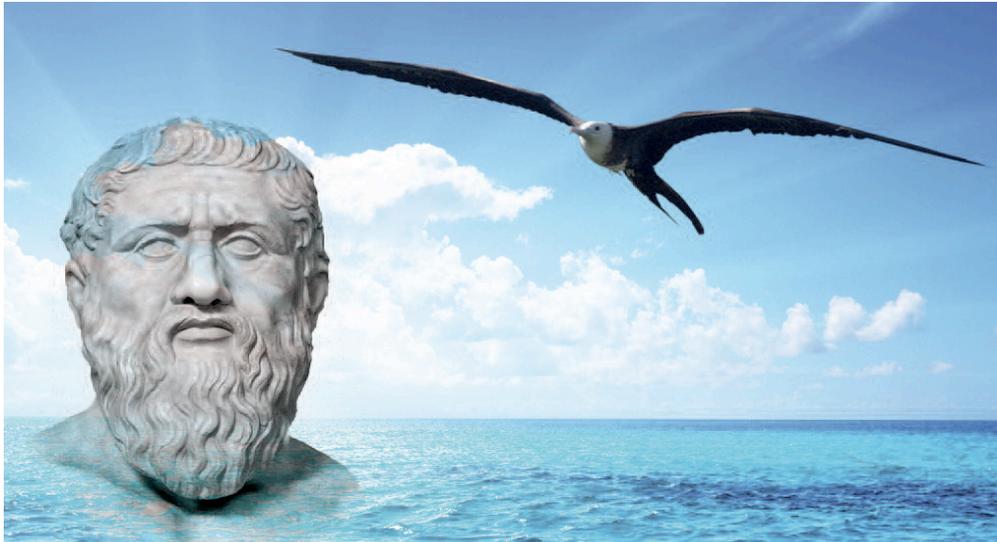


29th NOVEMBER - 1st DECEMBER 2013

2,400th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF PLATO'S ACADEMY
An International Interdisciplinary Conference

**THE ODYSSEY AND EVOLUTION OF PLATO'S DIALECTICS
FROM ANTIQUITY TO TODAY:
A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN WORLD**



Organized by Hermes International Institute

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE

I. PLATO AND THE ROOTS OF MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE:

- THE SOURCES OF PLATO'S VISION: THE EASTERN LEGACY, EGYPT, MESOPOTAMIA, MYCENAE
- THE GREAT MYTHS: PROMETHEUS, THE ANDROGYNE, THE CAVE, ATLANTIS
- THE GREAT DIALOGUES: PHAEDRUS, PHAEDO, THE SYMPOSIUM

II. NEOPLATONISM AND THE UNIVERSAL MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATION:

- THE ITINERARY OF NEOPLATONISM FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE RENAISSANCE
- MUSLIM AND JEWISH PLATONISM
- THE BYZANTINE SYNTHESSES

III. THE RELEVANCE OF PLATO'S MESSAGE IN THE 21st CENTURY:

- **SCIENCE, ART, SOCIETY AND PHILOSOPHY**

Friday 29 November 2013

15.00 - 16.15:

Registration and drinks reception with inaugural exhibition

***Intervalum* or "Geometry of Light"** (by *Pierre Poulain*, philosopher and photographer)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE

(16.30 - 18.30)

- **A multipolar philosophy of Plato** (France - *Brigitte Boudon*)
Plato as a reader of Pythagoras, Parmenides and Socrates.

The dialectical process: the role of discourse as Socratic knowledge (France - *Philippe Guitton*)

Socratic and Platonic dialectics is primarily an ascensional dialogue that sets out from particular opinions and seeks to arrive at universal ideas. However, it is not a dehumanized abstraction; Platonic dialectics is based on an interaction with "the Other", the friend.

Socratic dialogue is recognised by UNESCO as part of the new practical approaches to philosophy.

The One and the many in Platonic thought throughout history

(France - *Fernand Schwarz*)

In the *Parmenides*, the One is the principle of unity underlying the multiplicity of ideas and phenomena. This dialectic was to inspire a number of different visions over the centuries, from the Neoplatonism and *En Kai Pan* of the philosophers of Alexandria to the cosmotheism of the 17th and 18th centuries, and its latest manifestations in contemporary science.

I. PLATO AND THE ROOTS OF MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE

(19.00 – 20.30)

I.1 THE SOURCES OF PLATO'S VISION: THE EASTERN LEGACY, EGYPT, MESOPOTAMIA, MYCENAE

Plato and the Upanishads

Plato's secret doctrine (Greece - *Savvas Pattakos*)

As suggested by the Tübingen School, alongside his written teachings Plato also gave out oral teachings relating to the invisible worlds, the origins and evolution of humanity.

The Presocratics and Pythagoras (Germany - *Anna Holub-Pszywvyj*)

The roots of Platonic thought were influenced by a number of philosophers in addition to Socrates, including Heraclitus, the Eleatics, Anaxagoras and the Pythagoreans.

Pythagoras had a profound impact on Plato's thought with his model of a school for the body and the soul. The Pythagorean theory of Numbers emanating directly from the divine spirit was to inspire his theory of Ideas.

Saturday 30 November 2013

I. PLATO AND THE ROOTS OF MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE

(9.00 - 10.30)

I.2 THE GREAT MYTHS: PROMETHEUS, THE ANDROGYNE, THE CAVE, ATLANTIS

The human condition, the destiny of souls and magical connections (*Spain - Vicente Peñalva*)

Using dialectics as the method, Plato proposed that the soul of the philosopher should be led "from what is born to what is".

I.3 THE GREAT DIALOGUES: PHAEDRUS, PHAEDO, THE SYMPOSIUM

Paradigms, core values and the Good Life (France - Brigitte Boudon)

Each of Plato's dialogues contains a representation of the world, a coherent model of man and the universe. For example, the immortality of the soul, or the different levels of knowledge.

The evolution of political thought according to Plato. The Republic, The Statesman, The Laws (*Belgium - Fernando Figares*)

According to Plato, Politics should be subject to high ethical standards. How can a dialogue be achieved between the philosophical *logos* and the democratic *praxis*?

Round table discussion and conclusions

II. NEOPLATONISM AND THE UNIVERSAL MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATION (11.00 - 12.30)

II.1 THE ROUTES OF NEOPLATONISM FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE RENAISSANCE

The birth of neo-Platonism:

- **Plotinus, implicit eclecticism** (*Chile - Harry Costin*)

The philosophy of Plotinus was based on a new reading of Plato's works, and in particular of his dialogue *Parmenides*. The conceptual contribution of this dialogue is to clarify our understanding of the intelligible world in terms of its three hypostases: the One, intelligence and the soul.

- **Proclus, explicit eclecticism** (*Spain and Germany - María Dolores Figares and Heribert Holzinger*)

Knowledge can only be achieved by recognizing the metaphysical principles on which it is based, and these principles have ethical foundations. The original work of Proclus systematizes the teachings of Plato, Porphyry and Plotinus. He was one of the greatest philosophers of antiquity and a faithful guardian of the Platonic tradition. He developed one of the most elaborate systems of Neoplatonism, thus preparing the Platonic heritage for the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Islamic thought.

Pseudo-Dionysius and the Theology of Light (*France - Dominique Duquet*)

Through his negative theology, Dionysius demonstrated that divine transcendence cannot be positively affirmed. The symbolism of Light is the mediator between the

outer man and the inner man.

The Florentine Renaissance (*Germany - Evgeny Spodarev*)

Nicholas of Cusa and the metamorphoses of his dialectics paved the way for the European identity of modern times. His ideas, such as the coincidence of opposites, his ecumenical thought and the idea of the unity of all religions influenced Giordano Bruno, Hegel and Gadamer and prepared the ground for German idealism. This presentation will analyze the roots of his doctrine in Plato, Plotinus, Porphyry, Augustine, Proclus, Pseudo Dionysius and Albertus Magnus.

Granada, capital of Europe: Platonists at the Court of Charles V (*Spain - Florencia Suñta*)

This presentation will examine the possible influence of a group of Platonic philosophers around one of the key monarchs of the age, at a defining moment of European history which ushered in the Modern Age.

Round table discussion and conclusions

II. NEOPLATONISM AND THE UNIVERSAL MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATION

(15.00 - 17.30)

II.2 MUSLIM AND JEWISH PLATONISM

The Platonic philosophers of Andalusia (*Spain - Irene Melfi*)
Ibn Masarra, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Al Arif, Ibn Gabirol, Fox Morcillo.

Bridges and tunnels, the crossing of Platonic ideas into Jewish thought
(*Israel - Anat Sela*)

Great philosophers and politicians, including Philo of Alexandria and Isaac Israeli, were inspired by the principle of reconciling opposites to incorporate the old into the new, the abstract into the material.

II.3 THE BYZANTINE SYNTHESSES

Soloviev: from Cairo to Moscow via Byzantium (*France - Guy Ferry*)
The Eastern Roman Empire, a direct heir to the Hellenistic tradition, in its relationship with Western Christianity and the two lands of Islam in the Middle East and Andalusia with the Jewish diaspora, were part of the process of metamorphoses of Platonic dialectics which produced various philosophical syntheses. Alongside this process, the diplomatic game between these worlds and their political ambitions led them into significant “dialectical” exchanges.

Round table discussion and conclusions

III. THE RELEVANCE OF PLATO'S MESSAGE IN THE 21st CENTURY

(18.00 – 20.30)

III.1 - SCIENCE

The forward-looking vision of Giordano Bruno, a reader of Nicholas of Cusa

and inspirer of Schelling (*France - Fernand Schwarz*)

A philosopher of the imagination and the infinite, Bruno invented the notion of space as we understand it today, and defined a cosmology which is confirmed by current scientific research. He moved from a static outlook to a dynamic vision in which everything forms part of the all, within an interactive dynamics. Few Renaissance philosophers understood the legacy of Nicholas of Cusa and it was through Giordano Bruno that his metaphysics came to be revived. Through his anthropology he prepared the ground for the future work of Schelling and Schleiermacher.

A special lecture by Jean Staune, philosopher of science

18.30 - 20.30: with slides and video interviews

The revival of Platonism in the science of matter and the life sciences

Bernard Espagnat wrote that if a physicist wished to maintain a realistic position, he could not fail to be at least partly Platonic. Many mathematicians, including agnostics such as Alain Connes and Roger Penrose, have taken Platonic positions. Gödel based his system on the idea that the notion of truth is broader than the notion of demonstrability. But if the importance of Platonism in physics and mathematics is generally well known, the great revolution that lies ahead is the return of Platonism, under the name of structuralism, in the life sciences. This lecture will review the different elements that show that Platonism can no longer be ignored in philosophy of science today.

Sunday 1 December 2013

III. THE RELEVANCE OF PLATO'S MESSAGE IN THE 21st CENTURY (9.00 - 10.30)

III.1 - SCIENCE

Plato and the Beautiful in 21st century science (*USA – Video link with astrophysicist Trinh Xuan Thuan*)

Nature dazzles us with its visual beauty, but there is also splendour in the order of the universe. There is, in fact, a more abstract kind of beauty that relates to the laws themselves, or rather, to the organisation of these laws in theory. Some scientists are now talking about the beauty of a theory. In this interview, Trinh Xuan Thuan will try to express what we can understand today by a *beautiful theory*.

III.2 – ART

A modern Platonist: Eugenio Trias and the philosophy of limits (*Spain - Manuel Ruiz*)

His philosophy of limits is consistent with findings from other branches of knowledge, such as anthropology and the study of complexity.

III.3 - SOCIETY

Idealism in Russia: "Russian history is inspired by the imaginarium of Western civilization and is synthesized in Eastern culture (*France - Guy Ferry*)

A spiritual renaissance took place in Russia between 1900 and 1913, which was revived by the White Russian diaspora and reinstated from the time of Perestroika

with the return of the influence of thinkers like Soloviev and Berdyaev.

Round table discussion and conclusions

III.3 SOCIETY (11.00 - 13.00)

Plato's concept of Justice in the legal world of the 21st Century (*Spain - Juan Manuel de Faramiñan*)

In works such as *The Republic* or *The Laws*, we can recover for the 21st century concepts of justice and good governance that will allow us to break the deadlock in which the failure of political ethics, administrative corruption and the lack of "alterity" have plunged our generation into disillusionment and apathy. We need a "Copernican revolution" to bring us back to mutual respect and the exercise of justice.

European identity and differences, seen from the perspective of the metamorphosis of Plato's dialectics (1913-2013) (*France - Guy Ferry and Fernand Schwarz*)

The formation of an identity is a slow dialectical process involving the interplay of differences, in which these differences are taken almost "to the limit" and subsequently develop step by step towards unifying solutions.

The relevance of Plato's Seventh Letter today (*Spain – José Osuna*)

This text sets out Plato's theory of knowledge as well as his political doctrine and underlying ethics. He gives clear guidance on how tyrants should be opposed, using peaceful means.

In his age of nascent democracy, Plato maintained that philosophers need to recognize justice and establish a clear distinction between public and private life - a subject that continues to be of major relevance today.

The challenge of Platonism. Platonic vision and action in our times (United Kingdom - Tim Addey)

In the centuries since the closure of the Platonic Academy (in 529 AD), many thinkers have attempted to re-introduce Platonic philosophy to the West as a basis for intelligent spirituality – but with only limited success. Today's challenge, then, if we see our best future in the adoption of a philosophical life, is not to separate the metaphysical and spiritual vision of reality from daily ethical practice.

Round table discussion and conclusions

For further information: www.sciencesdelhomme.com