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*The End of the Academy\**

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**ABSTRACT:** What happened to the Platonic Academy in late Hellenistic and Early Imperial Age is a controversial point. For a long period it has been a widely held view that the Academy continued to operate until the Emperor Justinian closed it in the 529 A.D. But in opposition to this view some challenging studies argued that it rather ended its activity around 86 b.C., during and in consequence of the Mithridatic War, when the garden of the Academy was destroyed by Sulla's troops. Needless to say, neither this new (and more solid) reconstruction solved all the ambiguities, and more recently some doubts have been raised against it. By reconsidering the available evidence, aim of the paper is a reappraisal of this *vetus quaestio*. In fact, the problems are two: the problem of the end of the Academy as a working institution is not the same as its end in the sense of its destruction. The two points not necessarily imply each other. And even though one may cast doubts that the Academy was physically destroyed, the surviving testimonies appear to show that there was not anymore Academic teaching in Athens. Even more fatal than Sulla's troops, were the internal struggles. But not everything went lost, for the term 'Academic' continued to be used in the following centuries, confirming the importance of the tradition stemming from Plato: for at stake in the use and appropriation of the term was not so much the membership to the institution as Plato's heritage – an everlasting problem.

*Status quaestionis*

One eloquent result of the great era of the German *Altertumwissenschaft* was the reconstruction of the history of the Academy and of its scholars – an impressive application of Niebuhr's claim that the historian is someone who «can make a complete picture from separate fragments»<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, in the ancient sources there were many mentions to the Athenian philosophical life, often in association with the Academy, but always in a scattered and fragmentary way. The most notorious episode was the edict by the Emperor Justinian, who closed the school in 529 A.D., in the same year of the foundation of the first Christian monastery by St. Benedikt in Montecassino – a very symbolic date, marking the end of the ancient educational system and the beginning of a new institution. But the history informs us of more benevolent Emperors: Marcus Aurelius, above all, who restructured the Athenian philosophical teaching in 176 A.D. Less known but not less important, were then the various references to many Academic professors operating in Athens, such as Ammonius, Plutarch's teacher in I cent. A.D., or Calvenus Taurus in the II cent. A.D. How to make sense of all these and many other confusing testimonies? Giving proof of patience and great erudition the German scholar Karl Gottlob Zumpt ordered the testimonies, filled the gaps and presented his history of the Academy from Plato to Justinian, the result being summarized in his 'Tabelle über die Succession der Scholarchen in Athen'<sup>2</sup>. This list was readily incorporated in the monumental Ueberweg - Praechter's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (cf. 12ed. Berlin 1926, p. 663-666), and Zumpt's account soon, and for a long period, exerted an almost all-pervasive influence, as one can for instance draw

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\* I wish to thank Pierluigi Donini and Tiziano Dorandi for many helpful suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Glucker 1978, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> On Zumpt, cf. Glucker 1978, p. 330-337 with further bibliographical references.

from another authoritative book on the Classical World, Henri-Irénée Marrou's *A History of Education in Antiquity*:

«We can follow the succession – *diadoche* – in the four greatest schools almost without a break through the Hellenistic period and to the end of Antiquity» (english ed. New York 1956, p. 207).

Zumpt's conclusions dominated all along the XIXth century and deep into the XXth, but did not arrive to the XXIst century. For in the seventies of the previous century his reconstruction was systematically refuted by many scholars, most notably by John Lynch in his book on the Lyceum (1972) and John Glucker in his book on the Academy (1978). To put it briefly, these scholars demonstrated that if Justinian closed any school (which is controversial) it was a Neoplatonic school that was closed, a school which had no relation with Plato's Academy; nor had any institutional relation with the Academy the various Academies run by professors such as Ammonius and Taurus nor the imperial school founded by Marcus Aurelius, for the very simple reason that the Academy ceased to function around the first half of the eighties of the first century b.c., at the time of the Mithridatic war and of Sulla's siege of Athens. (Athens was taken by Sulla in March 86 b.C.)<sup>3</sup>.

#### *A new challenge?*

After the ground-breaking monographs by John Glucker and John P. Lynch the interest in the Hellenistic Academy and in Early Imperial and Late Antique Platonism – in brief, in the history of Platonism in all its ramifications – greatly proliferated and a better understanding was reached from both the philosophical and from the historical point of view. By consequence of this renewal of studies, some or many particular aspects of the reconstruction proposed by the two scholars were also re-considered and some major objections were raised. But until recently, criticisms and remarks did not address the end of the Academy; that it ceased to exist during Sulla's siege was generally agreed. But eventually also this conclusion has been doubted. It is a small remark in Charles Brittain's book on Philo of Larissa:

«The myth of significant damage to, or the destruction of the Academy, is unfounded: both reports mention only the harvesting of wood by Sulla's troops – the Academy lying outside the city walls – for siege engines (Plutarch, *Sulla* 12; Appian, *Mithr.* 30). If Philo chose to return of Athens, and if there were anyone there to teach, he could have lectured in the Academy until his death» (p. 68).

This brief but challenging remark occurs in the section devoted to the last years of Philo. We know that Philo fled with other Athenian 'optimates' to Rome in 89/88 bc, where he stayed and lectured

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<sup>3</sup> For a full description of these events, cf. Ferrary 1988, p. 435-494. For the consequences concerning the philosophical schools, cf. now Sedley 2003.

with success for some years; and it seems safe to assume that he died in 84/83 bc<sup>4</sup>. But where did he die? In Rome, as the majority of scholars maintains? It is by addressing this problem that Brittain raises doubts about the Academy. For the general agreement that Philo never returned to Athens is grounded on the fact that there were no reason to come back to Athens after Sulla's destruction of the Academy. But if it is not true that the Academy was destroyed and that there were no colleagues and pupils in the Academy after Sulla's conquest what does impede that Philo returned and died in Athens? «If Philo chose to return to Athens, and if there was anyone there to teach, he could have lectured in the Academy until his death».

Brittain's remarks are very cautious. Far from pretending to impose new views, they simply raise doubts about some too easily accepted facts – at least in his opinion: that Philo never returned to Athens, because the Academy did not exist anymore. But the consequences are considerable, insofar as he dismisses as a myth what had been regarded so far as an historically ascertained fact. A more careful analysis is therefore needed<sup>5</sup>.

One useful point in Brittain's remark is that it helps us to see that the problems are two, not one. There is the problem of the destruction of the Academy and there is the problem of the cessation of its activities. Clearly, the two problems do not necessarily coincide. For if it is true that the first implies the latter, the opposite is not necessarily the case. If the Academy was destroyed it is evident that lectures were not given in it (and there is no evidence that they were given elsewhere in Athens, see below). But the closing of the activities doesn't exclusively depend on the destruction of the Academy: the destruction is not the only cause for the closing, and in principle nothing excludes that the Academy ceased to function even without being destroyed. The two problem need to be addressed in order.

As for the first question is concerned, it is important to notice that the surviving testimonies do not explicitly say anything about the destruction of the Academy. Plutarch and Appian, our two most important sources, allude to the destruction of the woods but not of the Academy<sup>6</sup>; neither Cicero, in the prologue of *De finibus V* does say something explicitly. In this text Cicero reports of a visit he made with some of his friends to the gymnasium of the Academy in 79 b.c.:

«My dear Brutus, once I had been attending a lecture of Antiochus, as I was in the habit of doing, with Marcus Piso, in the building called the School of Ptolemy; and with us were my brother Quintus, Titus Pomponius, and Lucius Cicero, whom I loved as a brother but who was really my first cousin. We arranged to take our afternoon stroll in the Academy, chiefly because the place would be quiet and deserted at that hour of the day. Accordingly at the time appointed we met at our

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Dorandi 1991b, p. 17-20.

<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, J. Glucker carefully reviewed Brittain's book, but he did not touch on this point, see Glucker 2004.

<sup>6</sup> One further testimony is Athenion's discourse presented by Posidonius (*ap. Athen. V 213d = Posid. f 253 Kidd*): the gymnasia are in a squalid condition and the philosophical schools silent; but on the reliability of the passage cf. the critical remarks in Ferrary 1988, p. 441-444.

rendezvous, Piso's lodgings, and starting out beguiled with conversation on various subjects the three-quarters of a mile from the Dypilon gate. When we reached the walks of the Academy, which are so deservedly famous, we had then entirely to ourselves, as we had hoped. Thereupon Piso remarked: 'Whether it is a natural instinct or a mere illusion, I can't say; but one's emotions are more strongly aroused by seeing the places that tradition records to have been the favourite resort of men of note in former days, than by hearing about their deeds or reading their writings. My own feelings at the present moment are a case in point. I am reminded of Plato, the first philosopher, so we are told, that made a practice of holding discussions in this place; and indeed the garden close at hand yonder not only recalls his memory but seems to bring the actual man before my eyes. This was the haunt of Speusippus, of Xenocrates, and of Xenocrates' pupil Polemo, who used to sit on the very seat we see over there [...].

But I [*ie* Cicero], Piso, agree with you; it is a common experience that places do strongly stimulate the imagination and vivify our ideas of famous men. [...] All over Athens, I know, there are many reminders of eminent men in the actual place where they lived; but at the present moment it is that alcove over there which appeals to me, for not long ago it belonged to Carneades. I fancy I see him now (for his portrait is familiar), and I can imagine that the very place where he used to sit misses the sound of his voice, and mourns the loss of that mighty intellect [...].

'But Lucius,' he [*ie* Piso] asked, 'do you need our urging, or have you a natural leaning of your own towards philosophy? You are keeping Antiochus's lectures, and seem to me to be a pretty attentive pupil.' 'I try to be,' replied Lucius with a timid or rather a modest air; 'but have you heard any lectures on Carneades lately? He attracts me immensely; but Antiochus calls me in the other direction; and there is no other lecturer to go to' (*De fin.* V 1-2, 4, 6; trad. Rackham).

From this text it appears that, in 79 b.c. at least, everything is in order in the Academy (the nostalgia is for the absence of classes not for the ruins), and this was interpreted by John Lynch as an indication of the fact that the Academy, after being destroyed or heavily damaged during the Mithridatic war, had been «rebuilt or repaired» (Lynch, p. 187). It might be. But another conclusion one can draw from these testimonies is that the Academy was never destroyed or heavily damaged, as, long before Britain, John Glucker had already suggested (p. 373). Perhaps it is a little bit too rude to claim that the destruction of the Academy is a «myth», but it is true that, on the basis of the available ancient sources, it cannot be taken as an historically ascertained fact. Unfortunately, the sources are too much scanty to permit any uncontroversial conclusion. On this point, some help will hopefully come from the archeologists.

But even admitting that the Academy was not destroyed, what are the consequences for the other problem? In principle, if it was not destroyed, the Academy could have well continued to function. In principle. But do we dispose of some positive evidence? On this issue the testimonies are more numerous and the answer seems to be mostly negative. It is for instance uncontroversial that already

at Seneca's time in Athens there were no Academic teachings, be it from the institutional Academy or from Antiochus' school<sup>7</sup>:

«Accordingly so many groups of philosophers have died out with no successor. The Academics, both the older and the newer, failed to leave an heir» (*Nat. Quaest.* VII 32, 2, trad. Lynch).

Not different is Cicero's judgment in 45 b.c.:

«Take for example the philosophical method referred to, that of a purely negative dialectic which refrains from pronouncing any positive judgment. This, after being originated by Socrates, revived by Arcesilas, and reinforced by Carneades, has flourished right down to our own period; though I understand that in Greece itself it is now almost bereft of adherents» (*De nat. deor.* I 11, trad. Rackham).

And even when we go back in time, what emerges from the remaining testimonies does not substantially change what is claimed in the two above-mentioned texts, as far as the Academy is concerned. First of all, the most important testimonies unanimously speak of Philo as the last head of the Academy, and this suggests that it is with him that the activity of the school ceased<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, this appears to be confirmed by the above mentioned text from Cicero's *De finibus* V. In 79 b.c. there was Antiochus' own school in the Ptolemaion<sup>9</sup>, but nothing in the Academy. As already John Lynch had noticed, «such passages suggest that the 'New Academy', the school which had evolved through a succession of scholars from Plato, had failed and that only the school of the 'Academic' eclectic Antiochus resumed operation in Athens after the Mitridatic war. Though Antiochus is often called a pupil of Philo, he is never said to have succeeded him» (p. 181).

Some scholars, however, have argued that there are some minor elements of Cicero's testimony that, if correctly taken into account, point in the opposite direction. First, there is the mention of the crowd gathering in the Academy in the morning: is this not an indication that there still were Academic lectures in the Academy? and is this not further confirmed by the allusion to 'lectures on Carneades'? By emphasizing this second point, David Sedley argued that in fact in 79 b.c. «there are still lectures in the Academy» and suggested that it is Charmades who «might have succeeded Philo for a while»<sup>10</sup>. Undoubtedly, the proposal is intriguing, but I am not sure that the elements on which it is built suffice to prove it.

<sup>7</sup> See Glucker 1978, p. 337-342.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. for instance *Luc.* 11; *Luc.* 16-17; *De nat. deor.* I 11.

<sup>9</sup> The Ptolemaion was another gymnasium, inside Athens. After Glucker 1978 there is not anymore need to demonstrate that Antiochus has never been elected head of the Academy and that his *diatribe* in the Ptolemaion has nothing to do with the Academy. Interestingly, according to Apollodorus of Athens, also Charmadas seems to have lectured in the Ptolemaion, cf. Philod. *Ac. Ind.* XXX with Dorandi 1991a, p. 75-76.

<sup>10</sup> Sedley 1981, p. 74 n. 3; 2003, p. 34.

First of all, how plausible is to assume that the crowd gathering in the Academy in the morning is a crowd of would-be Academic philosophers? Had the Academy be still in function, and assuming that the crowd was there in order to attend Academic lectures, is it not strange that Cicero does not say anything of it<sup>11</sup>? In fact, given that the Academy was also a recreational center it is more likely that the crowd gathered in the area for non-philosophical purposes<sup>12</sup>. Secondly, what is implied exactly by the reference to Carneades in *De fin.* 5.6 ('lectures on Carneades' in Rackham's translation)? Indeed, it is disappointing that no answer is given to the question, and many conflicting interpretations can be suggested. For instance one can deny that there were such lectures. For what is explicitly stated in the text is that Lucius is attending Antiochus and not that there were 'Academic lectures'. Lucius *asks* whether there are lectures: that there were is controversial. If on the other side one admits that there were Academic lectures, it must also be recognized that it is not in the Academy that they were given. And this not only for the above reason that Cicero's silence would appear quite bizarre, but also because, if they were given in the Academy, Lucius, that is the one who is supposed to have attended those lectures, could not have attended them. For the lectures in the Academy, if there were any, were in the morning; but it also appears that Antiochus' lectures as well were given in the morning and of Piso and of the young Lucius it is said that they used to attend Antiochus's lectures («you are keeping Antiochus' lectures, and seem to me to be a pretty attentive pupil»), so that they couldn't be at the same moment in the Academy. But perhaps these lectures were given elsewhere in Athens. But why not in the Academy, given that, as we have seen, in 79 b.c. everything appears in order? One explication should be provided. And in all probability, even in that case, the teacher could not be Charmadas, for Cicero implies that already in 91 b.c. he was probably not anymore alive<sup>13</sup>. Indeed, it is difficult, not to say impossible, to definitely settle the question, and other possibilities can be taken into account. A third possibility one can suggest is that there were lectures on Carneades and that Lucius heard them, because it was Antiochus himself who was talking about Carneades in his classes (as is later confirmed for instance by his exploitation of the Carneadean division)<sup>14</sup>. This

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<sup>11</sup> Glucker 1978, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> Polito 2012, p. 36; Görler 1994, p. 944.

<sup>13</sup> Cic. *De or.* II 360; cf. Ferrary 1988, p. 472 n. 122; Dorandi 1994, p. 298; Dorandi 1997, p. 104. If one does not accept this date, it may be argued that Charmadas continued perhaps to teach for some time in the Academy after Philo's flight (cf. Glucker 1978, p. 108-111, 251) and perhaps elsewhere (if with Sedley we take him alive also in 79 b.c., see above n. \*\*\*), but nothing appears to justify the claim that he was the last head. Another candidate might be the rather mysterious Maecius, if it is correct the reading of *Ind. Ac.* XXXIV 2-4, cf. Dorandi 1991a. Critical remarks against the existence of a diadochos named 'Maikios' are in Puglia 2000 who, unconvincingly, argues that the text says that there were anyhow mention of one head after Philo. The text is really too much lacunose, and for defending his proposal Puglia introduces some unusual terms (such as *oimai*) and unrequested (at least by all the other scholars) emendation. Unfortunately, this text is too lacunose to draw clear informations.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *De fin.* V 16: *Carneadea nobis adhibenda divisio est, qua noster Antiochus libenter uti solebat*: this clearly implies that Carneades was a subject of Antiochus' classes; cf. Bonazzi 2009, p. 37; cf. also Schofield 2012.

reading is possible and would perhaps solve many difficulties. But I do not want insist on it too much. Perhaps it is safer to avoid overinterpretation of this prologue!

All in all, it can be admitted that the available testimonies do not prove beyond doubt that the Academy ceased to exist with Philo: true, this is nowhere attested explicitly, and some marginal passages raise some objections. But it is not less true that the objections are not sufficiently strong to resist examination. The alternative interpretations are even more difficult to accept. The testimonies do not justify the claim that there was someone, Charmadas perhaps, lecturing on Carneades in the Academy. On the base of the informations we presently have, the most reasonable conclusion is that the Academy ceased its activities with Philo's flight to Rome; and, if it is fair to assume that Philo remained also in Rome the official school head, one may date the closing of the Academy with Philo's death in 84/83 b.c.<sup>15</sup>, or in any case in the period between 88 and 84 b.c.

Be that as it may, there is a most interesting fact that emerges by the available testimonies, and it is the conflictual relationship of the philosophers who were attached to the Academy<sup>16</sup>. A symptomatic case is the famous encounter in Alexandria in 87 b.c., reported in Cicero's *Lucullus* (10-11): two philosopher, Antiochus of Ascalon and Heraclitus of Tyre, both members of the Academy for a long period, meet and talk about the views of a third Academic philosopher, Philo of Larissa, the *diadochos* in exile. And the three philosophers defend three different positions, often in a polemical tone. If it is further added that Aenesidemus as well was a product of the Academy and that in that very period he was defending a fourth position, promoting a new form of scepticism in polemical opposition to all the other Academics, the temptation is strong to conclude that it really makes no sense to speak of the Academy in the singular. It is true that also earlier there had been polemics and secession (one can think of Clitomachus and Metrodorus), but here the divergence appears to be radical, and it is not to exclude that also these struggles proved determinant in the last years of the Academy.

In sum, one conclusion appears as the most probable and some explanations can be provided. In all probability, the Academy ceased its activities with Philo's flight to Rome and subsequent death, and in this sense at least the Mithridatic war can be regarded as having played a role in the history of the Academy: if not for the physical destruction, as John Lynch suggested, for it was the cause that forced Philo to abandon Athens. To explain the closing of the Academy some further reasons can be added. In the long period, as John Glucker rightly remarked, one must not neglect the growing importance of Oriental centers such as Alexandria, Rhodes, Aphrodisias etc.: «the Easterners had discovered that they could do at home what they had been doing in Athens all these generations, and the teaching of philosophy was reestablished in the East»<sup>17</sup>. Before, on the other side, the impact of struggles,

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<sup>15</sup> Probably in Rome? For a recent attempt, cf. Puglia 2000, p. 200 (not mentioned in Brittain 2001).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. also Glucker 1978, p. 109.

<sup>17</sup> Glucker 1978, p. 377. More in general, on the impact of the 'decentralisation of philosophy', see Sedley 2003.

contrapositions and internal secessions must not be neglected: also these dissents played an important role and contributed to the collapse of the institution when the head was absent:

This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but with a whimper (T.S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*)

*An Academic without the Academy: Antiochus*

One major figure in the last years of the Academy is Antiochus of Ascalon, and it is Antiochus' alleged secession that notoriously provoked vehement reactions. It is therefore worth focusing on him for a better reconstruction of the last period of the Academy. At first sight, it may appear that the polemics between Antiochus and Philo are unfruitful (this is for instance Aenesidemus' view); in fact it will emerge that at stake there was a substantial issue.

In spite of the fragmentary sources, many of the relevant facts of Antiochus' biography are known; above all, for what concerns its relationship with the Academy, it is confirmed by the sources that 1) he spent a remarkable period within the Academy endorsing Philo's 'official scepticism', 2) before modifying his views and 3) finally founding his own school, the one in which we find Cicero in 79 b.c. (see Cic. *De fin.* V 1-6 quoted above): as John Glucker definitively demonstrated Antiochus was never elected as head of the Academy after Philo. What is more difficult to establish is when Antiochus seceded and founded his own school. Once again, at stake are two problems, one dependent on the other: and if on the first it is possible to find an agreement, on the second the divergences are less easy to settle. 1) When did Antiochus started to react against scepticism? As a matter of fact, on this point there is a wide agreement and scholars, with the notable exception of Fladerer, are unanimous in arguing that Antiochus' contrast with Philo began much earlier than the so-called 'Sosus affair' in 87/86 b.c.; the contrasts began in the nineties<sup>18</sup>. 2) But, this being the case, once he started to disagree with the official head of the school, what did Antiochus decided to do? Did he remain in the Academy or rather decided to abandon it, lecturing elsewhere (perhaps in the Ptolomaeum)? David Sedley, followed by Roberto Polito, argued that Antiochus remained within the Academy until Philo's flight; it is only when the Academy ceased to function that Antiochus officially started his own *diatribe*. The main evidence is a passage from Cicero's *Lucullus*, where Cicero the Academic mouthpiece complains that Antiochus did not go over to the Stoic school, once he abandoned scepticism:

«But first let us have a few words with Antiochus, who studied under Philo the very doctrines that I am championing for such a long time that it was agreed that nobody has studied them longer and who also wrote upon these subjects with the greatest penetration, and who nevertheless in his old age denounced this system, not more keenly than he had previously been in the habit of defending it. Although therefore he have been penetrating, as indeed he was, nevertheless lack of consistency does

<sup>18</sup> Cf. for instance J. Glucker 1978, p. 19-21; Barnes, p. 68-70.



diminish the weight of authority. For I am curious to know the exact date of the day whose dawning light revealed to him that mark of truth and falsehood which he had for many years been in the habit of denying. Did he think something original? His pronouncements are the same as those of the Stoics. Did he become dissatisfied with his former opinions? Why didn't he go over to another school, and most of all why not to the Stoics? for that disagreement with Philo was the special tenet of the Stoic school. What, was he dissatisfied with Mnesarchus? or with Dardanus? they were the leaders of the Stoics at Athens at the time. He never distanced himself from Philo, except after he had begun to have his own audience. But why this sudden revival of the Old Academy? It is thought that he wanted to retain the dignity of the name in spite of abandoning the reality – for in fact some persons did aver that his motive was ostentation, and even that he hoped that his followers would be styled the School of Antiochus. But I am more inclined to think that he was unable to withstand the united attack of all the philosophers (for although they have certain things in common on all the other subjects, this is the one doctrine of the Academics that no one of the other schools approve); and accordingly he gave way, and, just like people who cannot bear the sun under the New Row, took refuge from the heat in the shade of the Old Academy, as they do in the shadow of the Balconies (*Luc. 69-70*, trad. Rackham sl. mod.)».

Why didn't he go over to the Stoics? If he did not defect to the Stoics, Sedley and Polito argue, this means that he did not leave the Academy, in spite of his dissatisfaction with scepticism<sup>19</sup>. But does the texts imply that? I do not think so, and another more correct explanation is possible, provided that one takes in due consideration the polemical context. Indeed, here it is matter not so much of an historically-detached reports as of polemical attacks. Cicero the Academic is charging Antiochus for being a Stoic, and the question is: given that he was a Stoic why didn't he go with them? From an Antiochean point of view, the answer is simple: because he was not a Stoic<sup>20</sup>. From the beginning to the end of his career Antiochus was crystal-clear that he was an Academic heir of Plato's philosophy and Old Academy; it was rather his adversaries who charged him for being a Stoic; Antiochus himself, if he was ready to take into account the Stoic doctrines, he did it on the assumption that they were somehow compatible with the Old Academic ones; it is not by chance, then, that he presented his school as the Old Academy. Alone by itself, the polemical accusation of being a Stoic does not mean much.

In fact, the most important affirmation of this passage is the following: «he never distanced himself from Philo except after he had begun to have his own audience». For, as Myrto Hatzimichali correctly remarked (p. 14), this phrase «suggests that once the loyalty of these followers was secured, he *did* distance himself». Now, as John Glucker has already remarked (p. 18), since we see him in

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<sup>19</sup> Sedley 1981, p. 70; Polito 2012, p. 32-34.

<sup>20</sup> I argue for this view in Bonazzi 2012.

Alexandria already with his pupils, this clearly means that he seceded before the trip to Alexandria<sup>21</sup>. How much before? Unfortunately, the source are not eloquent on this point, and one might admit both: either that he distanced himself when Philo went to Rome or that he had already seceded. Perhaps slight indication in favour of the latter option is in what Cicero writes in the above mentioned passage: Antiochus defected after he began to have followers: in order to have followers he did not need to wait Philo's departure (Hatzimichali aptly lists a number of parallel cases of philosophers 'distancing themselves' in consequence of a doctrinal divergence with the official head, p. 15). But I am afraid that this is asking too much from the texts: in fact, it is probably safer to suspend judgment with Jonathan Barnes on this specific point (p. 70).

In any case, be that as it may, what is interesting is what is at stake in this controversy: the struggle is not for the institutional property but for the philosophical tradition. In other words, at stake is Plato's philosophical heritage and the controversy is about what it does mean to be a follower of Plato. On this point as well some qualifications are perhaps in order. For it is usually assumed, consciously or not, that the controversy was between Philo the Academic, that is the sceptic, and Antiochus the dogmatist, be it Stoic or Platonist. But is this correct? If not properly qualified, I am afraid that this opposition is misleading both for Antiochus and Philo. First, Antiochus. In fact, as I have already remarked, Antiochus never regarded himself as a Stoic but always as a follower of Plato. Does this mean that we can take him simply as a Platonist, that is a dogmatist as opposed to scepticism? Not literally, for he regarded himself as an Academic, as it can be detected by the name he gave to his *diatribe*. An important point which has not yet received due attention is that the term 'Academic' did not immediately come to be an equivalent of 'sceptic'. For we know of at least three other philosopher who adopted the term without committing themselves to the sceptical Academy of the Hellenistic centuries, Eudorus of Alexandria (second half of the first cent. b.c.), Plutarch of Chaeronea (I-II cent. a.d.) and the anonymous commentator to the *Theaetetus* (probably to be dated to I-II cent. a.d.). These three philosophers diverge on many questions and with Antiochus. But they all agree in using the term in a non-sceptical sense. The term is used in order to claim allegiance to the school of Plato, and by consequence, and most importantly, to his philosophy<sup>22</sup>.

If this is correct, it also follows that the same applies also in the case of Philo. When regarding himself as an Academic, Philo was primarily and emphatically claiming for his Platonic dependence, and only secondarily for a sceptical stance in the philosophical debate. In other words, Philo and Antiochus agree on the primary sense of 'Academic', which is connected to Plato's philosophy. Where they do diverge is on what Plato's philosophy consists in: in a positive system later endorsed and developed by

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<sup>21</sup> More cautiously, cf. also Barnes, p. 70. Polito's attempt at arguing that Aristus, Aristo and Dion were not Antiochus' pupils is not convincing. In his *Ac. ind.* Philodemus lists them as Antiochus' pupils and there is not reason to deny this testimony.

<sup>22</sup> On this see Bonazzi 2012 forthcoming with further bibliography (still fundamental is Glucker 1978, p. 205-226).

Aristotle and the Stoics too or in a sceptical investigation? It is in this sense that we should speak of Academic fighting Academics<sup>23</sup>.

As a matter of fact, history tells us that the war had a winner: even though many of his doctrines were decisively rejected, it was Antiochus' view that had the upper hand: from the second half of the second century a.d. the dominant idea is that Plato's philosophy has nothing to do with scepticism, which is rather considered as the Dark Ages of the history of Platonism. And the subsequent adoption of the term *Platonikos* as the technical term definitely distanced the term *Akademaikos* from Plato: from the second century a.d. *Akademaikos* basically means 'sceptic' and the connection with Plato is progressively lost. But history, at least for those who do not profess an Hegelian *credo*, does not settle philosophical questions: that it was the dogmatist view that won and influenced the subsequent centuries to the extent that Platonism is often synonymous of dogmatism does not mean much. If philosophy is nothing but «a series of footnotes to Plato» (Whitehead), also the Hellenistic Platonism should be taken into account, as scholars too rarely do.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. also Tarrant 2007.

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