for instance Cobb-Stevens (2002; 2004) and, more recently, Dodd (2015). On the field of ethics, one cannot but recall John Drummond’s agenda. See, among others, Drummond (2017).

shades, as it were, blurring such phenomenological picture of Aristotle. Yet a careful assessment of this complex phenomenon is still a *desideratum* whose importance has been only recently acknowledged.⁴

Two tasks hence seem to merge: reading the history of phenomenology through the lenses of Platonism and the history of Platonism through the lenses of phenomenology. On the one hand, one therefore has the task of following the development of phenomenology based on its relations to Plato, notably, the many relations in which phenomenologists (from Husserl to Heidegger, from Fink to Patočka, from Levinas to Marion, from Reinach to Beck, from Hering to Stein, from Klein to Becker, from Ingarden to Spiegelberg, and so forth) stand vis-à-vis Plato and Platonism (whatever these might mean). On the other, one should follow the opposite track and describe the history of Plato or Platonism *within* phenomenology. A history within a history that could be directly labelled: *the Platonic history of phenomenology* (as a part of the more general and encompassing trajectory of Platonism in Western philosophy).

As a matter of fact, the long-term history of Platonism, upon which many scholars have devoted a great amount of work in the last century, should certainly include a chapter on phenomenology—a chapter that has not been written yet.⁵ Thus, it is also with the idea of providing a contribution to fill such a gap that this issue of *Studia Phenomenologica* has been conceived.

2. One should nevertheless immediately refrain from indulging in the widespread tendency of labelling phenomenology *as* a form of Platonism (or anti-Platonism). Does the phenomenologist sitting under Plato's plane tree enjoy a refreshing shade—as suggested by Phaedrus—or is she darkened by a gloomy shadow as Nietzsche would rather claim? It is our contention that the question of whether the phenomenological tradition contributes to reversing Platonism, and therefore to joining the happy community of post-modernism, or appears to be stuck within the good old metaphysical schemes, has to be rejected altogether. For the story (of Platonism) within the story (of phenomenology) includes, in turn, many stories. As it has been rightly pointed out,

From a strictly conceptual standpoint, there is not merely one single Platonism. [...] The same holds for the Platonic tradition: there are many possible platonisms, depending on the selection imposed on the *corpus*, on the questions discussed, the general claims taken over, on the arguments re-enhanced, developed and modified. (Chiaradonna 2017: 29)

⁴ See the contributions in the volume De Santis and Trizio (2017).

⁵ Beierwaltes (1980) and Krämer (1982), for instance, limit their discussion to Heidegger, while references to Husserl are either allusive or superficial.

Thus, the question is not—and cannot be—to establish *whether* phenomenology is a Platonism or not; rather, one should try to *identify the varieties of “possible Platonisms” to be found within the scattered landscape of the phenomenological tradition*. A tradition in which efforts to *develop* phenomenology in a descriptive (Brentano), transcendental (Husserl, Fink, Landgrebe) or realist (Reinach, Ingarden) manner coexist with various attempts to *overcome* phenomenology, as it were *from within*, towards a fundamental ontology (Heidegger) or a new form of ethics as a first philosophy (Levinas), and even to *re-invent* phenomenology as a subject-less cosmology (Patočka) or as an all-encompassing philosophy of the givenness (Marion). Hence, *if* a Platonic pattern, as it were, should appear through this rather complex maze-like scene—in which someone *injects* Plato within Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (Brentano), and someone else focuses either upon the *Republic* (Heidegger) or the *Phaedrus* (Levinas)—such a pattern could only be shown *a posteriori*. In short, the question as to whether the Platonic “questions discussed,” the “general claims taken over,” “the arguments re-enhanced, developed and modified” within phenomenology *share some common features*, it is a point that one would be able to establish only after a careful mapping.⁶ A task that, as far as we can tell, has yet to be accomplished.

3. This suggests already that, upon closer look, even the so-called phenomenological tradition does not appear to be an all-too homogeneous historical event. For, and by leaving aside the extremely difficult task of elucidating, let alone determining, what “Platonism” is or might be, the fact should never be missed that the history of 20th century phenomenology is *also* the history of the various accounts of what “phenomenology” is, hence, of *the many different relations to Husserl and his understanding of phenomenology*. In other words, the history of phenomenology is *also* (of course, not only) the history of the different positions taken by the different phenomenologists vis-à-vis Husserl’s own conception of phenomenology and, more generally, of philosophy as a rigorous science (*strenge Wissenschaft* and ἐπιστήμη)—the origin of which Husserl finds precisely in Plato’s θεία φιλοσοφία (*Phaedrus*, 239a). What holds true of Platonism (see above, §2) could also apply to phenomenology: there are *many* “possible phenomenologies,” each selecting Husserl’s corpus, singling out some questions instead of others, developing and/or modifying some of its claims, merging them with other influences etc.

As a matter of fact, in the many accounts of the history of philosophy and, more specifically, of the birth of philosophy that Husserl develops over the last twenty years of his life (to say the least), Plato is always identified as the father and, more precisely, as the original father (*Urvater*) of the “ideal” of

⁶ See the above passage from Chiaradonna 2017: 29.

philosophy as ἐπιστήμη in the strongest sense possible.⁷ At this fundamental level, Husserl is not at all interested in such and such a specific theme of Plato's philosophy; rather, he is interested in Plato as the one who accomplished the first "theoretical reform" of philosophy on the basis of the "practical reform" already accomplished by Socrates against the skepticism in which philosophy had fallen (Majolino 2017; De Santis 2019, 2020). Here is what Husserl explains in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*:

If the skepsis denied the *de jure* possibility of any such thing as "philosophy," as science in general, then Plato had to weigh and establish by criticism precisely the *de jure* possibility of it. [...] Thus Plato was set on the path to the pure idea. [...] His dialectics (in our words: his logic or his doctrine of science) was called on to make science as to matters of fact possible for the first time and to guide its practice. And precisely in fulfilling this vocation the Platonic dialectics actually helped create sciences in the pregnant sense that were consciously sustained by the idea of logical science and sought to realize it so far as possible. (Hua XVII: 5–6 / trans.: 1–2)

In Husserl's view, there are two main accomplishments or acquisitions of Plato's reform.

(i) In the first place, Plato manages to fix the very "conditions" under which reason can proceed by constantly "justifying" itself, thereby being able to ascertain the ὄντως ὄν. What is determined once and for all is the "nature" of reason and then the correlation between *authentic knowledge, truth* and *what truly is*: "One can assert that with Plato the pure ideas: authentic knowledge, authentic theory and science and, embracing all of these, authentic philosophy make their way for the first time into the consciousness of humanity. [...] Authentic knowledge, authentic truth [...], being in the true and authentic sense [...]: these become for him essential correlates" (Hua VII: 12–13 / trans.: 12–13).

(ii) More generally, a second consequence follows from Plato's reform that bears directly upon the *nature of philosophy*. With Plato—Husserl points out at the very beginning of his *First Philosophy* lectures—there appears the crucial idea of "a necessary foundation and division of philosophy into two stages, i.e., into a 'first' and a 'second' philosophy." On the one hand, there is the idea of a *first philosophy* understood as a "universal methodology" that justifies itself absolutely; or, to put it theoretically: "a science of the pure (a priori) principles of all possible knowledge." In so doing, Husserl also remarks, "the unity of all a priori sciences ever to be realized is circumscribed, which is inseparably bound together by the essential connections of all universal fundamental truths" (Hua VII: 14 / trans.: 14). On the other hand, there also arises the idea of a *second philosophy*, understood as the totality of the sciences as to matters

⁷ Hua VII: 12 / trans.: 12; Hua XXXV: 53; Hua-Mat IX: 2.

of fact that refer in all their “justification” back to first philosophy and to the a priori system of any possible rational method (for a detailed reconstruction, see De Santis 2020; and, in a more historical perspective, Majolino 2017).

For Husserl, the combination of these two aspects is what makes Plato the father of *the idea itself of philosophy as a rigorous science* and ἐπιστήμη whose radical re-elaboration and new foundation is the grand ambition of transcendental phenomenology.

4. Now, if the history of phenomenology is *also* the history of the many positions vis-à-vis Husserl’s conception of philosophy as a rigorous science; and if for Husserl such an idea is to be traced back to Plato—it follows that the history of 20th century phenomenology is *also* the history of *the different concepts of Plato’s foundational role vis-à-vis both the nature and task of philosophy*. Rejecting or developing *Husserl’s variety of phenomenology entails the correlate operation of reassessing the role of Plato*. Thus two options seem to be possible: one could reject Husserl’s phenomenology *and* link such rejections to a critique of Plato and Platonism; one could reject it *precisely* in the name of its putative betrayal with respect to the original core of Plato’s teachings. In opposition to the previous one, this path could be called: *the phenomenological history of Plato and, more generally, of Platonism*.

To put it even more clearly, such a second perspective on the history of phenomenology would build on the intertwining of two motifs: (a) *the conception of philosophy itself* (primarily, Husserl’s concept of philosophy as a “rigorous science”); and (b) *Plato’s foundational role vis-à-vis such a conception*. As a consequence, the history of phenomenology (as the history of the criticisms, re-elaborations, understandings and misunderstandings of the ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science) intertwines with the history of the interpretations of Plato as the father of philosophy (no matter what such turn of phrase could possibly mean), or whatever other role one might want to ascribe to him. Hence, of the relation(s) between Plato, the very nature of philosophy and phenomenology itself—as such and such a phenomenologist has come to conceive them.

5. It should now be apparent why the expression *phaenomenologia sub specie Platonis* is meant to embrace both *the Platonic history of phenomenology* and *the phenomenological history of Platonism*. Of course, the issues and questions tackled by these two histories do not coincide; rather, they form a complex hermeneutical framework.

Let us start with *the phenomenological history of Platonism* so as to better elaborate on what has been said so far. Its task would consist in investigating the following interrelated set of problems.

(α) The “conception” of philosophy that we owe to Plato or, better: *which* sort of foundational or groundbreaking role and function (if any) can be ascribed to Plato vis-à-vis the nature, character and task of philosophy.

(β) The “position” that phenomenology itself occupies in relation to such a conception and within its history, so as to understand whether phenomenology is meant to accomplish or overcome, recast or transform the Platonic idea or determination of philosophy that the tradition has bequeathed us.

(γ) An additional problem can also be included here, which would consist in trying to pinpoint or identify the textual references and roots that—directly or indirectly—justify (α) and sustain (β).

Let us provide some examples as to briefly elucidate these points.

6. In the case of Husserl (see Hua-Mat IX: 48-49), the reading of Plato as the theoretical reformer of reason, and hence as the father of the ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science, seems to textually hinge upon the *Sophist*, notably, the passage where the Stranger answers Theaetetus’ question “What was our subject?” in the following way: “Our object was to establish rational discourse (λόγον) as one of our classes of being. Indeed, if we were deprived of discourse, we should be deprived of philosophy (φιλοσοφίας ἂν στερηθῆμεν), which would be the greatest calamity. Moreover, we must now come to an agreement about the nature of rational discourse” (*Sophist* 160a). The passage testifies to the effort—upon the part of Plato—at securing reason’s ability to grasp how things truly are by firmly determining the possibility of λόγος, thereby establishing the correlation between knowledge, truth and what really is: such a correlation is, for Husserl, the true sense and meaning of the term λόγος (see also Husserl 1974: §1).⁸

Were we to quickly consider Heidegger, the reference would no longer be the *Sophist*, but rather *Republic* VII, notably, the passage in which Socrates tells us that after the slave was “freed from his chains and compelled to stand up suddenly and turn his head around and walk and to lift up his eyes to the light,” he “felt pain and, because of the dazzle and glitter of the light, was unable to discern the objects whose shadows he formerly saw.” As Socrates goes on to add: “what do you suppose would be his answer if someone told him that what he had seen before was all a cheat and an illusion, but that now—being nearer to reality and turned toward more real things—he saw more correctly (πρὸς μᾶλλον ὄντα τετραμμένος ὀρθότερον βλέπει)?” (515c-d). In *Plato’s Doctrine of Truth* (Heidegger 1976: 203–238), Book VII of *Republic*, in particular the description of the “soul” that has to *adjust itself* in order to *correctly* (ὀρθότερον) see true reality (πρὸς μᾶλλον ὄντα), marks the beginning

⁸ An important account that should be compared with that of Husserl is the one developed by Antonio Banfi, the father of Italian phenomenology, in his early lectures on Plato (Banfi 2000) as well as in his *Socrates* (Banfi 1963: 91–103): here, a groundbreaking role is ascribed to Socrates’ “dialectics,” understood as the first seeds of a critique of reason that will have one of its highest realizations in phenomenology itself (as had already been presented in his masterpiece of 1926 called *Principi di una teoria della ragione*).

of the concept of truth as *adaequatio* or *convenientia* and *Übereinstimmung* that will shape the whole of the history of philosophy (which in this sense is to be called Platonic through and through⁹). Both the ambition and the task of phenomenology—as Heidegger understands it in *Being and Time* within the framework of the “analytics of *Dasein*” (Heidegger 1967: §44)—is to bring to light the original phenomenon of truth, on whose basis alone the traditional view is possible and even conceivable.

7. The picture could be further complicated by the fact that, as is well known, Heidegger himself commented on the *Sophist*, just as in Husserl’s lectures there are hints at *Republic* VII. Yet the point remains: *the role* of such discussions with respect to Husserl’s and Heidegger’s overall account of philosophy and phenomenology is entirely different. Husserl’s Plato is not Heidegger’s Plato, and Husserl’s understanding of the way in which Plato shapes the history of philosophy by injecting the ideal of a rigorous science and *ἐπιστήμη* turns into Heidegger’s construal of Plato as the one who determines the concept of truth as “correctness” and adequation, and hence the history of philosophy that rests upon it. Given the specific function and role they respectively ascribe to Plato—thus the physiognomy of philosophy that stems out of him—their assessment of phenomenology, i.e., its project and position within such a history, also changes. (i) Having understood phenomenology in different ways and, one could also say, having understood the concept of “phenomenon” in quite different terms (see Djian and Majolino 2020), and (ii) having spelled out differently the relation between phenomenology and philosophy, Husserl and Heidegger provide (iii) rather distinct “phenomenological” readings of Plato’s contribution to philosophy and, accordingly, (vi) single out different dialogues where to identify the key elements of such a contribution, while (v) recalibrating the rest of Plato’s corpus around such selective readings.

A different Platonic *corpus*, a different Platonic shaping of philosophy and its history, and thus a different diagnosis of what phenomenology is meant to *be* and also expected to *do* vis-à-vis them. This is the specific configuration and constellation of issues which *the phenomenological history of Platonism* would investigate: in this sense, the history of 20th century phenomenology would be the history of a “three-center configuration,” as it were, rather than of a simple theme or series thereof.

8. To mention a further example, when it comes to Patočka, the crucial reference point would be the *Apology* (28e–30b), notably, that passage in which Socrates criticizes directly the Athenian people: “Most excellent men, are you

⁹ It should be borne in mind that such Heideggerian reading of Plato should be connected to Ernesto Grassi’s interpretation of the Platonic conception of truth in Grassi 1939: 69–142 (in which a peculiar reading of Heidegger’s own thought is also outlined, see pages 37–65).

who are a citizen of Athens, the greatest of cities and the most famous for wisdom and power, not ashamed to care for the acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honor, when you neither care nor take thought (ἐπιμελούμενος) for wisdom and truth and the soul (φρονήσεως δὲ καὶ ἀληθείας καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς)?” In contrast to this—as Socrates goes on to explain to his fellow citizens—“I go about doing nothing else than urging you, young and old, not to care for your bodies or your property more than for the perfection of your souls (ἐπιμελεῖσθαι... τῆς ψυχῆς), or even so much, and I tell you that virtue does not come from money.” The “care of the soul” (the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς ψυχῆς, in the words of Socrates) is not to be misunderstood as a specific doctrine; rather, this is “the concept out of which grew not only classical Greek philosophy, but also Europe and our history. *The history of Europe* is, in large part [...], *the history of the attempt to realize the care of the soul*” (Patočka 2002: 36–37). The soul is “the caretaker of the phenomenon,” as Patočka points out; and already in his early lectures on Socrates he had stressed that the soul is the bearer of an internal destiny or fate (*osud*): “The soul decides about itself [*Duše rozhoduje o sobě same*], and in order to reach such goal [*cíl*], it has the power that belongs to it alone, i.e., the knowledge of truth [*poznání pravdy*] as well as the power to discriminate between good and evil” (Patočka 1991b: Ch. V). Regardless of the many differences between Husserl and Heidegger, the ambition of phenomenology, as Patočka understands it, is to take up such Platonic concept of the soul as the caretaker of the phenomena—thereby finally establishing the possibility of a “science of appearing” (Patočka 2002: 26). As Patočka succinctly says: “The subject-matter of phenomenology is the process of appearing as such [*Proces ukazování jako takový je téma fenomenologie*]” (Patočka 1991: 71).¹⁰

Just like in the previous two cases, here too we are confronted with a peculiar configuration and constellation. It is a different textual Plato, a different understanding of both the nature and task of philosophy (as well as of its history), and hence of what phenomenology ought to be and ought to do vis-à-vis the original Platonic determination. If, for Husserl, the *phaenomenologia more platonico* would strive towards both correcting and realizing the Platonic ideal of a philosophy as a rigorous science (Majolino 2017), for Patočka it would rather tend toward the accomplishment of the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς ψυχῆς. The metaphysics of the *Sophist* and the grand picture of *Republic VII* are now recalibrated in a new configuration whose point of balance is the *Apology*.

9. Before we move on, let us make a few additional remarks about the three sets of questions listed above (= the subject-matter of *the phenomenological history of Platonism*).

¹⁰ In this text Patočka links the science of phenomena as such also to the famous Platonic *Seventh letter* and discusses the sequence: ὄνομα, λόγος, εἶδωλον, ἀληθὲς δόξα, ἐπιστήμη (Patočka 1991a: 68–72).

It should be clear by now how (α) and (γ) are related. The function or role that is ascribed to Plato in relation to both the nature and history of philosophy (α) can be rooted in such and such a text and passage or series thereof (γ): it can be for example the *Apology* (Patočka), *Republic* (Heidegger) or the *Sophist* (Husserl). Again, this does not rule out that other texts could be identified in relation to other specific issues and themes. However, the point is to understand that the decision to focus on this or that dialogue in order to address and explain (α)—and hence the relation between (α) and (γ)—rests upon the determination of what we have been labeling Plato’s foundational role vis-à-vis the inner character of philosophy.

In contrast to points (α) and (γ), point (β) does not and cannot exclude the hypothesis that philosophers and thinkers other than Plato might have to be brought into the picture: for example, the claim that phenomenology is called upon to fulfill the original Platonic ideal of a rigorous science (Husserl) cannot fail taking into account the role played by Descartes’ own reform of philosophy. Indeed, without the transcendental line initiated by the Cartesian *cogito*, it would not even be possible to think of a re-elaboration and new foundation of both the scientific character of philosophy and the idea of a πρώτη φιλοσοφία. In Patočka, the very phenomenological task of fulfilling the ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς ψυχῆς could not even be conceivable without Heidegger’s account of the “care” (*Sorge*) as the unifying structure of *Dasein*.

10. This being emphasized, we can now turn to *the Platonic history of phenomenology* in order to better and more concretely expand upon what was mentioned at the outset of this introduction. Its subject-matter would be a series of specific individual issues, specific individual concepts and themes that are recognized and assumed by phenomenologists as derived from Plato’s own philosophy and even the subsequent tradition (no matter what this may include). Here the list of examples can only be partial, and we will confine ourselves to mentioning just a few.

(a) The first concept to mention is that of *idea* or *eidos*, which—at least from the first edition of the *Logical Investigations* onward—, while consistently rejected by almost all Brentanians (see, for instance, Marty 1908: 311–312) is assumed by all the first generations of phenomenologists as what alone makes possible phenomenology as an a priori type of investigation. This is very clearly stated by Hering in his essay on the concepts of essence, essentiality and the idea (Hering 1921: 495), and both Schapp (1981: 130) and Reinach (1988: 407, 441) explicitly acknowledge its Platonic legacy. Of course, the positions might slightly or radically diverge, thereby giving rise to the following set of sub-questions (for a later, systematic discussion of the overall topic, see Seifert 1996, 2000).

(b) Whether *essence*, *idea* and *eidos* are exactly the same formation (Metzger 1925: 665; Beck 1929; Spiegelberg 1930), or whether a distinction between

them should be recognized (e.g., Husserl, Hering, Stein, Conrad-Martius), and in what such a difference would consist (e.g., Ingarden (1925) avoids as much as possible the Greek term *eidos*).

(c) The role and function of such formations, e.g., whether they possess merely a logical and a gnoseological function (as could be argued for example in relation to the term *idea* in the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*¹¹), a strong ontological (von Hildebrand 1991: Chap. 4) or even a metaphysical role (Beck 1929; Stein 1962).

(d) The question as to the “mode of being” of such formations, which Husserl ends up calling irrealty (Husserl 1929: §§63–64), while for Spiegelberg this is not even a phenomenological problem, and therefore needs to be held in abeyance (Spiegelberg 1930: 1). This brings us also to the problem of the relation between the concepts of “ideality” and “irrealty.”

(e) The question on the relation(s) between these formations called *ideas* and *eidê* and what is usually deemed their opposite (= the sensible, the individual, the concrete). It is the Platonic problem of “participation” or μέθεξις (De Santis 2016). According to Ingarden, we should not even speak of a problem because in phenomenology there is no “two-world” theory (Ingarden 1972: 25). For E. Stein, by contrast, this is precisely the very problem that every ontology worthy of its name must discuss and solve once and for all (Stein 1962: 66; see also Beck 1947: 233–234). Moreover, if the distinction between *idea* and *eidos* is accepted, the additional problem arises whether we need to think of two different modes of participation, e.g., “individualization” and “realization” (Hering 1929: 511; 528–529; see also Patočka 2009: 187–191). This should also refer to the relation, often carefully discussed (see Dewalque 2015), but still in need of being definitively assessed, of the relation between Husserl’s phenomenology and Lotze’s “Platonism.”

(f) Finally, the problem of the mode of givenness of *ideas* and *eidê*, and whether, for example, this is to be conceived based on the categorial activity of thought (as is the case with Husserl and the very relation between ideation and categorial intuition in the *Sixth Investigation*) or, as on the contrary Schapp claims (1981: 130; see Nucilli 2020), within the straightforward act of perception (on this matter, see the introductory chapter in Spiegelberg 1930).

11. This preliminary battery of questions, though still rough and incomplete, should have made clear that *the Platonic history of phenomenology* would have to investigate specific themes and concepts and how they are differently treated by the different phenomenologists. In this respect, from the angle of the theme and sub-themes just presented, the history of 20th century phenomenology would write the history of a specific Platonic concept, and hence its

¹¹ Hua XIX/2: 106, where it is asserted that to ascribe *being* to ideas simply amounts to acknowledging the *validity* of certain true propositions.

development throughout the tradition (see a first attempt in De Santis 2014). In contrast to *the phenomenological history of Platonism*, there would be no need here to mobilize the interpretation of Plato's alleged foundational role in the history of Western philosophy (which can be completely missing), let alone the position that phenomenology would occupy within it.

One last remark seems however to be in order. From the above list, one might think that the relationship between Platonism and phenomenology revolves, mainly if not exclusively, around ontological and epistemological issues. Yet that would be utterly mistaken. Patočka's example should already remind us that ontology and epistemology are only *the most visible part* of an Atlantis-like drawn continent, which includes ethics, pedagogy and political philosophy, but also cosmology and theology. If one is not ready to resist the—historically inaccurate if not utterly wrong-headed—temptation to identify Plato's heritage with a form of ontological commitment to some sorts of separate intelligible forms, it is quite impossible to understand *both* the very complex historical paths of Platonism *and* the various ways in which Phenomenology complicates such paths. Though less mainstream in the contemporary discussions on phenomenology, philosophical issues such as the infinite *ἁμείωσις θεῶν* or the *παιδεία* of humanity (quite crucial to understanding, for instance, Levinas or Fink—but also Husserl) are not only part and parcel of the Platonic tradition but also key elements of its phenomenological appropriation.

For, at least in phenomenology, under Plato's "plane tree," there is much more than just a bunch of weird entities called *εἶδη* or *ιδέα*—ready to be dismissed by commonsensical arguments, barely ennobled by the expected reference to an unshadowed Aristotle.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the European Regional Development Fund-Project "Creativity and Adaptability as Conditions of the Success of Europe in an Interrelated World" (No. CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16_019/0000734).

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