

ABSTRACTS

Franco Bacchelli, *La Considération céleste et les Enseignements de Démétrius Rhaoul Kavàkis (avec deux lettres inédites de Gemistus Plethon)*, pp. 164-238

The essay illustrates the figure of Demetrios Kavàkis Rhaoul (1416-1506), Byzantine official at the service of the last two Paleologue emperors and of the Despots of the Peloponnese, who was also George Gemistos Plethon's friend and student. Two short works of his are here published for the first time, one on the Sun God and another on the classification of the religions professed by humanity, alongside two small inedited letters by Plethon. In the first of the two writings, Kavàkis clears the reasons for his aversion towards any kind of religion or philosophy that places the divine beyond the visible world and that believes in the existence of an intelligible or, even worse, over-intelligible world. These ideas lead him to clash not only with Christianity, but also with Plato and with the ideas of his beloved teacher Plethon, who, however, seems to agree with him in a dream. In the second writing this peculiar solar religion is reaffirmed, against the religion of poets and the religions of transcendence, warning however that nature wants some respect for the religion of ancestors, whichever this might be, when it is functional to the life of the society and of the State.

Han van Ruler, *La découverte du domain mental. Descartes et la naturalisation de la conscience*, pp. 239-294

Although Descartes' characterization of the mind has sometimes been seen as too 'moral' and too 'intellectualist' to serve as a modern notion of consciousness, this article re-establishes the idea that Descartes' way of doing metaphysics contributed to a novel delineation of the sphere of the mental. Earlier traditions in moral philosophy and religion certainly emphasized both a dualism of mind and body and a contrast between free intellectual activities and forcibly induced passions. Recent scholastic and neo-Stoic philosophical traditions, moreover, drew attention to the disparity between the material and the immaterial, as well as to the possibility of a retreat into the personal realm of one's own mind. Yet none of these moral and religious assessments of the relation between mind and body were motivated by the purely epistemological interest that we find in Descartes in setting apart a world of consciousness from the world of physics. The present article explains how Descartes made use of specific theological and moral philosophical theories in his own analysis of mental faculties; how he changed the orientation of metaphysics itself in the direction of a phenomenology of the mental; how he never returned to the naive idea of offering a dualist foundation for ethics; and how his mechanicism may have motivated his epistemological transformation of the science of metaphysics. In all these various ways, Descartes inaugurated an understanding of human mental life on the basis of physiological rather than metaphysical considerations, a view of psychology that is related to the experience of human individuals, and a naturalistic

characterization of the mind in terms of a domain of consciousness rather than of moral conscience.

Brunello Lotti, *La luce nella riflessione di Berkeley: filosofia della percezione e filosofia della natura*, pp. 295-338

In Berkeley's writings the topic of light is discussed in two different ways, within a theory of perception and within a metaphysics of nature of a Platonic stamp. In his first work, the original *Essay for a New Theory of Vision* (1709), light and colours are regarded as condition and object of vision; they are examined as contents of visual perception distinct from tangible perception. Light will be dealt with in a completely different manner in Berkeley's last work, *Siris* (1744), in which a spiritualistic reading of the natural world is superimposed on modern science in general and on Newtonian physics in particular. In *Siris*, light (or invisible fire) is the instrument by which the causal activity of divine Intellect orders and permeates the natural world. A detailed analysis of the topic of light in the two aforementioned contexts shows inconsistencies and strained interpretations which derive from the apologetic use of the theory of vision in Berkeley's early immaterialism and from the multi-layered and confused speculations of his late *Siris*. On the whole, Berkeley conceives light within the idealistic frame inherited from Platonic metaphysics of light; however, the specific themes examined in the *Essay for a New Theory of Vision* and in *Siris* derive from acquisitions of modern science, and are recast within a spiritualistic interpretation which intended both to neutralize scientific ideas through their phenomenistic reading and to exploit them for apologetic ends.

Marco Sirtoli, «Glosse Categoriarum»: un commento anonimo del XII sec. alle «Categorie», pp. 339-460

This work aims to a critical edition of an Aristotle's Categories commentary, transmitted by M2 codex of St. Ambrose's Chapter Archive in Milan. Written in Northern Italy, in the XIIth century, it was probably a handbook for Chapter School. It is based upon some passages from the *auctoritates*, as it's evident from the heading: *incipiunt flores glosse categoriarum*. It deals with fundamental logical issues, and it presents a widespread use of the *status*'s theory, in order to solve some of the logical, physical and metaphysical problems in Aristotle's Categories.