GREEK
PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS

A Historical Lexicon

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The glory and the bane of Greek philosophy is its lack of a past. Drawing on nothing more than common speech and the elastic potential of the Greek language the Hellenic philosophers not only formulated a problematic within which all subsequent thinkers cast their own reflections, but devised as well a sophisticated and complex terminology as a vehicle for their thoughts. Both the terms and the concepts they employed have since been overgrown with a millennium and a half of connotation that not even the most determined can completely strip away. The contemporary philosopher or theologian may attempt to rethink the concept, but he is betrayed in the utterance. For what the thinker has striven to clear away the reader or listener supplies anew. “Soul” and “God” carry their history heavily with them.

By a not too peculiar irony we read their philosophical future back into our Greek past in a variety of ways. One has experience of a Whiteheadian and Nietzschean Plato, a Thomistic and Hegelian Aristotle, and even an Existential Diogenes. As in much else, the Greeks invented this particular historical fallacy. It is clear that the Stoics read themselves back into Heraclitus; and the Neoplatonists, Plotinus into Plato.

It is an obvious necessity to make some sort of attempt at coming to the Greeks on their own terms. This can, I think, best be accomplished not by the usual chronological and historical approach that, for all its divisions into “schools” and “successions,” obscures rather than illuminates the evolutions we might otherwise discern in ancient philosophy, but rather from the direction of the problematic as revealed by a consecutive treatment of some of the basic concepts. This can be done in a number of ways and on different scales, but the method and scale adopted in this work is the one most conformable to the needs of what may be termed an “intermediate student” of the subject, not the beginner who is making his first acquaintance with Greek philosophy and who would be better served by a history of ancient philosophy and, perhaps, a dictionary of basic terms, nor, on the other hand, the professional scholar who would require a treatment both more massive and more nuanced.
Since such a "student" may be presumed to have some familiarity with the material it has been judged safe to substitute, in a fairly thorough way, a terminology transliterated directly from the Greek for their English equivalents in a modest effort at lightening the historical baggage. Jargon can be more easily cured than preconceptions, and it is this hope that prompts the frequency of stoicheion for element and physis for nature. There is, moreover, a complete English-Greek cross-index at the end.

The following treatment, then, singles out a few of the trees from the forest that threatens to overwhelm all of us at times, and attempts to trace their progress from acorn to fully grown oak. It also essays, if the metaphor may be indulged a bit longer, to display some of the interlocking root structure. Each entry is thoroughly cross-referenced, and if these references are pursued there will emerge a fairly complete philosophical context for each term. Every entry will supply some information, but meaning must be sought in the larger complexes. Finally, each entry is designed to be read with the texts of the philosophers themselves, and there are full textual citations at every step of the way. These are the final elements in the construction of a fruitful context where the prior history of the concept will illuminate a philosophical text, while the text will embellish the understanding of the term.

Both originals and translations of Plato and Aristotle are easily at hand. For the earlier and later philosophers the following will cover all but very few of the citations made in the text:

Pre-Socratics


Post-Aristotelians

The following authors are also frequently cited:


I would like to express my gratitude to the Arts and Science Research Fund of New York University for a subvention toward the preparation of the manuscript of this work, and particularly to the two selfless workers who turned the inscrutable text into clean copy, Eileen Markson and Kristin Helmers.
Philosophers have been uneasy about language almost from the beginning. The sculptor may curse his stone or the painter his oils, but neither contemplates suing for divorce. The philosopher, on the other hand, lives constantly in the shadow of infidelity, now suspecting metaphor, now tautology, or occasionally succumbing to the ultimate despair, the fear that he is dealing with nomina tantum. The Greeks' bouts with these maladies were occasional and mild; they were spared, moreover, the final indignity of desertion to mathematics, though the flirtation was long and serious. They trusted in names and their self-assurance was such that they could even afford to be playful about them. And when they came to devising names for the strange new things that they themselves had wrought, they approached the task with both confidence and inventiveness.

Prephilosophical language had been shaped by popular usage and the more transcendent intuitions of religion and mythology. The former was, of course, marked by its predilection for things; but there was, in addition, an accumulating store of more or less abstract terms flowing from the moral sensibilities of the epic tradition. Dike, time, arete, though calculable in purely material terms, were already at hand as abstracts and the first generation of philosophers, who still subscribed to most of the poetic conventions, drew heavily upon this epic vocabulary. But for the rest, there were things: gold, chariots, the soul (psyche), spears, and the spirit (thymos), all material objects and all capable of fairly precise localization.

But there was another factor at work as well. The search for understanding no more began with Thales than logic with Aristotle. All primitive men try to come to terms with the more numinous aspects of their environment through the media of ritual and myth, and the Hellenic version of the latter was a particularly rich and imaginative attempt at organizing and explaining higher levels of reality in some coherent fashion. Myth is, among other things, explanation and, what-
ever dimensions its moralizing content might assume, the didactic element is never completely absent.

Myth was the immediate forerunner of philosophy and provided it not only with certain embryonic conceptualizations, but with insights into the working of the world as well. Myth already presupposes a world order, what the philosophers would call a *kosmos*, but bases it chiefly upon the genealogical relationships between the gods whose family structure, derived from human paradigms, both preserved and explained the order of terrestrial reality. It also embodied the notion of what was later to be called causality, though in its mythological form it might be better termed the principle of responsibility, since both it and the patterns of order are founded on the characteristic mythological principle of anthropomorphism. The divine (*theion*) had been personalized by myth into a god (*theos*) and could thus be linked and systematized and held responsible for phaenomena.

The earliest philosophers, for all their revolutionary achievements, were indebted to the mythological world view. Eventually the anthropomorphic bases upon which it had been constructed came under attack, but the effects were not at first critical since the pervasive hylozoism of those early thinkers enabled them to explain action and reaction in terms of the life and movement naturally inherent in material things. Once Parmenides had denied the hylozoistic premiss, however, the mythological personalized god reappeared, not, to be sure, in his grosser Homeric shapes, but as an artist who molds or a thinker who moves, both unmistakably personalized but deprived of physical aspect and will.

Thus, at the end of the philosophically abhorred infinite regress there was preserved what can be fairly identified as the god of the mythologers. What the philosophers had, in effect, done was to lay exclusive claim to the entire intermediary area of secondary causality. Myth was banished from these regions and causality replaced responsibility. But before this could be done or, rather, in the course of doing it, a new form of discourse had to be shaped and a new language to express it. If Thales did, indeed, say that water was the *arche* of all things (Aristotle, *Meta.* 983b), the wonder of it all is not so much the substitution of water for Zeus (the mythologers had already personified Oceanus to serve the same genetic end), as the intrusion of *arche* for the mythologer's *pater*. Thales (or perhaps Anaximander) was in search of a starting point other than the common mythological one of father and chose a term, *arche*, already in fairly common use, to express the new concept. The older senses of *arche* continued to be
employed, but a radical new dimension had been added to the lan-
guage.

What did the philosophers do to language? At first they did
nothing since they did not know, fortunately perhaps, that they were
philosophers and so continued to use words in their common accept-
ance, which, as a matter of fact, tended to be in rather concrete,
individualized senses: the hot and the good were both some thing. The
great terminological changes introduced by the philosophers—and an
inspection of usage suggests that they took place only gradually—were
tied to the “discoveries” of incorporeality and universal predication or,
to put it more baldly, the realization that there were things and things.
The dimensions of this new order of reality, which was not tied to
objects in the ordinary sense and which could be generalized, were only
gradually understood, and the stubborn “thisness” of language, conse-
crated by an epic tradition that revelled in the physical, never com-
pletely disappeared. Its most obvious aftereffects are probably to be
seen in the persistent Greek habit of philosophizing through metaphor.
Just as the geometer might offer a proof “by construction,” so the
philosopher was perfectly content to substitute analogy for analysis.

Language began to change. Prephilosophical staples like eros and
chronos (both of which myth had already appropriated for its own
purposes), eidos, physis, and the already mentioned arche developed
new connotations, while other old words like hyle and stoicheion were
expropriated for radical new purposes. The concrete yielded to the
abstract, as poion, “just such a thing,” gives way to poiotes, “quality”
(in Theae. 182a Plato apologizes for the awkward new term). In-
deed, this progresses to the point where only names (Callias, Socrates)
will serve to denote the individual, or to such Aristotelian peculiarities
as “this something or other here” or the untranslatable to ti en einai.
The combinatory powers of the language are tapped to describe the
new complexities (hypostasis, hypokeimenon, symbebekos, entele-
cheia), and there appears a veritable treasure trove of abstract terms to
identify newly isolated processes (apodeixis, synagoge, phronesis, gene-
isis, kinesis, aisthesis, noesis).

All these refinements and new formations led, in time, to a sophis-
ticated technical vocabulary that bore little resemblance to common
usage. Literary considerations also came into play. A Stoic pamphlet
addressed to a popular audience will obviously make more concessions
to the general than a commentary by Simplicius, but the impression of
popularity in the former work may be heightened by the passage of
technical terms into common parlance. Plato went to some pains to
vary his terminology in what seems to be a deliberate attempt to resist the congealing of technical terms, and the implication of the Socratic-centered Platonic dialogue is still that two reasonably educated citizens can sit down and discuss these matters. Whether this is the truth of the matter or mere literary rhetoric we cannot tell. But no such premiss is visible in Aristotle who insists on a standardized technical usage. With Aristotle the professionalism implicit in the founding of the Academy comes of age in language.

Philosophical language did become technical even though standardization was, and remains, an unfulfilled dream. Since the ancient philosophical tradition was strongly oriented to schools there was a certain degree of consistency within, say, the Platonic or Peripatetic school. But even here the pervasive post-Aristotelian thrust toward syncretism tended to muddy the conceptual waters: Plotinus' use of *eidos* will owe something to Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics without, at the same time, specifying either the debt or its extent.

Whether this terminological virtuosity was for good or for ill may be debated. But it is clear that in manufacturing a new currency for a new way of seeing reality the Greeks were borne by the counters themselves into a world far removed from this material one. Most of the philosophers were at one in agreeing that this world of concrete, discrete beings is an exceedingly disorderly place and that "there is no science of the individual." Such was not true, however, of the newly isolated universal terms that, like the gods of the now disreputable mythology, could be manipulated and, once endowed with an order of reality, could be constructed into a world of order and stability. The Platonic *eidos* and the Aristotelian *kategoria* are, each in its own way, the Greeks' ultimate tribute to language, and the Proclean *kosmos noetos* undoubtedly its most baroque monument: a universe in which every concept is matched with its appropriate universal term and the whole arranged in a hierarchical order of mathematical precision and exceeding beauty.
Contents

Preface v
Preliminary Note ix
Greek Philosophical Terms 3
English–Greek Index 205
adiaphoron: without difference, morally indifferent or neutral state

1. Since the end of man is, according to the oldest Stoic formulæ, to live harmoniously with nature (see nomos 2), the good will consist in those things which are helpful or have some value toward this kind of life, while evil will reside in those things which make no such contribution (D.L. vii, 94, 105). Between these two absolutely helpful and harmful classes of acts (justice, prudence, moderation, etc. on the one hand, cowardice, injustice, immoderation on the other) there exists another group of things like life, health, and pleasure that are characterized as morally indifferent (adiaphora) in that they have no immediate connection with the end of man (D.L. vii, 101—103). They do, however, contribute to or impede that end indirectly and hence are further divided (D.L. vii, 105—106) into preferable acts (proegegmena), acts to be avoided (apopoegegmena), and absolutely indifferent acts, the first category constituting the “duties” (officia) of the Roman ethicians and defined as those acts for whose performances some reasonable defense (eulogos, probabilis) can be given (Cicero, De fin. iii, 17, 58).

2. These latter distinctions provoked considerable controversy in both the Stoa and the Academy. There was no question that one had a moral obligation to choose the good; what was at stake was the moral implications of dividing the adiaphora into justifiable and nonjustifiable acts. There were those moral rigorists like Aristo of Chios and the Sceptic Pyrrho who denied that any moral value at all could be attached to these reasonably defensible and so “befitting” (kathekonta) activities (Cicero, De fin. iv, 25, 68). Further, the Sceptics’ attacks on epistemological certitude had its inevitable effects in the moral sphere and we find the two eminences of the New or Sceptical Academy, Arcesilas and Carneades, advancing a theory that once certitude has been undermined the moral act can only be that for which some reasonable defense can be made, the former approaching the now central kathekonta by applying an intellectual criterion (rationally probable, eulogon; Sextus Empiricus, Adv. Math. vii, 158), Carneades by putting forth an experimental one (the practically probable, pithanon; idem, Pyrrh. 1, 227—229).
3. That these attitudes, coupled, in the case of Carneades, with a trenchant criticism of Stoic epistemology, had an effect on the thinking of the Stoa in ethics is clear from its own focusing on the correct choice of the *kathekonta* as the central problem of the moral life (Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 11, 76) and its retreat from Zeno's earlier insistence that virtue alone (in this context, life according to nature) suffices for man's happiness and its admission of the need for satisfactions flowing from a correct choice of the *kathekonta* (D.L. vii, 128).

**aér:** air

1. For Anaximenes the *apeiron* of Anaximander and the *arche* of all things was air (Aristotle, *Meta.* 984a; Simplicius, *In Phys.* 24, 26), probably because of its connection with breath and life (cf. *pneuma*). It was, as were most of the pre-Socratic *archai*, divine (*theion*), Cicero, *De nat. deor.* 1, 10, 26. The later popularizer of *aer* was Diogenes of Apollonia who made it the substance of both soul (*psyche*) and mind (*nous*), frs. 4, 5, an affinity parodied by Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 227 ff.; what is striking in Diogenes' conception is, of course, the association of a purposeful activity with his *aer-nous* (see *telos*).

2. The connection *aer-pneuma-psyche-zoe-theion* remained a constant one. The air-like nature of the soul is raised in *Phaedo* 69e–70a; Cebes fears it, but from another point it suggested a sort of impersonal immortality: the body might perish, but the *psyche* would be reabsorbed into the purest part of the *aer*, i.e., *aither* (q.v.), as yet undistinguished as a fifth element (see Euripides, *Helen* 1014–1016; *Suppliants* 533–534). Since the heavenly bodies (*ouranoii*) dwell in the *aither* another possibility was that the soul might be absorbed into the stars (see Aristophanes, *Peace* 832). This belief was incorporated into later Pythagoreanism, but with the reservation of *aither* to the supraluminary world; it was the aer between the moon and the earth that was filled with *daimones* and heroes, D.L. viii, 32; compare Philo, *De gigant.* 2 and 3 where the *daimones* are now angels, and the consequent identification in *De somn.* i, 134–135 of the aer and Jacob's Ladder (*Genesis* 28, 12–13); see *kenon*.

**agathon:** something good, the good, an ultimate principle, summum bonum

1. Plato, perhaps displaying his Socratic heritage, gives one of the ethical *eide* a central position in his hierarchy: in the *Republic* (see 504e–509e) the form of the Good stands at the center of the Platonic state, and it is the chief duty of the philosopher to contemplate it, *ibid.* 540a (for the problems arising from its transcendence at this stage, see *hyperousia*). It is, moreover, the term of the process of dialectic (*dialektike*, q.v.). Plato's turning toward the conditions of the *kosmos*
aisthētōs in the later dialogues is reflected in his general reflections on the Good in the *Philebus*; the contrasting claims of pleasure (*hedone*) and wisdom (*phronēsis*) to be the highest good are being examined, and the conclusion turns to an examination of the “mixed life” (see *hedone* and the mixed result of the operation of *nous* and *ananke* in the *Timaeus*), which is found to combine both pleasure and wisdom (59c–64a). What is notable here is not only the blending of the *eide* in this life, but the presence of measure and proportion (64a–66a) and, more importantly for Plato’s growing theism, the advancing emergence of a transcendent, intelligent cause of good in the universe (see *ibid.* 26c–31b and *theos, nous*).

2. Aristotle is critical of Plato’s theory of the Good (see *Eth. Nich.* 1, 1096a–1097), but what he understands by that is clearly the *eidos-agathon* theory of the *Republic* (see *ibid.* 1095a and *Eth. Eud.* 1, 1217b). Yet he accepts (*Eth. Nich.* 1, 1094a) a Platonic definition of good as “that at which all things aim”; for Aristotle, this is happiness (*eudaimonia*) (*ibid.* 1, 1097a–b), defined as activity (*praxis*) in accordance with virtue (*aretē*), *ibid.* 1, 1100b; and the highest virtue is *theoria*, i.e., contemplation for its own sake, *ibid.* x, 1177a–b (for the highest type of *theoria* and hence the Cosmic Good, cf. *telos*). The Epicureans return to the position rejected by Socrates (*Gorg.* 495c–496b), Plato (*Phil.* 55b–c), and Aristotle (*Eth. Nich.* vii, 1153b–1154a), namely that pleasure (*hedone*) is the highest good (D.L. x, 129). In the Stoa the good was identified with the profitable (D.L. vii, 9 and 101–103).

3. Plotinus’ “theology” of the Good is to be found in *Enn.* vi, 15–42, including (25) a description of the hierarchy of goods leading up to the Ultimate Principle; the One (*hen*), which he identifies with the Good, is the final unification of the Socratic and Parmenidean strains in the Platonic tradition.

agēnētōs: ungenerated, uncreated (universe)

In *De coelo* 1, 279b Aristotle says that all his predecessors agreed that the *kosmos* had a beginning. Xenophanes is, perhaps, to be excluded from them, on the basis of an interpretative reading of frs. 14 and 26, and surely the entire Eleatic school stemming from Parmenides, with its banishment of *genesis* from the realm of Being (see *on*), is also to be excepted, as Aristotle specifically does in *Meta.* 986b. In *Tim.* 28b Plato clearly says that the *kosmos* is subject to *genesis*. Aristotle, who earlier in his career had supported the same position (*De phil.*, fr. 18), takes this to mean that it had a beginning in time and criticizes it severely (*De coelo* 1, 279b). But there was another interpretation of the passage, as Aristotle himself (*loc. cit.*) is aware, put forth by Xenocrates (see Plutarch, *De an. proc.* 1013a), and
adopted by most later Platonists, that *genesis* here means "in a perpetual state of change" (see *on*). The same interpretation, adapted to his emanationist theories, can be seen in Plotinus (see *Enn*. II, 9, 2). Aristotle is emphatic in his belief that the universe is both ungenerated (*agenetos*) and incorruptible (*aphthartos*). This becomes the basic position, but Philo, by reason of the account in *Genesis*, must, of course, stand outside it (see *De opif.* 2, 7–9).

**ágnôstos:** unknown, unknowable

1. Because of the transcendence of God certain problems arise in the possibility of his being an object of knowledge. A simple agnosticism is held by Protagoras (Diels, fr. 8084) where the question is separated into knowledge of whether the gods exist, and what their nature is; the *agnosia* problem treats more properly of the latter (on the question of their existence, cf. *theos*).

2. Because of the importance of transcendence in the Platonic tradition, the question of the knowability of God was central there; the Platonic proof text on the difficulty of knowing God was *Tim.* 28c, supported by the pessimistic remarks in *Parm.* 141e–142a, *Symp.* 211a, and especially, *Ep.* VII, 341b–d. As is indicated in the texts cited, the problem is the transcendence of the supreme principle, the "Good beyond Being" of *Rep.* VI, 509b (see *hyperousia*). But if the essence of God could not be apprehended directly, the same and similar texts of Plato suggest alternative ways of knowing God, ways highly developed in later Platonism (e.g. Albinus, *Epit.* X and Maximus of Tyre, VII and XVIII; compare Proclus, *Elem.* theol., prop. 123). The major ones are:

   a) by inductive return to the source (*epagoge*, the medieval *via eminentiae*); see *Symp.* 209e–211c and compare Plotinus, *Enn.* I, 6.

   b) by analogy (*analogia*); see *Rep.* VI, 508a–c and compare Plotinus, *Enn.* VI, 7, 36; because Proclus denied any participation (*methexis*) between the One and the rest of reality (*Elem.* theol., prop. 23), he is barred from the *via analogiae*.

   c) by "removal," negation (*aphairesis*; the *via negativa*); see the first "hypothesis" of the *Parmenides*, which later Platonists took in a very unhypothetical sense; compare Plotinus, *Enn.* VI, 7, 32.


**ágrapha dógmata:** unwritten doctrines

One of the common methods used to obliterate the difference between what Aristotle says about Plato's *eide* and the preserved account in the dialogues is to presume that Aristotle, as a member of
the Academy, had access to unpublished material (had not Plato said in Ep. vii, 341c that he would never publish anything on the ultimate principles?). There are only two possible references to such material in Aristotle; in De an. I, 404b he refers to something called “On Philosophy,” possibly a reference to his own dialogue by that name, though later commentators took it as a reference to a Platonic lecture (cf. Simplicius, In De an. 28, 7—9), and in Phys. iv, 209b where he refers to Plato’s “unwritten doctrines” (agrapa dogmata). What were these agrapa dogmata? The one identifiable possibility is a single lecture “On the Good” that Plato gave to a disenchanted public who came to hear about happiness, but were treated to mathematics, geometry, and astronomy instead (Aristoxenus, Harmonics ii, 30–31); it was attended by Aristotle and other members of the Academy, who took notes that they later published (Simplicius, In Phys. 151, 453); cf. arithmos.

For a related problem as it concerns Aristotle, cf. exoterikoi.

agrapheis nomos: unwritten law
See nomos.

aìdios: everlasting, perduration in time (aìdios kata chronon)

Although the distinction in terminology is not always maintained by the philosophers, the concepts of “everlasting perduration in time” (aìdios) is separate and different from “eternal” (aìionios), i.e., not belonging to the order of time (chronos), but to the order of eternity (aìon, q.v., and Plotinus, Enn. iii, 7, 3); “eternal” is used loosely to describe both concepts, e.g. the “eternity of the kosmos;” but aìdios is really a question of the occurrence or the possibility of occurrence of corruption (phthora), and so the concept will be discussed under aphthartos; see also aìon, chronos.

aìon: life-span, eternity
1. In its earliest and nonphilosophical use, aìon means a life-span; its conceptual introduction into philosophy may be seen in Parmenides, fr. 8, line 5, where the denial of becoming (genesis) in true being (see on) leads to its corollary, the denial of the temporal distinctions “past” and “future” and the affirmation of total present simultaneity. Melissus interprets this as apeiron, without limit, going on forever (frs. 2, 3, 4, 7), a notion later distinguished as aìdios (q.v.), perduration in time, and the same type of interpretation may be seen in Aristotle, De coelo i, 279a where aìon embraces “all time even to infinity [apeiron].”
2. The fundamental distinction between time (chronos) and aìon that is implied in Parmenides is made fully explicit in Plato, Tim. 37d where time is created to serve as an image (eikon) of the state of the
eide, from which Plato, like Parmenides, has banished all genesis, or as Plotinus puts it (Enn. III, 7, 4), aion is the “manner of existence” of Being. But Plato’s admission, through the intermediary of the soul, of both nous and kinesis into the intelligible world creates a problem unknown to the static universe of Parmenides. The solution is to be found in Aristotle’s discussion of the First Mover whose “span of existence” (aion) is unending (aidios), Meta. 1072b; the reason for this is the peculiar type of activity involved in a noesis thinking itself, what Aristotle calls “the activity of immobility” (energeia akinesis) in Eth. Nich. 1154b. This is the foundation of the treatment of eternity in both Plotinus, Enn. III, 7, 4 and Proclus, Elem. theol., prop. 52; in the following proposition Proclus hypostatizes aion as a separate substance, probably as a result of a similar practice in later Greek religious thought. See chronos.

aísthēsis: perception, sensation

1. Perception is a complex of problems rather than a single question. It enters philosophy modestly enough as an attempt on the part of the early physikoi to explain the physiological processes involved in perceiving an object. A variety of solutions were worked out, mostly in terms of the contact, mixture, or penetration of the bodies involved. There were, of course, certain anomalies as, for example, the case of vision where contact was apparently absent, but the first major crisis did not occur until grades of knowledge were distinguished and sense perception was separated from another more reliable type of perception that had little or nothing to do with sensible realities or sensible processes. Aisthesis found itself involved in the epistemological doubts raised by Heraclitus and Parmenides and debarred from any genuine access to truth (see aletheia, doxa, episteme).

2. Other changes were afoot as well. The particle or somatic theory upon which the physikoi’s theory of perception was based began to be replaced by theories on change that took as their point of departure a new dynamic view of the “powers” of things (see dynamis, genesis). Aristotle, who was a dynamist, incorporated the analyses worked out for change in sensible beings into his metaphysic and for the first time aísthēsis became a philosophical question as well as a physiological one.

3. A third major change was precipitated by the growing belief in the incorporeal nature of the soul (psyche, q.v.), the principle of life in beings and the source of their sensitive activities. What then was the general relationship between the immaterial soul and the material body, and the specific one between that part or faculty of the soul known as aísthēsis and that part of the body which it employed, its organon? What had once been a simple contact between bodies was