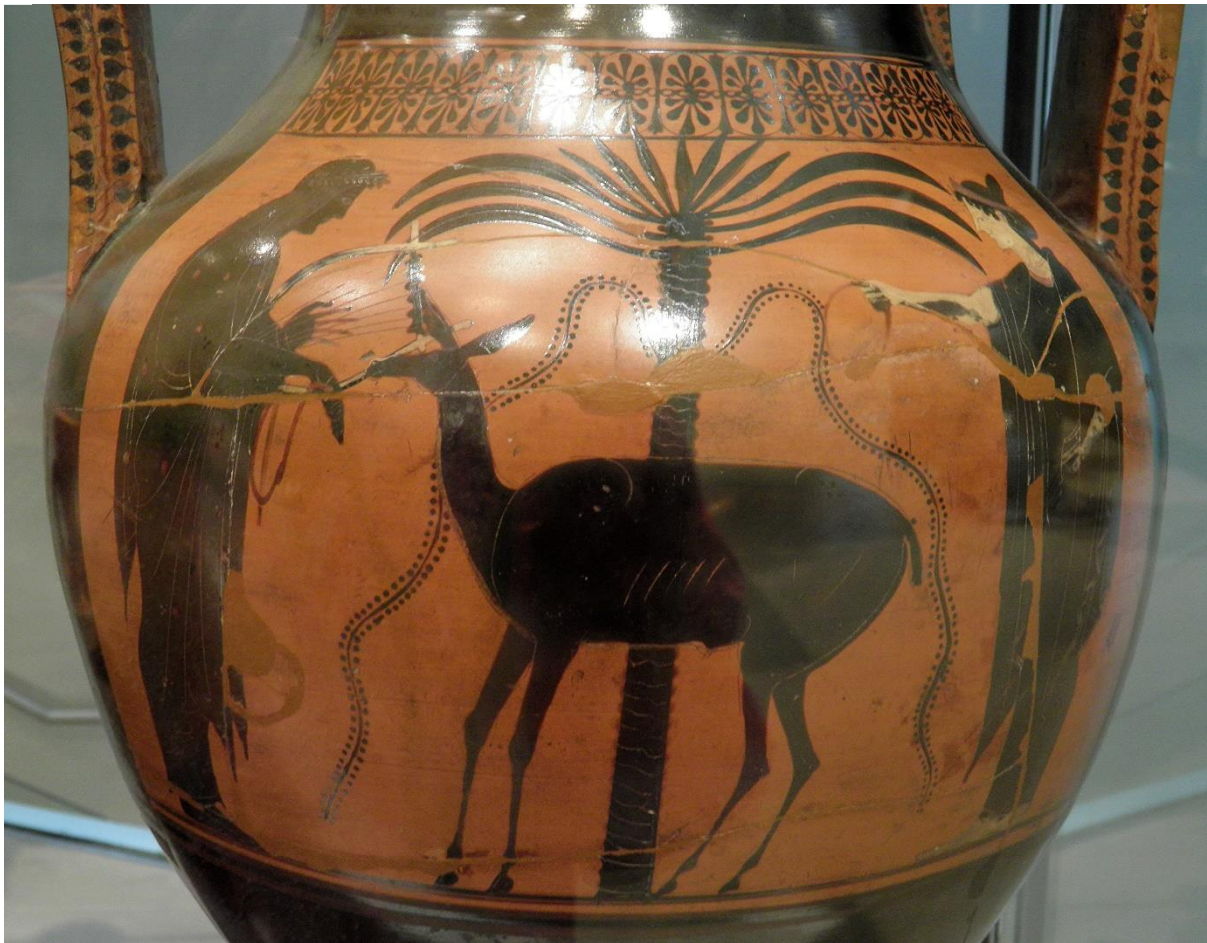




ANIMALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN ANCIENT GREEK AND ROMAN PHILOSOPHY

An Online International Conference organised jointly by the Eco-Humanities Research Group, University College Cork, and Birkbeck, University of London, with the support of the University College Cork Environmental Research Institute

Wednesday 8 November – Friday 10 November 2023
Time zone: GMT



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Conference Registration

The whole conference will be held online on Zoom. We would like to thank the UCC Environmental Research Institute for providing technical support and resources for the conference.

Please register for the conference on Eventbrite here: <https://tinyurl.com/4px4vhcr>

Once you have registered, you will receive the Zoom meeting link for the Conference automatically prior to the conference.

Registration is for the whole three-day conference: please register via this link even if you can only attend some of the conference. If you have any problems registering, please contact Crystal Addey (crystal.addey@ucc.ie)

Conference Organisers

Crystal Addey (crystal.addey@ucc.ie) is a Lecturer in the Department of Classics and a Principal Investigator of the Environmental Research Institute at University College Cork (UCC), Ireland. She is the Founder and Co-Convenor of the UCC Eco-Humanities Research Group. Her publications include *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the gods* (Ashgate 2014; reprinted Routledge 2015), the edited volume *Divination and Knowledge in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Routledge 2021), and many chapters and articles on ancient philosophical and religious approaches towards the environment and the natural world, on the connections between ancient Mediterranean religions (especially divination) and philosophy, and on the roles of women in ancient philosophy.

Sophia Connell (Sophia.connell@bbk.ac.uk) is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Birkbeck, University of London and Undergraduate Lead in the School of Historical Studies. Her publications include *Aristotle on Female Animals: A Study of the Generation of Animals* (Cambridge 2016), *Aristotle on Women: Physiology, Psychology and Politics* (Cambridge 2021), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Biology* (editor, 2021)

and many chapters and articles on ancient philosophy, including ‘Aristotle on Animal Cognition’ (2021) and ‘Aristotle on the Intrinsic Value of Nature and its Relation to Contemporary Environmental Ethics’ (forthcoming). She also works on women in the history of philosophy both ancient and modern.

Conference Description

In ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, we see a diverse range of perspectives on, and great interest in, animals, nature and the natural world, and in related environmental issues, such as sustainability. Despite this, environmental ethicists and philosophers tend to dismiss the relevance of ancient philosophy to contemporary environmental debates and issues. Environmental philosophers have even claimed that ancient Greek and Roman philosophy – at least in its canonical forms – is part of the problem in environmental terms that has contributed significantly to the subsequent prevalence of anthropocentrism in western philosophy and culture. Plato, who has had a profound influence on the western philosophical tradition, is sometimes seen as epitomising this anthropocentrism because of his emphasis on dualism, championing of reason, and his apparent anti-female and anti-body stance. Consequently, it is thought that he diminished the importance of the natural or ‘sensible’ world primarily because of his theory of Forms which postulates the existence of an ideal, immaterial world beyond the world of the senses and accords a greater value to the former (cf. Mahoney 1997: 45-54). Aristotle’s philosophy has also been characterised as anthropocentric, based on his statement that animals and plants are ‘for the sake of’ humans in the *Politics*. Some consider the way he separates human beings as rational from other living things as perceptive and nutritive to have been influential. Stoic philosophers are often seen as drawing on Aristotle in support of their own anthropocentric philosophical positions.

However, recent scholarship in Classics and Ancient Philosophy has begun to call into question and challenge this characterisation of ancient philosophy and its relevance to environmental concerns. *The Greeks and the Environment*, edited by Laura Westra and Thomas M. Robinson, suggested new ways of relating ancient Greek philosophy to ecology and environmentalism. More recently, Melissa Lane’s *Eco-Republic: What the Ancients can Teach Us about Ethics, Virtue, and Sustainable Living* has re-assessed Plato’s *Republic* as a useful and provocative work for thinking through environmental and related issues, including climate change, and seeks to refashion the political imagination toward a more environmentally sustainable way of living, while Mark Usher’s *Plato’s Pigs and Other Ruminations: Ancient Guides to Living with Nature* suggests that we can find in the lives and thought of ancient philosophers a close engagement with nature and an understanding of human knowledge and experience that is based on whole systems and, in relation to this, values and practices that are conducive to sustainable living. With regard to Aristotle, ongoing research on his zoological writings continues to reveal his focus on the capacities of organisms, living in their natural environments, including much cognitive sophistication (most recently: *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle’s Biology*, edited by Sophia Connell; *Aristotle On How Animals Move*, edited by Andrea Falcon and Stasinos Stavrianeas). Aristotle’s focus in these works is on animals’ independent goods and values, quite apart from any service they provide to human beings.

This conference seeks to expand on these developments and re-assessments of the relevance of ancient philosophy to contemporary environmental debates.

Conference Schedule

Please note: **the timezone for the conference is GMT. Please check your own timings and timezone if you are in a different timezone.**

Wednesday 8 November 2023

- 10.00-10.15 Introduction and Welcome
- 10.15-11.15 Keynote Lecture: Claudia Zatta (University of Milan, Italy): “Οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ζῷα”: Life and The Environment in Early Greek Philosophy’**
- 11.15-11.30 BREAK
- 11.30-12.15 Harold Tarrant (University of Newcastle, Australia): ‘The World as a Magical Organism: Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*’
- 12.15-1.00 Stefano Mecci (Italian Institute for Historical Studies, Naples, Italy): ‘The Dog-like Philosophers and Nature: The Ancient Cynics, the first environmentalists?’
- 1.00-2.00 LUNCH
- 2.00-2.15 Melissa Lane (Princeton University, USA): Special Introduction and Reflections**
- 2.15-3.00 Hallvard Fossheim (University of Bergen, Norway): ‘A Stoic Perspective on Worth in Nature’
- 3.00-3.45 Matt DuPree (Florida State University, USA): ‘Like Wasps and Flies: Deep Ecology and the Ten Modes of Aenesidemus’
- 3.45-4.00 BREAK
- 4.00-4.45 Michal Bizon (Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland): ‘Na ton kynai! The dog in Greek thought from Heraclitus to Plotinus’

Thursday 9 November 2023

- 10.30-11.15 Leo Catana (University of Copenhagen, Denmark): ‘The Concept of Care (Gr. *epimeleia*) as a Nature-Orientated Virtue in Ancient Greek Thought’
- 11.15-12.00 Jorge Torres (University of Bern, Switzerland): ‘Aristotle on Friendship between Human and Non-Human Animals’
- 12.00-1.00 Keynote Lecture - Dimitri El Murr and Jean Trinquier (École Normale Supérieure, France): ‘Soul and the Beasts: A Platonic Reading of Two Newly Discovered Pompeian Polychrome Mosaics’**

- 1.00-2.15 LUNCH
- 2.15-3.00 Douglas Campbell (Alma College, Michigan, USA): ‘Plato on Plants, Humans and Other Living Things’
- 3.00-3.45 Thornton Lockwood (Quinnipiac University, Connecticut, USA): ‘*Politics* I.8: Aristotle’s environmental philosophy?’
- 3.45-4.00 Break
- 4.00-4.45 Enrico Piergiacomini (Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, Israel): ‘*Animal sacer et pius?* Xenocrates, the animals’ notion of god, and the environment’

Friday 10 November 2023

- 10.00-10.45 Miira Tuominen (University of Stockholm, Sweden): ‘Just Life: Porphyry’s argument for abstinence’
- 10.45-11.30 Tonguc Seferoglu (Ardahan University, Turkey): ‘Porphyry’s *On Abstinence* and Its Modern-Day Ramifications for Moral Vegetarianism’
- 11.30-12.00 BREAK
- 12.00-1.00 Keynote Lecture: Coleen P. Zoller (Susquehanna University, USA): ‘The Nature of Pregnant Bodies in Plato’s Dialogues’**
- 1.00-1.30 LUNCH
- 1.30-2.15 Eleanor Oser (Boston University, USA): ‘Justice as Virtue is Justice pros: The twofold concerns of justice in Porphyry’s *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*’
- 2.15-3.00 Wiebke-Marie Stock (University of Notre Dame, USA): ‘*Physis*: Plotinus on Nature and the Soul of the Earth’
- 3.00-3.45 Round-table discussion
- 3.45-4.00 BREAK
- 4.00-5.00 Keynote Lecture: M.D. Usher (University of Vermont, USA): ‘Aristotle and *Umwelt*’**

Abstracts: Keynote Speakers

(Listed in order of conference presentation)

Claudia Zatta (University of Milan): “Οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα”: Life and The Environment in Early Greek Philosophy’

In this keynote address I pursue the discourse of inclusion which frames the early Greek philosophers’ study of life and its phenomena (particularly, Anaximander, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus). Moving from the accounts of the emergence of humans and the other animals to the doctrines about their capacities such as sensation and thought, I reveal the profound awareness of the essential tie between lifeforms and their environments and the fact that life, human and not, is sustained and unfolds through the relation with the space of existence.

Dimitri El Murr and Jean Trinquier (École Normale Supérieure): ‘Soul and the Beasts: A Platonic Reading of Two Newly Discovered Pompeian Polychrome Mosaics’

Two newly discovered Pompeian polychrome mosaics with utterly original animal iconography have recently been brought to the attention of the scholarly world by Massimo Osanna, the former director of the archaeological site of Pompeii, whose interpretation has recently been criticised by the French Egyptologist Sydney Aufrère. Building on parts of these earlier interpretations, we defend a new, allegorical and Platonising reading of the two mosaics, starting with the polycephalic monster, or “Butterfly Mosaic” and then considering the “Cobra Mosaic”. Drawing on the correspondence between the scene depicted and key Platonic passages on the composite nature of the soul (in *Republic*, IX and *Phaedrus*), we argue that the Butterfly Mosaic is an enigmatic representation of the soul inspired by Platonism, which confronts the viewer with both the challenge of interpretation and the ethical urgency of self-knowledge. We then move to the second mosaic and argue that the scene depicted therein is the astral immortalisation (or catasterism) of a soul, but not that of Orion, *pace* Osanna. The astral destiny of the soul is marked not only by its ignition, as well recognised by earlier interpretations, but also by its ascent along the ladder of living beings to escape the sensible world.

Coleen P. Zoller (Susquehanna University): ‘The Nature of Pregnant Bodies in Plato’s Dialogues’

Contrary to popular belief, Plato shows reverence for nature, for human reliance upon the natural world, and for the interconnectedness of all life. In the first section I will briefly give attention to the “wilder” philosophy Plato *actually* presents in his dialogues, but I will quickly move on to a specific focus on the presence, absence, and meaning of pregnancy in Plato’s dialogues. Plato’s thinking about pregnant bodies has not been given the attention it deserves, despite how profoundly pregnancy inspires him.

First, I will investigate the connection Plato asserts between nature and motherhood. Second, I will examine women’s bodies and pregnancy as they are accounted for in the *Timaeus*.

There I will attempt to clarify much that has been muddled for us previously. Next, I will reckon with an interesting tension in Socrates' claims about whether philosophers should imitate pregnant people. In the *Republic* Socrates tells us that guardians should not imitate women, especially those in labor. Yet, Socrates' own metaphors in the *Theaetetus* have thinkers imitating pregnant women and himself imitating his mother the midwife. Furthermore, Socrates also has the three arguments of *Republic 5* imitating fetuses. Finally, I will briefly investigate how the first two of these three "waves" of paradoxical argument challenges the custom of gender discrimination and the shortcomings of a customary division of labor. In particular, I will look at the disassociation of pregnant bodies from childcare (*R.* 460b, 466c), exploring how this has been received in the literature. I will demonstrate my disagreements with essentialist interpretations that Plato wrongs women by "de-sexing" them and by co-opting pregnancy as a metaphor for a philosophy. Instead, I interpret Plato as a philosopher who calls women into the world of reason, culture, and leadership and men into embodiment and childcare, much like contemporary eco-feminists.

M.D. Usher (University of Vermont): 'Aristotle and *Umwelt*'

When zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) coined the word ecology in 1866 he defined it as "the relation of the animal to its organic and inorganic environment." Biologist Jakob von Uexküll (1864-1944) elaborated on this idea, dubbing these environs an organism's *Umwelt*, a bubble in which both space and time are wholly relative, experienced and navigated uniquely by each species depending on its morphology and sensory receptors. It's a crucial concept for ecology and a necessary corrective to anthropic bias in human inquiry. Ed Yong's recent book *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms around Us* (2022) shows the extent to which von Uexküll's discoveries have taken hold in the biological sciences.

In 1980, the late art critic John Berger asked us in a widely read and highly influential essay "Why Look at Animals?" In his piece Berger described the alienation that sets in between human and non-human species in a capitalistic age of mechanical reproduction. Why look at animals? Aristotle's answer to that question at *Parts of Animals* 1.5, formulated over two thousand years prior, is remarkably fresh and contemporary on this question. Several of Aristotle's ideas, I argue, adumbrate Uexküll's later formulation. Especially prescient is his insistence that all scientific investigation, of whatever sort, should be concerned with systemic wholes, about which, he insists, looking at animals has much to teach us.

Abstracts: all Speakers

(Listed in order of conference presentation)

Wednesday 8 November 2023

Harold Tarrant (University of Newcastle, Australia): ‘The World as a Magical Organism: Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*’

From the environmentalist point of view one of the most disturbing things about Greek philosophy is its tame acceptance of the view that we humans differ enormously from all so-called ‘non-rational’ animals. Other barriers exist between us and the gods, and between animals, plants and their inanimate environment. Yet something is saved by philosophic systems that see the world overall as animated whether by world-soul or cosmic pneuma, and hence see the universe as an organic whole. Though Apuleius can at times look rather like an ordinary Platonist, allowing for a world-soul but perhaps not allowing it to make so much difference, his 42-line summary of the *Timaeus* (*Expos.* 32) describes the world itself as *animal ... rationale, sapiens, unum*, leaving little room for unintelligent life, while the *De Platone* affirms connections between the physical elements and living things including stars and plants as well as animals, and fills the metaphysical space between humans and gods with *daemones* (203-206; cf. *de Deo Socratis*). Furthermore, the world soul is itself the *fons animarum omnium*, and a subsidiary demiurgic force (199), thus perhaps given quite a lot more work than the *Timaeian* world-soul.

Against this background we can see why the boundaries between gods, humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects dissolve in the *Metamorphoses*. This is most obvious in the Cupid and Psyche episode where Psyche is given help in her worst moments by a Zephyr (inanimate, 4.35); a river (inanimate, 5.25); Pan (a god, in words, 5.25); an ant (animal, 6.10); a green reed (plant, speaking, 6.12); an eagle (animal, speaking, 6.15); a tower (inanimate, speaking, 6.17-20: note *sic turris illa prospicua vaticinationis munus explicuit*), not to mention a revived Cupid (6.22) and even Zeus himself (6.23).

At one point during the story (6.14) the fearful Psyche is turned to senseless stone. Lucius, too, had been turned into a pillar of stone on seeing the corpses that he had ‘slain’ (3.10). But stones do not always seem so senseless, for Lucius had detected the souls of transformed humans in the rocks, statues, and walls of Hypata. Here in the external ass-story the barriers between human and inanimate are broken down in much the same way as those between human and animal, if rather less often. When in book XI the playful tones are in retreat we perhaps learn why: the full moon brings consciousness of a supreme goddess governing human affairs by her providence, as were domestic and wild animals: *verum inanima etiam divino eius lumines numinisque nutu vegetari*. Bodies of various kinds in land, sea and sky grew with her waxing and contracted with her waning. As the author’s own vision finally begins to ring out, the boundaries between everything within the world dissolve, and that ultra-powerful world-soul of the Apuleian *Timaeus* is finally revealed as Isis.

Stefano Mecci (Italian Institute for Historical Studies, Naples): ‘The Dog-like Philosophers and Nature: The Ancient Cynics, the first environmentalists?’

In the study of the relevance of ancient philosophy to contemporary environmental debates, a prominent role is played by Ancient Cynicism. Indeed, the Cynics were the first to reflect on “nature” in relationships with humanity and in its “concreteness”, as *fauna* and *flora*. Thus, they underline that philosophers are happy (*eudaimon*) when they live outside the city, in contact with nature, which provides them with everything they need (e.g. Bion *apud* Teles p. 7, 4-5 and D.Chr. *or.* VI). At the same time, the Cynics claim that animals provide the model to be followed to live well, *i.e.* naturally and simply (e.g. D.L. VI 22 and 60). Despite these elements, and despite the “Cynic Renaissance” in recent scholarship, Cynicism has not been analyzed and studied in this peculiar light. In addition to filling this gap, the aims of my talk are threefold: (1) I will focus on what the Cynic “life according to nature” means and on what the consequences are for the way of life of the Cynic philosopher (*kynikos bios*). Is Cynicism a “primitivism” and a “naturalism”? (2) I will pay specific attention to the importance of animals for the Cynics. Why and in which sense is the animal a model? (3) Finally, I aim to study the implications of these aspects for contemporary environmental debates. To put it simply, are Cynics environmentalists? Are they animal rights activists?

Hallvard Fossheim (University of Bergen): ‘A Stoic Perspective on Worth in Nature’

Care for nature is typically grounded either in human beings as environmental dependents or in nature in its own right. In the latter case, nature is seen as an object of care irrespective of human welfare. I will establish that this latter kind of care for nature can be gleaned from the Roman late Stoic philosophy of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. In order to hone in on the attitude in question, I will start from a consideration of the fresco in the triclinium from the Villa of Livia (Rome, ca 29-20BC). I will argue that this fresco suggests an appreciation of nature that transcends all purely instrumental value. Having established the possibility in Roman culture of a non-instrumental gaze upon nature, we turn to 3.2 of Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations*. I will first show that the passage is in dialogue with a *topos* more fully articulated in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, concerned with the relative status of mimetic representations and their real-life objects. With this framework in place, it can more readily be appreciated that Marcus is sketching an attitude to nature and the natural aspect of all things that is akin to an aesthetic delight. At the same time, it is crucial to see that this appreciative attitude towards nature does not come for free. In order to bring this complex fact to the fore, we turn to a major influence on Marcus, in that Epictetus’ *Discourses* 1.12.15-17 suggests such a non-instrumental attitude depends on *paideia*, including a settled belief in a divine presence in all things. A final question is thus whether or in what ways we might make this Stoic non-instrumental appreciation of nature our own without importing its theology.

Matt DuPree (Florida State University): ‘Like Wasps and Flies: Deep Ecology and the Ten Modes of Aenesidemus’

A core pillar of the deep ecological program of Arne Naess is the notion of self-realization—an erasure of an individualistic, anthropocentric orientation toward the world in favor of a recognition of oneself as just a part of nature. However, to the degree that we claim to be above the rest of nature—superior to other beings in value and capacity—it is unclear how we can motivate a transition between these perspectives. If I am superior to other beings, why should I integrate them into my self-conception? As such, we need to find a mode of critique capable of bridging these orientations.

I contend that the Pyrrhonian tradition has resources directly relevant to this problematic. Pyrrhonist philosophers expended great effort in critiquing our pretensions to know, and a principal way that they accomplished this was by utilizing the ten modes of Aenesidemus—argument schemata that direct our attention to the situatedness and relativity of our lives to disabuse us of dogmatic clinging. Although all ten draw our attention to the lived environment in which we operate, bringing inquiry back to the Earth, of special interest is the mode that directly compares human and animal cognition; rather than privileging human cognitive capacities, this mode leaves us unable to decide whether one is superior to the other. This willingness to take environmental situatedness and animal cognition seriously suggests a nascent anti-anthropocentric subject naturalism within Pyrrhonism; and, insofar as these modes are effective, they move us to see ourselves as situated in a natural world as but parts of that world. As such, I argue that Pyrrhonian practice already inclines in the direction of Naess’ self-realization, such that utilizing the ten modes in one’s critique of an egocentric anthropocentrism leads one from that orientation to an orientation that Naess would find favorable.

Michal Bizon (Jagiellonian University, Krakow): ‘Na ton kynā! The dog in Greek thought from Heraclitus to Plotinus’

In Plato’s *Republic* 2.375d-e, Socrates makes an odd argument to the point that dogs are philosophers. This quirky conclusion is predicated on the argument that dogs bark at what they don’t recognize (thus don’t know), and don’t bark at people they recognize. Superficially, the argument could be seen as a piece of rather cringy humor. On the other hand, the comparison of the well-educated guardians to purebred dogs is a recurrent motif in the *Republic* and there is no overt reason to treat it as ironic. Also, Socrates has a habit of saying “by the dog”, using the standard expression where normally some god would be invoked. In the *Gorgias* he identifies this “dog” as the “god of the Egyptians”, suggesting that he is thinking of Anubis. This latter clue also indicates that invoking the dog is by no means an ironic hint at Socrates’ disdain of the gods as such. It seems thus that the dog is not seen by Plato as menial, but rather a commendable being. In the paper I explore the meaning of the dog in Greek philosophy and literature in general, focusing on the Platonic tradition beginning with the Socratic dialogues. From Argos, the faithful dog of Odysseus, to the dog-like Diogenes of Sinope, the dog plays an ambivalent and salient role in Greek culture and thought. I argue that the Greeks had an uneasy relation to dogs, at times vilifying them, at others considering them as paradigms of various virtues. Sometimes, as in Heraclitus, dogs were seen by the Greeks as unruly and indeed vile. By the time of Socrates, however, as well as in his wake in Plato, the Stoics, and Cynics, dogs came to be seen as hybrid beings partaking in both animal and human traits. As such they were not only appreciated for their unique qualities, but even studied as enabling an inquiry into the normative regularity of nature.

Thursday 9 November 2023

Leo Catana (University of Copenhagen): ‘The Concept of Care (Gr. *epimeleia*) as a Nature-Orientated Virtue in Ancient Greek Thought’

This paper examines a concept which has been under-investigated among scholars, but which was important to the approach to animals and the natural world in Greek antiquity, namely ‘care’ (Gr. *epimeleia*). Scholars have typically confined their examinations of this concept to the context of (self-)care of the human soul (Foucault 2001, Erler 2009). In ancient Greek philosophy, however, ‘care’ was used in a variety of other contexts: Some of these did not involve direct engagement with animals and the natural world, e.g. administration of the *polis*, whereas other contexts did so, e.g. domestication of animals, livestock breeding and agriculture. Incidentally, this concept enjoys considerable interest in contemporary environmental philosophy (Anthony 2012, Clowney 2013, Lenzi 2017) and feminist ethics (Noddings 1984, Groenhout 1998, Held 2006, Norlock 2019), though it is rarely connected to its ancient origins.

In my paper, I discuss three questions. First, which ancient Greek philosophers discussed ‘care’ in the context of human beings’ approach to animals and the natural world? I argue that Socrates, as presented by Plato and Xenophon, was a key philosopher in this respect: one case in point is Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* (discussed in Dorion 2018: 528 though without relating *epimeleia* to the environmental aspect). Second, was ‘care’ in this context regarded as a morally neutral competence or as a moral virtue? Or both? Or, alternatively, is it fundamentally misguided, if the ancient Greek concept ‘care’ — when deployed in the above-mentioned context — is explained as yet another moral virtue belonging to some sort of virtue ethics? Third, were the ancient Greek uses of ‘care’, still in the context of human beings’ relationships to animals and the natural world, characterized by consensus in terms of philosophical significance? Or was it a contested concept? If the latter was more to the point, which were the lines of division?

Jorge Torres (University of Bern): ‘Aristotle on Friendship between Human and Non-Human Animals’

Although Aristotle’s account of friendship occupies a fifth of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (VIII-IX), the fact remains that until recently it was widely neglected by scholars. It is true that the literature on the topic has increased dramatically in the last decades, but even to this date the focus of all such valuable contributions to our understanding of Aristotle’s account of friendship has been mostly on its ethical and political implications for human life.

Only very few scholars have pursued the further question as to whether Aristotle allows for the possibility of friendship (*philia*) between human and non-human animals. Within this minority of scholars, the consensus has it that Aristotle explicitly denies this possibility. This paper seeks to challenge the received opinion by reassessing the textual evidence adduced by scholars to support this reading, while also adding new textual material for discussion. Central to the traditional reading is the assumption that animals, in Aristotle’s view, cannot be friends in virtue of their cognitive limitations. I argue that Aristotle’s account of animal cognition is perfectly consistent with the possibility of friendship between human beings and nonhuman animals.

Douglas Campbell (Alma College, Michigan): ‘Plato on Plants, Humans and Other Living Things’

In this talk, I will argue that Plato affirms anthropocentrism in some respects while denying it in others. Specifically, Plato believes that plants exist for the sake of human beings but denies that animals exist for our sake. Plants were created by the gods to serve our bodies as food for us and as shelter. Trees and other plants make the environment more hospitable for us.

Other animals do not exist for human beings. Humans and non-humans are on a par with each other. Both exist for the sake of the cosmos. Both promote the perfection of the cosmos in two ways. The first way is that their existence furthers the resemblance between the cosmos and the Intelligible Living Thing, which is the model that the Demiurge looks to when he is creating the cosmos. Monkeys, for instance, are just as important to the cosmos as humans, since both are required for the resemblance of the cosmos to the divine model. The second way that both exist for the sake of the cosmos is that their existence reflects the victory of virtue over vice in the whole cosmos: Plato views non-human animals as deceased humans who have been punished by being reborn in a body appropriate to their vice. Accordingly, the existence of non-human animals reflects the fact that nobody can escape punishment for vice. Plato’s denial of anthropocentrism when it comes to animals is complicated by the fact that he views animals as morally degenerate versions of humans (and animal bodies as degenerate versions of human bodies). The two central texts for my talk will be the *Timaeus* and *Laws X*.

Thornton Lockwood (Quinnipiac University, Connecticut): ‘Politics I.8: Aristotle’s environmental philosophy?’

In his discussion of natural property acquisition, Aristotle famously claims that:

property of this sort, then, is evidently given by nature itself to all living things straight from when they are first conceived, and similarly too when they have reached completion....It is clear, then, in the case of developed things too, that we must suppose both that plants are for the sake of animals, and that the other animals are for the sake of human beings, domestic ones both for using and eating, and if not all, nonetheless most, wild ones for food and other sorts of support, so that clothes and other instruments may be got from them. If then nature makes nothing incomplete and nothing pointlessly, it must be that nature made all of them for the sake of human beings. (*Pol* 1.8.1256b9-11, 16-26)

Aristotle’s discussion of natural property acquisition has puzzled his readers in several ways. Is the account of natural teleology in *Politics* 1.8 “global” (for instance, involving ecological systems) or particularized to specific animals? Is Aristotle’s teleology anthropocentric and does it warrant the exploitation and limitless instrumental use of non-human animals? How does Aristotle’s discussion of nature in property acquisition connect with his claims about “naturalism” in *Politics* 1—for instance, that humans are political animals or that the polis exists by nature? Finally, how do Aristotle’s remarks about natural property acquisition square with contemporary questions about sustainability and environmentalism? My paper will explore these four questions in order to arrive at what I will call “Aristotle’s environmental philosophy.” Such an interpretation is sensitive not only to debates about Aristotle’s teleology, but also about the argumentative structure and context of *Politics* 1.8. Although his account is concerned with natural limits and sustainability, his view of ecological niches seems at odds with environmental philosophies such as bio-centrism or

animal rights. Rather, I will argue that Aristotle formulates an eco-centric environmental philosophy that lies at the root of several of his most important claims about the nature of the human good.

Enrico Piergiacomi (Technion, Israel Institute of Technology): ‘Animal sacer et pius? Xenocrates, the animals’ notion of god, and the environment’

In a passage from the *Stromata* by Clemens of Alexandria, it is stated that the Platonic Xenocrates acknowledged the presence of the notion of God even in animals. This assertion is quite unique within Greek thought, as no other known ancient philosopher appears to have made a similar claim. The objective of my talk is to explore the rationale behind Xenocrates' idea that animals can possess the notion of God. By examining the available sources, I identify two reasons that support this viewpoint.

First, Xenocrates may have derived his hypothesis from an original interpretation of Plato's theory of metempsychosis, which suggests that animals are vessels in which human souls can be embodied. Given that souls are immortal and retain previous memories, it is plausible to consider that animals may retain a dormant notion of God acquired in their previous lives.

Secondly, Xenocrates may have deduced that animals can possess a notion of God by observing their reactions to the natural world, particularly celestial phenomena. For example, the elephant, in its act of "purifying" with water while gazing at the sky, venerates the stars and the divine perfection of the heavens. This observation could have led Xenocrates to conclude that animals, through their behavior with the environment, exhibit a knowledge of the divine.

An implication stemming from this reading is that Xenocrates might have advocated his hypothesis to raise awareness and promote the protection of animals / the environment. If we consider that God encompasses everything and that animals may be reincarnated human beings, it follows that we should treat them with kindness and refrain from causing harm. Such understanding could have served as a moral argument to encourage the preservation of both animals and their habitats.

Friday 10 November 2023

Miira Tuominen (University of Stockholm): ‘Just Life: Porphyry’s argument for abstinence’

In histories of animal ethics, Porphyry’s *On Abstinence* is often mentioned and some scholarly work on the treatise exists. However, the claim that Porphyry shows genuine moral concern for non-human animals has recently been denied, and it has been argued that the treatise focuses on justice as the inner harmony of the soul (Rowett, previously Osborne 2007; Edwards 2018) or a life of intellect and purification (Edwards 2018). In my contribution, I argue for a new reading of Porphyry’s argument for justice in *On Abstinence*. I claim that justice is, according to Porphyry, at least partly constituted by abstinence from causing harm to others and that such abstinence must be extended not only to non-human animals but also to plants. Porphyry’s arguments for his account, I claim, are largely based on Theophrastus’ objections to animal sacrifice quoted in book 2 (for which Porphyry is also our only source). According to Theophrastus, taking lives of harmless living creatures is intrinsically unjust or wrong as an action (a wrongdoing, *to deinon*, 2.13.1 at 143.1) which is argued for on the basis of an analogy to stealing. As stealing is commonly accepted to be wrong, illicitly taking a much greater good (a life) than any external possessions should definitely be accepted as being wrong. However, although taking lives of harmless animals is

a central injustice in the arguments, neither Theophrastus nor Porphyry restrict justice to animals. Both extend it to plants and explain how plants can be used for nourishment without violating justice.

Tonguc Seferoglu (Ardahan University, Turkey): ‘Porphyry’s *On Abstinence* and Its Modern-Day Ramifications for Moral Vegetarianism’

Porphyry's work *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* holds significant historical importance in the development of moral vegetarianism. Porphyry claims to build upon earlier Greek thinkers, such as Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Plato. In his open letter to Firmus Castrius, Porphyry presents two main lines of argumentation: ethical-ontological and political-philosophical. Under the ethical-ontological perspective, Porphyry argues that animals possess reason (*logos*) to some extent, although it is not as developed as in humans. Consequently, he posits that animals should be treated with due justice. This viewpoint emphasizes that moral and just actions should be extended to animals due to their capacity for reasoning, albeit to a lesser degree than in humans. The political-philosophical aspect of Porphyry's argument centres on the pursuit of philosophical enlightenment. He contends that true philosophers should abstain from consuming animal products because such consumption hinders the process of separating the soul from the body. By avoiding the pleasures associated with meat-eating, philosophers can focus on cultivating their minds. Porphyry also notes that the procurement of meat is expensive and a luxury, thus philosophers should refrain from such indulgences. In this paper, after reviewing Porphyry's arguments, I will discuss their connection with modern vegetarian arguments about animal suffering, animal slaughter, and the harm to the environment caused by the production of animal food. Drawing connections to modern vegetarian arguments, Porphyry's ethical-ontological perspective aligns with concerns about animal suffering and the recognition of animals as sentient beings. Meanwhile, his political-philosophical argument resonates with contemporary discussions on the environmental impact of animal food production. Finally, I will ask whether a modern-day philosopher, when obtaining animal food is not as expensive and difficult as in ancient times, should be vegetarian to become productive in the context of the Global North.

Eleanor Oser (Boston University): ‘Justice as Virtue is Justice pros: The twofold concerns of justice in Porphyry’s *On Abstinence from Killing Animals*’

Porphyry's *On Abstinence from Killing Animals* provides us with a comprehensive overview of the ancient debates regarding treatment of animals, many of them actually quite familiar. At the same time, the text, informed by its author's Neoplatonic asceticism, tends to be taken as primarily concerned with the wellbeing of the human soul, subsuming other-regarding concerns for animals. However, I propose a reading of *Abstinence* – particularly Book III – that demonstrates the mutually sustaining nature of these concerns. I argue, contra G. Fay Edwards, that the case presented for reason in, and justice toward, animals is not merely dialectical and forms an essential part of a coherent line of argument across the text. Porphyry's concern with justice in Book III is thus twofold: first, it entails an inner state of psychic harmony – justice is a virtue; second, it entails a state of harmlessness toward all living creatures – justice is therefore relational; it is justice πρὸς. Considering the Greek title of Porphyry's work, Περὶ ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων, underscores this dual concern. The term ἀποχή ("abstinence") reflects themes of separation and withdrawal, not just from meat, but from obstacles to spiritual progress. The ψυχή ("soul" or "life") in the title points to both the lives of animals (other-regarding) and the souls of Porphyry's readers (self-regarding). Porphyry,

then, invites us as his readers at the outset to view animals in connection with human beings, as possessing agency, perception, some degree of reason, and, most importantly, a capacity to be harmed. Thus, I concur with Patricia Marechal's reading of Book III as a defense of just treatment towards animals not merely for human benefit, but for the sake of animals themselves. For Porphyry, justice necessarily entails both self-regarding and other-regarding concerns.

Wiebke-Marie Stock (University of Notre Dame): 'Physis: Plotinus on Nature and the Soul of the Earth'

This paper examines Plotinus' rather radical rethinking of what *physis*, nature, is. This rethinking attempts to understand just what it is that binds all animate beings together. Like many other ancient philosophers Plotinus believes that everything that is alive is alive because of soul. Plato assumes that soul gives life, and Aristotle speaks about the vegetative form of the soul which human beings, animals and plants share. Plotinus transforms Platonic and Aristotelian ideas about soul and its functions. He assumes that human beings, animals and plants share this basic form of ensoulment, but he does not want to ascribe it to soul itself, but to an image of the soul (an *eidôlon* or *indalma* or a shadow or a trace). Plotinus makes this distinction to keep soul itself pure and ascribe the traditional functions of soul (as what gives life) to something connected to it, but not to soul itself. Plotinus often describes the image of soul which gives life as *physis*, nature. Furthermore, in some passages he even goes so far to speak about a soul of the earth. Plotinus thus presents human beings both as a special – rational – form of animal and as part of the whole universe of what is alive, including animals and plants. In my paper, I will discuss Plotinus' concept of the soul and of its image and the reasons for this distinction, especially in treatises V 9 [5], V2 2 [11], IV3-4 [27-28], III 8 [30], VI 7 [38], II 1 [40] and I 1 [53]. The focus of the talk will be on the image of the world soul, i.e. *physis*, nature, which makes the sensible world alive, i.e. animals and plants, and I will devote some space to the unusual idea of the soul of the earth. It is my goal to describe Plotinus' thoughts as a contribution to ecological thinking and a reflection on the position of human beings in the world of living beings.

Biographical Information: Keynote Speakers

(Listed in order of conference presentation)

Claudia Zatta (PhD Johns Hopkins University) is the author of *Interconnectedness. The Living World of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Academia Verlag 2019, second revised edition) and of *Aristotle and the Animals* (Routledge 2022), and of numerous essays on ancient Greek philosophy and classics. She is currently a researcher in the Department of Philosophy at the State University of Milan, Italy.

Dimitri El Murr is Professor of Ancient Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy, Ecole Normale Supérieure–PSL, and a member of the Centre Jean Pépin (UMR 8230 CNRS). His research area is ancient philosophy, especially Socrates, Plato and political Platonism in antiquity and beyond. He has published widely on different aspects of Plato’s thought. He is the author of *L’Amitié*, a collection of texts on the philosophy of friendship, with introduction and commentaries (2001; repr. with corrections, 2018) and *Savoir et gouverner: Essai sur la science politique platonicienne* (Vrin 2014), a monograph on Plato’s *Statesman*. He edited a volume on the *Theaetetus: La Mesure du savoir: Études sur le Théétète* (Vrin 2013), and co-edited, with A. Brancacci and D. P. Taormina, *Aglaïa: Autour de Platon* (Vrin 2010); with G. Boys-Stones and C. Gill, *The Platonic Art of Philosophy* (CUP 2013); with M. Dixsaut *et al.*, *Platon. Le Politique* (texte grec, introduction, traduction et commentaire, Vrin 2018); with C. Veillard and O. Renaut, *Les philosophes faces au vice, de Socrate à Augustin* (Brill 2020); and with E. Partene, *Kant et Platon. Lectures, confrontations, héritages* (Vrin 2022). His latest paper is ‘Satyr-Play in the *Statesman* and the Unity of Plato’s Trilogy’, *Phronesis* 68 (2023) 127-166. He is currently writing a book on Plato’s theory of friendship.

Jean Trinquier is Associate Professor in the Department of Classics at the École normale supérieure–PSL and a member of AOROC (UMR 8546 CNRS). His research focuses on the history of human-animal relationships, the circulation of animals and animal products, and, more broadly, on the history of zoological knowledge in Antiquity. He has co-edited two volumes, one on hunting in Antiquity (J. Trinquier, C. Vendries éd., *Chasses antiques. Pratiques et représentations dans le monde gréco-romain (III^e siècle av.-IV^e apr. J.-C.)*, Rennes, PUR 2009), and the other on the circulation and trade of pepper (P. Schneider, J. Trinquier éd., *Le poivre, fragments d’histoire globale: Circulations et consommations, de l’Antiquité à l’époque moderne*, Paris, Hermann 2022). Recent papers on ancient zoological knowledge include: ‘De la tortue marine à l’écaille: un matériau “indien” du luxe romain’, *Topoi*, 22, 2018, 15-124; ‘La vache reproductrice du chant III des *Géorgiques* (III, 51-59): une description paradoxale’, *Bulletin de l’Association Guillaume Budé*, 1, 2021, 82-127; ‘Pline l’Ancien et le dénombrement des espèces marines: de l’exubérance à la circonspection’, *Revue des études latines*, 99, 2021 [2022], 107-160; ‘Deux poids, deux mesures? L’impact sur les faunes lointaines de la *luxuria* et des *uenationes* dans les sources du début de l’époque impériale’, in É. Gavoille, I. G. Mastrorosa (dir.), *Enjeux environnementaux et souci de la nature, de la Rome ancienne à la Renaissance*, Actes du colloque international et interdisciplinaire de Florence, 6-7 nov. 2019, Bordeaux, Ausonius Éditions, 2023, 39-63.

Coleen Zoller is Professor of Philosophy at Susquehanna University where she has taught since 2003. She completed her Ph.D. in philosophy in 2004 at Emory University, specializing in ancient Greek philosophy. She earned her B.A. in Philosophy at Bucknell University in 1998, as a first-gen college student. She has been head of the Department of Philosophy since 2012. Additionally, she directs Susquehanna's study-abroad program in Greece, specializing in cross-cultural educational travel since 2006. Coleen has won three teaching awards at Susquehanna: the 2008 Award for Distinguished Teaching, the 2016 Dorothy M. Anderson Student Government Association Faculty Member of the Year Award, and the 2016 Joel L. Cunningham Service-Learning Faculty Member of the Year Award. In addition to articles about Plato, Aquinas, and Kant, Dr. Zoller has published a monograph (*Plato and the Body: Reconsidering Socratic Asceticism*, SUNY Press 2018) and two co-edited anthologies (*Athletics, Gymnastics, and Agon in Plato*, Parnassos Press 2020 and *Gorgias/Gorgias: the Sicilian Orator and Platonic Dialogue*, Parnassos Press 2022), as well as numerous journal articles and anthology chapters. Currently, Dr. Zoller is researching a second monograph titled *Only Playing: Six Revolutionaries Ideas in Plato's Dialogues*, which examines friendship and philosophy and Plato's ideas of non-violence, reconciliation, equality, gender, pregnancy, and family. This project also traces out the legacy of Plato's Socrates in the work of other thinkers trying to advance justice, particularly examining Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and contemporary American philosopher Maureen Linker in the context of the current renaissance of civil discourse.

M. D. Usher is the Lyman-Roberts Professor of Classical Languages and Literature and a member of the Department of Geography and Geosciences at the University of Vermont (USA). With his wife, he also built, owns, and operates Works & Days Farm. His books include *Plato's Pigs and Other Ruminations: Ancient Guides to Living with Nature* (Cambridge 2020), *How to Be a Farmer: An Ancient Guide to Life on the Land* (Princeton 2021), *How to Say No: An Ancient Guide to the Art of Cynicism* (Princeton 2022) and *How to Care about Animals: An Ancient Guide to Creatures Great and Small* (Princeton 2023). A book in press with Princeton, to be published simultaneously in French with Presses universitaires de France, *Following Nature's Lead: Ancient Ways of Living in a Dying World*, is forthcoming in 2024.

Biographical Information: All Speakers

(Listed in alphabetical order by surname/last name)

Douglas R. Campbell is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Alma College, where he researches ancient natural philosophy, especially the biological system that Plato develops in the *Timaeus*.

Michał Bizoń is a classicist and philosopher at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland, where he lectures on ancient philosophy and teaches ancient Greek. His current field of research is Greek ethical psychology of the archaic and classical periods, particularly Heraclitus, Plato, and Aristotle. He has written translations and commentaries on Plato's *Hippias Minor*, Demosthenes' *Against Leptines*, and Antiphon's *Tetralogies* and sophistic fragments. His published work includes papers on Plato's *Protagoras* and *Hippias Minor* and a collection of papers on the notion of will in Greek and Roman thought.

Leo Catana is Associate Professor in the Section of Philosophy, University of Copenhagen. His current research focuses on three areas. First, ancient Greek ethical and political thought, especially Socrates, as he was presented in the works by Plato and Xenophon; second, the historiography of philosophy, that is, the method and historical development of written histories of philosophy, in particular 18th-century German histories of philosophy and their influence; third, environmental ethics, especially modern environmental virtue ethics, which draws on ancient Greek philosophical sources, notably Aristotle. Given that ancient virtue ethics existed in many different versions, of which the Aristotelian version was one among several, it is crucial to modern environmental virtue ethics to approach these versions in an open and well-informed manner.

Matthew DuPree is a PhD candidate at Florida State University, having received his MA at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. He is primarily focused on questions to do with the nature of agency and the norms that regard it—especially those that center human moral responsibility as involving the possession of superlative capacities that establish us as more dignified than the rest of the natural world. He is heavily influenced by Greek skepticism, Buddhist philosophy, the Daoism of Laozi and Zhuangzi, and the critical theory of Giorgio Agamben.

Hallvard Fossheim is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Bergen, where he is also Head of Research in the Department of Philosophy. Fossheim has published widely on Plato and Aristotle; among his recent pieces are «Aristotle on Political Agency», in Buddensiek and Odzuck (edd.), *Praxis – Handeln und Handelnde in antiker Philosophie*, de Gruyter (2023); «Aristotle on Plants: Life, Communion, and Wonder», in Duckworth and Guanio-Uluru (edd.), *Plants in Children's and Young Adult Literature*, Routledge (2021); «To kalon and the Experience of Art», in Destrée, Heath, and Munteanu (edd.), *The Poetics in Its Aristotelian Context*, Routledge (2020); and «The Number of Rulers in Plato's *Statesman*», in

Polis, Vol. 37/3 (2020). Fossheim also works on virtue ethics and research ethics, and currently serves as Chair for Norway's National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology. He has previously served as Director of the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (2011-2014). A recent contribution in research ethics is «Research on Human Remains: An Ethics of Representativeness», in Squires, Errickson, and Marquez-Grant (edd.), *Ethical Approaches to Human Remains: A Global Challenge in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology*, Springer (2020).

Thornton Lockwood is Professor of Philosophy at Quinnipiac University (with a joint appointment in Environmental Studies). His research focuses on ancient Greek and Roman ethical and political thought, and he has published the co-edited volumes *Aristotle's Politics: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press 2015) and *Aristote Politique VII: La constitution « selon nos vœux »* (in *Polis* 36.1: 2019). His research on Aeschylus, Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero has been published in journals such as *Phronesis*, the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *Apeiron*, *Review of Politics*, *Ancient Philosophy*, *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, *Classical World*, and *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*. He is also the Editor in Chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*. His teaching interests include global justice, environmental ethics, the philosophy of war and peace, and philosophy of sport. He is currently at work on two overlapping projects: he has written several pieces on the moral status of non-human animals in Aristotle's ethical and political works. He is also working on a book-length manuscript entitled *Aristotle on Justice: The Virtues of Citizenship* (currently under contract at Cambridge University Press). For 2022-23 he was a Visiting Fellow at the Classics Faculty and Clare Hall, Cambridge University, and for spring 2023, Professor invité at Université Paris I.

Stefano Mecci is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the Italian Institute for Historical Studies. He obtained his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Rome Tor Vergata in 2021. His PhD thesis, which deals with the relationships between Cynicism and Early Christianity in antiquity, will be published by Brepols in the series "Monothéismes et Philosophie" (forthcoming: under contract). His research focuses on Socrates, the Socratics, especially Cynicism, as well as the relationship between Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity. He has published numerous papers on these topics in miscellaneous volumes and journals. He has delivered several presentations at national and international conferences, both in Europe and America. He is co-editor of the following volumes: *The World as a City. History of a Philosophical Image between the Ancient World and the Three Monotheisms*, Brill, Leiden-New York, forthcoming (edited with L. De Luca and F. Stella) and *Dein Zetein*, L'Harmattan, Paris, forthcoming (edited with L. Franchi and F. Rampinini). He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Italian journal *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*.

Eleanor Oser is a PhD Student in the Philosophy Department at Boston University. She is especially interested in ancient ethics and epistemology; this usually involves virtue, moral psychology, environmental philosophy, and/or feminist philosophy. She grew up in Worcester, MA and received a BA in philosophy and classics from College of the Holy Cross in 2020.

Enrico Piergiacomi is Assistant Professor in the history of Philosophy at the Technion | Israel Institute of Technology. He was recipient of the international grant *The Reception of Lucretius and Roman Epicureanism from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth century* (2019-2020), research in residence at the Bogliasco Foundation of Genova (2021), fellow at Villa I Tatti | The Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies (2021-2022) where he carried out the project *The Pleasures of Piety. The History of a Neglected Religious Tradition*, and postdoctoral fellow in the research group *Religion and Urbanity: Reciprocal Formations* at the Max-Weber-Kolleg of Erfurt (2022). He specializes in ancient/modern philosophical thought and its intersections with philosophy of science, medicine, psychology, theology, and ethics. His research interests include atomism; hedonism; medical theory; philosophical theology; scientific poetry; theory of performance. He has so far published two books: *Storia delle antiche teologie atomiste* (Sapienza University Press 2017), and *Amicus Lucretius. Gassendi, il "De rerum natura" e l'edonismo cristiano* (De Gruyter 2022).

Tonguc Seferoglu is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy specializing in the history of philosophy at Ardahan University, Turkey. He completed his BA in Philosophy in 2008 and his MA in Philosophy in 2012 at Middle East Technical University. In 2018, he successfully obtained his PhD in Ancient Philosophy from King's College London. During his Master's studies, he focused on Plato's early dialogues, with particular emphasis on the *Meno*. His doctoral dissertation delved into a metaphilosophical interpretation of Plato's *Phaedo*, centering around the intellectual norms that govern philosophical dialogue. Presently, his research centers on the Neoplatonist scale of virtues and its intricate linkages with the Neoplatonist curriculum for reading Plato's dialogues. Dr Seferoglu teaches courses on the Presocratics, Plato and Aristotle to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Wiebke-Marie Stock (Universität Bonn/Germany; University of Notre Dame, USA) works on ancient philosophy with a focus on Plato and the Platonic tradition. She is especially interested in epistemology, metaphysics, psychology, philosophy of religion and aesthetics. Her publications include: *Plotinus. III 4. On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit. Introduction, translation and commentary* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing 2020), *Denkumsturz. Hugo Ball. Eine intellektuelle Biographie* (Göttingen: Wallstein 2012), and *Theurgisches Denken. Zur Kirchlichen Hierarchie des Dionysius Areopagita* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter: Transformationen der Antike, Bd. 4, 2008). This semester Dr. Stock will be finishing studies on the theory of mind in the Neoplatonic tradition, on the function of myth in Plotinus' works and on ancient and modern ideas on the therapy of soul.

Harold Tarrant studied at Cambridge and Durham Universities, and moved to Australia in 1973 to take up a position in Greek at the University of Sydney. He was appointed to the Chair of Classics at the University of Newcastle, Australia, in 1993. He retired at the end of 2011, and is now Emeritus Professor at Newcastle, though currently living in the UK. His principle focus has been ancient Platonism, from Plato to around 600CE. He has authored or co-authored ten books in that field, and edited or co-edited others. He collaborated in producing the first modern English translation of Proclus' Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* (CUP, 2007-2017) and was the principle editor of *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plato in Antiquity* (Brill, 2018). More recently he has authored *The Second Alcibiades: a Platonist Dialogue on Prayer and on Ignorance* (Parmenides Publishing, 2023). At the same

time he has also published on more literary matters, particularly on such authors as Aristophanes, Achilles Tatius and Apuleius. While at Newcastle he was also Joint Editor of, and contributor to, *The Whistler*, an ornithological publication, and retains a fascination with many aspects of the natural world, which occasionally has input into his work on the ancient world.

Jorge Torres is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Bern (Switzerland), where he will soon complete his Habilitation. As a member of a broader research team, he is currently working on an inter-disciplinary project on comparative environmental thought funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. He has published most of this research in journals such as *Environmental Ethics*, *Journal of Animal Ethics*, *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, and the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (forthcoming). He is also currently working on the edition of a pioneering volume on comparative environmental philosophy with focus on ancient Greek philosophy and early Chinese thought. His research interests include environmental and animal ethics, the history of medicine and biology, and ancient Greek ethics.

Miira Tuominen is University Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, University of Stockholm. After defending her PhD thesis (University of Helsinki, 2001), she has worked on a number of research projects, interdisciplinary institutions and departments. Her earlier work has focused on the question of starting points for knowledge, i.e., what needs to be assumed as given in order for a person to acquire knowledge, mainly in the ancient and late ancient Platonic-Aristotelian tradition. She has also worked on the question of how, in the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, human cognitive capacities are understood to support the different theories of the starting points for knowledge and also more generally on how some key cognitive functions are understood in a broadly speaking (although not exclusively) hylomorphic context in late antiquity. She has also published some more general introductions to the late ancient commentaries on Aristotle and one on Plotinus on virtue and happiness. More recently, she has been worked on Porphyry's *On Abstinence* and the question of how Porphyry argues for justice to living creatures in the treatise and why earlier accounts have not captured the nature of his argument. She has published some articles on the question and written a monograph on the treatise that has not been published yet. Currently, she is also the leader of a project *Nature and Moral Status of Animals in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, financed by the Kone foundation (2019-24).