Miscellanea

Plato *Timaeus* 40b4-6

As is the case for the majority of Plato’s works, Burnet’s OCT edition of the *Timaeus*, first published in 1905, is still the most often used and most easily accessible text of this dialogue. New editions of many Platonic dialogues have been published, but others still lack a thorough revision of the text, even though, in some cases, the preliminary manuscript study has been done. The *Timaeus* is a case in point: the manuscript tradition of this dialogue has been studied by Jonkers 1989 and his collations show that the text of this dialogue, as well as the *apparatus criticus*, could still be improved.

To serve as but one example of a *locus* where both text and apparatus, to my mind, may be improved, we may have a look at a phrase from the astronomical passage (38b6-40d5) of the *Timaeus*: 40b4-6, quoted above as printed by Burnet. At first sight, the text may cause no objections, as the sense seems clear and, judging from Burnet’s apparatus, there are no variations in the text.

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1 My citation of MSS is based on the collations made by dr. G. Jonkers, which were kindly put at my disposal by prof. dr. G.J. Boter. All sigla are those used by Jonkers 1989.
2 Rivaud’s Budé-edition of 1925 is no improvement, as his text does not differ much from Burnet’s and he adopts a very conservative stance towards the tradition (cf. Rivaud 1925, 123); furthermore, his apparatus is burdened by the readings of several MSS which are falsely considered primary (Jonkers 1989, 39-41), and the report of these new MSS is not always reliable: cf. Jonkers 1989, 191.
manuscripts at this point. But Burnet’s silence is misleading: according to Jonkers’ collations there is a neat division between the two families of the tradition, one family reading καὶ ἀίδια καὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ (AV), and the other reading καὶ διὰ ταῦτα omitting καὶ ἀίδια (FC ΨΥ). Not only do I think that these variants should have been reported in the apparatus in order to give a better picture of the textual evidence on which the text is based, me iudice they should also lead us to adopt a different text than the one printed by Burnet.

In what follows I will argue that, firstly, the words καὶ ἀίδια are to be omitted with the F-side of the tradition, and that, secondly, κατὰ ταὐτὰ is to be preferred over διὰ ταῦτα with the A-side of the tradition. In a sense, then, both sides contain true and false elements, but I think there may be a plausible explanation for this, as I will try to demonstrate later. Regarding the first half of the phrase presently under consideration—the inclusion or omission of καὶ ἀίδια—one branch of the tradition is in favour of omission: the words are not in any of the primary manuscripts that make up the F-side of the tradition. Furthermore, they are also omitted by the Late Antique commentators Simplicius and Proclus.

But the reading of F et al. was already known to Cicero and Calcindius, who both translated (parts of) the Timaeus. Cicero translates thus: [sidera . . . quae sunt] animantia eaque divina, ob eamque causam etc. Calcindius has: [Qua ex causa facti sunt] summa diuinitate praediti omnes illi ignes siderei, qui nullos errores exorbitationes patiuntur proptereaque etc. Thus both, it seems, translate as though they had before them the text of FC ΨΥ, omitting καὶ ἀίδια and rendering καὶ διὰ ταῦτα as ob eamque causam and proptereaque respectively.

Rivaud does cite a variant reading in his apparatus: καὶ διὰ ταῦτα WY Par. Pr. However, Jonkers has shown that W and Par. (called 1812 by Rivaud) are secondary witnesses, belonging to the Ψ and C-groups respectively: Jonkers 1989, 203 ff. (W); 190 ff. (Par./1812). Furthermore, Rivaud fails to mention that all these witnesses omit the preceding words καὶ ἀίδια, which, as I will argue, are to be removed from the text. As far as I know, no editor, commentator or translator has yet seen any difficulty with the words that we are concerned with here.

In this paper I will only be concerned with the primary MSS (for which see Jonkers 1989, 82-133) and the indirect tradition.

Burnet must have known the variant, since he is familiar with the readings of FCY, but apparently he felt no need to include the variant in his apparatus.

Simp. in Cael. 455.5-6 (ed. Heiberg 1894); Procl. in Ti. ad loc. (ed. Diehl 1903-1906), neither in lemmate nor in commentario.


Calc. Tim. 41.6-17 (ed. Waszink 1962).

Although it is also possible that Cicero’s ob eam causam and Calcindius’ propterea represent the Greek κατὰ ταὐτὰ instead of διὰ ταῦτα—for which variation see below.