Self, Self-Fashioning, and Individuality in Late Antiquity

New Perspectives

Edited by

Maren R. Niehoff and Joshua Levinson

Mohr Siebeck

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Move Your Self

Mobility and Migration of Greek Intellectuals to Rome

Irmgard Männlein-Robert[1]

Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis / intulit agresti Latio ("The conquered Greece conquered the harsh victor and introduced the arts into Lazio") – this famous dictum of the ancient Roman poet Horace (epist. II 1, 156) encapsulates in a historical retrospect the momentous cultural transfer (*translatio studii*) that could be observed since the 2nd century BC from defeated Greece into militarily successful Rome. In Horace's time, along with Greece, the entire Levant, including Egypt, was politically in Roman hands and belonged to the Roman Empire, yet the East remained linguistically and culturally Greek until late antiquity. While previous classical-philological scholarship has mainly dealt with this cultural transfer in a general way, this article deals specifically with the individual mobility and migration of people. More precisely, it considers philosophers in a certain historical context, namely, the Roman Empire of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. I aim to shift the scholarly perspective by examining the mobility and migration of philosophers from the Greek world to the West, that is, to Rome. In doing so, I assume that spatial changes, particularly those made by Greek philosophers, may have external stimuli, but are always to be understood as phenomena, symptoms, or starting points of individual change and personal reorientation, and inventing or reinventing the self. In the case at hand, spatial mobility and migration are read as visible traces of philosophers' social and intellectual acculturation and personal readjustment.

The chapter unfolds as follows. First, I offer several remarks on the concept of "migration" (1.). This is followed by a historical sketch in which the Roman Empire is identified as an intercultural landscape, and here (2.), Rome and Athens are shown to be attractive cities for philosophers. Next (3.), I use case-studies from the 3rd century CE to trace the migration movements of Greek philosophers to Rome: mainly the well-known Platonic philosophers Plotinus and Porphyry, and, in passing, the Platonist Longinus. Here, I am concerned with their personal motivations to migrate (as far as we are able to identify this according to

[1] I would like to thank Maren Niehoff (Jerusalem), the anonymous reviewer, and Mischa Meier (Tübingen) for their helpful critical remarks and additions.

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our evidence), their social and political integration, as well as their acculturation and adjustment in the new world. A brief look (4.) at their reception in the West will conclude by indicating the impact of their philosophical texts, concepts, and thought structures in the context of the new world, as far as we can trace this from the sources handed down to us. Our information about ancient migrants generally derives from documentary sources ("stones and bones"), which include bones and inscriptions as well as documentary papyri, military diplomas, and letters. In the case of migrating Greek philosophers, however, we are mostly dealing with literary texts by self-reflective intellectuals, which must be analyzed and interpreted with care.

1. The Roman Empire as Intercultural Landscape

The topic of migration in the Imperial Period and Rome as a destination in the context of migration movements in antiquity has only recently attracted scholarly interest (see, e. g., David Noy, or Luuk de Ligt and Laurens Tacoma), and it must be considered as distinct from touristic or business travel, or even pilgrimage.[2] By "migration," we mean a "movement of humans by which they change their residence from one place to another on a permanent or semi-permanent basis."[3] With regard to the Mediterranean region, however, the high mobility of people has been a special characteristic since the earliest times, which has to do with the particularly good economic exchange, social, and communicative interactions. Accordingly, we observe a specific "connectivity" for this geographical cultural area (according to Horden and Purcell),[4] even if this term needs to be differentiated – for instance, regionally. Our sources indicate that human mobility was rather high in the Roman Empire. Plausibly, the largely peaceful political conditions in the Roman Empire at that time contributed to this trend.[5] But the wide and well-developed road infrastructure also played an important role by providing convenient travel routes and fast communication structures, facilitating a real "culture voyageuse"[6] especially in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.[7]

Travelers and returnees are to be distinguished from true migrants, whether short-term, long-term, or seasonal, but the boundaries between mobility and migration have always been fluid, insofar as there are no specific descriptive pa-

[2] Noy 2000; Ligt and Tacoma 2016a. For the phenomenon of journeys, which must be distinguished from real migration and longer stays, see e. g. André and Baslez 1993; Niehoff 2017: 1–20; for Philo's stay and diplomatical activities in Rome, see Niehoff 2017: 25–90.

[3] Ligt and Tacoma 2016a: 4.

[4] Horden and Purcell 2000.

[5] Ligt and Tacoma 2016a: 5.

[6] André and Baszléz 1993: 7.

[7] Ligt and Tacoma 2016a: 6. See also n. 1 above.

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rameters.[8] By "migration," we mean a change of location of significant duration ("permanency") including a considerable geographical distance and requiring a transfer to a different environment, even if ethnic groups often form their own networks in a new place.[9] Until recently, the motivations of migrants have generally been analysed in terms of "push-and-pull" factors. Push factors include, for example, the loss of existential or economic foundations at home, such as natural disasters (e. g. earthquakes), epidemics, violence, wars, or personal troubles. Pull factors, for their part, might include economic considerations, such as the hope for better living or working conditions; perhaps education and a supportive cultural environment.[10] When applying the "push-and-pull" model, however, it is important to avoid thinking of migrants as passive links on an extrinsic chain of events. In view of their considerable individual and social agency, modern migration research designates such individuals as "skilled transients."[11] Additionally, migration phenomena have been treated through the prism of network theories. Thus, in what follows I offer a dual-pronged analysis.

2. Shifting the Focus: Rome and Athens in the Imperial Period

In the sources that have survived, Rome appears as an appealing center for voluntarily emigrating intellectuals from Greece and the Greek East, particularly in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. This region encompassed the *oikoumene*, the large eastern Greek cultural area, as well as Egypt, Asia Minor, and the Greek islands. In the following, I focus on Greek intellectuals who permanently (or at least voluntarily) moved to Rome, bringing to that city their knowledge, and developing themselves personally there. During the Roman Republic, in what is considered "forced migration," many Greek prisoners of war arrived to Rome as house-teachers, secretaries, grammarians, or philologists, and also as house-philosophers. In contrast, from the beginning of the Principate, and specifically in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, one can identify many members of the Hellenic elite living and working voluntarily in Rome.[12] This stemmed from political reasons which in turn created favourable conditions: not only the did Roman emperors promote the city of Rome, but private elites financed it, making it, from the 2nd century on, an attractive environment for Greek intellectuals. Many well-educated Greeks worked in Rome as doctors and philosophers. Moreover, one finds philosophers of various schools: Cynics as well as Stoics, Peripatetics, Aristotelians, and, last but not least, Platonists. This is evident from literary and

[8] See Bruun 2016: 176.
[9] See the typology of migration after Tilly 1978: 48–72.
[10] For more detailed push-and-pull-factors, see Noy 2000: 86–90.
[11] So, too, ibid.: 89; see Ligt and Tacoma 2016a: 11.
[12] See Hidber 2011: 115–23, here 116–17, who compares Augustan Rome with Alexandria.

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also epigraphic evidence; epitaphs are particularly enlightening in this context because of the biographical and ethnic information contained in them. Tilly and Noy's apposite term "career migration"[13] requires review in the case of the philosophers,[14] whose motivations must be analysed on a case-by-case basis due to their different agencies. In addition, among intellectuals and philosophers from the Greek East of the Roman Empire, we are dealing with a group of migrants who may have been able to rely on existing networks within their social groups and thus perhaps integrated more easily than other migrants into their new lives, beyond ethnic networks.[15]

At this point, we might mention the traditionally difficult relationship of Romans and Roman elites with philosophy, although we do know of highly reflective Latin-speaking philosophers, such as Lucretius, Cicero, Seneca, Apuleius, Augustine, and Boethius, to name but a few. Notably, Cicero played an important role in the introduction of philosophy into Rome (in the sense of a *translatio studii*). Nonetheless, philosophical language, imagery, and forms of thought were considered Greek.[16] Let us recall, in this vein, the famous Athenian legation of philosophers in 155 BC (the Stoic Diogenes of Seleukia, the Academic Carneades of Cyrene and the Peripatetic Critolaos were among them).[17] This, like other, later philosophical legations, more or less failed (the case of the later legation from Alexandria to Rome to Emperor Gaius, in which the Jewish-Hellenic philosopher Philo took part in the years from 38–41CE and narrated, is especially difficult).[18] The rhetorical capers and intellectual refinements of these Greeks tended to frighten ancient Roman politicians, even though Roman curiosity about Greek philosophy had, by now, been raised. After the fall of the Republic and during the Imperial Period, Greek philosophers' influence in Rome was mainly channeled through their writings and texts, as exemplified by Cicero's translation of Plato's *Timaeus* and the collection of Aristotle's writings in Rome by Andronicus of Rhodes.[19] Although, in the Republican period, the rather practical Romans included philosophical instruction and studies in Greece as

[13] See four modes of migration in Ligt and Tacoma 2016b: 8.

[14] About the discussion on typologies of migration, see Ligt and Tacoma 2016a; Noy 2000 applies four types of migration (Tilly) to Rome.

[15] See the whole volume by Whitmarsch 2010 with an emphasis on literature, and Schmitz 1997 with an emphasis on the political context.

[16] See Worstbrock 1965: 1–22, here 9–10.

[17] See e. g. Plutarch, Cat. Mai. 22; Cicero, De Orat. 2, 154–55; Cic. Tusc. 4, 3, 5; more detailed is Gruen 1990: 158–70, and Müller and Zini 2018: 1–40, here 2 and 16.

[18] See Philo, Leg. Gai. *passim*; for political-religious implications of this enigmatic and stylized account see Niehoff 2017b, esp. 34–43.

[19] For Cicero's interest in the Platonic *Timaeus*, his translation and his reconstructible interests and methodology, see now Hoenig 2018: 38–101. The Roman redaction of the writings of Aristotle is testified by *Strabons Geographica* 13, 1, 54; see Radt 2004: 602–5; Plutarchus, Sulla 26; Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 24. More general is Maier 1985, esp. 50 and 220; Hahn 1989, esp. 148 and 165.

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part of the standard curriculum for higher educational purposes, Greek philosophers were for a long time relegated to being house-teachers and interlocutors (albeit at a high level) in the capital city. The early Imperial Period seems to have seen a shift in this regard: the Platonist Thrasyllus, who was employed as court astronomer by the emperor Tiberius, the Platonist Plutarch of Chaironeia, who worked in the Roman Senate, and the Stoic-Cynical philosopher Dio Chrysostomos, who worked in Rome, might be mentioned as examples.[20] The Roman satirist Iuvenal, who expresses dismay about the glut of intellectuals in *Graeculi* (Satura 3 *passim*),[21] signals that the acute influx of Greeks into Rome at the end of the 1st century CE aroused more than enthusiasm. Under Emperor Domitian, even Greek philosophers from Rome and Italy were expelled three times (83, 87 and 88/9 CE) – Cynical itinerant preachers and Stoic moralists, in particular, fell under the general suspicion of agitation by the emperor. Consequently, one must wonder about the Greek philosophers who lived and worked in larger numbers in Rome a little later.[22] Admittedly, this phenomenon is connected with the Hellenic-friendly policies of the Roman emperors since Hadrianus, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, under whose rule (117–80 CE) major waves of Greek philosophers migrating to Rome took place. We know the names of about 50 Greek philosophers in Rome; one of these was Apollonius of Chalkedon, who first taught in Athens and was called to Rome by Emperor Antoninus Pius to teach the young Marcus Aurelius.[23] The new and intense interest of the Antonine emperors in Greek education and philosophy can thus be identified. Of course, not all Greek philosophers had their own school in Rome, but they often depended on more or less loose patronage from Roman benefactors.[24] There appear to have been social and financial incentives for this. The autobiographical information of the Greek philosopher-physican Galen about his activities in Rome (162–66 and from 169 CE) is illuminating in this regard.[25] His host was initially the Greek Peripatetic Eudemus, who had been living in Rome for more than ten years and

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[20] On Thrasyllus, see Männlein-Robert 2018a: 563–65 and 679 (bibliography). On Plutarch's membership in the Roman Senate, see Suda IV, 150, 27–29 Adler; recently Frazier 2012: 1096–1185, here 1112–15; also Jones 1971, esp. 48; Syme 1982. On Dio Chrysostomos, see Brancacci 2018: 184–89, here 185–87 and 238–40 (bibliography).

[21] Cf. the apparently common prejudice related to Greek philosophers (cited in Lucianus, Merc. Cond. 17): μόνοις τοῖς Ἕλλησι τούτοις ἀνέῳκται ἡ Ῥωμαίων πόλις, see Hahn: 1989, 148.

[22] Suetonius, Dom. 10, more detailed is Hahn 1989: 153. More, but historically not arranged, in Noy 2000: 91–97.

[23] Historia Augusta Ant. P. 10, 4; Lucianus, Demonax 31.

[24] See Lucianus, Nigrinos 24 and Lucianus, Merc. Cond. *passim*; also Iuvenal, Sat. 3 *passim*. On the dependency connected with economic-social security as a social phenomenon of the house philosophers in Rome, who mostly came from the Greek aristocracy, see Hahn 1989: 151.

[25] See Bowersock 1969: 59; Nutton 1984: 315–24 (= chapter 3 in Nutton 1988); Reardon 1971, 46; Schlange-Schöningen 2003: 151; Kendra Eshleman 2012: 17.

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had a circle of pupils. Among these students were consulars as well as outstanding personalities of the city who regarded him as *amicus*, allowing us to infer that this Greek migrant was held in high esteem. Through Eudemos, the newcomer Galen came into contact with the most respected circles of Rome and established his reputation there as a doctor. These networks enabled him to make contact with the imperial house, and to be called to tend to Marcus Aurelius.[26]

In addition to the Greek philosophers of the late 1st and 2nd centuries CE in Rome who migrated to Rome permanently or for an extended length of time, we must mention a colorful scene of Greek intellectuals who gave lectures – also on philosophical topics – as temporary migrants, travelers, and guest lecturers. This group included Maximus of Tyros and Apuleius, both well-known representatives of the so-called "Second Sophistic."[27] It should be noted here that Rome became a culturally fascinating metropolis during the Imperial Period, which was a strong pull-factor for intellectuals because of the city's cosmopolitan and now more and more intellectual "urban identity."[28] From the end of the 1st century CE onwards, the *Imperium Romanum* was an "intercultural landscape" to which people with Greek *paideia* could easily move. At that time, then, both in the East and the West, Greek language and culture were unquestionably established in certain domains.

But why, we might ask, do all these imperial *Graeculi* not appear in Athens? Athens had always been *the* city of education and philosophy, even from the point of view of ancient contemporaries. One might think of the famous Epitaphios of Pericles in Thucydides, where "the whole city" (sc. Athens) is described as an "educational institution for Greece" (Thuc. 2, 41,1), or Aelius Aristides' speech *To Rome (passim)* – to which one might easily add other *loci classici* of Athens' praise.[29] Athens had been the city of intellectuals since classical times: the abundance of literary figures, rhetoricians, sophists, and philosophers, even given the extant evidence, is immense. Athens, we might bear in mind, was the founding site of the Platonic Academy, the Aristotelian Peripatos, the Stoa, the Kepos of Epicurus, and was the living environment of the Cynics. Although political power had shifted towards Rome since Hellenistic times, and Alexandria, Pergamon and, a little later, Rome, too, beckoned intellectuals, it was Athens that remained the educational capital in the cultural memory of its contemporaries, the traditional epicenter of *paideia* and philosophy.[30]

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[26] For the texts of Galen, see Hahn 1989: 154–55.

[27] See Bowersock 1969; Wyss, Hirsch-Luipold and Hirschi 2017; Anderson 1993; Goldhill 2001; Whitmarsh 2005.

[28] See, for further details, Rüpke in this volume.

[29] E. g., Isocrates, Paneg. 39–40, more in Worstbrock 1965: 10 n. 40.

[30] On Athens' struggle for identity in the 1st century BC, see Borg 2011: 213–34; with emphasis on sophists see also Eshleman 2012: 67–90 and 125–148.

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That the imperial gaze was directed at both Athens and Rome, then, comes as no surprise. Athens boasted the foundation of four chairs for the great philosophical *haireseis* (Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, Epicurean) in 176 CE, subsidized by the emperor Marcus Aurelius, which were installed alongside the philosophical schools that had been privately organized.[31] For its part, Rome, as a city of political power and imperial seat, developed in the 2nd century through numerous initiatives and programmatic imperial support-measures into a metropolis with enormous cultural draw: Hadrian, for example, initiated (in 135 CE) the *Athenaeum* financed by the fiscus, a place of education in the *artes liberales* named after the Greek goddess Athena, with the aim of stimulating Greek culture in Rome. There he supported grammarians, rhetoricians, poets, sophists, and lawyers. Public lectures were also held.[32] Until the 4th century CE, no fewer than twenty-nine public libraries (mostly in the spatial context of *thermae*) could be found in Rome.[33] Moreover, numerous legal sources (mainly *digestae*) attest that teachers of higher education living in Rome, including philosophers, were granted certain privileges: for example, they were exempted from guardianship,[34] taxes, and liturgies.[35] Among the Philhellenic emperors of the Antonine era, new institutional and economic structures of cultural promotion arose. In their desire to transmit the formation of Greek traditions, these structures provided the emigrated Greek philosophers with favourable pragmatic and intellectual conditions for their own activities and lives in Rome. Yet, the Christian philosopher Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* shows that the Jew Trypho, as an exemplary constructed figure, was but a mirror-image of the still-recognized Greek "otherness," now functionalized for the construction of one's own religious (in the case of Justin: Christian) identity.[36] Thus, the multi-layered and hybrid identity that characterized Greek intellectuals and philosophers after their move to Rome ought to be borne in mind. We now possess some clues as to why these philosophers did not settle in Athens during the Imperial Period, but rather in Rome. Such motivational stimuli, of course, are always accompanied by histori-

[31] Attested by the (not unproblematic) testimony of Historia Augusta, Antoninus Pius 11, 3; for the promotion of philosophy and education especially at the time of the Antonines, see Dörrie and Baltes 1993: 121–40; Goulet-Cazé 1982: 243–44 with references to literature. It is a matter of scholarly dispute, however, whether one has to reckon for each of the mentioned *haireseis* (Platonist, Stoicist, Peripatetic, Epicurean) with two places occupied next to each other. Clearly arranged is Dörrie and Baltes 1993: 135–39. For a broader context of institutional and private philosophical teaching in the Imperial Period, see Eshleman 2012, esp. 25.

[32] On *paideia*, see in greater detail Pietzner 2008: 886.

[33] Ibid.: 873.

[34] Digest. 27, 1, 6, 5.

[35] Cf. Plotinus's deviance from this practice: Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 9, 5–18; Digest. 27, 1, 6, 11–12; Pietzner 2013: 878 with more testimonies. However, it was expected that philosophers would make their fortune available voluntarily, and there were, in any case, only a few philosophers (Digest. 27, 1, 6, 7).

[36] For details, see Niehoff 2019: 2–5.

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cally and individually determined "push and pull" factors, as well as by networks. We will see that in the following section.

3. Case Studies: Plotinus and Porphyry (in Contrast to Longinus)

For our case-studies, which will shed further light on the migration of Greek philosophers to Rome, we move on to the 3rd century CE. Unlike the two previous rather peaceful centuries, this era confronted the Roman Empire with thorny political and military problems its outermost borders (particularly in the East), and showed the typical symptoms of crisis: an almost annual replacement of soldier-emperors prevented domestic political stability, as well as internal and external wars and epidemics; new forms of religiosity emerged, and philosophers, of the past as well as the present, became leading spiritual figures (θεῖοι ἄνδρες).[37] Whether we can label the politically and mentally restless 3rd century as an "age of anxiety," as Eric Robertson Dodds (1965) has argued, is not relevant to the present question. Nonetheless, this notion ought to be distinguished from a historical, geographical, social, and individual perspective.[38]

Below, we consider the Platonic philosophers Plotinus and Porphyry, who migrated to Rome, and, as a kind of mirror-image, their Platonic colleague Longinus. In making this distinction, the contours of both "Roman" Platonists emerge. These three philosophers are not only exact contemporaries, but are also in intricate personal relationships with each other.[39] Longinus and Plotinus, for example, had the same philosophical teacher in Alexandria (Ammonius Saccas), but represented different interpretations in Platonism; Porphyry was first Longinus's pupil, then Plotinus's adept. Although every history of migration is characterized by its own particularities, with these three philosophers we can grasp some typical phenomena of the migration and acculturation of Greek philosophers in the Imperial Period.

Alongside biographical information in Eunapius,[40] our main source for the following is the *Vita Plotini* of Porphyry, a literary text preceding Plotinus's complete edition as *prolegomenon*, in which biography turns into hagiography and is centered on Plotinus's death (I name it "thanatography").[41] In this work, he is stylized as the model figure of a philosophical teacher who has mastered life in the body and whose soul could migrate into the transcendent realms in the sense

[37] Relevant is still Bieler 1976; Du Toit 1997; Fowden 1982: 33–59; Brown 1971: 80–101.

[38] Dodds 1965; see Fuhrer 2015: 61–85, esp. 61–64.

[39] More detailed on Longinus is Männlein-Robert 2001, *passim*; Männlein-Robert 2009: 436–46 and now Männlein-Robert, 2018b, 1310–21 and 1423–25 (bibliography).

[40] Eunap. *Vitae philosophorum et sophistarum* 5,18 – 10,16 Giangrande, see Becker 2013: 169–207.

[41] See Männlein-Robert 2002: 581–609, here 586.

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of Plato. Moreover, we find numerous autobiographical remarks by the author Porphyry in this text. With this writing as *prolegomenon* or better, as an isagogic text preceding his complete edition of the writings of the charismatic teacher, Porphyry aimed to depict the genesis of his work (in certain phases of life and work), and his own influence on its literary production. Amidst all the literary transformation, we can glean important information about Porphyry himself, as well as his teacher Plotinus.

First, Plotinus's migratory movements – at least, as far as we can grasp them:

> From that day on he remained continuously in the company of Ammonius, and achieved such proficiency in philosophy that he was also eager to acquaint himself with the corresponding practices of the Persians and the way that was followed in India. And as the Emperor Gordian was preparing an expedition against the Persians, he gave his services as a soldier and went along with them, being already in his thirty-ninth year. For he had remained as a student with Ammonius for eleven whole years. But when Gordian perished near Mesopotamia, he escaped with difficulty to Antioch and survived. And when the Emperor Philip assumed power, he went up to Rome, being forty years of age.[42]

After studying in Alexandria with Ammonius Saccas, the Platonist Plotinus, who probably came from the Egyptian Lyco(-polis), joined the Roman emperor Gordian III when he set out on a campaign against the Persians (Sassanids) under King Shapur I. Presumably, Plotinus did not go to the East as a soldier,[43] but rather as a philosophical advisor or king's counselor.[44] When the emperor died in February 244 CE, towards the end of this victorious campaign, Plotinus fled the ensuing political turbulence to the Syrian city of Antioch.[45] It is interesting that from there he neither went back to Alexandria – perhaps to avoid the competition for students and publicity there[46] – nor to Athens – although he (at least

[42] Translation (slightly adapted) by Edwards 2000: 5: καὶ ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας συνεχῶς τῷ Ἀμμωνίῳ παραμένοντα τοσαύτην ἕξιν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ κτήσασθαι, ὡς καὶ τῆς παρὰ τοῖς Πέρσαις ἐπιτηδευομένης πεῖραν λαβεῖν σπεῦσαι καὶ τῆς παρ᾽ Ἰνδοῖς κατορθουμένης. Γορδιανοῦ δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπὶ τοὺς Πέρσας παριέναι μέλλοντος δοὺς ἑαυτὸν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ συνεισῄει ἔτος ἤδη τριακοστὸν ἄγων καὶ ἔννατον. ἕνδεκα γὰρ ὅλων ἐτῶν παραμένων τῷ Ἀμμωνίῳ συνεσχόλασε. τοῦ δὲ Γορδιανοῦ περὶ τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν ἀναιρεθέντος μόλις φεύγων εἰς τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν διεσώθη. καὶ Φιλίππου τὴν βασιλείαν κρατήσαντος τεσσαράκοντα γεγονὼς ἔτη εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἄνεισιν (Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 3, 13–24 Henry-Schwyzer).

[43] Normally war veterans were settled in colonies, according to Ligt and Tacoma 2016a: 21 – and this is not the case with Plotinus.

[44] Porphyry stresses in the *Vita Plotini* Plotinus's burning interest in Persian and Indian philosophy (ibid. c. 3, 15 ff.) and thus inscribes it in the Platonic discourse of the integration of the 'wisdom of the barbarians'; see in more detail on (real or fictitious) journeys to India by philosophers Männlein-Robert 2009: 331–57, here 349.

[45] The Persian representation, according to which Gordian fell in February 244 as a result of the battle of Mesiche, is regarded as quite credible by several scholars, especially since later Byzantine sources (such as Iohannes Zonaras), which may be based on older material, do not point to an assassination of the emperor; see in more detail e. g., Körner 2002, here 87–88 and Drinkwater 2005, 28–66, here 35–36.

[46] See esp. Porph. Vita Plot. 3, 5–12, where we get a glimpse into the rich choice of philo-

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later) had contacts with Athenian Platonists such as Longinus and Eubulus (cf. ibid. c. 15, 18.) As Porphyry notes (ibid. 3, 13–24), he instead went to Rome in the same year (244 CE). Porphyry does not explain this decision; perhaps he did not know the reason, or assumed that Plotinus would naturally be attracted to Rome as a capital city. In any event, the now 40-year-old Plotinus began to teach philosophy in Rome, continuing to do so for 25 years.

While we can only speculate about Plotinus's motivation to migrate to Rome, we know that he soon met a wealthy widow there named Gemina who provided him with a house, slaves, and all his needs (ibid. c. 9, 1–3: ἔσχε δὲ καὶ γυναῖκας σφόδρα προσκειμένας, Γεμίναν τε, ἧς καὶ ἐν τῇ ταύτης θυγατέρα Γεμίναν, ὁμοίως τῇ μητρὶ καλουμένην, […] but he also had women as enthusiastic followers, such as Gemina, in whose house he also lived, and her daughter Gemina, who bore the same name as her mother; cf. for the slaves, ibid. c. 11, 1–6). By doing so, Gemina expressed her "social legitimation" of the Greek philosopher Plotinus.[47] With his ability to use Gemina's house as a base for building a following, Plotinus may have settled in rather quickly. This further indicates the presence of favorable conditions and perhaps already existing networks,[48] but Porphyry does not mention or thematize these possible facts on the ground (perhaps because of his hagiographic purposes in the *Vita Plotini*). Not least, this arrangement must have fostered the charismatic Plotinus' further development of his own philosophical approaches, themes, and methods, as well as the production of his writings accompanied by an assistant (first Amelius,[49] then Porphyry). I have already discussed the advantageous formal conditions that existed in Rome, and I will return shortly to the question of patrons and networks.

At this point, one might ask why Plotinus did not settle in Athens, which, in the 3rd century, was still a bustling educational and philosophical hub. Apart from the aforementioned chairs, which were subsidized by the emperor and existed in Athens since 176 CE, as far as we can judge by the sources, privately established and financed schools of philosophy seem to have been the norm. Famous grammarians, rhetoricians, sophists, and philosophers resided in Athens at that time (e. g., Apsines of Gadara, Fronto of Emesa, the sophist Nicagoras, the grammarian Apollonius); thus, the city enjoyed a lively intellectual scene.[50]

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sophical teachers in Alexandria). That Plotinus did fail to become head of Ammonios' school in Alexandria and therefore went to Rome, I find highly speculative, so Edwards 1994: 137–147.

[47] Stowers 1984: 59–82, here 66 and more recently Eshleman 2012: 78.

[48] We know from the *Vita Plotini* (c. 7, 8. 46 f.; c. 10, 1 f.) that Eustochius and Serapion, who both belonged to Plotinus' school in Rome, were Alexandrians, and also Olympus, who carried out the evocation of Plotinus' daemon in Rome, came from Alexandria. So there were quite a few compatriots of Plotinus around in Rome in his time (of course, we do not know if they came because of Plotinus or if they have already been living in Rome). For possible compatriotic networks in Rome see (more in terms of religion) Jörg Rüpke in this volume.

[49] On Amelius in detail see Männlein-Robert 1986:1423–25.

[50] See Porphyry in his *Philologos Akroasis* quoted by Eusebios (Praep. Ev. X, 3, 1–25 Mras

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Moreover, it was at this time that the Platonist and literary critic Cassius Longinus took over his uncle Fronto's rhetorical school in Athens, after years of study in Alexandria – and Longinus was a Platonist who serves as a contrast to Plotinus. After his studies, Longinus, who came from Syria, migrated from Egypt to Athens with a solid economic and institutional background (he inherited a private school): Φρόντων, Ἐμισηνός, ῥήτωρ […] τῆς ἀδελφῆς Φροντωνίδος παῖδα ὄντα Λογγίνον τὸν κριτικὸν κατέλιπεν κληρονόμον […] Fronto, from Emesa, rhetoric teacher, […] appointed the son of his sister Frontonis, the critic Longinus, as heir and successor […] (Suda s. v. Φρόντων p. 763, 13–17 Adler IV).

Three decades or so later, in 267 CE, Longinus again departed Athens. This migration seems to have been related to the political crisis of the Herul attacks, which caused a brutal caesura in Athens' cultural life. (The Platonic tradition in Athens only emerges again in the 4th century with Plutarch's private school.) This time, Longinus headed to the Syrian city of Palmyra, where the renowned Platonic philosopher and literary critic is reported to have turned into an active, even agitating politician in the service of the Palmyrenean queen Zenobia, about whom the following statements were made: "At the time of the emperor Claudius he (sc. Longinus') florished and in many respects he fought together with Zenobia, the queen of the Osroenes […],"[51] and "It is said that a weighty case among those who were killed was the philosopher Longinus, whom she (sc. Zenobia) had, as it is said, as "magister ad litteras Graecas" (as secretary for Greek affairs); but Aurelianus is said to have had him executed because that letter was supposed to have been written on precisely his advice)."[52]

It seems plausible to assume here an intricate interweaving of push-and-pull factors coupled with social and political networks: in addition to the perennial pull of "return to one's country of origin," it seems that the political involvement that was apparently possible for Longinus in Syria was always an important field of activity for Platonists. For his part, Longinus was regarded as jointly responsible for the anti-Roman policy of the Syrian queen Zenobia, and was even publicly executed by the Roman emperor Aurelian in 272 CE after conquering Palmyra.[53] A contemporary of Plotinus and, like him, a Platonic philosopher, Longinus was able to build on existing institutional and material structures within his own family and establish himself as a philosopher and philologist in Athens.

I) and the commentary on it in Männlein-Robert 2001: 251–92; Eshleman 2012: 67–90 and 125–48.

[51] Photius Bibl. Cod. 265, 492a p. 60, 30 f.: ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου δὲ οὗτος ἤκμαζε, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ συνηγωνίζετο Ζηνοβίᾳ τῇ Ὀσροηνῶν βασιλίδι […].

[52] Historia Augusta, Vita Aureliani 30, 1–3 Paschoud: *[…] grave inter eos qui caesi sunt de Longino philosopho fuisse perhibetur, quo illa magistro usa esse ad Graecas litteras dicitur; quem quidem Aurelianus idcirco dicitur occidisse quod superbior illa epistula ipsius diceretur dictate consilio […].* For further details, see Männlein-Robert 2001: 109–38; Hartmann 2001: esp. 302–05.

[53] For details, see Männlein-Robert 2001: 114–38.

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Taking a course diametrically opposed to that of Longinus, Plotinus established himself in Rome. Did he lack similar networks in Athens and therefore prefer Rome because of some better facilities there? Longinus's later arrival in Palmyra tells us that there were alternatives to Rome for philosophers willing to migrate. While Longinus decided to move to the absolute periphery of the Roman Empire, to a city the greatest possible distance from Rome, Plotinus went to the very capital of the Roman Empire – albeit without becoming politically active there, at least in the common sense.

As outlined above, we are only familiar with imperial or private funding structures for philosophers in Rome.[54] In Plotinus's case, we can clearly identify a seemingly private patroness, an apparently wealthy Roman woman named Gemina (*Vita Plotini* 9), who not only enthusiastically attended Plotinus's philosophical seminars together with her daughter of the same name, but also provided Plotinus and his close circle of employees and students with a house, classrooms, and slaves. Unlike Longinus, Plotinus had no kinship structures on which to rely. Gemina simply seems to have been a Roman woman with an affinity for philosophy, enthusiastic about Plotinus and possessing the means to support him. We know all this because Porphyry reports as an eyewitness – and, of course, we learn about all of this through his eyes.

Porphyry himself was a Platonic philosopher who originated from Phoenicia. Following many years of study with Longinus in Athens, he resettled in Rome, planning to study with Plotinus. Eunapios claims that Porphyry at that time already felt an urge to go to Rome: "[…] because of his desire to see Rome in all its size, and to conquer the city by means of his philosophy" (τὴν μεγίστην Ῥώμην ἰδεῖν ἐπιθυμήσας, ἵνα κατάσχῃ διὰ σοφίας τὴν πόλιν.)[55] In the war metaphor used by Eunapios (κατέχειν), which recalls Horace's dictum quoted at the beginning of this article (*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*), one detects a certain success of Porphyry in Rome – although the whole narration on Porphyry given by Eunapius is fanciful in the extreme.[56]

In the year 262/3 CE, Porphyry joined Plotinus's circle, adopting his philosophical convictions and serving as his assistant editor for the next six years.[57] Porphyry's acculturation in Rome, like Plotinus' before him, seems to have gone smoothly; according to the surviving texts, he presented himself as cosmopolitan, multilingual, and well-educated; thus, all in all as "Greek."[58] He reported some initial difficulties in grasping Plotinus's idiosyncratic interpretation of the Platonic theory of souls and ideas, which deviated considerably from the tradi-

[54] Cf. Fowden 1977: 359–83, here 370–71 (who, however, wrongly assumes a house of Porphyry in Rome because of Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 11, 13!).

[55] Eunap. Vitae Soph. 4, 6.

[56] Cf. Noy 2000: 97; on Eunapios see in detail Becker 2013: 175–83, esp. 181.

[57] Cf. Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 7, 50–51; 18, 20–23; 24, 2–5.

[58] Clark 2002: 112–32.

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tional one of his former teacher, Longinus, in Athens.[59] After setting aside Longinus's more traditional Middleplatonism, Porphyry appears to have devoted himself to the Platonist orientation initiated by Plotinus, particularly with regard to psychology, ontology, and ethics. This he did less with regard to methods – these were still quite philological, as he had learned them from Longinus – than with respect to philosophy, an area in which it can be said that he reinvented himself.

Hence, in the case of Porphyry – and probably also that of the apologist Tatianus, who, after other, different studies in Syria, migrated to Rome around the middle of the 2nd century CE to become a member of Justin's Christian school in Rome[60] – we observe a typical form of student mobility similar to modern forms, when an inspiring new teacher is visited (career migration as sort of a "pull factor"). In this regard, let us recall that Porphyry moved to Rome together with an otherwise unknown fellow student, Antonius of Rhodos (*Vita Plotini* 4, 1–5). Nevertheless, we can speak here of migration, since Porphyry remained with Plotinus in Rome for six years (ibid.), and after a few intermediate years in Sicily seems to have returned to Rome, married a wealthy Roman widow named Marcella, and died there.[61] With Porphyry's arrival in Rome at Plotinus's school, both biographies – at least according to the *Vita Plotini* of Porphyry – interlock. With regard to both integration and acculturation in the new sphere of life and living environment, Porphyry's report is in some respects revealing. While in his *De abstinentia* he is – for reasons of content and aim of this text – highly critical of the Romans and their religious practices (especially in terms of animal sacrifices), in his *Vita Plotini* Porphyry implies more tangentially his attitudes against the Roman fellow citizens, where he seems to have closer contact with them in non-political and non-religious contexts.[62]

In Rome, then, there was a close circle of students as well as other interested persons around Plotinus.[63] Among the students, besides Amelius and Porphyry, there were not only women, like the aforementioned Geminae and a certain Amphiclea, the daughter-in-law of Iamblichus, but also doctors (Paulinus, Eustochius, the Arab Zethus), the poet-philologist Zoticus, a rhetorician named Serapion, as well as some politically active Romans (e. g., Zethus, Castricius Firmus). Among the interested listeners were numerous senators, of whom Marcellus Orontius and Sabinillus were most taken with Plotinus's philosophizing, as well as Rogatianus, who, under Plotinus' influence, relinquished his political

[59] Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 18, see Männlein-Robert 2001: 202.

[60] Tat. Orat. 18, 6; Eus. Hist. eccl. 4, 29, 1.3.

[61] For his death at Rome, see Eunapius, VS 10, 10 Giangrande.

[62] See Johnson 2013: esp. 288–96.

[63] Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 7, 29–46. See Fowden 1977: 371. For a comparison with the contrarian school model of Origenes the Christ see (though from a very Christian perspective) in greater detail Pietzner 2013: esp. 279–323.

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ambitions and possessions, resigned his senatorial status, and did not take up his office as praetor at the last moment before the inauguration.[64] Thus, Plotinus's circle in Rome included Roman personalities and officials of high rank and status, as well as intellectual migrants from the Greek East from different ethnic groups.[65] In this way, the circle seems to mirror the hybridity of an "elitist subculture" in Rome.[66] Moreover, Plotinus also maintained close personal contacts with the Roman emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina, who were his friends (φιλία is mentioned in the text).[67] His attempt to turn an uninhabited city in Campania into a model city following the idea proposed by Plato (the "Platonopolis project" that failed due to envious people) can probably be traced back to his alleged closeness to the emperor.[68] Whether this can be described as a political commitment is an open question.[69] In any event, it is important to bear in mind the specifically Platonic comprehension of what is to be taken as "politics:": Plotinus may have sought to realize the Platonic utopia of an ideal state, and establish the ideal place for philosophical *anachoresis,* rather than become practically politically active in the common sense.[70] It is worth noting, in this context, that Plotinus discouraged the political engagement of his student Zethus.[71] This account given by Porphyry reflects Plotinus' individual habitus, which fully harmonizes with his psychology: with his attitude towards politics, Plotinus puts into practice his (very specific) notion of self as an immortal soul which has its true homeland in the transcendence, in the realm of mind, while only a (lower) part of the soul came down to earth into a body and thus feels the urge to escape and return.[72]

We possess yet further evidence for Plotinus' social commitment: he took over the guardianship and thus not only the education, but also the care and administration of property, for orphans from the best families of Rome, which the parents handed over to him before their death. This is remarkable because philosophers in Rome were legally released from social duties such as paying taxes or acting as guardians (see above p. 8).[73] It should be noted that Porphyry's

[64] Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 7, 17–40.

[65] For more details, see Brisson 1982: 511–42.

[66] For such hybridities especially located in Rome see Niehoff 2019: e. g., 30 and *passim* (manuscript); see also Clark 2002: 112–32 (see above n. 55).

[67] See Gagé 1975: 828–52; Edwards 1994: 137–47.

[68] Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 12. More sceptical on this is Pietzner 2013: 874–75.

[69] For the apolitical attitude of the Neoplatonists around Plotinus, see De Blois 1994: 166–76, esp. 172–74 and even more strict against any assumed political activity of Plotinus, De Blois 1989: 69–82. Fundamental to the political commitment of Platonic philosophers is still O'Meara 2007.

[70] See Becker 2011: 450–75.

[71] Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 7.

[72] Plot. Enn. I (6) 8; IV (8) 6; for details, see, e. g., Blumenthal 1971; Chiaradonna 2005: 27–49.

[73] Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 9.

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portrayal of the Plotinian circle presents a deliberately pagan, Platonic countermodel: first, to the contemporaneous Christian congregations in Rome, which already existed in large numbers and where corresponding promotion and social structures are genuinely present. With his *Vita Plotini*, then, Porphyry sought to bring to center stage an ideal Platonic philosopher – Plotinus – who was fashioned programmatically as a pagan "holy man."[74] But second, we must remember that in Porphyry's *Vita Plotini*, Plotinus as a "holy man" or Platonic saint, situated between men and gods, turns out to be a philosophical "alternative" to the emperor Gallienus, who likewise is represented between the supreme god and normal men as an intermediate power on coins.[75]

It seems significant that Porphyry himself dedicated a number of his works to Roman politicians: the politically active Castricius Firmus is also an addressee in Porphyry's *De abstinentia* (1, 1; 3, 1), and to Chrysaorius, a Roman senator (Elias, in Isagog. P. 93, 17 f. Busse) and suffect consul (David, in Isag. P. 92, 18 Busse), he dedicated three texts: his introduction in Aristotle's *Categories*, a language-philosophical and logical text (*Isagoge*), a now-lost treatise on Plato and Aristotle (Περὶ διαστάσεως Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους), and his fragmentarily preserved Περὶ τοῦ ἐφ᾽ ἡμῖν / *On Free Will* (Frg. 268, 1 Smith). We can therefore reconstruct rather strong interests of this senator in logic, in the difficult relation between Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy, and in the discussion about free will. Porphyry adapted at least the *Isagoge* to the current (and perhaps also individual) needs of Senator Chrysaorios, who apparently had difficulty with Aristotelian logic – something Porphyry then explained from the Platonic perspective. To another (otherwise undocumented) Roman senator, Gedalius, he dedicated his extensive commentary to the *Categories* of Aristotle.[76] As far as we are able to establish, Porphyry tailored at least some of his writing to the needs of his philosophical pupils, who, in these cases, are politicians and senators with obviously strong interests in (and likewise problems with) Porphyry's Platonic philosophy. We can therefore say that Porphyry himself maintained close contact with Roman politicians and even senators without practising politics himself. Without a doubt, he put down roots in his new world from his very beginning there and cultivated a personal Roman network, which he (quite like Plotinus) leveraged for purely philosophical purposes.

What conclusions can we draw from our observations with regard to the acculturation and the local influence of Plotinus and Porphyry? Their personal integration and acculturation in Rome seem to have been no problem at all: the new Roman world apparently offered the conditions for philosophical self-dis-

[74] See already Jerphagnon 1990: 41–52; Croke 1984: 1–14 and see, e. g., Männlein-Robert 2002: 581–609, esp. 601.

[75] See De Blois 1994: esp. 73.

[76] See in detail about these dedications, Goulet 2012: 1289–467, here 1295. See also Becker 2016: 39.

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covery and self-development, as well as self-fashioning. Particular historical, political, and personal constellations and networks of relationships conditioned and facilitated the work of these Platonists in Rome which, at that time, provided an ideal environment for them.[77] The factors that can be regarded as conditions for individually evaluated migration include:

1) The cultural factor is cardinal: Rome was a multi-ethnic, multicultural cosmopolitan metropolis since the Antonian emperors. The migration of Greek philosophers to Rome was rooted in the long-established phenomenon of transculturality in the Roman Empire, which was permeated by the Greek language since Hellenistic times, paideia, and culture. Thus, even for members of non-Hellenic ethnic groups (Longinus is Syrian, Plotinus Egyptian, and Porphyry Phoenician), mobility and migration, or rather, integration and acculturation, in a new locale was smoothed by a Hellenic educational background (language, paideia, culture).

2) In addition, there is a structural factor: particularly for the Platonists, who dominated the philosophical scene in the 3rd century, functioning translocal and international networks (around philosophers) can be identified (e. g., between Athens and Rome; around teachers and school memberships), which enabled social integration and economic security (we know of a lively correspondence between the Athenian Platonists Longinus and Eubulus with Plotinus and members of his school, especially Amelius and Porphyry).

3) The affiliation of these philosophers to a particular ethnic community at the destination of their migration seems to have borne some relevance, but a rather marginal one from an overall perspective.[78] Being part of a cosmopolitan or transcultural social elite characterized by a specific educational background was much more relevant.

4) Finally, the factor of personal attractiveness: in our context, the migrant Plotinus proved to be a significant pull factor for a science-based migration to Rome. His singular way of philosophizing and his charismatic personality attracted Roman elites. Furthermore, he motivated the migration of other philosophers, such as the upcoming Porphyry (cf. also Antonius of Rhodes), from Athens to Rome, and offered him both a local, that is, Roman, and at the same time culturally homogeneous network, by receiving him in his circle of students. This seems to have furnished ideal working conditions for Plotinus himself as well, for as far as we can see, he developed his novel philosophical concepts and considerations (metaphysics, theology of the soul), which deviated from tradi-

[77] Cf. also the close Plotinus familiar and pupil Amelius, who presumably leaves 269 for Syria, probably for Apameia, Porphyrius, Vita Plot. 2, 32–33.

[78] See the grave inscriptions on cemeteries, to this Ligt and Tacoma 2016a: 17. In the case of Longinus's move to Syrian Palmyra ethnicity and familial connections are possibly relevant; for other Alexandrians in Rome besides Plotinus see above, n. 47. In the Athens of the 5th century CE the Lycian Proclus is picked up by his compatriot Nicolaos at the harbour and is brought and introduced to the school of philosophy, for this see DeForest 2011: 315–42, here 2011, 322 n. 27.

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tional and contemporary (Middle) Platonism, especially in his Roman years. This deviation constituted a momentous mutation within Platonism, one that Heinrich von Stein would dub "Neuplatonism"- whose founding father Plotinus is regarded.[79]

4. Reception and Impact

Finally, let us take a brief look at Plotinus' and Porphyry's local impact in their adopted city of Rome. As we have seen, they first developed and disseminated their philosophy among the local Roman (cultural and political) elites of their time, but did not establish a "school" in the narrow sense. Shortly thereafter, in the early 4th century, Christian bishops and church fathers began to engage critically with Porphyry, who had expressed his criticism of Christianity explicitly in an extensive publication.[80] At the same time, Plotinus's and Porphyry's writings were received by Firmicus Maternus, Macrobius, and later also by Boethius.[81] It was the 4th-century rhetorician-politician Marius Victorinus's translation of their works into Latin, however, that propelled the far-reaching impact of these writers. These translations were intensively discussed by the church father Aurelius Augustinus, who made them known to Christian and hence broader circles in late antiquity and the Middle Ages.[82] This constitutes a clear "cultural transfer," since the Latin translations of Marius Victorinus which were produced in Rome prompted a broader reception of Plotinus's and Porphyry's philosophy in the Latin West.[83] In any case, their writings, and thus Neo-Platonic philosophy, have demonstrated reach and power. Their work had a significant impact on late Roman philosophy precisely because of its reception in Rome and translation into Latin.

Thus, the "construction of self" of the Platonists, on whom we have focused in this essay, had a great deal to do with their decisions of where to move and where to stay. A close look at the end of their migration tells us that it was entwined with their practice of philosophy and their philosophical conception of "self." The Roman self-construction and self-fashioning of these philosophers, and above all the fashioning of Plotinus' image through Porphyry in *Vita Plotini*,

[79] Stein 1965: 295–96 and 316.

[80] See Becker 2016.

[81] See Fowden 1977: 373.

[82] E. g., Augustinus, Conf. 8, 2, 3–4. For more details on the translation and revision by Marius Victorinus see Colish 1991: 57–74, here 57–59.

[83] The "linguistic translation as actual transfer with incorporation," according to Worstbrock 1965: 12; Lüsebrink 2005.

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proved to be highly effective,[84] and was accepted by Roman intellectuals, who translated and transmitted their works.

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[84] For a very similar result of successful self-fashioning and constructing a philosophical image of one-"self," see Ilaria Ramelli in this volume.

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