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Foreword

Introduction to the second International Issue of Aither

Dear Readers,

Again I have the honor of welcoming you on behalf of the editors and editorial board and invite you to read the international issue of the journal Aither. The journal is published by the Philosophical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and has following two-year cycles: We publish 3 issues in Czech and then one international issue. This gradually forms a series of Aither International Issues, the second of which you have in your hands.

The journal is not only dedicated to philosophy, but also to the all relevant contexts of history, culture, politics, social, religious and other contexts that are important in the European intellectual tradition. To precisely increase common interdisciplinary scientific research was, after all, the reason why we defined the journal through the language rather than field of philosophy. Aither is designed for the publication of studies and interpretations in any way related to the texts and intellectual currents that were originally formulated in ancient Greek and also Latin.

While the first international issue was composed on a shared interest in Greek tragedy that permeated through all articles the current issue is
composed from a wide spectrum of research standing on the pillars of European intellectual traditions ranging from Hesiod’s epic cosmology to Swyneshed’s late - medieval semantics. The second International issue of our journal begins with a study by Charles Burnett, accompanied by the Latin edition and the translation of the Prague Manuscript of Johannes Borotín. Usually articles are composed in the issue according to historical order and relevance to the topic, i.e. we start with ancient texts and themes followed by articles on Medieval Latin and the early modern period. However, in case texts that are more critical studies or even comments on the manuscript including copyright translation, we put in first place. In this case it means the case studies of Burnett, plus the national edition of the Borotín’s manuscript.

The Burnett commentary study is devoted to a text file stored in the Library of the Prague Metropolitan Chapel, the author is Johannes Borotín. The manuscript contains two very different sets of texts: the first period when Borotín was still studying with Master Johannes Andreae (also known under the name Schindel who significantly contributed to the construction of the Astronomical Clock), while the second group of 3 texts is almost 40 years younger and shows Borotín as an elderly teacher. All texts are devoted to mathematics, astronomy and astrology as the seventh and crowning element of the liberal arts. After a brief look at the entire file and a related Borotín’s biography in contemporary intellectual discourse, but also in cultural and political context (disputes between nations at Charles University in Wenceslas IV and the Hussites) Burnett also focuses on Borotín's preamble and subsequent initial study to Alcabitios, which are attached in the original version and in its English translation.
The second article by Eliška Luhanová discusses the prehistory of the human race, as shown by mythologema that was often commented by Greek thinkers of the golden age era. In the first part the author deals with Hesiod’s concept of paradigm, where she identifies the fundamental ambiguity of the golden age: on one hand, the golden age of the ideal of a carefree life full of happiness, free from hardship and suffering, however, such a life was identified as more animalistic and in a sense inhuman, because it precedes the actual history of the human race and lacks a distinctive feature of human activity motivated by the desire to overcome a lack of adverse fate. Golden Age in the womb of the natural laws thus does not allow self-reflection as deficient human beings, which subsequently through technai founds culture as distinct phenomenon from nature, thus a very human plane of existence. This profound ambiguity of hesiodic concept of a prehistoric state combines by Luhanová with other ambiguous conception of the divine representative Kronos. In Theogonia Kronos overcomes primordial, pre-cosmic governance of Uranos and becomes the first truly sovereign ruler. His governance, however, has the character of tyranny without taking into account the harmonic relations of space and therefore must be replaced by Zeus and his Order and the Law. On the other hand this work embodies the era of the golden age of Kronos. In this sense, it is a pre-historic and strictly non-human state, which on one hand is much closer to the gods but on the other also to animals. In the second part, the author analyzes Plato’s conception of a golden age under the rule of Kronos in the dialogue Politikos. In accordance with the interpretive tradition of Plato’s myth space is divided into two cosmic stages. The first is under the direct rule of Kronos and Luhanová sees this as a continuation ambivalent hesiodic concept of the human condition. The second period is indirectly controlled by Zeus,
whose governance is mediated by the cosmic order and the rule of law. Human is in this period exposed to conditions that are well known to us: human is mortal and must cope with adversity of fate. Precisely this is, however, a challenge that - based on the author’s unitarian interpretation of mythical passages from Protagoras and Symposium - that leads one to the establishment of culture, laws, and finally to philosophy, which is an attempt to overcome mortality.

Pavel Hobza in the third article focuses on Parmenides’ famous poem, which he proposes to interpret more in line with contemporary intellectual horizon and without the burden of logical and ontological scheme, which was attached to the Eleatic philosophy much later under the influence of Plato and Aristotle. Hobza primarily proposes an alternative analysis of the poem, which, unlike traditional reading is divided into four parts: the prooimion according to him is much shorter and ends at the moment of utterance of the Goddess. Her speech is the second part, a kind of philosophical reflection mythological foundation throughout the poem in prooimiu. The key to understanding the central problem is according to Hobza the opposition to light and darkness. Respectively binary opposition of being and non-being, but it is presented twice in a different way in the third and fourth parts of the poem. A traditional, so-called ontological interpretation, assumes a stark contrast between being and world of people, where there is no positive relationship between them. Hobza, however, highlights the difficulty of connecting Parmenides eon with einai and proposes - in response to Empedocles fragment B17 - rather an anthropological interpretation, which is just between the two aforementioned perspectives and connects them together and also is primarily aimed at the world from a human perspective. The third and
fourth parts constitute a sort of continuation of the binary opposition of light-darkness to a more concrete level than methodological passages in the first and second parts. In the third part is non-being present in human perspective rejected in contrast to the divine truth against which the human world is defined perceptively, as a mere perception. The fourth part on the contrary gives way to a detailed description of the human world and according to Hobza provides a scientific perspective, which also shows the practical possibility of human use of the original divine concept of *nus*.

The fourth paper by Josef Moural is devoted to Plato’s dialogue Timaios, specifically to the passages 37a-c, which are part of a broader interpretation of a particular process of creation. According to the text, demiurgos created (an invisible) world soul from circles based on the being of both identical and different, and then inside of it (visible) body. Activity of World Soul is conceptualized through circular movements reacting to contact with things of integral or a composite nature, beings enduring or emerging. In this way process of perception is conceptualized as a fetus of thought of the world soul. Moural however, considers broader questions concerning the soul and the different concepts of cognitive activity in Plato, and therefore analyses the aforementioned passage as one of the key occurrences of such a conceptualization. After a detailed textual analysis that partially deviates from the standard reading of for example Brisson, Moural asks a basic question that is not addressed explicitly in the text:

1. What does the world soul exactly perceive?
2. What specifically is this knowledge?, i.e. what can be said of its objects?

3. What is the epistemological status of different types of knowledge?

4. How is the logos incorporated into knowledge, or some internal communication within the circles of the soul?

The first answer notes that touch compared to auditory and visual perception is not addressed by Plato and because of nothing outside themselves can be perceived by cosmic animal; there is conceivably certain sensory self-reflection of his body through the soul. This, however, according Moural also does not exclude the possibility of a certain concept of intentional directivity to the object. The second question is left open by Moural, since its solution lies in one of two possible philological interpretations of passage 37b1 – 3. In principle, the question is whether the knowledge of forms and sensory perceptions goes separately, or in a relationship or whether we can assume something of Plato’s theory of predication. The third response may take the form of “strict specialization”, according to which knowledge within a circle is completely indifferent to others, or to offer an interpretation in terms of “quasi specialization”, according to which the aforementioned circle plays a prominent, but not an exclusive role. The fourth answer is the most speculative and is based on the resolution of the logos on the aspect of knowledge articulation and communication of knowledge.

Miroslav Hanke devoted the paper to detailed analysis of solutions for “last sofisma” in the work Insolubilia of the British logician Roger Swyneshed. The manuscript dates back to 1330 and is a historically
influential contextual attempt to revise classical logic, especially the influential Aristotelian square table of opposites and the two essential conditions of truthiness: firstly correspondence with reality as a necessary condition and second truth duration as condition sine qua non of validity. Swyneshed also formulated a number of sophisms, the solution to corroborate the plausibility of their theories. The Hanke article focuses on the latest sophism that Swyneshed placed at the end of his work. Hanke through both historical and systematic analysis demonstrates that the “last sophism”, which offers a dual solution “plain liar paradox” based on arguments different from the arguments Swyneshed used throughout the previous file and in addition there are two alternative solutions based on different theoretical starting points. According to Hanke this neglected passage either points to the need for a correction of existing ideas about Heytesburian tradition, or it is necessary to declare it as apocryphal. The article was completed with a double appendix, appropriately referring readers to Swyneshed’s contextual reasoning in contemporary tradition.

Last paper by Jakub Ráliš deals with the long going problem of medieval philosophy i.e. predication to God. This paper although takes a bit different perspective from the point of view Greek and Latin tradition. It is namely perspective of one of the greatest minds of Jewish thinking Maimonides. Although Jewish thinker in the environment of Arabic Egypt, Maimonides was through Arabic philosopher deeply influenced by Greek philosophical tradition. This fact is reflected strongly in his view on the functioning of language especially in connection with characterization of God. Ráliš claims that Maimonides saw God as an absolutely “other entity” which can not be sufficiently described by human language. Maimonides’ conception itself is interesting topic, but
author primarily tries to show that Maimonides’ conception of homonymity in this context leaves us without any real possibility to grasp the God through the language and most probably therefore not even through the rationality.

Dear readers, I hope you will enjoy the content of the second international issue of our journal and, of course, we would greatly appreciate any feedback. As an electronic journal, we try to be as close as possible to our readers and, if possible, meet their expectations and possibly respond to their specific themes. In case you have any recommendations or suggestions for future issues, please feel free to contact the editor via email addresses listed on our website under “Contacts”.

Kryštof Boháček

Editor-in-Chief
Editions and Commentaries

Teaching the Science of the Stars in Prague University in the Early Fifteenth Century: Master Johannes Borotin

Charles Burnett

We have records of the teaching of astronomy – the seventh and final subject of the seven liberal arts – from the late twelfth century onwards, and a group of texts has been identified, on the grounds of their frequent occurrence together in manuscripts, as forming the curriculum of the art. In 1405, in the statutes of the University of Bologna, this curriculum is set out in detail:

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i I am very grateful to the help of Pavel Blažek and Ota Pavliček, and the kind services of Martina Hůlková in the Prague Castle Archive. Oleg Voskoboynikov has helped me in deciphering the Latin text and identifying some of the sources. I am also grateful to Petr Hadrava, Alena Hadravová for their kindness and advice, and to Nicolas Weill-Parot for helping to identify magical references.

During the first year of the astronomy course the *Algorismi* (of Sacrobosco) is read, followed in order by the first book of Euclid’s *Geometry*, with the commentary of Campanus, the *Alphonsine Tables* with their canons (Rules), and the *Theorica Planetarum*. During the second year the *Sphere* (of Sacrobosco) is read followed in order by the canons for the astronomical tables of John of Lineriis, and the *Treatise on the Astrolabe* of Messehallah. During the third year Alcabitius is read, followed in order by the *Centiloquium* of Ptolemy with the commentary by Haly, the third book of (Euclid’s) *Geometry* and the *Tractatus Quadrantis*. During the fourth year the whole *Quadripartitus* is read followed by the *De urina non visa* (of William the Englishman) and the third book of the *Almagest*.

Only eight years later we find evidence of a very similar curriculum in a series of notes and commentaries in a manuscript which

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i I.e., the *Treatise on the Quadrant* of John of London.
iii ‘In astrologia in primo anno primo legantur Algorismi de minutis et integris; quibus lectis, legatur primus geometrie Euclidis cum commento Campani; quo lecto, legantur Tabule Alfonsi cum canonibus; quibus lectis, legatur Theorica planetarum. In secundo anno, primo legitur Tractatus de sphera; quo lecto legetur secundus geometrie Euclidis; quo lecto leguntur Canones super tabulis de Lineriis; quibus lectis, legatur Tractatus astrolabii Messachale. In tertio anno, primo legatur Alkabicius; quo lecto, legatur Centiloquium Ptolomei cum commento Haly; quo lecto, legatur tertius geometrie; quo lecto, legatur Tractatus quadrantis. In quarto anno, primo legatur Quadripartitus totus; quo lecto, liber legatur De urina non visa; quo lecto, legatur dictio tertia Almagesti’: Jean-Patrice Boudet, *Entre science et necromance*, Paris 2006, p. 289.
once belonged to the University of Prague, and is now kept in the Prague Castle Archive as MS Prague, Metropolitan Chapter Library, O.1.¹

This manuscript includes almost entirely notes of the courses followed or taught by a student at the university in the fields of astronomy and astrology. It is full of scraps of texts and large empty spaces, some of them extending over several pages. The length of time over which items were added to the notebook is sufficient to explain the changes of appearance of the script. It is reasonable to suppose that the notebook was written entirely by one man, who names himself as the writer on fol. 129r:

Eodem die Magister Ioannes Andree doctor medicine incepit legere librum magnum Ptolomei Almagesti in Praga. Mitte, mi domine, auxilium de sancto et de Syon, tuere me ut perficere possim quod proposui, quia volo. Me Borotyn scrisit in Zderaz dum [s]ibi vixit anno milleno quadringento (sic!) duodeno, quo iam complebat quatuor triginta Decembres (‘On the same day [20 November, 1412], Master Ioannes Andree, a doctor of medicine, began to lecture on the great book of Ptolemy’s Almages in Prague: “Send me help, O Lord, from your sanctuary and from Zion; protect me so that I can complete what I have planned, since this is my wish”. Borotin wrote me (this manuscript) in Zderaz, while he was living there in 1412, when he was completing his 34th December’).

¹ Described in A. Podlaha in *Soupis rukopisů knihovny metropolitní kapitoly pražské*, Prague, eds. A. Patera and A. Podlaha, 2 vols, Prague 1910–1922, II, 1922, pp. 452–3. Its connection with the University of Prague is confirmed by a note on fol. 223v: ‘ad honorem universitatis Pragensis’ (‘for the honour of the University of Prague’).
The same name ‘Borotyn/Borotin’ appears several times in the manuscript:

1) Fol. 114r: Continuatio expositionum canonum tabularum M. Io. de Borotin (‘Continuation of the explanation of the Canons (rules) for the tables of (by) Master Io. de Borotin’).

2) Fol. 222v: 1420 circa lectionem metheorum M. J. B. (‘1420 concerning the lecture on the Meteora of Aristotle by M. J. B.’) (beginning ‘Sciendum quod tota terra...’)

3) Fol. 130r: anno domini 1454 preambulum super lectionem Alkabicii quem legit magister Joh<annes> Borotin (‘In 1454, the Preamble to the lecture course on Alcabitius which master Johannes Borotin lectured on’).

There are, in addition, three comments in the first person:

4) Fol. 129v: 1449 pro theorica planetarum, quam legere tunc incepi, hec sunt scripta (‘These notes have been written in 1449, for the Theorica planetarum which I then began to lecture on’).

5) Fol. 165v: Ego qui pro ordinario meo hoc durum opus mathematice scientie mihi preripui (‘I took up this hard mathematical text [Euclid’s Elements] for my Ordinary Lectures’).
The third comment appears to confirm that the first person is Borotin:

6) Fol. 66r: 1452 incepi legere astrolabium fer<ia> tertia ante Ascensionem Domini ego M. Jo… (‘I, Master Jo… began to lecture on the Astrolabe on the Tuesday before Ascension’).¹

What we have are mathematical, astronomical and astrological texts written first in 1412 when Borotin was 34, to which, nearly 40 years later, the same Borotin added three more texts, on planetary astronomy, astrology and the astrolabe. But there is an obvious and understandable difference between these two sets of texts. In some of the earlier ones, Borotin is still a student, listening to lectures by Master Johannes Andreae; in the later ones he is the teacher.

Let us look in more detail at the evidence in the manuscript of what he learnt as a student and taught as a teacher. The first of the astronomical texts is a work on the uses of the astrolabe (fols 37r–65r, ‘De utilitatis astrolabii’), to which the date 1411 is given, and the attribution to ‘Magister Cristanus’. This is, in fact, a false attribution. But Christian of Prachatice (who was born after 1360 and died in 1439), was also a teacher who wrote a very popular book on the composition and use of the Astrolabe in 1407 as the basis of his university lectures in astronomy. It survives in some 80 manuscripts and several printings from

¹ This evidence should be treated with caution. Alena Hadravová and Petr Hadrava, Křišťan z Prachatic: Stavba a užití astrolábu, Prague 2001, p. 77 read ‘Alkabicium’ for ‘astrolabium’ (understanding ‘Alkabicium’ to be an error for ‘astrolabium’) and conjecture that the Magister Iohannes is Iohannes de Nova Domo. But Borotin’s lecturing in 1452 on an astrolabic text written in 1411 is compatible with his lecturing on Alcabitius 42 years after his first writing of the lectures (see below).
1477 onwards. This is followed by an introduction to arithmetic by Jean de Murs (14th century, fols 48r–66r). The next text is a detailed commentary on Alcabitius’s *Introduction to Astrology* (fols 72r–89v, with breaks) to which we shall return. Then come the canons to the *Alfonsine Tables* (fol. 90r–106v) – i.e., rules for using the standard astronomical tables of the time – to which Borotin has added a ‘continuation’ (fols 114r–115v). Then there is a commentary on Thebit Bencora’s *De hiis que indigent expositione antequam legatur Almagesi* (‘About those things that need explanation before one reads the *Almagest*‘; fols 120r–129r). It is at the end of the second text that Borotin says that, after lecturing on Thabit’s text, Johannes Andreae continued to lecture on Ptolemy’s *Almagest* itself. It is these lectures that follow on fols 138r–161v of the manuscript.

Borotin’s teacher, Johannes Andreae, better known as Schindel, is also mentioned in other sources as being a teacher of astronomy. He is best known as the designer of the astronomical clock on the Old Town Hall in the centre of Prague, which was constructed in 1410. So, in this manuscript we find Borotin in the presence of two other experts on the science of the stars.

Following the lectures on the *Almagest* are lectures on the *Elements* of Euclid (described as being ‘ordinary lectures on a difficult text’ – i.e., lectures given on ordinary days, rather than on feast days), apparently by Borotin himself (fols 166r–178r), and on Alfragani (fols

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i Hadrová and Hadrava, *Křišťan z Prachatic: Stavba a užití astrolábu*, provides a critical edition of the text, from all the manuscripts.

181v–222r), the Arabic introduction to astronomy, which starts in a way reminiscent of the *Metaphysics*, but also use the adjective ‘gloriosus’ shared by the introductory lecture to Alcabitius: ‘Scire et intelligere scientiam astrorum gloriosum est…’. These in turn are followed by notes on Aristotle’s *Meteora* with the ascription, as we have seen, ‘1420 circa lectionem metheorum M. J. B’ (fol. 222v). As we shall see, there is another manuscript containing a ‘Lectura libri Meteororum…’ delivered by Borotin in 1433. Since the *Meteora* is the most astronomical of Aristotle’s works it is not surprising that Borotin should lecture on this too. The manuscript ends with the prediction of a partial lunar eclipse which will coincide with hostilities between the Czechs and the Germans (‘Teutoni’), in the forest called Hwozd (fol 223v–224r).

But within the manuscript there is a sequence of pages written several years later. First the writer gives notes of his own lectures on the *Theorica planetarum* (of Campanus of Novara; fol. 129v–130r, written 1449), the standard introduction to planetary astronomy of the time, and then he gives a preamble (‘preambulum’) in 1454 to the commentary on Alcabitius which had been written 42 years earlier, in 1413 (fol. 130r–v).

We learn from his Preamble that Borotin has been prevented from lecturing on this subject for several reasons, but that, as a teacher, he is required to hand on the knowledge that he has received. The reiterated reference to an ‘open book’ may be an allusion to a practice in degree ceremonies whereby the student who now has the ‘magisterium’ and the ‘ius legendi’ is handed a symbolic open book. At the end of this Preamble

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i Borotin’s lectures on the astrolabe (see p. 13 above), given in 1452, would also belong to the same period.
ii For the Latin text and English translation see the Appendix.
there is a reference to the text that occurs earlier in the manuscript – the untitled introduction to Alcabitius and the full commentary to the text. This Preamble shows that the introduction and commentary were meant to be delivered as lectures. Let us turn to them.

The introduction is a substantial text which would have occupied a whole lecture on its own. As one might expect, it starts with an invocation to the glory of God, the creator of the *machina mundi*, by which the heavenly bodies cause all movement in the sublunary bodies, and the creator of man, who is the only animal to be made to stand upright, with a round head, and a flexible neck, so that he can gaze at the stars. It includes a brief history of the study of astrology, starting from Noah, and documenting its spread throughout the Mediterranean cultures, but also to Indian and China, so that it ‘encompassed the whole earth’. It gives the definitions of astronomy and *astrology* and describes their divisions. It counters objections that astrology is against the Christian faith, buttressing its arguments not only with the astrological authorities but also with the testimony of ancient philosophers, and more recent theologians.

The words and phrases of several of Borotin’s predecessors can be recognized in this preface. The definitions of astronomy and astrology are taken from Ptolemy, ‘Ali ibn Ridwan, Ptolemy’s Arab commentator, and Abu Ma‘shar, the last of whom also provides the history of the spread of their study. But many of these ancient authorities have been mediated through Borotin’s more immediate predecessors in the art of astrology, whom he does not acknowledge. The first sentences are the same as the opening sentences of the thirteenth-century astrologer, Leopold, the ‘son of the County of Austria’, who expressed his piety by beginning his
astrological compendium on the day of the Nativity of Christ.\footnote{i} The divisions of astrology, however, are taken from John of Saxony’s commentary on Alcabitius, which was the most popular commentary on the work up to (and after) Borotin’s time.\footnote{ii} Nevertheless, Borotin is not a mere compiler from previous works; he has his own slant on the subject. This is indicated already in the way he deals with his quotation from John of Saxony. John had dismissed the astrological categories of great conjunctions, talismans and sigils (seals) as being subjects ‘about which we have little or nothing’\footnote{iii} – and indeed John of Saxony does not refer to these categories in his commentary. Borotin includes this phrase, and immediately goes on to say: ‘from all of which wonderful and stupendous effects are found to come into being under the moon’.\footnote{iv} That he is referring specifically to these last three categories is indicated by two substantial quotations from a book that describes the construction and operation of talismans, called De esse et essentiis.\footnote{v} This book happens to be attributed to Saint Thomas, an attribution that Borotin parades and

\footnote{i} Compilatio Leupoldi ducatus Austrie filij de astrorum scientia Decem continens tractatus, Augsburg, 1489.
\footnote{ii} First printed in Venice in 1485: Libellus Ysagogicus... interpretatus a Ioanne Hispalensi scriptumque in eundem a Iohanne Saxonie editum, and several subsequent printings, including that of Simon de Colines (Colinaeus) of Paris 1521, which is used in this article.
\footnote{iii} Alcabitius, Libellus Ysagogicus, ed. Simon de Colines, fol. 34r: ‘Praeter istas sunt quaedam aliae partes judiciorum, scilicet de coniunctionibus magnis, de imaginibus, de sigillis, de quibus parum vel nihil habemus’.
\footnote{iv} See p. 34 below, § 29.
\footnote{v} Thomas Aquinas, De esse et essentiis tum realibus tum intentionalibus, ed. Venice 1488. The title, of course, is very similar to that of the genuine work by Thomas Aquinas, De ente et essentia.
does not question (as Jeronimo Torrella was to do in 1496),\textsuperscript{i} for it gives the seal of church approval to the use of talismans.

He first appeals to the authority of this book to indicate that the science of the stars was in fact known before Noah; for Saint Thomas refers to a very ancient volume written by no less than Abel the son of Adam.\textsuperscript{ii} His second reference to the book occurs immediately after his mention of the talismans and sigils as divisions of astrology.\textsuperscript{iii} The context is a rather theoretical discussion as to whether the stars have souls; Borotin considers that they rather have \textit{intelligences} moving them, and illustrates this by citing examples of the practice of talismanic magic taken from the \textit{De esse et essentiis}, including the author’s own experience of the efficacy of a talisman that he used to prevent horses from passing his window and disturbing his sleep. Borotin uses these stories to justify the belief that intelligences rule the stars rather than that the stars have souls, which is the conclusion of Pseudo-Thomas Aquinas.\textsuperscript{iv}

The other distinctive passage is that with which Borotin ends his introduction. Here the argument is that the stars must have an effect, since plants and stones and, above all, words have an effect. For this he brings in another ecclesiastical authority, no less than a pope: ‘Innocent the Great’. In fact, the quotation comes from a popular confessional written

\begin{enumerate}
\item See p. 30 below, §17, and \textit{De esse et essentiis}, Sig. B iii r.
\item See p. 33 below, §30, and \textit{De esse et essentiis}, Sig. B iii r–v. Pseudo-Thomas’s source is \textit{Liber scientiarum ex scientia Abel, Liber Lunae}, MS Florence, BNC, II.III.214, fols 15r–20r: prologue, fol. 15r–v and cap. 8, fol. 18v (\textit{De ligatione bestiarum ne impedientur}), identified by Weill-Parot, in Torrella (n. 18 above), p. 147, n. 61.
\item See p. 34 below, §34.
\end{enumerate}
by Thomas of Chobham in ca. 1217. Chobham is lamenting that his contemporaries no longer have the knowledge of the power of words, as King Solomon used to have. Chobham is thinking of the words used in a religious context (‘verba sacra’), but Borotin turns this argument around in order to justify the power of the stars:

If words have this kind of power over natural things, why should not the stars and celestial bodies have <this power>?

With these words the introductory lecture comes to an end. Borotin then goes straight into explaining the words of Alcabitius’s Introduction to Astrology. His commentary, however, proves to be a little disappointing, since it follows very closely that of John of Saxony.

Who was this John of Borotin? In fact, we have several other testimonies to his career and interests.

Borotin lived through one of the most dramatic periods of Czech history, i.e., that of the Hussite revolution. The University was a focal point for this revolution.

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i See p. 27 below, §44–47.
exponent of some of the doctrines of John Wyclif, which had arrived in the university in the late fourteenth century. Having been a student at the university he played an important role there, as a reform preacher and teacher in the faculty of Arts, becoming Dean of the Faculty of Arts in 1401, and Rector of the university in 1409. During this period there was a swell of support for native Czechs. This culminated in the decree of Kutná Hora, issued by King Wenceslas IV in 1409, giving the ‘Czech nation’ of the university three votes to a single vote of the other three university nations together (Polish, Bavarian and Saxonian), resulting in a mass exodus of the other university nations, and the foundation of a new university in Leipzig. The University of Prague lost its international status and it took some time to recover its academic standing. Meanwhile tensions arose between the Faculty, the students, the king and the archbishop, concerning the support of Wycliffian ideas, and of one or other of the three claimants to the papacy. These tensions mounted dramatically until, in 1415, in an attempt to reconcile the parties of the different popes at the Council of Constance, Hus was put on trial, condemned and burnt at the stake (6 July 1415).

Borotin was a supporter of Hus. We know from his own testimony that he was born in 1378, a few years after Hus (born ca. 1370–2). He studied at the University of Prague where he took his

Jan Hus, in F. Šmahel (ed. in collaboration with Ota Pavlíček), A Companion to Jan Hus, Leiden – Boston (forthcoming).

ii See above, p. 11.
bachelor’s degree in Arts in 1400 and his master’s in 1410. In 1415 he followed in Hus’s footsteps by becoming the Dean of the Faculty of Arts in 1422 and Rector of the University in 1425–6. Most interestingly, in 1411, he was one of the teachers at the university who are depicted as taking part in a solemn disputation de quolibet (a debate on ‘anything you like’), organised by Jan Hus in that year in order to ‘exercise the talents of the university’. The masters took on the names of ancient and more recent authorities, and it is significant that Borotin is given the name ‘Avicenna’, the eleventh-century Arabic philosopher and medical writer. When it comes to his turn, he is introduced in the following way:

Hanc autem difficultatem venerandus Magister noster, Magister Io<hannes> de Bo<rotyn>, cum sit preclarus perspectivus et medicus, velud Avicenna alius, nostro auditorio declarabit. Unde proponitur sibi questio sub hac forma: Utrum sensaciones fiunt per extramissiones virtutum ab organis sensitivis (‘Our venerable magister, magister Iohannes de Borotin, since he is a brilliant perspectivist and doctor, like ‘another Avicenna’. Hence a question is proposed to him under this form: “Do sensations occur through extramission of powers (virtues) from the organs of sensation?”’).

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i Jan Hus, *Disputationis de Quolibet Pragae in facultate artium mense Ianuario anni 1411 habitae enchiridiion*, ed. Bohumil Ryba, Turnhout 2006; see p. 6: ‘ne alma nostra universitas sine exercicio in scienciis sterilesceret’.

ii *Ibid.*, p. 255. While the designation ‘Avicenna’ would primarily recall the author of the medical *Canon of Medicine*, the discussion of sight is found in Avicenna’s *Liber sextus de*
We have other evidence that he studied medicine. A manuscript of medical texts in the Prague Castle Archive (MS Prague, Metropolitan Chapter Library, L.15) belonged to him. He wrote a preface to the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates in 1424\(^i\) and he lectured on the *Isagoge Iohannitii* in 1430. One manuscript contains both texts, and the note against the *Isagoge* that ‘I heard this book following the reverend master Johannes de Borotin, which he finished <lecturing on> in 1430.\(^ii\) In 1433 we also find him lecturing on the *Meteora* of Aristotle.\(^iii\) He participated not only in the Quodlibet of Jan Hus but also in quodlibets of ‘Michael de Malenicz dictus Czizek’ (1412) and Procopius de Kladruby (1417).\(^iv\) Above all we know that he was active in promoting the Utraquist cause – i.e., the advocacy of accepting communion in both bread and wine – ‘both kinds’ (‘in utraque specie’) – which was at the heart of Hussite doctrine and was first propagated by Jacob of Mies, a reform theologian at the Prague University, in 1414.\(^v\) We find him adopting this position in letters to Saint John Capistran and Jan Rokycana (in this case, in which he and Rokycana supported the same cause, he wrote a secret letter, in verse).

\(\textit{anima},\) part of his philosophical *al-Shifa*’: see Dag Nikolaus Hasse, \textit{Avicenna’s De Anima in the Latin West}, London and Turin, 2000, pp. 107–127 (‘The Theory of Vision’).

\(^i\) MS Prague, Národní knihovna České Republiky, X H 23, fol. 48v: ‘M. Johannis de Borotin proemium Aphorismorum Hippocratis’.

\(^ii\) MS Prague, Národní knihovna České Republiky, X H 16, fol. 20r: ‘Istum libellum audivi post rev. M. Iohannem de Borotyn, quem finivit a. 1430 feria tercia in decollacione Iohannis…’


\(^iv\) For the quodlibetal disputations in Prague in general as well as in particular see Jiří Kejř, \textit{Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské universitě}, Prague 1971.

Finally, an enigmatic reference to him in a note in a manuscript suggests that he may have combined his attacks against the evil practices of the church with an interest in the magical and miraculous, for we read:

Anno Dominice incarnacionis 1454 f. Va ante Urbani hoc experimentum per Magistrum Borotin in sua leccione, quod ipse expertus est fuit pronunciatum: quod quidam puer nondum habens facultatem loquendi hec verba protulerit: ve, ve ve sacerdotibus, qui gladium in populum christianum inducunt’ (‘In 1454, on the fifth day before the Feast of Urbanus, this experiment was announced by Master Borotin in his lecture as something that he had experienced himself: that a certain boy who was not yet able to talk, spoke these words: “Alack, alack, alack for the priests who bring the sword against the Christian people”’).\(^i\)

This is reminiscent of the words at the end of the introductory lecture to Alcabitius in which the power of words is stressed.

So, we find ourselves in the presence of a respected university teacher, involved in teaching and administration over a period of almost fifty years; a colleague of Jan Hus, but also of two other teachers who acquired a reputation for their astronomical skills, Christian of Prachatice and Schindel. In Borotin’s later years the University of Vienna became

\(^i\) MS Prague, Metropolitan Chapter Library M 75, on a flyleaf (‘in folio operculo inf. adligato’).
the focal point for astronomy, with scholars such as Georg Peurbach and Johannes Regiomontanus, the authors of the *Epitome* of the *Almagest*, written in reaction to George of Trebizond’s translation of the work. But in an atmosphere in which Ptolemy’s *Almagest* was being retranslated directly from Greek and a new interest in astronomy was being generated, it is not without interest that Borotin, as (apparently) his last contribution to scholarship, decided to lecture on Alcabitius and spoke eloquently about the validity of astrology and the efficacy of the stars.

Appendix: Edition and Translation of John Borotin’s Preamble and Introductory Lecture to Alcabitius

In the following transcription of the Preamble and the Introductory Lecture on Alcabitius, < > indicate editorial additions, [ ] deletions; \ / indicate additions by the author. Borotin’s handwriting sometimes deteriorates to the point of being illegible. As is the nature of a rough draft, there are repetitions, insertions, and deletions by the author, which are indicated in the notes. Punctuation and capitalization has been added to show the articulation of the phrases. Section numbers have been added to facilitate reference. Italics indicate unclear readings, or uncertain realisation of abbreviations.
Abbreviations:

a.c. = ante correctionem

add. = addidit

al. man. = alia manus, alia manu

del = delevit

p.c. = post correctionem

sup. lin. = supra lineam

*** = non legitur
I. The Preamble

Fol. 130r. <1> Anno domini 1454: preambulum super lectionem Alkabicii quem legit magister Iohannes Borot<in>i. et incepit feria tertia ante diem sancte Sofie est hoc.

<2> In nomine Domini, Amen, cuius nutu sermo accipit gratiam, cuius gratia intellectus accipit prudentiam et animus hominis disciplinam, aggrediamur hoc opus quod legere intendim, doctrinam videlicet sapientis Alkabicii in iudicia astrorum; per hunc librum suum introductorium iam tractemus, ut eam scilicet in corda audientium in ea studere volentium, Deo auxiliante, infundamus. <3> Ego enim ante hoc tempus doctrinam ipsius legere pro utilitate audiencium et ad meum exercicium/ legere inceperam, set intervenientibus causis ad cessandum o<p>portunis hucusque cessavi. Set iam revolvens in animo meo diligenter intellexi quod officium magisterii nomine quod indignus suscepi urget me ut thesaurum scientie quem accepi aliis distribuam, eo quod librum apertum et non clausum in magisterio meo receperam. Sic quod ut lectionem quam in Alkabicio inceperam, ut resumam id intravi, duce Deo. <4> Dicit enim sapiens: ‘Thesaurus absconditus et scientia aliis non errogata, que utilitas in utrisque?’<ii> Quasi dicit: ne forte reus efficiar talenti quod ille servus acceperat et in terra fodierat neque lucrum inde faciendo, pro quo argutus est a domino suo, ut scribitur in Matheo.<iii> <5> Magister enim ex officio magisterii sui tenetur alios docere. Ob hoc

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i Borotin]


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ii Mat 25, 14–30.
enim quando magisterium accipit venitur ad kathedram, datur sibi liber apertus et non clausus, ut iam tamquam magister de kathedra doceat. Libet enim, quoniam utilis proficiat. /fol. 130v/ Et idem est quod dicit Boetius libro De consolatione philosophiae: ‘Nichil enim est quod me plus movit ad magisterii officium quam utilitas’.\footnote{i} <7> Ut igitur ego vobis digne et utilter scientiam hanc astronomie in corda vestra infundam>, iuvenalia tamen ellexero, dummodo auxim, set quo fund..< exordium. Ita D\footnote{ii} Deus presens huic operi sit, gratie divinitate me iuvet et faciat compleure quod utile fuerit, sequitur quia prospera lux ostenditur linguis animis (omnibus?), quod favitur *** \footnote{iii} Vide ante circa introductionem Alkabicii que incipit ‘Gloriosus deus et sublimis’.

\textbf{II. The Introductory Lecture}

<9> Gloriosus Deus et sublimis, qui omnia verbo creavit quique terram in celi medio sapientissime collocavit, ut corpora celestia ei virtutum suarum, quas a suo Creatore acceperant, effectus imprimerent, ipsam terram tamquam receptaculum virtutum celestium \textit{\textbackslash inmotum} mirabiliter collocavit. <10> Quod autem Dominus seculorum mundanis rebus quas sub lunari globo posuit instabiles et caducas impressiones faciat per superiora corpora stabilia et perpetua, que a Luna sursum celi nomine designantur, solus ille ignorat qui mente obstinatus aut carnalis vite mollitie alligatus, opera superiorum et passiones\footnote{iii} inferiorum non

\footnote{i} Boethius, \textit{De consolatione philosophiae}, I, 4: ‘nullum me ad magistratum nisi commune bonorum omnium studium’, ed. K. Büchner, Heidelberg, 1960, p. 11
\footnote{ii} The following two lines are impossible to decipher.
\footnote{iii} passiones\textbackslash porciones \textit{MS}
considerat nec observat.¹ De quibus effectibus scientiam astrologus subtilissime mirabiliterque perscrutatur, quam videre ym<o> et cognoscere cupientes, hic noster Alkabicius³ tamquam eius dux et/ autor precipuus⁴ omnibus ingredi volentibus [h]ostium eius apperi et ad ea<:> suaviter introduci. Antequam igitur [h]ostium eius veniamus, probatissima eius introductione et ..bli.. intellectu eorum que continent astrorum scientiam, cuius presens hic libellus principium est.

Sciendum est quod summus rerum dominus, Deus, universe mundane creature naturam miro quodam et stupendo condidit artificio, ut in contemplacione celestium et terrestrum mens humana non quiescat, sed, speculando .4. elementorum molem, situm et ordinem, qualiter moles terre in medio mundi velut centrum in circulo sit suspensa, qualiter maria et flumina terram circuientia col<l>ocantur, qualiter aeris et ignis magnitudo circumferuntur, et plurima alia mirabilia que tam breviter pertranseo, ad partem celestem incorruptibilem transcendat, cum nichil magis oblectet animos, nichil mentem plus erigit ad divina, quam celorum inclitam contemplari pulcritudinem, astrorumve agitantem coream, per quam huius mundi machina sub Deo regitur, subiecta virtuti militie celestis exercitus que cursu velocissimo et tranquillo, sponsam diversitate

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¹ nec observat] add. Quodque nonnulli qui querunt a simplicibus astronomi nuncupari, ut igitur in eius oculos mentis… possumus infigere’ sed del. MS .. Gloriosus… nuncupari] This corresponds to the opening of the preface of Leopold of Austria’s Compilatio Leupoldi ducatus Austrie filij de astrorum scientia Decem continens tractatus, Augsburg, 1489.

² Two unreadable words follow, which have been crossed out.

³ A reference mark here is picked up by the word ‘astra’ in the margin.

⁴ The text continues with ‘omnes ingredi volentes’, which has been crossed out.

⁵ eius] add. marg. Iste igitur arguat theorice
motuum quadam mobilitate absque fatigacione protendit in evum ad exercitium humani ingenii perhen<
e>spectaculum. <13> Quo spectaculo nichil \hic/ melius, nichil admirabilius, nichil pulchrius. Quid enim in mundo spectabilius Solis iubare mundum illustrante? Quid mirabilius vario et diverso incessu planetarum necnon multiplici defectu corporis \solaris et/ lunaris? Et quid terribilius quam lunarium tristes et continuate eclipses, quas cum intuentur et bestie pertiment, et se interius in suis abscondunt cavernis? <14> Quapropter natura primum homines exercitatos, celsos et rectos constituit, ut deorum congregationem idest (?) stellarum celum intuentes capere\(^i\) possent unum esse (?) Deum... ut scias, inquit,\(^ii\) /72v/ naturam nos spectare \celestia/ voluisse, in media nos sui parte constituit et tantummodo homines ultra bruta erexit, ut ab ortu sidera in occasum labentia prosequi posset, et vultum suum circumferre, sublime fecit caput, et collo flexibili imposuit, <15> quatenus rotunditatem celestis plausus aspiceret, et quam mira celeritate moderatur\(^iii\) omnis conversio, qualiter apparret vicissitudines anniversarias perpetuis motibus renovari et subdit, et qualiter ipse conditor celorum, Deus, ex vario celorum motu nunc famem, nunc pernicacem pestem, nunc hor<r>enda bella, nunc aquarum inundaciones, nunc seditiones etc. in hoc inferiori mundo causari permittit, quapropter ad evitandorum malorum subsidium astronomiam dignatus est hominibus revelare.

<16> Fuit enim hec scientia Noe Prophe te primitus post diluvium revelata \ut ex dictis antiquorum haberi potest. Unde Ovidius tertio De vetula loquens de astris dicit: ‘hec scripsit prior ille propheta Noe

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\(^i\) capere\] carpere a.c. capere p.c. Ms
\(^ii\) inquit\] add. marg. inf. al. man. vel reputavit dominus sapientes et se ad
\(^iii\) moderatur\] add. sup. lin. moveatur
venerandus et docuit primogenitus Sem filius eius’,/ quia non dubitamus quod ante diluvium plures eam habuerunt, sicud Abel filius Ade, ut dicit sanctus Thomas in *Libro de esse et essentia*, ubi dicit: ‘Vidi librum quendam antiquissimum editum ab Abel filio Ade quem Cayn interfecit mirabilis materie et effectus’. ii<sup>17</sup> Noe vero ipsam docuit Caldeos, ut dicit Albumasar in suo *Introductorio*. iii Ex Caldeis vero pervenit ad Indos, deinde ad Egiptios, ab Egiptiis venit ad Persas, deinde ad Romanos et Grecos, deinde ad Sinos, post ad Saracenos, et ultimo ad nos, et sic iam totum circuivit universum. <sup>18</sup> Pro ipsius autem astronomie meliori declaracione notandum est quod astronomia a Guidone sic describitur: ‘Est ars que cursus siderum et habitudines stellarum inter se et circa terram considerat’. iv<sup>19</sup> Ex quo habetur quod astronomie sunt due partes: prima est de orbibus et astris in se consideratis, et hec proprie dicitur astronomia, quasi astrorum lex, et potest sic describi: ‘Astronomia est astrorum lex, que cursus siderum, figuras, magnitudines ac habitudines ipsorum inter se et circa terram indagabili ratione

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ii Pseudo-Thomas Aquinas, *De esset et essentiis*, Sig. B iii r.


iv Bonatti, *Decem libri*, Book I, Ch. 11, Venice 1551, col. 16: ‘Astrologia...est scientia magnitudinis mobilis, quae cursus syderum et habitudines stellarum circa se et circa terram certa ratione perquirit’. This, in turn, is a quotation of Gundissalinus, *De divisione philosophiae*, ed. Baur, p. 115 (with ‘indagabili ratione’ = Isidore, for ‘certa ratione’; see next note). *In margin*: ‘De qua tractat hic theorica planetarum’.
perscrutatur’.\textsuperscript{i} <20> Sed astrologia est scientia per quam sciri possunt mutaciones et opera contingentia in rebus que sunt circa nos, quia, ut dicit Ptolomeus in \textit{Centum verbis}: ‘Vultus huius seculi sunt subjici vultibus superiorum’. <21> Et Hali ibidem exponens hec verba dicit: ‘Ptolomeus vultus huius seculi dicit species animalium et plantarum etc., et quod omnibus istis vultibus seu speciebus vultus consimiles sunt in celo <id> mane<n>tes. Verbi gratia, Scorpio celestis terrenis scorpionibus dominatur, serpens celestis terrenis serpentibus etc. et \textit{introdu<ci>t} exemplum pulcrum.\textsuperscript{ii} <22> Et Plato in \textit{Thimeo} dicit: ‘Iste mundus sensibilis factus est ad similitudinem mundi architipi’.\textsuperscript{iii} Et Philosophus primo \textit{Metheororum}: ‘Est enim iste mundus contiguus lacionibus superiorum, ut tota eius virtus inde gubernetur’,\textsuperscript{iv} vel sic: ‘Astrologia \textit{vero/ est scientia que celestium /73r/ corporum effectus, mutaciones et opera in istis inferioribus observat et, quia rerum effectus secuntur ad eorum motus et situs, necesse habet astrologus recipere ab astronomo doctrina<m>, qua motus et situs celestium cognosceret respectu terre in qua fiunt; et \textit{exinde} iudicium de effectibus certum daret’. <23> Ite<m> differentia est inter astronomiam et astrologiam, quia illa solum motus, figuras et magnitudines et orbium et stellae, ista vero effectus \textit{exinde

\begin{itemize}
\item Isidore of Seville, \textit{Etymologies}, Book 3, chapter 24: ‘Astronomia est astrorum lex, quae cursus siderum et figuras et habitudines stellae circa se et circa terram indagabili ratione percurrit’.
\item This is a summary of Timaean doctrine, rather than a direct quotation.
\end{itemize}
consurgentes considerat, sepius tamen una[m] sumitur pro alia.\footnote{i} Et sic dividit istam scientiam Albumasar in Introductorio suo magno, d<icens>: ‘Due sunt species\footnote{ii} astronomie: una est scientia totius, scilicet scientia de circulis et motibus ipsorum, secunda est ars iudiciorum astronomie’.
\footnote{iii} \footnote{Hanc divisionem etiam po<ni>t Tolomeus in \textit{proemio} Quadripartiti sui et Hali in commento ibidem.\footnote{iv}} Prima species\footnote{v} est tradita perfecte et complete quantum ad principia, conclusiones\footnote{vi} et demonstrationes integraliter et subtilissime a Ptolomeo in Almagesti\footnote{vii} set narrative tradita est ab Alfragano, Albategni per aerem (ascensionem?) spere universalis (?) et cetera, cuix tres sunt partes: prima est de figuris, numeris, ordinibus, quantitatibus <et> proportionibus corporum celestium; secunda pars est de moti<bu>s et de hiis que accidunt astris ex diversitate situs eorum ex motu uti sunt coniunctiones, eclipses, quadrature, elevacio, depressio, velocitas, tarditas etc.; tertia est de diversitate dierum, climatum et noctuum secundum unamquamque regionem et hec simili\textit{ter} tradite sunt per aeres (ascensiones?) suprascriptas.  
\footnote{\textit{Secunda species, scilicet ars iudiciorum de qua est astrologia, habet .4. partes principales. quaram prima est de}}

\footnote{i} alia] \textit{add marg. sicud est hic theorica}  
\footnote{ii} species] \textit{sensus MS}  
\footnote{iii} astronomie\textit{]} \textit{add. marg. Idem hic theorice}  
This is a summary of the argument in Albumasar, \textit{Introductorius maior}, Book 1, chapter 2: see ed. Lemay, V, pp. 7–8.  
\footnote{iv} Ptolemy, \textit{Quadripartitum} with the translations of Plato of Tivoli and Aegidius de Tebaldis, and the commentary of ‘Ali ibn Ridwan, Venice, 1493 (incipit of Plato of Tivoli’s translation): ‘Res, iesure, in quibus est pronosticabilis scientie stellarum perfectio magnas et precipuas duas esse comprehendimus…’ \footnote{v} \footnote{This reproduces John of Saxony, \textit{Libellus Ysagogicus}, preface, ed. 1521 (Colinaeus), fol. 25v.} \footnote{vi} a Ptolomeo in Almagesti\textit{]} \textit{John of Saxony, ibid.} \footnote{viii} species\textit{]} \textit{sensus MS}
interrogationibus, secunda de nativitatibus, tertia de revolutionibus annorum, et hec est duplex, scilicet revolucio annorum mundi et revolutio annorum nativitatum. <28> De istis .4. partibus Hali Abenragel fecit unum librum completum; Ptolomeus autem in Quadripartito obmisit duas partes, scilicet de interrogationibus et electionibus. <29> Preter istas sunt quedam alie partes iudiciorum, scilicet de conjunctionibus magnis, de ymaginibus, de sigillis etc., de quibus parum vel nichil habemus, i ex quibus omnibus mirabiles et stupende effectus inveniuntur fieri sub Luna. ‘Propter hoc quidam [posuerunt] philosophorum et astrologorum antiquorum posuerunt corpora celestia esse animata et rationalia ex eo quod videbant effectus eorum quasi rationales circa ista inferiora, propter quod posuerunt ipsa esse deos et adorabant. Videbant enim quod per ipsa operabantur mala et bona fortuna super terram’. <30> Unde dicit Sanctus Thomas ii ibidem ubi loquitur istam materiam in libro De esse et essentia: ‘Set quantumcumque habeant effectus mirabiles et stupendos corpora celestia, iii non tamen propter hoc habent animas, /73v/ set habent intelligentiam moventem et regentem ipsa, non tamen est forma ipsorum quia aliam formam habent per quam cum materia habent esse’. <31> Et subdit contra illos qui hanc artem dicunt esse vanam et erroneam, dicens: iv ‘Et quantumcumque per rationem et fidem hoc credam, tamen hec operacio valde in me operata fuit, cum vidi librum quendam antiquissimum mirabilis nature et effectus editum ab Abel filio Ade quem Cayn interfecit, qui presciens diluvium invenit lapidem et fregit et dictum librum ymaginum in ipso abscondit. Unde in ipso libro ponit nomina

i secunda species...nichil habemus] John of Saxony ibid.
ii Thomas] add. marg. Thomas de esse et essentia et hic nota (?) partem
iii corpora celestia] marg.
iv dicens] add. marg. Nota S. Thomas dicit quid de astrologia
intelligentiarum regentium ipsos planetas et ponit vii. intelligentias, et nomen intelligentie moventis primum celum. Hec igitur nomina sunt tante efficacie ut, si ymaginem secundum diversitatem planetarum in signis diversis sub diversis faciebus existentibus, nomenque domini planete sub quo ymago facta fuerit in ymagine scripseris, et nomen facti pro quo fit ymago, volunntatem tuam in omnibus exequeris. Ibi enim docet facere ymaginem, cum qua, si tetigeris omne metallum, fiet aurum. Ibi etiam docet facere ymagines quasi de omnibus fortunis bonis et malis. <32> Non tamen’ dicit Sanctus Thomas ‘has omnes ymagines probavi nisi unam, quia cum multitudo equorum mane transierunt ad aquam, non permettentes me dormire, et me infestarent quolibet die, feci ymaginem equi secundum quod ibi precipitur, et sepelivi eam in curreria illa, extunc illuc nullus equus transire potuit, set cum perveniebat ad locum ubi erat ymago, eum locum non poterat pertransire quantumcumque stimularetur et[c] mutaverit viam. Propter quod experimento didici esse vera. <33> Narravit etiam michi quidam quod fuerat ymago de stanno secundum quod in dicto libro precipitur, Luna existente sub secunda facie Aquarii,i et scripsit nomen domini sive intelligentie Lune et fecit illa que erant necessaria secundum quod ibi precipitur et volens deridere puellas cuiusdam op<p>idi, posuit dictam ymaginem in aquam fontis, unde omnes utres et vasa quibus tangebant aquam frangebantur.’ii <34> Sunt etiam ibi quedam ymagines ex quibus scientia augetur ex quadam irradiacione illius intelligentie sub qua fit quis sapiens’. Ex quo quidam ponunt quod corpora supercelestia a formis suis has stupendas et amirandas influentias non habeant, set pocius ab intelligentis regentibus

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i Aquarii] add. non retrograda sed del.
ii Philosophorum et astrologorum (§29) … frangebantur’ corresponds to Pseudo-Thomas Aquinas, De esse et essentiis, Sig. B iii r–v.
ipsa, que Sanctus Thomas partem ut supra. <35> Ex quo igitur isti actus quoque effectus mirabiles virtute corporum celestium fiunt in istis inferioribus, ut testimonio plurimorum sapientum tam fidelium quam gentilium evidentissime comprobatur. /fol. 74r/ <36> Constat astrologiam, que est de illis effectibus qui per artem humanam possunt inveniri, fore veram, ymmo verissimam, scientiam, licet aliqui ei multa superstitiosa admiscentes, eam totam dicat esse falsam et erroneam que sic non est ars set error et quedam superstition ab ecclesia prohibita, quia ut sic est species mathematicae dicte a Mathesi filia Tyresye, media producta, que prima divinationem dicitur invenisse, etc., set prout est vera ars tunc est species mathematicae vere scientie dicte a ‘mathesis’ quod est scientia, et de illa est nostra hic intencio. Unde illud: ‘Scire facit matesis set dat divinare matisis, ut in tant li(?).’ i Idque in libro super Danielem. <36> Hanc etiam scientiam de iudiciis confirmat Ptolomeus in Quadripartito suo, et Albumasar in Introductorio suo magno. ii Unde ambo in confirmando iudicia incipiunt ab opere Solis. <37> Unde Ptolomeus in 13 propositione prime partis dicit quod ‘Sol cum aere operatur in rebus omnibus existentibus in terra’. iii Et Haly exponens dicit: ‘Ptolomeus vult nobis ostendere quod sperma ignea et aeris que mutantur per corpora celestia mutant res omnes que sunt inter nos’. iv <38> Item Hali in commento 20 propositionis dicit quod ‘radices huius scientie adeo sunt manifeste quod plures quasi nichil scientes sciunt <et> intelligunt eas

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i ut in tant li?] add. marg. hic ostenditur (?) astrologia partim naturalis (?)’.

ii magno] add. et Haly in commento et del.

iii Ptolemy, Quadripartitum, trans. Aegidius of Tebaldis, fol. 4rb: ‘Quoniam Sol cum aere operatur in rebus omnibus existentibus in terra’.

iv Ibid. (continuation from previous quotation): ‘Ptolomeus vult nobis ostendere per hec verba quod sperma ignis et aeris que mutant per corpora celestia mutant res omnes que sunt inter nos’.
inspiciendo ipsas’, i et Ptolomeus dicit ‘Populares sciunt res antequam accident et quod magis est’ ipse dicit ‘Animalia muta sciunt res antequam accident’. ii <39> Et Albumasar contra negantes iudicia astrorum, quos dividit in 10 sectas, arguit multis et evidentibus rationibus eorum oppositiones destruendo, que longum esset declarare. iii <40> Ex hiis omnibus sequitur quod ista scientia, cum sit vera scientia, non est erronea ut est contra fidem sicud plurimi ignorantes et rudes nituntur asserere, qui, quantum in eis est, omnem scientiam mundi non solum negare set et abradicare festinarent, ut abiectis sapientibus seu philosophantibus in sua ignara insipientia libertus sine reprehensione permanerent, iv quibus dicendum: ‘Nolite fieri sicud equus et mulus v etc. rem (?) quia iam non philosophia set philopeucnia regnat, vi iam namque ‘ditari volunt potius quam philosophari’. vii <41> Olim namque sacerdotes in Egipto, acquisitis necessariis, propter animam (?) ceperunt philosophari, nunc vero viii non solum non philosophantur set si qui sunt philosophantes eos odiunt et dedignantur, quia iam non philosophia set filopecunia regnat, ideo ditari volunt potius quam philosophari. <42> ‘Sic te prostituant, o virgo scientia, sic te venalem faciunt castis amplexibus aptam, non te propter te

i Ibid., fol. 5ra: ‘Dicit quod radices huius scientie sunt adeo manifeste quod populares nihil scientes de scientia sciunt et intelligunt eas inspiciendo et experiendo ipsas.’

ii Ibid., fol. 5ra: ‘Sciunt antequam accident nescii populares. Et dico magis quod hec intelligunt animalia multa.’

iii Albumasar, Introductorius maior, Book 1, chapter 5 (refutation of the ten kinds of people who are critical of astrology or bring it into bad repute).

iv permanent] add. marg. ‘ut vivere possint sicud bruta, verum rectorem humana/habenda (?)’.

v Ps 31, 9.


viii vero] add. philosophantes scilicet qui sunt sed del.
querentes, set lucra per te’. Nunc igitur ‘matesis\(^i\) vix inveniet qui iam velit ipsam’, quia ‘omnes declinant ad ea que lucra ministrant utque sciant discunt pauci, plures ut habundent:\(^\text{ii}\) Ovidius De vetula /74v/ 

<43> Vos autem non sic, ne efficiamini similes illis, \set/ hanc scientiam reputantes esse veram et rectam, eam amate et ad eam cognoscendam totis viribus festinate, cuius principiorum notitia in hoc libro Alkacicci qui introducit nos in eam sufficienter est consolida. Qui bene doctrinam huius libelli intellexerit, poterit omnes libros judiciorum per se legendo intelligere valde plane. Qui sic incipit: ‘Postulata a domino etc.’ 

<44> Set quid dicerent illi qui hanc reprehendunt scientiam de scientia que fit virtute verborum de qua loquitur Innocentius magnus in Summa, di(stinctio) p(ri)ma, tractatus duodecimus? Ita dicit: ‘Constat quod verba sacra in rebus naturalibus multam habent efficaciam. In tribus enim dicunt fisici precipue vim nature esse constitutam, scilicet in verbis, herbis et lapidibus. De virtute autem herbarum et lapidum aliquid scimus, set de virtute verborum nichil vel parum novimus. <45> Hanc autem verborum artem Salomon habuisse dicitur que nunc penitus omnibus est incognita. Sicud enim aliqua herba aliquem in corpore humano habet effectum et alia in alio,\(^\text{iii}\) ita sonus elementi naturaliter creditur habere

\(^i\) matus[is]\ add. sup. lin. id est mathematica consensus cum astrologia. 
\(^\text{ii}\) Pseudo-Ovid, De vetula, I, 714–8 (ed. Robathan, p. 75): Sed mathesis vix inveniet que iam velit ipsam, / Omnes declinant ad eas que lucra ministrat. / Utque sciant discunt pauci, plures ut abundant. /Sic te prostituunt, O virgo scientia, sic te / Venalem faciunt castis amplexibus aptam, /Non te propter te querenentes, sed lucra per te.’ 
\(^\text{iii}\) alio\ add. ad aliquid agendum sed del.
aliquem effectum ad aliquid agendum circa rem aliquam et alius circa aliam. Et sicud diverse herbe simul coniuncte habent aliquam virtutem in medicina quam nulla per se haberet, ita plura elementa vel plures elementorum voces in rebus aliquem si simul coniuncte fuerint habentes effectum quem prolate singulariter non haberent. Set non est homo qui elementorum sciat virtutem vel artem coniungendi verba. <46> Per hanc autem artem Salomon exorcismos inveniit in quibus artando demones, eos in vitreis vasis inclusit, et multa alia mirabilia in rebus naturalibus per exorcismos fecit. Per hanc etiam artem magi Pharaonis ex virgis creduntur fecisse dracones secundum naturam artis, et etiam occulta semina ipsis virgis insita, quorum ipsi noverunt naturam, et ex illis seminibus producendi demones artem habuerunt’.<sup>i</sup> Hec ille. <47> Si igitur<sup>ii</sup> verba habent huiusmodi virtutem in rebus naturalibus, quare astra et corpora celestia non haberent etc.?<sup>iii</sup>

<48> (fol. 74v) Postulata a domino etc …

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<sup>ii</sup> Si igitur] *add.* scientia verborum virtute est huiusmodi et ubi *sed del.*

<sup>iii</sup> non haberent etc.] *add. marg.* Ista sunt quasi aulula hic adducta; iam ad librum *primum* accedendum.’ et ‘*Numquid verbum* non habet virtutem quod sepe verbum ter dictum te commovet, te turbat, te in iram et furorem excitat, ad bella, ad pugnas, ad amorem, ad odium trahit, quanto te astra et celum movet, quod te tum et circumdat et circumdant’.
Translation

<Preamble>

<1> In the year of the Lord 1454: this is the Preamble to the lectures on Alcabitius which master Johannes Borotin gave and began on the Tuesday before the day of Saint Sophia.

<2> In the name of God, Amen, by whose assent speech acquires grace, by whose grace the intellect receives wisdom, and the human soul, discipline, let us take up this work which we intend to lecture on – i.e., the doctrine of the wise Alkabitius on the judgements of the stars; let us now proceed in such a way through this introduction of his that we pour it into the hearts of our auditors who wish to study it, with God’s help. <3> For I had before now begun to lecture on his doctrine for the usefulness of auditors and for my own exercise, but because intervening events brought about delay I have kept on postponing the lecturing. But now, as I turn things over in my mind carefully, I have understood that the office with the name of ‘teaching’ which I, though unworthy, have accepted urges me to distribute to others the treasury of learning that I have received, because I received an open book and not a closed one in my teaching position. Thus, what I had begun on Alcabitius as a teacher (?), I have entered upon to resume it, under God’s leadership. <4> For the wise man says: ‘A hidden treasure and wisdom not passed on to others: what usefulness is there in either of them?’ As if he said: ‘Lest perhaps I am found guilty of <hiding the> talent which that servant received and buried in the earth, not making any profit from it, for which he was accused by his lord’, as is written in Matthew. <5> For a teacher, from his office of teaching is obliged to teacher others. Because of this, when one accepts
the teaching position, one comes to the Chair, and one is given an open book, not a closed one, so that now, as a teacher one teaches from the Chair. He is pleased to do this because, by being useful, he benefits <his students>. <6> Boethius says the same in his *Consolation of Philosophy*: ‘For there is nothing which inclines me more to the office of teaching than usefulness’. <7> Therefore, so that I should worthily and usefully pour this science of the stars into your hearts, I will chose something from my youth, as long as I increase…(?). Thus may God, being present for this work by the divinity of his grace help me and make me complete what will be useful. It follows, then, that a prosperous light is shown to tongues <and> souls, which is favoured (?). <8> Look back <in the manuscript> for the introduction to Alkabitius which begins ‘The glorious and sublime God’.

*<The Introductory Lecture>*

<9> The glorious and sublime God, who created all things by <His> word, and who most wisely placed the earth in the middle of the heavens, so that the celestial bodies might impress on it the effects of their powers which they had received from their Creator, wonderfully made the earth itself like a receptacle for the celestial powers. <10> But that the Lord makes the unstable and failing impressions on the mundane things of this world which He placed under the lunar globe, stable and perpetual through the superior bodies, which from the Moon upwards are designated with the name of ‘heavens’, he alone denies who, being stubborn of mind, or hidebound by the softness of carnal life, neither considers nor observes the actions of the heavenly bodies and the
passions of the lower bodies. <11> Knowledge about these effects is sought out by the astrologer in a most subtle and wonderful way. When they desire to see, or rather to know this, our Alcabitius <is> like their guide and greatest helper, for those wanting to go in, the door to be opened, and <the subject> to be introduced gently. Before we come to its door <we should proceed> with a most approving introduction and … understanding of those things that constitute the science of the stars, of which this present book is the beginning.

<12> One should know that the supreme lord of things, God, founded the nature of the entire mundane creature in a wonderful and astonishing way, so that in the contemplation of celestial and terrestrial things the human mind should not rest, but by speculating on the mass, position and order of the four elements, on how the bulk of the earth is suspended in the middle of the world like a centre in a circle, how the seas and rivers are placed encircling the earth, how the greatness of the air and fire encircle them, and the very many other wonderful things, which I pass over so quickly, in order that it may ascend to the incorruptible part, since nothing delights <human> spirits more, nothing raises the mind to divine things more, than to contemplate the great beauty of the heavens, or the vibrating dancing of the stars, through which the machine of this world is ruled under God, subject to the power of the celestial army, which with the swiftest but noiseless course, by its diversity of motions, and a certain mobility without tiredness, presents for ever its bride (?) as a perpetual spectacle for the exercise of the human mind. <13> Nothing here is better than this spectacle, nothing more marvellous, nothing more beautiful. For what in the world is more remarkable than the brightness of the Sun,
illuminating the world? What is more wonderful than the various and diverse progress of the planets, or the multiple defects of the body of the Sun and Moon? And what is more terrible than the continued sad eclipses of the luminaries, which even wild animals, when they observe them, are afraid of and they hide in caves? <14> Therefore, nature first made men energetic, tall and straight, so that, by observing the congregation of the gods – i.e., the heavens of the stars – they might be able to grasp that there is one God (?). Hence, he says, so that you should know that nature wished that we should look at celestial things, it placed us in its middle part and only raised man above beasts so that he might be able to follow the stars as they flowed from their rising to their setting, and turn his face round to them. It made his head uplifted, and placed it on a flexible neck,<15> so that he might see the roundness of the heavenly applause: with how wonderful swiftness each turning around is moved; how it appears that the yearly changes are renovated by perpetual movements, and how the Creator himself of the heavens, God, from the diverse movement of the heavens now permits hunger, now pestilent plague, now horrible wars, now floods, now rebellions etc. to be brought about in this inferior world. Therefore, as a help for avoiding ills He thought it worthy to reveal astronomy to men.

<16> This science was first revealed to Noah the prophet after the flood, as can be understood from the words of the Ancients. Hence, Ovid in the third book of the De vetula, speaking about the stars, says: ‘That venerable prophet Noah first wrote these things down, and Shem, his first-begotten son, taught them.’ But we do not doubt that before the flood many people had the science, such as Abel son of Adam, as St Thomas
says in his book on *Being and Essence*, where he says: ‘I saw a certain most ancient book composed by Abel son of Adam, whom Cain killed, of a wonderful nature and effect’. But Noah taught it to the Chaldeans, as Albumasar says in his *Introduction*. From the Chaldeans it reached the Indians, then the Egyptians; from the Egyptians it came to the Persians, then to the Romans and Greeks, then to the Chinese, afterwards to the Saracens, and finally to us, and thus now it has encompassed the whole earth. In order to show astronomy better it should be noted that astronomy is described by Guido <Bonatti> in this way: ‘It is an art which considers the courses of the stars and conditions of the planets between themselves and around the earth’. From this it is gathered that there are two parts of astronomy, the first is concerning the orbs and the stars considered in themselves, and this is properly called astronomy, meaning ‘the law of the stars’; and it can be described in this way: ‘Astronomy is the law of the stars, which considers their courses, shapes, sizes and relations among themselves and around the earth with enquiring reason’. But astrology is the science through which the changes and actions happening in things which are around us can be known. Because, as Ptolemy in the *Centiloquium* says, ‘the faces of this world are subject to the faces of the higher things’, and Haly explaining the same passage, says these words: ‘Ptolemy calls “the faces of this world” the species of animals and plants etc. and (says) that there are similar faces to all these faces or species in heaven. For example, the celestial scorpion dominates over earthly scorpions, the celestial serpent, terrestrial serpents’ etc, and he introduces a beautiful example. And Plato in his *Timaeus* says: ‘This sensible world is made in the likeness of the archetype’. And the Philosopher in the first book of the *Meteora* says: ‘This world touches the movements of the higher bodies so that the whole
of its power is governed from there’, or this: ‘Astrology is the science which observes the effects, changes and actions of the celestial bodies on these lower bodies, and, because the effects of things follow their movements and positions, the astrologer has to take from the astronomer the teaching by which he may know the movements and positions of the celestial bodies, in respect to the earth, in which they come to be, and hence he can give a certain judgement concerning the effects. <23> Likewise, there is a difference between astronomy and astrology, because the former considers only the movements, shapes and sizes of both the orbs and the stars, the latter considers the effects arising from there; often, however, one is taken for the other. <24> Thus Albumasar divides that science in his Great Introduction, saying: ‘There are two species: one is the science of the whole, i.e., the science concerning the circles and their movements, the second is the art of the judgements of astronomy’. <25> Ptolemy also makes this division in the preface to his Quadripartitum, and Haly in the commentary on this passage. <26> The first species is handed down perfectly and complete as far as principles, conclusions and demonstrations, completely and in a most refined way by Ptolemy in his Almagest, but in a narrative way, by Alfraganus, Albattani through the ascension (?) of the universal sphere etc. of which there are three parts. The first is on the figures, numbers, orders, quantities, and ratios of the heavenly bodies. The second part is about their movements and about those things which happen to the stars from the difference of their positions as a result of their movements, such as conjunctions, eclipses, quadratures, elevation, depression, swiftness, slowness etc. The third is on the difference of days, climes and nights, according to each region and this is handed down similarly through the aforesaid ascensions (?). <27> ‘The second species, i.e., the art of judgements, which is what astrology is
about, has four principal parts, of which the first is on interrogations, the second on nativities, the third on revolutions of years, and this is two-part, i.e., the revolution of the years of the world and the revolution of the years of the nativities. <28> On these four parts Haly Abenragel has made a complete book; Ptolemy, however, in his *Quadripartitum* has omitted two parts, i.e., interrogations and elections. <29> As well as these parts there are certain other parts of judgements, i.e., about great conjunctions, about talismans, about sigils etc. about which we have little or nothing’, from all of which wonderful and stupendous effects are found to come into being under the Moon. ‘Because of this certain philosophers and ancient astrologers have posited that the celestial bodies are animate and rational, because they saw their effects were as if rational in respect to these inferior things. Because of this they made them gods and worshipped them. For they saw that through them good and evil fortune were brought about on earth’. <30> Hence St Thomas in the same place where he speaks about that material in his book *About Being and Essence*, says: ‘But, however wonderful and stupendous effects the celestial bodies possess, they do not because of this have souls. But they have an intelligence moving and ruling them. It is not, however, their form, because they have another form through which they have their being with matter’. <31> He adds against those who claim that this art is vain and erroneous: ‘However much I believe this through reason and faith, nevertheless this practical application had a great effect on me, when I saw a certain very old book of a wonderful nature and effect, composed by Abel, the son of Adam whom Cain killed, who, foreseeing the Flood, found a stone, broke it open, and hid the book of talismans in it. In this book he gives the names of the intelligences ruling the planets, and he posits seven intelligences and the name of the intelligence moving the
first heaven. These names are of such great efficacy that if you make the talisman according the different planets being in different signs and under different decans, and write on the talisman the name of the planet under which the image was made, and the name of the action for which the talisman is made, you will obtain your desire in everything. For there he teaches how to make a talisman, with which, if you touch any metal, it will become gold. There also he teaches how to make talismans for virtually every good and bad fortune. <32> I have not tested all of these,’ says St Thomas, ‘but only one: when a large herd of horses passed by every morning on the way to their watering place, not allowing me to sleep, and annoyed me every day, I made a talisman of a horse according to the instructions there, and I buried it in that path, with the result that no horse was able to pass. When it arrived at the place where the talisman was, it could not pass through the place, however much it was goaded etc, and it changed its course. Because of this I learnt by experience that these things were true. <33> Someone also told me that a talisman had been made of tin, according to the instructions in this book, when the Moon was in the second decan of Aquarius, and he wrote the name of the lord – or intelligence – of the Moon, and he did what was necessary, according to what was instructed there, and, wanting to make fun of the young women of a certain town, he put this talisman in the water of a well, and all their waterskins and vessels broke when they touched the water. <34> There are also there certain talismans from which knowledge is increased from a kind of irradiation of that intelligence under which someone becomes wise’. Consequently certain people claim that the supercelestial bodies do not have these stupendous and wonderful influences from their forms, but rather from the intelligences ruling over them, which St Thomas says as above. <35> Therefore, these actions also become
marvellous effects by virtue of the celestial bodies on these lower things, as is most clearly proved by the testimony of very many wise men, both Christian and pagan. <36> It is established that astrology, which concerns those effects which can be discovered through human art, is a true – indeed most true – science, although some people, mixing many superstitious things with it, say that it is completely false and erroneous, and thus is not an art but an error, and a superstition prohibited by the church, because, as such, it is a species of the mathematics which takes its name from Mathesis, daughter of Tyresias, with a long middle syllable, who is said to have first discovered divination, but insofar as it is a true art, then it is a species of the true mathematical science, which takes its name from ‘mathesis’ which is ‘science’. The latter is what we mean here. Hence this: “‘matesis’ gives rise to knowing, but ‘matesis’ allows divination (?)’, and this is in the book on Daniel. <36> Ptolemy also confirms this science on judgements in his Quadripartitum, and Albumasar in his Great Introduction; both of them, in confirming judgements, begin from the operation of the Sun. <37> Hence Ptolemy in the thirteenth proposition of the first part <of the Quadripartitum> says that the Sun with the air operates on all things existing on earth. And Haly, explaining this, says: ‘Ptolemy wishes to show us that the fiery sphere and the sphere of air, which are changed by the celestial bodies, change all things which are among us’. <38> Likewise, Haly in the commentary on the twentieth proposition says that ‘the roots of this science are so obvious that many ignorant people know and understand them by observing them’; and Ptolemy says that the common people know things before they happen and what is more, says: ‘Mute animals know things before they happen’. <39> And Albumasar, against those denying the judgements of stars, whom he divides into ten sects, argues
with many obvious arguments, destroying their oppositions, which it would take a long time to explain. From all this it follows that this science, since it is a true science, is not erroneous in that it is against faith, just as very many ignorant and simple people attempt to assert – those who, as far as they can, hurry not only to deny every science of the world, but also to tear it out by the roots, so that, by throwing out all the wisemen and philosophising men, in their ignorant folly, they remain more willingly without criticism. To those people one should say: ‘Do not become like a horse and a mule’, because now not ‘philosophia’ but ‘philopecunia’ reigns. For now they wish to become rich rather than to philosophise. Once the priests in Egypt, when they had acquired what was necessary, began to philosophise for the sake of the soul, but now not only do they not philosophise, but if anyone is philosophising they hate them and despise them, because now not ‘philosophia’ but ‘philopecunia’ reigns. Therefore, they wish to become rich rather than to philosophise. ‘In this way they prostitute you, O virgin science! In this way they put you on sale, though you are suited to chaste embraces, not seeking you for yourself, but seeking profit through you’. But now he will hardly find mathesis who now wants here, because ‘all debase themselves to the level of those things which provide gain, and few learn things in order to know, but more so that they might become rich’.

Do not like this, lest you become similar to these people, but, considering this science to be true and right, love it and hurry with all your strength to get to know it. The information of its principles in this book of Alcabitius which introduces us to it is sufficiently solid. Whoever understands the doctrine of this book well, will be able to understand all
the books of judgements very clearly by reading them himself. It begins ‘Postulata a domino…’

<44> But what should those who criticise this science say about the science which occurs by means of words? About this Innocent the Great speaks in the *Summa*, in the twelfth treatise of the first distinction. He speaks in this way: ‘It is clear that sacred words have much efficacy over natural things. For physicists say that the natural force resides in three things: words, plants and stones. About the power of plants and stones we know something; about the power of words we know virtually nothing. Solomon is said to have possessed this art of words, which is now completely unknown to all people. For just as one plant has an effect on one human body, and another on another, so the sound of a letter is believed to have, naturally, the effect of producing one action in one thing, and another <sound>, another. And just as different plants mixed together have a power in medicine which they do not have individually, so, if many letters or many words consisting of letters are combined, they have an effect on things which, when they are pronounced singularly, they do not have. But no one knows the power of letters or the art of joining together words. <46> Solomon invented exorcisms by which he bound demons and enclosed them in glass vessels and performed many other wonders on natural objects, through exorcisms. Through this art, also, the magicians of Pharaoh are believed to have made dragons from rods, according to the nature of the art, and the hidden seeds embedded within the rods themselves, whose nature they knew, and from these seeds they had the art of producing demons’.
If, therefore, words have this kind of power over natural things, why should not the stars and celestial bodies not have <this power>?

(The first lemma from Alcabitius’s text).

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i Added in the lower margin: ‘Surely a word has power, because often a word spoken three times moves you, disturbs you, arouses you into anger and furor, and excites you to wars, battles, love and hate, by as much the stars and the heavens move you, because it and they surround you.’
Articles

Blessed life without philosophy:

Plato and Hesiod on prehistory of man and world

Eliška Luhanová

Motto:

“Understanding myth is not believing in it, and if all myths are true, it is in so far as they can be set in a phenomenology of mind which shows their function in arriving at awareness, and which ultimately bases their own significance on the significance they have for the philosopher. In the same way, though it is indeed from the dreamer that I was last night that I require an account of the dream, the dreamer himself offers no account, and the person who does so is awake.”

i First version of this paper was presented at an international conference “Myth and Literature in Ancient Philosophy” hosted by the Faculty of Classics at the University of Cambridge on April 15–16, 2011.

Introduction

The questions of human prehistory and about the origins of humanity – which would be nowadays classified as anthropological ones – were present in Greek thinking from its very beginnings. Although a physical anthropology, i.e. how the first humans were born or created, played a rather marginal role in Greek myth (contrary to another mythical traditions, such as the Mesopotamian one), the more a cultural anthropology was significant: the myths explaining how the cultural human sphere was established in its specificity were of major importance. Two mythical narratives about human prehistory played a crucial role: the myth of golden age and the Promethean myth. Summed up schematically, the first one is predominantly primitivistic, taking human prehistory as an ideal which the humanity in its history recedes from, while the second one, talking about the divine origins of cultural skills, is predominantly progressivist, taking human history as a process of development of human nature and life-style. Boeotian poet Hesiod (8th–7th century BC) is our oldest source for both myths.

Taking into account his poems Theogony and Works and Days (with some help of presumably an Aeschylus’ play Prometheus Bound) we will try to show how the descriptions of a pre-historical, paradisical golden-age life, free of all toil and suffering, have found their counterpart in the stories expressing the role of “cultural gods” (such as Prometheus) which emphasise different aspects of human prehistory: the absence of technical skills and arts (technai), the lack of an appropriate knowledge

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and as a result a rather bestial lifestyle missing essential signs of humanity. Thus the conception of a continuing decline of human character is counterbalanced by the idea of gradual cultural progress, and these two views are not simply juxtaposed, but essentially ambiguous, forming the appropriate view on human history and nature together. As a result, the original myth of golden age can be by no means reduced to a simple regressive scheme – the golden-age is not purely positively valued and the history is not simply a continual fading of the ideal. And *vice versa*, the oldest Promethean myths do not represent simply the stories about a necessary progress – the profits of the cultural development are potentially dangerous, drawing apart men and the divine world-order and possibly causing the degeneration of human nature. We will then move our attention to Plato and his dialogue *Statesman* (in context with *Protagoras* and *Symposion*) to show that the old anthropological questions together with some of the traditional ambiguous responses played a crucial role also in later philosophical discourse, because they constituted a ground from which the later philosophical reflection organically evolved. In elaborating this particular theme we thus hope to be able to show, among others, a principal unity of so called pre-philosophical and philosophical thinking.

I. Hesiod on the origins of world-order and prehistory of humankind

We will start our enquiry about the origins of the cosmos and prehistory of the human race with Cronus: a god who gained his specific
importance in the texts of Hesiod\textsuperscript{i} and who is represented there as an essentially ambiguous character. In *Theogony* he represents a major adversary of Zeus: a primordial, cruel god, who turns against his own father by a terrible action of castration and then swallows his own children, while as a true tyrant being totally unable and unwilling to share his superior power with anybody else. Consequently he must be defeated so that the justice (δίκη) of Zeus’ world-order, which would also incorporate other divine powers into world-rule, could be established. On the other hand, in *Works and Days* Cronus creates the first race of mortals, who were living blessed, god-like lives during the “Golden Age” of Cronus’ government.\textsuperscript{ii}

In the first part of this section, we will deal with this ambiguity. As for Cronus, his role is crucial for the transition from the primordial proto-cosmical phase of Ouranos to a fully developed Zeus’ world-order. Taking his transitional role into account, he represents on the one hand a progressive force tending to cosmos (compared to Ouranos), on the other hand a primordial god of the phase when cosmos wasn’t yet fully established (compared to Zeus). As for the way of life Cronus guarantees for mortals living in the world, we will try to show that not even the golden-age life-style is single-valued as it shares some characteristics not only with the divine life, but with the subhuman, animal life, too.

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\textsuperscript{i} Cronus represents just a marginal character in Homer: father of Zeus, arrested in the Underworld (*II*. VIII, 478–481).

\textsuperscript{ii} But does a discrepancy really exist between the tyrant as a cruel and enslaving autocrat and tyrant as a populist ensuring a blessed life for his people? We can find a brief but illuminating remark in (pseudo)Aristotelian *Constitution of Athenians* (16,7): the tyrannid of Peisistratus (second half of 6th century BC) was commonly labelled as “the golden age of Cronus” in the classical period.
1. Ambiguity of Cronus

1.1 Ouranos – head of the pre-cosmic family

In the *Theogony*, the cosmogonic process starts with three divine powers coming into being: Chaos, Gaia and Eros (*Theog. 116 ff.*)\(^i\). Chaos represents a counterpart of Gaia: it is a yawning chasm without any limits and restrictions, an absolute indeterminateness.\(^ii\) The line of his descendants (divine powers like Night and Day, Erebos and Aither, Dreams, Fates, etc., *Theog. 123–124, 211ff.*) remains strictly unrelated to the genealogical line beginning with Gaia, we will leave it aside in our analysis\(^iii\). Gaia or the Earth represents solidity and fortress; she provides an unshaken seat for everything else to come into existence, eminently for other divine powers and deities. It is Gaia who gave birth, directly or indirectly, to the most important cosmological constituents and whose line established the physical world in its known form. The whole of the

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\(^{i}\) Abbreviations of sources referred to correspond to abbreviations used in Liddell’s and Scott’s Greek-English lexicon (Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon, with a revised supplement*, Oxford 19969). All translations will be my own.

\(^{ii}\) This interpretation of Chaos is based also on close etymological and factual relations between *chaos* and *chasma* (West, M. L., *viz* Hesiod, *Theogony*, ed. Martin Litchfield West, Oxford 1966, s. 192–193) and on Hesiod’s description of *chasma* in the passage of so called “topography of Tartaros” (*Theog. 736–744*).

\(^{iii}\) The descendants of Chaos represent specific interpretative problems. It is doubtful even in the case of Zeus’ rule whether or how these powers are subordinated to his world-rule. In some cases, it seems that they are liminal components of the cosmos which they help to establish negatively, as articulations of its limits. In this case the absolute generational independence of Chaos’ line could represent its substantial resistance to ordering supreme cosmic power and this liminal character.
cosmos as we know it came to being by a constitutional process of generation and here comes the role of Eros. Eros is an active force of generation, a desire and a power to procreate, to give birth to a new being. The first primordial cosmic power is therefore a procreative one: in the first cosmic phase divine power means power to generate.

An important moment in the development of this power came when Gaia gave birth to Ouranos, the Sky. This descendant is special as he is equal to his mother (*Theog.* 126): he is not only the son of Earth, but he will also become her husband and the father of her children. Since then all elementary relations of procreative power are set: parental relations between progenitors and their descendants, marital relations between two beings who procreate in sexual conjunction. But in fact, Ouranos does not take up with the equality between him and his wife and he starts to act as the head of the rudimentary cosmic family.¹ From his parental and marital position he oppresses violently his wife and their children (Titans, Cyclops and *Hekatoncheiroi*): he doesn’t allow the children to be born and keeps them inside the body of their mother Earth, who thus suffers (*Theog.* 154–158). There is no intention, no purpose of his violent behaviour – he just finds the children repulsive and enjoys the evil deed he is able to perpetrate against his wife. Ouranos was therefore exercising his procreative power as an instrument of self-confirmation in his role of husband and father. Here comes Cronus who will expand the nature of the cosmic power and use it as an instrument to govern the world.

1.2 Cronus – first sovereign of the world

Cronus is not just the youngest of Gaia’s children, but also the most terrible (δεινότατος παίδων, Theog. 138). What makes him so specific? Maybe we could find the answer in the epithet expressing the ambiguity of this divine figure: Cronus is ἀγκυλομήτης (Theog. 137), that is cunning and tricky, but also clever and crafty. He has μῆτις – prudence, i.e. the ability to consider, deliberate, think thoroughly, but his prudence is ἀγκύλος – biased, twisted, not pure and accurate. It is the capacity of μῆτις which enabled Cronus to make steps bellow to Ouranos and become Zeus’ precursor. The story begins with an appeal from Gaia to their children, an appeal to change the unjust oppressive conditions, which Cronus is the only one able to respond to – it proves his capability to understand the present situation, to evaluate it and to realize the need and necessity for change. Furthermore, he had proven an ability to intrigue, to plan and schedule his future actions when he admitted and accepted as his own the intrigue (δόλος, Theog. 175) which Gaia had prepared.\(^1\) Last but not least, he proved himself capable to fulfil the plans, to act according to what was planned, so that his behaviour was entirely intentional. None of these characteristics can be found in the case of Ouranos. It is significant that the castration, i.e. definitive deprivation of procreative power, is sufficient to get Ouranos out of the way – when he has lost his procreative

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\(^1\) Gaia acts against Ouranos and is capable of gaining some predominance over him because she is not just his wife, but also his mother – she still holds a privileged position of primordial divinity with supreme procreative power. This priority is also confirmed by the fact that Gaia generated some entities (the Mountains and the Sea) after Ouranos had already been born (Theog. 126–132).
power, he has lost all his power and a place for Cronus was open.

Cronus is not just a father and a husband, he is the king (βασίλευς, Theog. 476) of the world and the imperial honour (βασιληίς τιμή, Theog. 462) belongs to him. His power is not a primordial procreative power of the head of a family, but real political power of the world sovereign. Cronus didn’t take up the position which belonged to Ouranos: he didn’t marry Gaia. Purely genealogically speaking, Cronus will remind subordinated to divinities that he in fact (because of his act) dominates. Cronus’ domination is a domination of ruler over his tributaries, the new hierarchy of power is independent on generational relations. Nevertheless, the older type of power is not completely annulled by the more advanced one. The primordial procreative power and generational relations didn’t vanish, nor could they be totally suppressed. They still represent an important engine of the events to come and Cronus’ inability to deal with these older forms of cosmic power will show how his μῆτις is twisted or inaccurate.

Although Cronus was warned that it meant a threat to his rule, he gave birth to offspring. He was trying to apply his prudence (φρονεῖν, Theog. 461) to avert this known risk, but at this precise moment his prudence showed its weakness, its deficiency. Firstly, he prevents his children from being born by swallowing them and didn’t see that he was just repeating Ouranos’ injustice (though on higher level, because contrary to Ouranos, Cronus’ behaviour was conducted by a precise intention – to remain a king). Then he wasn’t able to anticipate future risks and uncover intrigues against himself, so that he was deceived by his mother and wife and swallowed a stone instead of the youngest child, Zeus. Finally, Cronus lost the power of a sovereign because his understanding wasn’t enough for such a post: he did not catch what was
going on by his twisted reason (οὐδ’ ἐνόησε μετὰ φρεσίν, Theog. 488) and he was relieved by his hidden son.

Therefore there seem to be two major levels of Cronus’ deficiency: first, he is not capable of distributing the power – for Cronus, the power of the sovereign fully coincides with the one person holding it. Zeus will be the first one able to construct the power differently, in a distributive manner, when he will include also other deities, his offspring included, in the government of the world.¹ Second, Cronus’ prudence is not sufficient to grasp the future properly – it will be once more Zeus who will demonstrate intelligence oriented adequately to the future, to potential future risks and ruses and to their effective prevention.

1.3 Zeus – righteous king

As Cronus is not just an oppressive father, but a world-sovereign, a simple castration would not be enough to cast him out. The processes of establishing a new ruler and new world-order will be much longer and more complex. To accomplish this task, Zeus must confront Cronus’ twisted prudence (once more he is named as ἀγκυλομήτης, Theog. 495) not only with force (βίη, Theog. 496), but also with new means and arts

¹ We can add another, closely related task of the world sovereign which Cronus failed at: to find a way to incorporate the primordial divinities and their powers in a more advanced cosmic order toward which they represent a permanent latent threat. Just as Cronus wasn’t capable to settle adequately with his own children, as he wasn’t capable of dealing properly with ancient deities and with the injustices of the past – he left his siblings, Cyclops and Hekatoncheiroi, hidden inside the Earth, waiting there for Zeus to liberate them and to assign to them a proper place in the world order.
At first, Zeus applied a political providence unknown to Cronus when he liberated *Hekatoncheiroi* from their old prison and gave them a proper share on full divinity (the donation of ambrosia and nectar, *Theog.* 640). In return, he gained valuable help from them: their brutal force decided the fight against the Titans in favour of the Olympians and then their gift of thunderbolt would help Zeus to exert his supreme power of the sovereign. Zeus thus proved that he was able to acquire allies, to incorporate primordial divinities into his new order and to use their power for the benefit of his own world-order. This could also explain an apparently paradoxical fact that the poet uses exactly these old monsters to express the capacities by which Zeus surpasses the Titans and by which it is possible to win the battle against them: because Zeus’ intelligent, ingenious mind (πραπίδες, νόημα, *Theog.* 656) liberated them from their prison, they will fight for Zeus “with all efforts of intellect and with sobriety in their hearts” (τῷ ἀτενεῖ θυμῷ καὶ πρόφρονι νόῳ, *Theog.* 661). Also during the Typhon incident Zeus proved that he was capable of coping with primordial forces, this time with Gaia who gave birth to a threatening monster. Without Zeus’ focused attention and his immediate intervention, this monster would one day become a new ruler of the world (*Theog.* 836–837). It was not only Zeus’ battle force, but also his “prompt comprehension” (ὀξὺ νοεῖν, *Theog.* 838) of this threat which saved the day.

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i In *Theog.* 501–506, we are told that the thunderbolt was a gift from Cronus’ brothers enchained by their father. There is an agreement among the commentators that *Hekatoncheiroi* are meant (see Hesiod, *Theogony*, ed. Martin Litchfield West, Oxford 1966, s. 303–304).
But the decisive moment comes for Zeus after all these battles. How to avoid Cronus’ fate and establish new world-order forever? A decisive step is made by Zeus’ first marriage with the goddess Metis who is “the most understanding of all gods and mortals” (πλειστα θεον ειδουην ιδε θνητων ἄνθρωπων, Theog. 887). It is once more repeated that the ability of μητις, prudence, represents the crucial challenge for the world-sovereign: it was prophesied that it would be Metis who would give birth to a son who would become a new world sovereign. But Zeus found a way how to deal with this challenge: when the goddess became pregnant with him, he swallowed her, internalised her completely. And he did it by use of convincing, effectual discourses (αιμωλισις λογοις, Theog. 890) which overbalanced sheer wisdom (φρένες, Theog. 889) of the goddess. Contrary to Cronus’ twisted prudence, Zeus has thus gained prudence in its pure form: from now he can understand and clearly distinguish what is good and what is bad (Theog. 900). And as a result, significantly from Zeus’ head Athena was born, a goddess with the same strength and same intelligent deliberation as her father (Îσον ξουσαν πατρι μενος και ἐπιφρονα βουλην, Theog. 896). So through logos Zeus enriched the craftiness of older divine generations with clear, long-sighted intellect – it is this combination the new world-order will be based on.

Finally, the nature of Zeus’ rule remains to be discussed briefly. Zeus was invited to rule by other gods (Theog. 883) and then he ordered the inherent laws for the gods and distributed to all of them their spheres of activity (ἀθανατως διεταξε νομους και ἐπεφραξε τιμας, Theog. 74; very similarly also Theog. 885). Everyone who deserved it obtained his proper place in the power structure of the world and gained an appropriate honour and position (τιμη), that is the law (θεμις) of Zeus’s government (Theog. 390–396). So the unitary power of one world sovereign is
distributed by Zeus among many other divinities which have become to him co-executors of the divine order in the world and this order is till now not granted by a singular person, but based on a complex network of divine relations governed from a functional centre, represented by Zeus. Thus the world-order as a whole is much more stable, because it doesn’t represent an unchangeable unitary monolith, but a flexible, variable structure which can seat also new divinities, to embrace them as new supports for the present order.

2. Ambiguity of human prehistory: myth of golden age and Promethean story

We will now look closer at the hesiodic poem *Works and Days*, and to some important aspects of the myth of races (Op. 110–201), which represents an extant account of five successive ages of mankind and where we find – articulated for the first time – the idea that at the very beginning, there was a golden race of mortals living god-like lives. As West remarks in his commentary to *Works and Days*,¹ Hesiod himself (unlike the subsequent tradition) does not speak of a golden *age* of human prehistory but of specific a golden *race* of mortals. However, the chronological aspect is none the less present and already important in Hesiod’s account, because the chronological order of the races constitutes a narrative backbone of the story of five mortal generations. The golden race is historically the most distant from our present, iron race of mortals and it can thus represent its counterpart in many aspects. With this in

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mind, we will talk about “the golden age” as in the case of Hesiod, although he himself didn’t use that term.\textsuperscript{i}

2.1 Human prehistory as a golden age: myth of the races

The so called myth of the races is told in Hesiod’s poem *Works and Days* (Op. 110–201) where it represents successive processes of establishing the fully human state. This interpretation (proposed by J.-P. Vernant)\textsuperscript{ii} supposes that the variation of races does not represent five different, isolated states, but rather it stands for one whole mythical narrative with an integral meaning. The core of this meaning would be that the actual human situation with all its complexity could not be established by a single act, but a long and complex process is needed for its constitution.

The first, golden race of mortals (Op. 111–126) was living during Cronus age and these first mortals lived like gods (ὡσπε θεοὶ ἔζωον, Op. 112): they were insulated from all evils (κακῶν ἐκτοσθεν ἁπάντων, Op. 115), they knew no aging and illnesses (their life should represent god-

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\textsuperscript{i} When using the term “golden age”, the subsequent tradition didn’t invent an interpretation entirely foreign to Hesiod, but was rather suppressing one specifically hesiodic aspect of the story, that is the discontinuity of the processes of variation of races and the original hesiodic emphasis on the fact that the mortals of golden race were not just “humans living differently”, but essentially different mortal beings.

like ageless youth) and the earth provided them all nurture herself “automatically” (καρπὸν δ’ ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἀρουρα αὐτομάτη πολλὸν τε καὶ ἀφθονον, Op. 117–118). Being nurtured by the “life-giving” (ζείδωρος) Earth, these mortals, as the story was traditionally understood, were not only vegetarian, but moreover were born not one from another, but directly from the Earth. As a consequence, the golden-age mortals didn’t need family (there is no mention of women or children among them) as they didn’t need to work, so there were no sexual relations and no social life among them. Their death and fate after death confirms their proximity to divinity: they were dying as if falling asleep and then they became above-ground daemons which are repeatedly denominated as “immortals” (Op. 122, 250, 253). We can conclude that the golden-age lifestyle represents pure existence: no need of human activity, no motivation for it. Golden mortals were so god-like that any problems and values connected with the pursuit of a better life (both in material and moral sense) didn’t yet exist for them – nature provided all that was needed and there is no trace of culture, neither material nor spiritual, among them.

The mortals of the second, silver race (Op. 127–142) were unlike the golden ones “in stature as in mind” (οὖτε φυὴν ἐναλίγκιον οὗτε νόημα, 129) and they bear some new characteristics which made them dissimilar to gods and more like the later humans. First, these mortals are no longer nurtured directly by the Earth herself and consequently there is a basic social organisation that is the family (children are nurtured by their mother at parental house). The importance of this aspect is emphasized by the fact that childhood is extremely long. Second, moral deficiency already exists among these mortals: “they weren’t able to
refrain themselves from mutual arrogance and recklessness” (ὑβριν ἀτάσθαλον οὐκ ἐδύναντο ἄλληλων ἀπέχειν, Op. 134–135). This formulation clearly implies an imperative to refrain from these wrongdoings, an imperative to live well was posed to mortals. This imperative doesn’t concern only horizontal relations of humans, but also vertical relations of mortals and gods. The mortals are no longer close to the gods simply by their nature, they had to constitute a proper relation to divinity by their own activity: they should honour the gods properly and sacrifice to them. The nature and origin of sacrifice will be described later in context of the Promethean myth, but it should be noted here that the sacrifice detaches human sphere from the divine one (mortals are no longer close to the gods simply by their nature, they had to constitute on their own a proper relation to divinity) as from the animal realm (the sacrifice finished the period of vegetarianism and animal flesh became a nurture; men are then differentiated from the animals by a specifically human imperative of allofagia). The inability of the silver mortals to satisfy new cultural and moral tasks was then a cause for Zeus to destroy the whole race. This means that somewhere between the golden and the silver age the world order changed: Cronus was replaced by Zeus. The unitary posthumous fate of these mortals (they have become underground daemons) confirms on one hand their proximity to the golden age mortals, on the other it is already closer to the posthumous fate of actual humans in the Underworld.

Zeus then became father of the third, bronze race of ash giants (Op. 143–155), which pushed to the extreme some of the characteristics which already existed in the silver age and distinguishing mortals from gods. The first sign of this extremity is their monstrous physical
appearance. Furthermore there is also their way of life which shows their state of mind: they knew only arrogance, violence and hardness of heart. They were fighting with themselves all the time and there is no sign of any relationship to divinity. Their whole life is subordinated to permanent warfare (which is stressed by the fact that they are always surrounded by bronze in diverse forms) and their distance not only from gods, but also from the fully developed cultural state of humanity, is expressed by the fact that they do not eat bread, and as a result didn’t practise agriculture. Their death and posthumous fate confirms all that: they weren’t destroyed by gods, but by themselves and then they vanished into the Underworld forever, completely anonymous without any memory and any glory.

In such an extreme state the process of establishing the distance of mortals from gods reached its farthest and some kind of *epistrophe*, a “turn-back”, started with the next race. The race of heroes (Op. 156–173) is a noble, literally divine, race (θείον γένος, 159) which is already “more just and better” (δικαιότερον καὶ ἄρειον, Op. 158) than its predecessors. These mortals are therefore denominated as demigods (καλέονται ἡμίθεοι, Op. 159–160). All this makes evident that the process of establishing humanity turned back to the gods. But this turn doesn’t mean a simple return – it is not directed to simply re-establishing the pre-cultural golden age on earth, but is oriented to a fully cultural state of humanity with all its (moral and other) ambiguities, risks and hopes.

The lives and fates of heroes being well-known, Hesiod refers to them a little elliptically when he mentions the heroes known from the famous battles over Thebes and Troy. It was not necessary to stress that during this heroic past the social organisation existed and that the questions of justice and good life played a crucial role, as well as the imperative of
establishing an adequate connection with the gods by sacrifices and other divine honours. Hesiod immediately concentrates on the posthumous fate of heroes, which represents a crucial difference between them and all the preceding races. Unlike all their predecessors, heroes do not have a unitary, individually undifferentiated fate, but their afterlife depends on their own acts during life. These heroes who died in an undignified hassle for Oedipus’ heritage followed the fate of ash giants and vanished into the Underworld, while those who were fighting for the honour of Greeks and for Zeus’ justice in front of Troy are living a golden-age posthumous life: governed by Cronus they are living a blessed life on a land which yields without toil three times a year. As a consequence, the existential situation of these mortals isn’t granted from the beginning by their nature but becomes variable, dependant on human activity. What was non-problematically established for the preceding races must now be obtained by the mortals themselves. The heroes and their fates make apparent that there are two extreme possibilities for humans: to live a good life, to die honourably and thus to approximate oneself to the gods (the memory of heroes preserved after their death is also a way how to transgress the limits of human mortality), or to fail in this task and to die and vanish completely in the anonymity of the Underworld. By this differentiation the moral imperative to live a good life finds an unprecedented motivation: when mortality does not mean unique fatality, humans live in permanent tension between the golden-age ideal of divine proximity as a limit of their efforts and the ash-giants’ risk of keeping fighting for nothing, of not finding the appropriate way of living and of the abolition.
The last iron race of humans (Op. 174–201) is the actual one (νῦν γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον, Op. 176) and it represents a continual sequel to the race of heroes. Despite all the toil and suffering which fulfil our lives, the good isn’t totally absent from us (μεμείξεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖσιν, Op. 179), but it is present as something mortals have to struggle for: to arrange properly and on their own the social sphere, to establish adequately a relationship with the divine sphere and to constitute for oneself an individual fate by approximating oneself to divinity, i.e. by the effort of living a fully human good life. The whole myth of the races culminates in a series of expressive warnings in future tense: the risks of failure are important and it depends on us how we are able to cope with them. Whether the epistrophic movement which started with heroes will be accomplished or not is something essentially open, there is no “happy ending” which could be taken for granted. The moral of the story (in the context of the whole poem) consists in an appeal to live well and thus it is implicitly based on the assumption that such a possibility is in our powers – this represents an important counterpart to a certain pessimism presented by the poet at the end of the story.

To clarify what a fully human good life consists of and what is the nature of risks which it has to overcome, we will now turn to Promethean myth which represents an important Hesiod theme (Theog. 521–616; Op. 42–105) and which can be read as a counterpart to the myth of the golden age, articulating the question of human prehistory in a different, sometimes even opposite manner.
a. Human prehistory as animal life: Promethean myth

In the *Theogony* (*Theog.* 521–616), the Promethean myth is set into his cosmological context and plays an important role of elucidating the transition from Cronus’ to Zeus’ world order on an anthropological level. The whole story is presented as a conflict between Prometheus and Zeus, which is summed up as a contest in deliberation (ἐρίζετο [sc. Προμηθεύς] βουλὰς ὑπερμενέτι Κρονίωνι, *Theog.* 534) and the story of Prometheus trying to fool Zeus’ mind and of Zeus outsmarting Prometheus is the leading theme of the narrative. Prometheus’ titanic craftiness, resulting in so many evils for humans whom he intended to help, is constantly contrasted with Zeus’ prudence and providence and Prometheus is even called tricky or sly (ἀγκυλομήτης, *Theog.* 546), exactly as Cronus himself.¹

In *Works and Days*, the Promethean myth constitutes a cohesive unity with the myth of the distant golden age. Also, the episodes of Prometheus story can be interpreted as a successive process of establishing a fully human, social, cultural and moral sphere. In the traditional point of view, Prometheus is a “cultural hero” who has brought the mortals out of animality,² yet his role is more ambiguous in Hesiod’s account. Before Prometheus’ intervention, the mortals lived without any evils, without toil, labour and illnesses (*Op.* 90–92) – such a description

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¹ Also the other epithets denoting Prometheus’ cleverness are ambiguous, cf. ποικίλος αἰολόμητις (*Theog.* 511), ποικιλόβουλος (*Theog.* 521).

reminds us immediately of the life-style of the golden age mortals. But then Zeus has hidden away their daily bread which could otherwise be easily obtained without any toil (Op. 42–47) and the necessity of labour together with many evils affecting humans emerged. The change of the primordial blessed life is presented explicitly as a consequence of Prometheus’ interference with Zeus’ intentions.

The first episode of the story was written in Mecone when “mortal humans and gods were quarrelling” (ἐκρίνοντο θεοὶ θνητοί τ’ ἄνθρωποι, Theog. 535). We know nothing about the causes or nature of this dispute, but in its literal sense this phrase means “mortals and gods were separating” and that is an accurate description of what had actually happened. The possibility of dispute originating and subsisting between mortals and immortals clearly presupposes some kind of original community between them, but this mutual relation changed with the intervention of Prometheus and his unequal division of sacrificial meat.

The sacrifice represents not only a means to transcend the distance separating humans from gods (a way to overcome the deficiency originated in dissolution of the primordial likeness of mortals and immortals), but also how to preserve it. The very necessity to sacrifice for the relationship with the gods could be established articulates and keeps the separation of human and divine sphere. Furthermore, the sacrifice represents a confirmation that mortals eat not only vesture, but also meat, so it is not just the Earth which provides them the nurture. This fact articulates also a distinction between the human and animal sphere: while

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i In the narrative line of the poem the Promethean myth precedes the myth of five races, so strictly speaking the golden-age myth develops and backs up some of remarks and hints made previously in the Promethean myth.
it is common and natural among animals to eat individuals of the same species, this is forbidden in the case of humans, who can eat only animal flesh. It is a basic law of humanity established by Zeus (τόνδε ἀνθρώποισι νόμον διέταξε Κρονίων, Op. 276) and based on the fact that contrary to human sphere, “there is no justice among animals” (οὐ δίκη ἐστι μετ’ αὐτοῖς [sc. ἵθυσι καὶ θηρσὶ καὶ οἰωνοῖς], Op. 278). This expression is crucial, because justice, laws and supposedly sociability are represented as essential marks of humanity. And we can conclude that sacrifice separates humans both from gods on the one hand and from animals on the other.

Prometheus’ gift of fire could be interpreted as a logical continuation of the story: how could a sacrifice be made without fire? Nonetheless, there’s one problematic moment, which is Zeus’ unwillingness to give the fire to humans, or more precisely actively hiding it from them. The motives of hiding, theft and subsequently Zeus’ great anger are repeated expressively in both of Hesiod’s poems (Theog. 562 ff., Op. 50 ff.). Is Zeus just mean to humans, or does it mean that the fire could represent some sort of danger for them? It seems that fire, as other Promethean novelties (sacrifice, and women in Hesiod and technai in subsequent tradition), is a very ambiguous gift for humans – potentially very helpful, but dangerous at the same time. Promethean gifts help mortals live more easily, but by their efficacy they can facilitate their life far too much. Present humans have to struggle for their lives; this struggle makes them human and their lives good ones. To imitate the golden-age, effortlessness by using technical utilities can lead to the corruption of a fragile human nature, which is an inherent risk hidden in all cultural profits. To clarify further this statement, we will make a short excursion
to (presumably) Aeschylus’ play *Prometheus Bound*.\(^1\)

In this play, Prometheus himself asserts that the gift of fire represents a starting point of human cultural skills (ἀφ’ οὖ γε πολλάς ἐκμαθήσονται τέχνας, *Pr.* 254), many of which he will name later as his gifts for humans (*Pr.* 442–468, 478–506). These gifts of technai are essential for establishing the human sphere as cultural.\(^{ii}\) Above all, Prometheus proclaims himself to be the one who made humans intelligent and gave them reason (ἐννους ἔθηκα καὶ φρενὸν ἐπηβόλους [sc. βροτοῦς], *Pr.* 444). Than he taught them practical skills needed to build houses and a knowledge of the celestial phenomena enabling orientation in the cycles of nature. In addition, there came mathematics and written language, and then skills of using animals for work – clear signs that humans had become superior to them –, and in the end, the art of sailing. Later (*Pr.* 476–506), Prometheus’ added medicine, prophecy and metalworking on the list and ended with the imperial conclusion: “All technai came to mortals from Prometheus.” (πᾶσαι τέχναι βροτοῖσιν ἐκ Προμηθέως, *Pr.* 506)

As magnificent as it seems to be in its effects, Prometheus’ primary gift of fire to mortals is evaluated by the chore as a big mistake overseen by Prometheus (οὐχ ὀρᾷ ὃτι ἦμαρτες; *Pr.* 259–260). Nevertheless, Prometheus passionately agrees and even adds that he made

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\(^{i}\) Summary of (presently undecided) discussion about the authorship and the date of the play can be found in: Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, ed. A. J. Podlecki, Oxford 2005, Appendix I.

\(^{ii}\) The same theme was elaborated later by Euripides in his *Suppliant*, where Theseus presents an encomium to a god who separated human life from disorder and bestiality first by implanting intelligence (ἡμῖν βίοτον ἐκ πεφυρμένου καὶ θηριώδους διεστάθμηστο, πρῶτον μὲν ἐνθείς σύνεσιν, *Sup.*, 201–203) and subsequently by introducing different technai, many of them known already from Aeschylus’ account (*Sup.*, 203–213).
this mistake deliberately (ἐκὼν ἐκὼν ἡμαρτον, οὐκ ἀρνήσομαι, Pr. 266), for he was convinced that by his gifts he has saved humans from sure destruction. His description of preceding, pre-historic human lifestyle (Pr: 442 ff.) reveals a bestial, pre-cultural life of men, which are compared to reasonless children, senseless dreamlike phantoms, or ants living directly in the earth, as were the ancestral humans inhabiting caves. So this is the Promethean point of view on the so called golden age when humans were living without labour and without the need of culture.

But it could be that this is just a partial view of a titanic god with a retorted mind. As is the case in Hesiod’s poems and also in Aeschylus play, Prometheus’ acts are constantly opposed to Zeus providence and Prometheus is repeatedly exhorted to change his mind and to adapt it to new Olympian order. The prudence of Prometheus has its limits: he wants to help, but it ends problematically; he is not capable of anticipating adequately the future consequences of his present acts. That’s what he professes himself, affirming that he made his mistake deliberately, but without anticipating the terrible nature of the punishment (Pr. 268–269).

It is then once more the chore who points out the nature of Prometheus’ mistake, reproaching him the richness and efficiency of his gifts. Just after Prometheus had ended the long self-celebrating

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i Many signs of this retortion were pointed out by A. J. Podlecki: Prometheus’ extreme self-confidence, very inappropriate in his situation, his obstinacy, adverseness to all discussion, his harsh and arrogant dealings with Io and Hermes. Podlecki concludes: “It is as though the author of Prometheus Bound were deliberately trying to undo all the positive feelings that this amiable and familiar figure would have evoked in the audience.” op. cit. p. 3.

ii E.g. Pr. 309 ff. (Okeanos), 472–474 (chore), 977 ff. (Hermes). And of course, it is highly suspicious that a Titan would really be able to definitively frustrate Zeus’ plan.
enumeration of his gifts to humans, the chore appeals to him: “Don’t give to mortals benefits beyond measure.” (μὴ βροτοὺς ὑφέλει κακοῦ πέρα, Pr. 507) It seems that Prometheus had helped humans far too much for their own good. The chore refers to the principal problem with fire, technai and everything which facilitate human life: humans must work and strive for life on their own, because when they have their existence granted, arrogance and injustice inevitably follow. Toil and pains are necessary for humans, because they are the most effective means of learning how to live in accordance with the divine world order – that is the famous Aeschylus’ theme of πάθει μάθος, humans learning through suffering.¹

Bearing this in mind, we can return to Hesiod’s story with a better understanding of its dynamics of harmonisation. Prometheus gave to humans animal flesh to eat, which Zeus counterbalanced by keeping the fire from them. Prometheus then stole the fire and gave to humans all the technical skills, which Zeus counterbalanced by the creation of woman, an essentially ambiguous gift for men, too. She was induced between humans as a response to Zeus trying to counterbalance this far too big advantage for humans and with her came many evils which torment the present human race (Theog. 590–601).² The emergence of woman implies

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¹ It is very well possible that this theme was presented also in the story of Prometheus himself, who could have changed his mind before being liberated in Prometheus Unbound. Such an interpretation of the remaining fragments of this play was elaborated by Eirik Vandvik, The Prometheus of Hesiod and Aeschylus, Oslo 1943, in: Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, II. Historisk-filosofisk Klasse, 1942, No. 2, Oslo 1943.

² When Pandora was created, Zeus was able to bring her at a place “where gods and humans were dwelling” (ἐξάγαγ’ ἐνθά περ ἄλλοι ἔσαν θεοὶ ἡδ’ ἄνθρωποι, Theog. 586), which corresponds with the situation at Mecone before the sacrifice.
many important and complex changes to the human situation. The first one is closely related to the sacrifice, eating meat and the fire: woman as a mother replaces the Earth in the role of the primordial nourisher – it is up to her to preserve the family hearth, in the pragmatic as in the symbolic sense. Furthermore, man-woman relationships represent an elementary source of sociability, because the creation of woman means the origin of the family. This opens entirely new problems in the human sphere – man doesn’t work just for himself, he has to win bread also for his wife and descendants (Theog. 592–599). Procreation enables a prolongation and preservation of the profits gained during life even after death through children or the familial genealogical line. It could also be linked with the motif of memory, so important in the myth of the races: it is the role of offspring to preserve the memory of their ancestors, as it is only in the collective memory of society where the good and heroic men can survive in the form of poetical narrations, like the heroes from Troy. As such, procreation represents an essential possibility for mortals to transcend the limits of their mortality, to prolong individual life after inevitable death.

This could be one of the notions of hope which is stressed in Hesiod’s account as a force induced in the human world by woman (Op. 96–98). Also in Prometheus bound, Prometheus tells the chore he has liberated mortals from death by “blind hopes” which started to live together with man (Pr. 248–250). And the chore’s reply is highly ambiguous, maybe ironic, maybe not: “What a great benefit you gave to mortals!” (Pr. 251).

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i This could be one of the notions of hope, which is stressed in Hesiod’s account (Op. 96–98): the procreation. The theme of hope occurs in exactly the same context in Prometheus bound: Prometheus tells the chore he could liberat mortals from death by “blind hopes” which started to live together with man (Pr. 248–250). And the chore’s reply is highly ambiguous, maybe ironic, maybe not: “What a great benefit you gave to mortals!” (Pr. 251).
together with man (*Pr.* 248–250). Chore’s reply is highly ambiguous, maybe ironic, maybe not: “What a great benefit you gave to mortals!” (*Pr.* 251) So even if woman has brought to men many evils, once women are here, to ignore them is not a solution (*Theog.* 602–612). A terrible death is waiting for a man free of family, there is no hope for him in such a choice: without a descendant he will simply vanish as never existed, his property and possession blasted apart, his lifelong efforts lost in vain, as in the case of the ash giants (*Theog.* 604–607). In fact, the ultimate evil consists not in a wife, but in bad offspring which would mean the end of all mortal hopes given to men by the procreation.

The creation of woman thus seems to be functionally analogous to the establishment of the sacrifice: at the same time it separates humans from gods and their original divine golden-age lifestyle and it opens a way of surpassing this distance without annulling it.

3. Conclusions

We have tried to show that the question of the prehistory of mankind couldn’t be reduced to a simple formula that the myth of the golden age expresses an entirely positive, ideal vision of human prehistory (and understands the development to the present state as a decline), while the Promethean myth a purely negative one (understanding the development as a progress). We were able to detect four main areas of ambiguities: Firstly, if labour, toil and effort function as a prevention of deterioration of human nature, then the golden-age way of life is in itself unstable and condemned to an early end and the means helping to facilitate mortal life and to overcome human deficiencies do not deserve a purely positive evaluation either. Secondly, if *technai* and cultural skills constitute human
sphere as different from nature and so represent truly human activity, then a golden-age life-style is lacking something essentially human and the Promethean myth can be read as a progression from animal to a fully human, cultural state. Both of these propositions point to a more general conclusion: life without activity motivated by a deficiency, without striving for good, is not fully human. Thirdly, the area of problems is structurally the same as the second: social relations and human sociality constitute together with technai human sphere as different from nature, they form an essential part of human life. The social life is hard and thus life without family can be seen as more simple, but not so unambiguously as to be better. And lastly, it is in this striving for good and in the complexity of different social relationships where human variety and individuality can be properly manifested by differentiating particular human fates. To be good means in a human context to become good personally, to overcome the deficiency of good by our specifically human means – it is this effort which the nature of justice, laid out as a distinctive sign of humanity, consists of.

While it is true that the pre-cultural, golden-age way of life represents many existentially as morally supreme values (close partnership between mortals and gods; nature instead of culture, which means a simple, harmonic life without excesses based on abundance), it is important to evaluate carefully the status of this “ideal”. Prehistory of humanity represents a god-like life in both aspects: a blessed life without deficiencies, but also a pre-cultural animal state. The life of humans in Zeus’ world order is thus stigmatized by many deficiencies, but also enriched by values originated in an effort to overcome them deliberately and actively. From the point of view of an actual human situation, both
aspects of prehistory are inhuman, because they lack essential signs of constituted humanity. The prehistory of humanity therefore represents a highly ambiguous ideal which does not represent a model for simple imitation, because imitating the pre-human way of life would be inappropriate in respect of what humanity actually means for us here and now. Nevertheless, this ideal can orientate our lives because it expresses by comparison some of the deficiencies we have to overcome using our own powers. And it is in this continual struggle for a better life that we are become what we are: humans.

II. Plato: philosophical reception of traditional ambiguities

The themes of the myth of golden-age and of Promethean gifts also played a crucial role in later philosophical reflections and anthropological questions. The above-mentioned ambiguities of history conceived as a decline and as a progress constitute an ever-present theme in the Greek tradition of thinking, which was taken over by the subsequent Latin tradition and which has never, I believe, completely disappeared from European philosophy and culture. There are innumerable different variations on the theme of a primordial “lost paradise” and its adversary, the story of a cultural progress from animality to humanity. As for Plato, he is not just one thinker among many others who have treated these subjects. He incorporates these traditional themes into broader context of his own cosmological, anthropological and

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political philosophy and in such a frame that the question concerning the status of “ideals” or “models” (such as the paradigmatic social organization depicted in Republic, the description of human prehistory in Laws,...) came out with unprecedented distinctness and persistence. For the purpose of the present paper, we will try show how he worked out the traditional anthropological subjects chiefly in a famous myth in dialogue Statesman (Plt. 268e–274e), with regard to other dialogues, namely Symposium and Protagoras. In this rich and complex platonic myth we will focus on the motives which are important to our own anthropological theme (so we leave aside the cosmological subjects, as the different movements of the world) and will try to propose an interpretation according to which Plato’s myth articulates anew the traditional, already hesiodic ambiguities.

**Plato’s Statesman – cosmological myth**

The proposed interpretation, as necessarily selective as it is, is based on the traditional reading of the platonic myth, distinguishing two different cosmic periods.¹ The guest from Elea differentiates two world-orders on a cosmological (and partially metaphysical) level. Moreover, he talks about two different types of divine cosmic government, which have specific consequences for the life of mortals in differently constituted

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world. The actual human life is contrasted with the life of mortals at the
time of Cronus holding the power (ἐπὶ τῆς Κρόνου δυνάμεως, Plt. 271c)
and the relationship with ancient myths which deal with Cronus’ reign as
well (τὴν βασιλείαν ἣν ἦρξε Κρόνος, Plt. 269a) is explicitly expressed.
This stress laid on the difference of governments and on the
Corresponding anthropological facts is not at all surprising, taking into
account the theme of the dialogue and the contextual role of the myth
itself (it is supposed to explain the role and nature of the human
statesman). Furthermore, opening of the myth with the elements of older
tradition seems to justify our efforts to find and elaborate possible
relations between the hesiodic and platonic account.

1. Cronus’ government

During Cronus’ cosmical period, the world was completely and in
all its details governed by one divine sovereign: the god himself
controlled the whole rotation of the cosmos and in the same way at every
particular place (τότε γὰρ αὐτῆς πρῶτον τῆς κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν
ἐπιμελούμενος ὅλης ὁ θεός, ὃς δ’ αὖ κατὰ τόπους ταύτῶν τοῦτο, Plt.
271d). The existence of other divinities is also mentioned: these
anonymous gods governed their places together with the supreme god
(οἱ κατὰ τοὺς τόπους συνάρχοντες τῷ μεγίστῳ δαίμονι θεοῖ, Plt. 272e). These
divine powers represent a strictly unified hierarchy where the particular
elements have no autonomy on their own. Although we are told at first
that particular daemons take care of particular species of living beings as
shepherds (τὰ ζῷα κατὰ γένη καὶ ἄγελας οἶνον νομῆς θείοι διείληφεσαν
dαίμονες, Plt. 271d), it is just a way through which the god himself
“shepherds” humans and stands near to them (θεὸς ἐνεμεν αὐτοῦς [sc.
ἀνθρώπους] αὐτὸς ἐπιστατῶν, Plt. 271e). In the end, it is the supreme god himself who is the one “divine shepherd” (ὁ θεὸς νομεύς, Plt. 275c) in the world. The same structure of complete subordination can be observed at the end of this cosmical period, when the divine power retires from the world: he retires completely and as a unitary whole (Plt. 272e). So it seems that the anonymous daemons represent almost “mechanical converters” of a single divine power to the plurality inherent to the world. The text refers to uniform and unidirectional instrumentality of one supreme power and it is thus not possible to find here a complex system of diverse divine powers known from the world governed by Olympians. All this reminds us of Cronus as he is represented by Hesiod: a unique and absolute ruler with undivided sovereignty power, who does not leave room for any conflicts or tensions between different divine powers and during whose reign the divine and human sphere stood in close proximity.

Also in the matter of human way of life under Cronus’ rule, the platonic myth embodies practically the same ambiguities we have been able to find in Hesiod.¹ The god himself taking care of mortals, it seems that they are very close to the divine sphere. But already the metaphor of shepherding chosen by Plato makes clear that in relation to this god, the humans seem rather like animals: “The god himself was shepherding humans and was standing near them, just as now the humans, other living

¹ This similarity was already pointed out by Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Valeurs religieuses et mythiques de la terre et du sacrifice dans l’Odyssée, in: Vidal-Naquet, P., Le chasseur noir, Paris 1981, p. 39–68. Nevertheless Plato’s commentators are usually proposing interpretation according to which Cronus’ period is to represent simply the ideal of golden age as a lost paradise, exactly as it (supposedly) was the case with Hesiod. Ch. Rowe’s commentary represents a typical example of this approach, see Rowe, C., Plato, Statesman, Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary, op. cit., p. 187.
beings but more divine, shepherd different kinds of animals inferior to them.” (θὲος ἐνεμεν αὐτοὺς αὐτὸς ἐπιστατῶν, καθάπερ νῦν ἄνθρωποι, ζῶον ὃν ἔτερον θειότερον, ἄλλα γένη φαυλότερα αὐτῶν νομεύουσι, Plt. 271e). As in the hesiodic account, everything what is needed is provided to mortals by itself, so to say “automatically” (πάντα αὐτόματα γίγνεσθαι τοῖς ἄνθρώποις, Plt. 271d). In the language of the platonic myth, the daemons are fully competent to cover by themselves all particular needs of their wards (αὐτάρκης εἰς πάντα ἐκαστος [sc. δαίμων] ἐκάστοις ὃν οἶς αὐτὸς ἐνεμεν, Plt. 271d–e). Later on, the abundant nurture for men is said to have been provided by Earth herself, once more “automatically”, without agriculture (καρποὺς δὲ ἄφθονους εἴχον ἀπὸ τε δένδρων καὶ πολλῆς ὕλης ἄλλης, οὐχ ὕπὸ γεωργίας φυομένους, ἀλλ’αὐτομάτης ἀναδιδούσης τῆς γῆς, Plt. 272a) and rather by pasture. It was thus a vegetarian way of life: no violence existed among different animal species and we are told that they didn’t eat each other (Plt. 271e). So in hesiodic terms, these humans were living in the period before sacrifice, before Zeus declared animals as a nurture for humans and thus separated them (on the base of justice which exists in human sphere) from purely animal state.

The following point represents the absence of procreation and social life during Cronus’ period. The guest tells us that the humans were born directly from the Earth and no generic relations existed among them.

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i P. Vidal-Naquet made an interesting observation: lexical means used by Plato coincide with the duality of Cronus’ pre-political and Zeus’ political period. While the first one is depicted with pastoral vocabulary, the second uses many political expressions: „Au vocabulaire pastoral utilisé pour décrire le temps de Cronos succède, pendant le cycle de Zeus, un vocabulaire politique.“ (Vidal-Naquet, P., Le myth platonicien du Politique, les ambiguités de l’âge d’or et de l’histoire, in: Le chasseur noir, Paris 1981, p. 373.)
Subsequently, there were no women and children and therefore no families, no society, no political establishments (πολιτείαι, Plt. 271e). All these substantially human elements were absent in Cronus’ period (tà μὲν τοιαύτα ἀπῆν πάντα, Plt. 272a) and this entire lack of sociality is explicitly contrasted with the abundance of material resources (Plt. 272a). Compared to Hesiod, this contrasting represents an important step in making the mentioned ambiguities explicit. Furthermore, there is one more related element which was lacking during Cronus’ government: being free of offspring, these mortals had no memory (ἐκ γῆς γὰρ ἀνεβιώσκοντο πάντες, οὐδὲν μεμνημένοι τῶν πρόσθεν, Plt. 272a). We are able to gain some knowledge about them and about the existence of the preceding cosmic period only thanks to later sequence of our own type of humanity, which is gifted with memory and which has found a way how to preserve this knowledge in the form of old myths, which are now often but wrongly disbelieved (ἀπεμνημονεύετο δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων προγόνων τῶν πρῶτων [...], τούτων γὰρ οὕτωι κήρυκες ἐγένονθ᾽ ἡμῖν τῶν λόγων, οἳ νῦν ὑπὸ πολλῶν οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἀπιστοῦνται, Plt. 271a–b). Letting aside that we find here a very high, and for Plato, an unusually explicit estimation of myths, it seems that this means a clear sign of a certain superiority of humans from Zeus’ period.

The lack of memory goes (as it is the case in the hesiodic account) hand in hand with total absence of posthumous fate, characteristic for the mortals of Cronus’ period. In fact, they were born old-aged from the Earth (Plt. 271b), then they were growing younger until they became newborns and finally they simply vanished (Plt. 270e). This strange motive of humans being born old-aged can be found also in the hesiodic myth of races. In its an alerting finale, the inherent risk of iron age is revealed as the end of humanity (Op. 180–181); the old-aged
newborns than represent one sign among others that the end is coming, accompanying by a total collapse of all social relations and morality. If Plato chooses this specific moment as an emblematic sign characterizing human prehistory, it seems that he deliberately tries to draw attention to its essential ambiguity, i.e. that it is marked by the proximity not only to the divine, but also to the animal sphere. Other aspects of human life during Cronus’s government correspond with such an interpretation. Because humans don’t need to work, they have no promethean cultural skills. Remaining naked, they are dwelling all the time on meadows without need of houses, chatting with animals Plt. 272a–c). Their capability to communicate with animals is ambiguous par excellence: is it supposed to imply that animals disposed of human language, or just the opposite, that human language was reduced to animal voices? But it may be that at this period, the difference between human logos and animal voice wasn’t established yet and it was that indistinctness that made the communication possible.¹

2. Zeus’ world order

The subsequent cosmic period is called the period of Zeus’ rule and its constitution and correspondent way of life are just briefly mentioned by the guest affirming that it is the state we all know because it

¹ R. Sorabji deals with the question of a logos shared between humans and animals, claiming that articulated speech expresses the internal speech of the soul and that in the platonic tradition, such an internal speech exists in animal soul, too. Even if animals didn’t have logistikon (Smp. 207a–c, Rep. 441a–b, Leg. 963e), the highest, specifically human part of the soul, they surely participate in doxa (Tim. 77a–c), based on the conversation the soul holds with itself (Theait. 189e–190a). Sorabji, R., Animal Minds and Human Morals, Ithaca, New York 1993.
characterizes our present situation (τόνδε δ’ ὁν λόγος ἐπὶ Διὸς εἶναι, τὸν νυνὶ, παρὼν αὐτὸς ἕσσθαι, Plt. 272b). It is thus evident that during this cosmic period we do not deal with a world without gods or with divinity standing apart from the world and completely absent from it. Even this world, the world Plato was living in, has its own divine generation: the Olympians. But the relation in which these gods stand to the world differs substantially from the case of Cronus’ period with its unitary, undivided and undistinguished divine power. Their role is not to be shepherds, but rather instructors or educators of the human race.

When the total care of Cronus the shepherd ended, humans were exposed to all consequences of their imperfect nature, as all other animals. Animals have in majority an aggressive nature and humans, being much weaker and more defenceless, were oppressed by them (Plt. 274b–c). They were barely living and dying quickly without any skills or arts, without any knowledge of how to take care of themselves – all this is due to their origin in Cronus’ period, when they didn’t learn anything of this sort, simply because they didn’t need to (ἀμήχανοι καὶ ἀτεχνοί κατὰ τοὺς πρῶτους ἦσαν χρόνους [...], πορίζεσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοι πω διὰ

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i Some commentators defend this interpretation of Zeus’ period in the myth of Statesman, e.g. Rowe, C., Plato, Statesman, Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary, op. cit., namely p. 193 and 197. This interpretation is based on the description of the end of Cronus’ rule, when the supreme god and subsequently all lower daemons let the world loose from their shepherd’s custody (Plt. 272e). All following remarks about gods during the second cosmic period are than put aside as purely literally motives without any philosophical relevance. Nevertheless, such an interpretation seems to be far too anachronistic. Plato criticised traditional religiosity because its many philosophically problematic aspects, but we cannot find anywhere in the dialogues a conception of the world devoid of divinity and standing on its own or a notion of totally transcendental divinity not at all present in the world we are living in.
to μηδεμίαν αὐτούς χρείαν πρότερον ἀναγκάζειν, Plt. 274c). Because humans were in such trouble caused by their weakness, divine gifts were provided to them: fire from Prometheus, technai from Hephaestus and his fellow craftsman, presumably Athena (Plt. 274c–d). These gifts were obtained from the gods together with necessary teaching and education (μετ’ ἀναγκαίας διδαξῆς καὶ παιδεύσεως, Plt. 274c).

Also in a platonic myth from dialogue Protagoras (Prt. 320c–323a), humans are at first presented as the weakest of all the animals: naked, unarmed and without shelter (τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον γυμνὸν τε καὶ ἀνυπόδητον καὶ ἀστρωτον καὶ ἀσπλον, Prt. 321c). When Prometheus saw them in such a condition, he was wondering about how to preserve their life and found a solution in stealing from Hephaestus and Athena their practical wisdom of the arts and fire, because without fire no other skills could be acquired and properly used (κλέπτει Ἁφαίστου καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς τὴν ἐντεχνὸν σοφίαν σὸν πυρὶ – ἀμήχανον γὰρ ἦν ἄνευ πυρὸς αὐτῆς κτητήν τῷ ἡ χρησίμην γενέσθαι, Prt. 321d). Through these gifts humans not only gained practical wisdom (ἡ περὶ τὸν βίον σοφία, Prt. 321d), but also started to share a divine portion (ὁ ἄνθρωπος θείας μετέσχε μοίρας, Prt. 322a), because the arts obtained were at first apportioned to gods only.

This relationship with divine sphere separated humans from animals – humans, and humans only, started to worship gods (διὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ συγγένειαν ζώων μόνον θεοὺς ἐνόμισεν, Prt. 322a). Later on, humans evolved and learnt many other technai and skills on their own, including articulated speech (322a). This is a crucial element: without direct divine control, humans have to acquire certain autonomy in practical skills and some capability to evolve further by use of their own powers. Instead of direct fulfilment of all human needs, gods now provide just an education and humans have to learn how to fulfil their needs on their own.
All these selected elements could be read as strong allusions to the older tradition represented by Hesiod or in *Prometheus Bound* where pre-historical, animal state of humanity precedes the cultural progress due to divine help. This progress is now explicitly related with prudence, wisdom and human language and is based on the necessity to fulfil our needs and to overcome autonomously our deficiencies. There remains one new moment to be clarified shortly, namely the role of the gods Hephaestus and Athena. It is in Homeric *Hymn on Hephaestus* where appears a brief sign of tradition described conventionally as a rival to the Promethean one. In a short invocation, Hephaestus together with Athena are named as the gods who thought of “glorious crafts” (αγλαά ἕργα, h.Vulc. 2) for to men living previously like animals without houses in mountain caves (οἱ [sc. ἄνθρωποι] τὸ πάρος ἄντροις ναιετάσκον ἐν οὐρεσιν ἓν θηρεῖς, h.Vulc. 3–4). The Platonic reception of this tradition found in the *Statesman* and in the *Protagoras* seems to indicate that this version could be understood as a complementary, not necessarily a rival to the Promethean one and, more importantly, that both versions could be understood as describing one and the same process, that is the establishment of the human sphere as a cultural and progressive (capable of self-evolution).

Cultural progress means also that a family, developed social order and political organisation arose in the human sphere. Such a development (implied in the *Statesman* by referring to our present experience) is

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i This hymn is usually supposed to be one of the oldest in the collection and this would date it back to 7th century BC. On the supposed date of the text and on relations between Promethean and Hephaestean tradition, see *Homeric hymns, Homeric apocrypha, Lives of Homer*, ed. Martin L. West, Cambridge, London 2003.
recorded in more detail more in the *Protagoras*. After Prometheus gave practical skills to humans, they still weren’t not strong enough strong to beand separated from animals who continued to be a threat for to them. Productive skills (ἡ δημιουργικὴ τέχνη, Prt. 322b) helped men to find their nurture, but with respect to fight against animals, they were yet substantially deficient (πρὸς δὲ τὸν τῶν θηρίων πόλεμον ἐνδεχὴς, Prt. 322b). What these humans lacked was anthe ability to live together in cities, which goes hand in hand with an ability to defend themselves and their homes (πολιτικὴν γὰρ τέχνην οὕτω εἶχον, ἢς μέρος πολεμικὴ, Prt. 322b). As humans were trying to live together to be safe from animals, they even started to found cities (ἐξήτου ἡ ἄθροιζεσθαι καὶ σώζεσθαι κτίζοντες πόλεις, Prt. 322b) Bbut they were wronging each other and were incapable of sociability, lacking necessary skills (ἡδίκουν ἀλλήλους ἄτε οὐκ ἔχοντες τὴν πολιτικὴν τέχνην, ὡστε πάλιν σκεδανύμενοι διεφθείροντο, Prt. 322b). Thus Zeus, by the hand of Hermes, gave to humans two gifts enabling the development of social skills: a decency and a justice (ἀγοντα εἰς ἀνθρώπους αἰδῶ τε καὶ δίκην, Prt. 322c). Since they became shared by all men, the cities could be established (πάντες μετεχόντων· οὐ γὰρ ἄν γένοιτο πόλεις, εἰ ὁλίγοι αὐτῶν μετέχοιεν, Prt. 322d). From now on, to not being able to participate in these basic social values means an exclusion from human society, that is Zeus’ law (τὸν μὴ δυνάμενον αἰδοῦς καὶ δίκης μετέχειν κτείνειν ὡς νόσον πόλεως, Prt. 322d).

We have also seen that also in the hesiodic account, that Zeus established an order of justice among gods (*Theog.* 74, 885) and than differentiated humans from animals on the basis of justice which exists only in human sphere (*Op.* 276–278). A crucial role of decency and justice is stressed by Hesiod also in the warning finale of the myth of the
races: the threatening end of humanity in our iron age is characterized by the lack of precisely these two values (δίκη δ’ ἐν χερσί· καὶ αἰδώς οὐκ ἔσται, Op. 192–193, cf. also 199–200). For Plato, it seems that a complex social and political constitution of the human sphere represents an essential part of human nature separated both from direct divine presence and control as from animality.

3. Model and its imitation

During Zeus’ period, it is imposed to mortals to imitate the cosmos and to conform ourselves to its situation (ἀπομιμούμενα καὶ συνακολουθοῦντα τῷ τοῦ παντός παθήματι, Plt. 274a). There is a strong correspondence, stressed repeatedly by the elean guest, between the actual cosmic order and the constitution of our human sphere. As the cosmos is now without direct divine control, so are the humans, being born and living under their own guidance as far as they can (καθάπερ τῷ κόσμῳ προσετήτακτο αὐτοκράτορα εἶναι τῆς αὐτοῦ πορείας, οὕτω δὴ κατὰ ταύτα καὶ τοῖς μέρεσιν αὐτοῖς δι’ αὐτῶν, καθ’ ὅσον οἶδον τ’ ἤν, φύειν τε καὶ γεννᾶν καὶ τρέφειν προσετάττετο ὑπὸ τῆς ὁμοίας ἀγωγῆς, Plt. 274a). After Cronus had released the helm of the world, his absolute and unitary power was divided between many different and even conflicting divine powers of the Olympian generation and so the humans are left to establish their social and political organisation which has to incorporate many different and often conflicting needs, demands, desires and ideas of how the human society should function. Nevertheless, as we have seen, humans are not left without any relations with the divine sphere, they dispose of diverse “instructions” from the gods. With this education in mind, men can take care of themselves and direct themselves, exactly as it
is in the case of cosmos (ὅτι ἐαυτῶν τε ἔδει τὴν τε διαγωγήν καὶ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτοῦς αὐτῶν ἔχειν καθάπερ ὅλος ὁ κόσμος, Plt. 274d). Moreover, we have already remarked that actual humans remember how it was during the preceding cosmical period; this wouldn’t be possible without the world itself remembering the preceding order of direct divine control and trying on his own and by his own forces to preserve this order, i.e. to follow the instructions of Cronus, its divine father (ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ κράτος ἔχων αὐτῶς τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ τε καὶ ἐαυτοῦ, τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἀπομνημονεύων διδαχὴν εἰς δύναμιν, Plt. 273a–b).

So as humans have their divine guide-lines from the gods of the Olympian generation, which helps them to conform their lives to a new cosmic condition, the cosmos as a whole has its instructions from the supreme god of the preceding phase characteristic by the direct divine control. This “cosmic memory” means that the cosmos preserves a vivid relation with its originii and Cronus’ world-rule is presented as an ideal which the world is trying to imitate even in its changed actual situation. More distant the cosmos is from the previous cosmic period, more chaotic

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i M. Miller proposed an interesting cosmological interpretation that the world is not just a living, but also a rational being – only as such he can actively imitate his preceding movement from Cronus’ period. “Divine gifts” or “instructions” represent a rational compound of our actual world, which enables it to preserve a relation with his divine origin. See Miller, M., The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman, Hague, Boston, London 1980, p. 48–51.

ii The motive of “cosmic memory” could be find also in the hesiodic account, but it plays there a bit different role: the older gods have to be incorporated into the new world-order for they were not its threats, but supporters (the case of Hekatoncheiroi, Theog. 640 ff., Styx, Theog. 383–403 or Hecate, Theog. 411–428), or if impossible, they have to be minimized it their powers and be permanently guarded (the case of the defeated Titans, imprisoned in the Underworld, Theog. 726–735).
and less viable it becomes \((Plt. 273b–d)\). Thus the plurality of divine powers in the world and their irreducibility to one single power, i.e. this indisputable contribution of Zeus in the hesiodic account, represents now for Plato also something inherently problematic. The diversified multiplicity of Zeus’s world-order is capable of constituting the cosmos just as long as it can also maintain also a certain unity which originates in the absolute unity of Cronus’ government.

In a way, the unity of Cronus’ sovereign power represents an ideal point in the constitution of the human sphere as well, in a sense that the ideal of unity should guide the structuring of complex human relations. The sovereign political power should aim to establish and to maintain a unity in the multiplicity and complexity of human community and thus Cronus’ world-order, precisely in this respect of unity, can represent an ideal vanishing-point for human social and political efforts. Humans have to bear in mind the ideal or model of unity and struggle to approximate to it their actual situation. Nevertheless, it is this very struggling, and not the fulfilment of the ideal, which represents the core of humanity in new Zeus’ new world-order. In this respect, Plato does not diverge from the esprit of the hesiodic account. In actual cosmic conditions, it would be neither possible nor desirable or adequate to establish in full the life-style known from human prehistory and conform not to the present one, but to the preceding cosmic period. The task for mortals is not a return to the pre-cultural state, in a way close to divinity.

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i The whole myth about the divine shepherd is supposed to throw light on a previously given account \((Plt. 267a–c)\) of the human politician or king \((\betaασιλεύς, πολιτικός, Plt. 274e)\). The described example of Cronus should enlighten weak points in this account and enable to see more distinctively clearly the human politician himself \((Plt. 275b)\).
but at the same time comparing men to animals (such a primitivistic ideal guided for example the efforts of cynics). We should follow our specific human nature and develop corresponding cultural values: intelligence and knowledge, arts and technical skills, morality and sociability. Also our relationship to the divine sphere must be established adequately towards the new cosmic order, which means by our specifically human means of sacrifices and other divine honours practised in established cults.

4. Life in Cronus’ and Zeus’ period: which one is more blessed?

When we consider the above-mentioned aspects, it is not surprising that when it comes to a comparison of the golden-age life with the actual one, i. e. a question which one of them is more blessed (κρίνα τὰ αὐτῶν τὸν εὐθαμονέστερον ἄρ’ ὃν δύναι τε καὶ ἐθελήσειας; Plt. 272b), no simple and definitive answer can be found. Young Socrates, although following carefully the whole argument (Plt. 271c), is not able to respond (Plt. 272b) and even the guest himself decides to leave this question aside (Plt. 272d). Nevertheless, he articulated a criterion which could be used to judge properly the human prehistory: we should ask what kind of knowledge these people aspired to and which needs motivated their speech (ποτέρως οἱ τότε τὰς ἐπιθυμίας εἶχον περὶ τε ἐπιστημών καὶ τῆς τῶν λόγων χρείας, Plt. 272d). The guest then distinguished two main possibilities: either they were directed to food, drink and dubious stories (Plt. 272c–d), \(^\text{i}\) or to gain wisdom and to

\(^{\text{i}}\) We must admit with Rowe that it is hard to see precisely which stories ( הדיδέγοντο [...] μέθοδος οία δή καὶ τὰ νῦν περὶ αὐτῶν λέγονται, Plt. 272c–d) the guest is referring to. But it seems clear that they accompanied the indulgence in eating and drinking, so their content is supposed to be correspondingly un-philosophical. (See Rowe, C., Plato, Statesman, Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary, op. cit., p. 194.)
philosophy (εἰς συναγυρμὸν φρονήσεως, ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν, Plt. 272c). It would be this second possibility that would grant them supreme blessedness or happiness (Plt. 272c).

In fact, it is not possible to choose between these two possibilities and to judge the quality of the golden-age life, simply because we don’t have enough relevant information at our disposal (Plt. 272d). Plato formulating such a question and leaving it without an unambiguous response is referring, I believe, to the essentially ambiguous nature of human prehistory, where the distinctions between gods, men and animals were not as yet constituted and where it is thus impossible to decide whether the mortals were god-like or just animal. However, there are some clues as to a possible platonic response. We have seen that prudence, intelligence and reason come together with the necessity to overcome our mortal deficiencies on our own and of course, they are impossible without the existence of memory. If none of them existed during Cronus’s period, it is difficult to claim the existence of philosophy. Further on, there is another indication that pre historical mortals represented men without philosophy: as they were born directly from the Earth, no erotic desire existed among them. Eros as a desire to surpass our mortality is substantially related with Zeus’ world-order and if we take Symposion into account, it becomes clear that it is substantially related with the existence of philosophy, too.

Although Socrates’ speech (repeating an account narrated to him by Diotima, Smp. 201d) is directed to Eros himself, a major part of the analysis is relevant for a desiring human, because Eros as a subject of love (τὸ ἔραστὸν, Smp. 204c) represents a model of all men in love (Smp. 204c). Now the one “who desires necessarily desires something he lacks
and reversely, if he doesn’t lack it, he doesn’t desire it” (τὸ ἐπιθυμοῦν ἐπιθυμεῖν οὐ ἐνδεές ἐστιν, ἢ μὴ ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἡν μὴ ἐνδεές ἢ, Smp. 200a–b). In the case he desires something he doesn’t lack in present, he desires not to lack it in future (Smp. 200d). So because of the variability and instability of human life, surpassing our deficiencies represents a dynamic, open process: each actual saturation of our lack or need is temporal and endangered by possible future deprivation. To desire means to desire something which is not here, or which is not granted to be here for us forever. Socrates sums up this crucial thesis: “All who desire, desire something which is not provided or present, for something they have not, or are not, or lack. And these things are the ones which are desired for and which are loved.” (πᾶς ὁ ἐπιθυμόν τοῦ μὴ ἐτοίμου ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ τοῦ μὴ παρόντος, καὶ ὃ μὴ ἔχει καὶ ὃ μὴ ἔστιν αὐτός καὶ ὃ ἐνδεής ἐστι, τοιαῦτ’ ἄττα ἐστὶν ὧν ἡ ἐπιθυμία τε καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐστίν, Smp. 200e, cf. Smp. 201d).

Eros’ genealogy (Smp. 203b ff.) follows the same direction: Poros as ingenuity and resourcefulness is permanently counterbalanced by Penia, indigence and poverty, and a corresponding description of his nature pictures also the nature of humans, permanently striving to overcome their deficiencies and fulfil their desires: “According to his mother’ nature, he dwells forever with deficiency, according to his father’s nature, he plots against all that is beautiful and good. [...] Born neither mortal nor immortal, at the same day he flourishes and lives when he succeeds and he dies and is revived through his father’s nature, and yet all he succeeds to gain is unceasingly leaking away.” (τὴν τῆς μητρὸς φύσιν ἔχων, ἀεὶ ἐνδείᾳ σύνοικος, κατὰ δὲ αὖ τὸν πατέρα ἐπίβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς [...] ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὐτε ώς θνητός, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῆ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ, τοτὲ δὲ
ἀποθνῄσκει, πάλιν δὲ ἀναβιώσκεται διὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς φύσιν, τὸ δὲ ποριζόμενον ἄεὶ ύπεκρεῖ, Smp. 203d–e). Eros as a lover is thus presented as a mediate being, someone “between a mortal and an immortal” (μεταξύ θνητοῦ καὶ άθανάτου, Smp. 202d) and also “between wisdom and ignorance” (σοφίας τε αὕτη καὶ ἀμαθίας ἐν μέσῳ ἐστίν, Smp. 203e). He doesn’t belong to gods, because gods always participate in what is beautiful and good (Smp. 202c–d) and also in wisdom (Smp. 203e–204a), but neither is he simply an ignorant being separated from all good, wisdom and possibilities of immortality, as someone who doesn’t find himself deficient and thus has no desire for what he doesn’t find lacking (ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ μὴ οἰόμενος ἐνδεχόμενος εἶναι οὐὰν μὴ οἶηται ἐπιδείκνυῃ, Smp. 204a).

As a result, we obtain a tripartite structure: on one side, there is an extreme case of full divinity, on the other, an extreme case of deficiency which doesn’t know about itself and thus is an unsurpassable absence, and in between a sphere of desire, of surpassing deficiency and mortality. In her following account, Diotima will examine this mediate region as a scale oriented from animals through humans to divinity and will try to explain how and why this mediate region is linked to philosophy: the lover at his best is described as a being succeeding to fulfil its desires because of intelligence, so he is presented as a whole-life lover of wisdom, i.e. a philosopher (φρονήσεως ἐπιθυμητής καὶ πόριμος, φιλοσοφός διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου, Smp. 203d, cp. also Smp. 204b). With her account, Diotima will separate human sphere from animality and outline a specifically human relation to divinity (for following detailed analysis see Figure 1).

It is supposed as an axiom of subsequent argumentation that what
is loved is beautiful (ἐστι τὸ ἐραστὸν τὸ τῷ ὄντι καλὸν, Smp. 204c) and Diotima immediately converts this to a desire for good (Smp. 204d–e). Then the above-mentioned desire oriented toward future is converted to a desire oriented toward eternity: love means a desire for a good to belong to us forever (τοῦ ἄγαθοῦ ἑαυτῷ εἶναι ἀεὶ ἔρως ἔστίν, Smp. 207a, cp. also 206a). Thus Diotima can conclude that humans’ desire not only for good, but also for immortality (ἄθανασίας δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐπιθυμεῖν μετὰ ἄγαθον, Smp. 206e–207a). For mortals, a basic level of immortality can be gained by procreation, as “procreation is something eternal and immortal in our mortal life” (ἀειγενὲς ἐστι καὶ ἄθανατον ὡς θνητῷ ἡ γέννησις, Smp. 206e) and as such it represents a divine element in a mortal being (ἐστι δὲ τοῦτο θεῖον τὸ πράγμα, καὶ τοῦτο ἐν θνητῷ ὄντι τῷ ζῷῳ ἄθανατον ἔνεστιν, ἡ κύησις καὶ ἡ γέννησις, Smp. 206c). Such a conception of procreation reminds us of the hesiodic account, where woman bring to man a hope for offspring, which means a possibility to surpass human mortality. Moreover, it is used by Diotima as a ground for the first distinction between mortal beings and gods (Smp. 207a–208b). Humans and animals share a variable immortality based on procreation, which differentiates from the gods, immortals in a sense of remaining eternally unchanged (Smp. 208a–b).
I. Duality of living beings (*Smp.* 207a–208b)

**mortals** differentiated from **immortals**

by the **type of immortality:**

preservation or foreverness

II. Difference of mortal beings (*Smp.* 207d–208a, 208e–209c)

**animals** differentiated from **humans**

a) by the **continuity of individuals:**

and higher parts of soul

body (and lower parts of soul)

b) by **possible offspring:**

procreation of children and creation of thoughts

III. Difference in human sphere (*Smp.* 210a–212a)

**scale of humans**

differentiated intrinsically

by the **medium of creation:**

from beautiful bodies to beauty itself

*Figure 1: Specificity of human sphere in the Symposium*
Diotima will then differentiate further the region of mortals. Animals and humans differ at first on the level of continuity of each particular living being. The identity of a singular being is constituted through the continuity of the body as through the continuity of the soul. Whereas humans and animals share the bodily continuity (Smp. 207d–e) and maybe to a certain degree the continuity of such aspects as behaviour, character, wishes or pains (Smp. 207e), it could hardly be the case with the higher constituents of the soul, such as knowledge or intentional use of memory (Smp. 208a). On a second level, humans and animals differ by the type of procreation they are capable of and by the continuity of offspring: while bodily procreation, which gives birth to children (Smp. 208e), is common to all animals including humans (cf. also Smp. 207a–d), there is also a procreation of the soul, which gives birth to prudence and other virtues (φρόνησιν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν, Smp. 209a), the offspring “more beautiful and more immortal” (καλλιόνων καὶ ἀθαναστέρων παίδων κεκοινωνηκότες, Smp. 209c). Only humans are capable of this sort of procreation and here lies also the origin of “creators and all craftsmen named inventors” (οἱ ποιηταὶ πάντες γεννήτορες καὶ τῶν δημιουργῶν ὃς οἱ λέγονται εὐρετικοὶ εἶναι, Smp. 208e–209a). But the most important and beautiful part of this procreation (πολὺ δὲ μεγίστη καὶ καλλίστη τῆς φρονήσεως, Smp. 209a) is described by Diotima as “ordering of cities and families, which has the name of sobriety and

Creation in the broadest sense represents the cause of passing from not being into being (ἡ τοι ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ δὲ ὄντα ὑποκολούθησα τὸ ἄνδρα ἐμφάνισα, Smp. 205b–c), so the works of all technai are creations and craftsmen are creators (αἱ ψευτὲς ταῖς τέχναις ἐργασίαι ποιήσεις εἰς καὶ οἱ τούτων δημιουργοὶ πάντες ποιηταί, Smp. 205c). Also in Agathon’s speech, there is a remarkable passage connecting all technai with to Eros (Smp. 197a–b).
justice” (ἡ περὶ τὰ τῶν πόλεων τε καὶ οἰκήσεων διακόσμησις, ἥ δὲ ὄνομα ἐστὶ σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη, Smp. 209a). Such a description of the human sphere, based on moral virtues, arts and social and political skills, variates the same traditional motives we have found in the Promethean myth in Hesiod as in the Protagoras and the Statesman.

The last part of Diotima’s account will analyse further this sphere of specifically human procreation connected with the soul.¹ Gradation of this “way of love” (Smp. 211c) is not based on a different type of offspring (these remain “beautiful thoughts”, Smp. 210a) but on the medium within which humans create these offspring. Diotima has already affirmed that procreation is always procreation in beautiful (τόκος ἐν καλῷ, Smp. 206b), because it is something divine and as such it couldn’t proceed in something inappropriate, in something without beauty (Smp. 206c–d). On this basis she will present her famous scale of beautiful things (Smp. 210a ff.) which starts with beautiful bodies, continues to beauty in souls (τὸ ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς κάλλος, Smp. 210b), than and in ways of life and laws (ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλὸν, Smp. 210c) and then in different kinds of knowledge (ἐπιστημῶν κάλλος, Smp. 210c). Therefore, it is crucial to train oneself gradually in the ability to apprehend these kinds of beauty. Than if the lover is able to ascend to the level of beauty in knowledge, “he produces many beautiful and magnificent thoughts and intellections in philosophy free of envy”

¹ We should note that these three successive steps represent also three types of differences. The first one represents strict duality of gods and mortals. The second one leaves open a mediate space in between two terminals of animals and humans (what is essentially human is the possibility, not necessity, to surpass an animal state, and humanity means not to deny, but to sublimate animality). The third one represents then a continual scale.
The possibility to become a philosopher represents an ultimate state that the desiring humans can achieve in surpassing their deficiencies (Smp. 210d–e). It is just this level which presents “the state of life whereof above all others a man finds it truly worthwhile to live” (ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, [...] εἶπερ ποι ἄλλοθι, βιωτόν ἀνθρώπῳ, Smp. 211d), because this way man is able to produce a true virtue (ἀρετή ἄληθής, Smp. 212a), to approximate himself to the gods (θεοφιλής, Smp. 212a) and to become eminently immortal (εἴπερ τῷ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ, Smp. 212a).

We can conclude that Socrates’ and Diotima’s account represents a specific conception of humanity separated from the animal sphere and related to gods and based on an essential deficiency which humans desire to surpass. The means of this surpassing form, a hierarchical structure and human aspiration is presented as a possible movement through this structure. It represents a sublimation of desire from its elementary forms, shared with animals, through specifically human values such as morality, art and sociability, to philosophy, which brings humans in proximity to gods. This process could be interpreted as a progress to higher levels of humanity, which culminates in a likeness to gods and specific human immortality based on philosophical activity. The very possibility of philosophy not only dwells in a substantial deficiency of human life represented by mortality, but also in opening the possibility to surpass this deficiency by use of our specifically human means.

If we now return to the Statesman and the question of the possibility of philosophy during the golden age, it seems that by then, the conditions of living were not very suitable for the rise of such a way of
life. Humans living without deficiencies, with all needs immediately fulfilled by the direct divine direction, have nothing to desire for. The substantively human (Smp. 205a) desire to have good forever, which goes hand in hand with the desire for immortality and which is the original motivation for the emergence of philosophy, have no place in such a world where humans can’t surpass by their own means the limits of their mortality. From our present human situation, it seems possible to look up to the pre-cultural state of golden age as if it were our lost paradise, but without philosophy as an ultimate and essentially human possibility to transgress deliberately and by our proper efforts the limits of our mortal existence, such a life cannot be neither fully human, neither nor fully blessed.¹

¹ Tento text byl podpořen v rámci projektu OP VK Výzkumné centrum pro teorii a dějiny vědy, reg. č. CZ.1.07/2.3.00/20.0138 spolufinancovaného z Evropského sociálního fondu a státního rozpočtu České republiky.
Zwei Wege als Grund der vierteiligen Struktur von Parmenides’
Gedicht: Entwurf eines neuen Ansatzes

Pavel Hobza

Bevor man Parmenides’ Gedicht zu interpretieren anfängt, macht
man eine wichtige interpretatorische Entscheidung, ohne es eigentlich
innezuwerden. Man setzt nämlich voraus, dass Parmenides’ Gedicht aus
drei Teilen besteht. Obwohl man diese Voraussetzung fast für eine
Tatsache hält, zeigt es sich bei näherem Zusehen, dass die Einteilung des
Gedichts in drei Teile nur auf der Interpretation zweier Stellen beruht (auf
einem bestimmten Verständnis der Beziehung zwischen den Fragmenten
B 1 und B 2 und auf der Ergänzung der Lacuna am Ende von B 6,3). Und
weil bei der Interpretation beider Stellen die Wegeproblematik eine
wichtige Rolle spielt, zeigt es sich weiter, dass die Einteilung des
Gedichts in drei Teile mit der Zahl der Wege resp. mit der gewöhnlichen
Annahme dreier Wege weitgehend zusammenhängt. Eine der wichtigsten
Aufgaben der vorgelegten Studie ist also eine alternative Struktur des
Gedichts zu entwerfen und zu zeigen, dass das Gedicht anhand von zwei
Wegen in vier Teile eingeteilt werden kann, ja muss.

Unsere Untersuchung gliedert sich in drei Hauptteile: Da die
gewöhnlich angenommene dreiteilige Struktur mit der angeblichen
ontologischen Argumentation des Parmenides zusammenhängt, setzen

i Vgl. z. B. Furth, M., „Elements of Eleatic Ontology“, in: A. P. D. Mourelatos (ed.), The Pre-Socratic: a collection of critical essays, Princeton, New Jersey 1993, S. 241–270, S. 241. “Several portions of the general view from which I ‘deduce the poem’ are not clearly stated in the poem itself; my explanation for this is that they are operating as tacit assumptions”. Unter “tacit assumptions” versteht er abstrakte und ontologische Denkschemata. Dagegen vgl. Havelock, E. A., Preface to Plato, Oxford 1963, VII–VIII. “But if the early Greek mentality was neither metaphysical nor abstract, what then was it, and what was it trying to say? […] The Presocratics themselves were essentially oral thinkers, prophets of the concrete linked by long habit to the past, and to forms of expression which were also forms of experience, but they were trying to devise a vocabulary and syntax for a new future, when thought should be expressed in categories organized in a syntax suitable to abstract statement.”
I.1 Angebliche Ontologie

Wie oben schon angedeutet wurde, trägt man die Ontologie an Parmenides’ Text heran, um den Ursprung, ja überhaupt die Möglichkeit von ἐόν zu erklären. Im allgemeinen lässt sich sagen, dass man im Gedicht des Parmenides zwei Arten der ontologischen Argumentation entdeckt:

1) Parmenides soll bei der Begründung der Ontologie von dem als „Mittel der Untersuchung“ dienenden ἔστι ausgegangen sein (vgl. „Der Baum ist“ usw.). Weiter soll er zur Ansicht, dass „was ist, ist“ bzw. dass man nur ἔστι sagen kann, gelangt sein. Zuletzt wird vorausgesetzt, dass Parmenides ἐόν aus ἔστι deduziert hat.

i Vgl. z. B.: Furth, M., „Elements of Eleatic Ontology“, op. cit., S. 261. “By an ‘enquiry’ into ‘what is’ I shall understand Parmenides to mean any investigation of ‘what is’ in the sense of what is so, or what is the case; any procedure aimed at ascertaining the facts.” Ibid, S. 249. “What is (everything that is), is […] and (very emphatically) that’s all (=nothing else!).” Ibid, S. 264. “Parmenides’ own ontology and cosmology, upon which attention has traditionally focused, and which I take it is agreed to be absurd, can all be derived, without mistakes, from the standpoint at which we have now arrived.” Kahn, Ch. H., „The Thesis of Parmenides“. The Review of Metaphysics 22, 1968/69, S. 700–724, S. 700–1. “I am primarily concerned here to elucidate Parmenides’ thesis: to see what he meant by the philosophic claim which is compressed into the one-word sentence ἔστι, ‘it is.’ I take this to be the premise (or one of them), from which he derives his famous denial of all change and plurality.” Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E., The Presocratic Philosophers, Cambridge 1982, S. 272. “The premise ἔστι is by now established as the only possibility: the only significant thought or statement is that a thing is. […] From now onwards until the end of the Way of Truth he is concerned, in other words, to deduce all that can be
2) Man nimmt an, dass durch ἔστι, das hier unpersönlich und existential verwendet werden soll, das Sein oder die Existenz gesetzt wird. Weiter wird behauptet, dass ἔστι, ἐόν und ἐἶναι (anhand eines reinen Seinsbegriffs) einfach synonym sind.¹

Diese Auffassung, dass sich die Ausdrücke ἔστι, ἐόν, ἐἶναι bei Parmenides aufeinander beziehen, einander übertragbar oder sogar auf einen (Seins-)Begriff zurückzuführen sind (sei es anhand der Deduktion oder der Synonymität), scheint aber im Text des Parmenides, geschweige denn im damaligen Kontext, kaum Unterstützung zu finden; denn sie setzt einige, erst später bei Platon und Aristoteles anzutreffende Philosopheme voraus. Wenn man also die Ontologie bei Parmenides zu rekonstruieren versucht, stößt man auf eine im Gedicht wohl nie wirklich befriedigend


„Lorsque Parménide dit ,est‘, il constate (ou propose) un fait: qu’il y a, qu’existe, que quelque chose est présent. […] Parménide part d’une thèse […] : la présence, l’existence, le fait d’être. Ce principe, Parménide l’exprime indifféremment moyennant un infinitif (ἐῖναι, πέλειν), un participe (ἐόν) ou un verbe à la troisième personne du singulier (ἔστι comme en 2,3a et en 2,5a. “ Taran, L., Parmenides. A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays, Princeton, New Jersey 1965, S. 37. „let it be stated once and for all that the different idioms which Parmenides uses to express Being and non-Being are synonymous. […] To distinguish between the use of the participle and of the infinitive, for example, as some scholars do, is to obliterate the fact that for Parmenides there is only absolute Being, although the language, the meter, and the necessity of referring to the phenomenal world in order to deny its existence forced him sometimes to use expressions like ,the things which are not‘ (fr. VII.1).” Vgl. auch Wiesner, J., Parmenides. Der Beginn der Aletheia, Berlin – New York 1996, S. 112–122.
aufzulösende Spannung zwischen der Konzeption von ἕστι, die mit einem rein geistigen Akt oder Begriff des Seins zu rechnen hat, und der von ἑόν, die mit räumlichen Prädikaten und Vorstellungen verbunden ist (vgl. Charakterisierungen von ἑόν im Fragment B 8 wie z.B. seine Unteilbarkeit in B 8,22–25 oder seine Kugelförmigkeit und Begrenztheit in B 8,42–49) – eine Spannung, die erst anhand des weder innerhalb der archaischen Kultur, noch innerhalb der vorsokratischen Philosophie nachweisbaren Philosophems Materialität versus Immaterialität verständlich und möglich wäre. Wenn man dieses Philosophem im Gedicht irgendwie voraussetzt, dann fragt es sich etwa, warum Parmenides – wenn er einmal den immateriellen Begriff des Seins im ἕστι gefunden hatte – ihn dann in der Konzeption von ἑόν mit räumlich-materiellen Prädikaten versah; warum er also das Materielle und das Immaterielle vermischt und nicht auseinanderhält. Man kann sicher erwidern: eben deshalb, weil er dieses Philosophem nicht gehandhabt hat und weil „he may have been attempting to conceive a nonspatial Reality but was simply unable to find any expression for this view except in spatial language.“

Man scheint also den Schwierigkeiten, die mit der Formulierung und Begründung der Ontologie im Gedicht zusammenhängen, durch die Behauptung zu entgehen, dass es Parmenides nicht der geeignete begriffliche Apparat zur Verfügung stand. Doch im Allgemeinen lässt sich sagen, dass die ontologische Interpretation einerseits mit sehr

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i Kahn, Ch. H., „Parmenides, ed. Tarán“, Gnomon 40, 1968, S. 132. Ähnlich auch Kirk, G. S., Raven, J. E., The Presocratic Philosophers, op. cit., S. 270. “On the contrary, the chief difficulty about Parmenides is that, while the incorporeal was still unknown, and no vocabulary therefore existed to describe it, he was none the less […] feeling his way towards it.”
gewagten, andererseits mit sehr vagen Voraussetzungen und Vorstellungen arbeitet; weshalb es angebracht ist, nach einer anderen, der damaligen Zeit angemesseneren Erklärung von ἐόν zu suchen, als sie die ontologische Interpretation, die ἐόν aus ἔστι deduziert oder beide Termini einfach als synonym betrachtet, liefert.

I.2 Der Ursprung von ἐόν

Es ist viel plausibler, ἐόν aus dem damals geläufigen Ausdruck ἐόντα, der die Welt im ganzen bezeichnet hat, zu erklären. Diese Erklärung ist hauptsächlich aus zwei Gründen der ontologischen vorzuziehen:

Erstens ist sie den damaligen Denk- und Sprachmöglichkeiten angemessen. Man braucht also nicht vorauszusetzen, dass Parmenides von einer Art ontologischer Spekulation, die sich – wie wir gesehen haben – einiger komplizierter und abstrakter Denkoperationen oder Philosopheme bedienen muss, ausgegangen sei. Er scheint vielmehr „bloß“ über den sprachlichen Ausdruck ἐόντα erstaunt gewesen zu sein. Dass man über die Welt als über ἐόντα sprechen kann, impliziert, dass jedes einzelne Ding als ἐόν begriffen werden kann. Parmenides muss sich also die (geniale) Frage gestellt haben: Wie können sich alle Dinge voneinander unterscheiden, wenn jedes Ding letztlich als ein einzelnes ἐόν aufgefasst werden kann? Wobei seine Antwort gelautet haben muss: Sie unterscheiden sich gar nicht, weswegen es letztlich nur ein einziges ἐόν gibt. In anderen Worten, beim Konzipieren von ἐόν scheinen Parmenides’ Erwägungen über die diskreten Seienden eine wichtige Rolle
gespielt zu haben. Obwohl dieser Gedankengang ganz und gar ontologisch anmuten kann, ist der von uns angenommene Ursprung von ἐὸν in einer wichtigen Hinsicht von der ontologischen Argumentation verschieden. Denn gegenüber der geläufigen ontologischen Interpretation meinen wir nicht, dass Parmenides imstande war, einzelne in der Welt sich befindende Dinge als die Seienden deshalb aufzufassen, weil sie sind (d.h. weil ihnen das Prädikat „ist“ zugeschrieben werden kann). Dieser Gedanke kann zwar für uns ganz und gar selbstverständlich sein, aber in Parmenides’ Text, geschweige denn im damaligen Kontext findet sie keine Stütze. Deshalb scheint es uns den damaligen Denkmöglichkeiten angemessener, den Ursprung von ἐὸν bloß in einem sprachlichen Ausdruck resp. in Parmenides’ Erwägungen über die Möglichkeiten und Tragweite dieses Ausdrucks zu sehen. (Obwohl es für uns kaum vorstellbar ist, dass anhand der Sprache auf die Realität geschlossen werden kann, ist dieses Schließen in Rahmen der archaischen Denkweise durchaus plausible. Denn damals wurde noch nicht die strikte und unüberbrückbare Trennung zwischen der Sprache und Realität vollzogen, so dass beide als Aspekte des Gleiches angesehen werden konnten.)

Die Richtigkeit dieses Ursprungs von ἐὸν wird aber im Gegensatz zur ontologischen Erklärung, die erst anhand einiger, bei Parmenides nirgendwo explizit nachweisbarer Voraussetzungen gerechtfertigt werden kann, durch eine deutliche Spur im Gedicht bestätigt. Es handelt sich um die Stelle B 8,22–25 (οὐδὲ διαιρετὸν ἐστὶν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστὶν ὁμοῖον· / οὐδὲ τι τῇ μᾶλλον, τὸ κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι, / οὐδὲ τι χειρότερον, πᾶν δ’ ἐμπλεόν ἐστὶν ἐόντος· / τῶι θυνεχές πᾶν ἐστὶν· ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει), wo die (Unmöglichkeit der) Teilbarkeit von ἐὸν erörtert wird und wo insbesondere der Satz ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει („Das Seiende nährt sich
dem Seienden“, was in dem Sinn zu verstehen ist, dass das Seiende dem Seienden ähnlich ist) hervorzuheben ist. Denn im Unterschied zur ontologischen Interpretation wird es hier angedeutet, dass die Konzeption von ἐόν irgendwie mit Parmenides’ Überlegungen über die diskreten Seienden, die sich letztlich ähneln, zusammenzuhängen scheint (vgl. auch B 4,2 οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμῆξει τὸ ἐόν τοῦ ἐόντος ἐχεσθαι).

Der von uns angenommene Ursprung von ἐόν scheint aber zweitens die Erklärung der Beziehung zwischen ἐόν und der ab B 8,53 behandelten menschlichen Welt anzudeuten, was für die meisten Interpretationen bekanntlich das schwierigste Problem ist. Obwohl sie oft nicht imstande sind, die Möglichkeit der menschlichen Welt auf dem Hintergrund von ἐόν einzusehen, sollte man schon anhand der Tatsache, dass Parmenides der Beschreibung der menschlichen Welt soviel Raum und Mühe gewidmet hat (der weitaus größte Teil des Gedichts war ja der Beschreibung der Welt vorbehalten), voraussetzen, dass die Welt im Gedicht eine durchaus wichtige Rolle spielen muss und dass Parmenides

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i Vgl. z. B. Mansfelds resignierte Äußerung, dass die Frage, „wie Parmenides es verantworten kann, dass neben (?) dem unbewegten und ewigen Seienden noch eine menschliche Welt entstehen kann, […] nicht mit vollständiger Gewissheit beantwortet werden“ kann (Mansfeld, J., Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt, op. cit., S. 219), was dann Kahn in der Besprechung Mansfelds Buch mit „Plotinus’ question, ‘Why is there more than the One’?“ vergleicht und was er als “the problem which remains, and must remain, unresolved” auffasst (Kahn, Ch. H., „Jaap Mansfeld: Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt“, Gnomon 42, 1970, S. 119). Man sollte aber erwägen, ob eine Interpretation, die bei solchen (sei es durch die Resignation oder durch den Hinweis auf eine entlegene Tradition zu rechtfertigenden) Ausflüchten Zuflucht sucht, eine wirklich gelungene Interpretation ist. Man sollte daher weiter bedenken, ob nicht gerade eine befriedigende, im Text plausibel nachweisbare und womöglich mittels der damaligen Denkmöglichkeiten durchgeführte Lösung dieser Beziehung ein wichtiges Kriterium für die richtige Interpretation lieferte; man scheint nämlich bisher ein solches Kriterium vor allem im Nachweis der ontologischen Argumentation zu sehen.
sie nicht einfach verwerfen und durch die Konzeption von ἐόν verdrängen, ja ersetzen wollte. Der Ursprung von ἐόν aus ἐόντα zeigt vielmehr, dass ἐόν mit der als ἐόντα gedachten Welt irgendwie vereinbar sein und sie voraussetzen muss.¹ Wie die Beziehung zwischen ἐόν und der als ἐόντα begriffenen Welt innerhalb der Lehre des Parmenides genau aussieht, kann aber erst später (vgl. Abschnitte III.3, 4.) behandelt werden.

Diese Ausführungen haben für die angebliche parmenideische Ontologie erhebliche Konsequenzen; denn damit ist die enge (sei es anhand der Deduktion oder der Synonymität) angenommene Beziehung zwischen ἔστι, ἐόν und ἐἶναι verletzt. Das ist aber für die Interpretation des Gedichts von großer Bedeutung, weil man damit etwa die  


Möglichkeit gewinnt, ἔστι von ἔόν zu trennen. Während ἔόν im Gedicht als der zu behandelnde Gegenstand der Untersuchung auftritt, hat ἔστι vornehmlich die Funktion eines geläufigen Prädikats.

**II.1 Alternative Gliederung des Gedichts**


Darin, dass man zwischen B1 und B2 eine so scharfe Abgrenzung anzunehmen pflegt, scheinen hauptsächlich zwei Gründe mitzuspielen: Der eine Grund darf auf unserer bruchstückhaften Überlieferung des Gedichts beruhen. Denn das Proöüm wird einfach, ohne dass man sich darüber viel Bedenken machte, mit dem Fragment B 1 gleichgesetzt; die scheinbare (bloß in unseren Ausgaben sich manifestierende) Selbstständigkeit von B 1 erweckt also den Eindruck der inneren Geschlossenheit. Das scheint mit dem anderen, in dem ontologischen Vorverständnis bestehenden Grund in völligem Einklang zu stehen. Denn in B 1 scheint nichts philosophisch Wertvolles, d.h. Ontologisches zur Sprache zu kommen; da handelt es sich ja lediglich um


Nun, diese Auffassung, dass beide Alternativen verschieden sind, kann – bisher nur vorläufig – problematisiert werden, womit aber gleich die Annahme dreier Wege problematisiert wird. Denn wenn wir erwägen, dass B 2 ursprünglich in unmittelbarer Nähe zu B 1 gestanden haben

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i Obwohl die erste Alternative die Wege nicht explizit thematisiert, man nimmt an, dass auch sie die Wege betrifft.


vorgegriffen, sondern auch das Thema von B 1,26–30 aufgegriffen zu werden, wo über den menschlichen Weg im Gegensatz zu dem, den θέμυς und δίκη verbürgen, und wo über die Wahrheit im Gegensatz zu menschlichen Meinungen die Rede ist.


Bevor wir aber versuchen, das Gedicht anhand zweier Wege in vier Teile zu strukturieren, ziehen wir noch einmal in Betracht, dass wir ein orales, d.h. für das laute und öffentliche Vortragen bestimmtes Gedicht interpretieren. Das kann insofern von Bedeutung sein, als mit den Erwartungen und überhaupt Verstehensmöglichkeiten des Zuhörers zu rechnen ist. Um von Zuhörern leicht und mit Verstehen verfolgt werden zu können, sollte das orale Gedicht eine klare und übersichtliche Struktur haben. Was die gewöhnliche Einteilung des Gedichts in drei Teile unter der Voraussetzung dreier Wege angeht, wirkt die so aufgefasste Struktur eher verwirrt. Denn einige Gedanken, die in einem Teil ihren rechten Platz zu haben scheinen, tauchen in einem anderen auf, wo sie einigermaßen ungeeignet wirken (z.B. das mit den schweifenden Menschen zusammenhängende Motiv des Wegs, das in dem für die Behandlung der ontologischen Probleme bestimmten aletheia-Teil vorkommt). Überdies wäre der angebliche Verweis auf die Einteilung des Gedichts, der am Ende des als Proömium verstandenen Fragment B 1 erscheint und nach dem das Gedicht in zwei Teile strukturiert werden soll, vielmehr in einem schriftlichen, für das einsame verstehende Lesen
bestimmten Text zu erwarten. Denn während man bei Lesern damit rechnen kann, dass sie sich auch anhand des wiederholten Lesens den schriftlichen Text anzueignen und seinen Sinn und Struktur kennen zu lernen versuchen, muss sich der Zuhörer nur auf einen Vortrag verlassen; deshalb bedient sich der orale Text auch anderer Mittel der Strukturierung (z.B. des Wiederholens desselben Motivs). In anderen Worten, es ist nicht zu erwarten, dass man den oralen Text nur mittels einer anfänglichen Erwähnung in zwei komplexe und weiter sich gliedernde Teile strukturiert (hauptsächlich wenn diese Struktur nur angedeutet wird).

Versuchen wir nun also die einzelnen Teile kurz zu characterisieren:

Den ersten Teil bildet das Proömium, das aber nicht – wie man gewöhnlich annimmt – am Ende vom Fragment B 1, sondern da, wo die Göttin zu sprechen anfängt, also in B 1,23, endet. Das Proömium, das eine bildliche Schilderung der Auffahrt darstellt, ist nach der am Bild des Übergangs von der Nacht zum Licht inszenierten binären Struktur aufgebaut (die Sonnenmädchen verlassen das Haus der Nacht und streben zum Licht; sie stoßen die Schleier von ihren Häuptern weg; weiter erscheint das Tor der Bahnen von Nacht und Tag, von dem δίκη den Schlüssel hat; Parmenides passiert dieses Tor und wird von der Göttin in ihrem Haus, das als Gegensatz zum Haus der Nacht konstruiert wird, empfangen).

Was die Zahl der Wege im Gedicht angeht, wäre es überraschend, wenn die deutliche binäre Struktur, nach der das ganze Proömium aufgebaut ist und die bereits im Proömium als Motiv zweier Wege von Nacht und Tag (vgl. ἔνθα πολαὶ Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἡματός εἰσι κελεύθων, B
1,11) vorgezeichnet ist, in den weiteren Darlegungen als Motiv zweier Wege nicht ausgewertet würde. Dieselbe binäre Struktur kommt also – meistens eben in der Form zweier Wege – in B 1,26–28a (ἐπεὶ οὕτι σε μοῖρα κακὴ προὔπεμπε νέεσθαι / τὴνδ’ ὀδὸν (ἳ γὰρ ἂν’ ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν) / ἀλλὰ θέμις τε δίκη τε. χρεῶ δὲ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι); B 1,29–30 (ἡμὲν Ἀλήθειας εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμές ἦτορ / ἣδὲ βροτῶν δόξας); B 2,3,5 (ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἐστὶν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἐστὶ μὴ ἐίναι / ἡ δ’ ὡς οὐκ ἐστὶν τε καὶ ὡς χρεῶν ἐστὶ μὴ ἐίναι); B 6,3–5 (πρώτης γὰρ τ’ ἀφ’ ὀδοὶ ταύτης διζήσιος <ἀρξεῖν> / αὐτῷ ἔπειτ’ ἀπὸ τῆς, ἦν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν / πλάττονται, δίκρανοι); B 7,2 (ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆςδ’ ἀφ’ ὀδοὶ διζήσιος εἰργε νόημα); B 8,16 (ἐστὶν ἡ οὐκ ἐστὶν); B 8,17–18 (τὴν μὲν ἐὰν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον (οὐ γὰρ ἄληθῆς / ἐστὶν ὁδός), τὴν δ’ ὡστε πέλειν καὶ ἐπήτυμον εἶναι) vor. Die zwei Wege stellen also das Grundmotiv des Gedichts, anhand dessen das Gedicht durchaus streng eingeteilt und strukturiert ist, dar.


ii Dass man von einem Weg zurückgehalten werden soll, impliziert, dass es noch einen anderen Weg, dem man sich zuwenden muss, gibt.
Nachdem also das Motiv zweier Wege im Proömium vorgezeichnet war, wird es im zweiten Teil (ab B 1,24 bis B 7), der bisher noch nie beachtet und erkannt wurde, mehrmals wiederholt. Es handelt sich aber nicht um bloße Widerholung desselben Motivs, sondern vielmehr um seine Variierung resp. philosophische Ausarbeitung, die – damit wir unsere weiteren Ausführungen ein bisschen vorwegnehmen – dazu dient, beide Wege gegeneinander zu inszenieren und konfrontieren und so den Vorzug des ersten Wegs gegenüber dem zweiten nachzuweisen und zu sichern (vgl. Abschnitt III.3.). Dieses klare Wiederholen und Variieren desselben binären Motivs wird aber von den Interpreten ganz übersehen und das gleiche binäre Motiv wird in verschiedenen Teilen des Gedichts verschieden interpretiert resp. als verschiedene Alternativen gedeutet (vgl. z.B. oben angeführtes Beispiel von der in B 1,29–30 vorkommenden Alternative, die nach der geläufigen Auffassung von der in B 2 vorkommenden Alternative grundverschieden sein soll, was fast als Grundsatz der gewöhnlichen ontologischen Interpretation gilt). Es soll noch einmal erinnert werden, dass das Wiederholen und Variieren desselben Motivs eines der wichtigsten stilistischen, ja kompositorischen Mittel darstellt, denen sich ein oraler, d.h. für das Vorlesen und Vortragen bestimmter Text bedient.

Beziehung genau aussieht bzw. wie beide Wege zueinander stehen. Auf die genaue Beziehung beider Wege zu ἐόν resp. der Welt werden wir später eingehen (vgl. Abschnitt III.4.), deshalb versuchen wir jetzt vielmehr die Beziehung beider Wege zueinander verständlich machen. Denn nach der geläufigen ontologischen Auffassung, nach der sich ἐόν und die Welt gegenseitig ausschließen, wäre auch zwischen beiden mit ἐόν resp. der Welt zusammenhängenden Wegen letztlich keine Beziehung; höchstens würde es sich um eine Beziehung der Ausschließung oder Privation handeln, was aber keine eigentliche Beziehung ist.

Wenn wir jedoch in Betracht ziehen, dass damals die Welt als ἐόντα aufgefasst wurde und dass – wie wir gesehen haben – Parmenides’ Konzeption von ἐόν aus ἐόντα stammt, dann öffnet sich eine aussichtsvolle Möglichkeit, die Beziehung beider Wege zu denken. Die fast strukturelle Ähnlichkeit, die zwischen ἐόν und ἐόντα besteht, begründet auch die Beziehung beider Wege. Denn nicht nur dass sie sich nicht ausschließen, sondern wegen der Beziehung der mit ihnen zusammenhängenden Konzeptionen von ἐόν resp. ἐόντα verweisen sie aufeinander, ja sie bedingen sich gegenseitig.

Man könnte vielleicht einwenden, dass die Wege im allgemeinen mit ἐόν und der Welt zusammenhängen können, dass aber der zweite Weg nirgends explizit mit ἐόντα verbunden ist. Denn die Welt resp. der mit ihr zusammenhängende Weg wird im Gedicht vielmehr mit dem Nichtsein (vgl. B 2,7; B 7,1–2) oder mit der Mischung der elementaren Grundkräfte von Tag und Nacht (z.B. B 8,53–59) verbunden. Dieser Einwand ist aber verfehlt, denn es wäre gleich zu behaupten, dass wegen
der damals geläufigen Auffassung der Welt als ἐόντα jeder Hinweis auf die Welt ἐόντα impliziert und voraussetzt.

Unsere Auffassung von der Verbindung beider Wege mit ἐόν resp. ἐόντα hat aber eine sehr wichtige Parallele, die sie durchaus bekräftigt. Es handelt sich um Empedokles’ Fragment B 17, wo die Beziehung zwischen ἕν und πλέονα behandelt wird. Denn Empedokles variiert und entfaltet hier die (dialektische) Beziehung zwischen ἕν und πλέονα in ähnlicher Weise wie Parmenides das mit ἐόν und ἐόντα resp. der Welt zusammenhängende Motiv zweier Wege. Es lässt sich erwarten, dass Empedokles, der ja in manchem an Parmenides anknüpft, auch dieses Motiv von ihm übernommen hat. Während jedoch Parmenides die (dialektische) Beziehung zwischen ἐόν und ἐόντα mit dem Wegemotiv eng verflochten, ja in ihm aufgelöst hat (aus Gründen, die erst allmählich aufleuchten können und die – damit wir sie einigermaßen vorwegnehmen – mit dem praktisch-religiösen Charakter des Gedichts zusammenhängen, vgl. Abschnitte II.2. und III.5.), war Empedokles (wohl aus kosmogonisch-kosmologischen Gründen) darum bestrebt, eben die (dialektische) Beziehung zwischen ἕν und πλέονα zu betonen.¹

¹ Vgl. Empedokles DK 31 B 17,1–17:

διπλ’ ἐρέω· τοτε μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἡπείρῃ μονὸν εἰναι
ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτε δ’ αὖ διέφυ πλέον’ ἐξ ἐνὸς εἶναι.

δοιή δὲ θνητῶν γένεσις, δοιή δ’ ἄπολευψις;

τὴν μὲν γὰρ πάντων σύνοδος τίκτει τ’ ὀλέκει τε,

η δὲ πάλιν διαφυιμένου θρεφθεῖσα διέπετι.
Empedokles’ Fragment B 17 ist also für Parmenides’ Gedicht insofern von Bedeutung, als man den zweiten (bisher nie erkannten) Wegeteil des Gedichts durch Empedokles’ Fragment B 17 formal und inhaltlich gerechtfertigt und bestätigt sehen kann.

Der dritte Teil des Gedichts beginnt wieder deutlich in B 8,1–2 (μόνος δ’ ἐπὶ μύθος ὁδόιο / λείπεται ὡς ἔστιν) und behandelt die mit dem ersten Weg zusammenhängende Problematik von ἔόν, während der vierte, der wiederum deutlich durch B 8,50–52 (ἐν τοῖς σοι παῦω πιστὸν λόγον ἦδὲ νόημα / ἀμφὶς ἀληθείας· δόξας δ’ ἀπὸ τούτων βροτείας / μάνθανε κόσμον ἐμὸν ἐπέων ἀπατηλοῦ ἄκοιν) vom dritten abgetrennt ist, die

καὶ ταύτ’ ἀλλάσσοντα διαμπερές οὐδαμὰ λήγει,

ἀλλοτε μὲν Φιλότητι συνερχόμεν’ εἰς ἑν ἅπαντα,

ἀλλοτε δ’ αὐτ δή’ ἐκαστὰ φορεύμενα Νείκεος ἔχει.

<οὔτως ἦ μὲν ἑν ἐκ πλέονων μεμάθηκε φύεσθαι>

ἡδὲ πάλιν διαφύντος ἐνὸς πλέον’ ἐκτελέθουσι,

τηί μὲν γίγνονται τε καὶ οὔ σφισιν ἐμπεδὸς αἰών·

ἥ ἐ δε διαλλάσσοντα διαμπερὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει,

ταύτη δ’ αἰὲν ἅσιν ἀκίνητοι κατὰ κύκλον.

ἀλλ’ ἂγε μύθοιν κλάθι· μάθη γάρ τοι φρένας αὐξεί·

ὡς γάρ καὶ πρὶν ἔσπετα πιθανόν καὶ πιθανόν ἑκεῖνον,

δίπλ’ ἐρέω· τοτε μὲν γὰρ ἑν ηὐζήθη μόνον εἶναι

ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτε δ’ αὖ διέφυ πλέον’ ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶναι,
mit dem zweiten Weg zusammenhängende Problematik der menschlichen Welt.

II.2 Archaische Anthropologie

Wie Mansfeld anhand der Analyse von B 6 festgestellt hat, ist für Parmenides die archaische Auffassung des Menschen (die sogenannte archaische Anthropologie), die ihn als unwissend, hilflos, taub und blind im scharfen Gegensatz zur göttlichen Allwissenheit und Allmacht erscheinen lässt, durchaus verbindlich. Weil aber die Problematik der archaischen Anthropologie in B 6 direkt mit der Wegeproblematik zusammenhängt (vgl. αὐτῶρ ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῆς [i.e. ὁδοῦ], ἢν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν / πλάττονται, δικρανοὶ ὃμηγανιν γὰρ ἐν αὐτῶν / στήθεσιν ἰδύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἷ δὲ φοροῦνται / κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, B 8,4–7) und weil im Gedicht das Motiv zweier Wege entfaltet zu werden scheint, ist anzunehmen, dass für zwei im Gedicht angeführte Wege die dualistische Weltauffassung der archaischen Anthropologie, in der die Menschen im scharfen Gegensatz zu den Göttern stehen, maßgebend sein muss.

Erst dadurch erhält das Motiv zweier Wege seine tiefe und volle Bedeutung: Der eine (göttliche) Weg hängt mit der Wahrheit (dem unentstandenen und unvergänglichen ἐόν) zusammen; der andere (menschliche) Weg dagegen mit der menschlichen Welt. Auf diesem Hintergrund ist es klar, dass die Wege nicht Wege eines diskursiven

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i Mansfeld, J., Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt, Assen 1964, S. 1–41.
Denkens sind, wie man oft behauptet,\(^i\) sondern vielmehr zwei grundverschiedene Lebensweisen darstellen; die eine entspricht dem Leben der allwissenden und allmächtigen Götter, während die andere das jämmerliche Leben der Menschen darstellt. Die Wege sind also Lebenswege (vgl. auch Abschnitt III. 5.).

### III.1 Das Fragment B 2


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\(^ii\) Vgl. Kahn, Ch. H., „The Thesis of Parmenides“, op. cit., S. 709: “But the verb ἔστι is not normally used in Greek as an impersonal in the sense just described. It generally occurs either with a grammatical subject or with a logical subject easily identified from the context.”
zuerst in der veritativenden Bedeutung aufzufassen ist. (Es ist aber gleich
darauf aufmerksam zu machen, dass wir ἔστι nicht etwa im logischen
Sinn von Kahns These, sondern ganz allgemein als stilistisches Mittel,
etwas als wahr zu betonen, verstehen – es soll also nach dem geläufigen
Ausdruck ἔστι ταύτα gebildet sein.) Eine solche Charakterisierung beider
Wege als wahr resp. unwahr in B 2,3,5 („Der eine Weg, dass er (wahr) ist
und dass es unmöglich ist, dass er nicht (wahr) ist; der andere, dass er
nicht (wahr) ist und dass es nötig ist, dass er nicht (wahr) ist.“) bereitet
auf dem Hintergrund der archaischen Anthropologie keine
Schwierigkeiten. Denn in dieser Interpretation wollen beide Verse sagen,
dass der eine (göttliche) Weg wahr sein muss, während der andere
(menschliche) aus dem Gesichtspunkt des ersten Wegs als unwahr
erscheinen muss.

Obwohl diese Interpretation plausibel wirkt, reicht sie dennoch
nicht aus. (Nun gilt es, sich noch einmal die Tatsache zu
vergegenwärtigen, dass wir das Gedicht interpretieren. Durch das
ontologische Verständnis ist man verpflichtet, im Text des Parmenides
nach einer logisch präzisen und eindeutigen Argumentation zu suchen;
für ein Gedicht ist es dagegen nicht nur charakteristisch, sondern auch
konstitutiv, dass es mit Mehrdeutigkeiten, Assoziationen, Evozierungen
und überhaupt mit Strategien, die nicht argumentativ verfahren, arbeitet.)
Wenn Parmenides nur über die Wahrheit bzw. Unwahrheit der Wege
 sprechen wollte, würde er sich, um sie zu charakterisieren, einfach der
Ausdrücke ἀλήθης oder ἐτήτυμος (vgl. B 8,17–18) bedient haben. Dass er
sie aber mit Hilfe von drei hintereinander vorkommenden ἔστι resp.
ἐἴναι (in B 8,2 und in B 8,16 nur mit Hilfe von einem ἔστι)
charakterisiert, muss einen guten Grund gehabt haben. Die beiden Verse

Interpretatorisch lassen sich also in beiden Versen zwei Ebenen unterscheiden. Auf der einen Ebene ist als Subjekt zu ἔστι ὁδὸς aufzufassen, und was die Semantik von ἐἶναι angeht, ist zuerst aus der breiten Skala der verschiedenen Aspekte von ἐἶναι der veritative Aspekt hervorzuheben. (Dadurch werden beide Wege als wahr resp. unwahr charakterisiert.) Auf der anderen Ebene streben die Äußerungen in B 2,3,5 ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ ἐῖναι und Ἡ δ’ ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεῶν ἐστὶ μὴ ἐῖναι zum selbständigen, von der ersten („grammatischen“) Ebene unabhängigen Ausdruck. (Dadurch wird der „Inhalt“ beider Wege oder das auf ihnen zu begegnende Objekt evoziert und so als notwendig mit beiden Wegen verbunden.) – Es ist ersichtlich, dass beide Verse zu komplex sind, um als bloße Glieder einer ontologischen Argumentation abgetan zu werden. Sie sollten zuletzt in ihrer dichterisch-denkerischen Fülle und Tiefe genossen werden.
III.2 Die Funktion von λέγειν und νοεῖν


Wie er λέγειν auffasst, geht aus B 6,1–2 (χρῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ’ ἐόν ἐμμεναί· ἐστὶ γὰρ εἶναι, / μηδὲν δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν. τά σ’ ἐγὼ φράζεισθαι

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i Vgl. B 2,7–8 (οὐτε γὰρ ἁν γνοῖς τό γε μὴ ἐόν (οὐ γὰρ ἀνωστόν) / οὐτε φράσας); B 6,1 (χρῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ’ ἐόν ἐμμεναί); B 8,7–8 (οὐδ’ ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἕσσο / φάσθαι σ’ οὐδὲ νοεῖν); B 8,8 (οὐ γὰρ φατόν οὐδὲ νοητόν); B 8,17 (τὴν μὲν ἐὰν ἀνώτητον ἀνώνυμον).
iii Weil γιγνώσκειν im Gedicht sonst nicht vorkommt und weil an anderen Stellen νοεῖν in Zusammenhang mit λέγειν gerät, ist es anzunehmen, dass γιγνώσκειν mit νοεῖν synonym ist.

Die beiden, aus drei Sätzen bestehenden Verse B 6,1–2 haben also folgende argumentative Struktur. Zuerst wird in B 6,1a die Notwendigkeit dessen, dass das Seiende ist, hinsichtlich der Sprache und des Erfassens behauptet. Während – wie wir gesehen haben – die Begründung anhand des Erfassens ohne weiteres klar ist und keiner zusätzlichen Erklärung bedarf, erklärt Parmenides in den folgenden zwei Sätzen, wie die sprachliche Begründung aufzufassen ist. Er unterstützt sie (vgl. die begründende Partikel γαρ in B 6,1b) zuerst durch seine im zweiten Satz ausgedrückte These oder Maxime, dass das Seiende ist, das Nichts aber nicht ist (ἔστι γαρ εἶναι, / μηδὲν δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν, B 6,1b–2a). Dass eben diese These die sprachliche Begründung der (ontologischen)

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Notwendigkeit dessen, dass das Seiende ist, liefert, belegt der dritte Satz (B 6,2b), wo die Göttin ihren Zuhörer auffordert (ἀνωγά), auf diese Weise resp. (wortwörtlich) diese Sachen (τά), die die These enthält, zu sich zu sprechen (φράζεσθαι). In anderen Worten, die These, dass das Seiende ist, das Nichts aber nicht ist, kann nicht bloß als Konstatierung eines Sachverhalts gedeutet werden, sondern ihre innere sprachliche Logik, nach der es unmöglich wäre, anders zu sprechen, ist vor allem zu berücksichtigen. Parmenides’ Auffassung der Sprache war also grundverschieden von dem, wie wir die Sprache und ihre Beziehung zur Realität auffassen. Ihn war die Sprache nicht ein bloßes, von der Wahrheit oder Wirklichkeit losgelöstes Werkzeug, sondern vielmehr – wie für die ganze damalige archaische Zeit – eine elementare Macht, deren Wahrheit keinen Widerspruch von der Art, dass das, was nicht ist (μὴ ἐόν), ist, zuließe. Zwischen der Sprache und der Wirklichkeit gibt es also bei Parmenides keine unüberbrückbare Kluft – beides stellt höchstens zwei verschiedene Aspekte des Gleichen dar. (Die ganze Übersetzung von B 6,1–2 lautet: „Hinsichtlich des Sprechens und Erfassens ist es notwendig, dass das Seiende ist.“ Denn das Seiende ist, das Nichts ist aber nicht. Ich fordere dich auf, auf diese Weise (diese Sachen) zu sich zu sprechen."

Die Termini λέγειν und νοεῖν haben also die Funktion, die Notwendigkeit von ἐόν resp. die Unmöglichkeit von μὴ ἐόν zu sichern. λέγειν tut dies im Hinblick auf das richtige Funktionieren der Sprache,

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i Als Subjekt in B 6,1b ist das in B 6,1a vorkommende ἐόν zu ergänzen. Was die Wendung ἔστι εἶναι angeht, betrachten wir es als dichterischen Kunstgriff, die Richtigkeit der Formel ἐόν ἔστι durch εἶναι zu bestätigen und zu betonen (vgl. B 2,3,5, resp. Abschnitt III.1.).

Durch B 6,1–2 erhält auch die Charakterisierung beider Wege noch eine andere wichtige Dimension. Der erste Weg wird mit der (Notwendigkeit der) Äußerung „Das Seiende ist, das Nichtseiende ist nicht“ verknüpft, während der zweite die (Unmöglichkeit der) Äußerungen wie „Das Nichtseiende ist“ (vgl. B 7,1) oder „Das Seiende ist nicht“ (die ja in Widerspruch zum richtigen Funktionieren von λέγειν stehen) impliziert.

III.3 Zweifache Perspektive der menschlichen Welt

Nachdem also das Motiv zweier Wege am Ende von B 1 angegeben und in B 2 und B 6,1–2 entwickelt und ausgearbeitet wird, geht Parmenides auf eine gründlichere Behandlung des zweiten Wegs ein. Doch bevor wir versuchen, sie zu rekonstruieren und interpretieren, sollen wir das folgende Problem erwägen: Die von B 8,53 (also im vierten Teil) beschriebene menschliche Welt, die ja der „Inhalt“ des zweiten Wegs sein soll, wird als Mischung zweier elementarer Kräfte von Tag und Nacht aufgefasst (B 8,53–59). Dabei ist es gleich darauf aufmerksam zu machen, dass diese Konzeption der Welt das Nichtseiende ausschließt
(vgl. πᾶν πλέον ἔστιν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου, B 9,3). Doch haben wir mehrmals (hauptsächlich im Zusammenhang mit dem, was im zweiten Wegeteil gesagt wird) festgestellt, dass der zweite Weg das Nichtseiende voraussetzt und impliziert. Das Gedicht scheint also zwei Auffassungen der menschlichen Welt zu implizieren: Während im zweiten Wegeteil die menschliche Welt unter der Perspektive des Nichtseienden betrachtet wird, entwickelt der vierte Teil die Auffassung der Welt als der Mischung zweier elementarer Grundelemente, Licht und Nacht, die keinen Raum für das Nichtseiende zulassen.

Für die Lösung dieser Schwierigkeit ist die richtige Rekonstruktion des Restes des zweiten Wegeteils, der sich von B 6,4 über B 4 bis zu B 7 weiter erstreckt, von großer Bedeutung. Die entscheidende Feststellung wird in B 6,8–9 (οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταύτῶν νενόμισται / κοῦ ταύτῶν, πάντων δὲ παλιντροπὸς ἐστὶ κέλευθος) angegeben: die Menschen vermögen nicht zwischen 'sein' und 'nicht sein' resp. zwischen den Dingen, die sind, und jenen, die nicht sind, zu unterscheiden (die substantivierten Infinitive sind nicht mit ἐόν resp. μὴ ἐόν gleichzusetzen, sondern sie behalten vielmehr die verbale Funktion).

Was es genau heißt, dass die Menschen die seienden und nichtseienden Dinge vermischen, erhält eine präzisere Bedeutung durch die weitere Fortsetzung des Wegeteils in B 4 und B 7¹, wo zuerst über die

ab- und anwesenden Dinge (λε bearings δ’ ὑμως ἀπεόντα νόω παρεόντα βεβαιως, B 4,1) und ferner über die nichtseienden (οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμὴ εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα, B 7,1) die Rede ist. Die Problematik des Nichtseienden (μὴ ἐόν resp. μὴ ἐόντα) scheint also im Zusammenhang mit der Ab- und Anwesenheit gedacht werden. In der Tat erfahren wir in unserer Lebenswelt infolge der Sinneswahrnehmung einige Dinge als abwesend. Und weil diese ἀπεόντα nicht zu sein scheinen, lässt sich über sie als über μὴ ἐόντα sprechen. Angesichts der Lebenswelt ist es somit nötig, μὴ ἐόντα ἔστι zu sagen. Unsere menschliche Welt, in der wir leben, setzt also (wegen der Sinneswahrnehmung) unumgänglich die Vorstellung von μὴ ἐόν resp. μὴ ἐόντα voraus.

Der scheinbare Widerspruch beider Konzeptionen der menschlichen Welt ist also durch die Schlüsselrolle des damals für die Welt verwendeten Ausdrucks ἐόντα behoben. Denn er impliziert nicht nur die Pluralität der Seienden, die die (triviale, zugleich aber fundamentale) Voraussetzung der menschlichen Welt ist, sondern auch das Nichtseiende, das wiederum eine Konsequenz der (Sinneswahrnehmung der) Pluralität ist. Obwohl es in Parmenides’ Gedicht im Grunde nur eine einzige, auf ἐόντα gründende Konzeption der menschlichen Welt gibt, kann sie jedoch aus zwei verschiedenen, auf eine je andere Wirkung abzielenden Perspektiven betrachtet und inszeniert werden. In dem zweiten Wegeteil verwendet (inszeniert) Parmenides die mit dem Nichtseienden zusammenhängende Auffassung der menschlichen Welt zur Herabsetzung und Verwerfung des zweiten Wegs, was zugleich den Vorzug, ja die Notwendigkeit des ersten Wegs

Nichtseiendes einstufen.> Denn es kann niemals erzwungen werden, dass Nichtseiendes (μὴ ἐόντα) ist (B 7,1).“

III.4 Die Beziehung zwischen ἐόν und der menschlichen Welt

Nun können wir die Beziehung zwischen ἐόν und der als ἐόντα aufgefassten menschlichen Welt anhand von B 4 genau bestimmen. Der Unterschied zwischen ihnen ist letztlich kein essentieller (in dem Sinne, dass zwischen ihnen eine Wesen- oder Grundverschiedenheit besteht bzw. dass sie zwei verschiedene Seinsregionen des Ganzen darstellen), sondern nur ein perspektivischer. Denn er hängt mit νόος zusammen. Wie die Wendung λεύσε νόοι in B 4,1 (λεύσε δ’ ὁμος ἀπεόντα νόοι παρεόντα βεβαίως) andeutet, stellt νόος eine Art Optik, durch die die
Welt anzusehen ist, dar. Wenn man also durch νόθος die abwesenden Dinge als anwesend ansehen soll und wenn – wie wir gesehen haben – die abwesenden als nichtseidig gelten, dann ist es νόθος, von dem es abhängig ist, ob es das eine ἑόν oder die als Pluralität von ἑόντα gedachte Welt gibt resp. – damit wir der perspektivischen Hinsicht Rechnung tragen – ob man die Welt nur als das eine ἑόν oder als die Pluralität von ἑόντα sieht.¹

Dass es also \( \varepsilon \) gibt resp. dass wir \( \varepsilon \) sehen und begegnen, hängt von \( \nu \) ab. Man könnte sich aber fragen, ob man wirklich auch die Welt durch \( \nu \) ansehen kann, denn spätestens seit Platons Ablösung der immateriellen Ideen von der materiellen Welt sind wir daran gewöhnt, die Tätigkeit von (dem als Denken oder Geist verstanden) \( \nu \) mit dem Immateriellen oder Geistigen zu verbinden und die Welt mittels der Sinneswahrnehmung zu erfassen. Bei der Interpretation eines archaischen Denkers müssen wir aber alle platonischen Denkschemata ablegen. Und wie der Imperativ \( \lambda \varepsilon \sigma \sigma \varepsilon \) in B 4,1 andeutet, kann die Wirksamkeit von \( \nu \) nicht nur auf \( \varepsilon \) beschränkt werden, sondern sie muss auch die Welt einschließen. Wenn \( \nu \) nur mit \( \varepsilon \) irgendwie wesensverwandt wäre, hätte der Imperativ keinen Sinn.\(^i\)

Dass sich \( \nu \) auch auf die Welt bezieht, wird auch im Fragment B 6 bestätigt, wo er explizit mit dem zweiten Weg zusammenhängt und wo er überdies mit dem Prädikat \( \pi \lambda \kappa \tau \tau \varsigma \) („schweifend“) versehen ist. Wenn nun \( \nu \) ein mit dem zweiten Weg zusammenhängender \( \pi \lambda \kappa \tau \tau \varsigma \) \( \nu \) (B 6,6) ist, der „sein‘ mit „nicht sein‘ vermischt (vgl. B 6,8–9), sieht man nicht nur einige Dinge als abwesend, also nichtseidend (vgl. die perzeptorische Konzeption der Welt innerhalb des zweiten Wegeteils), sondern auch ihre Mannigfaltigkeit (vgl. die ab B 8,53, also im vierten Teil entwickelten wissenschaftliche Konzeption der Welt); anders gesagt,

\(^i\) Zu der Identität von „Denken“ und Sinneswahrnehmung in Parmenides vgl. auch Theophrasts Kommentar zu B 16 τὸ γὰρ αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν ὡς ταύτη τὸ λέγει (A 46).
auf diesem zweiten Weg begegnet man die Welt. Wenn man sich dagegen auf dem ersten Weg befindet und den richtig funktionierenden und ansehenden νόος hat, sieht man alle Dinge als anwesend, also seiend; und weil νόος nicht ἐόν von ἐόν abschneidet (B 4,2), begegnet man nur das eine unentstandene und unteilbare ἐόν (vgl. auch B 8,22–25).

Nun, die Verbindung von νόος mit beiden Wegen ist eines der prinzipiellsten Momente für das Verständnis des Gedichts. Denn der Unterschied zwischen ἐόν und der Welt liegt letztlich darin, auf welchem Weg man sich befindet resp. aus welchem Weg man die Welt ansieht. Und weil die Wege als Lebenswege zu verstehen sind, hängt es letztlich von unserer Lebensweise oder von unserem Charakter (zur praktischen Bedeutung von νόος als Charakter vgl. Abschnitt IV.) ab, ob wir ἐόν oder die menschliche pluralistische Welt begegnen.

IV. Schluss: Praktisch-religiöser Charakter des Gedichts

Der praktische Charakter des Gedichts manifestiert sich auch in der Konzeption von νόος selbst. Denn νόος darf nicht nur als eine rein theoretische (sei es denkende, sei es betrachtende) Fähigkeit aufgefasst werden. Wie auch seine Verwendung im damaligen Kontext belegt, hängt er mit dem menschlichen Gemüt oder Charakter eng zusammen, was noch damit betont wird, dass er oft mit moralisch wertenden Attributen vorkommt. Was seine Verwendung in Parmenides’ Gedicht angeht, ist diese praktische Auffassung von νόος durch sein innerhalb der archaischen Anthropologie als moralisch zu fassende Attribut πλακτός ziemlich eindeutig bestätigt. Denn innerhalb der archaischen Anthropologie wird die in B 6,6 vorkommende Wendung πλακτός νόος nicht nur im theoretischen Sinn (etwa als fehlende Sichtweise/Vernunft), sondern als schweifender oder gar labiler Charakter verstanden.

Wenn wir diese praktisch-moralische Färbung von νόος in Betracht ziehen und wenn wir zugleich erwägen, dass seine Nähe zu der Wegeproblematik seinen praktischen Charakter im Gedicht unterstreicht (vgl. B 6), dann darf es nicht verwundern, dass auch der mit νόος synonymen Ausdruck νόημα in B 7,2 (ἀλλὰ σὺ τῇσδ’ ἀφ’ ὄδυ διξήσιος εἰργε νόημα) praktisch-moralische Konnotationen hat („Wende deine Sichtweise der Welt/deinen Charakter vom diesem Weg der

i Wenn man sich im Kontext des Gedichts von Parmenides umsieht, wird man feststellen müssen, dass νόος hier oft soviel wie Charakter oder Gemüt heißt – was noch durch die ihm zugeschriebenen moralischen Attribute betont ist – vgl. z. B. Solon (ἀδίκος νόος 3,7, νόος ἄρτιος 5,10, χαῦνος νόος 8,6) oder Theognis (πίστος νόος 88; ἀπλήστος νόος 109; νόος ἀθλός 1054). Vgl. auch H. Fränkel, Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens, München 1955, S. 28. Anm. 3: „Der Begriff ‘Charakter’ jedoch war noch nicht klar entwickelt; die dafür hier gebrauchten Worte sind bei Homer νόος und bei Archilochos ϑημός und φρονεῖν. Sowohl νόος als ϑημός kann bedeuten ‘Geist, Gemütsverfassung, Haltung’.“
Untersuchung“). Denn wenn man sich auf dem ersten Weg befindet, muss man nicht nur der für den zweiten Weg charakteristischen Sichtweise loswerden, sondern es ist notwendig, sich auch einer innerlichen Verwandlung zu unterziehen. Ähnlich behandelt auch der bekannte Vers B 8,34 (ταύτων δ’ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα), der oft als Identität vom Sein und Denken interpretiert wird, nicht nur einen theoretischen Bezug zwischen ἔόν und νόημα, sondern er ist auch so zu lesen, dass nur ἔόν als etwas Göttliches den Menschen den unerschütterlichen Charakter, der im Gegensatz zu ihrem schweifenden Wesen steht, gewährt.¹


¹ Zur Interpretation von B 8,34 vgl. meine Studie XXX.
begegnen; „es wurde jedoch mit der Notwendigkeit entschieden (in dem zweiten, anhand der Konfrontation beider Wege inszenierten Teil des Gedichts), dass man sich vom zweiten Weg abwenden soll, weil nur der erste wahr ist“ (κέκριται δ’ οὖν, ὃσπερ ἀνάγκη, / τὴν μὲν ἑάν ἀνόητον ἀνώνυμον (οὐ γὰρ ἀληθῆς / ἔστιν ὀδός), τὴν δ’ ὡστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήτυμον εἶναι, B 8,16–18).

Circular Motion, the Same and the Other, logos, and Cognition

(Tim. 37a5–c3)

Josef Moural

I. Arguably, one main point in Plato’s philosophy is the challenge that each of us should care for one’s soul rather than for anything else, and the cognitive capacity of the soul is supposed to play a major role in that undertaking. Hence the importance of studying Plato’s descriptions of various types of cognition and their relation to the soul. Specifically, given that the soul’s basic feature is to be in motion, it seems natural to look for the description of cognition in terms of soul’s motion.

In fact, Plato provides such descriptions in various passages, mainly in the so-called middle and late dialogues. These descriptions are sometimes neglected by the students of Plato’s theory of knowledge, presumably because they are too brief and not quite intelligible. Still, they recur often enough in Plato to be worth of, at least, questioning seriously what we understand in them, and what we do not.

Although my primary interest is in the cognitive capacities of the human soul, in this paper I shall deal with the passage 37a5–c3 which concerns cognitive capacities of the World-Soul. My questions will focus on the role of the circular motion, of the opposition the Same/the Other, and
of *logos* in various types of cognition. Unfortunately, my discussion of possible answers will remain inconclusive on several points.

II. The passage *Tim. 37a5–c3* (*hotan…*) is known as difficult and open to various ways of reading. Given both the limited space and the limits of my erudition let me refer on that to the admirable commentary by Mr. Luc Brisson.\(^i\) Although I am going to propose tentatively an alternative reading of 37b1–3, let me start with a summary of the passage’s contents as it is usually read (watering down or leaving out some possible discrepancies):

\[1\] …whenever the World-Soul touches (*efaptétai*) a substance, be it a dispersed (*skedastén*) or an undivided (*ameriston*) one, it moves thoroughly and using *logos* determines what the substance in question is the Same with and what it is Other than, in what respect, where, how, and when, both in the sphere of things becoming and with regard to things that are always changeless.  

\[37a5–b3\]

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[2] Logos true both concerning the Other and the Same is born without speech and sound, [37b3–6]

[3] and when concerned with the sensible (aisthēton) and the circle of the Other moves correctly and proclaims (diangeilê) throughout the Soul, beliefs and opinions true and firm are born, [37b6–8]

[4] and when concerned with the rational (logistikôn) and the circle of the Same moves correctly and announces (ménusê), the result is nous and knowledge. [37c1–3]

Let me point out immediately at the tension between (i) the specialization of the circles suggested in [3] and [4], where the soul seems to be said to cognize the sensibles by means of the circle of the Other, and the intelligibles by means of the circle of the Same, and (ii) the cooperation of the circles suggested in [1] where, regardless what kind of object is cognized, it is the whole soul that moves, and sameness as well as otherness are predicated. The recognition of that tension gave direction to my inquiry. Given the limited space, however, I shall do only little more besides analyzing the passage in question regarding four aspects, namely (a) what is cognized by the World-Soul (the objects of cognition), (b) what the cognition consists of, i.e. what is predicated about the objects, (c) the epistemological status of various types of cognition, and (d) the involvement of logos and of some kind of internal communication in the cognition.
III. (a) When asking ‘what is cognized’ by the World-Soul we have to bear in mind that there is nothing outside it that could enter it (33c), and that it does not have certain sense organs, namely those of sight and hearing (33c). Given that, how are we supposed to understand the word εφαπτάται in [1]? I see two possible ways to answer, and I propose to see them as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

One answer is that the tactile sense was not explicitly ruled out by Plato (unlike the visual and auditive), and that the world animal clearly could have some sensations about what goes on in its body. The second answer takes the word εφαπτάται in a less narrow sense, i.e. as meaning just some kind of intentional directedness towards the object. While considering the former answer I am rather indifferent (I guess that to accept it would probably not do much harm – and anyway, in the case of the human soul there will be plenty of sensations to deal with). I suggest that we have to embrace the latter answer, since among the objects ‘touched’ there are also the intelligible ones, which are hardly to be met in the body of the world animal.

While it is puzzling how the World-Soul meets its object of cognition, it seems quite clear what the objects of cognition themselves are supposed to be: most people agree that the pair skedastēn/lameriston in [1] stands for the same as the pair aisthēton/logistikōn in [3] and [4], and that they refer to the familiar pair of realms of sensible and intelligible objects.

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i Cf. p. 84 and note 26 (pp. 98–99) of Edward N. Lee’s paper “Reason and Rotation: Circular Movement as the Model of Mind (Nous) in Later Plato,” in: W. H. Werkmeister (ed.), Facets of Plato’s Philosophy, van Gorcum, Assen 1976, pp. 70–102. Still, it is not clear how much of freedom that intentionality has to focus on its object: in Tim. 40a–b the heavenly gods are forced by the circular motion to think the same thoughts all the time (see also De Anima 407a 30–32 – but cf. Laws 901d ff. where heavenly gods have knowledge of everything both sensible and intelligible).
As that is normally supposed to be an exhaustive dichotomy, in effect we are told that anything could become an object of the World-Soul’s cognition, and that there are two basic classes of such objects.

(b) To state exactly ‘what the World-Soul’s cognition consists of’ would require taking sides on the philological battlefield at 37b1–3 (cf. my note 1 and 5). It is clear that the cognition is supposed to consist (at least partly) in determining what the object in question is identical with, and what it is different from (37a7–b1). It is, however, less clear whether the phrase ‘both among (kata) the changeable … and with regard to (pros) the immutable’ is supposed to concern the classes of objects of cognition or the classes of predicates.

Admittedly, it would not say anything new if it concerns the classes of objects of cognition (see (a) above). Also, we need not be surprised if identity and difference with regard to sensibles is predicated about a sensible, and identity and difference with regard to forms about a form. But it would be interesting to know whether a predication across the realms is proclaimed here – a doctrine surely possible in Plato,

i On the one hand, a form functions as a paradigm for recognizing qualities of sensibles due to their likeness (as e.g. in the Euthyphro 6d–e); on the other hand, a form can be like some sensibles in some respect (e.g. being ‘beautiful’), and unlike them in an other (e.g. being a form).

Besides, close to our passage, the circle of the Same is repeatedly referred to as the circle of the Same and the Similar (tautou kai homoiou – 36d, 39b, 39d, 40b, 42c). Should we conclude from this, that the
predication of ‘sameness’ need not to be just the predication of identity (numeric, or – probably more often – eidetic), but also of similarity?¹

And finally, we do not quite know what else besides predication of sameness and difference (and possibly similarity) belongs to the soul’s cognition. Surely, the second part of [1] suggests that the predication can concern not just the object as a whole, but also certain aspects of it or relations it enters (including spacial or temporal determination). But some seem to read the passage 37b1–3 as admitting any kind of predication, not just those mentioned above.

The latter point leads to an interesting question – too big to be dealt with here – whether Plato perhaps refers to some theory of predication here, a program aiming at reducing all possible predications to those using sameness and difference (numeric and eidetic), the aspect or relation (pros ti), the ‘when’, and the ‘where’ (and possibly also a distinction between what is essential and what accidental), as suggested at 37b1–b3.²

(c) The passages [3] and [4] are rather closely parallel. If we take the phrases doxai kai pisteis bebaioi kai alétheis and nous epistémé te as

¹ Taylor (1928) says that homoios can mean isos in the old Ionian scientific usage, but all examples he quotes concern just angles [p. 155].

² A tentative reading of 37a7–b3 connected with that is based on the opposition between einai and xumbainein: it recognizes that it can be seen as strange to predicate that something xumbainei to an immutable entity, especially if it were to be ‘where’ and ‘when’. Granted that, it seems plausible to read the passage hot ... aei (37b1–3) as saying what happens in the realm of the changeable (kata ta gignomena), namely that it is predicated by them how they (hekasta) relate to other changeable entities (pros hekaston) as well as to the immutable ones (pros ta kata auta echonta aei). Cf. also Aristotle’s Met. V, ix, on predication of tauton (accidentally or essentially), heteron and homoion.
referring each basically to a single epistemological status (which can be conveniently called ‘true opinion’, resp. ‘knowledge’),\textsuperscript{i} the main message of [3] and [4] is that (as expected) the successful cognition of sensibles reaches the status of true opinion, and the successful cognition of intelligibles the status of knowledge.

What remains puzzling is that in each case the correct function of only one circle is mentioned as a necessary condition of the corresponding successful cognition. In an extreme reading the other, non-mentioned circle would not play any role in each type of cognition (\textit{strong specialization}). In a less extreme reading the circle mentioned would just play a more prominent role than the other in the corresponding type of cognition (\textit{quasi-specialization}). But it is worth noting that the text perhaps does not require any specialization really: maybe the correct function of both circles is required for a successful cognition in each case, and just not all necessary conditions of successful cognition are explicitly mentioned in [3] and [4].

I find the claim of ‘strong specialization’ somewhat implausible, since we know from [1] that in both cognition of sensibles and cognition of intelligibles it is sameness as well as otherness that is predicated. Thus, the specialization of circles regarding the type of object of cognition would require a lack of specialization regarding the type of predication, and both circle of the Same and circle of the Other would have to be able to

\textsuperscript{i} See Taylor (1928), pp. 182–3. Brisson (\textit{Le même et l’autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée de Platon: Un commentaire systématique du Timée de Platon}, op. cit.) agrees with Proclus’s contraposition (\textit{In Tim. II}, 312.9–12) of \textit{nous} and doxa to \textit{epistémé} and \textit{pistis}, without much explanation (p. 351). Surely, there is room for a possible internal differentiation of the way the phrases refer to the corresponding epistemological status; I just do not follow that line of inquiry here.
determine both sameness and otherness. i The plausibility of the ‘quasi-specialization’ claim depends on what kind of prominence would be ascribed to the appropriate circle. Without stating clearly what the prominence of the appropriate circle consists in, however, there is not much point in stressing it.

(d) It is far from clear what is the supposed role of logos and communication in our passage, in which Plato refers to logos explicitly in [2] and implicitly in [1] (legei), and to certain kinds of communication (diangeilé, ménusé) in [3] and [4]. The logos is said to be ‘without speech and sound’, and while in [2] it is discussed as a result of the process of cognition, in [1] it seems to play an active role in the process itself. If we distinguish between the aspect of articulation of cognition (e.g. into a subject and a predicate), and the aspect of communication of it (primarily between various parts of the soul in our context), I see the role of logos in [1] and [2] predominantly in the sphere of articulation. ii

In [3] and [4], on the other hand, we are informed about some process of propagation of the (already achieved) cognition throughout the soul, in case of the cognition of sensibles by the circle of the Other, and in case of the cognition of intelligibles by the circle of the Same. That is, of course, puzzling: are we to suppose that the cognition is achieved just at one part of the soul, if it has to be propagated? What part is that? Is it

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i That seems to be the position of Harold Cherniss in Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato and the Academy, vol. I (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore 1944). His words ‘each circle … reports both identity and difference among its own objects’ seem also to preclude predication across the realms, see his note 339 [p. 410].

ii Although the communicative aspect may be pointed at as well: see the word feromenos in [2], and the possible (though not preferable) attachment of dia pasés heautés to legei (instead of kinoumené) in [1].
always the same part or not? How are we to understand the process of propagation?\textsuperscript{i}

To sum up, we have a pair of circles and three other basic pairs: /a/ types of objects (sensible and intelligible), /b/ types of predication (otherness and sameness), and /c/ epistemological statuses (opinion and knowledge). I claim that it would lead to an absurdity to have the circles specialized regarding both /a/ and /b/,\textsuperscript{ii} since it would make it impossible to predicate sameness of sensibles and otherness of intelligibles.\textsuperscript{iii} Besides, I think one can read the text as suggesting that there is a strict correspondence between /a/ and /c/, but I don’t think one has to.\textsuperscript{iv} Similarly, one can see the text as suggesting specialization of the circles regarding either /a/ or /b/, but again one doesn’t have to.\textsuperscript{v}

\textsuperscript{i} Cf. Aristotle’s criticism of the role supposedly ascribed to the parts of the soul in the \textit{Timaeus} in his \textit{De anima} I, iii, 407a 16–18.

\textsuperscript{ii} As far as I understand it, Brisson’s commentary comes close to such an absurdity. The fact that Brisson speaks about logical affirmation and negation instead of predication of sameness and otherness (see his p. 348) does not make the latent absurdity less sharp: are we supposed to avoid affirmative statements about the sensibles and negative statements about the intelligibles? If not, how should we understand the claim that the circle of the Same (resp. of the Other) is on the one hand the seat of the cognition of intelligibles (resp. of sensibles), and on the other hand the principle of affirmation (resp. of negation)? (see pp. 351–2, 439)

\textsuperscript{iii} A possible objection is that it may be all right not to predicate any identity of sensibles (because of the doctrine of flux). But: 1) still it is necessary to predicate otherness of intelligibles, 2) besides otherness, we may want to predicate some similarity of sensibles, and we may want the circle of the Same to take part in that, and 3) the text passage [1] seems to require that both sameness and otherness is predicated of sensibles anyway.

\textsuperscript{iv} Is it entirely impossible to have some knowledge of sensibles – e.g. that they are in flux and corruptible? Or is that just a true opinion? And, is it entirely impossible to have any true opinion of intelligibles?

\textsuperscript{v} The situation gets more complicated if we add one more pair: /d/ the types of objects (intelligibles, sensibles) with regard to which sameness or otherness is predicated. Those who want to make sense of the repeated remark that the principle ‘like is known by like’ is applied here (as Aristotle in \textit{De Anima} 404b 17–18, and many others) have thus a third candidate: it could mean kinship of the cognitive faculty /a/ with the type of object, or /b/
IV. Of course, since we are told that our passage (and most of the *Timaeus*) should take only *cum grano salis*, we have to distinguish between the puzzles concerning the role of the circles etc. in *Timaeus’s story* (as discussed above) and their relevance as to how we understand *Plato’s philosophy*. The latter is part of a general question too big for just this small paper. I shall confine myself to mentioning briefly two or three points.

Out of the three topics preceding ‘cognition’ in the title of my paper, it is what was said about the pair *the Same/the Other* that has more of general relevance. That pair is generally regarded to play an important role in Plato’s later ontology as well as in his logic of predication and (perhaps less generally) in his theory of cognition. I hope that some of the questions raised and positive interpretations suggested (in III. above) may be relevant for our understanding of Plato’s philosophy despite the fact that they arise while dealing with a somewhat fantastic narrative.

It is less clear whether we have learnt something positive concerning the role of *logos* and of the *circular motion*. Still, some questions were raised which need to be answered by those who see the metaphor of the circular motion as being closely connected to the problem field of *logos* and the Same/the Other, as e.g. Patočka and Gadamer,\(^i\) as well as by those who want to disconnect them completely, as e.g. Lee.\(^{ii}\)

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\(^ii\) Lee, E. N., “Reason and Rotation: Circular Movement as the Model of Mind (*Nous*) in Later Plato”, op. cit., pp. 80–83. Circular motion is for him a model of ‘overcoming all perspectival limitation’ (p. 81); of ‘a “grasp,” … unconstricted by limitation to any fixed,
specific vantage-point, but taking its “object” all at once and all-round’ (p. 82); of ‘subjectivity entirely absorbed in and subordinated to the apprehension of its object, wholly reduced to an abstract, pure aboutness’ (p. 83). Can that be reconciled with the role of *logos*, of the Same and the Other in articulation of knowledge?
The “last sophism” of Roger Swyneshed.
Remarks on a fourteenth-century insolubilia-treatise

Miroslav Hanke

1. Introduction

Semantic paradoxes or “insolubes” similar to those occasioned by the use of the self-reflexive Liar sentence “This sentence is false” became a widely discussed issue during the late-medieval development of scholastic logic. i In 1330’s the British logician Roger Swyneshed composed his treatises concerning obligational disputations and insolubes and, despite strong criticism formulated almost immediately by an author as important as William Heytesbury, his approach remained influential for more than two centuries in the British logical tradition ii as

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well as in John Mair’s Parisian circle and subsequently in Spain via Mair’s disciple Domingo de Soto. The solution he proposes in his *Insolubilia* is in general terms based upon a contextualist approach to truth and ultimately results in a very serious revision of classical logic. The revision includes denying that correspondence with reality has the status of a sufficient condition for truth and that truth-preservation has the status of a necessary condition of validity. It also involves a reconsideration of the traditional square of opposition, namely in terms of assuming that two contradictory sentences can be false at the same time, i.e., the so-called “di-pseudism”. To prove the viability of his theory (and possibly to support its claim to completeness), Swyneshed formulates various sophisms together with solutions to them. This paper will focus on the “last sophism”, i.e., the sophism which usually occurs at the very end of his treatise both in manuscripts and early prints and compare it to

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Swyneshed’s “standard solution” to semantic paradoxes (“standard” meaning here and henceforth one which he adheres to in the majority of his treatise). The present research is motivated by the fact that the solution to the last sophism is based upon a course of argument different from the one implemented by Swyneshed in his other sophisms. Without questioning prior interpretations of Swyneshed’s approach, this paper should attract attention to one usually overlooked feature of Swyneshed’s treatise; from the historical point of view, Swyneshed’s last sophism offers interesting data relevant for properly positioning its author on the intellectual map of scholastic logic.

2. Swyneshed’s “standard solution”

2.1 General principles

In his analysis of paradoxical sentences, Swyneshed tacitly assumes that they are well-formed and meaningful and have neither implicit meaning nor is their explicit meaning restricted; for instance, Liar sentences say precisely that they are false. His solution to semantic paradoxes is ultimately based upon a revision of the correspondence theory of truth, where correspondence with reality is no longer considered to be a sufficient condition for truth and another contextual truth-condition, the absence of self-falsification, is introduced:

Anonymous (ed.), Libellus sophistarum ad usum Oxoniensis, London [?]1499–1500 (STC 15576.6), and Anonymous (ed.), Logica “[Q]uoniam ex terminis”, Oxford 1483 (STC 16693). (Working editions of extracts from these early prints will be offered in appendixes to this paper.)
A true sentence is a sentence that does not falsify itself and that principally signifies as is the case, either naturally or from the imposition or impositions by which it was last imposed to signify. […] A false sentence is an expression that falsifies itself, or else an expression that does not falsify itself and that principally signifies otherwise than is the case, either naturally or from the imposition or impositions by which it was last imposed to signify.¹

The concept of self-falsification, which is crucial both with respect to defining truth and to solving semantic paradoxes (since the Liar sentence is the paradigm of a self-falsifying sentence), is given detailed analysis and cautious classification in Swyneshed’s treatise. For the purposes of this study, only the simplest case of the so-called “immediate” (i.e., direct) self-falsification needs to be introduced:

A sentence falsifying itself immediately is a sentence signifying principally as is the case or otherwise than is the case and is pertinent for inferring that it is false.²

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¹ “Propositio vera est propositio non falsificans se principaliter sicut est significans naturaliter aut ex impositione vel impositionibus qua vel quibus ultimo fuit imposita ad significandum. […] Propositio falsa est oratio falsificans se vel oratio non falsificans se principaliter aliter quam est significans naturaliter, ex impositione, vel impositionibus qua vel quibus ultimo fuit imposita ad significandum.” Cf. Swyneshed, R., Insolubilia, op. cit., pp. 185–186, the English translation of Swyneshed’s treatise is derived from Spade, P. V., “Roger Swyneshed’s Obligationes: Edition and Comments”, op. cit., and Uckelman, S. L., Modalities in Medieval Logic, op. cit.

² “Propositio falsificans se immediate est propositio significans principaliter sicut est vel aliter quam est pertinent ad inferendum se ipsam fore falsam.” Cf. Swyneshed, R., Insolubilia, op. cit., pp. 182–183 (for the complete Swyneshed’s analysis of self-falsification, cf. ibid., 182–184), for the English translation of this definition and its
Furthermore, Swyneshed’s standard semantics admits the occurrence of truth-value gaps in case of sentences which deny their own correspondence with reality. Again, contextual truth-conditions are taken into consideration:

A sentence that principally neither signifies as is the case nor otherwise than is the case, or which is neither true nor false, is a sentence which signifies that something is the case and it itself by signifying in such a way is pertinent for inferring that it does not signify as is the case, such as the following sentence: ‘This does not principally signify as is the case’, demonstrating itself, which principally signifies that it does not signify as is the case.\(^1\)

As a consequence, sentences which deny their own correspondence with reality (or entail this denial) do not satisfy the contextual clause and are gappy. Equally as in the case of self-falsifying paradoxical sentences which are false despite the fact that they correspond with reality (since it is actually the case that they are false, which is precisely what they signify to be the case), the sentences which deny their correspondence with reality come out gappy and hence do not correspond with reality (or “do not signify as is the case”, as Swyneshed would say) despite the fact

\(^{1}\) “Propositio nec principaliter significans sicut est nec aliter quam est, id est, quae nec est vera nec falsa, est propositio significans aliquid esse et illa sic significando est pertinens ad inferendum se ipsam non significare principaliter sicut est, sicut haec propositio ‘Haec principaliter non significat sicut est’, demonstrata illa eadem, quae principaliter significat quod ipsa non significat sicut est.” Cf. Swyneshed, R., Insolubilia, op. cit., pp. 180–181.
that it is actually the case that they do not correspond with reality and say precisely that.

To sum up, the key element of Swyneshed’s semantics of truth and correspondence with reality in its standard version as regards the solution to semantic paradoxes is the addition of contextual clauses which apply to paradoxical sentences, rendering them either false or gappy. The relation between a sentence and its semantic correlate ceases to be a decisive truth-criterion and truth becomes a matter of both what a sentence says and contextual linguistic factors, i.e., its direct or indirect self-reflexivity. As a consequence, three theorems incompatible with traditional logic hold of Swyneshed’s logic and are proved by him: (1) there are false sentences which correspond with reality, (2) there are valid inferences which are not truth-preserving and (3) there are contradictory sentences with the same truth-value (in other words, the traditional square of opposition does not hold).\textsuperscript{i} The first theorem was already presented in the context of Swyneshed’s solution to the Simple Liar. The second theorem is, again, an expansion on the Simple Liar: let us assume that the Simple Liar sentence is a consequent of an inference, the antecedent of which says precisely what the consequent does, i.e., that the Liar sentence is false. In that case, the antecedent would be true, since it does correspond with reality and does not falsify itself, whereas the consequent would be false. Swyneshed does not justify his opinion that such an inference would be valid, but the most probable reason is that its components are synonymous.\textsuperscript{ii} Therefore,

\textsuperscript{i} For these theorems, cf. Swyneshed, R., *Insolubilia*, op. cit., pp. 188–190.

\textsuperscript{ii} That, at least, is the argument used by John Mair in similar cases, cf. Mair, J., “Tractatus insolubilium”, in: J. Mair, *Inclytarum artium ac sacre pagine doctoris acutissimi Magistri Johannis Maioris Scoti libri quos in artibus in collegio Montis acuti Parisius regentando compilavit…*, Lyon 1508, fols. 44ra–70rb, fol. 64vb.
there can be a valid inference which is not truth-preserving. The third theorem is proved by expanding on the same paradoxical situation: let us assume that alongside the simple Liar sentence, there is a sentence which denies that the Liar sentence is false, saying precisely that “That sentence is not false”. In that case, this sentence would be contradictory to the Simple Liar sentence (assuming that negation is a contradiction-forming operator) and it would be false, since it does not correspond with reality which is a necessary condition for truth. Therefore, there can be two contradictory sentences which are simultaneously false.

2.2 Analysis of Liar paradox

The usual presentation of particular paradoxes in Swyneshed’s treatise uses the general framework of “obligationes” or of obligational disputations. Close relation between the obligational framework and Swyneshed’s analysis of semantic paradoxes is supported by the fact that his treatises concerning obligations and insolubles follow one another and the reader of the latter might have been assumed to be already acquainted

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with the former.\textsuperscript{i} Also, Swyneshed’s definition of truth uses the concept of “being pertinent to inferring” which is part of the obligational framework.\textsuperscript{ii} The obligational disputation begins by positing a (counterfactual) situation or “casus” delimited by both linguistic and extra-linguistic assumptions, which is either admitted or denied depending on its internal consistency. Afterwards, assertions related to the posited casus are proposed by one participant of the disputation to be conceded, denied, or doubted by its other participant. The disputation ends as soon as the set of reactions to proposed assertions becomes inconsistent.

To construct the so-called “Simple Liar” casus, let us assume that there is only one sentence, “Something false exists”, which signifies precisely that something false exists.\textsuperscript{iii} If we assume the correspondence theory of truth (or at least a theory of truth validating Tarskian biconditionals) and classical logic, it is possible to prove that the Liar sentence is true if and only if it is false. The proof goes as follows: if the Liar sentence is true then it is false and if it is false then it is true.\textsuperscript{iv} The first leg of the argument can be proved as follows: Let us assume that the Liar sentence

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\textsuperscript{iii} “Sit igitur haec propositio ‘Falsum est’ in scripto et nulla alia praeter illam. Et significet illa principaliter quod falsum est.” Cf. Swyneshed, R., \textit{Insolubilia}, op. cit., p. 194.

\textsuperscript{iv} Swyneshed presents this paradox in the form of a sophism, i.e., in the form of two arguments for contradictory assertions which appear to be equally legitimate (or in the specific case of semantic paradoxes, equally illegitimate). Therefore, his presentation of the paradox focuses on the two legs separately, without proving the equivalence of the truth and falsity of the Liar sentence, but the latter is the immediate consequence of the former.
is true. But it signifies precisely that something false exists. Therefore, since there is no other sentence but the Liar sentence itself, it signifies otherwise than is the case and is false. The second leg of the argument can be proved as follows: Let us assume that the Liar sentence is false. But it signifies precisely that something false exists. Therefore, it signifies precisely as is the case. Therefore, it is true.\(^i\)

Based on his (re-)definition of truth, Swyneshed proposes the following solution to the Simple Liar:

\begin{quote}
The casus should be admitted. And if “Something false exists” is proposed, it should be conceded. And it should be conceded that it is false.\(^ii\)
\end{quote}

After admitting that the Simple Liar casus is internally consistent and conceding that the Liar sentence is actually false, it is necessary to prove that its falsity does not entail its truth (in other words, to block the second leg of the above-formulated argument). Swyneshed does that as follows (substantiating by the same token that the Liar sentence in question is false):

\begin{quote}
And we deny the inference “hence, it signifies principally otherwise than is the case”. One would have to add to the antecedent that it [i.e., the sentence under scrutiny] does not falsify itself. Which is false because “Something false exists;
\end{quote}

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\(^i\) For Swyneshed’s original argument formulated in terms of obligations, cf. Swyneshed, R., *Insolubilia*, op. cit., p. 194.

and every sentence is identical with ‘Something false exists’; therefore, it is false”. Hence, it is pertinent for inferring that it is false. Furthermore: therefore, it is false.\textsuperscript{i}

In other words, the fact that the Simple Liar sentence is false does not entail its truth because correspondence with reality is not a sufficient condition for truth. Also, since Liar sentences are self-falsifying, they are false as an immediate consequence of Swyneshed’s definition of truth and falsity.\textsuperscript{ii}

3. Swyneshed’s last sophism

3.1 Presentation of the sophism

How Swyneshed’s approach towards his last sophism differs from his standard solution is clear already from the delimitation of the paradoxical casus under scrutiny, which is as follows:

A similar case occurs if it is posited that only the sentence “Something false exists” exists and that it signifies precisely that something false exists and also that every sentence signifying as is the case is true <and every sentence signifying otherwise than is the case is false>.\textsuperscript{iii}


\textsuperscript{ii}Swyneshed characterises the “second leg” in Aristotelian terms as an instance of the fallacy secundum quid et simpliciter, cf. Swyneshed, R., Insolubilia, op. cit., pp. 197–198.

\textsuperscript{iii}“Simile est si ponatur quod tantum illa propositio sit ‘Falsum est’ et quod illa praecise significet quod falsum est et quod quaelibet propositio quae significat sicut est sit vera <et
The difference from the standard delimitation of the Simple Liar paradox rests upon the additional assumption that correspondence with reality implies truth and non-correspondence with reality implies falsity, which conjointly entails that truth-values can be assigned simply based upon correspondence with reality. This additional parameter of the paradoxical casus stands in direct opposition to Swyneshed’s definition of truth, where correspondence with reality is only one factor in truth-making. The additional assumption restricts possible applications of contextual clauses which are part of the definition of truth. The paradoxical reasoning is then formulated as follows:

Thereafter, “Something false exists” is proposed. If it is conceded or doubted, one can argue against that as follows: the following inference holds: “Something false exists; and this is the only sentence which there is; therefore, it is false.” From whence it follows that “therefore, it signifies otherwise than is the case”. And furthermore: “therefore, it is not the case as it signifies; and it only signifies that something false exists; therefore, it is not the case that something false exists.” And furthermore: therefore, nothing false exists. And hence on the casus assumed it entails its contradiction. If “Something false exists” is negated, one can argue against it as follows: this sentence exists and it is not true and it signifies as is the case or otherwise that is the case; therefore, it is false. Furthermore: therefore, it is false.\(^1\)

\(^1\)“Deinde proponitur ‘Falsum est’. Si conceditur vel dubitatur, contra: Sequitur ‘Falsum est; et omnis propositio est illa; igitur, illa est falsa’. Et sequitur: ‘ergo, illa significat quaelibet quae significat aliter quam est falsa’.\(^*\)” Swyneshed, R., Insolubilia, op. cit., p. 219. The clause in angle brackets is only added in one of “Spade’s” manuscripts, namely the fifteenth-century Vatican, Vat. Lat. 2130, ff. 154vb–159va, and is also contained in both printed editions.
The use of obligational framework causes a slight deviation from the most straightforward form of the argument, which would only prove that the truth of the Liar sentence entails its falsity and vice versa. The context of obligations, on the other hand, requires that one takes also the third option into consideration, i.e., that the sentence under scrutiny can be doubted, instead of being simply conceded or denied. However, this option is only possible in the case of sentences which are “irrelevant”, i.e., logically independent of the casus (impertinens), and part of Swyneshed’s argument is that this is not the case, as is emphasised by saying that on the casus assumed the Liar sentence entails its own contradiction (ex illa cum casu sequitur suum contradictorium). The rest of the argument is fairly typical and should not require further comments.

Swyneshed proposes two solutions to this paradox which differ from each other as regards the admission or rejection of the principle of bivalence. The first solution is based upon assigning truth-value gap to the Liar sentence:

\[ \text{Solution: the casus should be admitted and “Something false exists” should be denied.} \]

Swyneshed does not pay much attention to doubtful sentences in his Obligationes but he proposes the rule that “irrelevant” sentences are not a matter of obligation and hence do not have to be conceded or rejected as a consequence of an obligation (propositio impertinens est propositio non obligata, et propter obligatum nec est concedenda nec neganda) and that obviously irrelevant sentences should be considered doubtful (propositio impertinens scita ab aliquo sibi significare dubie sine obligatione et cetera est dubitanda), cf. Spade, P. V., “Roger Swyneshed’s Obligationes: Edition and Comments”, op. cit., p. 252 and 256.
And one should admit that the sentence in question exists and that it is not true. Then it should be denied that it signifies as is the case or otherwise than is the case because it is pertinent for inferring that it does not signify as is the case. The reason is that the following inference holds: “Something false exists; and there is only one sentence, namely this one: ‘Something false exists’; therefore, it is false”. Furthermore: hence, it signifies otherwise than is the case. Furthermore: hence, it does not signify as is the case. As a consequence, it does not signify either as is the case or otherwise than is the case on the assumed casus.

The second solution has the form of a rule for obligational disputation:

*If the casus is posited that the sentence “Something false exists” exists and that there is no other sentence and that it principally signifies that something false exists and also that every sentence signifying as is the case is true <and that every sentence signifying otherwise than is the case is false> and that every sentence signifies as is the case or otherwise than is the case, then the casus should not be*

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i “Solutio: Admittendus est casus et negandum est ‘Falsum est’. Et concedendum est quod illa propositio est et quod illa non est vera. Et tunc negandum est quod ista significet sicut est vel aliter quam est eo quod illa est pertinens ad inferendum se ipsam non significare sicut est. Nam sequitur: Falsum est; et omnis propositio est illa ‘Falsum est’; ergo, illa est falsa. Et ultra: ergo, significat aliter quam est. Et ultra: ergo, illa non significat sicut est. Et per consequens illa non significat sicut est nec aliter quam est illo casu posito.” Cf. Swyneshed, R., Insolubilia, op. cit., pp. 219–220.
admitted because it implies that one and the same sentence is true and false which is impossible.\textsuperscript{i}

Swyneshed adds yet another additional characteristic of the casus under scrutiny, i.e., the principle of bivalence, and concludes that with this additional assumption the casus is rendered inconsistent and thereby to be denied. The same step could be interpreted as an alternative analysis of the original casus in terms of bivalent semantics rather than positing an entirely new casus: one which emphasises that bivalence must fail in paradoxical contexts where classical semantic values are not defined in terms of contextual valuation-clauses. In other words, the two solutions conjointly claim that the posited casus should either be evaluated in terms of non-bivalent semantics or denied as inconsistent.

3.2 Historical analysis

Two major historical issues can be addressed regarding the last sophism: how it differs terminologically from Swyneshed’s standard position and the logic of the argument and its scholastic context.

The various versions of Swyneshed’s treatise differ in their terminology of signification: the manuscripts use the term “praecise significare”, whereas the printed editions use “principaliter significare” in the

\textsuperscript{i} “Si tamen ponatur ille casus quod illa propositio sit ‘Falsum est’ et nulla alia et quod illa principaliter significet quod falsum est et quod omnis propositio significans sit verum et quod omnis propositio significans alter quem est sit falsa> et quod omnis propositio significat sicut est vel aliter quam est, tunc ille casus non est admittendus eo quod includit quod eadem propositio sit vera et falsa, quod non est possibile.” Cf. Swyneshed, R., \textit{Insolubilia}, op. cit., pp. 219–220. The clause in angle brackets is dismissed by Spade according to whom the omission is required by the sense of the argument (ibid., p. 220). However, the definition of falsity in terms of signifying otherwise than is the case seems to play an important role in the argument.
description of the *casus*. This difference is not interesting as a characteristic of the text-versions, since the former term is one which normally occurs in Spade’s edition in other sophisms. The point is that these two notions emphasise different aspects of the *casus* in question: to say that a sentence “principally” signifies that \( b \) is to point out that a sentence as a whole signifies that \( b \) or even that it primarily and explicitly signifies that \( b \) (as opposed to what it might say implicitly or what its syntactic components might signify), whereas to say that a sentence signifies “precisely” that \( b \) is to emphasise that it says that \( b \) that it does not have any implicit meaning.\(^i\) More importantly, by the occurrence of “*praecise*” in this context the passage resembles the Heytesburian tradition where it plays a crucial role, as will be shown below. Also, the notion of “*principale significatum*” used in *Libellus sophistarum ad usum oxoniensis* suggests adherence to realist semantics but that would only be the case if the nominal form of “*significare*” were actually intended as a sign of objective entity.\(^ii\)

To focus on the theoretical achievement of the first solution proposed in the last sophism: by taking such an approach to Liar sentences into consideration, Swynheud becomes one of the genuine “*mediantes*” mentioned and criticised in Bradwardine’s *Insolubilia*:


[...] the middle way, whose proponents are so called because they say that an insoluble is neither true nor false, but in the middle indifferent to both. But they are mistaken, for every sentence is true or false, so since an insoluble is a sentence, an insoluble is true or false.¹

Swyneshed’s standard solution, on the other hand, would not be covered by this passage, since it evaluates Liar sentences as false rather than having a “third” semantic value (possibly: being gappy). However, due to the expected chronology of their works, Swyneshed could not have been the object of this remark, because Bradwardine wrote his Insolubilia between 1321 and 1324, whereas Swyneshed’s treatise was composed approximately a decade later.² Still, the position described by Bradwardine must have been quite rare given that no other text adhering to this position at least as closely as Swyneshed has been uncovered so far.³


² Cf. Spade, P. V. – Read, S., “Insolubles”, op. cit., for the chronology of Bradwardine’s, Swyneshed’s and Heytesbury’s treatises concerning semantic paradoxes.

³ Cf. Dutilh Novaes, C., “A comparative taxonomy of medieval and modern approaches to liar sentences”, History and Philosophy of Logic 29, 2008, p. 239. There is a theoretical possibility that “mediantes” were only Bradwardine’s own construction for the sake of discussing alternative solutions to semantic paradoxes; his contemporary Buridan, for instance, argues against authors who assume that Liar sentences are both true and false at the same time and even introduces this position by saying that this is what “others have
The second approach could be conceived as part of the Heytesburian tradition based upon analysis of paradoxes in terms of obligations which primarily focuses on the admissibility of the paradoxical casus rather than on the semantic value of paradoxical sentences. The first step in Heytesbury’s evaluation of paradoxical sentences is then rejecting the casus which are inconsistent as a consequence of their paradoxicality:

Second, notice that if a casus of an insoluble is posited, and together with that it is assumed that the insoluble precisely signifies just as its terms commonly pretend, the casus may in no way be admitted.\(^i\)

However, it is not possible to say that Swyneshed’s second solution to the last sophism is Heytesburian in its fashion, since the exact opposite of what was stated about the relation between Bradwardine and Swyneshed holds here: Heytesbury’s *Regulae solvendi sophismata* released in 1335 was obviously written *after* Swyneshed’s treatise began circulating because Swyneshed’s theory is one of the alternative solutions to semantic paradoxes presented and rejected at the beginning of Heytesbury’s treatise.\(^ii\) From this point of view, the last sophism of Swyneshed’s treatise would be the historically first formulation of the


Heytesburian approach, which would certainly supplement the currently prevalent interpretation of Swyneshed by emphasising that he proposed the obligational solution to semantic paradoxes in classically Heytesburian form even before Heytesbury, not to mention that Heytesbury would actually have taken his own solution over from an author he criticised.

### 3.3 Systematic analysis

From the systematic point of view, the two solutions are based on truth-value gappism and what as a result is equivalent to restricting the expressive force of the language used in the *casus* in question.

Swyneshed’s delimitation of the *casus* in question does not specify the concept of correspondence with reality used in the respective argument. As a consequence, neither the concept of truth-value gap applied as part of the valuation of Liar sentences is entirely clear. Systematically speaking, there are two options: the “black-hole” concept of gap, endorsed by Saul Kripke, and the “active-value” concept of gap, endorsed by Haim Gaifman.

The Gaifmanian solution\(^\text{i}\) to semantic paradoxes is based on a contextualist, token-based approach to semantic valuation, where the semantic value of sentences is defined in terms of valuation rules sensitive to their linguistic context. For the present issue, the distinction between the so-called “gap rules” and “jump rules” is crucial. The gap

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rules “determine the cases of failure, where GAP is assigned”: they
govern the assignment of GAP to paradoxical sentences which cannot be
evaluated by means of standard rules expressible in the case of classical
semantics by means of Tarskian biconditionals. Jump rules which
“determine the assignments of standard values, which are based on
previous failures”, then, are what distinguishes active-value-gaps from
black-hole-gaps: even though paradoxical sentences cannot successfully
make (direct or indirect) assertions about their own semantic values (gaps
being equivalent to “recognised failures” of such attempts), their semantic
value can be expressed (or even the fact that they are gappy and hence do
not make successful assertions about their semantic values) by means of
another, non-self-reflexive sentence synonymous with the original
paradoxical sentence. Being an “active value” entails that the assignment
of gap can became a basis for assigning “standard” values (in the case of
bivalent semantics, truth and falsity) to semantic assertions about
paradoxical sentences. As an example, Gaifman uses the so-called “two-
line puzzle”:

line 1 The sentence on line 1 is not true.

line 2 The sentence on line 1 is not true.

The sentence on line 1 could not be evaluated in standard terms, since in
that case they would have to be both true and false, which is incompatible
with the principle of bivalence; therefore, it is assigned GAP.\footnote{The respective rule has the following form by Gaifman: “if, in the course of applying the evaluation procedure, a closed unevaluated loop forms and none of its members can be assigned a standard value by any of the rules, then all of its members are assigned GAP in a single evaluation step” (Gaifman, H., “Pointers to Truth“, op. cit., p. 230). In}
this assignment, The sentence on line 2 would be assigned the value FALSE, based upon some form of jump rules. The whole approach to semantic valuation of sentences is functionally equivalent to Swyneshed’s standard solution. In fact, if the concept of gap used in the last sophism were actually the active-value concept, the result would be a more coherent position than Swy styled’s standard approach, which (without any justification) draws a distinction between two groups of paradoxical sentences, i.e., the false ones and the gappy ones. Swyneshed’s approaches towards these two groups in his standard theory are internally coherent and even mutually consistent, but probably mutually incoherent: the difference in approach towards otherwise analogical failures of standard semantic valuation seems *ad hoc.*

The Kripkean approach reconstructed in the same terms would consist simply in denying the existence of jump rules. As a consequence, no paradoxical sentence or semantic assertion about paradoxical sentence

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Swyneshedian semantics, the equivalent to this so-called “closed loop rule” can be formulated in terms of self-falsification.

i The respective rule has the following form by Gaifman: “Assume that q points either to Tr(p) or to Fa(p), and that p, but not q, has already been assigned GAP. Then the jump rules (for Tr and for Fa) assign q the value F.” (Gaifman, H., “Pointers to Truth“, op. cit., p. 231. In Swyneshedian semantics, the equivalent to this jump rules can be formulated simply in terms of the definition of truth and the lack of self-falsification.

ii The reason for this incoherence is probably the desire to remain faithful to Aristotle’s treatment of self-referential sentences which Swynshed displays in his treatise, cf. Swyneshed, R., *Insolubilia*, op. cit., pp. 190–194. But such an attempt is hardly a valid theoretical reason for the distinction between the solutions to aletic and correspondence paradoxes.


iv To be more exact, the Kripkean approach is *effectively equivalent* to the Gaifmanian approach stripped of jump rules. From the conceptual point of view, the definition of truth in Kripke’s theory in terms of the so-called “minimal fixed points” uses different framework, but we shall refrain from discussing that here.
can be assigned other value than gap (hence: gaps are “black holes”). The problem with this solution is that making true assertions about paradoxical sentences synonymous with them is not possible, which implies serious restrictions of the expressive force of the language in question. In other words: the Kripkean approach would be able to perform a viable truth-assignment which would escape paradoxes but the outcome of this procedure would not be expressible within the same language; it admits of assigning gap to a sentence but not of successfully saying that the sentence in question is gappy.

The most serious (and most common) objection to gappist solutions to paradoxes are the so-called “revenge arguments”. In the most elementary form, where gap is assigned to the Simple Liar sentence, the revenge argument can be formulated as follows: let us assume that there is a sentence “This sentence is not true”. “Not being true” would then be equivalent to “being false or gappy”. If the sentence in question is true then it is not the case as it says to be the case, and hence it is not true. And if it is not true (for instance, if it is gappy equally as Simple Liar sentences) then it is the case as it says to be the case and hence it is true. Therefore, if introducing the third semantic value is the only change in

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i To be more exact, it is something one might designate as “assertive force” conceived as the ability of a language to successfully assert certain facts rather than the expressive force itself which is restricted, since one could still assume that Liar sentences and semantic assertions about them are well-formed or meaningful. Also, one should note that despite its sensitivity to the linguistic context of evaluated expressions, Kripkean semantics is effectively type-based, at least in the sense that sentences of the same type are assigned identical semantic values.

the language which generated the original Liar paradox, paradoxical reasoning can be reconstructed by means of this so-called “Strengthened Liar”. However, no such argument can be formulated against either the Gaifmanian or the Kripkean solution to paradoxes. The self-reflexive sentence “This sentence is not true” would, indeed, not be true on these accounts, but this fact would not make it true, since truth is defined in terms of valuation-algorithms including gap rules which ensure that every paradoxical sentence is gappy regardless of the respective state of affairs. The only difference would be that on the Gaifmanian approach one could successfully express this fact, which would not be possible on the Kripkean approach. Even if both approaches were equally effective and hence ascribing either of them to Swyneshed equally charitable, the Gaifmanian analysis would be the more probable choice for Swyneshed, since it is the one more coherent with his standard solution.¹

Unlike different versions of gappist theories and hence unlike the first approach in Swyneshed’s last sophism, Heytesburian solutions to semantic paradoxes, such as the one proposed as the second approach in Swyneshed’s last sophism, are based on regarding genuinely paradoxical situation as not acceptable due to their inconsistency. As a consequence, this approach restricts the set of admissible linguistic conditions of possible situations; since a semantic theory cannot force any restrictions on its extra-linguistic conditions, restricting language is the only option available. This step makes Heytesburian solutions to paradoxes equivalent to the early-medieval nullification-solution to semantic

¹ For instance: two tokens of the same sentence-type can be assigned different semantic values in Swyneshed’s semantics if one of them is paradoxical, cf. Swyneshed, R., Insolubilia, op. cit., p. 189.
paradoxes which is based upon denying paradoxical sentences the status of truth-bearers,¹ or with restrictionist banishment of self-reference in the case of paradoxical sentences; ii either way, the restrictions of the expressive force of language are only applied to paradoxical expressions and their ability to successfully express their own falsity, other situations including self-referential expressions being regarded as legitimate. As opposed to Spade’s criticism of Heytesbury’s position for its incompatibility with the conventional character of language, iii it would be probably more accurate to say that Heytesburian solutions leave certain semantic and grammatical questions unattained, most importantly, what particular aspect of the assertion-act actually fails in the attempt of Liar sentences to assert their own falsity. One could, for instance, ask whether Liar sentences are entirely meaningless, and hence neither true nor false, or whether the range of significance of their predicates is restricted, which could make them either true or false. iv Leaving these questions open renders the solution ultimately incomplete from the general-semantic point of view, legitimate as it may be in the relatively narrow context of obligations-theory.


4. Conclusions

Swyneshed’s last sophism presents two different solutions to the Simple Liar paradox; one is based on truth-value gappism, the other on denying the (obligational) admissibility of paradoxical situations. Its content raises the question of authenticity for several reasons. First, some editions of Swyneshed’s *Insolubilia* do not include it, but there is still a majority of text-versions which do; hence this objection taken separately is not very serious. Second, there are minor terminological variations as compared to the rest of the treatise, but not any fundamental ones; therefore this objection is not very serious either. Third, the first attempt to solve the sophism endorses an alternative approach to truth-assignment; even though it would make the whole treatise more coherent (at least on one interpretation), this step seems hard to explain. Fourth, the second attempt to solve the sophism suggests that genuinely paradoxical situations should be denied, which implies a fundamentally different approach towards semantic paradoxes. Finally, the preceding two arguments conjointly entail another argument against the authenticity of the last sophism: nowhere else in his treatise is Swyneshed so open to theoretical pluralism that he would present two incompatible theoretical alternatives as equally admissible. Even though the last sophism occurs in the majority of manuscripts used for Spade’s working edition and of currently known early-print editions of Swyneshed’s *Insolubilia*, its occurrence is surprising. On the other hand, accepting it as a genuine Swyneshed’s passage results in an even more interesting picture of the author who is even without it an exceptional medieval scholastic logician.
To sum up, if what was called “the last sophism of Roger Swyneshed” is an authentic Swyneshed’s work, he can be interpreted as an author who, despite his adherence to one particular version of contextualist approach to truth, also took alternative solutions into serious consideration. Namely, he formulated a consistently gappist approach to semantic paradoxes; as a result, the whole of Swyneshed’s propositional semantics could only be using one pair of semantic predicates, as opposed to his standard position which introduces two pairs of semantic predicates which denote truth and correspondence with reality, for which different rules hold. This step would not only secure the coherence of Swyneshed’s approach to different paradoxes (and thus conform to “the principle of uniform solution” proposed by Graham Priest: same kind of paradox, same kind of solution) but also simplify the set of contextually sensitive evaluation algorithms and increase practical applicability of the theory in question. Furthermore, to put the point in a bit paradoxical way, not Heytesbury but Swyneshed would be the originator of the Heytesburian tradition. But even if the last sophism is actually inauthentic, it does contain the theories just mentioned, i.e., a consistently gappist treatment of semantic paradoxes and a Heytesburian solution. The only question would then be, who to ascribe this position (and its insertion to the corpus of Swyneshed’s texts) to. Assuming that it would be possible to prove that it originated before 1335, the need for rethinking the history of the Heytesburian tradition would last. One way or another, the existence of the last sophism occurring in Swyneshed’s Insolubilia sheds interesting light on the whole treatise and should stimulate further research.

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Appendix 1 *Libellus sophistarum ad usum Oxoniensis*

Simile est si ponatur quod tantum ista propositio sit “*Falsum est*” et quod ista principaliter significat quod falsum est. Et quaelibet propositio quae significat sicut sit vera et quaelibet significans aliter quam est sit falsa. Deinde proponatur “*Falsum est*”. Si concedatur vel dubitetur, contra: falsum est; et omnis propositio est ista “*Falsum est*”; ergo ista est falsa. Tunc sic: ista est falsa, ergo significat aliter quam est. Et ultra: ergo, non est ita sicut illa significat principaliter; et solum significat quod falsum est; ergo non est ita quod falsum est. Et ultra: ergo, nullum falsum est. Et sic ex ista cum casu sequitur suum oppositum. Si negetur quod falsum est, contra: ista propositio est; et non est vera et significat sicut est vel aliter quam est; ergo est falsa. Et ultra: ergo, falsum est.

Responsio: admittatur casus et negetur quod falsum est. Et tamen concedatur quod ista propositio est et illa non est vera. Et negetur quod illa significat sicut est vel aliter quam est eo quod est pertinens ad inferendum seipsam non significare sicut est. Nam sequitur: falsum est; et omnis propositio est ista; ergo ista est falsa. Et ultra: ergo, significat aliter quam est. Et ultra: ergo, illa non significat sicut est. Et per consequens ista nec significat sicut est nec aliter quam est. Sed si ponatur ille casus quod illa propositio sit “*Falsum est*” et nulla alia et quod principaliter significat quod falsum est et quod omnis propositio significat sicut est vel aliter quam est et quod omnis propositio significans sicut est sit vera et omnis propositio significans aliter quam est sit falsa, tunc iste casus non est admittendus eo quod includit contradictionem. Et similiter eadem
propositio est vera et falsa propter illud principale significatum, quod non est possibile.\textsuperscript{i} Vel melior negatur casus prior, quia partes repugnant, si bene inspicientur.

Appendix 2 Theodoric Rood’s 1483 Logica

Sextum sophisma prope simile. Si ponatur quod tantum ista propositio sit “Falsum est” (sic principaliter significans) et quod quaelibet propositio quae significat sicut est est vera et quaelibet significans aliter quam est est falsa. Admisso casu proponitur quod falsum est. Si concedatur vel dubitetur, tunc sic: falsum est; et omnis propositio est ista propositio; ergo ista est falsa. Et ultra: sequitur istam significare aliter quam est. Et ultra: ergo, non est ita sicut ista significat; et ista solum significat quod falsum est; ergo non est ita quod falsum non est. Et ultra: ergo, nullum falsum est. Et sic ex isto casu sequitur suum contradictorium. Si negatur quod falsum est, contra: ista propositio est; et non est vera et significat sicut est vel aliter quam est; ergo est falsa. Et ultra: ergo, falsum\textsuperscript{ii} est.

Solutio: admittatur casus et negatur quod falsum est. Et tamen conceditur quod ista propositio est, videlicet “Falsum est”. Et eciam quod ista non est vera. Et negatur quod ista significat sicut est vel aliter quam est (est

\textsuperscript{i} Anonymous, *Libellus sophistarum ad vsum Cantabrigiensis*. London 1510 (STC 15576), has “impossibile”, which is not compatible with what the argument aims at.

\textsuperscript{ii} Anonymous, *Logica “[Q]uoniam ex terminis”*, op. cit., has “falsam”, which is a typographical error.
enim pertinens medium ad inferendum seipsam non significare sicut est). Sequitur enim: falsum est; et ista propositio est omnis propositio; ergo ista est falsa. Et ultra: ergo, significat aliter quam est. Et ultra: ergo, non significat sicut est; et per consequens non significat sicut est nec aliter quam est. Si autem ponatur casus sic quod ista propositio “Falsum est” sit omnis propositio et quod ista principaliter significat quod falsum est et omnis propositio significans sicut est est vera et omnis propositio significans aliter quam est est falsa et quod omnis propositio significet sicut est vel aliter quam est, tunc non est admitsendus. Includit enim eandem propositionem esse veram et falsam, quod est impossibile.
This paper is primarily aimed as a setting up of the controversial yet in some authoritative secondary literature established interpretation of Maimonidean theory of predication and problem tied to it.\textsuperscript{1} In footnotes there are most important paginations for the given premises and should be treated as integral part of the argumentation, which for the sake of readability are sometimes not included inside the text itself. On the other side for the reason of relative strangeness of Maimonidean corpus especially among the researcher on the field of Greek and Latin tradition I will use more extensive essentials quotations from Maimonides straight in the text and Maimonides himself is often very clear.

Divine language and predication to God is topic so frequent in medieval philosophy that we cannot overstate its importance. It is obvious then that most important Jewish thinker of medieval period had a lot to say about it and almost as always his solution and view could be described as entirely original, at least in Jewish philosophical environment. In this paper we will try to sketch very rifly but also thoroughly source-wise basis of his conception and also very deep philosophical problems connected of his views. We will just uncover

\textsuperscript{1} See for example Rudavsky, \textit{Maimonides}, Willey-Blackwell, 2011, p. 36- 50.
these problems and leave them open for “readers” as was the custom and aim of Maimonides himself. Most interesting and important on this topic is that in this basis research we will not only shed light on the Maimonidean conception of predication and language, but through that we will see clearly his highly distinct view of highest deity as Aristotelian “God of philosophers” much more that biblical “God of Abraham”.

Maimonides tried to provide detailed and accurate image of God according to his understanding in many chapters of his work. I will look especially into the one particular point that was found radical and echoed not only in Jewish philosophical tradition. The topic could be summarized as “how do we talk about god?” To clarify my starting position in the very beginning my reading of mentioned passages and understanding of the whole problem could be basically described as a middle position between famous Pines interpretations and those of Kellner or Manekin especially in the case of affirmative predication. I will dodge Maimonides more intricate proofs of existence i.e. question if

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ii Argument for the existence of God itself is one of the hotspots of Maimonidean interpretation. For our purpose is not necessary to solve this problem. Generally it is shown on this topic the difference between Aristotelian and Jewish Cosmogony and it is also central topic for the alleged Maimonides esoteric writing. For the problem of existence argument see for example: Tamas Visi: *The Existence of God: Maimonides’ Intricate Argument*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008
the god is, which are “only” variations on the cosmological argument as always.

I will focus on the problem of predication to God, in broader picture it means if could we know what god is and how do we talk about him. Although any interpretation of Maimonides work always opens evergreen question about understanding of Maimonides’ work as a whole. i.e. his use of noble lie, exoteric vs esoteric writing and his “true” opinions displayed or hidden in Guide of the Perplexed, although problem of esoteric and exoteric writing was long time debated basically since the 14th century. Throughout the centuries it was certainly central topic for many Maimonidean scholar – What is the „real“ meaning of Maimonides philosophical writing, this problem was brought to wider attention by Leo Strauss in 1952 in his books Persecution and the Art of Writing. There he argues that Maimonides same as other famous authors (Plato, Spinoza) used esoterical way of writing in order to conceal opinions (no matter if strictly speaking his) that could be by the public and authorities perceived as dangerous and noxious and could bring punishment on the head of the author.

In this respect esoteric means – as in original sense of meaning something for „inner circle“, something hidden. And exoteric writing for „outer circle“ aimed for the general public. This conception of course

1 More precisely how do we attribute to God any predicates at all and is it possible to use natural language in respect to Gods essence and even attributes?


work best with Plato’s dialogues, but for Maimonidean philosophy is by some taken as either refuted or problematic. These fortunately are not essential troubles for our talk because problems mentioned below are stated by Maimonides quite explicitly in his work and are mainly concentrated in the first part of his Guide of the Perplexed whereas problems with esoteric writing and doctrines are mostly connected to the later parts dealing with existence of god and eternality of the cosmos.\textsuperscript{i} Concerning the existence of God Maimonides thinks (at least in traditional interpretation) that cosmological argument he uses in \textit{Mishne Torah}\textsuperscript{ii} and \textit{Guide of the Peplexed} gives us sufficient proof for saying that God is, but not What God is. To see why not, we have to recognize that God's oneness or anything else is not in any way comparable to anything else: one person, one number, one idea. In \textit{Guide of the Perplexed} 1.51 he says:

\begin{quote}
There is no oneness at all except in believing that there is one simple essence in which there is no complexity or multiplicity of notions, but one notion only.\textsuperscript{iii}
\end{quote}

According to Maimonides there can be no plurality of faculties, moral


\textsuperscript{ii} Sefer Yad HaHazaka is Maimonde’s main rabbinical writing and it is obviously aimed at the public we can and will use it for the cross-referencing of the problem of equivocality. Important fact is that in the Mishne Torah we cannot presupposed some kind of esoterical or hidden writing and therefore it is not important to search for some deeper level of understanding.

\textsuperscript{iii} \textit{Guide of the Perplexed} 1.51, p 59.
dispositions, or essential attributes in God. Even to say that God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good is to introduce plurality. The same is true if we say that God is a composite of matter and form, genus or essence and accident. To quote Seeskin: “All introduce plurality where none can be tolerated.”

Maimonides then argues that we cannot attribute to God any predicates that imply any anthropomorphic or corporeal features to him at all. We shall see that according to Maimonides very little if anything at all can be said about God. Maimonides persistently argues that god is not a body and incorporeality truly is the main feature of his conception of God. It is important to understand that in Islamic and Jewish environment which surrounded Maimonides was acceptance of god corporeality deeply rooted and that is probably the reason why he devoted so much effort to the fight against it.

Throughout his works it is emphasizes that incorporeality and unity of Deity must be taught to all. Already in his rabbinical writings Maimonides claims that phrases about corporeal nature of deity in Scripture like “beneath his feet” in the the eyes of god” God wrath etc. are “ adapted to the mental capacity of the majority of mankind who have clear perception of physical bodies. Torah simply uses language appropriate to the individuals and they must be understood metaphorically (concept very well known to us but not so to 12th century reader). And in the first place incorporeality in Maimonides understanding means that we cannot attribute any accidents of matter to god and therefore he does not exist in time nor he does change or have

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ii HYT 1. 34b.
any emotions.¹

In Guide of the Perplexed he again maintains that following characteristics must be taught to everyone without exception: that god is one, there is none like god, god is not a body and god has no likenesses in his creation in any way. Because corporeality of god was as I mentioned deeply engraved in Jewish tradition and that why Maimonides devotes basically whole first part of the first book of Guide of the Perplexed to the construction of the new image of incorporeal god in scripture through metaphorical reading God's incorporeality and otherness must be in the first place reflected in the language.

In famous 1.51.- 60 he elaborated his theory of predicting which could be perceived as a radical even from the viewpoint of his Arabic predecessors. Our interest lies primarily in the chapter 56.² Let us look at the core of the texts which is usually seen as a key to understanding of Maimonides conception of predication:

You must know that two things of the same kind--i.e., whose essential properties are the same, and which are distinguished from each other by greatness and smallness, strength and weakness, etc.--are necessarily similar, though different in this one way; e.g., a grain of mustard and the sphere of the fixed stars are similar as regards the three dimensions, although the one is exceedingly great, the other exceedingly small, the property of having [three] dimensions is the same in both: or the heat of wax melted by the sun and the heat of the element of fire, are similar as

¹ Guide of the Perplexed 1.11, Friedländer translation.
² Chapters 56 and 57 are mostly dealing with their likenesses of God, which are according to Maimonides „absolutely Other“ than ours.
regards heat: although the heat is exceedingly great in the one case, and exceedingly small in the other, the existence of that quality (heat) is the same in both. Thus those who believe in the presence of essential attributes in God, viz., Existence, Life, Power, Wisdom, and Will, should know that these attributes, when applied to God, have not the same meaning as when applied to us, and that the difference does not only consist in magnitude, or in the degree of perfection, stability, and durability. It cannot be said, as they practically believe, that His existence is only more stable, His life more permanent, His power greater, His wisdom more perfect, and His will more general than ours, and that the same definition applies to both.¹

It’s hard or impossible to talk about god. Firstly because his incorporeality and also because applying any attributes to god's essence would mean intrusion into god oneness or rather otherness. He goes even further: even to ascribe God the accident of oneness is “just as absurd as to ascribe him the accident of multiplicity.”² In other words: of the various types of affirmative attributes only homonyms are somehow representing God according to Maimonides. In Guide he states on this topic:

Those who are familiar with the meaning of similarity will certainly understand that the term existence, when applied to God and to other beings, is perfectly homonymous. In like manner, the terms Wisdom, Power, Will, and Life are applied to God and to other beings by way of

¹ Guide of the Perplexed 1.56, p. 79
² Guide of the Perplexed 1.57
perfect homonymity, admitting

We predicate essential proposition like the four basic attributes of god: life power wisdom and will, but even these, when use in respect to god, are used just in equivocal (homonymous) sense. In his Treatise on the Art of Logic based on Aristotle's Topics he distinguished three types of terms:

Univocal, amphibolous and equivocal or homonymous, where univocal term means:

A term is used univocally when there is something which constitutes the essence of two or more things, and that term refers to each one of these things that share in that constitutive essence; e. g., the term 'animal', which is applied to man, horse, scorpion, and fish, because life which is nourishability is found in each one of these species and constitutes its essence. Thus, the name of any genus is applied to its component species univocally, and every specific difference is applied to all the individuals of the species univocally.

Then Maimonides describes amphibolous as follows:

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i Guide of the Perplexed 1.56, p. 79.  
ii Although it is disputed if authorship of this work could be ascribed to Maimonides. For example Davidson, Moses Maimonides (2005), p. 313-318 takes this short treatise a misattributed. He argues that because of stylistics and also simple fact that there are at least two manuscripts where there is nowhere to be found name of Maimonides, we should suppose that he is not the author. On the other side mostly translator as Joseph Ibn Vives, R. Brague (1996) takes these to be work of Maimonides.  
iii See Treatise on the Art of Logic, p. 59.
But the amphibolous term is a term applied to two or more objects because of something which they have in common but which does not constitute the essence of each one of them. An example of this is the name 'man' given to Reuben, the rational animal, to a certain man who is dead, and to an image of man carved in wood or painted. This name is applied to them because of their having one thing in common, to wit, the figure and outline of a man; but the figure and outline do not constitute the meaning of man. Hence it resembles a univocal term in so far as it is applied to these objects because they have something in common, and it also resembles the absolute homonym because the essence of one is different from that of the other. It is therefore called amphibolous.\(^i\)

Maimonides then argues that predicates attributed to god can't be neither univocal or amphibolous, because, as we emphasized earlier, there is NO common ground between god and human (or even his creations) This is the reason why predicated terms of God we are using must, be understood only in the equivocal sense. All the predicates then, including even the term power, life, will and knowledge, have “nothing common in any respect or in any mode; these attributions have in common only the name and nothing else.”\(^{ii}\) For Maimonides are most important so called absolute homonym:

The absolute homony is one applied to two things, between which there is

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\(^i\) See Treatise on the Art of Logic, p. 60.
\(^{ii}\) Guide of the Perplexed 1.56 131.
nothing in common to account for their common name, like the name 'ain signifying an eye and a spring of water, and like the name keleb (dog) applied to the star and to the animal.\(^1\)

Maimonides then stresses in 1.59 that only absolute homonymous prediction captures the fact that God has no essential or accidental characteristic in common with his creation. God is absolutely other in all respects.

*You must bear in mind, that by affirming anything of God, you are removed from Him in two respects; first, whatever you affirm, is only a perfection in relation to us; secondly, He does not possess anything superadded to this essence; His essence includes all His perfections, as we have shown. Since it is a well-known fact that even that knowledge of God which is accessible to man cannot be attained except by negations, and that negations do not convey a true idea of the being to which they refer, all people, both of past and present generations, declared that God cannot be the object of human comprehension, that none but Himself comprehends what He is, and that our knowledge consists in knowing that we are unable truly to comprehend Him.\(^2\)*

All we say about him has only imaginative similarity through name. No attributes can be then truly ascribed to god and nothing could be really said about god. If this is true it is at least very interesting position among

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\(^1\) *Treatise on the Art of Logic*, p. 59.

\(^2\) *Guide of the Perplexed* 1.59, p. 85.
the Jewish Thinkers.

But then how do we talk about god at all? We are left with entity that can't be known or described properly in human language. By using our language and ascribing God terms that cannot touch his transcendent nature, we are actually “insulting” the God's true essence. For Maimonides are possibilities how to say anything about god or to approach him through language very narrow indeed. Only way is negation of the privation based again on Aristotle's logic. For example: applying temporality of non-temporality would be again categorical error and then only way how to emphasize the unique nature of god is to say “God is not-un-temporal”. Therefore we have to use “negation of privation of the attribute in question.”i (1.58.136). Even if we take in account problematic character of authorship of Tretise on the Art of Logic, this passage still usually serves as a very strong evidence for Maimonides equivocal conception of God.

Maimonides is strict about ascribing positive attributes to god, for such an action actually recess us from god's true nature and although negation of privation could be the way how to use our language in respect to god, ultimately silence is only proper response to divine prediction. In 1.59.Maimonides concludes this part with famous quotation:

Much more has been said on this topic, but it is useless to repeat it here. The idea is best expressed in the book of Psalms, "Silence is praise to Thee" (lxv. 2). It is a very expressive remark on this subject; for whatever we utter with the intention of extolling and of praising Him, contains something that cannot be applied to God, and includes

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1 Guide of the Perplexed 1.58, p 83.
derogatory expressions; it is therefore more becoming to be silent, and to be content with intellectual reflection, as has been recommended by men of the highest culture, in the words "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" (Ps. iv. 4).¹

Although some scholars tried to soften the edges and save Maimonides for the traditions Judaism, explicit nature of Maimonides linguistic analysis and approach to god's otherness cannot be dismissed or marginalized. We are left with very philosophical image of almost completely transcendent entity that could be praised just by silence and awe over so called action attributes.

In my opinion this radical linguistic theory of Maimonides could be taken as one of the absolutely key elements to understanding Maimonides corpus as a whole. But, as we can tell from his letters, Maimonides was always political and social realist and he later in Guide of the Perplexed acknowledges that system of religion based only on silence could not be successful and therefore we could (and must pray) as long as we understand that such prayers leaves god un-described and unknowable.

Could we not understand series of these statements as a noble lie by the philosopher king? Who on the one site knows the truth i.e. the

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¹ Guide of the Perplexed 1.59, p. 86.
² Manekin, Seeskin, Altman – Are using switch in interpretation in order to save “Maimonidean God” from the trap of absolute unknowability and impossibility of payer and therefore effective crush of revealed religion. They are then arguing that Maimonides had in mind inexplicability rather the unknowability. In this interpretation we can attribute predicates of God and they even have some likenesses in the sense of quality but are absolutely other in the sense of quantity.
³ Guide of the Perplexed 3.32
⁴ It is stated explicitly in Misne Torah 2.2 and On the Prayers 1.1.
absolute otherness of God, but on the other understand the social
dangerousness of such idea in Medieval context and therefore wisely
decided that ritual, tradition and language based religion is necessity, at
least for non philosophers.\textsuperscript{i}

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