

Ilsetraut Hadot

# Simplicius the Neoplatonist in Light of Contemporary Research

A Critical Review



ACADEMIA

*For Arnold Davidson  
in friendship and gratitude.*

**Ilsetraut Hadot**

# **Simplicius the Neoplatonist in Light of Contemporary Research**

A Critical Review

With two contributions of Philippe Vallat



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## Table of Contents

Preface to the French edition (2014)	9
Precision about the English translation	10
A. Biography	11
I. Name	11
II. Simplicius's origins and where he studied	12
III. The philosophical and religious atmosphere in Alexandria during Simplicius's stay	13
IV. Date of Simplicius's departure for Athens	15
V. Date of departure for Persia and reasons for exile	16
VI. The stay in Persia	19
VII. Where did Simplicius and the other philosophers go after their stay in Persia?	21
1. Older hypotheses: The seven philosophers, or at least Simplicius, returned to Athens or Alexandria	22
2. The hypothesis that some or all of the seven philosophers settled in Ḥarrān (Carrhae)	26
a) Simplicius's conversation with a Manichaean	26
b) Where did Simplicius found the famous school of mathematics which continued after him?	33
c) In the tenth century, the Arab historian al-Mas'ūdī visited a Platonist school in Ḥarrān, a city on the frontier with Persia which had remained largely pagan.	44
d) Evidence supporting the theory that Neoplatonism survived in Ḥarrān between the sixth and tenth centuries	52
aa) Late sixth to early seventh century	52
bb) Second half of the eighth century	54
cc) The ninth century: The pagan Neoplatonists of Ḥarrān adopt the name "Ṣābians"	55
(1) The prophets of the Ṣābians	56
(2) the Qur'ānic Ṣābians	59
(3) The god of Abraham as seen by Muslims, Neoplatonists, and Ṣābians	60

Table of Contents

dd) Four Arabic accounts of the role of Ḥarrān in the transmission of Greek thought to the Arabs	66
ee) The “temples” of Ḥarrān: astrological-philosophical terminology	68
3. Additional arguments in favour of Tardieu’s theory	73
a) Simplicius’s observation on the river Aboras (Khābūr) in Mesopotamia	73
b) The Syrian goddess Atargatis (Simplicius, <i>In Phys.</i> , 641.33 – 35 Diels)	76
c) The calendars in use in Ḥarrān	82
d) The addressee of a commentary by Simplicius on Aristotle’s <i>De anima</i> according to the <i>Fibrist</i> of Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 995): by Philippe Vallat	85
VIII. Conclusions	107
IX. Some additional remarks	110
X. Three epigrams on Simplicius	112
B. The surviving works (except <i>In Phys.</i> and <i>In De caelo</i> )	113
I. General introduction	113
1. The method of composition of Neoplatonist commentaries	113
2. The importance of the prefaces for interpreting the Neoplatonist commentaries	118
a) The Aristotelian curriculum as preparation for the Platonic curriculum	119
b) The superiority of Plato over Aristotle	119
c) The assertion that the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato are complementary but related hierarchically	121
II. The commentary on the <i>Encheiridion</i> of Epictetus	124
1. Editions	124
2. Translations	124
3. The place of the commentary on Epictetus’s <i>Encheiridion</i> in the Neoplatonist programme of studies	125
4. The kind of people to whom the <i>Encheiridion</i> was directed (its usefulness: an essential point in the second introductory outline in six points)	127
5. Dating and philosophical orientation	130
a) Praechter’s hypothesis	130
b) Alan Cameron’s hypothesis	139
c) Merlan’s hypothesis	143

6. The doctrinal orientation of the commentary on Epictetus's <i>Encheiridion</i>	144
7. The reception of Stoic doctrines by Simplicius in his commentary on Epictetus's <i>Encheiridion</i>	148
8. The survival of the <i>Encheiridion</i> commentary	150
a) An unidentified abridgement of Simplicius's commentary on Epictetus	150
b) A Christian commentary on the <i>Paraphrasis Christiana</i>	150
c) The influence of the commentary on the humanists	151
d) Traces of the <i>Encheiridion</i> commentary in Arabic sources?	152
III. The commentary on Aristotle's <i>De anima</i>	153
1. Editions	153
2. Translations	153
3. The place of the commentary on the <i>De anima</i> in the Neoplatonist curriculum	154
4. Atā Wālīs (or 'Itā Wālīs, according to Michel Tardieu), the dedicatee of the <i>De anima</i> commentary	155
5. The sources and the philosophical orientation of the <i>De anima</i> commentary	155
6. The authenticity of the commentary traditionally attributed to Simplicius	157
a) Conclusion concerning the authenticity of the <i>De anima</i> commentary attributed to Simplicius by the manuscript tradition	184
7. The dating of the <i>De anima</i> commentary	186
8. The purpose (σκοπός) of the <i>De anima</i> commentary	188
9. The survival of the <i>De anima</i> commentary	190
a) Traces of the <i>De anima</i> commentary in Arabic philosophical literature	190
b) The survival of the commentary in the Renaissance	192
IV. The commentary on Aristotle's <i>Categories</i>	194
1. Editions	194
2. Translations	194
3. An epigram from Ambrosianus 306 (E 99 sup.)	195
4. Simplicius's sources in his <i>Categories</i> commentary	196
5. The filiation of the five late Neoplatonist commentaries on the <i>Categories</i>	198
6. The place, purpose, and usefulness of the commentary on the <i>Categories</i> in the Aristotelian curriculum of the Neoplatonists	199

*Table of Contents*

7. The dating of the <i>Categories</i> commentary and additional bibliography	203
8. The posterity of Simplicius's commentary on the <i>Categories</i>	205
a) The posterity of Simplicius's <i>Categories</i> commentary in Arabic according to the <i>Fihrist</i> of Ibn al-Nadīm: by Philippe Vallat	205
b) The survival of the <i>Categories</i> commentary in the Byzantine era and the Latin Middle Ages	223
C. Lost and partially lost works	226
I. Simplicius's commentary on Euclid's <i>Elements</i>	226
II. Lost works known from self-citations or other sources	226
1. A commentary on a dialogue of Plato	226
2. The <i>Epitome</i> of Theophrastus's <i>Physics</i>	227
3. The commentary on the <i>Metaphysics</i>	227
4. A lost commentary by Simplicius on Iamblichus's <i>On the Pythagorean Way of Life</i> in three books	234
5. A commentary by Simplicius on Aristotle's <i>Meteorologica</i>	236
6. A commentary by Simplicius on the <i>Art of Rhetoric</i> of Hermogenes	237
7. A treatise on syllogisms?	239
III. A false attribution	239
D. Epilogue	240
Bibliography	243



## Preface to the French edition (2014)\*

In 1985, at the international colloquium in Paris on “Simplicius: His Life, His Works, His Survival,” the first colloquium since the end of the Second World War devoted to the Neoplatonist philosopher Simplicius – perhaps the first ever on this topic – I introduced the sessions with the following words:

In attempting today to make an assessment of research on the life and works of Simplicius, I am conscious of the fact (and even pleased by it) that fifteen years from now this assessment will have become obsolete, at least in part. For the moment has finally come when we are studying Simplicius’s commentaries for themselves, rather than limiting ourselves to a few quotations from the Presocratics and the “Corollary on Time.”<sup>1</sup>

The present overview, made twenty-eight years later, will also be obsolete some day. Moreover, it is only a partial overview, since, given the considerable number of studies on Simplicius that have appeared in recent years, it will leave aside the commentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics* and *De caelo*. However, it will endeavour to give a summary – one that is rather encyclopedic and at the same time critical – of research on the life of Simplicius, his commentaries on Epictetus’s *Encheiridion* and Aristotle’s *Categories* and *De anima*, as well as works by him that have been lost but are known in one way or another; furthermore, it will provide a summary overview of the survival of these works of Simplicius as far as the Renaissance, and also in the Arabic context. This short book also includes two important contributions by Philippe Vallat, which elucidate some interesting points about Simplicius’s biography and the survival of the *Categories* commentary in the Arabic-speaking world.

Finally, I would be happy if the present work’s reflections on research methods should prove helpful to young researchers in spotting certain pitfalls that can easily be avoided.

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\* I. Hadot 2014b.

1 See I. Hadot 1987a.

*Preface to the French edition (2014)*

*Precision about the English translation*

The English translation is based on an updated (unpublished) version of the French text.

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