

PEITHO

— EXAMINA ANTIQUA —

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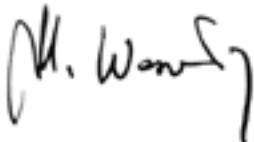
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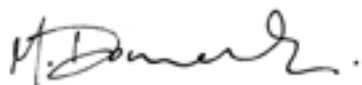
Commentarius PEITHO / Examina Antiqua in Instituto Philosophiae Universitatis Studiorum Mickiewiczianae Posnaniensis conditus id spectat, ut in notissimis toto orbe linguis, lingua quoque Latina et nostra lingua Polona minime exclusa, antiquorum philosophorum opera atque cogitationes nec non earum apud posteros memoria longe lateque propagentur. Non exstitit adhuc in Polonia commentarius, quem docta societas internationalis legeret; at nostra magnopere interest gravissimas philosophiae antiquae quaestiones, cultui atque humanitati totius Europae fundamentales, communiter considerari, solvi divulgarique posse. Namque philosophia, Graecorum et Romanorum maximi momenti hereditas, hodie novis scientiarum rationibus et viis adhibitibus ab integro est nobis omni ex parte meditanda et disputanda.

Itaque characterem internationali commentarius hic variarum terrarum et gentium hominibus doctis permittet, ut credimus, cogitationes, investigationes, laborum effectus magno cum fructu commutare et instrumentum doctorum fiet utilissimum ad se invicem persuadendum, ut antiquus id suggerit titulus (Latine Suada), quem scripto nostro dedimus. Sed commentarius hic late patefactus est quoque omnibus rebus, quae philosophiae sunt propinquae et affines, quae ad temporum antiquorum atque Byzantinorum culturam lato sensu pertinent, quae eiusdem denique philosophiae fortunam aetate renascentium litterarum tractant. In nostra PEITHO praeter commentationes scientificas doctae disputationes quoque et controversiae atque novorum librorum censurae locum suum invenient. Itaque omnes, qui philosophiae favent, toto exhortamur animo et invitamus, ut nostri propositi participes esse dignentur.

MARIAN WESOŁY



MIKOŁAJ DOMARADZKI



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ARTYKUŁY

Parmenides' Structure of the Earth*

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GUIDO CALENDIA / *Università di Roma Tre* /

Introduction

Parmenides' cosmological doctrine seems almost incomprehensible, due to the overlapping of two incompatible descriptions: on the one hand, a certain number of celestial bodies and, on the other, a sky made of alternating igneous and solid spherical crowns. The celestial bodies are mentioned in Parmenides' fragments 10, 11, 14 and 15, and in some short doxographic passages; the crowns in Aëtius 2.7.1 and, apparently, also in Parmenides' fragment 12.

These cosmological elements are part of Parmenides' scientific doctrines, described by Plutarch as follows:

ὅς γε καὶ διάκοσμον πεποιήται, καὶ στοιχεῖα μινύς τὸ λαμπρὸν καὶ σκοτεινὸν ἐκ τούτων τὰ φαινόμενα πάντα καὶ διὰ τούτων ἀποτελεῖ. καὶ γὰρ περὶ γῆς εἴρεκε πολλὰ καὶ περὶ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἡλίου καὶ σελήνης καὶ ἄστρον, καὶ γένεσιν ἀνθρώπων ἀφήγηται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἄρρητον,

* This paper is an updated English translation of the central chapter of my book *Un universo aperto* (Calenda 2017).

ὥς ἀνήρ ἀρχαῖος ἐν φυσιολογίᾳ καὶ συνθεῖς γραφὴν ἰδίαν, οὐκ ἄλλοτριάν διαφορῶν, τῶν κυρίων παρήκεν. (*Adv.Col.*, 13, 1114b)

Unfortunately, of this broad work only a few fragments remain, a total of only 44 verses on the composition of the earth, on cosmology, on man and genetics.

The description of Parmenides' scientific doctrines is introduced by an ontological section, which has an essentially epistemological scope,¹ and is connected to questions also raised by Xenophanes and, above all, by Heraclitus.² The interest of modern scholars is almost exclusively focused on this ontological premise, so that several scholars have even argued that in the second part of his poem Parmenides did not plan to expose his own opinions, but only wanted to exemplify the false opinions of others.³

The scarcity of the remaining fragments, and the confused nature of the main evidence, conceivably contributed to the relative lack of interest in Parmenides' scientific doctrines. However, a certain return of interest in these aspects of Parmenidean thought has been recently observed, as shown by several contributions to the International Symposium *Parmenides Venerable and Awesome* held in Buenos Aires in 2007 (Cordero 2011),⁴ and by some sweeping studies on the argument published by Rossetti.⁵

That the earth is spherical, that also the moon is spherical and shines with reflected light, and that Hesperus and Phosphorus are the same celestial body are solid astronomical doctrines, which Parmenides certainly shared and was perhaps the first to formulate. This gives an idea of his exceptional abilities as an empirical observer, that make us regret the almost total loss of his cosmological doctrines; hence the need to make the most of the limited information available, to overcome the difficulties of traditional interpretations.

¹ See Calenda (2020).

² See Calenda (2011: 299); Calenda (2020).

³ Zeller (18925: 582): "Parmenides selbst erklärt zu bestimmt, dass er nur das Eine unveränderliche Wesen als ein Wirkliches anerkenne, der Vorstellung dagegen, welche uns Vielheit und Veränderung zeigt, nicht die mindeste Wahrheit einräume, dass er daher in dem zweiten Theil seines Gedichts nicht seine eigene Ueberzeugung, sondern fremde Meinungen vortragen wolle." Long (1963: 98): "The cosmogony is thus seen to be, *exempli gratia*, an excursus within the false premises which vitiate all such accounts [...] it demonstrates that the appearances thought by ordinary men to fill reality are totally false"; Mourelatos (1970: 260): "Why did Parmenides bother [...] to append an exposition of »mortal opinions« that was actually longer than the first part? He did it as a case-study in self-deception, indecisiveness, and confusion"; Barnes (1979: 157): "the Way of Opinion does not express Parmenides' own convictions"; Gallop (1984: 23): the goddess "attributes to mortals a theory about the physical world, from which she not only stands aloof, but which she expressly declare to be mendacious"; Cordero (2004: 158): "in the part of his Poem called »Dóxa,« Parmenides works out a fictitious philosophical system, a true summing up both of »what is said« and of the previous philosophical schools." But more recently Cordero (2011b: 107) admitted that "in fragments 10–11 and 13–18, we face theories that Parmenides considers not only »true,« but also worthy »to be known« [...]. The Goddess speaks in her own name" (see also Cordero 2011c).

⁴ On this topics see Casertano (2011), Cerri (2011) and Mourelatos (2011).

⁵ Rossetti (2016), (2017). See also Rossetti (2023).

1. Spherical crowns

In fragment 10 the goddess undertakes to teach her disciple the nature and origin of some celestial entities, namely the ether and everything we see in it: the sun, the moon, the stars. In fragment 11, which implies the same premise, “you will know”, of fragment 10,⁶ the goddess says that she will explain how some of the previously mentioned entities were forced to be born, namely the sun, the moon and the ether, she adds the milky way, the extreme Olympus and, above all, begins with the earth (γαῖα).

These fragments introduce a broad set of subjects, including together with a cosmology, also a cosmogony. Parmenides treated this matter in some detail, without neglecting anything important, as Plutarch suggests (καὶ οὐδὲν ἄρρητον ... τῶν κυρίων παρήκεν), but very little has reached us.

Apart from fragments 14 and 15 on the moon, the only other text of Parmenides which seems to refer to what fragments 10 and 11 pledged to teach is fragment 12:

αἱ γὰρ στενιότεραι πλῆνται⁷ πυρὸς⁸ ἀκρήτιοι,
αἱ δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς νυκτός,⁹ μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἴεται αἴσα·
ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων δαίμων ἢ πάντα κυβερνᾷ·
πάντων¹⁰ γὰρ συγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιος ἄρχει
πέμπουσ' ἄρσενι θῆλυ μιγῆν τό τ' ἐναντίον αὐτίς
ἄρσεν θηλυτέρῳι. (Simp. *in Phys.* 34.14)

This text lists some tighter objects full of pure (not mixed) fire and, over them, several other objects full of night, adding that among the last ones goes a portion of fire. What those objects are the fragment does not say; but we can gather information from two other sources (both included in DK 28 A 37). One is Cicero's *De natura deorum* (N.D. 1.11.28):

Nam Parmenides quidem commenticium quiddam: coronae simile efficit (στεφάνην appellat), continentem ardorem (et) lucis orbem qui cingit coelum, quem appellat deum; in quo neque figuram divinam neque sensum quisquam suspicari potest. Multaque eiusdem monstra, quippe qui bellum qui discordiam qui cupiditatem ceteraque generis eiusdem ad deum revocet,

⁶ Conche (1996: 211): “ce fragment est, comme le précédent, sous le signe de la promesse.”

⁷ Diels and Kranz (1951: 183, n. 2): πλῆντο; Fränkel (1955: 183): “We must write πλῆνται because of the faulty metre...” (english transl. by D. Harvey, M. Frede). So also Tarán (1965), and Mansfeld, Primavesi (2011).

⁸ Verse 8.56-57: φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ, / ἦπιον ὄν, μέγ' ἔλαφρόν.

⁹ Verse 8.59: νύκτ' ἀδαῆ, πυκινὸν δέμας ἐμβριθές τε.

¹⁰ πάντα DEF, πάντων W; Diels, Kranz (1951): πάντα γὰρ <ῆ>; Coxon (1986: 242): “Mullach's correction (πάντη) of the manuscript reading πάντα is more attractive than Karsten's insertion of ῆ, which was adopted by Diels, but the text remains uncertain”; Conche (1996: 224): “πάντων, que donne le manuscrit W (Musée historique d'État de Moscou, n 3649, xiiiie s.) – manuscrit que Diels ne connessait pas –, doit être retenu (ainsi font Mansfeld, Kirk-Rav.-Sch., Gallop)”; πάντων: Mansfeld and Primavesi (2011), and Laks and Most (2016).

quae vel morbo vel somno vel oblivione vel vetustate delentur; eademque de sideribus, quae reprehensa in alio iam in hoc omittantur.

After suggesting that Parmenides is contriving something fictitious, similar to a fiery crown (στεφάνην), which surrounds the heavens, and which he calls god, Cicero harshly criticizes such a ludicrous image of divinity.

Greater influence has the other source,¹¹ Aëtius 2.7.1, which, as we shall see, shows several affinities with fragment 12:¹²

Παρμενίδης στεφάνας εἶναι περιπεπλεγμένας, ἐπαλλήλους, τὴν μὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἀραιοῦ, τὴν δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πυκνοῦ· μικτὰς δὲ ἄλλας ἐκ φωτὸς καὶ σκοτὸς μεταξὺ τούτων. καὶ τὸ περιέχον δὲ πάσας τεύχους δίκην στερεὸν ὑπάρχειν, ὑφ' ᾧ πυρώδης στεφάνη, καὶ τὸ μεσαιτάτον πασῶν¹³ περὶ ὃ πάλιν πυρώδης [sc. στεφάνη]. τῶν δὲ συμμιγῶν τὴν μεσαιτάτην ἀπάσαις¹⁴ (ἀρχήν) τε καὶ (αἰτίαν) κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως ὑπάρχειν, ἦντινα καὶ δαίμονα κυβερνήτην καὶ κληιδουῶχον¹⁵ ἐπονομάζει Δίκην τε καὶ Ἀνάγκην. καὶ τῆς μὲν γῆς ἀπόκρισιν εἶναι τὸν ἀέρα διὰ τὴν βιαιοτέραν αὐτῆς ἐξατμισθέντα πύλησιν, τοῦ δὲ πυρὸς ἀναπνοὴν τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὸν γαλαξίαν κύκλον. συμμιγῆ δ' ἐξ ἄμφοιν εἶναι τὴν σελήνην, τοῦ τ' ἀέρος καὶ τοῦ πυρὸς. περιστάντος δ' ἀνωτάτω πάντων τοῦ αἰθέρος ὑπ' αὐτῶι τὸ πυρῶδες ὑποταγῆναι τοῦθ' ὅπερ κεκλήκαμεν οὐρανόν, ὑφ' ᾧ ἤδη τὰ περιγεία.¹⁶

It is commonly acknowledged that this entry by Aëtius is very confusing.¹⁷ Therefore modern criticism, which made many attempts to understand the cosmology described by Aëtius, failed to reach a shared interpretation. The interpretative attempts start from

¹¹ But Gigon (1945: 279): “ungemein wichtige Ciceronstelle 28 A 37.” Also Coxon (1986: 236): “Cicero’s version of the tradition may be more reliable than the fuller version of Aëtius.”

¹² Pseudo-Galen. *hist. phil.* 50 = *Dox.* 622, draws almost verbatim from the *Epitome* of Pseudo-Plutarch: “Παρμενίδης στεφάνους εἶναι πεπλεγμένους πρὸς ἀλλήλους τὸν μὲν / ἐκ τοῦ ἀραιοῦ, τὸν δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πυκνοῦ, καὶ τὸ περιέχον δὲ τὸ πᾶν στοιχείον / δίκην στεφάνου στερεοῦ εἶναι” and he adds: “πρῶτον πῦρ, εἶτα αἰθέρα, μεθ' ὃν ἀέρα μεθ' ὃν / ὕδωρ”. Torraca (1961: 10) on Pseudo-Galen: “[*Epitome pseudo-plutarchea*] dal capitolo 25 alla fine è fonte unica, fedelmente, ma non sempre intelligentemente seguita.”

¹³ Diels (1879: 335) notes: “πασῶν scil. στερεὸν ὑπάρχειν”; Diels and Kranz insert στερεόν in 28 A 37.

¹⁴ <ἀρχήν> τε καὶ <αἰτίαν> Diels and Kranz; τε καὶ A; τοκέα πάσης Diels 1879; αἰτίαν πάσης Hense and Wachsmuth 1884 (TLG Stobaeus I.22.8).

¹⁵ κληιδουῶχον Fülleborn; κληροῦχον A. (Diels and Kranz I 224).

¹⁶ The text belongs to Stobaeus *Ecl.* 1.22; in Pseudo-Plutarch *Epit.* 2.7 only the initial part, down to ὑπάρχειν.

¹⁷ See Gigon (1945: 283): “Es ist ganz unmöglich, daß es eine Deutung der Überlieferung geben könnte, die allen Berichten gerecht würde”; Morrison (1955: 60): “Aëtius [...] is probably reproducing Theophrastus, and, it will appear, condensing him often to the point of obscurity”; Guthrie (1965: 61): “The only information about cosmology comes from a condensed and disordered paraphrase of Aëtius”; Reale (Zeller and Mondolfo 1967: 264, n. 45): “La testimonianza A 37, che dovrebbe essere un chiarimento del fr. 12 è, in verità, assai oscura, e più ancora l’hanno oscurata i vari tentativi fatti dai moderni per spiegarla”; Kirk *et al.* (1983: 259): “it is impossible with any confidence to reconstruct a coherent account of this extraordinary theory of ‘garlands’ or ‘rings’”; Cerri (2011: 88): “Aëtius’ testimony, very valuable for reconstructing the type of overall architecture, is however too confused and inconsistent when it comes to details of the system.” *Contra*: Reinhardt (1916: 10): “Was Aëtius darüber berichtet, macht den Eindruck großer Zuverlässigkeit, weil es auf jede Ausdeutung verzichtet.”

the hypothesis that the 'crowns' mentioned by Aëtius – i.e. the entities also mentioned in fragment 12 – represent celestial elements (annular or spherical) that surround the earth.

Aëtius' text can be divided into two parts. Only the first part, down to Δίκην τε καὶ Ἀνάγκην, is clearly a paraphrase of fragment 12 and will be examined here. Parmenides' fragment 12 is compared with Aëtius' testimony in the table below, following Aëtius' order.

Comparison between Aëtius 2.7.1 and Parmenides' fragment 12

AËTIUS 2.7.1	PARMENIDES fragment 12
<p>(i) στεφάνας εἶναι περιπεπλεγμένας ἐπαλλήλους,</p> <p>(ii) τὴν μὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἀραιοῦ,</p> <p>(iii) τὴν δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πυκνοῦ·</p> <p>(iv) μικτὰς δὲ ἄλλας ἐκ φωτὸς καὶ σκότους μεταξὺ τούτων.</p> <p>(v) καὶ τὸ περιέχον δὲ πάσας τείχους δίκην στερεὸν ὑπάρχειν,</p> <p>(vi) ὑφ' ὧν πυρώδης στεφάνη,</p> <p>(vii) καὶ τὸ μεσαίτατον πασῶν, περὶ ὃ πάλιν πυρώδης [sc. στεφάνη].</p> <p>(viii) τῶν δὲ συμμιγῶν τὴν μεσαιτάτην ἀπάσαις (ἀρχήν) τε καὶ (αἰτίαν) κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως ὑπάρχειν, ἦντινα καὶ δαίμονα κυβερνήτην καὶ κληιδουχὸν ἐπονομάζει δίκην τε καὶ ἀνάγκην.</p> <p>(ix) καὶ τῆς μὲν γῆς ἀπόκρισιν εἶναι τὸν ἀέρα διὰ τὴν βιασιέραν αὐτῆς ἐξατμισθέντα πίλησιν, τοῦ δὲ πυρὸς ἀναπνοὴν τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὸν γαλαξίαν κύκλον. συμμιγῆ δ' ἐξ ἀμφοῖν εἶναι τὴν σελήνην, τοῦ τ' ἀέρος καὶ τοῦ πυρός. περιστάντος δ' ἀνωτάτω πάντων τοῦ αἰθέρος ὑπ' αὐτῶν τὸ πυρῶδες ὑποταγῆναι τοῦθ' ὅπερ κεκλήκαμεν οὐρανόν, ὑφ' ὧν ἤδη τὰ περιγεια.</p>	<p>[before frg. 12]</p> <p>αἱ γὰρ στεριότεραι πληνται πυρὸς ἀκρήτιοι,</p> <p>αἱ δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς νυκτός,</p> <p>μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἴεται αἴσα·</p> <p>[specifies (iii) by placing the solid above everything]</p> <p>[specifies (ii) by placing the fire below the solid]</p> <p>[missing]</p> <p>ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων δαίμων ἢ πάντα κυβερνᾷ· πάντων γὰρ στυγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιός ἄρχει πέμπουσ' ἄρσενι θῆλυ μιγῆν τό τ' ἐναντίον αὐτὶς ἄρσεν θηλυτέρωι.</p> <p>[after frg. 12]</p>

Aëtius' text begins with passage (i), which is missing in fragment 12, transmitted by Simplicius, but something of the kind must have preceded the fragment, because Parmenides surely named the entities to which αἱ στεινότεραι refers. I have no difficulty in admitting that these entities are precisely what Aëtius and Cicero call 'crowns' (στεφάναι); but we have no way of knowing whether the very term 'στεφάνη' was used by Parmenides, or whether it is merely a doxographic interpretation, just as "ἄρματείωι τροχῶι παραπλήσιον" (Aët. 2.20.1) was for the circle of the sun in Anaximander;¹⁸ or as "οἱ μὲν μυλοειδῶς, οἱ δὲ τροχοῦ δίκην περιδινεῖσθαι" (Aët. 2.2.4) for Anaximenes' celestial bodies. Obviously in those cases Aëtius does not report the exact words of the authors, but he, or his source, with the images of the wheel or of the grindstone, is trying to make sense of indirect and unclear information. Since I believe that Aëtius was talking about the same type of objects as Parmenides, in the following I will use the same word 'crowns' also for the objects of fragment 12. I believe that Parmenides conceived the earth as spherical;¹⁹ therefore I think that the system described by Parmenides in fragment 12 is spherical too, and that the entities that Aëtius calls 'crowns' should be understood as *spherical crowns*, in the sense in which we say 'solar crown'.

After the initial passage, Aëtius mentions two 'crowns' formed (ii) "one from the thin" and (iii) "one from the dense", without specifying their mutual position. These objects are clearly the same ones that Parmenides indicates as "the narrowest filled with unmixed fire" and "those above with night." Aëtius then adds (iv) that there are "others, among these, which are mixtures of light and darkness," a passage which must be Aëtius own interpretation of Parmenides' phrase "afterwards a portion of flame spreads." We therefore have, also in Aëtius, some concentric crowns, one of which is thin and fiery, the other dense, plus others mixed in between.

In quoting fragment 12, Simplicius omitted something which should have come before, where Parmenides specified what he was talking about – he does not mention the objects that Aëtius calls 'crowns' – however his quotation of the fragment is continuous: first he describes the succession of pure crowns of fire and, above these, other crowns of night, in which a portion of fire spreads. After that, the fragment points out where the *dáimon* is located. In passage (viii) Aëtius also introduces the *dáimon*. But Aëtius' passages (v), (vi) and (vii) have no corresponding passages in fragment 12. Where do they come from? For passages (v) and (vi) the answer is easy: in (ii) and (iii) Aëtius does not

¹⁸ Similarly for the moon (Aët. 2.25.1) and the stars (Aët. 2.13.7).

¹⁹ See Calenda (2017: 37 f.).

say where the crowns he is speaking of are located, thus in (v) and (vi) he just specifies the mutual positions of the first two crowns previously mentioned:

– the crown in (iii), the one of ‘dense’, which in passage (v) surrounds everything, and is made of solid and inert matter (στερεὸν) as a wall, corresponds to Parmenides’ crowns of night (verse 12.1);

– the crown in (ii), that of ‘rare’, which in passage (vi) is placed underneath, corresponds to Parmenides’ crowns of pure fire.

Let us now consider passage (vii). Nothing corresponding to this passage appears in fragment 12. It begins with “καὶ τὸ μεσαίτατον πασῶν,” a crown which is most in the middle of everything, but what it is made of is not told; then Aëtius adds “περὶ ὃ πάλιν πυρώδης”, that is, all around the first one is another fiery crown. Therefore Aëtius could not be speaking again of steps (ii) and (iii), i.e. to verses 12.1–2, where the fiery crown is below and the night crown above. So, where do these new crowns come from? I can imagine three alternative hypotheses:

1) Aëtius mentions new crowns which are named by Parmenides before or after fragment 12;

2) Aëtius adds something he, or his source, thinks should be there;

3) Aëtius, or his source, try to explain passage (iv).

Hypothesis 1): if in Parmenides’ poem, the first crown named by Aëtius in passage (vii) came before²⁰ fragment 12, τὸ μεσαίτατον πασῶν στερεὸν²¹ may suggest that before verse 12.1 Parmenides mentioned a solid central sphere,²² surrounded by spherical crowns; then, περὶ ὃ πάλιν πυρώδης could be the same unmixed fire (πῦρ ἄκρητος), mentioned in 12.1. But what could this central sphere be, if not the solid earth? In this case the crown of night of verse 12.2 – that is Aëtius περιέχον δὲ πάσας τείχους δίκην στερεὸν – would be in the sky.

I see two difficulties here. First, a solid wall located in the sky around everything (περιέχον δὲ πάσας) contradicts passage (ix), where Aëtius says that what surrounds everything is αἰθήρ, which surely cannot be identified with a wall. Furthermore, Aëtius’ αἰθήρ does not surround a ‘wall’, but a fiery body “called sky”, and further below there is “what surrounds the earth.” Where is the wall, then? Note that Cicero’s passage (*N.D.* 1.11.28) also places a fiery body around the sky (*qui cingit coelum*), and does not mention a solid vault, nor a wall. This contradiction was highlighted by Tarán.²³ Second, why

²⁰ ‘Before’ is more likely than ‘after’.

²¹ As suggested by Diels (see note 14).

²² Coxon (1986: 235): “it is true that the doxographic account of P.’ rings is based in part on lines of the poem now lost.”

²³ Tarán (1965: 238).

Aëtius, who follows the main order of Parmenides' fragment, should place (*vii*) in the middle of his paraphrase and not at the beginning?

Hypothesis 2): it is also possible that during the transmission of the text, someone tried to explain, according to his own interpretation, a synthetic commentary by Theophrastus,²⁴ inserting in (*vii*) what he expected to find: namely, that at the centre of the cosmos there is not a sphere of fire but our solid earth.²⁵ Thus, τὸ μεσαίτατον πασῶν στερεὸν περὶ ὃ πάλιν πυρώδης could be a suggestion from Aëtius, or his source, which places the earth in the centre, surrounded by the sky. This hypothesis too would project the crowns of night (i. e. Aëtius' τείχους δίκην στερεὸν) into the sky, just as hypothesis 1 does.

Hypothesis 3): Aëtius locates the mixed crowns between the crowns of light and of darkness; however, since the mixed crowns are plural (μικτὰς δὲ ἄλλας), their distribution still needs an explanation. Perhaps Aëtius is trying to figure out the disposition of the mixed crowns below the solid wall, but he, or his source, could only guess.

I believe that the objections to the first hypothesis are conclusive: to suppose that the incomprehensible passage (*vii*) was taken from some other part of the poem and then placed in the middle of a fragment is, in my opinion, arbitrary. The two other hypotheses seem more likely. Passage (*vii*) is then an arbitrary attempt by Aëtius or his source to place the earth in the centre of everything (hypothesis 2), or to explain a text that they were unable to understand (hypothesis 3). Thus, passage (*vii*) does not add anything to fragment 12.

Aëtius' paraphrase of fragment 12 ends with passage (*viii*), which specifies that one of the mixed crowns – the one most in the middle – is a *dáimon*, which not only is the cause of movement and genesis, but also guardian, justice and necessity.

In fragment 12 Parmenides locates the *dáimon* who governs everything among the crowns of night (i.e. solid), into which a portion of fire spreads (φλογὸς ἴεται αἴσα), but he does not identify her with one of these crowns. As described in 12.4–6, this *dáimon* is the goddess of life, and there is no reason to believe that she is the same goddess as the guardian of the keys, mentioned in the preamble, nor that she is the same as Δίκη, or Θέμις, or Ἀνάγκη, or Μοῖρα, which are personalisations of justice, of the bonds of law, of necessity and of the unavoidable fate – which in the poem indicate the rigid constraints of logic.²⁶

Like Aëtius, Cicero identifies Parmenides' god (*deum*) with a crown, but he does not place it in the middle of mixed crowns, but rather in the *ardor* (i.e. the ether) which

²⁴ Tarán (1965: 247) goes farther: “it seems to me that one should stop asserting that this report of Aëtius is derived from Theophrastus.”

²⁵ This would justify Diels' στερεόν. Zeller (1892: 573): “der mittlere feste Kreis dagegen kann nur die Erde sein, von der auch sonst bezeugt wird, Parmenides habe sie sich als eine Kugel gedacht, die in der Mitte der Welt ruhe”; Coxon (1986: 236): “The centre is similarly expressed in the neuter (τὸ μεσαίτατον πασῶν) and is clearly identical with the earth.”

²⁶ See Calenda (2017: 51 f.).

surrounds the sky outside of everything. He probably draws from the same source as Aëtius,²⁷ but interprets it differently.

Verses 12.3–6 are the original text, which Simplicius quotes verbatim, while the interpretations of Aëtius and Cicero are based on a paraphrase transmitted in a confused form, through interpretations and transcriptions. Cicero's derogatory text is a clear example of the widespread inability of the ancient tradition to make sense of Parmenides' thought.²⁸

2. Celestial crowns?

It is not easy to overcome the contradictions detected by Tarán in Aëtius and those between Aëtius and Cicero, contradictions that lead him to suspect a Stoic contamination in both these authors.²⁹ Tarán, like most of modern critics,³⁰ interprets Parmenides' cosmos as consisting of a central, solid earth, encircled by a series of concentric crowns, in which the celestial bodies are surrounded by a solid crown, like a wall.

Although Tarán, recognizing the unreliability of Aëtius' 2.7.1,³¹ dropped the surrounding αἰθήρ, along with some other elements, such as the ring of fire around the earth and the mixed crowns,³² he is still forced to admit:

It is not possible, however, to get a complete and satisfactory idea of the astronomical conception behind the few remains of Parmenides' poem and the confused notices preserved by Aëtius.³³

Not even the attempts of Coxon (1986) and Conce (1996) to explain the arrangement of the crowns by referring 'στεινότεραι', not to their diameter, but to the width of the

²⁷ Cicero had attended the school of Posidonius in Rhodes, and, to use the words of Torraca (1961: 12): "la maggior parte della materia dossografica, contenuta nel libro I del *De deorum natura* e nel *De pietate* deriverebbe dai *Placita*. Per il Diels tale ipotesi è molto vicina al vero, qualora s'intendano non i *Placita* di Aëtio o del Pseudo-Plutarco, ma i *Placita vetusta*."

²⁸ Provided that the speech Cicero puts into the mouth of the epicurean Valleio actually represents Cicero's own judgment, or at least a current opinion on Parmenides.

²⁹ Tarán quotes another passage from Cicero *N.D.* 1.14.37: "Cleanthes [...] tum ipsum mundum deum dicit esse, [...] tum ultimum et altissimum atque undique circumfusum et extremum omnia cingentem atque complexum ardorem, qui aether nominetur, certissimum deum indicat."

³⁰ See e.g.: Zeller (1892: 572 f.); Reinhardt (1916: 10 f.); Untersteiner (1958: 174 f.); Pasquinelli (1958: 390): "Tutte queste soluzioni risolvono parte delle difficoltà, ma nessuna soddisfa completamente"; Guthrie (1965: 61 f.); Couloubaritsis (1986: 314, 321) names at least 10 celestial crowns, and some more. Following a suggestion by Reinhardt, Hölscher (1969: 108), Conche (1996: 217), Bollack (2006: 242), Bredlow (2010: 294) and Brisson *et al.* (2022: 136 f.) interpret Aëtius 2.7.1 as the description of a pre-cosmogonic phase.

³¹ Tarán (1965: 237): "the untrustworthiness of Aëtius' report is evident."

³² Tarán (1965: 239): "we may safely infer that the ring of fire which Aëtius places around the earth may be eliminated, since it is only the result of his misunderstanding of frg. XII.1-2. I think that we may dismiss, too, Aëtius' notion of the 'mixed rings'."

³³ Tarán (1965: 241). Guthrie (1965: 62): "It is impossible to reconstruct a detailed cosmic order from this garbled and confused summary."

ring band,³⁴ allow us to conceive a reasonable structure for Parmenides' cosmos, which agrees with fragment 12 and Aëtius 2.7.1.³⁵

The internal contradictions of Aëtius' text, its disagreement with Cicero's, and the difficulty of making both agree with fragment 12, make it hard to imagine how Parmenides could have conceived such an absurd astronomical theory, uncorroborated by what is observed in the sky. What relationship can ever be established between the crowns of fire and night, and the celestial bodies mentioned by fragments 10 and 11 – two groups of entities that seem to belong to incompatible cosmoses?

Some authors recall the cosmos of Anaximander, in which the celestial bodies are fiery annular bands, hidden by dark hazy layers, whose light is visible through tubular openings in the haze (vents similar to aulus pipes).³⁶ This analogy, however, does not hold, because Parmenides' celestial bodies are bodies, not holes in the haze, as shown by the fact that the moon, at least, is spherical, being lighted by the sun.³⁷ Equally absurd is the hypothesis of a solid wall-like crown³⁸ surrounding the cosmos. It is true that Homer conceived the sky as a solid vault, similar to bronze³⁹ or steel,⁴⁰ placed above the earth at an enormous distance, but this is a poetic conception based on myths that claim no scientific status.

Parmenides' world is completely different, and before him the Milesians had already conceived an infinite universe. Even the reference to Anaximenes does not work, because his solid vault depends on Aëtius 2.14.3: Ἀναξιμένης ἡλῶν δίκην καταπεπηγένα τὰ ἄστρα τῷ κρυσταλλοειδεῖ. This interpretation, clashes with Aëtius 2.13.10: Ἀναξιμένης πυρίνην μὲν τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἄστρον, περιέχειν δέ τινα καὶ γεώδη σώματα συμπεριφερόμενα τούτοις ἀόρατα: therefore the adjective 'crystalline' refers to these invisible orbiting bodies; so the fixed vault is just a misinterpretation.⁴¹ Aëtius 2.7.1 is the only text which mentions Parmenides' solid wall, but it does not claim that such a 'wall' is in the heavens.

³⁴ When we call a ring narrow, it is the diameter we are referring to, not the width of the strip: in Liddel and Scott στῆνός is "a narrow, close or confined space."

³⁵ Why should the Coxon's equatorial band of the sky (οὐρανός) be fiery, and the bands around the northern star dense and heavy is not easy to visualize. It would be more understandable if the bands were on the earth's surface.

³⁶ See Hipp. *Haer.* 1.6.4; Aët. 2.13.7; 2.20.1 and 2.25.1; Ach. Tat. *Isag.* 1.19 (p. 46, 20). I have shown (Calenda 2015: 97 f.) how Anaximander's conception is a rational hypothesis, which can explain, the rotation of the celestial bodies around the earth, the stability of their orbits and the origin of celestial fires.

³⁷ Zeller (1892: 576): "sich Parmenides die Gestirne mit Anaximander als hohle, mit Feuer gefüllte Ringe gedacht habe, aus deren Oeffnungen dieses hervortrete, ist nicht bloß unerweislich, sondern auch mit der Thatsache, dass ihm die Beleuchtung des Mondes durch die Sonne bekannt war, unvereinbar."

³⁸ Coxon (1986: 236): "Aëtius assertion that the outer envelope is στερεόν appears to be a misinterpretation of ὄλυμπος ἔσχατος."

³⁹ Hom. *Il.* 5.504; 17.423; *Od.* 3.2.

⁴⁰ Hom. *Od.* 15.329; 17.565.

⁴¹ See Calenda (2015: 175). Obviously, the presence of a solid crown cannot be justified by the mention of the sphere (σφαῖρα) in verse 8.43, which is only a simile used to illustrate the uniform distribution of being.

3. The structure of the Earth

We can easily eliminate all contradictions if we drop the preconceived idea that the spherical crowns, described by Parmenides' in fragment 12, are celestial features, and assume instead that they belong to the earth. In fact, neither Parmenides nor Aëtius explicitly declare that these spherical crowns are located in the heavens. Only Cicero says so, but he speaks of a single crown, and gives this name to the ether that surrounds the sky. Aëtius too mentions the αἰθήρ in (*ix*), but he does not call it a 'crown'. It is likely that Cicero, getting the name στεφάνη from the same source as Aëtius, refers it to the ether. It is therefore worthwhile exploring the possibility that fragment 12 describes not celestial entities, but the earth's composition, as announced in fragment 11. I will show that this interpretation makes all the contradictions disappear. Thus the discrepancy between the system of the 'crowns' and that of the celestial bodies listed in fragments 10 and 11, also vanishes.

The same concentric crowns are reported in 12.1–2 and in passages (*ii*), (*iii*) – multiple in fragment 12, but single in Aëtius – and their mutual position is established by Aëtius in passages (*v*) and (*vi*). The mixed crowns of Aëtius (*iv*), try to interpret what the second part of verse 12.2 describes as the transmission of fire to the night crowns.⁴² Once ascertained that Aëtius' text, up to step (*viii*), does not provide additions to the Parmenides' fragment, we can leave Aëtius aside and proceed directly to the interpretation of fragment 12.

In this spherical system, Parmenides places several crowns: pure fire occupies the central position, and around it are arranged crowns of inert matter (ταῖς νυκτός), which Aëtius compares to a wall. A portion (αἶσα) of flame (φλογός) pushes or breaks (ἔται) into the inert crowns. Among these is the demon who governs life, symbolized by sexual coupling. The most fitting explanation seems to be that, in these verses, Parmenides describes γαῖα, the earth, which is the first of the entities listed in fragment 11. The earth is therefore composed of solid crowns, that form what we call the earth's crust, arranged around a core of fiery crowns, which sheds off the heat that flows in the solid crowns above. Thus, Parmenides introduced, before Philolaus, a central fire, placing it inside the earth rather than outside.

Did Parmenides have a reason to conceive such a structure? I think he had: a thinker of Ionian culture, with a clear propensity for observation – who lived in Elea, on the coast of Southern Italy, surrounded by active volcanism,⁴³ well known to the Greeks of

⁴² Untersteiner (1958: 177): “ἔται evidentemente non esprime μίξις, ma intervento, che determina la compresenza di φῶς e νύξ.”

⁴³ Many volcanic systems in that area are still active today. The latest eruptions are: Vesuvius in 1944 AD; the vulcan of Campi Flegrei in 1538 AD, which created Monte Nuovo; the vulcan of Ischia in 1302 AD; the island of Vulcano in 1890 AD; while the volcanoes Etna and Stromboli are still in continuous activity. The volcanic chain is integrated by several active submarine volcanoes, such as the Empedocles vulcan, south of western Sicily, whose eruption in 1831 AD built the Ferdinandea Island, demolished by the sea after a few months; and

the time⁴⁴ – could reasonably imagine that the earth was not just a mass of rock, and that a huge fire was burning in its depths.⁴⁵ Such a scheme has a solid empirical base, which is missing from Philolaus’ central fire.

Already Diels suggested that Aëtius 2.7.1 could represent also the earth’s crust and the fiery core of the earth:

Denn da der rätselhafte Feuerkranz, den die Erde umgibt, ebenfalls wie der innerhalb des Firmamentes befindliche Aether, als der innere betrachtet werden muss, so stellt Parmenides, da er sich die Erde als Kugel dachte, darunter den feuerflüssigen Kern vor, der sich unter der Erdrinde befindet. Parmenides ist also für uns der erste, der nicht nur die richtige Gestalt, sondern auch die richtige Beschaffenheit der Erde sei es geahnt sei es aus Indizien (Vulkanen, heissen Wassern) richtig erschlossen hat (Diels 1897: 105).

Thus Diels, who interprets most of Aëtius’ multiple crowns as celestial elements, states that Parmenides correctly conceived not only the shape of the earth, but also its composition. But he interprets in this sense, Aëtius’ passage (*vii*) reading περί as if showing the intimate connection between the earth’s crust and the internal fire:

περί ist aber wohl, wie der Zusammenhang lehrt, nicht zu verstehen wie etwa ὁ περί τὴν γῆν ἄηρ, sondern in allgemeinerem Sinn vom unmittelbaren Anschluss an die innere Wölbung der Erdkruste (Diels 1897: 106).

This interpretation of περί was explicitly rejected by Reinhardt, Tarán and Reale,⁴⁶ and Diels’ proposal was shelved.⁴⁷ However, Diels’ description fits smoothly to Parme-

the volcanoes Marsili, north of the Aeolian Islands, and Palinuro, off the coast of Cilento (southern Italy), where Elea was located.

⁴⁴ It is at the origin of the myth of Typhoeus, a rebellious Titan, buried by Zeus between Cuma and Sicily (Pi. P. 1.15).

⁴⁵ Empedocles DK 31 B 52: πολλὰ δ’ ἔνερθ(ε) οὐδεὸς πυρὰ καίεται. Burkert (1962: 317, n. 94) comments: “This is natural enough for a Sicilian, with Etna before his eyes.” However Reinhardt (1916: 11) argues strongly against: “hätte Parmenides wirklich die feurige Beschaffenheit des Erdinnern geahnt oder erschlossen und aus diesem Grunde die Erde in zwei konzentrische Sphären eingeteilt, so stände er damit allein unter allen griechischen Philosophen.”

⁴⁶ Reinhardt (1916: 11) argues that περί ὁ cannot be read as ὑφ’ ὃ; Tarán (1965: 235): “this interpretation of περί ὁ is impossible”; Reale (Zeller, Mondolfo 1967) 265 n. 45: “Diels, per ottenere codesta immagine, è costretto a forzare il testo, soprattutto là dove Aët. dice περί ὁ.”

⁴⁷ However, Diels’ thesis was also taken up, in passing, by Kirk *et al.* (1983: 259): “Philolaus was perhaps following Parmenides when he placed fire both at the extremity of the universe and at its centre [...] (but Parmenides’ idea may have been of fire *within* the earth).” Both Diels and Kirk *et al.* seem to accept the multiplication of Aëtius’ celestial crowns. Finkelberg (1986) gives the earth a solid core, enveloped by a subterranean fire, but he projects the mixed layers in the sky and encloses everything into a solid shell, which he identifies with the ‘utmost Olympos’ (frg. 11: ὄλυμπος ἔσχατος).

nides' verses 12.1–2, that is, to the crowns which Aëtius names in passages (ii) and (iii), whose mutual positions are stated in steps (v) and (vi).

A question still remains: if the structure of the earth is actually composed of a nucleus of fire, surrounded by the earth's crust – therefore of only two parts – why does Parmenides use the plural? Why does he say “the narrowest *ones*” (αἱ γὰρ στενιότεραι), and then “*others* above *those*” (αἱ δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς)? We can only guess; but reflecting on the nature of Parmenides' ‘forms’ (μορφῆ) – that is, ethereal fire (αἰθέριον πῦρ) and dark night (νύκτ' ἄδαῖ) – may provide some further elements.

With ‘fire’ and ‘night’ Parmenides does not mean ‘elements’ in the sense that we usually give to this word. He means that men⁴⁸ identify in the world two groups of properties, which belong: to *fire*, subtle (αἰθέριον), hot like flame (φλόξ), favourable to life (ῥῆπιον); and to *night*, body (δέμας), in itself devoid of light (νύξ), dense (πυκνὸν) and heavy (ἐμβριθής). These are respectively the general properties of *heat* (and *light*), and of *matter*.⁴⁹ Heat and matter are both present in living beings. It is not impossible, therefore, that Parmenides, speaking of a plurality of crowns, had in mind the infinite heterogeneity of his “forms.” Indeed, ‘fire’ and ‘night’ have numberless aspects. So, when lava erupts from volcanoes and cools, it solidifies and appears just like any other rock, but when fluid it is molten rock, that is, inert matter associated with very strong heat.

According to fragment 12, the *dáimon*, who governs life in its various aspects, acts on the crowns of night that surround the central fire, i.e. on the earth's crust; instead Aëtius embodies it, so to speak, in a mixed crown placed ‘most in the middle’ (μεσαιτάτην ἀπάσαις). Then, Aëtius is saying something different from what we read in the fragment,⁵⁰ but it is to the latter that we owe our own trust. The goddess of life acts on the earth's crust, and life is fed in part by the benign fire that emanates from the subsoil, and above all by the sun. According to this interpretation, fragment 12, which describes the earth, is a rational doctrine, in accordance with what experience suggests.

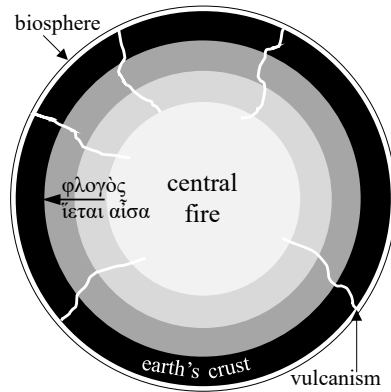
If in verse 12.2 we read μετὰ as ‘after’ or ‘beyond’⁵¹ the series of the fiery crowns and of the earth's crust, then the passage “μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἔται αἴσα” involves also a further crown, inhabited by life, animated by a form of fire, where the goddess of reproduction is located; a level which, with a Greek term, we call ‘biosphere’ (see figure). Fragment 12 goes no further.

⁴⁸ That is, Parmenides – in fact the goddess speaks as his mouthpiece.

⁴⁹ Calenda (2017: 23 f.).

⁵⁰ Reale (Zeller, Mondolfo 1967: 275): “L'identificazione della dea col cerchio o con la sfera è avvenuta nell'iter dossografico, e probabilmente è dovuta a Teofrasto stesso [...] e non c'è traccia di essa nei versi di Parmenide che possiamo ancora leggere.”

⁵¹ Conche (1996: 223): “Comme le notait déjà H. Ritter [...] le sens de μετὰ n'est pas clair.”



Structure of the Earth

In conclusion, what fragment 12 describes concerns only the terrestrial globe. In the remaining testimonia on Parmenides' cosmology the celestial crowns are not named.

Passage (*ix*) of Aëtius 2.7.1 has no parallel in fragment 12. It probably refers, more or less correctly, to the elements of the Parmenidean cosmology, named in fragments 10 and 11, such as: the sky, the objects which are in the sky (sun, moon...), and the αἰθήρ that surrounds everything. Conceivably Parmenides wrote about them in further passages of his poem following fragment 12.⁵²

⁵² On Parmenides' cosmology and cosmogony see Calenda (2017: 81 f.).

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Parmenides' Structure of the Earth

It is generally accepted that the enigmatic fragment 12 of Parmenides, supplemented by the first part of Aëtius II 7.1, represents an unlikely cosmos which comprises alternating spherical crowns of fire and night, surrounding the earth. A comparison of the fragment and Aëtius' text shows that the latter adds nothing substantial to the fragment. Thus, fragment 12 can actually represent the structure of the earth, which consists of a core of fire, is surrounded by the layers of the earth's crust, into which heat is transmitted from within, and on which the goddess of life dwells.

KEY WORDS

Greek science, Presocratics, Parmenides, cosmology, earth's crust, central fire, biosphere

The Study of Being in Plato and Aristotle

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Usage of the Greek verb ‘to be’ (*einai*) is generally discussed in reference to three broad categories: the predicative use, the existential and the veridical – that is, it can be used to say that something *is such-and-such*, that something *exists* or that something *is the case* – and these categories, or modifications thereof, have played a formative role in the way we understand Being in ancient Greek philosophy.¹ This is clearly a very natural way to proceed, but nevertheless in this article I make three suggestions which tell against this linguistic approach. Namely, (1) Being cannot be reduced to predication, (2) Being is conceived as a unified concept, rather than one with a range of fundamentally distinct senses, and (3) Being is, above all, a content-rich concept that enjoys a privileged status in Greek philosophical thought. What emerges from my discussion is that in the hands of Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle ‘being’ refers to the ultimate reality, the deepest level of truth. *That which is* is at once a cosmic principle and a principle of intelligibility. Although related to our twin ideas of existence and truth, it betrays a rather different set of assump-

¹ I capitalise ‘being’ wherever it is used as a noun. This helps avoid ambiguity in my English and marks out Being as something exceptional.

tions about nature and knowledge. I do not, however, attempt to develop this concept of Being here (though I hope to in the future).

I appreciate that the linguistic approach I am criticising has a lot of currency in the scholarship and I must admit a fair amount of trepidation in swimming against the tide.² Worse still, I engage with a broad range of complex and sophisticated texts but give them an only cursory treatment. Nevertheless, I have become convinced that certain features of the ancient concept of Being risk being obscured by our language-oriented focus and I believe that the following arguments, however superficial, still succeeded in highlighting some of the limitations of that approach.

1. Being cannot be reduced to predication or the like

The view that Being can be understood in reference to some kind of predicative usage has been defended by such eminent scholars as Michael Frede and G. E. L. Owen.³ Plato's account of not-Being in the *Sophist*, for one, has led these scholars to attribute to Plato the view that Being fundamentally involves *being something*. Here Being is concerned with statements and it provides the link between some subject and its predicate (or the like). Frede (1992: 409), for example, can claim that in the *Sophist* "being for Plato is always a matter of being something or other" and similarly for Owen (1971: 235) when we ascribe some portion of Being to something, we are saying "that it 'is' so-and-so."⁴ Such an approach has an obvious appeal. In the relevant passages of the *Sophist* the Eleatic Stranger is expressly concerned with understanding false *statements*. Moreover, when we turn to not-being, the locution 'is not' certainly seems to have something in common with negative predication: it is equated with the Different and, as the Stranger says, something must be different *to something* (255c8–d8). In syntactic terms we may say that this

² Fronterotta (2011: 35–39) provides a useful overview of the recent scholarship here. As he remarks, the tendency has been to reject or play down the 'complete' or 'existential' use of the verb 'to be.' Fronterotta joins his voice to O'Brien in arguing against this trend. My own view is broadly compatible: I think the complete use of *esti* can be used to evoke Being in its pregnant philosophical sense and I do not think that Being is predication.

³ The case of Charles Kahn is more complicated. He looks to linguistic usage and seizes on predication as foundational (see e.g. Kahn 2009a: 24–25), yet he stresses that the predicative *esti* is very pliable and that the Greeks were not sensitive to our distinction between existence and predication. At a semantic level Kahn argues that the veridical sense is basic, especially in philosophical usages; but this, in turn, is tied to the predicative construction: "for every fact, every case of being-so, can be formulated by a predicative usage of 'to be'" (Kahn 2009a: 24–25). Even where a *fact* is being asserted rather than a statement, "there is a one-to-one correspondence between what is the case and the truth or statement that it is the case" (Kahn 2009a: 25). Ultimately Kahn attributes to Plato and Aristotle the view that "the structure of reality is such to be truly expressed in discourse" (Kahn 2009a: 26, cf. 36). I tend to disagree. For Plato and Aristotle discursive knowledge relies on non-discursive principles (like the Good or the prime mover).

⁴ Some have argued against a predicative reading of the *Sophist*, e.g. Prior (1980), Heinaman (1983), Fronterotta (2011) and O'Brien (2013). Note that Being of the *Sophist* need not be equated with the verb 'to be.' Most instances of '...is...' will not refer to the form of Being (except incidentally): 'Socrates is tall' means that Socrates shares in the form Tallness; 'Socrates is not beautiful' means that Socrates shares in the form Difference in respect of Beauty, and so on. The things mentioned in these sentences *do*, of course, share in Being, but this is because everything whatsoever shares in Being.

‘is not’ is *incomplete*, it cannot be used absolutely. We can say ‘x is not F,’ but we cannot say ‘x simply is not.’ And yet this characterisation (that Being always involves being *something*) has a rather substantial problem to overcome. The quintessential Beings for Plato are the forms. Whatever it might mean, the forms *are* in some deeply significant way. And although they can happily fit into the predicate position of a sentence (the ‘p’ in *s is p*), nevertheless, insofar as they are Beings – *things that are* – they make far more sense as subjects than they do as predicates. This, I would urge, is not a trifling quibble, but an observation that speaks to the very essence of what a Being is for Plato. These items enjoy a special independence (χωρίς). They alone are what they are *themselves by themselves*, αὐτὰ καθ’ αὐτά.⁵ One of the key features of forms is that they are ontologically basic. Predicates, by contrast, enjoy no such pedigree. On the contrary, they are parasitic on their grammatical subjects. Though we do find forms in the position of a predicate (as in the tallness in Simmias), this is not their native habitat. To subject forms to this kind of dependence would vitiate their very reason for being. Forms are independent, predicates are not.

A broadly analogous idea is evident in Aristotle. And this is all the more striking because he not only reflects on various uses of the verb *einai*, but he clearly possesses the linguistic resources to identify predication (say, κατηγορία or τό τι κατά τινος λέγεσθαι).⁶ Consider, then, Aristotle’s treatment in the *Categories*. In this text he distinguishes *ousia* (often translated as ‘substance’) from the various qualifications that can modify it, such as how large it is, how it is placed and so on. But again, the most likely candidate for Being here is not a predicate; Being must be *ousia*, and this is the one thing that can operate outside of the ‘...is...’ relationship. As with Plato, this independence is one of the quintessential features of *ousia* (especially primary *ousia*, which is the purest expression of *ousia*).⁷ In this context Being will refer to the *subject* of which a predicate may be predicated. If we say that *Socrates is pale*, it is *Socrates* that counts as a Being here (*Cat.* 2a11–19). “From primary substance,” Aristotle says, “there is no predicate [κατηγορία], since it is never said of an underlying subject” (*Cat.* 3a36–7).⁸ *Ousia* is prior to, and independent of, any putative predication. This seems to rule out the possibility that Beings (as such) should be essentially understood as predicates.⁹

It is above all in the *Metaphysics* where we see that Aristotle cannot have thought of Being as something quintessentially exemplified by predication. This text (or collection

⁵ Owen (1971: 256) famously argued that things said to be *themselves by themselves* are things that are said to be identical to themselves in an identity statement. Frede (1992: 400–401) relies on a similar idea. I would put it the other way round: the Being of forms allows them to fit into these identity statements but is not reducible to such linguistic criteria. See further Fronterotta (2011: 45–47).

⁶ Aristotle notes that Being is said in many ways at, e.g., *Metaph.* 1026a33–b4 and 1051a34–b6. See Kung (1986). At, e.g., *Int.* 16b22–5 he appears to employ the phrase τὸ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι in a predicative sense whereby to say that something *is* or *is not* means nothing by itself.

⁷ Cf. Reeve (2000: 10): “Separation is the hallmark of Aristotle’s substance”.

⁸ Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 1028b36–1029a2. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁹ Perhaps it will be objected that this refers to *ousia* and not Being. Yet the two cannot be too far removed. Plato is happy to use *ousia* in the sense of Being at times (e.g. *Phd.* 78d1, *Th.* 185c9, *Sph.* 248c2, *Prm.* 142b6, *Ti.*

of texts) expressly concerns Being and looks to isolate Being in its purest form. It wonders if Being *qua* Being is form or a ‘this’ (τόδε τι). Such a question would be strange if Aristotle were trying to isolate predication, especially in regard to the idea that Being might be a *tode ti* with its demonstrative force; predicates and concrete particulars seem like very different things. Though it may be the case that *form* might overlap with *predicate* in some sense, this leads back the problem already mentioned, namely that this Being enjoys a special independence.¹⁰

We shall return to the claim that Being is not predication again in what follows, but for now let me simply reiterate my first suggestion. Although the ancients certainly *use* the verb ‘to be’ in predicative or identity statements, this usage is not what informs their concept of Being. As always in ancient philosophy we should be careful not to let our own interests and preoccupations obscure the nature of the ancient texts. And this takes us to the second suggestion.

2. Being is a unified concept and we should be wary of fragmenting it

Presumably we should try to avoid wherever possible the view that Being represents a half-cooked attempt to elucidate our modern concepts and distinctions. Certainly our sources tend to give the impression that Being in its pregnant philosophical sense is a unified concept. Aristotle is instructive here. He explicitly acknowledges an ambiguity in the thing, but insists on a paradigmatic, primary sense, namely substantial Being (*Metaph.* 1003a33–b10, 1028a31–b2). This is what underwrites the project of the *Metaphysics*. The unity of Being is in fact hard to deny and an increasing number of scholars have tried to accommodate this via the rather difficult contention that *esti* has a univocal sense. Thus, Frede has argued against the view that Plato is attempting to differentiate two senses of *esti* in the *Sophist* and others besides have taken up comparable views.¹¹ Simi-

29c3, R. 525b5 and *Phdr.* 247c7). And for Aristotle in both the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics* the *ousia* tells us *what something is*; cf. *Cat.* 2b32 with Ackrill (1963: 79–80) and *Metaph.* 1028a13–18. This is understandable given the clear etymological connection between *einai* and *ousia*, the latter being something like *being-ness*.

¹⁰ Cf. Witt (1989: 121–126). She argues that a form or essence cannot be the *property* of a substance because the form is the *cause* of a substance and hence the form is prior to the substance, while a property *qua* property has the substance as its cause, so it would be posterior to the substance.

¹¹ Frede (1992: 401–421); see also Owen (1971: 257–258), Prior (1980: 205–206) and esp. Kahn (2009a: 19). That Plato is committed to a univocal sense of *esti* is controversial however. See Brown (2008: 440–441). Matthen (1983: 124) proffered the view that predicative statements can be converted into existential and *vice versa* (e.g. ‘the man is running’ = ‘the running man is’). Brown subsequently popularised a comparable idea that there might be continuity between some existential and predicative statements (much as ‘Jane teaches’ and ‘Jane teaches French’ do not require different senses of ‘teach’). O’Brien (2013: 225), however, disagrees. He emphasises the primacy of existence for Plato and goes on to argue that we need to take ‘is’ in two different senses to understand how what-is-not is in, e.g., the *Sophist* (237). I’m inclined to agree with O’Brien that Being can be evoked by the complete use of *esti* (Change is) – but my contention is that Plato is not primarily concerned to investigate Being via analysis of what it means to say that something is. Indeed, this or that use of *esti* can be quite incidentally to an assertion about Being: ‘Change is’ (ἡ κίνησις ἔστι) can be rephrased as ‘Change is a Being’ (ἡ κίνησις ἔστιν ὄν) or ‘Change participates in Being’ (ἡ κίνησις μέτεχει τοῦ ὄντος). Cf. Fronterotta (2011: 51): “Plato certainly

larly, a shift in approach is evident in the scholarship on Parmenides' Being. While an earlier generation of scholars were inclined to accuse Parmenides of confusion between the existential and the predicative sense of *esti*, this has subsequently been replaced with more charitable readings. A popular interpretation of Parmenides understands his use of *esti* (etc.) as primarily veridical but fused with an existential sense.¹² But for all that, the more pressing issue is not that Plato, Aristotle or Parmenides treat the verb *einai* as univocal, but that when they are thinking about Being in its philosophical sense, they tend to assume that it is a discrete, homogenous thing. Indeed, my contention is that we fail to appreciate the fundamental unity of Being by viewing it through a linguistic lens. Although veracity and especially existence can make for a useful point of departure, the ancient concept of Being is different from either of these or their conjunction. To illustrate this point we will briefly glance over the Being of Parmenides before moving on to Plato and Aristotle. It is beyond my scope or ability to show definitively that the Parmenidean One does not fit neatly into these categories, but I believe a strong case can be made for the plausibility of my reading.

To this end let us begin with the reception of Parmenides by other ancient philosophers. The ancients are generally unconcerned with some of the issues that occupy modern commentators, like the subject or sense of *esti*. Moreover, they tend to interpret the Parmenidean Being in a cosmological vein, often as a concrete, extended entity.¹³ It is common to find Parmenides referred to as a natural philosopher like, say, Empedocles.¹⁴ Theophrastus says that according to Parmenides "the whole is one, ungenerated, and spherical in shape."¹⁵ Or consider Zeno's paradoxes of motion which attempt to show, in support of Parmenides, that distances are neither dense nor discrete. Surely Zeno is assuming that the Parmenidean One is extended, as Aristotle notes (*Metaph.* 1001b7–10).¹⁶ Indeed, this seems to be implicit in the fabled 'problem of change' which Parmenides bequeathed to Greek philosophy. That is, his abstract speculations were taken to show that the physical realm is unchanging. However much this cosmological reading of the

distinguishes among various sense of the verb 'to be' [...] but, contrary to what Ackrill, Frede and Owen claim, I do not think he gives of this distinction a theoretically coherent exposition or definition, since he simply makes use of it to develop his argument."

¹² Mourelatos (1979) summarises some trends in the scholarship. See more recently, Fronterotta (2007: 16–17) and Graham (2006: 157–158). Graham opts for an existential reading. An existential-predicative reading is employed by Kirk, Raven and Schofield (1983: 245–246), though they insist that Parmenides is not simply confused. And Mourelatos (1979) and Curd (1998) argue for predicative interpretations. Such readings struggle to account for the prohibition against not-being adequately since they must claim that 'not being something' (in some sense) is unthinkable.

¹³ Aristotle's *Ph.* 1.2–3 launches a critique of Parmenides that turns on Parmenides' failure to realise that Being is said in many ways. Nevertheless, Aristotle still assumes that Parmenides' account of Being was an account of nature (cf. *Cael.* 298b14–24). See further Charlton (1992: 55–57) and Angioni (2021).

¹⁴ See, e.g., fragments DK 28 A 2, A 4, A 10, A 23.

¹⁵ Fragment DK 28 A 7. See also DK 28 A 31. The idea that Being is a sphere has rankled with modern scholars like Owen (1960: 95–101) and McKirahan (2008: 210–214). Kirk, Raven and Schofield (1983: 254, n.1) are more circumspect.

¹⁶ Curd (1998: 172) has challenged this otherwise traditional interpretation of Zeno.

‘Way of Truth’ in Parmenides’ poem may jar, it is not so hard to see where the ancients get it from. The whole drift of fragment B 8 has an air of corporeality to it. Being is said to be ungenerated and unperishing, indivisible and all evenly alike, it remains fixed and unmoving, perfectly well rounded. In a sense Parmenides’ approach seems almost typically of Presocratic philosophy; namely, broad reflections about the shape and situation of the cosmos.¹⁷

And yet, against this it is little wonder that modern scholars might prefer a more epistemological or conceptual reading. Not only does Parmenides seem to reject the senses in favour of the mind (DK 28 B 4, B 7, B 8.8–9), but this is borne out by the fact that he employs abstract argumentation. And we can throw into the bargain that Parmenides attributes to his Being just those qualities that Aristotle and especially Plato would associate with the incorporeal: it is eternal and unchanging. Perhaps most importantly, the goddess establishes a strong connection between what *is* and what is intelligible and, on the other hand, between what *is not* and what is unintelligible (DK 28 B 2.8, B 3, B 6.1–2, B 8.17, B 8.34–36).¹⁸ The basic idea is that *what is not* fails to refer to anything. Thus, (a) if something is intelligible, it must exist and (b) if something does not exist, it cannot be intelligible. Although this is an attractive interpretation, I would like to suggest a modification. Namely, that the goddess actually *equates* the intelligible with what *is*. In other words, *only* that which can be known is real and that which is unintelligible has no place in the cosmos.¹⁹ This allows us to add another condition: (c) if something exists, it can be known; which is to say, if something cannot be known, it cannot exist. We, by contrast, do not think that existence is co-extensive with what is intelligible. We tend to think that something could exist and still be unintelligible. Or in the very least, it does not seem that intelligibility is a necessary property of what exist as such. That is, unintelligibility is not sufficient to establish that something does not exist.

As mentioned I do not intend to develop or defend this view. I merely wish to show that it is a plausible interpretation and, in particular, that it goes with the grain of contemporary ancient philosophy. Certainly this reading falls out the text readily enough. As we

¹⁷ Cf. Kahn (2009c: 147–148). The following remarks from Graham (2006: 153) are apposite here: “much of the discussion of Parmenides’ theory has taken place in a historical vacuum in which questions of motivation have simply been ignored. This vacuum was created by the assumptions of analytic philosophy that Parmenides was addressing timeless philosophical issues in a timeless way. The article that is perhaps most responsible for this reading (Owen 1960), encourages us to put aside historical for purely philosophical concerns.” Cf. similarly Curd (1998: 26–27).

¹⁸ The poem addresses not only what cannot be *thought*, but also what cannot be *said* (λέγειν in DK 28 B 6.2, ἀνόνητος in B 8.17); and in the *Sophist* too reference is made to what cannot be uttered (e.g. *Sph.* 238c8–10). There is, however, nothing to prevent us saying the words ‘not-being’ or the like. The sense required is comparable to *knowing* or *understanding* whereby the action successfully gains its object. I believe *intelligibility* conveys the basic idea.

¹⁹ For the view that *what is* and *what can be known* coincide cf. Kahn (2009c: 163–166). Curd (2015: 7) argues that “there is an isomorphism between what-is and genuine thought” and posits “an unbreakable connection between thinking/understanding and what-is” (Curd 2015: 8); and Gerson (2006) argues that real Being in the *Sophist* is in fact Intellect (*nous*). It is noteworthy that in Plato and Aristotle *knowing* is considered a natural function of humans – indeed, it is our highest function.

saw, the goddess explicitly links knowing and Being, or what is known and what *is*, in B 8.34–6 and B 3 (τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἔστιν τε καὶ εἶναι),²⁰ where we might allow for the idea that something can exist and not necessarily be intelligible. On this view the key problem with not-being is not merely that it fails to refer. Rather, the negation of Being is intrinsically unintelligible (because it claims that what *is* is not), and since it is unintelligible it cannot exist. To deny Being would mean not only that there is no Being to be discovered, but that there is nothing truly intelligible – for Being simply is the intelligible. But how can one intelligibly assert that there is nothing intelligible? This is nonsense. There would be no destination nor a path – nothing. In fact, this is just the kind of inference the Eleatic Stranger seems to make in the *Sophist*: not-being (*qua* the contrary of Being) is rejected because it is impossible to articulate or conceive without contradiction (*Sph.* 238c9–239a11). To say that the what-is-not (*qua* contrary of Being) *is* is incoherent and what is incoherent cannot be. In this way it becomes quite easy to understand how Parmenides could be led to his extreme rejection of change and plurality: if it is only the intelligible that exists, then by problematising generation – *for where does it come from? and what got it started?* – he shows that it has no place in the cosmos.²¹ Similarly, we can appreciate how Parmenides’ abstract argumentation leads to a cosmological conclusion.

But for our purposes, the most important reason for attributing this concept of Being to Parmenides is that Plato and Aristotle seem to have inherited just such a view. They all but take for granted that the epistemological first principles coincide with the metaphysical first principles; and these special first principles are identified in terms of ‘being.’ Plato’s Beings, the forms, are ontologically more basic than physical things, which are but a shadow of the forms; they are also quintessentially intelligible. This is not to say they are easy to know – on the contrary²² – but they ground knowledge in a way that perceptible things simply cannot. Accordingly, what can be known and what truly exists are the same, and these special items are readily brought to mind as *Beings*. The following distinction in the *Timaeus* (*Ti.* 27d6–28a1) is representative here:

²⁰ There is an issue here of how Parmenides is equating thought and Being: does the goddess mean ‘knowing and Being are the same’ or ‘the same thing can be known as can be’? Martin (2016: 128–147) has a thorough discussion of the scholarship which aims to establish the Neoplatonic view that Being for Parmenides was intelligent. I am not unsympathetic to this idea. O’Brien (2000: 21–24) opens the appealing possibility that we take τὸ αὐτὸ (‘the same thing’) as the *object* of νοεῖν and the *subject* of εἶναι. Essential for my view is the idea that the mind has a kinship with Being (which is not to say that it is mind-dependent). See Fronterotta (2007: 6–7) and the previous note.

²¹ Cf. Lear (1988: 58): “It is because Parmenides thinks change incomprehensible that he dismisses its reality. He believes himself entitled to move from the *unthinkability* of change to its *unreality*.” Consider also in this connection Curd (1998) 28: “The problem is that the premise that rejects the route of what-is-not is, on the face of it, woefully unsupported. B2.7–8 asserts that what-is-not can be neither known nor pointed out.... But there is no support offered for this assertion”. The interpretation I am developing makes excellent sense of Parmenides’ argument (or lack thereof).

²² The purest objects of knowledge are in fact the hardest to know or the last to be discovered for both Plato and Aristotle. See, for example, Arist. *Metaph.* 982a21–24, *APo.* 71b33–72a5; *Pl. Smp.* 210 and *R.* 517b8–c5.

What is it that always is but has no becoming and what, always becoming, never is? The first is grasped by the mind through reason, always remaining the same; the other, comes by opinion through the unreasoning senses, becoming and perishing, but never really being.

τί τὸ ὄν αἰεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον, καὶ τί τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεί, ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε; τὸ μὲν δὴ νοήσει μετὰ λόγου περιληπτόν, αἰεὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ὄν, τὸ δ' αὖ δόξει μετ' αἰσθήσεως ἀλόγου δοξαστόν, γιγνόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, ὄντως δὲ οὐδέποτε ὄν.

That which *is* possesses a permanence and immutability which renders it, and only it, apt for knowledge. Here, then, only the intelligible *is*, and only that which (truly) *is* is intelligible. The epistemic and the ontological aspects of Being are two sides of a single, homogenous thing.

For Aristotle, the quest for Being *qua* Being amounts to the quest for the first principle of knowledge. In A2 of the *Metaphysics*, for instance, Aristotle makes some programmatic remarks about the inquiry into Being. The wise man will know the causes and first principles that ground all scientific knowledge, *epistēmē*. “And what is most scientifically knowable of all [μάλιστα δ' ἐπιστητά] are the primary things and causes, since it is through these and proceeding from these that we know the other things, not these because of the ones that fall under them” (*Metaph.* 982b2–6, Reeve's translation). Even without going into detail here, it is apparent that intelligibility is closely allied with objects of a special ontological status—and it is this idea, I propose, that underlies Parmenides' Being. In the very least I hope to have indicated how appropriate it would be for Parmenides to identify the fundamental ontological component with the primary object of knowledge; that is, to posit a perfect coincidence between what the mind can grasp and reality.

Though (quite understandably) Plato and Aristotle are not led to the same extremes as Parmenides, they still appeal to a very particular understanding of Being. Moreover, it is one that does not fit neatly into the familiar linguistic distinctions between existence, veracity or predication. The most useful of these is the existential usage. It is sufficiently clear that *esti* used absolutely (without a complement) can readily be employed to refer to Being and this is often most easily translated with ‘exists.’ Thus ‘Beauty *is*’ might be glossed as ‘Beauty exists.’ And yet we cannot simply equate Being with existence. For consider Plato's forms. While they surely ‘exist’ in some sense of the term, this is an ‘existence’ which does not really apply to concrete things. But how can tables and chairs not exist? This is not the existence we are familiar with.²³ And again, it is apparently self-

²³ This, of course, is not infrequently remarked. Moss (2019: 77) notes that “Plato often uses ‘what is’ or being’ to refer to an ontologically superior subclass of all the things that there are in the ordinary sense.” Vlastos (1965–1966: 7–11) distinguishes two senses of ‘not real’ viz. *non-existence* and *not genuine*. Inasmuch as only the latter seems to permit of degrees (i.e. something can be more genuine, but it cannot exist more), Vlastos argues that Plato must have had this sense in mind, at least in the many places where he intimates that things are more or

evident that numbers ‘exist’ (*Sph.* 238a10–b1) which does not seem to square with our ideas of existence. Finally, as mentioned this ‘existence’ has a central epistemological function that almost entirely absent in our concept. Nevertheless, let me reiterate that *existence* is not completely incongruous with Being. A key feature of the forms is that they are permanent, enduring and unchanging; it is almost as though they are more concrete than concrete things. Moreover, as just mentioned, ‘existence’ can be employed as a kind of placeholder when talking about Being. In this way, *existence* is a useful but limited way of approaching Being.

Turning to the veridical sense, we can begin by noting that the quarry of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* – Being *qua* Being – is the metaphysical primary. It is not existence *per se*, nor is it truth *per se*, but the fount of scientific knowledge. And this should make us wary of the veridical understanding of Being. Being is not to be identified via uses of *esti* that might be translated by ‘is true.’ If Being simply referred to *what is true*, it would not focus so keenly on these privileged metaphysical entities. That is to say, *what is the case* is a broader category than *what is*. The account of Being we have just surveyed is much more pointed than simply designating those states of affairs that happen to pertain or those statements that happen to be true. The disparate facts of the manifest work cannot be identified with Being in the pregnant philosophical sense of the term (though the two may be related). Nevertheless, insofar as Being is the epistemic principle it is clear that veracity has a crucial role to play here. But let me reiterate that Being should be understood as a discrete, unified concept. Its ontological primacy and intelligibility (its ‘existence’ and its ‘veracity’) are inextricably linked. Parmenides is particularly emphatic on the unity and cohesion of Being.

Lastly, the ancient concept of Being is really not of a piece with predication. Rather than anything formal or semantic, it is a content-rich, pregnant concept endowed with significant intrinsic value. And this leads us to my third and final suggestion.

3. Being is something privileged and pre-eminent

This may have been evident in the previous section, however I wish to isolate and emphasise it here. The idea that Being is something privileged with a special ontological and epistemological status often appears in our texts – frequently without argument or explanation. It is clearly evident in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, if not Parmenides’ poem, but it is most conspicuous in Plato. Since we have already discussed the *Sophist* and since

less real (as in *R.* 579a where the form of the bed is said to be more real than a bed). Malcolm (1967: 131–139) in discussing Plato’s usage in the *Sophist*, similarly distinguishes *being real* from *existence*. Cornford (1935: 202–252) divines a three-tiered ontology at work in the *Sophist*: namely, real beings, images, and the totally unreal, as per the image of the line in the *Republic*.

this text is often thought to contain a predicative account of Being, let us begin with an example from there.

At *Sophist* 242c4-6 we read that earlier philosophers have been too lax in their approach to the questions of how many Beings there are and what kind they are (πόσα τε καὶ ποῖά ἐστιν). From there, having explicitly thematised the question of what τὸ ὄν refers to (243c10–e2), the subsequent examples clearly treat Beings as ontological primaries (242d–e). We are told that some say there are only two Beings, others three; some say they mingle, others say they clash; some say they are the hot and the cold and so on. Here ‘being’ refers to the fundamental constituents of the cosmos. Thus we encounter the ‘friends of the forms,’ who reject materialism and limit Being to the incorporeal forms (246b6–c3). This usage of ‘being’ tells against the predicative reading, nor is it the only such passage. Indeed, at a culminating point in the discussion with the friends of the forms we read quite explicitly that Being is a living, thinking entity! Theaetetus is incredulous at the mere supposition that ‘complete Being’ (τὸ παντελῶς ὄν) lacks life, soul or mind.²⁴

At *Metaphysics* 1002a8–14 Aristotle broaches the issue of whether body should be regarded as a substance or if perhaps it is surface, line, unit and point that should be substances. Earlier thinkers, he notes, considered body to be the substance and Being (τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸ ὄν ᾗοντο τὸ σῶμα εἶναι), but since it seems that body is defined by surface, line etc., and since it cannot exist without them, certain wiser thinkers came to believe the inverse. And he goes on, if these are not substances then nothing is, because the accidents of these are *not worthy of the name* (οὐ γὰρ δὴ τά γε συμβεβηκότα τούτοις ἄξιον ὄντα καλεῖν). Here too Aristotle is talking about what is ontologically basic.

For better or worse Aristotle has no qualms describing earlier philosophies in reference to this conception of Being – much like Plato (cf. *Sph.* 242c4–243b10). Perhaps the most memorable passage in this vein is in the opening chapter of *Metaphysics Z*. Aristotle foregrounds the question of Being or *ousia* as the question of what is primary. He continues,

Indeed the question that was asked long ago, is now, and always will be asked, and is always giving rise to puzzles – namely, What is being? – is just the question, What is substance? (For this is what some people say is one, others more than one, some that it is a limited number, others an unlimited one.) And that is why we too must most of all, primarily, and (one might

²⁴ See Pl. *Sph.* 248e6–249a10. Theaetetus calls it a δεινὸν λόγον (249a3) and subsequently says: Πάντα ἔμοιγε ἄλογα ταῦτ’ εἶναι φαίνεται (249b1). See generally Gerson (2006).

almost say) exclusively get a theoretical grasp on what it is that is a being in this [substantial] way (*Metaph.* 1028b2–7, Reeve’s translation).

It should be quite clear from this that Aristotle can use ‘being’ to refer to what is ontologically primary and fundamental without further ado.

Returning to Plato, in the *Philebus* (*Phlb.* 57b5 ff.) Socrates finds himself discussing which of the sciences (*epistēmai*) is most precise. Upon hearing that it is dialectic Protarchus understandably asks what this is. Socrates’ answer is emphatic:

Surely anyone could recognize which science we’re talking about. The one concerned with Being and reality and what is by nature always the same in every way – I take it that anyone with a modicum of sense would consider this by far the truest knowledge. (*Phlb.* 58a1–4)

Δῆλον ὅτι ἅς ἂν τὴν γε νῦν λεγομένην γνοίη· τὴν γὰρ περὶ τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ὄντως καὶ τὸ κατὰ ταῦτὸν ἀεὶ πεφυκὸς πάντως ἔγωγε οἶμαι ἠγεῖσθαι σύμπαντας ὅσοις νοῦ καὶ σμικρὸν προσήρηται μακροῦ ἀληθεστάτην εἶναι γνῶσιν.

Comparable usages of ‘being’ would not be hard to multiply (*Thet.* 186c is a good one).²⁵ In a philosophical context the term ‘being’ can readily be employed, without apology or explanation, to refer to the ontological primaries. However, it does more than simply designate the fundamental cosmic stuff, it characterises it as intrinsically intelligible and the source of the intelligibility of the cosmos. What begins to emerge here is that, far from conforming to a familiar notion of existence, truth or predication, the ancient concept of Being reflects and informs a particular way of looking at and explaining the world. This is not the place to explore these ideas, but they clearly have immediate implications for epistemology and ontology. For example, if knowledge is aimed at Being this would drastically limit the *scope* of what counts as philosophical knowledge; where modern epistemologists assume that knowledge extends to quotidian beliefs like knowing that Jones has three coins in his pocket, knowledge-of-Being would constitute a deep grasp of the nature of reality.²⁶ At the level of ontology, the ancient concept of Being leads us

²⁵ Moss (2019: 72–76) shows how Socrates simply assumes that *epistēmē* “is always of what is”.

²⁶ Moss (2019: 77–79) recognises the ontological primacy of Being (which she calls “Robust Being”) and connects this up with its role in epistemology. She notes also (2019: 80–81) that it speaks to what is *real* or metaphysically privileged. Von Fritz discusses how νόος and νοεῖν in Homer might refer to recognizing something for what it is (like recognizing an old woman as a goddess) and makes the following remark: “While [...] νοεῖν is always distinguished from purely sensual perception, it is not conceived of as the result of a process of reasoning, much less as this process itself, but rather as a kind of mental perception, if this expression is allowable. In other words, it may, in some way, appear as a kind of sixth sense which penetrates deeper into the nature of the objects perceived than the other senses. This connotation of the term was to become of great importance in early Greek philosophy” (Von Fritz 1943: 90). Cf. von Fritz (1945; e.g. 241). Gerson (2006) makes the provocative suggestion that the really real, the forms, are in fact divine intellect.

to expect a kind of hierarchy in nature, some items being intrinsically superior to others, and Being itself at the very apex.²⁷

*

I have no doubt that the various uses of *einai* are as the commentators say they are, but for all that, I find it very hard to fully account for Being with the limited tools provided by ‘what is the case’ or ‘what exists.’ And even more so, I struggle to make sense of certain passages with a predicative reading. To speak generally, when we broach philosophical issues – like *What is truth? What does it mean to be an individual?* and so on – we do so with some inchoate understanding of the sort of thing we are grasping after. What I have tried to show in this paper is that the questions surrounding Being are not borne of reflection on language. On the contrary, when the term ‘being’ is employed in its pregnant philosophical sense it refers to the highest of highs, the philosopher’s holy grail, that which fundamentally grounds reality and knowledge thereof. As can readily be observed from the textual evidence, writers like Plato, Aristotle and Parmenides felt very comfortable appealing to a basic conception of Being that enjoyed a special independence (unlike a predicate), that possessed a fundamental oneness and that was content-rich (again, unlike a predicate).

If it seems incredibly that these authors could be so blithe and unconcerned about usages of *esti*, we must remember how easy it is to lose sight of the tools we use even when we are employing them. From the age of infants we navigate highly complex social mores, yet in many cases we do so without any explicit knowledge of the sociology or psychology behind them; native speakers can and do deploy their language in highly complex ways without ever reflecting deeply on its structure (for example, most would not know the difference between ‘I’ and ‘me’ at an explicit level). The ancients, of course, were not utterly unconcerned with how their language worked – as we see from the *Cratylus* or from Prodicus – but this is a far cry from our ‘linguistically-turned’ philosophy.

²⁷ Koyré (1957) documents how this value-laden conception of the world was replaced by a modern ‘mathematical’ concept. Reeve (2000: 291–293) discusses how modern philosophy no longer couples ontological and epistemological primaries (to its own peril). Lear (1988: 273) asserts that two thoughts permeate Aristotle’s view of the world: firstly, that it is ultimately intelligible and, secondly, that reality forms a hierarchy. Vlastos (1965–1966: 13–15) notes the incomparable value Plato places on knowing the forms: “Thus in one and the same experience Plato finds happiness, beauty, knowledge, moral sustenance and regeneration, and a mythical sense of kinship with eternal perfection” (1965–1966: 15).

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The Study of Being in Plato and Aristotle

Usage of the Greek verb ‘to be’ is generally divided into three broad categories—the predicative use, the existential and the veridical—and these usages often inform the way we understand Being in ancient philosophy. This article challenges this approach by arguing that Being is not the product of linguistic reflection in Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle; rather, these thinkers treat Being as the ontological and epistemological primary. Though this may overlap with the linguistic senses, it is not the same thing. The article is divided into three sections: the first one raises several basic issues with the predicative interpretation of Being, the second argues that Being is unified and singular in a significant sense and the third brings out the special pre-immanence of Being.

KEY WORDS

the verb *einai*, predication, existence, forms, Parmenides’ Being

Wykładnia *mimesis* tragedii w *Poetyce* (6–19) Arystotelesa

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*Tragedia bowiem jest naśladowaniem nie charakterów ludzi,
ale ich działań i życia; powodzenie i niepowodzenie zachodzi
w działaniu, a celem jest jakieś działanie, nie cecha charakteru.*

Arystoteles, *Poetyka*, 1450a16

Wprowadzenie do lektury

Zadaniem artykułu jest kontynuacja nowego polskiego przekładu Arystotelesa *Poetyki*, mianowicie tych jej centralnych rozdziałów (6–19), które traktują o wykładni *mimesis* tragedii. W interpretacji pierwszych jej pięciu rozdziałów istotne było rozpoznanie mimetycznych wyróżników i form według tego, jakimi środkami, jakie obiekty i w jaki sposób się kształtowała się twórczość poetycka, ogólnie od improwizacji poprzez epope-

ję do komedii i tragedii. Na podstawie tych wstępnych założeń Arystoteles przechodzi do określenia tragedii i bardziej szczegółowej analizy jej składników, form i funkcji.

Poetyka Arystotelesa, nierozpoznana właściwie w czasach antycznych, odkryta została na nowo dopiero w dobie renesansu poprzez jej łacińskie i nowożytnie przekłady. Odtąd stała się w wymiarze adaptacyjnym kanonem estetyki i krytyki literackiej klasycyzmu. Oderwana jednak od zaplecza filozofii Arystotelesa w jego oryginalnej wizji świata, człowieka i sztuki, bywa ona w nowszych czasach zazwyczaj mylnie rozumiana, przeinaczana bądź całkiem zapomniana.

Wracając do oryginalnej wykładni tej *Poetyki*, trzeba uwzględnić zarówno jej właściwy kontekst problemowy w rozróżnieniu dziedzin przedmiotowych *theoria – praxis – poiesis*, jak i złożony sens współzależności *techne – poiesis – mimesis*. Myślenie (badanie) teoretyczne różni się bowiem od działania praktycznego, a ono od wytwarzania w sztukach. Wszelka zaś sztuka dotyczy tworzenia (*poiesis*), które powstaje podług ludzkiego naśladowania (*mimesis*, cf. *mimos*, *mimika*), a które samo w sobie nie jest jakimś procesem ani sztuką, a tylko stanowi jej wyróżniki i formy składowe.

Platon kwestionował poezję jako *mimesis mimeseos*, czyli wtórną imitację tego, co samo już jest naśladowaniem (świat zmysłowy) pierwowzoru (Idei), a zatem stanowi potrójne oddalenie od prawdy, złudne i emocjonalnie szkodliwe przedstawianie bogów i ludzi. Wbrew temu Arystoteles upatrywał w naśladowaniu naturalny instynkt poznawczy, sprawiający radość nie tylko filozofom, lecz także w jakimś stopniu wszystkim ludziom. Tak jak malarstwo i muzyka, poezja powstaje podług *mimesis*, którą Stagiryta oryginalnie ujmuje w triadzie wyróżników i form, czyli tego, jakimi środkami (*czym*), jakie obiekty (*co*) i jakimi sposobami (*jak*) przedstawia się naśladowczo w tych sztukach. I tak środkami *mimesis* w zakresie dźwięku i mowy są harmonie (spójnie tonów wysokich i niskich) oraz rytmy (układy stóp długich i krótkich) tworzących łącznie melodię instrumentalną i wokalną.

W ten sposób wyróżnił filozof mimetyczne formy twórczości: od muzyki i tańca (z rytmem i harmonią), poprzez epikę i elegię (z mową i metrum wierszowym), mimy i dialogi sokratejskie (z formą dramatyczną), do dytyrambu, nomosu oraz tragedii i komedii (z mową, melodią i metrum). Natomiast wchodzące w grę obiekty *mimesis* stanowią charakter (ethos) ludzkie w zakresie eposu, tragedii i komedii ujawniające się w działaniu, myśleniu i mówieniu. Z kolei sposobami mimetycznego przedstawiania bywają odpowiednio recytacje rapsodów w przypadku eposu oraz inscenizacje jako widowiska teatralne w przypadku dramatu, czyli tragedii i komedii.

Ponadto na podstawie rozróżnienia *mimesis* dramatycznej i diegetycznej (narracyjnej) oraz ethosu (charakteru ludzkiego) wzniesłego i pospolitego określał Arystoteles główne formy twórczości poetyckiej: epepeja, tragedia, komedia. Na temat tej ostatniej nie zachowały się bądź nie zostały podjęte zapowiadane przezeń systematyzujące wywody.

W swej *Poetyce* (6–19) Stagiryta najwięcej i najwnikliwiej analizuje *mimesis* tragedii jako najwyższą formę sztuki poetyckiej. Wspomnieć tutaj trzeba o znacznych trudnościach rozumienia i nieścisłościach przekładu istotnych wyrażań Arystotelesa. Wszyscy

tłumacze i badacze mówią tutaj o jego „definicji” tragedii, choć w sensie Arystotelesowym nie jest to istotnościowa definicja (*horismos*), a tylko określenie (*horos*) projektujące tragedii według jej form i składników mimetycznych, uściślane dalej stopniowo w pewien systematyzujący sposób (zob. wymogi Arystotelesa stawiane definicji: *Top.* 1.5; *APo.* 2.3–10).

Najpierw dla spójnego uchwycenia wyróżników i komponentów określających wstępnie tragedię, posłużmy się takim synoptycznym wykresem, który ujmuje jej triadę mimetyczną odpowiednio w środkach (melodyjność i wysłowienie), w obiektach (opowieść, charakter i myślenie), oraz w sposobie przedstawienia (widowisko jako spektakl teatralny).

MIMESIS TRAGEDII

ἐν οἷς –	τε καὶ ἃ –	καὶ ὧς –
(czym) ś r o d k i	(co) o b i e k t y	(jak) s p o s o b y
μελοποιῖα – <i>melodyjność</i>	μῦθος – <i>opowieść</i>	ὄψεως κόσμος – <i>widowisko</i>
	τὰ ἦθη – <i>charaktery</i>	
λέξις – <i>wysłowienie</i>	διάνοια – <i>myślenie</i>	

Ze wszystkich komponentów tragedii *mythos* jako obiekt *mimesis* jest najistotniejszy, stanowiąc zaiste jej zczyn i duszę. W większości przekładów *Poetyki mythos* tłumaczy się jako „fabuła” (od łac. *fābŭla*) czy jako „intryga” (od łac. *intricāre* = „wpłamywać”), co raczej odpowiada nowożytnej konwencji literackiej, lecz bywa mylące względem greckiego oryginału. *Mythos* (μῦθος, od czasownika μυθίζω, μῦθέω = „mówię”, „opowiadam”) oznacza mowę, oznajmianie, opowieść z heroiczej i legendarnej przeszłości, stąd owo typowe pojęcie „mitu” i jego rola w dramacie greckim.

Chodzi tutaj o taką szczególną opowieść, która dotyczy *praxis* – działania występujących postaci, co Arystoteles nazywa wymownie σύνθεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων, czyli układem właściwie ‘działań’ ludzkich niż ‘zdarzeń’ jako takich. Tragedia bowiem stanowi *mimesis* działania (*praxis*), co przyjęło się tłumaczyć jako „akcja” (od łac. *actio*); zmienia to jednak i modernizuje właściwy sens tego greckiego terminu. Nie chodzi tu przecież o „spektakularną i emocjonującą akcję” w dzisiejszym rozumieniu, ale o postępowanie i uczynki działających postaci (*prattontes*) o danych cechach charakteru w ich sposobie myślenia i wysłowienia. Według Stagiryty naoczne ukazywanie odrażających potworności nie jest oznaką dobrej tragedii, która sprawiać ma doznanie pewnej przyjemności i ukojenia.

Arystoteles kolejno precyzuje poszczególne wyróżniki dotyczące prymatu *mythos* – „opowieści” wyrażającej postaci działające. Zauważmy przy tym, jak metodycznie

przywołuje on wiodący wyznacznik tego, co „domyślne lub konieczne” (τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον), i to we wszystkich tych kwestiach dotyczących kolejno rozmiaru tragedii, jednolitości działań, różnicy poezji i historii, cech charakterów, epizodów, perypetii oraz rozpoznania.

Słowo ἕοικα oznacza „być podobnym” (od εἰκάξεν = upodobnić, wyobrazić sobie na malowidle, domyślać się). W *Retoryce* (*Rh.* 1357a34) tak określa się τὸ εἰκὸς: „Domyślam jest to, co zdarza się często, nie bezwzględnie, jak określają niektórzy, lecz w zakresie tego, co może mieć się inaczej, tak mając się do tego, jak szczegół do ogółu”. Podobnie w *Analitykach pierwszych* (*APr.* 70a4): „To bowiem, o czym się wie, że często zdarza się lub nie zdarza, jest lub nie jest, to jest domysłem, na przykład to, że zazdrośni gardzą sobą, albo że zakochani się miłują”.

Tłumaczenie w *Poetyce* Arystotelesa τὸ εἰκὸς jako „prawdopodobieństwo” bywa mylące, gdyż rzecz nie dotyczy możliwych do przewidzenia częstych zdarzeń fizycznych, a tylko takich ludzkich działań, co do których można domyślać się, że w danym układzie wystąpią lub nie, przy czym zachodzi tu typowa dla dramatu sytuacyjna niepewność i wynikłe zaskoczenie wbrew oczekiwaniu.

Wraz z tym, co domyślne w działaniach, stawia Arystoteles w poezji wyznacznik tego, co konieczne (τὸ ἀναγκαῖον), gdzie wyklucza się, aby było inaczej (cf. *Metaph.* 5.5). Nie ma w tym sprzeczności, gdyż moduł owej konieczności dotyczy konsekwencji logicznej, czyli nieodzownego wynikania jednych działań z drugich, a nie jednych po drugich bez związku sprawczego.

W związku z tym pojawiają się jeszcze takie zalecenia Stagiryty z rozdz. 24 *Poetyki*: „Trzeba więc w tragediach sprawiać coś zadziwiającego, a w eposie raczej dopuszczalne jest to, co nielogiczne, przez co zachodzi najbardziej zaskoczenie, dlatego, że nie widzi się [na scenie] postaci działającej” (*Po.* 1460a13); „Dobierać zaś trzeba [czyiny] niemożliwe domyślne, bardziej niż te możliwe niewiarygodne; dialogi zaś nie układać z części nielogicznych, aby niczego nie było nielogicznego, chyba że poza opowieścią” (*Po.* 1460a27).

Poezja dramatyczna jako *mimesis* na motywach *mythos* przedstawia postaci działające (*prattontes*), co jednak nie oznacza, że wyraża wiedzę praktyczną, faktyczną czy historyczną. *Mimesis* bowiem nie przedstawia faktycznych i konkretnych działań, które należą do badań historii, a tylko takie, które mogłyby zajść podług wspomnianego „domysłu lub konieczności”, i to w sensie ogólnym, czyli bardziej filozoficznym (refleksyjnym i poznawczym). Ponadto poeta jest bardziej twórcą owych opowieści niż miar wierszowych, uznawanych przez niektórych za główny wyznacznik sztuki poetyckiej.

Arystoteles określa kolejno, jaka winna być wielkość (rozmiar) samej opowieści, aby była dobrze skomponowana, miała porządek tworzący piękno, w oglądzie i pamięciowym ujęciu całości, w organicznym swym ograniczeniu. Do tego wymóg jednolitości opowieści, czyli jej zwartości w przedstawieniu działań postaci wedle domysłu lub konieczności.

W *mimesis* tragedii obiektami w zakresie *mythos* są charaktery (τὰ ἦθη) i myślenie (διάνοια) występujących postaci, ujawniających się w mówieniu i działaniu. Charaktery te winny być zacne, stosowne, jednolite i konsekwentne, ukazywane tak, jak czynią to

dobrzy portreciści. Myślenie wyrażone w słowach i charakter ujawniony w działaniu są bowiem dwoma czynnikami wyznaczającymi z natury postępowanie osób dramatu w ich powodzeniu lub nieszczęściu.

Częściami takiej opowieści jest perypetia, rozpoznanie (*anagnorismos*) i cierpienie (*pathos*). Perypetia to wedle domysłu lub konieczności przemiana na przeciwieństwo podjętych działań, a związane z tym rozpoznanie to przemiana osób naznaczonych szczęściem lub nieszczęściem od niewiedzy do wiedzy, przyjaźni lub wrogości.

Są różne formy rozpoznania, z których najlepsze jest przez zaskoczenie nie wywołane znakami, albo to wynikłe z wnioskowania. Wiąże się to odpowiednio z zawikłaniem i rozwikłaniem przedstawianych działań, czyli kolejności przemiany w szczęście lub nieszczęście, a dalej rozwikłania, czyli przemiany losu aż do zakończenia tragedii. Arystoteles rozróżnia opowieści proste i zawikłane z perypetią i rozpoznaniem. Od tego zależne są różne formy tragedii. Kiepskie są tragedie jako opowieści epizodyczne bez powiązań wedle domysłu lub konieczności. Pięknych zaś tragedii układ jest jednolity, natomiast układ dwojaki, na dobre czy na złe, właściwy jest raczej dla komedii. Dobór motywów i wstawiania epizodów różni się w dramatach i eposach.

Z kolei cierpienie stanowi zgubne lub bolesne działanie. Chodzi o tragizm z perypetii przez wzbudzanie litości lub trwogi z działań postaci zwykłych, nie wyróżniających się cnotą czy wadą, ale popadających w nieszczęście przez jakieś zbłądzenie, jak w przypadku króla Edypa. Właściwa tragedia wywołuje litość i trwogę nie z samego oglądu, ale z układu działań postaci sobie bliskich. W przedstawianiu działań budzących litość lub trwogę chodzi bowiem o większe zaskoczenie wynikłe wbrew oczekiwaniu. Poeta w wysłowieniu i oglądzie winien wczuć się w dane postaci. Sztuka poetycka jest bowiem dziełem kogoś z natury uzdolnionego albo natchnionego w boskiej ekstazie.

Kwestie związane z myśleniem (*διάνοια*) działających postaci, czyli dowodzenie, rozstrzyganie i wywoływanie doznań litości, trwogi, gniewu itp., zalicza Stagiryta do zakresu retoryki. W II księdze *Retoryki* traktuje szerzej o tych afektach, określając strach/trwogę (*φόβος*) jako „pewien ból i niepokój wynikły z wyobrażenia przyszłego zła zgubnego lub bolesnego” (*Rh.* 1382a21), a litość/współczucie (*ἔλεος*) jako „pewien ból ze zła jawnego i bolesnego niezasażenie przydarzającego się komuś, co może dotknąć nas samych lub kogoś z naszych bliskich” (*Rhet.* 1385b13).

Arystoteles w *Poetyce* rozważa pokrótce litość i trwogę jako wyznacznik dobrej tragedii, ale już nie wspomina o oczyszczeniu (*katharsis*) z tych doznań jako celu samej tragedii. Wzmiankuje natomiast o *katharsis* z odesłaniem do *Poetyki* w zakończeniu *Polityki* (*Pol.* 8.7) traktując o edukacji muzycznej. Rozróżnił tam melodie i harmonie jedne dotyczące charakterów (*ethika*), drugie dotyczące działań (*praktika*) oraz te „entuzjastyczne” dotyczące stanów natchnienia czy szaleńczego pobudzenia. Dalej czytamy, co następuje:

„Twierdzimy, że nie dla jednego pożytku korzystać trzeba z muzyki, ale dla wielu (bo i gwoli wykształcenia i oczyszczenia (*katharsis*) – co zaś nazywamy oczyszczeniem, teraz tylko ogólnie, a dalej w [księgach] *O poetyce* powiemy jaśniej – a po trzecie dla rozrywki (*diagoge*), dla odprężenia i rozluźnienia napięcia), to jasne, że należy korzystać ze wszystkich harmonii, nie zaś w ten sam sposób korzystać ze wszystkich, lecz dla

wychowania z tych najbardziej etycznych, dla wysłuchania z innych mistrzowskich, tych praktycznych i entuzjastycznych. Względem bowiem niektórych dusz doznanie zachodzi gwałtownie, a to przypada wszystkim, u jednego bardziej się wyróżnia, u drugiego mniej, tak jak litość i trwoga, a jeszcze entuzjazm. I tym poruszeniem są zawładnięci niektórzy; pod wpływem świętych melodii widzimy takich, gdy posługują się takimi ekscytującymi dusze melodiami, uspokajając się, jakby podlegali leczeniu i oczyszczeniu. To samo muszą odczuwać ci, którzy są skłonni do litości i trwogi, i w ogóle ci emocjonalni (*pathetikoí*); inni zaś na ile każdemu z tego przypada, a u wszystkich powstaje pewne oczyszczenie i doznanie ulgi wraz z przyjemnością. Podobnie i melodie dotyczące działania (*ta praktika*) sprawiają ludziom nieszkodliwą radość. Dlatego takimi harmoniami i takimi melodiami winni posługiwać się ci, którzy teatralną muzykę podejmują w zawodach” (Pol. 8.7, 1341b36–1342a18).

W powyższym kontekście pojęcie *katharsis* ma niewątpliwie sens leczniczy. Jednak w zachowanej wersji *Poetyki* Arystotelesa ten wątek nie został podjęty. Wspomina zaś w niej mimochodem o celu najlepszej tragedii, jakim jest doznawanie przyjemności w jej należytych odbiorze. U samego Stagiryty trudno nam jednak dociec sensu moralnego czy estetycznego pojęcia *katharsis*, jakkolwiek najwięcej starano się tak rozpoznać ten zamysł katartyczny greckiego filozofa.

Zakres tego, co czytał, widział i znał Arystoteles, był ogromny, miał bowiem do dyspozycji setki tragedii, które nie przetrwały do naszych czasów, a także nieznanym nam rozległym materiał archiwalny o dramacie attyckim. Można więc mówić o jego wnikliwym rozeznaniu i bezpośrednim doświadczeniu teatralnym. Dzieliły go od początków tragedii tylko dwa stulecia, podczas gdy dla badaczy nowożytnych ten materiał przepadł i owa odległość czasowa wynosi ponad dwa tysiąclecia. Jego dzieło nie ma sobie równego w antyku i nowożytności, niezależnie od wątpliwości i ciągłych dyskusji w tym zakresie.

Niestety w dzisiejszych opracowaniach na temat tragedii greckiej nie uwzględnia się już oryginalnych rozróżnień Stagiryty co do komponentów i form mimetycznych; co najwyżej nawiązuje się krytycznie do jego analiz historyczno-literackich wokół pochodzenia tragedii (zob. częściowo Lesky 2006: 15–19, 20–37). Gdyby ująć leksykalnie antyczny dramat grecki w formułach systematyzujących *Poetyki* Arystotelesa (dzieła niewątpliwie fundamentalnego), nadrzędna w tym byłaby jego triada mimetyczna z jej pochodnymi wyróżnikami, zapewne inaczej określonymi i uporządkowanymi niż w niedawnym polskim obszernym opracowaniu (zob. Chiżyńska, Czerwińska, Budzowska 2020).

Poniżej proponujemy lekturę tej partii *Poetyki* (6–19) Arystotelesa w nowym naszym tłumaczeniu. Inaczej niż w dotychczasowych czterech polskich jej przekładach, staramy się możliwie wiernie oddać zarówno istotne wyrażenia techniczne Arystotelesa, nie nagiągając ich do pojęć nowożytnej estetyki czy krytyki literackiej, jak i typową jego kompozycję w uchwyceniu tak ważnej acz skomplikowanej sekwencji wywodów. Staramy się właściwie rozpoznać jego sens wiodących założeń i rozróżnień, aby uniknąć pewnych zniekształceń, które bywają nadal powielane w różnych tłumaczeniach i opracowaniach. Dla ułatwienia lektury wprowadzamy w tekście większą ilość akapitów i stosownych

nagłówków tematycznych. Podana na końcu w wyborze *Bibliografia* stanowić może odniesienie do wielu ważnych kwestii nie podjętych w tym artykule.

ARYSTOTELES, *O POETYCE*, 6–19

6. [OKREŚLENIE TRAGEDII W JEJ MIMETYCZNYCH FORMACH I SKŁADNIKACH]

O naśladowaniu więc w heksametrach oraz w zakresie komedii powiemy później. O tragedii zaś pomówmy, biorąc z tych stwierdzeń powstające określenie jej istoty.

Tragedia tedy jest naśladowaniem działania poważnego [25] i spełnionego, mającego pewną wielkość, w mowie powabnej odmiennie dla każdej z form [*mimesis*] w ich składnikach, działających [postaci], a nie poprzez narrację, zmierzając przez litość i trwogę do oczyszczenia tych doznań.

Nazywam powabną mowę mającą rytm, harmonię i melodię; odmiennie zaś w ich [30] formach [*mimesis*] to, że niektóre tylko poprzez miarę [wierszową] są spełniane, inne znów poprzez melodie.

[SPOSÓB I ŚRODKI MIMESIS]

Skoro działające [postaci] tworzą naśladowanie, to pierwszą z konieczności częścią tragedii byłby układ widowiska, następnie melodyjność i wysłowienie; w nich bowiem tworzą naśladowanie. Nazywam wysłowieniem samą kompozycję w [35] miarach [wierszowych], a melodyjnością to, co ma w całości taką oczywistą możliwość.

[OBIEKTY MIMESIS: OPOWIEŚĆ, DZIAŁANIA, CHARAKTERY, MYŚLENIE]

Skoro jest to naśladowanie działania, a działa się przez pewne [postaci] działające, które muszą mieć pewne cechy wedle charakteru i myślenia – dzięki nim bowiem mówimy, że [1450a] działania mają pewne cechy, to z natury dwie są przyczyny działań: myślenie i charakter, wedle których wszystkim przypada powodzenie lub niepowodzenie.

Otóż opowieść jest naśladowaniem działania; nazywam taką opowieść [5] układem działań, a charakterami to, podług czego mówimy, że mają pewne cechy [postaci] działające; myśleniem zaś to, w jakich [wywodach] mówiący dowodzą czegoś lub ujawniają swój pogląd.

[SZEŚĆ SKŁADNIKÓW I FORM MIMESIS]

Musi tedy w całej tragedii być sześć części, podług czego taką jest właśnie tragedia; tymi zaś są: opowieść, charaktery, wysłowienie, [10] myślenie, widowisko i melodyjność. To bowiem, czym się naśladuje, ma dwie części [wysłowienie i melodia]; jak się naśladuje – jedna [układ widowiska]; a co się naśladuje – trzy [opowieść, charakter i myślenie], a prócz tych nic więcej. Tymi więc wielu [poetów] posługuje się, by tak rzec, jako formami [*mimesis*], bo i widowisko zawiera każda i charaktery, opowieść, wysłowienie, melodię i myślenie [15] w ten sposób.

[UKŁAD OPowieści: MIMESIS DZIAŁAŃ I ŻYCIA]

Najważniejszą z tych [form] jest układ działań; tragedia bowiem jest naśladowaniem nie ludzi, ale ich działań i życia; powodzenie i niepowodzenie jest w działaniu, a celem jest jakieś działanie, nie cecha [charakteru]. Podług charakterów są zaś pewne takie cechy, ale podług [20] działań [postaci] bywają szczęśliwe albo przeciwnie. Nie po to wszak działają, by naśladować charaktery, lecz charaktery ujawniają się poprzez działania. Toteż działania i opowieść stanowią cel tragedii, a cel jest najważniejszy ze wszystkiego.

Zresztą bez działania nie powstałaby tragedia, a bez charakterów by powstała [25]. Wszak tragedie większości nowszych poetów są bez charakterów, i na ogół jest ich wielu takich, jak z malarzy, na przykład Zeuksis względem Polignota. Polignot to najlepszy malarz charakterów, a malarstwo Zeuksisa w ogóle nie wyraża charakteru.

Ponadto, gdyby ktoś ułożył po kolei wypowiedzi wyrażające charaktery i w mowie [30] i w myśleniu dobrze ujęte, nie sprawi tego, co ma być dziełem tragedii, lecz znacznie bardziej [sprawi to] ta w niedomiarze stosująca je tragedia, posiadająca zaś opowieść i układ działań.

W związku z tym najważniejsze, czym tragedia działa na duszę, są składniki opowieści, czyli perypetie i rozpoznania. [35] Zresztą tego oznaka taka, że początkujący poeci wcześniej zdołają się wprawić w wysłowieniu i ujęciu charakterów niż w układzie działań, tak jak pierwsi owi poeci niemal wszyscy.

[ZACZYN TRAGEDII: OPowieŚĆ I CHARAKTERY]

Zaczynem więc i jakby duszą tragedii jest opowieść, a po drugie – charaktery. Podobnie bowiem jest w [1450b] malarstwie. Bo gdyby ktoś malował najpiękniejszymi barwami bezładnie, nie sprawiłby takiej przyjemności, jak biało-czarnym szkicem. Jest to więc naśladowanie działania i poprzez to właśnie [postaci] działających.

[MYŚLENIE I CHARAKTER]

Trzeci [składnik] to myślenie. Tym [5] jest zdolność wypowiedzania tego, co wiążące i zgodne, jak w przypadku przemówień jest to dziełem polityki i retoryki. Dawni bowiem poeci tworzyli [postaci] przemawiające politycznie, a dzisiejsi retorycznie.

Charakter zaś jest czymś takim, co ukazuje wybór – to, co ktoś, gdy nie jest oczywiste, wybiera [10] lub czego unika (dlatego charakter nie wyraża się w tych mowach, w których nie ma w ogóle tego, co mówiący wybiera czy unika). Myślenie zaś [stanowi to], w jakich [wywodach] się czegoś dowodzi, że jest [tym] lub nie jest, albo ogólnie się coś oznajmia.

[WYSŁOWIENIE, MELODYJNOŚĆ I WIDOWISKO]

Czwarta [część] to wysłowienie dialogów. Mówię tak, jak wcześniej stwierdziłem, że wysłowienie jest wyrażeniem myśli w słowach, co i w wierszach i [15] w dialogach ma ten sam potencjał.

Z pozostałych [części] melodyjność to największe z przystrożeń. Widowisko zaś jest oddziaływaniem na duszę, ale niezwiązanym ze sztuką i najmniej właściwe dla poetyki. Moc bowiem tragedii jest i bez agonu [teatralnego] i [udziału] aktorów. Zresztą w przygotowaniu [20] widowiska ważniejsza jest sztuka scenografa aniżeli poetów.

7. [UKŁAD DZIAŁAŃ – WŁAŚCIWA WIELKOŚĆ – CAŁOŚĆ]

Po określeniu tych [składników i form *mimesis*], powiemy dalej, jaki powinien być układ działań/zdarzeń, skoro to jest pierwsze i najważniejsze dla tragedii.

Ustala się przez nas, że tragedia jest naśladowaniem spełnionego i całego działania, mającego pewną wielkość [25]; może bowiem być całość i nie mieć żadnej wielkości. Całością zaś jest to, co ma początek, środek i koniec. Początkiem jest to, co samo niekoniecznie po czymś innym następuje, a po nim z natury jest lub powstaje coś innego. Koniec zaś przeciwnie, jest tym, co samo po czymś innym z natury jest [30] czy to z konieczności, czy po większej części, a po nim nie ma już niczego innego. Środkiem zaś jest to, co samo jest po czymś innym, a po nim coś innego. Trzeba tedy, by skomponowane dobrze opowieści ani nie zaczynały się, gdzie popadnie, ani kończyły, gdzie popadnie, lecz stosowały się do rzeczonych form [wielkości].

[PORZĄDEK I PIĘKNO]

Ponadto, skoro to, co piękne, żywa istota i każda rzecz [35], złożone jest z pewnych [części], nie tylko winno mieć uporządkowanie, lecz także zawierać wielkość nie przypadkową. Piękno bowiem jest we wielkości i porządku, dlatego zbyt mała istota żywa nie

okazałaby się piękna, bo zaciera się jej bliski ogląd powstały w niedostrzeżonym czasie, ani zbyt wielka [1451a], bo łączny jej ogląd nie powstaje, lecz jedność i całość tego oglądu wymyka się patrzącym, na przykład gdyby ta istota miała dziesięć tysięcy stadiów. Toteż, tak jak w ciałach i w istotach żywych musi być wielkość, i to dobrze postrzegalna [5], tak i w opowieściach musi być długość, i to możliwa do objęcia pamięcią.

[OGRANICZENIE DŁUGOŚCI]

Ograniczenie długości w zakresie agonów [teatralnych] i ich oglądania nie należy do sztuki [poetyckiej]. Bo gdyby miało współzawodniczyć sto tragedii, to przy klepsydry by współzawodniczyły, jak to mówią, że było tak raz po raz. Według zaś samej natury [10] przedmiotu ograniczenie jest takie: na tyle większe aż do postrzegalności, a piękniejsze jest wedle wielkości. Aby to wprost wyrazić: wystarczające jest takie ograniczenie wielkości, w jakiej wedle domysłu lub konieczności kolejno zachodzi przemiana ku pomyślności z niepomyślności lub z pomyślności w niepomyślność [15].

8. [JEDNOLITOŚĆ OPowieści – NAŚLADOWANIA UKŁADU DZIAŁAŃ]

Opowieść jest jednolita nie tak, jak sądzą niektórzy, jeśli dotyczy jednej [posta-ci]. Wszak wiele i rozlicznych działań komuś jednemu przypada, z których nic nie jest jednym. Tak też wiele działań należy do jednego, z których nie powstaje żadne jedno działanie. Dlatego wszyscy [20] ci poeci, którzy stworzyli *Herakleidę*, *Tezeidę*, oraz inne takie poematy, zdają się błędzić. Sądzą bowiem, że skoro kimś jednym był Herakles, to i jedna o nim opowieść przypada.

Homer zaś jak i w czym innym się wyróżnił, tak i to pięknie zdał się postrzec, czy to dzięki sztuce czy naturze. Tworząc bowiem *Odyseję* [25] nie opiewał tego wszystkiego, co mu [Odysowi] się przydarzyło, na przykład zranienia na Parnasie, udawania szalonego w poborze na wojnę, z czego jedno z drugim nie było zajściem koniecznym lub jedno z drugiego domyślne, lecz wokół jednolitego działania, jak mówimy, skomponował *Odyseję*, podobnie jak *Iliadę*.

[30] Trzeba więc, tak jak w innych naśladowaniach, by jednolite było naśladowanie czegoś jednego, tak też opowieść, skoro jest naśladowaniem działania, by była jednolita i wokół jego całego, a układ działań taki, że po przestawieniu czy usunięciu jakiejś części, zmieniona zostaje i naruszona całość. To bowiem, co dodanie [35] lub nie dodane nie ma znaczenia, nie jest bowiem żadną częścią całości.

9. [OPOWIEŚĆ WEDLE DOMYSŁU LUB KONIECZNOŚCI. RÓŻNICA MIĘDZY POEZJĄ A HISTORIĄ]

Jasne z tych stwierdzeń jest i to, że dziełem poety nie jest opowiadanie zaszłych zdarzeń, lecz takich, które mogłyby zdarzyć się wedle domysłu lub konieczności. Albowiem [1451b] historyk i poeta nie tym się różnią, że jeden wyraża się w miarach [wierszowych], a drugi bez tych miar, bo można by pisma Herodota ułożyć w tych miarach i nie mniej byłyby historią, jak bez tych miar. Lecz tym się różnią, że jeden mówi [5] o zdarzeniach zaszłych, drugi zaś o takich, które mogłyby się wydarzyć.

Dlatego też bardziej filozoficzna i poważniejsza jest poezja od historii. Poezja bowiem orzeka raczej to, co ogólne, historia zaś orzeka to, co szczegółowe. Czymś ogólnym jest to, co przypada komuś mówić lub czynić wedle domysłu lub konieczności, a tym [10] zajmuje się poezja, nadając imiona [postaciom]. Szczegółem zaś jest na przykład to, co działał Alkibiades lub czego doznał.

[NADAWANIE IMION POSTACIOM]

W komedii stało się to już bardziej oczywiste. Układając bowiem opowieść z tego, co domysłne, przypadkowe imiona nadaje się [postaciom], nie tak jak [czynią to] jambografowie, którzy mówią o kimś konkretnym [15]. W tragedii zaś przydarzają się imiona [postaci] przeszłych; racja tego taka, że wiarygodne jest to, co możliwe. Co do zdarzeń, które nie zaszły, wcale nie wierzymy, czy były możliwe; jasne zaś, że te zaszły były możliwe. Niesłałyby się bowiem, gdyby były niemożliwe.

Niemniej jednak w niektórych tragediach tylko jedno [20] lub dwa imiona są znane z tradycji, inne zaś wymyślone; w niektórych zaś żadne, jak na przykład w *Anteusie* Agatona. Podobnie wymyślone są w nim wydarzenia i nazwy, a tym nie mniej sprawiają radość. Toteż w ogóle nie trzeba wyszukiwać tradycyjnych opowieści, na których oparte są tragedie [25]. Bo śmieszne jest ich szukać, skoro nawet te znane tylko nielicznym są znane, a jednak radują wszystkie.

[POETA TWÓRCĄ OPOWIEŚCI NIŻLI MIAR WIERSZOWYCH]

Jasne więc z tego, że poeta powinien być raczej twórcą opowieści niż miar [wierszowych], o ile jest poetą wedle naśladowania, a naśladuje działania. Gdyby nawet przypa-
dło [30] mu podjąć wydarzenia [faktyczne], tym nie mniej byłby poetą, bo nic nie przeszkadza, by niektóre ze zdarzeń były takimi, co stają jako domysłne i możliwe, podług których jest on poetą.

[OPowieści EPIZODYCZNE BEZ DOMYSŁU LUB KONIECZNOŚCI]

Spośród prostych opowieści i działań te epizodyczne są najgorsze. Nazywam epizodyczną opowieść, w której epizody [35] nie łączą się wzajemnie ani domyślnie ani konieczne. Takie tworzone są przez samych kiepskich poetów, przez dobrych zaś dzięki grze aktorów. Współzawodnicząc bowiem i ponad możność rozciągając opowieść, [1452a] często zmuszeni są naruszyć ustalony porządek.

[ZASKOCZENIE Wbrew OCZEKIWANIU]

Skoro naśladowanie dotyczy nie tylko spełnionego działania, lecz także tych strasznych i litościwych, a te powstają zwłaszcza, gdy jedno wynika z drugiego wbrew oczekiwaniu. Bo zaskoczenie [5] będzie większe od wynikłego z trafu czy przypadku, skoro z wydarzeń przygodnych te okazują się najbardziej zaskakujące, które zachodzą jakby nie przypadkowo, jak na przykład posąg Mitysa w Argos zabił sprawcę jego śmierci, spadając na patrzącego. Wydaje się bowiem, że takie rzeczy [10] nie przypadkiem się dzieją, toteż muszą być piękniejsze takie opowieści.

10. [OPowieści PROSTE I ZAWIKŁANE Z PERYPETIĄ I ROZPOZNANIEM]

Opowieści jedne są proste, inne zaś zawikłane, bo i działania, których naśladowaniami są opowieści okazują się zgoła takimi. Nazywam prostym działaniem takie [15], którego stawanie określa się ciągłym i jednolitym, a przemiana zachodzi bez perypetii czy rozpoznania; zawikłanym zaś takie, w którym wraz z rozpoznaniem lub z perypetią bądź przemiana zachodzi z obydwoma. Te zaś winny powstawać z samego układu opowieści, toteż z działań uprzednich wynikają one [20] z konieczności lub podług domysłu. Nader bowiem różni się powstawanie tych [działań] przez tamte czy tych po tamtych.

11. [Części OPowieści: PERYPETIA, ROZPOZNANIA, CIERPIENIE]

Perypetia jest przemianą na przeciwieństwo podjętych działań, jak wspomniano, i jak mówimy, wedle domysłu lub konieczności. Na przykład w *Edypie* [25] przybysz, by pocieszyć Edypa, i uwolnić go od lęku przed matką, wyjawiając kim jest, sprawił coś

przeciwnego, a w *Lynkeusie*, gdy prowadzony jest on na śmierć, Danaos podąża, aby go zabić; z działań zaś wynikło, że ten zginął, a tamten siebie ocalił.

Rozpoznanie zaś [30], jak sama nazwa wskazuje, od niewiedzy ku poznaniu jest przemianą, ku przyjaźni lub wrogości [postaci] naznaczonych szczęściem lub nieszczęściem. Najpiękniejsze jest rozpoznanie, gdy zachodzi wraz z perypetią, jak na przykład w *Edypie*.

Są też inne rozpoznania. Tak jest w odniesieniu do przygodnych rzeczy nieożywionych [35], jak wspomniano, że się zdarzają; czy sprawił to ktoś, czy nie sprawił, jest tak do rozpoznania. Lecz szczególnie z opowieści i szczególnie z działania jest owo już wspomniane. Takie bowiem rozpoznanie i perypetia wzbudzi litość [1452b] lub trwogę, takich to działań tragedia stanowi naśladowanie, skoro doznanie szczęścia lub nieszczęścia z nich wyniknie.

Skoro zaś rozpoznanie dotyczy pewnych [postaci], to jeden z obydwu rozpoznaje tylko drugiego, gdy wiadomo [5], kim jest ten drugi; gdy zaś obydwu trzeba rozpoznać, jak na przykład Ifigenia rozpoznana jest przez Orestesa z wysłanego listu, jego zaś rozpoznanie przez Ifigenię wymagało innego rozpoznania.

Dwie są tedy części opowieści: perypetia [10] i rozpoznanie, a trzecią jest cierpienie. Z tych perypetia i rozpoznanie zostały omówione. Cierpienie zaś jest to działanie zgubne lub bolesne, jak na przykład jawne ukazanie śmierci, męczarni, zranień i innych takich [czynów].

12. [CZĘŚCI ILOŚCIOWE TRAGEDII: PROLOG, EPEJSODION, EKSODOS, PARODOS I STASIMON]

Części tragedii, którymi jako formami [*mimesis*] trzeba się posłużyć [15], wcześniej omówiliśmy. Podług zaś ilości, na jakie dzieli się ona specjalnie, części są takie: *prolog*, *epejsodion*, *eksodos* i partia chóralna, a z niej *parodos* i *stasimon*. Wspólne są one dla wszystkich, właściwe zaś są te śpiewane ze sceny oraz owe lamentsy [*kommoi*].

Prologiem jest cała partia tragedii przed wejściem chóru [20]; *epejsodion* zaś to cała partia tragedii pomiędzy pieśniami chóru; *eksodos* cała partia tragedii, po której nie ma już pieśni chóru. Wejście partii chóralnej to pierwszy występ całego chóru; *stasimon* to pieśń chóru bez anapestów i trochejów; lament to żałobna pieśń wspólna dla chóru i aktorów [25] ze sceny.

[Tutaj następuje powtórzenie pierwszego zdania tego rozdziału]

13. [MIMESIS DZIAŁAŃ STRASZNYCH I LITOŚCIWYCH]

Na co trzeba się nastawić i co trzeba dobrze uchwycić tworząc opowieści, i skąd będzie dzieło [30] tragedii, kolejno trzeba dopowiedzieć do tych [określeń] obecnie wspomnianych.

Skoro więc układ najpiękniejszej tragedii winien nie być prosty, lecz zawikłany, i ma ona być naśladowaniem działań strasznych i litościwych (to bowiem jest swoiste dla takiego naśladowania), to przede wszystkim jasne, że nie należy ukazywać ludzi prawych popadających [35] ze szczęścia w nieszczęście, bo nie to jest ani straszne, ani litościwe, tylko odrażające; ani też ludzi podłych z nieszczęścia w szczęście, bo najmniej tragiczne to ze wszystkiego; niczego bowiem nie spełnia tego, co ma, ani to miłe ludziom [1453a], ani litościwe, ani straszliwe. Przecież człek zgoła podły ze szczęścia w nieszczęście nie popada. Taki wszak układ byłby miły ludziom, lecz ani litościwy, ani straszny. Jeden bowiem dotyczy nieszczęścia kogoś niewinnego, drugi [5] zaś kogoś podobnego [do nas]. Litość dotyczy niewinnego, a trwoga tego podobnego, toteż ani litościwe ani trwożliwe nie będzie takie zdarzenie.

[POSTAĆ TRAGICZNA – Z NIESZCZĘŚCIA JAKO ZBŁĄDZENIA]

Pozostaje tedy ktoś pośredni między nimi. Jest nim ten, który nie wyróżnia się ani cnotą i prawością, ani przez podłość i nikczemność nie popada w nieszczęście, lecz [10] przez jakieś zbłądzenie [*harmatia*], pośród tych cieszących się wielką sławą i powodzeniem, jak na przykład Edyp i Tyestes czy inni mężowie znani z takich rodów.

Musi więc pięknie ułożona opowieść być raczej jednolita niż dwojaka, jak niektórzy mówią, i zmieniać się nie z nieszczęścia w szczęście, lecz przeciwnie [15], ze szczęścia w nieszczęście, nie wskutek podłości, lecz jakiegoś wielkiego zbłądzenia, o czym była mowa, i kogoś lepszego raczej niż gorszego.

[UKŁAD JEDNOLITY PIĘKNYCH TRAGEDII]

Oznaką tego jest to, co występuje [w tragediach]. Najpierw bowiem poeci podejmowali przygodne opowieści, teraz zaś o nielicznych rodach tworzą najpiękniejsze tragedie, na przykład [20] o Alkmeonie, Edypie, Orestesie, Meleagrze, Tyestesie, Telefosie i o tych innych, którym przypadło doznać lub sprawić straszne czyny. Tak więc podług sztuki najpiękniejsza tragedia jest z takiego układu [działań].

[EURYPIDES NAJBARDZIEJ TRAGICZNY]

Dlatego myślą się ci, którzy zarzucają Eurypidesowi, że [25] czyni to w swych tragediach i że wiele kończy się nieszczęściem. A jest to, jak wspomniano, słuszne. Oznaka tego największa: na scenach bowiem i w agonach [teatralnych] takie działania okazują się najbardziej tragiczne, jeśli odnoszą powodzenie, a Eurypides, nawet jeśli inne rzeczy niezbyt dobrze stawia, okazuje się z poetów najbardziej tragiczny.

[UKŁAD DWOJAKI WŁAŚCIWY KOMEDII]

[30] Po drugie, jako pierwszorzędny zwany jest przez niektórych taki układ ujęty dwojako, tak jak *Odyseja*, a kończący się przeciwnie dla lepszych i gorszych. Wydaje się być pierwszorzędny wskutek skłonności widzów, gdyż poeci podążają za tym [35] na życzenie widzów. Taka przyjemność nie bierze się jednak z tragedii, lecz właściwa jest raczej komedii, gdzie wrodzy są sobie w opowieści, tacy jak Orestes i Aigistos, stając się zaś przyjaciółmi i żaden nie ginie przez drugiego.

14. [LITOŚĆ I TRWOGA Z OGLĄDU CZY Z UKŁADU DZIAŁAŃ]

[1453b] Może więc litość i trwoga powstawać z oglądu [na scenie], może też z samego układu działań, co jest pierwszorzędne i oznaką lepszego poety. Winna bowiem i bez oglądu tak być ułożona opowieść, żeby [5] posłyszane działania sprawiały trwogę i litość z samego ich przebiegu, jakby ktoś doznał tego wysłuchując opowieści *Edypa*. Wywołanie tego przez ogląd jest mniej artystyczne i wymaga pewnego scenicznego zabiegu.

Natomiast ci, którzy poprzez ogląd nie wywołują trwogi, lecz tylko [10] coś potworzonego, nie mają nic wspólnego z tragedią. Nie należy wszak szukać wszelkiej przyjemności w tragedii, tylko tej jej właściwej. Skoro zaś z przeżycia litości i trwogi przez naśladowanie poeta ma sprawić przyjemność, jest jasne, że trzeba to sprawiać w działaniach.

[DZIAŁANIA POŚRÓD OSÓB BLISKICH]

Rozważmy więc, jakie te straszne i jakie litościwe [afekty] okazują się wynikać [15] z działań. Muszą takie wzajemne działania zachodzić pomiędzy osobami bliskimi albo wrogami lub między żadnymi z nich. Jeśli chodzi o wroga wobec wroga, to żadnej w tym litości nie sprawia się i nie zamierza, prócz samego cierpienia; ani też wobec osób obojętnych. Gdy zaś wśród bliskich powstają bolesne [20] czyny, jak na przykład brat zabija lub zamierza zabić brata, syn ojca, matka syna, czy też syn matkę, albo popełnia się coś innego, tego trzeba wyszukać.

[PRZYPADKI DZIAŁAŃ ŚWIADOMYCH LUB NIE Z TRADYCYJNYCH OPOWIEŚCI]

Tradycyjnych tedy opowieści burzyć nie można, na przykład tego, że Klitajmestra została zabita przez Orestesa, a Eryfila przez Alkmeona [25]; poeta winien je wynajdować i tymi tradycyjnymi posługiwać się pięknie. Czym zaś zwiemy owo pięknie, powiemy jaśniej.

Może bowiem tak się stawać działanie, jak dawni tworzyli [postaci] świadome i rozpoznające, tak jak Eurypides przedstawił Medeę zabijającą swe dzieci. Można [30] też działać nie wiedząc, że działa się strasznie, jeśli później rozpozna się pokrewieństwo, tak jak *Edyp* Sofoklesa. To więc [zachodzi] poza dramatem, a w samej tragedii, jak na przykład *Alkmeon* Astydamaasa lub *Telegonos* w *Zranionym Odysie*. Jeszcze prócz tych, po trzecie, [35] można w przyszłości zdziałać coś nieszczęsnego przez niewiedzę, aby to rozpoznać przed samym uczynieniem.

Poza tymi nie można inaczej. Bo albo musi się działać albo nie, i wiedząc albo nie wiedząc. Z tychże przypadek wiedzy i nie podjęcia działania jest najgorszy. Jest to odrażające i nie jest tragiczne, bo bez cierpienia. Dlatego nikt [1454a] nie tworzy [tragedii] w ten sposób, chyba że rzadko, jak na przykład w *Antygonie* Hajmon wobec Kreona.

Co do podjęcia działania, po drugie lepiej, że nie wiedzący działa, działając zaś ma rozpoznać. Nie ma bowiem w tym nic odrażającego, a rozpoznanie jest zaskakujące.

Najpiękniejsze [5] ze wszystkich jest to ostatnie, mówię na przykład w *Kresfontesie*, gdzie Meropa zamierza zabić swego syna, ale nie zabija, bo go rozpoznała, albo w *Ifigenii*, siostra ma zabić brata, lub w *Helli*, syn chcąc wydać matkę, był ją rozpoznał.

Dlatego też, jak dawniej mówiono, nie wokół wielu [10] rodów osnute są tragedie. Szukając bowiem nie dla efektu sztuki, lecz z przypadku, odkryli to właśnie dla przedstawień w opowieściach. Zmuszeni są tedy nawiązywać do tych rodów, w których wydarzyły się takie nieszczęścia. O układzie działań i jakie winny być opowieści [15], powiedziano tedy wystarczająco.

15. [CZTERY CECHY CHARAKTERÓW POSTACI]

Co tyczy się charakterów, cztery są cechy, które trzeba uwzględnić. Jedna i pierwsza to ta, by były zacne. Będzie to cechą charakteru, jeśli, jak wspomniano, uczyni to jasnym mowę lub działanie, jaki ma być wybór – jeśli zacny, to i [charakter] zacny. Jest [20] to cecha w każdym rodzaju, bo i kobieta jest zacna i niewolnik, choć chyba z nich jeden rodzaj jest pośledni, a drugi w ogóle marny.

Druga cecha to właściwość. Jest bowiem odwaga cechą charakteru, ale nie jest właściwa dla kobiety jako odwaga czy jako groźność.

Trzecia cecha to odpowiedniość. A to jest czymś różnym [25] od czynienia charakteru zacnym i odpowiednim, jak wspomniano.

Czwarta cecha to konsekwentność. Bo jeśli nawet niekonsekwentny jest ten, kto tworzy naśladowanie i taki charakter zakłada, jednak konsekwentnie musi być niekonse-

kwentny. Jest to przykładem podłości charakteru nie koniecznie, jak na przykład Menelaos w *Orestesie* [30]. Przykładem zaś charakteru niewłaściwego i niestosownego jest lament Odysa w *Scylli* oraz wypowiedz *Melanippy*, a niespójnego charakteru – *Ifigenia w Aulidzie*, bo w niczym nie przypomina tej błagającej później.

[CHARAKTERY WEDLE KONIECZNOŚCI I DOMYŚLNOŚCI]

Trzeba zaś w charakterach, podobnie jak w układzie działań, dociekać zawsze tego, co konieczne lub domyślne [35], toteż ktoś o takim [charakterze] takie to rzeczy mówi lub czyni koniecznie lub domyślnie, i jedno po drugim staje się koniecznie lub domyślnie.

[ROZWIĘLANIE Z OPOWIEŚCI I NAŚLADOWANIE WEDLE CHARAKTERÓW I NAOCZNOŚCI]

Jasne więc, że i rozwikłania opowieści muszą wynikać z samej [1454b] opowieści, a nie, jak w *Medei* z mechanizmu, czy jak w *Iliadzie* przy odpłynięciu. Bo mechanizmu trzeba używać przy zdarzeniach na zewnątrz dramatu, albo tych co stały się wcześniej, o których nie może człowiek wiedzieć, albo tych późniejszych [5], które wymagają zapowiedzi i oznajmienia. Wszystko to bowiem dajemy bogom do ujrzenia. Nic niedorzecznego nie powinno być w działaniach; jeśli zaś nie, to poza tragedia, na przykład w *Edypie* Sofoklesa.

Skoro zaś tragedia jest naśladowaniem ludzi od nas lepszych, to należy naśladować, jak dobrzy malarze [10]; oni bowiem odtwarzając właściwy kształt, czyniąc podobnych, malują piękniejszych. Tak i poeta naśladowując ludzi gniewliwych, poczciwych i mających inne takie cechy charakterów, takimi jakimi są, czyni ich wybornymi, na przykład zawziętość Achillesa, jak to przedstawił Agaton i Homer.

[15] Na to trzeba baczyć, a przy tym na naoczności zmysłowe towarzyszące z konieczności twórczości poetyckiej. Bo i podług nich można pobiłdzić często; mówiono już o tym w wydanych rozprawach wystarczająco.

16. [FORMY ROZPOZNANIA PRZEZ OZNAKI]

Czym jest rozpoznanie, powiedziano wcześniej. Formy [20] zaś rozpoznania są takie: pierwsza, mniej artystyczna, którą w większości stosuje się z braku inwencji, to ta poprzez oznaki. Jedne z nich są naturalne, jak na przykład dzida, którą „noszą synowie Ziemi”, lub jak gwiazdy w *Tyestesie* Karkinosa. Inne zaś są nabyte, a z tych jedne na ciele, jak blizny, inne na zewnątrz, jak [25] naszyjniki, a w *Tyronie* poprzez wannę. Można się mini posłużyć lepiej lub gorzej; na przykład Odys po bliźnie inaczej został rozpoznany przez niańkę, inaczej przez świniopasów. Są one wszak dla uwierzytelnienia mniej

artystyczne, i wszelkie takie, natomiast te oznaki z perypetii, [30] jak w scenie kąpieli, są lepsze.

[ROZPOZNANIA WYMYŚLNE]

Drugimi są rozpoznania wymyślone przez poetę, dlatego nieartystyczne. Na przykład w *Ifigenii* rozpoznano, że to Orestes; ona bowiem poprzez list, on zaś rzecze to, co chce poeta, a [35] nie to, co [głosi] podanie. Dlatego bliski jest rzeczonoego błędu, bo mógłby [Orestes] mieć jakieś [znaki] i być rozpoznany. Tak też w *Tereusie* Sofoklesa odgłos wrzeciona.

[ROZPOZNANIE Z PRZYPOMNIENIA]

Trzecie rozpoznanie jest z przypomnienia czegoś, co nasuwa się [1455a] patrzącemu, jak na przykład w *Kypryjczykach* Dikajogenesa; widząc bowiem obraz zapłakał. I w opowieści Alkinoosa, [Odys] słuchając kitarzysty i wspominając zapłakał, stąd byli rozpoznani.

[ROZPOZNANIE Z WNIOSKOWANIA]

Czwarte rozpoznanie jest przez wywnioskowanie, jak na przykład w *Ofiarnicach*, [5] [wnioskuje Elektra], że podobny ktoś przybył, podobny zaś nikt nie jest tylko Orestes, ten zatem przybył. Tak samo u sofisty Polyidosa co do Ifigenii. Domyślnie bowiem, rzekł, było dla Orestesa wywnioskować, że jego siostra była złożona w ofierze i jemu przypada być złożonym w ofierze. A w *Tydeusie* Teodektesa, że przybył, by znaleźć syna, [10] i sam ginie. Także w *Fineidach* – widząc bowiem to miejsce wywnioskowały przeznaczone, że w mim dane jest im umrzeć, bo tam były złożone.

[ROZPOZNANIE Z PARALOGIZMU]

Jest też pewne rozpoznanie z paralogizmu patrzącego, jak na przykład w *Odysie* – *falszywym pośle*. Bo to, że napiął on łuk, a nikt inny, było wymysłem i założeniem poety, jeśli mówił, że poznaje łuk, którego nie widział. [15] To jakby przez tamto rozpoznane jest dzięki temu, stanowi paralogizm.

[ROZPOZNANIE PRZEZ ZASKOCZENIE]

Ze wszystkich najlepsze jest rozpoznanie z samych działań przez zaskoczenie powstałe dzięki domysłom, jak na przykład w *Edypie* Sofoklesa oraz w *Ifigenii*. Domyślne

bowiem jest to, że ona chciała wysłać listy. Takie tylko rozpoznania są [20] bez wymyślonych znaków i naszyjników; drugie zaś są te z wywnioskowania.

17. [WCZUCIE SIĘ W WYSŁOWIENIU I OGLĄDZIE W PRZEDSTAWIANE POSTACI]

Trzeba zaś układać opowieści i wczuć się w wysłowienie, aby najbardziej mieć je przed oczyma. Tak bowiem [poeta] najwyraźniej postrzegając, jakby w nich [25] stających się uczestniczył, wykryje, co odpowiednie, i zgoła uniknie niezgodności. Oznaką tego jest to, co zarzucano Karkinosowi. Amfiaraos bowiem powrócił ze świątyni, czego nie postrzegając zapomniał, a na scenie przepadł przy niezadowoleniu widzów.

Na ile to możliwe, [poeta] winien wczuć się w dane postaci [30]. Bo najbardziej wiarygodni ze swej natury są ci, którzy wnikają w ich afekty, i szaleje ten, kto bywa szalony, i gniewa się ten, kto naprawdę bywa rozgniewany. Dlatego twórczość poetycka jest dziełem kogoś uzdolnionego z natury albo natchnionego bosko; z tych bowiem jedni są dobrze uformowani, a drudzy tworzą w ekstazie.

[MOTYWY OGÓLNE I WŁAŚCIWE EPIZODY]

Motywy i te już podejmowane powinien poeta [1455b] sam sobie wyłożyć ogólnie, a potem w pewien sposób tworzyć i rozwijać epizody. Powiadam, w ten sposób przedstawiać to, co ogólne, jak na przykład w *Ifigenii*: pewna dziewczyna ma być złożona w ofierze i znika niejawnie ofiarnikom; osiadła zaś w innym kraju, [5] gdzie był zwyczaj składania przybyszów w ofierze bogini, której ona była kapłanką. W czas potem jej bratu przypadło przybyć do kapłanki, bo tak nakazał bóg z pewnej racji poza ogółem; przybył tam, co jest już czymś poza podaniem. Przybył i pojmany, mając być poświęcony, został rozpoznany, czy to tak, jak [10] Eurypides, czy jak Polyidos przedstawił, według domysłu mówiąc, że nie tylko jego siostra, ale i on sam winien być złożony w ofierze, a stąd jego ocalenie. Potem już nadając imiona [postaciom] wprowadza się epizody; tak będą właściwe epizody, jak w przypadku Orestesa szaleństwo, przez co został pojmany, a [15] ocalenie [nastąpiło] dzięki oczyszczeniu.

[EPIZODY W DRAMATACH I W EPOSACH]

W dramatach tedy epizody są zwięzłe, epepeja zaś w nich jest rozwlekła. W *Odysei* wszak motyw nie jest rozwlekły; ktoś przez wiele lat będąc daleko od domu, przesładowany przez Posejdoną, ostał się zaś jedyny; tymczasem sprawy w jego domu tak się mają, że [20] majątek grabiony jest przez zalotników żony, a syn zagrożony życiem. On zaś [Odys] miotany burzami powraca, rozpoznany przez niektórych, sam jedyny ocalały niszczy wrogów. Taki jest tedy właściwy motyw, a reszta to epizody.

18. [ZAWIKŁANIE I ROZWIKŁANIE]

W każdej tragedii jest zawikłanie i rozwikłanie. Na zewnątrz [25] [działania] i niektóre wewnątrz zazwyczaj stanowią zawikłanie; reszta to rozwikłanie. Nazywam zawikłaniem to, co następuje od początku aż do tej partii, która jest ostatnia, z czego zachodzi przemiana na szczęście lub nieszczęście; rozwikłaniem zaś to, co następuje od początku tej przemiany losu aż do końca. Tak w *Lynkeusie* Teodektesa [30] zawikłanie obejmuje wcześniejsze działania i pochwylenie chłopca, a znów tego rozwikłanie od oskarżenia o zabójstwo aż do końca [tragedii].

[CZTERY FORMY TRAGEDII: ZAWIKŁANA, PATETYCZNA, ETYCZNA, WIDOWISKOWA]

Cztery są formy tragedii (tyle bowiem ich rzeczonych części): jedna to ta zawikłana, której całością jest perypetia i rozpoznanie. Druga zaś jest patetyczna, jak na przykład [1456a] *Ajaksy* czy *Iksjoni*. Inna dotyczy charakteru, jak na przykład *Ftotidy* i *Peleus*. Czwarta jest widowiskowa, jak na przykład *Forkidy* i *Prometeusz* i wszelkie takie [zajścia] w Hadesie.

Najbardziej więc wszystkie starać się trzeba wypróbować, a jeśli nie, to te ważniejsze i we większości, bo inaczej [5] tak to dzisiaj wyszydza się poetów. Stali się bowiem wedle każdej partii dobrzy poeci, a wymaga się, by jeden swym własnym dobrem prześcigał drugiego. Słusznie jest orzec tragedię różną czy tą samą niczym innym jak tylko opowieścią, a to stąd, że takie samo ich zawikłanie i rozwikłanie. Wielu zaś poetów dobrze [10] zawikłując, rozwikłuje kiepsko, powinno się zaś nad jednym i drugim zapanować.

[KOMPOZYCJA TRAGEDII I EPOSU]

Trzeba też, jak wspomniano, często pamiętać i nie tworzyć tragedii jako kompozycji epickiej. Epicką nazywam opowieść wielowątkową, jakby ktoś tworzył całą opowieść *Iliady*. Tam bowiem wskutek długości części przybierają właściwą wielkość, [15] w dramatach zaś wychodzi to daleko poza oczekiwanie. Świadcstwo tego takie, że ci co zburzenie Ilionu w całości tworzyli, a nie podług części, jak Eurypides czy Niobe i nie tak, jak Ajschylos, przepadają w agonach całkiem lub marnie, skoro nawet Agaton poniósł w tym tylko porażkę.

[TRAGICZNOŚĆ DZIAŁAŃ Z PERYPETII]

W perypetiach i prostych [20] działaniach osiągają to, co zamierzają, na sposób zadziwiający; tragiczne to bowiem i miłe ludziom. Jest to tak, gdy ktoś mądry w swej

przewrotności zostanie zwiedziony, jak Syzyf, albo ktoś mężny, lecz nieprawy, zostanie pokonany. Jest to i domyślne, jak powiada Agaton; z domysłem bowiem wiele się dzieje [25] i wbrew domysłowi.

[UDZIAŁ CHÓRU]

Chór zaś powinien podjąć jeden z aktorów, i być częścią całości i współuczestniczyć, nie tak jak u Eurypidesa, lecz jak u Sofoklesa. U innych zaś poetów partie śpiewane niczym więcej nie należą do opowieści niż do innej części tragedii, dlatego śpiewane są tylko wstawki, co wpraw wprowadzone zostało [30] przez Agatona. Jednak czym różnią się czy to śpiewanie wstawki, czy to, jeśli mowę jednego z innym się scali, czy też cały epizod?

19. [MYŚLENIE – DOWODZENIE, ROZWIKLANIE, AFEKTY]

O innych formach [tragedii] już powiedziano, pozostaje więc orzec o wysłowieniu i myśleniu. Kwestie dotyczące myślenia będą wyłożone [35] w *Retoryce*, to bowiem jest bardziej właściwe dla tamtej metody badania. Dotyczy myślenia to wszystko, co poprzez mowę winno być sprawiane. Ich części to dowodzenie i rozwikłanie i afekty, jak [1456b] litość, trwoga, gniew i inne takie, a jeszcze ich zwiększanie i pomniejszanie. Jasne zaś, że też w działaniach trzeba posługiwać się tymi samymi formami, gdy ma się wzbudzić litości lub trwogi, czy to wielkie czy domyślne. Prócz tego [5] różnica taka, że te afekty winny ujawniać się bez objaśnienia, a te co w wypowiedzi przez mówiącego winny być wywołane i stawać się za sprawą mowy. Bo jakież by było dzieło mówiącego, gdyby ujawniał radości, ale nie przez wypowiedź?

[FORMY WYSŁOWIENIA]

W zakresie wysłowienia jedna jest forma wyrazu: schematy wysłowienia, [10] które należą do wiedzy deklamującego i mającego taką architektonikę, jak czym jest rozkaz, prośba, opowiadanie, groźba, pytanie, odpowiedź itp. Znajomość ich lub niezajomość nie odnosi się w nim to do krytyki poetyckiej, co warte jest [15] troski. Bo za jakież uznałby ktoś błąd to, co Protagoras zarzuca [Homerowi], że sądząc prosić, rozkazuje, mówiąc: „gniew opiewaj bogini!”. Rozkazywać bowiem – powiada – czynić coś lub nie, jest rozkazem. Dlatego pozostawmy to, jako że badanie to dotyczy innej, nie [sztuki] poetyckiej.

[Z oryginału greckiego przełożył Marian A. Wesoły]

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Exposition of the *mimesis* of Tragedy in Aristotle's *Poetics* (6–19)

The aim of this article is to present a new Polish translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, namely, those of its central chapters (6–19) that deal with the Stagirite's explication of the *mimesis* of tragedy. When interpreting the first five chapters of the treatise, it is important to recognize the mimetic distinctions and forms according to means and objects as well as the question of how poetic creativity takes shape (generally from improvisation through epic to comedy and tragedy). On the basis of these preliminary assumptions, Aristotle proceeds to define tragedy and analyze its components, forms and functions in more detail. Unlike the previous Polish translations of the *Poetics*, we have attempted here to render Aristotle's essential technical expressions as faithfully as possible, without distorting them in accord with various concepts of modern aesthetics or literary criticism. We have also sought to preserve the Stagirite's typical composition and his complex argument. Only in this way can the sense of Aristotle's leading assumptions and distinctions be properly discerned. For the ease of reading, we also introduce more paragraphs and relevant subject headings into the text.

KEY WORDS

Aristotle, *Poetics* (6–19), *mimesis* of tragedy, new Polish translation and interpretation

The *paschein* and *pathê* of the Earth and Living Beings in Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias (*Meteorologica* 1.14)

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In his 2013 monograph on *Structure and Method in Aristotle's Meteorologica*, Malcolm Wilson showed that Aristotle conceived of meteorological phenomena as analogous to the bodily processes of animals.¹ Wilson also showed that for the Stagirite, the sublunar world should not be seen as a single body, being rather composed of many different indi-

¹ Wilson (2013: 281).

viduals.² However, Wilson did not articulate the relationship between these two theories—that is, he did not answer the following question: how is it possible for the Earth to behave like an animal if it is not a single body? In this paper, I argue that the answer to this question lies in the different ways in which the Earth and animals undergo *pathê*; this can be deduced from what Aristotle says, and is stated more explicitly by Alexander of Aphrodisia.

In fact, in chapter 1.14 of *Meteorology*,³ devoted to climatic changes,⁴ Aristotle, after comparing such changes to the maturation and ageing of living organisms, states that:

Just, it does not happen to those [i.e., the bodies of animals and plants] to suffer these things [i.e., maturation and old age] in each part separately, but it is necessary for the being to mature and decay all at once, whereas in the case of the earth this happens in each part separately, due to cooling and warming.⁵

It is good to analyse what the similarities and differences are between the transformations of the Earth and those of living beings, paying particular attention to the vocabulary used by Aristotle. To understand exactly how climate change is similar to the life cycle of a living being, it is first necessary to understand what types of change Aristotle is referring to. We can start with the sentence that opens the chapter, because in it Aristotle emphasises the existence of two different types of change in the environment in the long term: on the one hand, the same region is wet in one era, but dry in another; on the other hand, what is now land was once sea, and vice versa.⁶

Both of these changes are linked to the emergence and drying up of rivers. In fact, Aristotle states shortly afterwards that the presence or absence of the sea from a certain region is caused by the rivers. The details of this causal link are actually not very clear in the Aristotelian text.⁷ However, following the interpretation of Webster, Lee and Wilson, one can assume that Aristotle conceives of the relationship between river and sea in the following way. When a new river is created, it deposits sediment at its mouth, which, accumulating, creates new land;⁸ the sea, being moved away from that place, must necessarily inundate another. When, after a long period, the river dries up, the sea returns to

² Wilson (2013: 281).

³ The literature on Aristotle's *Meteorology* is not extensive. Apart from the commented translations (Webster 1923; Tricot 1941; Lee 1952; Strohm 1970; Louis 1982; Pepe 1982; Groisard 2008; Thillet 2008), the mentioned monography written by Wilson is the main study on the work. One can also cite Freeland (1999).

⁴ This chapter belongs with the previous ones and the next three (i.e., the first three chapters of the second book). Together, these chapters form a section on the rivers and the sea, with the account of winds introduced just before this section and continued after it. This section is considered by Strohm as an insertion (Strohm 1970: 155–156). Wilson introduces it as a part of a more general discussion of emanations, which also include winds (Wilson 2009: 67, n. 9).

⁵ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a28–31.

⁶ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a19–25.

⁷ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351b3–8.

⁸ To historically contextualize Aristotle's account of siltation, see Irby (2016: 187–189; 2021: 66–68).

cover the region it originally occupied, leaving behind that which it had occupied in the meantime.⁹ The birth of a river thus causes both the transformation from sea to land of one area and the reverse process in another; and the same is true of the drying up of a river. The difference is that the birth of the river transforms the mouth into dry land and another coast into the sea, while, on the contrary, the drying up of the river causes the sea to return to the former mouth and the dry land to the other coast.

The relationship between the moisture content of a piece of land and the presence or absence of a river might also seem similar; that is, one might get the impression that the state of the river is the cause of the moisture content. Indeed, when presenting the phenomenon of moisture variations, Aristotle states that:

The same places on Earth are neither always wet nor always dry, but change according to (κατά) the rising and falling of the rivers.¹⁰

The use of κατά might suggest that rivers are the cause and moisture is the effect, i.e. that the birth of a river makes the earth wetter and its disappearance makes it drier. In reality, however, Aristotle has a causality of the opposite direction in mind, as is evident from what he says a little further on: springs—and, consequently, rivers—disappear when the earth becomes drier.¹¹ Therefore, it is the moisture content of the earth that causes the existence or non-existence of rivers, and not vice versa.

Rivers thus constitute the link between the two types of environmental change mentioned by Aristotle at the beginning of chapter 1.14: as Wilson points out, rivers are the effect of changes in humidity and the cause of the retreat and advance of the sea.¹² In other words, the climatic changes mentioned by Aristotle are changes in the moisture content, which cause rivers to appear or disappear, which in turn influence the coastal profile. Therefore, the cause of the changes in the landscape is the changing degree of dryness/humidity of the land.¹³ Aristotle himself says that the ‘cause and principle’ (ἀρχή [...] καὶ αἴτιον) of environmental changes are the changes in the state of the inner parts of the earth.¹⁴

The evolution of the moisture content of the soil in a given region is not a random process, but follows a precise pattern. The soil, which is too wet at the beginning of the

⁹ Webster (1923: *ad locum*). Lee (1952: 108–109 n. a). Wilson (2013: 172). Solmsen seems to imply a different interpretation, as he portrays the action of the rivers as just reducing the volume of the sea, and he states that this action is counterbalanced by floods; that is to say, he does think that the birth of a river ‘pushes’ the sea in an area previously occupied by land, nor he refers to the effects of rivers drying up. In any case, Solmsen is right when he stresses that Aristotle wants to introduce, against the Presocratic idea of the sea progressively drying up, the image of a balanced sublunary world, where the proportions between the different parts never changes, as this is crucial to ensure that the world is eternal (Solmsen 1958: 273–275).

¹⁰ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a19–21.

¹¹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a36–351b3.

¹² Wilson (2013: 172).

¹³ On dry and wet in Aristotle, see Dimas, Falcon, Kelsey (2022).

¹⁴ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a26–28.

cycle, gradually loses the water with which it is impregnated, reaching an optimum moisture content; at this stage it flourishes. When, however, the drying process continues, and the proportion between wet and dry becomes unbalanced in favour of the latter, the soil dries out.¹⁵

This process is described by Aristotle using biological terms. Indeed, he states that the inner parts of the earth ‘have maturation and old age’ (ἀκμὴν ἔχει καὶ γῆρας).¹⁶ The philosopher explicitly says that, in this respect, the internal parts of the earth are ‘like the bodies of plants and animals’ (ὥσπερ τὰ σώματα τῶν φυτῶν καὶ ζώων):¹⁷ indeed, the body of a living being ‘matures and decays’ (ἀκμάζειν καὶ φθίνειν), and the same happens to the earth.¹⁸ Biological terms are used again to denote changes in the earth’s moisture content later in the chapter. Aristotle states that the regions of the earth first ‘are brought to life’ (βιώσκονται),¹⁹ then ‘grow old’ (γηράσκει).²⁰ Similarly, he says that a newly formed earth such as that produced by the deposits of the Nile, after a certain time, ‘prosper’ (εὐθeneῖ, a verb normally used for living beings).²¹ The earth has, therefore, a life cycle, just like plants and animals.²²

There are, however, various differences between the development and decay of the earth on the one hand and the life of a plant or animal on the other. One of these differences is not presented as such by Aristotle, but it is no less obvious. In fact, the philoso-

¹⁵ That the two extremes of the cycle are characterised by two opposing excesses (too much moisture and too much dryness, respectively) while maturity coincides with the balance between the two extremes, is perhaps stated most clearly when Aristotle gives examples of environmental changes in different regions. The philosopher says that initially the lands created by the Nile were marshy, waterlogged. As time progresses, however, there is a gradual drying up. This is at first positive, because it turns the swamps into fertile land, but then becomes negative, because it makes the land increasingly arid (Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a2–8). Actually, this is not really an example of the life cycle of the earth, because we are talking about the deposits from the river, and the existence (or, at any rate, the capacity) of the river depends on the moisture of the soil from which it flows. The real beginning of the cycle is therefore when the mountain becomes impregnated with water, not when the river deposits sediment creating a swamp. But the basic point holds true in any case: we go from excessive moisture to a fertile balance of wetness and dryness to excessive dryness. In fact, this same cycle (the similarity is explicit) can be found in the comparative history of Argos and Mycenae, which for Aristotle provide an excellent example of the environmental changes that also occur in larger regions (Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a8–17).

¹⁶ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a28. I have translated ἀκμὴ and ἀκμάζω as ‘maturing’ and ‘ripening’, rather than as ‘maturity’ and ‘being ripe’, because Aristotle contrasts ἀκμάζω with φθίω, which indicates the process of decay; ἀκμὴ, moreover, is contrasted with γῆρας, which is the age at which one grows old rather than the single moment of maximum old age. Scholars who have translated *Meteorology* also tend to interpret the two terms in this sense: ‘the interior of the earth grows’, ‘each of them necessarily grows’ (Webster 1923); ‘the whole creature must grow to maturity’ (but ‘the interior parts of the earth, like the bodies of plants and animals, have their maturity’, Lee 1952: 107); ‘le parti interne della terra hanno un ciclo di sviluppo’, ‘tutto il corpo insieme necessariamente si sviluppa’ (Pepe 1982: 72). Moreover, as will be seen, Alexander of Aphrodisia also interprets and uses ἀκμὴ and ἀκμάζω in a sense that is not static, but dynamic (see footnote 83).

¹⁷ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a27–28.

¹⁸ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a29–30.

¹⁹ More precisely, βιώσκομαι means being brought *back* to life; as we shall see, these changes are cyclical.

²⁰ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a32–36.

²¹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a6.

²² Moreover, this life cycle involves a change from wetness to dryness in both cases. We have already seen that the earth is very wet at the beginning of the cycle and progressively dries up, until it reaches its final, ‘dead’, state. As Lloyd has pointed out, Aristotle associates the life of animals with wetness and their old age and death with dryness (Lloyd 1964: 104). Therefore, for animals, too, a life cycle is a change from being wet to being dry.

pher states that the earth at some point becomes wet again, and its 'life cycle' begins anew.²³ Hence, Aristotle says that changes in the environment occur 'according to a cycle' (κατά [...] τινα [...] περίοδον)²⁴ and that the drying up of the soil continues 'until at last the beginning of the same cycle (τῆς περιόδου τῆς αὐτῆς) returns'.²⁵ It is, then, evident that the condition of the earth is different from that of living beings proper, for whom old age is followed by death. Aristotle states that the world changes, but is neither begotten nor perishes, because it is eternal.²⁶ While in the case of plants and animals flowering and growing old occurs only once, the earth, eternal, repeats this cycle countless times.

The cause of the 'zeroing' of the cycle is the 'great winter': in fact, Aristotle believes that, just as within a year there is a season (winter) in which it rains more than during the rest of the year, so too within a much longer period there is a phase with more rain.²⁷ Naturally, the length of this phase is proportional to the length of the period this rainy phase is part of. One can imagine that if within a year the rainy season lasts a few months, in a multi-century period such as the one we are talking about, this season must extend over decades and even centuries. In any case, longer than normal periods of frequent rainfall have the effect of impregnating the soil with a great deal of moisture, with the effect precisely that the earth 'becomes young again' and the cycle of maturing and ageing repeats itself once more.²⁸

Another difference between earth and living beings proper, as far as the process of maturation and senescence is concerned, is that in the case of the earth this process lasts much longer, even when considering a single cycle of development and decay. For Aristotle, it is crucial to emphasise this difference between earth and animals, and in particular human beings, since it explains why no people have any memory of environmental changes of the kind described in this chapter. In fact, the philosopher states that the life cycle of the earth is of such long duration that, before it is complete, not only do the individual human beings who witnessed its beginning die, but the entire civilisation to which they belonged also perishes.²⁹

From the perspective of this paper, however, the most important difference between the life cycle of a living being proper and that of the Earth is another. In the case of the living being, the transition from generation to maturity to death occurs for the organism as a whole, i.e. for all its parts together. The various regions of the Earth, on the other hand, experience these transitions each at a different time. It is not the Earth as a whole that passes from a state of wetness to a state of dryness, but each of its parts separately,

²³ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a35–36; 352b11–19.

²⁴ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a25–26.

²⁵ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b15–16; transl. Webster.

²⁶ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b16–17.

²⁷ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a28–31.

²⁸ According to Chroust, Aristotle assumes such cyclic catastrophes (here and in the first book of *On Philosophy*, which, again according to Chroust, is the source of this chapter of *Meteorology*) to explain why civilisations end, and generally why mankind does not remember its infinite past (Chroust 1973).

²⁹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351b8–13.

so that at any given time in the history of the world some regions of the planet will be flourishing and others will be arid. Aristotle expounds this difference between the Earth and living beings in the passage, which I have already quoted, in which he states that the process of development and decay affects plants and animals in their entirety, but the Earth in each of its parts separately.³⁰ Immediately afterwards, Aristotle reiterates that while some parts wither, in turn (κατὰ μέρος) other regions (ἕτεροι [...] τόποι) flourish.³¹ Indeed, the entire chapter is based on the idea that environmental changes affect different regions of the Earth rather than the planet as a whole. This is clear right from the incipit of the chapter:

The same regions of the earth (οἱ αὐτοὶ τόποι τῆς γῆς) are neither always wet nor always dry...³²

This sentence is repeated almost literally a few pages later: it is necessary that

the same places (αὐτούς [...] τόπους) are not for ever moist through the presence of sea and rivers, nor for ever dry.³³

And again, at the end of the chapter:

the same places of the earth (οἱ αὐτοὶ τόποι τῆς γῆς) do not always remain moist.³⁴

But even when citing examples of environmental changes by humans, Aristotle refers to individual regions: Egypt,³⁵ the lands around Argos and Mycenae,³⁶ the region of Ammon in Libya,³⁷ the lake Maeotis,³⁸ the area around the Bosphorus.³⁹ Indeed, in the case

³⁰ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a28–31.

³¹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a32–36.

³² Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a19–20.

³³ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b18–19; transl. Webster. In this passage, Aristotle seems to be saying that the fact that the earth's life cycle begins in different places necessarily follows from the premise that the world as a whole was not generated, and will never become corrupt. However, the philosopher seems to have no reason to rule out the possibility that the Earth may experience a cyclical transition from moisture to dryness and then back to moisture globally (although this is not what happens in practice). So perhaps in this passage Aristotle only means: (1) that the Earth is subject to perpetual change, not a single 'life' from generation to final corruption; (2) that we therefore experience cyclical change, in which wetness and dryness alternate; and (3) that, more precisely, this change affects different regions of the Earth separately.

³⁴ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 353a20–21.

³⁵ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351b27–352a2; 352b20–31. In the latter passage, Aristotle states that 'the facts about the Red Sea are a sufficient proof (τεκμήριον)' that the Egyptian land was produced by the Nile. On the use of τεκμήριον in *Meteorology*, see Freeland (1990: 85–94). Even though Freeland does not mention the passage on the Red Sea, it seems to me that it confirms Freeland's hypothesis that Aristotle uses τεκμήρια for abduction, that is to say, to confirm his own description of phenomena.

³⁶ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a8–14.

³⁷ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b31–353a1.

³⁸ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 353a1–7.

³⁹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 353a7–14.

of the districts of Argos and Mycenae, the temporal displacement of the cycles of prosperity and aridity is explicit, as Aristotle states that when Argos was at the beginning of the cycle (marshy land), Mycenae was at the middle (fertile land); this stage was reached by Argos at the time Aristotle teaches, but in the meantime Mycenae had reached the final stage (arid land).⁴⁰ Just after mentioning the cases of these two districts, Aristotle clarifies what scale of change he is talking about:

It must therefore be assumed that exactly what occurred in this small place (ἐπὶ τούτου τοῦ τόπου [...] ὄντος μικροῦ), also occurs for vast areas and entire regions (περὶ μεγάλους τόπους καὶ χώρας ὅλας).⁴¹

Even as he broadens the scope of the earth's maturing and ageing cycle, Aristotle reiterates that these are τόποι and χώραι, regions, not the planet as a whole. Furthermore, Aristotle responds to those who claim that the Earth is drying out not by denying that many places (τόποι) where there was sea are now dry land, but rather by pointing out that in many other places the opposite has happened;⁴² once again, the cornerstone of Aristotle's argument is that, in a given moment, different regions are at different stages of the cycle of progressive drying out (which, as we have seen, has an effect on the position of the sea). Finally, when Aristotle summarises his conclusions at the end of the chapter, he says that the region (ὁ τόπος) from which each of today's rivers flows has not always been wet.⁴³ Aristotle thus reiterates until the end that the change in the moisture content of the soil affects each part of the Earth separately. The whole Earth is subject to wetting and drying, but in each of its parts this cycle begins at a different time.

One can note that the difference between the different regions consists not only in the fact that the cycle of maturing and ageing begins at a different time in each place, but also in the different rhythm that this cycle has depending on the type of soil. In fact, after saying that the different regions change separately from one another, Aristotle adds that

the parts of the Earth also assume a different potentiality (καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τὰ μέρη τῆς γῆς λαμβάνει διαφέρουσαν), so that they can (δύναται) remain moist until a certain moment.⁴⁴

Different regions have a different capacity to retain the moisture they acquire at the beginning of the cycle, so for some the drying process is slower than for others. Aristotle makes this consequence explicit later, when he also explains the cause of this difference in potential between different places. Certain characteristics of the mountains from which

⁴⁰ On this temporal difference between the climatic cycles of Argos and Mycenae as an explanation of the history of the two cities since Homer's time, see Huxley (1973: 274–276).

⁴¹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a14–17.

⁴² Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a17–25.

⁴³ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 353a16–17.

⁴⁴ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a32–34.

rivers flow determine the ability of the soil to remain moist;⁴⁵ these are in particular size, density and temperature.⁴⁶ If a mountain is large, it retains more water; the same is true if its soil is compact or if the region is cold (of course, the effect of these factors is additive, so a mountain that is simultaneously large, dense and cold ensures maximum water retention). Conversely, a small mountain may hold less water; a soil that is not dense because it is porous, composed of stones or clay will hold less moisture; and – although Aristotle does not explicitly say so – a river will have a shorter life in a warmer climate.⁴⁷ The effect of these differences in moisture-holding capacity is that rivers flowing from large, dense, cold mountains manage to survive until the beginning of the next cycle, while the others die out at some point. This is why some rivers are perennial, but others are not.⁴⁸

Aristotle also explains why the life cycle of the earth does not begin everywhere at the same time. In fact, he emphasises the fact that the great winter does not occur throughout the Earth, but in a different region each time. When there is an excess of precipitation, it does not affect the entire planet, but only a part of it.

It [i.e., the overabundance of rainfall] does not always occur in the same places (κατὰ τοὺς αὐτοὺς τόπους).⁴⁹

The presence of the expression οἱ αὐτοὶ τόποι, mentioned so many times to state that different regions are at different stages of development, is not accidental: Aristotle wants precisely to emphasise how the differences between places with regard to the date of the great winter are the cause of the differences with regard to the stage of the cycle in which each region is found. The great winter constitutes the beginning of the earth's life cycle, so if it occurs at different times in each region, the 'calendar' of the different parts of the earth will be out of phase. The example used by Aristotle to prove that the exceptionally heavy rainfall that starts a new life cycle of the earth occurs in limited territories is the flood of Deucalion. This event in fact mainly affected the ancient Hellas, i.e. the region of Dodona and the Achelous.⁵⁰

Aristotle uses several different terms to designate the transformations of the earth during the cycle from one great winter to the next. We have already mentioned the biological terms used by Aristotle to indicate the different phases of the cycle: a region first βιώσκειται, then ἀκμάζει (i.e. experiences a process of ἀκμή), until it reaches a state

⁴⁵ On the relationship between rivers and mountains in Aristotle, see Irby (2016: 191 = Irby 2021: 71).

⁴⁶ Aristotle had already said that the ability to retain water depended on heat and cold.

⁴⁷ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b4–16.

⁴⁸ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b3–8; 353a27–28.

⁴⁹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a31–32.

⁵⁰ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a32–352b3. Given the central role the rivers and the mountains from which they flow play in the life cycle of the Earth, it is natural for Aristotle to divide the Earth on the basis of mountain ranges and streams. Indeed, the symmetry of geography is ensured by the existence of corresponding mountains and rivers in opposite parts of the planets. On this, see Pajón Leyra, Bartoš (2021: 107).

in which it εὐθενεῖ, and finally φθίνει and γηράσκει (i.e. is in the γῆρας).⁵¹ The beginning of the cycle is referred to by Aristotle as ἡ καταβολὴ τῆς περιόδου τῆς αὐτῆς.⁵² The becoming wet of a soil is designated using the expression ἔνυδρος γίγνεσθαι,⁵³ and the maintaining of this state by the expression ἔνυδρος διαμένειν;⁵⁴ for the becoming dry both the expression ξηρός/ξηρότερος γίγνεσθαι⁵⁵ and the verb ξηραίνεσθαι⁵⁶ are used. Aristotle then makes use of various adjectives and expressions to indicate the state in which a particular soil is: for a condition of excessive humidity, he uses the expression ἐλώδης εἶναι;⁵⁷ for an optimal condition, καλῶς ἔχειν;⁵⁸ being unproductive, due to excessive humidity or aridity, is denoted with ἀργός.⁵⁹ The same lexicon, enriched by some other adjective, is found when Aristotle speaks of the soil reaching a certain condition: in fact, to indicate that a land has reached the optimal state of moisture he uses the expressions ἔρχεσθαι εἰς τὸ καλῶς ἔχειν⁶⁰ and χρήσιμος γίγνεσθαι ('becoming usable'),⁶¹ while the subsequent process, in which the land becomes less and less fertile, is described as a ἀργός γίγνεσθαι⁶² or a χείρων γίγνεσθαι ('becoming worse').⁶³ In general, the fact that the moisture content changes over time is indicated with the verbs γίγνομαι (in this context, 'to happen'),⁶⁴ μεταβάλλω (to change)⁶⁵ and συμβαίνω (to happen)⁶⁶ and with the nouns associated with the first two of these verbs, i.e. γέनेσις and μεταβολή.⁶⁷ Γέनेσις is used in the expression φυσικὴ περὶ τὴν γῆν γέनेσις, 'the whole natural process

⁵¹ Aristotle speaks of ἀκμάζειν καὶ φθίνειν with regard to the bodies of plants and animals, but adds that 'this happens' (τοῦτο γίγνεται, Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a30) to the earth as well, although not simultaneously in all its parts.

⁵² Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b15.

⁵³ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a35–36.

⁵⁴ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a34.

⁵⁵ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a35–351b1; 351b24; 351b28–29; 352a13.

⁵⁶ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a34; 351b30–31; 352a5; 352b14. The prefix ὑπερ is added to ξηραίνεσθαι to indicate the process that leads to excessive dryness (*Mete.* 352a7–8).

⁵⁷ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a10.

⁵⁸ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a11.

⁵⁹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a14. Actually, in this passage Aristotle only speaks of a land that does not bear fruit because it is too impregnated with water. But from the use of ἀργός γίγνεσθαι we see that an excessively dry soil is also ἀργός.

⁶⁰ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a6–7.

⁶¹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a14.

⁶² Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a13.

⁶³ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a8.

⁶⁴ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a30 ('to the earth this [i.e. developing and decaying] happens separately for each part'); 351b10–11 ('these events escape observation').

⁶⁵ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a19–20 ('the same parts of the earth [...] change'); 351b22–24 ('it first settled in a land that was changing', transl. Webster); 352a5–6 ('in time this land changes its character', transl. Webster).

⁶⁶ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a8–9 ('this happened in Greece'); 352a14–17 ('Now the same process that has taken place in this small district must be supposed to be going on over whole countries and on a large scale', transl. Webster).

⁶⁷ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351b12 ('before we are reminded of the change in these things'); 351b35–36 ('Homer, who is modern, so to speak, with respect to such changes'). At 352b, l. 16 Aristotle speaks of the change of the world as a whole; however, this change is reduced to the changes, occurring at different times, of its parts (*Mete.* 352b16–19).

of the becoming of the earth';⁶⁸ The noun, therefore, is here linked to the meaning of 'becoming' of γίννομαι, which we have found in expressions in which the verb has a predicative complement, rather than to that of 'happening', which Aristotle refers to when he uses the verb without a complement in this chapter.⁶⁹ Another noun used to designate the progress of the earth through its various stages is ἐπίδοσις (progress).⁷⁰ But when Aristotle emphasises the main difference between the earth and living beings, he uses the verb πάσχω:

to those [i.e., the bodies of animals and plants] it does not happen that they *suffer* these things [i.e., maturation and old age] in each part separately.⁷¹

Moreover, πάθημα, one of the nouns derived from πάσχω, is used in the plural to indicate the changes to which the earth in general is subjected: in fact, after having spoken of the transformations, which can also be universalised, of Argolis from excessively humid to fruitful and of the region of Mycenae from productive to too dry, Aristotle speaks of the 'cause of such *affections*'.⁷² To sum up, it can be said that Aristotle uses two types of words to indicate changes in the earth's moisture content. The first type, comprising γίννομαι in the sense of 'becoming', μεταβάλλω and their derivatives, emphasises the fact that the phenomena spoken of are *changes*. The second type, which includes γίννομαι in the sense of 'happening', συμβαίνω and πάσχω/πάθημα, indicates instead that these phenomena are something that the earth passively *undergoes*. The earth, like *the body* of a plant or an animal, suffers the cyclical change of its conditions.

It should be noted, however, that Aristotle makes no explicit reference to the πάθη of the earth. He assimilates the life cycle of the earth to that of the bodies of living beings, which happen to suffer (πάσχειν) maturation and old age. One can easily deduce that the earth also happens to suffer the same phenomena, but this is not explicitly stated. Similarly, Aristotle speaks of the cause of the affections (παθημάτων) of the regions of Argos and Mycenae. These affections are certainly of the same type as those that occur elsewhere, but this is not made explicit by the philosopher.⁷³

It is Alexander of Aphrodisias who speaks explicitly of affections of the earth.⁷⁴ In his commentary on chapter 1.14, Alexander explains more explicitly than Aristotle that

⁶⁸ Arist. *Mete.* I, 14, 351b, ll. 8-9. Compare Pepe's translation: 'l'intero processo naturale del divenire della terra' (Pepe 1982: 72).

⁶⁹ Aristotle certainly does not mean γένεσις in the sense of 'generation', since he denies – even in this same chapter (Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352b16-17) – that the world as a whole is subject to generation and corruption. If the world is not generated, neither are its regions (although a region can be generated in the sense that where there was formerly sea there is now land, *Mete.* 352b20–22).

⁷⁰ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351b25–26 ('the *change* is gradual and lasts a long time', transl. Webster).

⁷¹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a28–29.

⁷² Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 352a17–18.

⁷³ On the metaphysical concept of *pathos* in Aristotle, see Rorty (1984). Cohen (2012).

⁷⁴ Alexander's commentary on *Meteorology* is still understudied. The commentary on the fourth book has been translated by Lewis (1996). Kupreeva (2022) is a study on a specific passage.

the difference between the changes of the earth and those of living organisms concerns the way in which these different subjects undergo affections (*pathê*).⁷⁵ Alexander states that what the internal parts of the earth have in common with the bodies of living beings is that they undergo changes and affections, and that the cause and principle of these changes and affections (αἰτία δὲ καὶ ἀρχὴ τῶν τοιούτων μεταβολῶν τε καὶ παθῶν) is the succession of a phase of maturation and one of ageing. In fact, these affections of the earth (τὰ τοιαῦτα [...] περὶ τὴν γῆν πάθη) occur according to an ordered succession. What these affections are, Alexander said immediately before, paraphrasing the first lines of the Aristotelian chapter: the wet parts of the earth become dry and vice versa, some rivers come to be and others cease to be, the land becomes sea and the sea land.⁷⁶ Since Alexander then repeats with Aristotle that the difference between the earth and living beings is that maturation and ageing occur at different times in the different parts in the case of the former but not the latter,⁷⁷ it can be said that Alexander is more explicit than Aristotle in stating that the similarities and differences between the earth and living beings concern the πάθη and their cause, i.e. the life cycle.

In general, in his commentary on this chapter of *Meteorology*, and in particular its first part, Alexander, while essentially repeating what Aristotle said, proposes some personal notes. For instance, while (at least in Wilson and my interpretation) Aristotle proposes a causal chain from changes in the earth's moisture content to the appearance or disappearance of rivers to changes in the coastline, Alexander considers that it is the generation and destruction of rivers that causes not only the sea to move, but also the moistening and drying up of the earth.⁷⁸ The commentator, moreover, develops the Aristotelian reference to the Sun's action on the life cycle of the Earth's parts through warming and cooling,⁷⁹ proposing a complete theory of how the Sun's approach to the Earth, repeating itself every year for many years, causes regions to mature, while its receding, which obviously also occurs annually, is the cause of ageing.⁸⁰ This explanation of the succession of the Earth's ages is placed in parallel with the description of the causes of the life processes of living beings, because they too grow and perish as a result of the Sun's approaching and receding.⁸¹ Alexander thus extends the Aristotelian similarity between earth and living beings: earth, plants and animals are united not only by having a life

⁷⁵ Alex.Aphr. in *Mete.* 59, 11–21.

⁷⁶ Alex. Aphr. in *Mete.* 58, 31–59, 15. Alexander also mentions the πάθη of the earth (in *Mete.* 60, 28), regarding the oblivion of such affections by human civilisations. Furthermore (in *Mete.* 60, 1–2) he uses the verb πύσχω to indicate the fact that rivers undergo changes; in particular, in lands that become dry, they see their flow decrease until they disappear altogether.

⁷⁷ Alex.Aphr. in *Mete.* 59, 15–21.

⁷⁸ Alex.Aphr. in *Mete.* 58, 31–59, 10.

⁷⁹ Arist. *Mete.* 1.14, 351a30–32.

⁸⁰ Alex.Aphr. in *Mete.* 59, 29–60, 4. Aristotle states that the approach and receding of the Sun causes generation and corruption elsewhere in the first book of *Meteorology* (Arist. *Mete.* 1.9, 346b21–23) and in *On Generation and Corruption* (Arist. *GC* 2.10). On the general meaning of this Aristotelian theory, see Wildberg (2004: 240–242). Horn (2016: 276–280).

⁸¹ Alex.Aphr. in *Mete.* 59, 21–31.

cycle, but also by the fact that this cycle is caused by the Sun's revolution. Finally, Alexander interprets differently from modern commentators the passage in which Aristotle explains how rivers cause the sea to turn into land. According to Alexander, this can happen in two different ways: either because the river pushes the sea away, or because it covers it with debris.⁸²

Alexander's commentary thus shows that the concept of *pathos* is fundamental to understanding how Aristotle conceives of biological analogies, which play a key role in his meteorology: parallels with the afflictions of organisms can be found in meteorological phenomena, but at the level of individual parts of the Earth, not for it as a whole. Although the sublunar world can be understood in organic terms, this world is not a 'cosmic animal', but rather a multiplicity of 'regional animals'.

Appendix: Translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Commentary on Aristotle's Meteorology*, 1.14, 58, 31–60, 13

[p. 58, l. 31] It seems to him that the parts of the earth do not always remain the same, so that the wet parts of it always remain wet and the dry parts always dry, but that they change and that [p. 59] those that were previously wet become dry, and conversely the dry parts are moistened, and that this happens through the work of the rivers. For, among the rivers, some are generated not existing before, while others come to an end and cease to be, no longer existing, and this is also followed by the transformations of the wet and dry earth, since the parts of the earth [l. 5] that were dry before are moistened by the rivers born in them, while those that were wet before are dried up because the rivers in them cease to exist. He says that, for the same reason that among the rivers [l. 10] some are generated not existing before and others cease to exist, the land and the sea also change state.

It must be supposed—he says—that such affections of the earth occur not in a disorderly manner, but according to an order and a cycle. The cause and principle of these changes and affections is, he says, that, just as the bodies of animals and plants have by nature maturation⁸³ and old age, so do [l. 15] the internal parts of the earth. But they

⁸² Alex.Aphr. in *Mete.* 60, 5–13.

⁸³ It seems to me that, in some passages of Alexander's argumentation, ἀκμή clearly means 'maturation' rather than 'maturity', and ἀκμάζω 'maturing' rather than 'being mature'. In fact, Alexander contrasts ἀκμή and ἀκμάζω with: (1) παρακμή and παρακμάζω, which have not only the static sense of having passed maturity but also the dynamic sense of declining; (2) γηράσκω, which (when, as in this case, it is used in the present tense) means 'to grow old'; (3) φθίω, which indicates the process of decay. Here, moreover, Alexander is explicitly referring to a 'change' (in *Mete.* 59, 15–21). On p. 60, 2, moreover, Alexander states that rivers are born in regions ἀκμάζοντα, and watercourses come to be when the region is wetter, i.e. when it is maturing, and not when the moisture content is optimal and thus lower, i.e. when that part of the earth has reached maturity; therefore, in this passage, too, ἀκμάζω seems to have the dynamic meaning of moving towards maturity rather than the static one of having reached it. Since the other occurrences of ἀκμή and ἀκμάζω are compatible with the dynamic sense, which is probably what Aristotle also gave to these terms (see footnote 16), I have translated these words as 'maturation' and 'maturing' respectively.

differ because in the case of the former, maturation and decline occur not with each part maturing and declining at a different time, but simultaneously in all parts; for both their maturation and, conversely, their ageing and decay occur simultaneously in all parts.⁸⁴ In contrast, to the earth this happens part by part; for to it this change occurs because of cooling [I. 20] and heating, and different parts of it are cooled and heated at different times.

For beings endowed with life and for those endowed with souls, the Sun's revolution is a cause of growth and shrinkage. For when it approaches, it is a cause of preservation and growth, and when it recedes, of shrinkage and corruption, as is evident from the annual plants, which grow when the Sun approaches them, and [I. 25] decay and corrupt when it recedes. And as in the case of these, so it is also in the case of long-living beings, whose growth and decay last longer: for they grow⁸⁵ for a certain number of approaches of the Sun, and shrink and decay⁸⁶ for the same number of recedings.

Therefore, just as these beings grow and decay because of the Sun's revolution, so too the parts of the earth receive both maturation and old age from the approaching and [I. 30] receding of the Sun, and in general from its revolution, so that they may mature and remain moist for a time, and then become dry and grow old again. He called dryness the 'old age of the earth', transferring the term from animals. It follows that the springs that are found in the regions and parts of the earth that become dry [I. 35] also at first become smaller and then also cease to be; since this happens, the rivers that flow from these springs also at first become smaller [p. 60] and then also cease to exist altogether; and since the rivers undergo this and change their course (because they are born in the parts of the earth that mature, and depart from those that decline), the sea also leaves some of the regions of the earth, and occupies others.

[I. 5] Next, Aristotle adds the phenomena relating to the sea that occur when rivers recede and when they continue to flow. In fact, parts of the sea dry up for two reasons.⁸⁷ Where, due to the rising of the rivers, the sea has spread out, pushed away by their inflow, it happens that, as the sea recedes, these lands become arid; when the rivers no longer flow, the sea is no longer pushed away and spreads out [I. 10] over these same lands. On the other hand, in those regions where the flowing of the rivers has increased the sea and filled it with land, it happens that, because of the alluvial deposit, the sea becomes marshy, little by little it dries up and becomes land, yet it spreads out towards other regions and occupies them.

⁸⁴ Literally, 'both mature simultaneously in all parts and, conversely, age and decay simultaneously in all parts'.

⁸⁵ Literally, 'their growth <occurs>'.

⁸⁶ Literally, 'their shrinkage and decay <occur>'.

⁸⁷ Alexander does not seem to mean that some parts of the sea dry up because the rivers move away from them, while others dry up because the rivers flow to them. The two drying-up processes described next are in fact both due to the presence of the rivers, which either push the sea away or fill it with alluvial deposits (this is how Lee (1952: 109) also interprets Alexander's passage).

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The *paschein* and *pathê* of the Earth and Living Beings in Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias (*Meteorologica* 1.14)

In his 2013 monograph on *Structure and Method in Aristotle's Meteorologica*, Malcolm Wilson has shown both that Aristotle conceived of meteorological phenomena as analogous to the bodily processes of animals, and that for the Stagirite the sublunar world should not be seen as a single body, but rather as composed of many different individuals. However, Wilson did not articulate the relationship between these two theories—that is, he did not answer the following question: how is it possible for the Earth to behave like an animal if it is not a single body? This paper argues that the answer to this question lies in the Aristotelian statement about the different *paschein* of the Earth and animals. In fact, in the chapter of *Meteorology* dedicated to climatic changes (1.14), Aristotle, after comparing such changes to the maturing and ageing of living organisms, states that ‘only, in the case of the bodies of plants and animals being affected does not occur in each part separately, but it is necessary for the being to mature and decay all at once, whereas in the case of the Earth this occurs in each part separately, due to cooling and warming’ (351a.28-31). In his commentary, Alexander of Aphrodisias reiterates that the difference between the changes of the Earth and those of living organisms concern the way in which these different subjects undergo affections (*pathê*). The concept of *paschein/pathos* is thus fundamental to understanding how Aristotle conceives of biological analogies, which play a key role in his meteorology: as the affections of maturing and corruption show, parallels with organic processes can be found in meteorological phenomena, but always at the level of the individual parts of the Earth. Although the sublunar world can be understood in organic terms, this world is not a ‘cosmic animal’, but rather a multiplicity of ‘regional animals’. To corroborate this thesis, this paper addresses several related questions, including: the mechanics of environmental changes according to Aristotle; the differences between the regions of the Earth; the lexicon used in *Meteorology* to refer to the transformations of the Earth; the personal notes that Alexander adds to Aristotle’s discussion. Finally, the first modern translation of the relevant section of Alexander’s commentary is also provided here.

KEY WORDS

Pathos, scala naturae, Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, climate change, great winter

Causality at Lower Levels: The Demiurgical Unity of the Second and Third God according to Numenius of Apamea*

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1. Introduction

The *Timaeus* may be considered the leading dialogue in Middle Platonism.¹ Its impor-

* I wish to thank my colleague, Maria Pavlova, who professionally proofread my text in English and other scholars who helped me to develop some important theoretical aspects of the present contribution.

¹ To the best of my knowledge, the most important and systematic study on the role of the *Timaeus* in the Platonic tradition is still Baltes 1976.

tance is likely due to the fact that the Imperial Age was characterized by the tendency to interpret Plato's doctrine as a unified philosophical system, possibly in competition with the Stoics' institutional model.² The *Timaeus* can be regarded as the most suitable text among Plato's dialogues to be interpreted systematically for two main reasons. Firstly, the *Timaeus* deals with various elements concerning aspects of human knowledge, including, for example, physiology and providence, along with several central themes of Plato's metaphysics. Secondly, it is not a "classic dialogue, because a significant portion of the text consists in a lengthy narrative about the origin of the universe and its characteristics, and hence the dialogue resembles a naturalistic treatise."³

For these reasons, the *Timaeus* has given rise to many philosophical difficulties, and it was already commented upon and interpreted in the old Academy.⁴ We know that Plato's students used to comment upon their teacher's works and provide *support* (βοήθεια) to the texts of the dialogues, especially when certain doctrines appeared obscure. Among the greatest difficulties arising in the interpretation of the *Timaeus*, two main aspects of the text stand out: 1) understanding the cosmogony,⁵ and 2) identifying the figure of the demiurge, introduced by Plato in the prologue to the ἐκὼς λόγος.

From a Middle Platonic systematic perspective, one of the most troublesome issues for the ancient interpreters was determining the realm of reality that the demiurge must be identified with. Philosophers like Plutarch and Atticus, for example, identify Plato's demiurge with the Idea of Good as it is expressed in the *Republic*,⁶ while Numenius⁷ distinguishes the demiurge from the first principle.

For Numenius there is a first and a second God whose essence is to some extent shared with the third God. I will revisit this latter point shortly.⁸ Many scholars have

² The development of systematic Platonism as an anti-Stoic tendency, in contrast to the scepticism of the Academy, has been highlighted by Donini (1994). According to Donini, the strength of the Stoic model would have given the decisive impetus for Platonism to establish itself as a systematic philosophy, deriving a precise metaphysical scheme from the doctrines of the Platonic dialogues. Donini's thesis is shared by Ferrari (2010: 56–72 and 2012), who emphasizes, from the point of view of Platonism, the various exegetical strategies deployed by ancient interpreters in the exegesis of the *Timaeus*. A different perspective on the origin of systematic Platonism is that of Hadot (1987), who attributes the existence of the dogmatic Platonism to the closure of the Academy in 88 BC and the necessity to interpret the Platonic thought as a system in the absence of a physical scholastic institution.

³ See Ferrari (2010: 71–72).

⁴ On this topic, see Centrone (2012: 57–80).

⁵ On the one hand, ancient interpreters found it challenging to establish whether the generation of the world described by Plato in the *Timaeus* should be conceived of as an event *in tempore* or, on the contrary, if the cosmogonic process should be reduced to a mere causal dependence of the sensible world on the intelligible. For a general discussion on this topic, see Bonazzi (2017: 3–15). Ferrari (2014a) focuses on Plutarch's and Atticus' literal interpretation of the *Timaeus*, while an excellent resume of the διδασκαλίας χάριν (didactical purpose) interpretative tendency is provided by Petrucci (2019).

⁶ See Procl. *in Ti.* 1.305.6–11 Diehl; On Plutarch and Atticus' account of the demiurge, see also Ferrari (2017/2018: 67–78).

⁷ Perhaps Alcinous as well might have distinguished between a first and a second intellect, but the question is still debated. Alcinous' distinction between a first and a second Intellect is a subject of debate among scholars. According to Mansfeld (1988) and Donini (1988: 130–131), Alcinous distinguished between two Intellects, while Giusta (1986: 170–200) and O'Brien (2017: 171–182) disagree with this position.

⁸ See fr. 20 (des Places 1973).

noted how difficult it is to find a clear distinction between the second and the third God in Numenius, as they are described as “one.”

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that the unity between the second and the third God must be understood in terms of a demiurgical unity. In other words, my intention is to demonstrate that the second and the third God are two different entities strongly connected by the demiurgical process they both undertake. Firstly, I will discuss fr. 52; then I intend to focus on fr. 19F and 24F (11 and 16 des Places), and finally on fr. 29T and 30T (21 and 22 des Places)⁹ to describe the different ways in which Numenius depicts the unity between the second and the third God.

2. Numenius’s dualism: From the Matter to the Cosmos

To understand Numenius’s account of demiurgy, it is helpful to recall some crucial aspects of his dualist theology. First, it is appropriate to briefly describe the monad/dyad relationship that is explained in fr. 52. Our main source on Numenian dualism is Calcidius’s *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*, which reports his thoughts on the matter.¹⁰

It is well-known that Numenius belongs to the so-called dualistic Neopythagorean tendency within Middle Platonism.¹¹ Essentially, for Numenius, the entirety of reality does not derive from a supreme principle but rather from the interaction between two main original principles that he respectively calls the monad (*singularitas* or *deus digestor*) and matter (*silva* or *dyad*).¹² As matter is described as chaotic and disordered,¹³ the monad’s action upon it provides order and ontological determination. According to what we learn from fr. 52, it is the monad-God (i.e., the demiurge) that interacts with matter and, as a result, the cosmos is generated as an intermediate reality that comprises both material and intelligible features.¹⁴ As the first God does not participate in the demi-

⁹ In this paper I will use the numbering of the last edition of the fragments of Numenius edited by Fabienne Jourdan (2023). However, for readers’ comfort, I will put in brackets the name of the fragments according to des Places’ edition as well.

¹⁰ The most important testimony on Numenius’ conception of matter is fr. 52, which corresponds to Calcidius’ *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*. In a recent study, Gretchen Reydam-Schils discusses the possibility that Calcidius might have interpreted Numenius’ doctrine his own perspective. However, the author efficiently shows that Calcidius is a trustworthy source for understanding Numenius’ opinion on matter. See Reydam-Schils (2020: 161–171).

¹¹ See Dillon (1996: 341–344). See also Bonazzi (2015: 225–240, in part. 231–236) who affirms that the dualistic views were already present in the pythagorizing Platonism.

¹² See fr. 52 des Places.

¹³ The chaotic nature of matter is mentioned by Numenius also in fr. 4a. Important remarks on the role of matter in Numenius are provided by Jourdan (2014).

¹⁴ In lines 1–12, which I do not cite here, Numenius describes the differences between the first and the second God, arguing that it is necessary to use appropriate language to express the respective natures of the two highest Gods.

urgic process,¹⁵ the demiurge projects an ontological order onto matter by introducing his intelligible character into the material substrate.

The cosmos, arising from these two principles, has a sort of “mixed nature,” being both evil (corporeal/ material) and divine (intelligible).¹⁶ While this question, which deserves more detailed attention, cannot be discussed here, suffice it to say that, in my interpretation, we can consider the cosmos as a product, whose essence derives from the intelligible order that the demiurge instils into matter.¹⁷ We can deduce that the monad of fr. 52 is to be identified with the demiurge, who “acts on behalf” of the first God and generates the cosmos through the interaction with matter. It seems to me that Numenius describes a process where initially we have both matter and the demiurge in their original states, and *then* the cosmos, which comes to be after these two principles have interacted with each other.¹⁸

These premises based on fr. 52 are, in my view, useful because they help us better understand the processes Numenius describes in fr. 19F and 24F and in fr. 19T.¹⁹

3. Numenius’s Conception of double Demiurgy according to Fragments 19F and 24F (= fr. 11 and 16 des Places)

It is worth beginning our investigation with some passages from Numenius’s work *On the Good*. The following passage corresponds to ll. 12–21 of fr. 19F:

[...] The first God, being in himself, is simple (ἀπλοῦς), and being together with himself throughout can never be divided. The God who is the second and third, however, *is* one (εἷς). He metaphysically encounters matter, but it is dyadic and, although he unifies it, he is divided by it, since it has an appetitive and fluid character. Because he is gazing on matter, he is not intent on the intelligible (for in that case he would have been intent on himself); and by giving his attention to matter he becomes heedless of himself. And he gets to grips with the perceptible

¹⁵ See fr. 12. The identification of the first God with a king depends on the exegesis of the second Platonic letter 312e1–4.

¹⁶ See fr. 52, 77–79 des Places: *Igitur iuxta Platonem mundo bona sua dei tamquam patris liberalitate collate sunt, mala vero matris silvae vitio cohaeserunt.*

¹⁷ See Reydam-Schils (2020: 163–171).

¹⁸ It is unclear if Numenius describes the generation of the cosmos temporally or not. According to Baltes (1975: 262) Petrucci (2018: 112–115) and Reydam-Schils (2020: 168) Numenius is a temporalist, while Dodds (1960: 16) and then O’Brien (2015: 154–155) propose an emendation to fr. 16 that rejects the temporal lexicon Numenius uses.

¹⁹ The question of whether or not Proclus is a trustworthy source to understand Numenius was addressed by Tarrant (2004), who argues that Proclus did not directly read Numenius but received information via Porphyry, some reflections are provided also by Michalewski (2021: 145).

and is absorbed in his work with it, and by devoting himself to matter he takes it up even into his own character.²⁰

The fragment begins with an argument in favour of the unitary nature of the first God, who is totally simple and indivisible; consequently, he does not participate in the demiurgic process,²¹ and hence it is the second God who acts demiurgically.

Of paramount importance for our purpose is the affirmation that defines the second and the third God as “one.” Through his encounter with matter, the second God is also described as being “split” (σχίζεται) into two; consequently, this interaction between matter and the demiurge results in the third God. It seems to me that the demiurgic process that Numenius describes here can be linked to the dualism of the principles that we have already discussed with regard to the monad/dyad relationship. We shall now investigate what this division between the second and the third God effectively means.²²

The use of the verb σχίζω suggests a process that entails a derivation of something new from a previous unity.²³ However, the second God is defined as “one” with the third in a strong ontological unity. Should we therefore conceive of two different entities, or just one? On the basis of these remarks, we can deduce that the duplicity Numenius theorizes deals with a twofold demiurgic process influenced by the active role of matter. Matter, upon encountering the second God, divides it into two distinct figures (or Gods),²⁴

²⁰ Fr. 11 des Places (1973: 12–21): ‘Ο θεός ὁ μὲν πρῶτος ἐν ἑαυτοῦ ὧν ἐστιν ἀπλοῦς, διὰ τὸ ἑαυτῷ συγγινόμενος διόλου μὴ ποτε εἶναι διαρετός· ὁ θεὸς μὲντοι ὁ δεῦτερος καὶ τρίτος ἐστὶν εἰς· συμφερόμενος δὲ τῇ ὕλην δυάδι οὕση ἐνοῖ μὲν αὐτήν, σχίζεται δὲ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς, ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἦθος ἐχούσης καὶ βρεύσης. Τῷ οὖν μὴ εἶναι πρὸς τῷ νοητῷ (ἦν γὰρ ἄω πρὸς ἑαυτῷ) διὰ τὸ τὴν ὕλην βλέπειν, ταύτης ἐπιμελούμενος ἀπεριόπτως ἑαυτοῦ γίγνεται. Καὶ ἅπτεται τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ καὶ περιέπει ἀνάγει τε ἔτι εἰς τὸ ἴδιον ἦθος ἐπορεξάμενος τῆς ὕλης. Engl. transl. Boys-Stones (2018: 190).

²¹ This is also confirmed in fr. 12, 13. Further details on the stability of the first God in Numenius can be found in Runia (1991: 47–51).

²² It is hard to determine if we can talk about two or three gods in Numenius, and the literature on this topic is extensive. In my view, the second God, insofar it is divided by matter, produces the cosmos, which can be referred to as *God* in the same way that the cosmos is described as divine in the *Timaeus*. According to Frede (1987: 1055 ff.), Numenius might have had in mind the Second Platonic letter, where the author talks about three Gods. Frede also suggests that Numenius might have included this doctrine to remain faithful to the Platonic background, even if he did not fully agree with it. Holzhausen (1992: 250) also supports the idea of the doctrine of the three Gods. Zambon discusses a differentiation between a noetic and a psychic aspect of the demiurgy (see Zambon 2002: 228), while according to Boys-Stones, it is incorrect to talk about three Gods because this is entirely inconsistent with Numenius’ thought. For Boys-Stones, the way matter acts upon the second God must be read within the context of Numenius’ emphatic language: this process must not be understood as an attraction of the demiurge towards matter, but, on the contrary, as a “bottom-up” process that elevates matter from its evilness to a state of order through the power of the intelligible. See Boys-Stones (2018: 190–191).

²³ The verb σχίζω refers to a process that concerns a division into parts from an original unity; see *s.v.* σχίζω LSJ (1940: 634).

²⁴ According to a recent study by Fabienne Jourdan, the cosmos in fr. 29T may be considered as the material world, but it must not be confused to what Numenius says in fr. 19F where the third God is not the world, but the cosmos as the thought and “planned” by the demiurge. See Jourdan (2023: 100–102). According to the scholar, in fact, it is possible to say that the third God is the cosmos, but this cannot be deduced by fr. 19F and, for this reason, she does not consider appropriate to force a harmonisation of the texts. In my view, on the other hand, I think that in 19F Numenius alludes to the third Gods as the ruling principle of the cosmos as the matter plays an active role in dividing the demiurge in his two functional aspects.

whose unity must be understood within the demiurgic process. Matter's power is determined by its "passionate character" (ἐπιθυμητικόν) corresponding to its evil nature, as we have already seen in fr. 52. Matter, since it acts as a principle, has the power to "come into contact" with the intelligible. As a result, the demiurge is metaphysically split into the second and the third God. On the one hand, the second God, i.e., the demiurge as a contemplative intellect, represents the paradigmatic aspect of demiurgy, the demiurge *stricto sensu*; in fact, he is close "to the noetic" (πρὸς τῷ νοητῷ), remaining apart from contact with the matter.²⁵

On the other hand, the third God, insofar as he has contact with matter, represents the ruling and ordering aspect of demiurgy, which Numenius identifies with the cosmos as a rationally ordered entity.²⁶ What about matter? In my interpretation, matter no longer exists in its original state, but once it receives ontological determination from the demiurge, it becomes the cosmos through this process.

We can, therefore, conclude that for Numenius the second and third God are distinguished in the sense that they represent two different levels of reality. However, at the same time, they are "one" as they constitute two moments of a unitary demiurgical process: the paradigmatic-causative demiurgy of the second God and the "operative" demiurgy of the third, i.e., the intra-cosmic order. Thus, Numenius is not referring to two demiurges and the most plausible explanation of this "double demiurgy" is a description of a single demiurgical process articulated through two different demiurgical aspects.²⁷ In addition to this, Numenius states that the second God *is* one with the third God, so we must conceive, in my interpretation, a single demiurgic process that unfolds through two levels of reality. However, the existence of a third God is due to the presence of the matter which plays an active role in dividing the essence of the demiurge.

In order to better understand Numenius' conception of demiurgy, it may also be helpful to consider an important section of fr. 24F (=16 des Places), from which we learn more about the relationship between the second God and the cosmos.

[...] For if the creator is the god of becoming, it seems right that the Good should be the principle of *essence*. The creator stands in relation to the Good, which he imitates, just as becoming stands in relation to essence: he is its image and imitation. And if the demiurge of becoming is good, well of course the demiurge of the essence will be the good itself, an innate feature of essence. For the second [God], being double, is personally responsible both for self-producing

²⁵ It is worth specifying that Numenius' hierarchy has both a theological and an ontological aspect. On the one hand, we distinguish between a first, second and third God; on the other hand, we should assume that these three gods must also be respectively identified with the (Platonic) ideas of good and the intelligible and, finally, with the cosmic order. See also *infra*.

²⁶ See Frede (1987: 1057). On the identity of Numenius' third God see Dodds (1960: 13–15). See also Opsomer (2005), Ferrari (2014) and Jourdan (2021). We must keep in mind that Plato, in the *Timaeus*, defines the cosmos as a "blessed God". Thus, in my view, to say that for Numenius the cosmos is divine due to its intrinsic order is a position that fits well with what Plato states in the *Timaeus*.

²⁷ On the demiurge governing matter, see also fr. 26F (=18 des Places).

the idea of himself, and for producing the cosmos; he is on the one hand a creator, and then wholly absorbed in contemplation. Since our arguments have led us to name four entities, let there be four of them: (1) the first god, the good itself; (2) the imitator of this, the good creator; (3) then substance: one which is that of the first [god], and another that of the second; (4) the imitation of this is the beautiful cosmos, made beautiful by participation in the Beautiful.²⁸

Numenius asserts that the first God is “the principle of essence,” (ἀρχή οὐσίας) implying that he acts causally as a principle in relation to the second God, performing a role similar to that of the Idea of Good in Plato’s *Republic*.²⁹ The second God is the imitator, which means that he derives his intelligible power from contemplating the nature of the first. Insofar as the first God is the supreme form of being (see fr. 13 and 17), Numenius can conclude that he is the “demiurge of essence,” which the “demiurge of generation” imitates.³⁰

Defining the second God as the “demiurge of generation” means that he is the paradigmatic cause of the sensible world, consistent with the cosmogonic process we have previously described. Similarly, the *Timaeus*, where the demiurge’s purpose is to order the cosmos and the World Soul according to mathematical schemes, Numenius’ demiurge is an intellect acting on matter.

Firstly, the second God self-determines the idea of himself and the cosmos. Since he has an intelligible nature, he can be directed toward himself, therefore ontologically determining his own essence. In addition to his self-determination, the demiurge produces the cosmos, which is the reason why his essence is dual, in the same way as we discussed earlier with reference to fr. 52 and 11. This generation of the world, caused by the activity of the demiurge entails and justifies his duality. Though contemplation and imitation of the Good, the demiurge can establish himself as a “secondary God.”

At the same time, the demiurge is also described as being double insofar as he determines himself through his own thought and, in turn, acts as the cause of the cosmos through his demiurgical action.³¹ If we bear in mind what we have learned from fr. 11, we

²⁸ Fr. 24F (=16, 8–17 des Places): Καὶ γὰρ εἰ ὁ μὲν δημιουργὸς θεὸς ἐστὶ γενέσεως, ἀρχὴ τὸ ἀγαθὸν οὐσίας εἶναι ἀρχή. Ἀνάλογον δὲ τούτῳ μὲν ὁ δημιουργὸς θεός, ὦν αὐτοῦ μιμητής, τῇ δὲ οὐσία ἡ γένεσις, <ἡ> εἰκὼν αὐτῆς ἐστὶ καὶ μίμημα. Ἐἴτερ δὲ ὁ δημιουργὸς ὁ τῆς γενέσεως ἐστὶν ἀγαθός, ἢ που ἔσται καὶ ὁ τῆς οὐσίας δημιουργὸς αὐτοάγαθον, σύμψυτον τῇ οὐσίᾳ. Ὁ γὰρ δεῦτερος διττός ὦν αὐτοποιεῖ τὴν τε ιδέαν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὸν κόσμον, δημιουργὸς ὦν, ἔπειτα θεωρητικὸς ὄλως. Συλλελογισμένων δ’ ἡμῶν ὀνόματα τεσσαρῶν πραγμάτων τέσσαρα ἔστω ταῦτα· ὁ μὲν πρῶτος θεὸς αὐτοάγαθον· ὁ δὲ τούτου μιμητὴς δημιουργὸς ἀγαθός· ἡ δ’ οὐσία μία μὲν ἢ τοῦ πρώτου, ἑτέρα δ’ ἢ τοῦ δευτέρου· ἢς μίμημα ὁ καλὸς κόσμος, κεκαλλωπισμένος μετουσίᾳ τοῦ καλοῦ. Engl. transl. Boys-Stones (2018a: 181) with modifications; italics are mine. See also the substantial commentary on this fragment provided by Jourdan (2023: 345–466) and the considerations in Bonazzi (2004: 80–81).

²⁹ I endorse the view of Baltes (1997) about the role of the Idea of Good in Plato. The scholar compares the relationship between the Idea of Good and the ideas to a king ruling over his subjects.

³⁰ See also fr. 18 des Places, in which Numenius says that the second God contemplates the first God and derives creative power from this activity. A systematic commentary on this fragment is Jourdan (2023: 345–466).

³¹ The way the demiurge generates the cosmos through his self-contemplation has been widely discussed by scholars. The use of the verb αὐτοποιεῖω has created some difficulties for interpreters of Numenius. Rossi (2020: 89) underlines the fact that this term occurs only in Numenius, while Petty (2012: 165) discusses the possibility that the αὐτοποιεῖ might be a sort of anticipation of the Neoplatonic concept of hypostasis.

can conclude that the demiurge and the cosmos, i.e., the second and the third God, are both involved in a unitary cosmogonical process; this is why in fr. 11 Numenius states that the second and the third God are “one” and in fr. 16 that the demiurge is “double.”

In the next section, I intend to focus on what Proclus says about Numenius’ system and about the latter’s account of demiurgy in fr. 29T and 30T.

3. Numenius’ Theory of the Three Gods according to Proclus’ *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*. Fr. 29T and 30T (= fr. 21 and 22 des Places)

The lines that Proclus devotes to Numenius in his *Commentary to Plato’s Timaeus* are significant for our purpose because Proclus’ work in this section (1.303.24–310.2 Diehl) deals explicitly with his predecessors’ conception of the demiurge and demiurgy. Regarding Numenius, Proclus underlines the distinction between the second and the third God, describing a clearly defined hierarchy:

Numenius *celebrates* three gods. He calls the first father, the second maker and the third *product* – for according to him the cosmos is the third God. According to him, then, the creator is double, the first God and the second, while what is created is the third.³²

This excerpt from the *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus* is one of the most well-known and commented upon of Numenius’ fragments. It is immediately clear that this description of the three Gods theory differs significantly from Eusebius’ text.³³

Proclus criticizes Numenius for considering both the first and the second God as a “demiurge.” Additionally, Proclus says that Numenius calls the first two Gods “father” and “maker,” respectively, in accordance with a theological reading of *Timaeus* 28c3–5. While Plato in the *Timaeus* uses the terms “maker” and “father” to refer generally to the cause of the universe, Numenius interprets them in a hierarchical sense, rendering the text of the dialogue compatible with his theological view.³⁴

Furthermore, in this passage Proclus also attributes demiurgic qualities to Numenius’ first God. Since Numenius understands the first God as an intellect, this first deity can also be considered as a cause, albeit in the supreme way, as we have seen previously in fr.

³² Fr. 29T (= 21 des Places): Νουμίνιος μὲν γὰρ τρεῖς ἀνυμνήσας θεοῦς πατέρα μὲν καλεῖ τὸν πρῶτον, ποιητὴν δὲ τὸν δεῦτερον, ποιήμα δὲ τὸν τρίτον· ὁ γὰρ κόσμος κατ’ αὐτὸν ὁ τρίτος ἐστὶ θεός· ὥστε ὁ κατ’ αὐτὸν δημιουργὸς διττός, ὃ τε πρῶτος θεός καὶ ὁ δεύτερος, τὸ δημιουργούμενον ὁ τρίτος. Engl. transl. Boys-Stones (2018a: 182), with modifications; italics are mine.

³³ According to Michalewski (2021: 137), Proclus reads Numenius “through the lens of Plotinian theology”.

³⁴ See Pl. *Ti.* 28c 3–5. The inversion of the terms in the expression ποιητῆς καὶ πατῆρ serves to distinguish between two different levels of reality in a hierarchical sense: the father, who is the highest principle, and the maker, who acts as “secondary” to the father. On the Middle Platonic strategy of term “inversion” in *Ti.* 28c ff., see Ferrari (2014). All these aspects have been correctly highlighted by Müller (2009: 52): “Numenio es probablemente el exponente más claro dentro del platonismo medio de una tendencia exegética jerarquizante de la teología platónica.”

24F. In other words, from Proclus' perspective, Numenius' first God is not "sufficiently" transcendent due to his ontological determination. However, this does not mean that the first God plays an effective demiurgic role, but rather, as we saw earlier when we discussed fr.16, that his demiurgic nature must be understood as an ontological priority, which is to say that he acts like a cause despite being totally simple and inactive.

I think it is worth focusing on the definition of the third God as a "product" (ποίημα).³⁵ In my view, this passage fits with what was said earlier about the nature of the third God. The third God is referred to as a "product" as he originates from the action of the second God on matter. This is why, even though the third God possesses a divine nature, his essence is somewhat contingent on a "previous" interaction between the intelligible and matter. By asserting that the third God is a ποίημα, Proclus here underlines that he is ontologically dependent on the action of the second God, therefore implies that the third God is produced by the demiurge, i.e., the cosmos.³⁶

I shall now consider Numenius' account of the nature of the third God, according to Proclus. The main information is derived from fr. 30T:

Numenius lines his first intellect up with 'living being' and says that it thinks by using the second. His second intellect he lines up with 'intellect', and says that this, again, creates by using the third. His third he lines up with '*the one who thinks discursively*'.³⁷

In this passage, Numenius is commenting on *Timaeus* 39e, in which Plato states that the divine intellect contemplates the intelligible paradigm in order to bring order and form to reality.³⁸

It is widely accepted that Numenius' definition – as we learn from Proclus – of the first God as the "living being" leads to an identification with the paradigm of the *Timaeus*. Defining the first God as living seems to contrast with the inactivity first God. Nevertheless, we should consider the living essence of the first God as linked with his being a Νοῦς.³⁹

Finally, I intend to focus on Numenius' conception of the third God as a "discursive intellect" (τὸ διανοούμενον). This definition has given rise to much debate among schol-

³⁵ See Jourdan (2023: 270–276) for further remarks.

³⁶ According to Jourdan, the cosmos as reported by Proclus in 29T must not be considered as the third God Numenius mentions in 19F. See Jourdan (2023: 100–102).

³⁷ Fr. 30T: Νοῦμῆνιος δὲ τὸν μὲν πρῶτον κατὰ τὸ 'ὄ ἐστι ζῶον' τάττει καὶ φησιν ἐν προσήσει τοῦ δευτέρου νοεῖν, τὸν δὲ δεῦτερον κατὰ τὸν νοῦν καὶ τοῦτον αὐτὸν ἐν προσήσει τοῦ τρίτου δημιουργεῖν, τὸν δὲ τρίτον κατὰ τὸν διανοούμενον. Engl. transl. Boys-Stones (2018a: 238) with modifications; italics are mine. I do not intend to focus on the so-called doctrine of the πρόσχησις, since it is a wide and complex question that does not entirely align with the theme of this paper. For a very good analysis of this problem, see Müller (2015) and Jourdan (2023: 306–314).

³⁸ Baltus (1975: 257–259); Frede (1987: 1061 ff.) and Spanu (2013).

³⁹ See, fr. 24F, 25F.

ars, some of whom have suggested that Numenius' conception of the third God could be close to the Plotinian World-Soul.⁴⁰

In Proclus' view, to say that the third God is a discursive intellect means that, insofar as Numenius refers to him as the cosmos, he possesses a sort of intrinsic immanent rational principle as well. We must constantly keep in mind that the third God is derived from the original interaction between the material and the intelligible. For this reason, the third God should be identified with the cosmos, as it represents the aspect of demiurgy that deals with the intrinsic ordering principle of the sensible world. Numenius might have had in mind this passage of the *Timaeus* when he theorised his conception of the cosmos as "God." A number of scholars, such as Jan Opsomer and Franco Ferrari, even though they have some reservations, admit that the third God may be considered as a sort of World Soul *ante litteram*;⁴¹ Fabienne Jourdan, on the other hand, does not share this view, maintaining that there are no clear textual hints about the presence of a cosmic Soul in Numenius' *De Bono*.⁴²

While it is true that Numenius never expresses himself in terms of a third God as the World Soul, it is also true that it has all the characteristics of a cosmic soul. This is the reason why I think we can conclude that Numenius' third God is the cosmos as material but, at the same time, as rationally ordered as well. Thus, I would speak neither of a third God as purely material, nor of a World Soul *stricto sensu*, but rather of the rational principle immanent to the cosmos that only insofar as it is present in matter activates – so to speak – its ordering function. The origin of this cosmos can be found in the original process that involves both the demiurge and the matter. For this reason, the immanent principle of the cosmos is to some extent demiurgic as well.

3. Some Conclusions

I have analyzed the structure of Numenian theology, dwelling on the relationship between the second and third God. We saw in fr. 52 how the cosmos derives from the ontological relationship between the original principles – the demiurge and matter – as a kind of product between these two realities. Indeed, the essence of the cosmos lies in being material and rationally ordered. This aspect also emerges, in my view, from fr. 19F, in which Numenius claims that the second and third God are "one," that is, one

⁴⁰ For example, see Dodds (1960: 14). While one of the main characteristics of the Plotinian third hypostasis is discursive thought, it is also important to specify that Numenius never explicitly states that the third God is a (World) Soul, even though the third God's function seems to be quite similar to the Plotinian third hypostases. Nevertheless, it is possible that Numenius anticipated some crucial aspects of the Plotinian Soul. On this aspect, see Emilsson (2007: 176 ff.). According to Jourdan (2023: 311–312) it is not appropriate to force a harmonisation between 29T and 30T because Proclus might have referred to two different aspects of the Numenian argumentation as it happens for the terms οὐσία and ὄν in the *Περὶ τὰ γενεῶν*.

⁴¹ See Ferrari (2014: 61) and Opsomer (2005: 69). O'Brien (2015: 140–141) agrees with the identification of the third God with the World Soul.

⁴² See Jourdan (2021) and (2023: 100–102).

reality. I believe that this sort of unity in multiplicity can only be understood if one interprets the unity between the second and third God as two aspects of a single demiurgical process. The second and third God are distinct, yet they are one in the sense that they are two aspects of the same demiurgic process, comprising the paradigmatic and the poietic moment. This perspective emerges in fr. 24F, where the demiurge is described as double insofar as he determines himself and the cosmos.

The fundamental difference between the testimonies from Proclus and Eusebius lies in the fact that Proclus emphasizes the distinct characteristics of the second and third God, while Eusebius, quoting Numenius *per litteram*, precisely reports the ontological continuity between the two realities. Proclus takes greater care in systematically distinguishing the different aspects of reality, assigning to the third God a kind of “ontological autonomy,” which, however, is not found in the other fragments. Nevertheless, I think that we can conclude that a distinction between the second and third God may be upheld within Numenius’ thought because a secondary God that mediates between the first God and the cosmos makes sense.

In my interpretation, the divinity of the third God aligns well with the text of the *Timaeus*. Therefore, Numenius underlines the theological value of the different levels of reality, while also focusing on the strong unity between the second and the third Gods, striving to demonstrate that even though the demiurge is one, his activity cannot be confined merely to the role of a paradigm. Instead, he must also act as “real” demiurge by providing order to the cosmos. For this reason, a more systematic difference among demiurgic aspects into two different levels of reality can be found only in Plotinus but still not in Numenius.

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Causality at Lower Levels: The Demiurgical Unity of the Second and Third God according to Numenius of Apamea

Numenius is an author who straddles the line between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. In this contribution, I focus on the differences between the second and the third God, which emerge from analyses of the relevant fragments. Numenius emphasizes, on several occasions, how the second God (i.e., the demiurge) has a dual nature. In this paper, I investigate the role of the demiurge in Numenius and examine in what sense the second and third God are “one.” On the one hand, Numenius seems to be stressing the unity of the second and third levels of reality, but on the other hand, he also appears to be differentiating them. The present analyses concentrate on fragments 19F, 24F, 29T and 30T (respectively 11, 16, 21, and 22 in des Places’ edition). My purpose is to demonstrate that, according to Numenius, the second and the third God are one because they both can be regarded as demiurgic. Thus, Numenius conceives a kind of “double demiurgy,” which preserves the distinction between the second and the third God, who are distinguished from an ontological point of view, but who, at the same time, share a demiurgic function. The second God is then the paradigm, whereas the third God is immanent *in* matter as a ruling principle of the cosmos, which is similar to the World Soul, as he operates on matter in order to make it rationally ordered.

KEY WORDS

Numenius, demiurge, cosmos, matter, theology

Parmenide e l'Uovo argenteo degli Orfici in Simplicio, Damascio e Proclo

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1. Prologo

Nel suo *Commento alla Fisica* di Aristotele, precisamente alle linee 146, 29–147, 2, Simplicio istituisce una equivalenza tra l'essere parmenideo o, per meglio dire, tra una delle qualifiche che Parmenide, nella sezione del suo poema consacrata alla cosiddetta Via della Verità (DK 28 B 8.43) attribuisce all'ἔόν, ossia quella di essere «simile a massa di ben rotonda sfera»,¹ e il luminoso e splendente «Uovo argenteo» (ὤειον ἀργύρεον) di cui parlava Orfeo.² Tale equivalenza si trova all'interno di un'ampia digressione dedicata a Parmenide.³ Il lemma di Aristotele che Simplicio sta commentando afferma che «alcuni fecero delle concessioni ad entrambi gli argomenti». I λόγοι di cui parla qui Aristotele sono, rispettivamente, quello che Simplicio attribuisce a Parmenide e secondo il quale, se l'essere ha un solo significato, allora tutte le cose sono uno (questo argomento, dice

¹ Simp. *in Ph.* 146, 30εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκωι.

² Fr. 70 Kern. Il contesto è il commento di Simplicio ad Aristotele, *Ph.* 1.3, 187a1, commento (lungchissimo) che Simplicio sviluppa tra le pp. 133, 31–148, 24 del suo commentario.

³ Simp. *in Ph.* 142, 28–148, 24.

⁴ ἔνιοι δ' ἐνέδοσαν τοῖς λόγοις ἀμφοτέροις.

Aristotele, avrebbe condotto alcuni filosofi ad ammettere l'esistenza del non-essere)⁵ e quello della dicotomia, che Simplicio attribuisce a Zenone (e che avrebbe condotto certi altri filosofi a porre l'esistenza di grandezze indivisibili).⁶ Si tratta di due linee argomentative che, pur essendo entrambe inerenti alla "questione eleatica", sono fra di loro autonome e indipendenti.

L'obiettivo di questo studio è quello di tentare di risalire ai presupposti neoplatonici di questa identificazione tra l'essere parmenideo e l'Uovo orfico.⁷ Tenterò di dimostrare, a partire da un'indagine sui testi, che l'incastonamento del concetto orfico di ὄεον ἀργύφειον nella metafisica neoplatonica è avvenuto mediante un processo storico graduale e caratterizzato, sotto il profilo teorico, da un'intima coerenza interna. In particolare, mi concentrerò su Damascio, *de Principiis* 2.55.40,14-19 e 3.123.160,1-3 Westerink,⁸ e su un contestuale confronto con la posizione di Proclo, dal momento che la trasposizione metafisica dell'immagine orfica dell'Uovo sembra risalire, in effetti, a Proclo, (*in Ti.* 1.428, 8-9), il quale ipotizza l'identità fra «l'essere in senso primario», τὸ πρῶτως [...] ὄν di Platone e, appunto, l'Uovo orfico.⁹

2. L'Uovo argenteo e la ben rotonda sfera quali metafore del concetto neoplatonico di «Unificato» (Simp. *in Ph.* 133, 31-148, 24)

Torniamo brevemente a Simplicio. La questione da cui il commentatore parte riguarda una rilettura originale dell'argomento platonico dell'intero e delle parti¹⁰ che, nel *Sofista*, secondo lo Straniero di Elea, si è autorizzati a porre a partire dalle parole dello stesso Parmenide il quale, in DK 28 B 8.43-45¹¹, considera l'essere nei termini di una ben rotonda sfera la quale, a partire dal centro, è dappertutto uguale. Questa immagine pone in discussione, da un punto di vista fisico-spaziale, la rigida unità dell'essere parmenideo. Lo Straniero, difatti, intende questa immagine nel senso di una sfera la quale, avendo un

⁵ Arist. *Ph.* 1.3, 187a2: ὅτι ἔστι τὸ μὴ ὄν.

⁶ Arist. *Ph.* 1.3, 187a2: ἄτομα ποιήσαντες μεγέθη. Su questa questione si rimanda a Licciardi (2019: 317-330).

⁷ Non è da escludersi *a priori*, peraltro, una circolazione del motivo orfico dell'Uovo argenteo proprio nella Magna Grecia di Parmenide già a partire almeno dal VI sec. a.C. se è vero, come ipotizzò Colli, che già Ibico (che certamente conosce Orfeo, fr. 25 Page), ne tradirebbe una certa conoscenza nel fr. 4, 4-5 Page, in cui si legge l'espressione ἐν ὁέωι ἀργυρέωι. In questo studio non mi occuperò tuttavia di questa questione.

⁸ Si tratta di passi che contengono approfondimenti sulla teologia orfica detta «usuale», «comune» o «rapsodica», e una contestuale "traduzione" di concetti orfici, quali proprio quello di ὄεον ἀργύφειον (da cui il fr. 70 Kern, che in Simplicio si trova ripreso solo allusivamente), nei termini della metafisica neoplatonica.

⁹ ταῦτὸν τὸ τε Πλάτωνος ὄν καὶ τὸ Ὀρφικὸν ὄόν.

¹⁰ Non è da escludersi che Aristotele (*Ph.* 1.2, 185b11-16), allorquando accenna all'aporia della parte dell'intero, abbia presente proprio questa sezione del *Sofista*.

¹¹ Sono versi che lo stesso Straniero cita in *Sph.* 244e3-5.

centro e dei limiti, è necessariamente dotata di parti;¹² fatta questa ammissione, ne segue che l'essere, al suo interno, dovrà accogliere la molteplicità, e pertanto non sarà più uno.¹³

L'argomento impiegato dallo Straniero, come è dato di vedere, ripone la sua correttezza nella trasformazione della similitudine posta da Parmenide tra l'essere-uno e la sfera in una relazione di identità.¹⁴ A partire da questa identificazione sarebbe possibile estendere all'essere parmenideo tutte le proprietà della sfera di cui discutono i geometri, fra le quali quella di avere un centro e delle parti. Simplicio, all'opposto, enfatizzando il carattere di "immagine" della ben rotonda sfera, il cui statuto viene considerato del tutto equivalente, secondo il Commentatore, a quello dell'immagine dell'«Uovo argenteo» impiegata da Orfeo,¹⁵ deduce che l'essere-uno parmenideo si riferisce alla seconda ipostasi neoplatonica, la quale è uni-molteplice. Tale ipostasi¹⁶ è l'unità dei molti, la cui realtà è quella di essere stretti insieme in unità e di non essere ancora dispiegati quale molteplicità, per via della natura fortemente unitaria di tale ipostasi.

L'ermeneusi dell'Eleate consiste, in buona sostanza, nella identificazione dell'essere-uno (τὸ ἔν ὄν)¹⁷ parmenideo con l'intelligibile (τὸ νοητόν) – concetto, quest'ultimo, che in altri passi dell'*in Physica* Simplicio stesso ha qualificato mediante il concetto di «Unificato» (τὸ ἡνωμένον) e che risale a Damascio.

3. Damascio: l'Uovo argenteo quale prefigurazione mitica dei concetti metafisici di μικτόν, ἡνωμένον ed ἐνοειδής (Pr. 2.55.40, 1-41, 5 WC)

La seconda delle tre parti nelle quali è suddiviso il terzo volume dell'edizione Westerink e Combès del *de Principiis*,¹⁸ quello dedicato alla processione dell'Unificato, si articola a partire da due principali filoni tematici: il primo consiste in un esame della dottrina

¹² Pl. *Sph.* 244e6-7: τοιοῦτόν γε ὄν τὸ ὄν μέσον τε καὶ ἔσχατα ἔχει, ταῦτα δὲ ἔχον πᾶσα ἀνάγκη μέρη ἔχειν ἢ πῶς;

¹³ Che l'intero (τὸ ὅλον), debba essere inteso come qualcosa che è dotato di parti e che possiede tutte le parti di cui è composto viene detto anche in Pl. *Th.* 204a7 ss.; cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 5.26, 1023b26-27.

¹⁴ «Simile», ἐναλίγκιον, si legge infatti in DK 28 B 8.43, subito dopo πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης.

¹⁵ Orpheus, fr. 70, 2 Kern. Cf. Kern (1922: 150).

¹⁶ Come Simplicio chiarisce in *in Ph.* 52, 8-53, 7, questa polarità uno-molti si trova espressa, nel *Sofista* (Pl. *Sph.* 244e3-245a6, in cui è citato proprio Parmenide, e precisamente DK 28 B 8.43), nei termini della polarità fra l'intero e le parti. L'essere-uno parmenideo viene, cioè, per il tramite di Platone, considerato un intero (ὅλον - *Sph.* 244a18 = Simp. *in Ph.* 53, 21), che risulta uno solo in quanto si identifica con l'unità delle sue parti, e pertanto il suo essere uno costituisce un'affezione (πάθος), o proprietà. Esso, quindi, non è uno nel senso che esiste una cosa soltanto, e non è dunque l'Uno, ma, come sostiene Simplicio citando e allo stesso tempo sovrainterpretando Platone, ciò che è affetto dall'Uno (πάθος μὲν τοῦ ἐνὸς ἔχειν - Pl. *Sph.* 245a1-2 = Simp. *in Ph.* 53, 2-3). Questo medesimo discorso verrà ripreso da Simplicio, in modo più esteso, in *in Ph.* 86, 19-90, 22 [commento ad Arist. *Ph.* 1.2, 185b5].

¹⁷ Il sintagma τὸ ἔν ὄν individua nel *Parmenide* di Platone, come è noto, l'Uno-che-è. Per i neoplatonici, come è altrettanto noto, quest'ultimo concetto è in tutto e per tutto equivalente all'essere parmenideo.

¹⁸ L'edizione di riferimento è quella di Westerink, Combès (1986-1991). Non si tratta, sia qui precisato, del libro III del *de Principiis* inteso come articolazione del testo tradito dell'opera, bensì della parte del *de Principiis* contenuta nel volume III dell'edizione critica curata da Westerink e Combès (con ripartizione del testo basata su una scelta redazionale degli autori).

degli *Oracoli Caldaici*;¹⁹ il secondo,²⁰ invece, in un'esposizione della tradizione teologica greca²¹ e di quella orientale²² finalizzata a mostrare l'accordo fra queste due tradizioni con, da un lato, gli *Oracoli Caldaici* stessi e, dall'altro lato, la teologia di Proclo.²³

Tralasciamo la sezione dedicata agli *Oracoli Caldaici*, e diciamo invece qualcosa in più sulla seconda sezione. I tre quarti di questa (e cioè 3.159, 17–165, 5) sono dedicati all'esposizione della teologia greca, e la metà di quest'ultima esposizione, a sua volta, è dedicata alla tradizione orfica (3.159, 17–162, 22), tradizione che possiede dunque una certa centralità nell'economia complessiva di questa sezione del *de Principiis*. Tale centralità è giustificata, in parte, dalla proliferazione delle differenti tradizioni della dottrina orfica, che Damascio si premura di analizzare minuziosamente nelle loro svariate ramificazioni, che sono tre, e cioè quella rapsodica (3.159, 17–160, 16), quella di Ieronimo ed Ellanico (3.160, 17–162, 18)²⁴ e quella eudemea (3.162, 19–22). Al tempo di Damascio (ma già al tempo di Siriano e Proclo) la versione corrente, presso i Neoplatonici, della dottrina orfica era quella desunta dai *Discorsi sacri in ventiquattro rapsodie*,²⁵ ed è da questi che Damascio ha tratto la maggior parte dei suoi riferimenti all'Orfismo (molto spesso, tuttavia, questi passaggi sono associati da Damascio agli *Oracoli Caldaici*, sicché non è sempre agevole sceverare con precisione il contenuto delle due tradizioni). Ad ogni modo, a differenza di Proclo, il quale utilizzò come fonte pressoché esclusiva delle sue conoscenze orfiche proprio i *Discorsi sacri* (ma con la mediazione di Siriano), Damascio, come è noto, amplia il quadro delle testimonianze e riferisce di almeno altre due tradizioni, quella di Ieronimo ed Ellanico e quella di Eudemo.²⁶ Ora, come ha mostrato Brisson, lungi dal costituire, quest'ultimo, un fattore di mera e ulteriore acribia documentale di Damascio rispetto

¹⁹ Questo filone viene sviluppato in 3.108, 16–159, 5.

²⁰ Cf. Dam. Pr. 3.159, 6–167, 24.

²¹ Damascio presenta, nell'ordine, Orfeo e l'Orfismo, Omero, Esiodo, Acusilao, Epimenide e Ferecide di Sirio.

²² Troviamo, nell'ordine, l'esposizione delle teologie babilonese, magica, ugaritica ed egizia.

²³ La prima parte del terzo volume dell'edizione Westerink-Combes del *de Principiis* era dedicata, invece, all'esame delle aporie della processione (1, 1–108, 15), mentre la terza parte - che però è monca - alla partecipazione (168, 1–173, 5). Sull'armonia fra le dottrine di Platone e di Aristotele con tradizioni teologiche non di origine greca in Dam. Pr. 3.159, 6–167, 25 si veda Mihai (2014: 457–483).

²⁴ La teogonia orfica attribuita a Ieronimo ed Ellanico presente in Damascio coincide con quella citata dall'apologista cristiano Atenagora, vissuto nel II sec. d.C. Cf. Herrero de Jáuregui (2010: 33, 167–170).

²⁵ Dei *Discorsi sacri* in ventiquattro rapsodie ('Ἐποὶ λόγοι ἐν ῥαψωδίασιν κδ') conosciamo 176 frammenti raccolti, per la maggior parte, a partire dagli scritti di Proclo (123, quasi tutti provenienti dall'*in Timaeum*) e Damascio, che denomina tale teologia «usuale» o «comune» (ἡ συνήθης Ὀρφικῆ θεολογία - Dam. Pr. 3.317, 16 = DK I B 12.27), o, come dicono i moderni, «rapsodica». Secondo Brisson (1987: 47–51) [il saggio copre le pp. 43–104, e si trova adesso pubblicato, con la medesima impaginazione, in Brisson (1995)] la conoscenza, da parte di Damascio, degli Ἐποὶ λόγοι sarebbe mediata da un perduto trattato di Siriano sulla *Concordanza tra Orfeo, Pitagora e Platone* annotato a margine da Proclo. L'ipotesi si trova ripresa in Brisson (1995: 168). A parere di West le *Rapsodie* andrebbero collocate cronologicamente intorno al 100 a.C., mentre secondo Colli e Brisson esse risalirebbero ad un periodo compreso tra la fine del I e l'inizio del II sec. d.C. Cf. Colli (2005⁴, 1977⁴: 424) e Brisson (1995: 170–171). Sempre a parere di Brisson, la redazione scritta più antica risale comunque ad un periodo compreso tra la fine del V e l'inizio del VI sec. d.C. Per uno *status quaestionis* su questi problemi e la relativa letteratura secondaria si veda Westerink, Combès (1991: 228–229).

²⁶ Per un breve prospetto sinottico sulle tre teologie orfiche citate da Damascio si veda Mihai (2014: 471–472).

a Proclo, esso scaturisce plausibilmente dall'esigenza di trovare una giustificazione teologica – o meglio, *orfica* – ad alcune innovazioni a carattere squisitamente filosofico che Damascio apporta alla filosofia neoplatonica.²⁷

* * *

In *Pr.* 2.40, 14–19 è contenuto, plausibilmente nella sua forma *in extenso* rispetto alla fugace allusione fatta da Simplicio, quello che da Kern è stato riportato come fr. 70 dei suoi *Orphicorum fragmenta*. Il contesto è relativo alla questione dell'ascendenza storica, all'interno della tradizione platonica, del concetto metafisico (proprio di Damascio) di Unificato, cioè la terza Enade (le altre due sono, come è noto, l'Uno-Tutto e il Tutto-Uno). Su questa ascendenza Damascio non ha dubbi: l'Unificato discende direttamente dal concetto platonico di «misto» (*μικτόν* – Pl. *Phlb.* 27d8)²⁸ della diade limite-illimitato.

Nell'*incipit* della seconda parte del secondo volume dell'edizione Westerink e Combès del *de Principiis*, in effetti, Damascio scrive che «<noi> ricercheremo l'unificato [...] e in che modo <esso> viene detto *misto* da Platone e dagli altri filosofi Platonici e, prima ancora, da Filolao e dagli altri <filosofi> Pitagorici».²⁹ Damascio prosegue scrivendo che «Filolao dice non solo che l'essere è risultato dalla coagulazione di <principi> limitanti e illimitati, ma anche che <gli altri Pitagorici> pongono un terzo principio, la triade unificata, accanto alla monade e alla diade indefinita».³⁰

Ora, non è semplice sviluppare, a partire da questo contesto, il significato di questa “coagulazione”, cioè della condensazione, da parte di Damascio, della triade platonica limite-illimitato-misto contenuta nel *Filebo* e della teoria, qui riportata come filolaica (ma in realtà platonica, e segnatamente riconducibile alle «cosiddette dottrine non scritte»)³¹ dell'uno-diade indefinita e sul relativo innesto, su questa, del concetto di «triade unificata».³² Sappiamo, però, che i platonici della tarda antichità, segnatamente Giamblico³³ e Proclo (il quale aveva probabilmente composto un *Commentario al File-*

²⁷ Si veda Brisson (1995: 195–203). Per una valutazione complessiva circa la ricezione neoplatonica dell'Orfismo si veda Brisson (2008: 1491–1516).

²⁸ Damascio fa riferimento a Pl. *Phlb.* 27d1–10 in Dam. *Pr.* 2.41, 3–4 e 43, 16–17.

²⁹ Dam. *Pr.* 2.40, 3–8: τὸ ἠνωμένον ζητήσωμεν [...] καὶ πῶς λέγεται μικτόν ὑπὸ τοῦ Πλάτωνος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων φιλοσόφων τῶν Πλατωνικῶν, καὶ ἔτι πρότερον ὑπὸ Φιλολάου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Πυθαγορείων (il corsivo, sia nel corpo del testo che in quello della nota, è mio).

³⁰ Dam. *Pr.* 2.40, 8–12: οὐ μόνον ὅτι ἐκ περαινότων καὶ ἀπειρῶν συμπετηγέται τὸ ὄν φησιν ὁ Φιλόλαος, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ μετὰ τὴν μονάδα καὶ ἀόριστον δυάδα τίθενται τρίτην ἀρχὴν τὴν ἠνωμένην τριάδα.

³¹ Cf. Arist. *Ph.* 4.2, 209b14–15.

³² È probabile che Damascio faccia qui riferimento al perduto *Περὶ φύσεως* di Filolao. Alcune pagine prima, in Dam. *Pr.* 2.24, 15 ss., Damascio aveva fatto esplicito riferimento a questo trattato in alcune linee che sarebbero poi state accolte da Diels e Kranz come frammenti di Filolao (DK 44 B 1–2). Cf. Westerink, Combès (1989: 228, 236).

³³ La testimonianza risale a Siriano apud Proclo (Procl. *in Ti.* 1.77, 24–78, 11) ed è stata accolta come fr. 7 del perduto *in Timaeum* di Giamblico. Cf. Dillon (1973), il fr. 7 si trova a p. 110, mentre il relativo commento alle

bo, che è andato perduto),³⁴ interpretavano la triade dei principi esposta in *Phlb.* 27d come il primo livello nella processione delle ipostasi immediatamente successivo all'Uno. Ora, limite e illimitato corrispondono, rispettivamente, a uno e diade indefinita, mentre il misto corrisponde al mondo intelligibile. Sappiamo anche che questo quadro teorico generale è condiviso (con alcune importate differenze di cui diremo a breve) anche da Damascio nel suo *Commentario al Filebo*³⁵ che, se ha ragione Combès, con buona probabilità possiamo assumere come terreno di verifica, sul piano esegetico, in vista della formulazione di alcune nozioni metafisiche.³⁶

Torniamo a seguire, però, questa equazione fra misto e unificato riportata nel *de Principiis*, e leggiamo cosa Damascio scrive immediatamente dopo in un passo molto importante per capire, giusto per usare le parole dello stesso Damascio, «cosa esso è»:³⁷ «Ora, tutto ciò che è unificato è un che di misto, se è vero che l'unificato comporta una manifestazione di uno e molteplicità; cosicché è da ricercare anche a partire da quali «elementi» è stato mescolato».³⁸ Se in 2.40, 4–5 Damascio aveva detto che «noi ricercheremo *che cosa è*» l'Unificato (τὸ ἡνωμένον ζητήσωμεν [...] τί ποτέ ἐστὶ), qui, invece, prescrive che bisogna indagarne anche gli elementi costitutivi. È proprio a questo punto che cade la citazione orfica. Il testo, immediatamente a seguire, dice:

E, infatti, Orfeo <dice>:

in seguito, poi, il grande Tempo³⁹ fabbricò, attraverso Etere eccelso,

pp. 268–270. Il testo si trova accolto anche in Dalsgaard Larsen (1972b: 92, test. 200). Si veda anche Westerink, Combès (1989: 228–229).

³⁴ Cf. Abbate (2004: XXVII).

³⁵ Quella che è giunta a noi è, verosimilmente, una sintesi del commento di Damascio, che la tradizione aveva erroneamente attribuito al suo discepolo Olimpiodoro. L'edizione è quella a cura di Westerink (1959, rist. 1982).

³⁶ Diversi aspetti dell'*in Philebum*, infatti, «révèlent une structure de pensée quasi contemporaine de celle du *Traité des Premiers Principes*» [si veda l'*Introduction* di Combès a Westerink, Combès (1986: LIV)].

³⁷ Dam. *Pr.* 2.40, 5: τί ποτέ ἐστὶ.

³⁸ Dam. *Pr.* 2.40, 12–14: πᾶν δὲ ἡνωμένον μικτόν, εἴπερ ἔμφασιν ἔχει καὶ ἐνὸς καὶ πλήθους τὸ ἡνωμένον ὥστε καὶ ἐκ τίνων μέμικται ζητητέον. Cf. la traduzione di Combès (Westerink, Combès 1989: 40–41), il quale integra con «éléments» i costituenti (che nel testo di Damascio sono sottintesi) a partire dai quali scaturisce il «misto». L'integrazione è corretta, dal momento che da quanto si legge una decina di linee dopo si comprende che Damascio qui sta parlando di στοιχεῖα. Bisogna avere l'accortezza, tuttavia, di non incorrere nell'equivoco che si stia parlando, in questo contesto, di costituenti materiali ultimi. La sintassi e il significato di tutto il passo di *Pr.* 2.40, 1–41, 5 suggeriscono a mio avviso in modo sufficientemente chiaro di intenderli come dei «principi». In 40, 2, difatti, in una discussione relativa al terzo principio di tutte le cose (τῆ τρίτῃ τῶν πάντων ἀρχῇ) e, in 40, 3–4, si fa riferimento al fatto che, a partire dalla conoscenza di questo, si potrà poi estendere l'indagine anche ai due principi (εἰς τὰς δύο πρώτας ἀρχάς), cioè gli altri due principi oltre il misto. In 40, 19, poi, la traduzione di Westerink qualifica come «éléments» materia e forma, che con tutta evidenza non sono στοιχεῖα, bensì ἀρχαί.

³⁹ Assume una certa rilevanza correggere qui il testo della vecchia edizione di Ruelle (come hanno fatto Kern, Westerink e Bernabé), perché mentre a Χρόνος, come si dirà fra breve, Proclo, sulla scorta delle rapsodie orfiche (ossia dello stesso materiale da cui attinge Damascio), assegna lo *status* di principio ineffabile, a Κρόνος assegna il ruolo di primo dio intellettuale. Nelle rapsodie orfiche, si ricordi, sotto Κρόνος ha luogo il quarto regno (i primi tre regni erano stati, rispettivamente, quelli di Tempo, Phanés e Notte), a cui succederà il quinto, quello di Zeus, a cui a sua volta succederà, nel sesto regno, Dioniso, che è ancora un infante quando Zeus gli trasmette

un Uovo argenteo.⁴⁰

«il termine» *fabbricò*, infatti, indica un che di artificiale, ma non un prodotto di una generazione; ora, tutto ciò che è artificiale è un misto di almeno due «principi», materia e forma, oppure «principi» analoghi a questi. «Ricercheremo» inoltre, quindi, se ciò che è misto «è» superiore agli elementi propri dai quali è composto; «ricercheremo» anche se gli elementi «scaturiscono» da principi anteriori⁴¹ «che siano» omogenei alla caratteristica individuale⁴² (perché sembra che Platone intenda questo).⁴³

Tempo, Etere e Uovo: queste, dunque, sono le complesse, e forse non prive di una certa opacità, figurazioni mitiche evocate dal frammento orfico 70 dei *Discorsi sacri* che sorreggono l'impianto di questo passaggio.

Un chiarimento su di esso, tuttavia, deriva da un altro estratto degli Ἱεροὶ λόγοι, precisamente il fr. 66, riportato da Proclo nel *Commentario alla «Repubblica»*, nella parte dedicata al commento al mito di Er.⁴⁴ Prescindiamo qui necessariamente, per ragioni di spazio, dalla contestualizzazione del brano orfico all'interno della disserta-

la sovranità (cf. fr. 207–208 Kern). Che la successione divina preveda, secondo Orfeo, sei stirpi, è un dato che plausibilmente sembra acquisito già al tempo di Platone (cf. Pl. *Phlb.* 66c8–9 = Orph. fr. 14 Kern). Su questo ruolo di Κρόνος in Proclo, e segnatamente nell'*in Cratylum*, si rimanda a Abbate (2017: 61, 65–66, 139–142). Alla luce di un gioco di corrispondenze tra personificazioni mitiche e concetti filosofici, gioco che come si dirà fra breve vede sostanzialmente allineati Proclo e Damascio (cf. Westerink, Combès 1991: 229–230), appare ragionevole ipotizzare, in definitiva, che il discorso di Damascio conservi una sua coerenza solo leggendo Χρόνος anziché Κρόνος. Le due figure si trovano equivocate ed erroneamente scambiate, per esempio, in Giannantoni (1979: 17), nonostante nell'edizione Diels-Kranz (DK 1 B 12.20) si trovi correttamente accolta la lezione Χρόνον anziché Κρόνον.

⁴⁰ Orph. fr. 70 Kern.

⁴¹ Lett.: «nati prima».

⁴² Lett.: «proprietà». Se, cioè, vige un isomorfismo tra l'elemento e il principio da cui questo elemento deriva, vale a dire, detto nei termini della filosofia di Platone, se occorre accogliere una concezione autopredicativa dell'archetipo. La questione si trova, in effetti, sollevata nel *Filebo*. Per la precisione Damascio alluderebbe qui, plausibilmente, a *Phlb.* 27d1–10; cf. Ahbel-Rappe (2010: 453, n. 3). Più precisamente, si dibatte, relativamente al piacere e all'intelligenza, quale dei due sia primo o secondo (Pl. *Phlb.* 27c8–10); risulta superiore, tuttavia, la vita mista di piacere e intelligenza (Pl. *Phlb.* 27d1–2: νικῶντα μὲν ἔθεμ'εν που τὸν μεικτὸν βίον ἡδονῆς τε καὶ φρονήσεως). Ne consegue, allora, il seguente quesito: a quale genere (γένος) appartiene questa vita (Pl. *Phlb.* 27d4–5)? Essa, dice Socrate rispondendo a Protarco, è «una parte» (μέρος) «del terzo genere» (τοῦ τρίτου [...]) γένους», vale a dire il misto, e quest'ultimo – si badi bene, perché è su questo che si focalizza qui l'attenzione di Damascio –, a sua volta, «non è un misto di due certi «elementi»» (Pl. *Phlb.* 27d8: οὐ γὰρ ὁ δυοῖν τινοῖν ἔστι μικτὸς ἐκείνος), «ma è il genere di tutte le cose illimitate che sono state avvinte dal limite» (Pl. *Phlb.* 27d8–9: ἀλλὰ συμπάντων τῶν ἀπειρῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ πέρατος δεδεμένον), «cosicché correttamente questa vita superiore verrebbe ad essere una parte di quello [scil. del terzo genere]» (Pl. *Phlb.* 27d9–10: ὥστε ὁρθῶς ὁ νικηφόρος οὗτος βίος μέρος ἐκείνου γίγνεται ἄν).

⁴³ Dam. *Pr.* 2.40, 14–41: Καὶ γὰρ Ὁρφεύς·
ἔπειτα δ' ἔτευξε μέγας Χρόνος Αἰθήρι δίω
ὤεον ἀργύφρον.

τὸ γὰρ ἔτευξε δηλοῖ τι τεχνητόν, ἀλλ' οὐ γέννημα, τὸ δὲ τεχνητόν [ἀλλογενν] ἄπαν μικτὸν ἔστιν ἐκ δυῶν τοῦλάχιστον, ὕλης καὶ εἶδους, ἢ τῶν τούτοις ἀναλογούντων. Ἔτι τοίνυν εἰ κρεῖττον τὸ μικτὸν τῶν οἰκείων στοιχείων ἐξ ὧν συμπληροῦται· καὶ εἰ τὰ στοιχεῖα ἐκ προγόνων ἀρχῶν ὁμογενῶν τῇ ἰδιότητι (δοκεῖ γὰρ ταῦτα βούλεσθαι ὁ Πλάτων).

⁴⁴ Come si sa, a partire soprattutto dagli studi di Carlo Gallavotti, l'*in Rempublicam* di Proclo scaturisce dalla raccolta di sei scritti autonomi, composti in tempi diversi e con finalità differenti. Il «commento» al mito

zione di Proclo, e leggiamo direttamente i due versi accolti come frammento da Kern: «questo Tempo senza vecchiaia, dalla saggezza che non perisce, / generò Etere,⁴⁵ e una grande voragine, smisurata qua e là». ⁴⁶ Etere e la voragine/Caos⁴⁷ costituiscono, secondo Proclo,⁴⁸ la trasposizione mitica della diade di limite e illimitato,⁴⁹ corrispondenti a loro volta a uno e diade indefinita, subordinati rispetto a Χρόνος. Ora, presso gli Orfici, stando a Proclo, Χρόνος è «il primissimo principio causale» (τὸ πρώτιστον αἴτιον),⁵⁰ «causa prima di tutte le cose» (καὶ Ὀρφεὺς τὴν πρώτην πάντων αἰτίαν Χρόνον καλεῖ),⁵¹ «la primissima causa» (ἡ πρώτιστη αἰτία),⁵² «l'ineffabile stesso che trascende anche le Enadi intelligibili» (αὐτὸ τὸ ἄρρητον καὶ τῶν νοητῶν ἐνάδων ἐκβεβηκός)⁵³ e «principio causale che preesiste a ogni generazione» (πάσης γενέσεως αἴτιον προϋπάρχον).⁵⁴

Sono tutte formulazioni abbastanza chiare che indicano che Χρόνος è, in Proclo, l'equivalente mitico dell'Uno ineffabile,⁵⁵ trascendente le stesse Enadi, ossia i livelli più elevati della realtà intelligibile, che in quanto uni-formi rappresentano nella realtà

di Er occuperebbe, sempre secondo il Gallavotti, le pp. 96–359 del vol. II dell'edizione di Kroll (1899–1901). Cf. Abbate (2004: LII–LIV).

⁴⁵ In realtà Αἰθέρα si trova nel verso precedente, ma per ragioni di sintassi, nella traduzione italiana, è bene porporlo.

⁴⁶ Orph. fr. 66 Kern = Procl. *in R.* 2.138, 14–15: Αἰθέρα μὲν Χρόνος οὔτος ἀγήραος, ἀφθιτόμητις / γείνατο καὶ μέγα χάσμα πελώριον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα. Efficace, a mio avviso, la resa di πελώριον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα proposta da J. Combès (Westerink, Combès 1991: 230, «dont l'immensité s'étend en tout sens»).

⁴⁷ Sull'equivalenza tra χάσμα e χάος cf. Simp. *in Ph.* 528, 12–19 (= Arist. *Ph.* 4.1, 208b29–209a2) = Orph. fr. 66b Kern, in cui, *contra* Esiodo che, a dire di Simplicio, aveva fatto del Caos uno spazio (χώρα – Simp. *in Ph.* 528, 13), il Commentatore scrive, sulla base dell'autorità di Orfeo, che il Caos è piuttosto una «enorme voragine» (πελώριον χάσμα, è l'espressione ripresa da Procl. *in R.* 2.138, 15). A tal proposito, rificendosi a una tradizione che senza dubbio risale almeno a Proclo (o che comunque esprime corrispondenze concettuali coerenti con il quadro offerto da Proclo), Simplicio scrive che «successivamente, infatti, all'unico principio di tutte le cose, che Orfeo proclama Tempo in quanto misura dell'origine mitica degli dèi, dice che fuoriuscirono [o anche «procedettero», προελθεῖν] Etere e l'enorme voragine, l'uno causa della processione di aspetto limitato [τῆς περαιοειδοῦς προόδου] degli dèi, l'altra, invece, di quella di aspetto illimitato [τῆς ἀπειροειδοῦς]. E in merito dice così: non c'era alcun limite, non fondo, né alcuna sede [οὐδέ τι πείραρ ὑπῆν, οὐ πυθμῖν, οὐδέ τις ἔδρα]» (Simp. *in Ph.* 528, 15–19). Questa interpretazione simpliciana su Esiodo appare abbastanza riduttiva, dal momento che anche in Esiodo è presente la potente immagine di una «grande voragine» (χάσμα μέγ' – Hes. *Th.* 740) posta al di sopra del Tartaro, che separa il Tartaro stesso dalla superficie della terra, cioè lo sconfinato spazio dell'Ade, dove crescono le radici (ρίζαι – Hes. *Th.* 728), le sorgenti e i confini (πηγαὶ καὶ πείρατα – Hes. *Th.* 738) della terra, del mare, del cielo, del Tartaro stesso e di tutte le cose (Hes. *Th.* 736–739). Più precisamente, il Caos, successivamente al suo stato primordiale (forse Simplicio si riferisce qui a questo stadio del χάος per qualificarlo quale χώρα), continua a sussistere tanto nello spazio ipogeico compreso tra la superficie terrestre e il fondo dell'universo, cioè il Tartaro, tanto in quello compreso fra la terra e il cielo; cf. Cerri (1995: 437–467, e in particolare pp. 449–450). Ad ogni modo, come giudica anche Ricciardelli (2018: 168), il termine χάσμα, nella Teogonia, è alternativo a Χάος.

⁴⁸ Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 3.9.36, 12–15.

⁴⁹ Cf. Brisson (1987: 70). Come viene segnalato (Brisson 1987: 71), l'assimilazione di Etere alla Monade e di Caos alla Diade risale, plausibilmente, al maestro Siriano, stando all'attendibilità di quanto riferito da Ermia (*in Phdr.* 138, 11 ss.).

⁵⁰ Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 1.28.121, 6–7.

⁵¹ Procl. *in Cra.* 109, 4–5 (= Orph. fr. 68 Kern).

⁵² Procl. *in Cra.* 115, 3 (= Orph. fr. 68 Kern).

⁵³ Procl. *in Cra.* 115, 3–4 (= Orph. fr. 68 Kern).

⁵⁴ Procl. *in Cra.* 115,5 (= Orph. fr. 68 Kern).

⁵⁵ Cf. anche Westerink, Combès (1991: 230).

intelligibile ciò che più s'approssima alla semplicità originaria dell'Uno.⁵⁶ Questo ruolo, precisa Proclo,⁵⁷ non può essere rivestito dal Χάος di Esiodo in quanto, come ammette proprio quest'ultimo,⁵⁸ esso, pur essendo stato il primissimo essere a fare la sua apparizione, nondimeno «venne ad essere» (γένετο), cioè fu generato.⁵⁹ È coerente, dunque, che nella linea di successione Χάος sia posteriore a Χρόνος, «che è causa originaria delle cose in quanto in lui temporalità e causalità coincidono poiché è con il sussistere del tempo che ha luogo la generazione delle realtà esistenti».⁶⁰

Χρόνος, dunque, genera Etere (che appartiene alla dimensione celeste, ed è dunque connesso al cielo),⁶¹ che per Proclo costituisce la sommità dell'intelligibile (mentre Phanês, come si vedrà meglio dopo, che per Proclo, allorquando commenta il *Timeo*, coincide con il concetto di «vivente-in-sé», αὐτοζῶον, costituisce il limite inferiore dell'intelligibile)⁶² e Caos, ossia le profondità della terra.⁶³ Ora, la triade Tempo-Etere-Caos riproduce su un piano mitico, secondo Proclo, la sequenza ipostatica di Uno-prima Enade (limite)–seconda Enade (illimitato). Sicché, combinando (non senza, forse, una certa dose di spregiudicatezza) la su-esposta genealogia mitica con il fr. 70 Kern, tratto dal § 55 del secondo volume dell'edizione Westerink e Combès del *de Principiis* di Damascio, in cui come s'è visto si apprende che l'Uovo venne forgiato da Tempo attraverso Etere, ne segue che l'Uovo è il primo essere (perché le Enadi, cioè Etere e Caos, non sono ancora «essere») e, più precisamente, nei termini del *Filebo*, il primo misto⁶⁴ e, più in generale, l'essere di Platone.⁶⁵

Ora, non è cosa affatto scontata assumere gli elementi concettuali contenuti in questa digressione su Proclo quali fonti filologiche del discorso di Damascio nel senso di una derivazione dell'uno dall'altro, e purtuttavia non appare infruttuoso, a mio modo di vede-

⁵⁶ Cf. Abbate (2017: pp. 632–633, nn. 676–678).

⁵⁷ Procl. in *Cra.* 115, 9–21.

⁵⁸ Hes. *Th.* 116.

⁵⁹ Cf. Abbate (2017: 66–67, 633, n. 679).

⁶⁰ Abbate (2017: 633, n. 679). Chiarissimo, a tal proposito, il passaggio contenuto in Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 1.28.121, 6–9 (τοῖς μὲν γὰρ Ὀρφικαῖς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸ πρόωτον αἴτιον <Χρόνος> προσείρηται – καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸ δὲ ἄλλας αἰτίας – ἵνα τὸ κατ' αἰτίαν τῶ κατὰ χρόνον ἦ ταῦτόν), ma anche in *in Ti.* 1.280, 25–26. Sulla corrispondenza tra Χρόνος e l'Uno si veda Brisson (1987: 70). È plausibile, come è stato ipotizzato, che a monte del ruolo importante assegnato a Χρόνος e del contestuale declassamento di Χάος, non ci siano soltanto ragioni di carattere filosofico, bensì anche storico-culturale, quali l'incontro tra l'occidente greco e il mitraismo e, più in generale, l'assorbimento di figure desunte dall'immaginario iranico. Brisson (1985: 37–55, in particolare 45–50), ora in Brisson (1995), con la medesima numerazione di pagine; Scarpi (2002: 632).

⁶¹ Cf. Westerink, Combès (1991: 230).

⁶² Chiarissimo, a tal proposito, il passaggio di Procl. in *Cra.* 110, 34–41, in cui peraltro, significativamente, alla linea 110, 37, riprende alcune espressioni (νοητὰ ζῶα περιέχον) da *Ti.* 31a4–5, il lemma a partire dal quale Proclo sviluppa la differenza tra l'Uovo e Phanês all'interno di una discussione relativa al concetto di αὐτοζῶον e di cui ci si occuperà nel paragrafo seguente. Cf. anche Abbate (2017: 627, n. 618).

⁶³ Che il Caos sia sottostante è confermato anche da Proclo, in *R.* 2.138, 17–18 = Orph., fr. 72 Kern.

⁶⁴ Così Westerink, Combès (1991: 230).

⁶⁵ In un passo su cui si tornerà dopo, e cioè Procl. in *Ti.* 1.428, 8–9 (cf. *Pl. Ti.* 30c7–d1), viene testualmente asserito, infatti, che l'Uovo orfico e l'essere di Platone sono la stessa cosa.

re, assumere le equivalenze istituite da Proclo come prolegomeni del discorso di Damascio e premesse per una interpretazione di esso.

Anche in Damascio, in effetti, vi è l'identificazione tra Χρόνος e l'Uno; l'Etere, poi, corrisponde all'Uno-Tutto (in termini procliani, alla prima Enade, cioè al limite); a seguire, il Caos corrisponde al Tutto-Uno (in termini procliani, alla seconda Enade, cioè all'illimitato);⁶⁶ l'Uovo, infine, corrisponde all'Unificato (in termini procliani, al Misto).⁶⁷ Che queste figure trovino tutte, secondo Damascio, una corrispondenza all'interno della processione delle ipostasi, risulta poi chiaro da un altro passaggio del *de Principiis*,⁶⁸ in cui si legge che Etere, Caos e l'Uovo formano la prima triade intelligibile. L'Uovo, in particolare, prende il posto dell'essere in assoluto.⁶⁹ Le triadi intelligibili, come aveva insegnato Proclo,⁷⁰ sono tre. La terza triade è formata da Phanês, Erichepeo e Metis. Meno chiara, in questo gioco di corrispondenza, appare invece la seconda triade intelligibile, in cui i primi due termini sono ignoti e, al terzo termine, compare «l'Uovo concepito e concepitore il dio» (τὸ κούμενον καὶ τὸ κύον ὄν τὸν θεόν),⁷¹ altrimenti detto «bianca Tunica» o «Nuvola» (ἢ τὸν ἀργῆτα χιτῶνα ἢ τὴν νεφέλην),⁷² da cui scaturisce Phanês, il primo membro, appunto, della terza triade.⁷³ L'Uovo, quindi, per un verso è ciò che è concepito (τὸ κούμενον) da Etere e Caos, mentre per un altro verso è ciò che concepisce (τὸ κύον) Phanês. La traduzione in termini speculativi di questa seconda triade viene fornita da Damascio, poco dopo, in *Pr.* 3.160, 8–16, in cui si legge che «forse, però, anche la triade intermedia [*scil.* la seconda triade, intermedia tra la prima e la terza] è da porre nei termini del dio trimorfo [*scil.* della triade divina] ancora in fase di concepimento nell'Uovo»,⁷⁴ cioè della triade Phanês-Erichepeo-Metis considerata ancora nello stato embrionale dentro l'Uovo cosmico. In particolare, questa seconda triade, «in relazione all'Uovo è ancora un unificato (κατὰ μὲν τὸ ὄν ἔτι ἡνωμένον), in relazione al dio è ciò che è stato già distinto (κατὰ δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἤδη διακεκριμένον), mentre l'intero, per così dire, «è» ciò che si distingue (τὸ δὲ ὅλον εἰπεῖν, διακρινόμενον)».⁷⁵ Damascio applica alla seconda triade, dunque, la dialettica di indistinto-distinto-ciò che si distingue (ἀδιάκριτον-διακεκριμένον-διακρινόμενον) la quale, come è noto, è per Damascio stesso

⁶⁶ Cf. Dam. *Pr.* 2.24, 7–9

⁶⁷ Cf. Dam. *Pr.* 2.40, 15–16. Sulla corrispondenza, in Damascio, tra la triade orfica di Etere, Caos e Uovo con le Enadi si veda Brisson (1995: 171–172).

⁶⁸ Dam. *Pr.* 3.159, 17–160, 16 (= DK I B 12).

⁶⁹ Dam. *Pr.* 3.159, 21: ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ ὄντος ἀπλῶς τὸ ὄν.

⁷⁰ Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 3, cap. 27.

⁷¹ Dam. *Pr.* 3.160, 1–2.

⁷² Dam. *Pr.* 3.160, 2. Sulla equivalenza qui istituita tra l'Uovo e la Nuvola si veda Brisson (1995: 174), secondo il quale Damascio farebbe riferimento, implicitamente, alla teologia orfica nella versione offerta da Ieronimo ed Ellanico, nella quale, secondo la lettura offerta da Damascio, Etere e Caos formerebbero una triade assieme a Erebo, qualificato come «nebuloso».

⁷³ Sulla difficoltà di reperire, in Damascio, le corrispettive personificazioni mitiche della seconda triade intelligibile, cf. Brisson (1995: 173–174).

⁷⁴ μήποτε δὲ καὶ τὴν μέσσην τριάδα θετέον κατὰ τὸν τρίμορφον θεὸν ἔτι κούμενον ἐν τῷ ὄν.

⁷⁵ Dam. *Pr.* 3.160, 14–16. Su questo passo passo Westerink, Combès (1991: 230). La seconda triade intelligibile appartiene, in Damascio, all'ordine intelligibile-intellettivo; cf. Ahbel-Rappe (2010: 473, n. 53).

un ulteriore modo di leggere e applicare la legge della dialettica triadica di manenza-processione-conversione.⁷⁶ Possiamo allora tornare, a questo punto, al passo *de Principiis* relativo all'Uovo.

Ora, il problema in Damascio è comprendere la natura di questo «misto» nel suo rapporto con la suddetta diade, quale tra i due, cioè, bisogna intendere come anteriore. Interpretando questo passo Proclo,⁷⁷ forse sulla scorta di Siriano,⁷⁸ aveva interpretato la diade limite-illimitato come direttamente discendente dall'Uno, e il μικτόν come la commistione di limite e illimitato (più precisamente: ciò che partecipa di questi due principi), sicché il «misto» di cui parla Platone nel *Filebo* si darebbe *a posteriori* a partire dai due termini della diade. Più precisamente: limite e illimitato costituirebbero due Enadi,⁷⁹ mentre il misto non sarebbe un'Enade. D'altra parte, Damascio ritiene invece che il «misto» (cioè l'antecedente, sotto il profilo storico-filosofico, del concetto di Unificato) non risulti dalla combinazione di due principi ad esso anteriori.⁸⁰ Esso non sarà da considerarsi nemmeno come essere in senso stretto bensì, piuttosto, come una «manifestazione» (ἐκφανσις)⁸¹ dell'Uno.⁸² Il μικτόν-ἡνωμένον sarebbe, assieme all'Uno-Tutto e al Tutto-Uno, esso stesso Enade (ἐννοειδής, cioè che ha la forma di uno ma non è esso

⁷⁶ Come preciserò in seguito, anche nella *Theologia Platonica* di Proclo l'ordinamento intelligibile è composto da tre triadi intelligibili, per cui considerato dal punto di vista del prevalere del carattere del limite, esso sarà l'«uno-che-è»; considerato, in secondo luogo, dal punto di vista del prevalere del carattere dell'illimitato, esso sarà «eternità» (o «intero»); considerato, infine, dal punto di vista del prevalere del carattere del misto, esso sarà «vivente intelligibile», o «vivente in-sé». L'Intero (ὅλον) corrisponde, in Proclo, al livello intermedio della realtà intelligibile, ed è quel livello in cui è implicita, anche se non ancora dispiegata, la nozione di molteplicità di parti; a questo stadio prevale il carattere dell'illimitato. Cf. Abbate (2019: LIII). Sulla dialettica della distinzione in Damascio si rimanda a Romano (1998: 164–168). La disposizione delle triadi intelligibili, nondimeno, non è identica in Proclo e Damascio. Sul distanziamento critico di Damascio rispetto a Proclo su quest'ultimo punto si veda Dam. Pr. 3.144, 1–147, 18, cioè l'intero § 119; cf. anche Ahbel-Rappe (2010: 405–406).

⁷⁷ Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 3.9.38, 22–27; 41, 20–22; 42, 23–26. Chiarissime, in particolare, le linee di 42, 12–17, da cui s'evince chiaramente che limite e illimitato trascendono il misto (τοῦ μικτοῦ τὸ πέρασ καὶ ἄπειρον ἐξηρημένον). Il libro III della *Theologia Platonica*, lo si ricordi, è dedicato all'analisi della struttura del mondo intelligibile, che si articola nella triade di Essere-Vita-Intelletto. Vita e Intelletto, a loro volta, dipendono e derivano dall'Essere (Essere che, sia detto qui *en passant*, nell'interpretazione di Proclo coincide con l'εἶν παρμενίδεο). Questa derivazione è illustrata da Proclo proprio a partire da una certa esegesi del *Filebo* (e del *Parmenide*): l'Uno-che-è, cioè la seconda ipotesi del *Parmenide* e la seconda ipostasi neoplatonica viene da Proclo considerato come μικτόν, che a sua volta scaturisce dal principio del limite (πέρας) e da quello dell'illimitato (ἄπειρον). L'Uno-che-è, pertanto, è intrinsecamente composito e articolato al suo interno (sicché, al fine di reperire un fondamento di unità originaria dell'essere stesso, Proclo introdurrà le Enadi come livello intermedio fra l'Uno-in-sé e l'Uno-che-è). Su questi aspetti si rimanda a Van Riel (2000: 15–27); Abbate (2008: 96–98; 2010: 196, 201).

⁷⁸ «L'esegesi platonica di Siriano – scrive Abbate (2019: 5, n. V) – viene considerata fondamentale da Proclo in tutta la *Theologia Platonica*».

⁷⁹ Sulle Enadi in Proclo si rimanda a Westerink (1978: IX–LXXVIII, LXV) e Guérard (1982: 73–82. Per una serie di utili indicazioni bibliografiche si rimanda anche ad Abbate (2017: 201, n. 54.)

⁸⁰ Cf. Dam. Pr. 2.45, 13–51, 15. Su questo aspetto specifico dell'ἡνωμένον si vedano J. Combès, nella sua *Introduction* a Westerink, Combès (1986: LXII); Abbate (2010: 226); Ahbel-Rappe (2010: 18–23, 45).

⁸¹ Cf. Dam. Pr. 2.151, 20 e 3.42, 16. Il termine ha ascendenza plotiniana (cf. Plot. *Enn.* 3.5.9, 16; 3.7.11, 11; 4.3.31, 13; 4.8.5, 33; 5.1.6, 15; 5.3.12, 43).

⁸² Per una efficace sintesi di quanto detto cf. Westerink, Combès (1989: 237, 240); Ahbel-Rappe (2010: 191 ss., utili osservazioni sono presenti anche alle pp. 453–459).

stesso uno, uno in sé, αὐτόεν).⁸³ Si potrebbe dire anche, parafrasando, che Damascio non ha una concezione autopredicativa del concetto di misto, sicché esso non scaturirebbe da una mescolanza, non sarebbe cioè esso stesso misto, bensì sarebbe piuttosto il genere del misto, vale a dire la precondizione di ogni essere misto. Ne segue, in definitiva, che l'Uno argenteo menzionato nelle rapsodie orfiche dispone anch'esso di uno statuto enadico.

Quali sono, è lecito domandarsi, le ragioni profonde che stanno a fondamento di queste precisazioni circa lo statuto (unitario o composito) del μικτόν-ἡνωμένον? Non è facile dare una risposta. Plausibilmente, la questione scaturirebbe dal fatto che Proclo e Damascio intendono in modo diverso il primo principio metafisico. Proclo lo identificava infatti con l'Uno-in-sé e non ammetteva null'altro al di sopra dell'Uno,⁸⁴ mentre Damascio pone, anteriormente all'Uno e al di sopra di esso, un Principio assolutamente ineffabile, radicalmente ulteriore rispetto al tutto, «neppure uno» (μηδὲ ἓν),⁸⁵ «nulla» (οὐδέν).⁸⁶ Se in Proclo è l'Uno-in-sé il fondamento dell'unità dell'Essere, cioè dell'Uno-che-è (il quale è dunque intrinsecamente composito e, sia detto *en passant*, coincide con l'Essere parmenideo), in Damascio invece, essendo il Primo principio assolutamente ineffabile e neppure Uno, si rende necessario, al fine di reperire un fondamento di unità del molteplice, porre al di sotto del Primo principio un che di unitario e non derivato, non composito, originario, unitario ma intrinsecamente e potenzialmente foriero della molteplicità, e cioè l'ἡνωμένον,⁸⁷ (corrispondente all'Uno-che-è o Essere-in-sé di Proclo),⁸⁸ a sua volta caratterizzato dall'unità a partire dal principio dell'Uno-Tutto, e dal tutto a partire dal principio del Tutto-Uno (Uno-Tutto, Tutto-Uno e Unificato costituiscono, come si è detto, la sequenza dei principi successivi al Principio ineffabile). Ma l'Unificato pre-comprende la molteplicità, in esso la molteplicità non si trova ancora dispiegata, ecco perché non va assolutamente inteso come un che di composito: è μικτόν in quanto possiede le caratteristiche degli altri due principi, l'Uno-Tutto e il Tutto-Uno, ma non è in nessun modo derivante da essi. Viceversa, se il μικτόν-ἡνωμένον non presentasse questi tratti attribuitigli da Damascio, e fosse invece un che di derivato, sarebbe necessario presupporre un principio anteriore ad esso (e intermediario fra di esso e il Principio ineffabile) che presenti siffatte caratteristiche.⁸⁹ Detto in altri termini, come è stato già detto, si rischierebbe un *regressus ad infinitum*.⁹⁰ Ecco plausibilmente spiegato perché, in definitiva, è decisivo stabilire in certi termini (e non in altri), su un piano esegetico,

⁸³ Sul fatto che Proclo non intende l'essere, o l'intelligibile, quale Enade, mentre per Damascio, al contrario, esso è Enade a pieno titolo, si veda anche Brisson (1995: 171–172).

⁸⁴ Cf., ad esempio, quanto si legge in *Institutio theologica* 20, 30: οὐκέτι τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄλλο ἐπέκεινα.

⁸⁵ Dam. *Pr.* 1.5, 20.

⁸⁶ Dam. *Pr.* 1.5, 25. Per l'esposizione di Damascio intorno al Primo principio assolutamente irrelato si veda *Pr.* 1.1, 4–26, 8. Si veda almeno Napoli (2008: 129–162, 172–199).

⁸⁷ Sull'ἡνωμένον si veda Dam. *Pr.* 2.39, 8–25 e J. Combès, nella sua *Introduction* (Westerink, Combès 1986: LX ss).

⁸⁸ Si rimanda, su questo, a Abbate (2010: 161).

⁸⁹ «È a questo livello – spiega Romano (1998: 164, n. 98) – [*scil.* al livello dell'Unificato] che i principi raggiungono la concretezza della realtà intelligibile [...] in modo indivisibile».

⁹⁰ Cf. Ahbel-Rappe (2010: 19, 183, 196 et al.).

nel *Filebo*, i corretti rapporti di derivazione tra il μικτόν, il πέρας e l'ἄπειρον. Ed ecco per quale motivo interviene, in questa *querelle* procliano-damasciana⁹¹ di natura esegetico/metafisica, il concetto orfico di ὄεον ἀργύφειον. L'Uovo argenteo, in ultima analisi, costituisce la trasposizione metafisica della terza Enade che, assieme alle altre due Enadi, Uno-Tutto e Tutto-Uno, forma la prima triade intelligibile.

Ma affinché Damascio potesse dare un fondamento teologico, *orfico*, a siffatta impostazione sistematica, era necessario richiamare, nel § 55 del secondo volume dell'edizione Westerink e Combès del *de Principiis*, il fr. 70 Kern, in cui si legge che Tempo *fabbricò* (ἔτευξε) l'Uovo argenteo, e glossare il frammento tratto dalle rapsodie intendendolo nel senso che Tempo forgiò un che di artificiale (τι τεχνητόν), ma non il prodotto di una generazione (ἀλλ' οὐ γέννημα).

4. Proclo, *in Ti.* 1.427, 3–430, 18 Diehl: sullo sdoppiamento del «vivente-in-sé» (αὐτοζῶον) in causa occulta (Uovo primigenio) e causa manifesta (Phanès)

In *Theologia Platonica* Proclo afferma che tutta la teologia greca discende dalla dottrina misterica di Orfeo, che questi l'avrebbe trasmessa a Aglaofemo il quale, a sua volta, l'avrebbe tramandata a Pitagora (e Platone, a sua volta, l'avrebbe desunta dagli scritti dei Pitagorici e degli Orfici).⁹² Basti questo per perimetrare l'incidenza dell'Orfismo all'interno della costruzione procliana di una tradizione telogica greca e del tentativo, messo da lui sistematicamente in opera, di armonizzare dottrine orfiche e dottrine platoniche.⁹³

Ma già al maestro di Proclo, Siriano, la tradizione attribuisce due scritti, *Concordanza tra Orfeo, Pitagora e Platone* (Συμφωνία Ὀρφέως, Πυθαγόρου καὶ Πλάτωνος),⁹⁴ e un trattato *Sulla teologia di Orfeo* (Εἰς τὴν Ὀρφέως Θεολογίαν), testo ampiamente annotato e assimilato da Proclo (trattato che fu, plausibilmente, anche nella disponibilità di Damascio).⁹⁵ Stando al biografo di Proclo, Marino di Neapoli, pare che Siriano avesse preso in considerazione l'ipotesi di destinare un corso proprio all'approfondimento degli scritti orfici.⁹⁶ L'autorità di Orfeo presso i neoplatonici, e segnatamente quella dei

⁹¹ È stato ipotizzato che, relativamente alle questioni qui sollevate, dietro la posizione di Proclo potrebbe esservi Siriano, mentre dietro quella di Damascio l'ombra di Giamblico; cf. Napoli (2008: 201 ss.) e Abbate (2010: 226).

⁹² Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 1.25, 26–26, 4: ἅπαντα γὰρ ἢ παρ' Ἑλλησι θεολογία τῆς Ὀρφικῆς ἐστὶ μυσταγωγίας ἔκγονος, πρώτου μὲν Πυθαγόρου παρὰ Ἀγλαοφήμου τὰ περὶ θεῶν ὄργια διδαχθέντος, δευτέρου δὲ Πλάτωνος ὑποδεξαμένου τὴν παντελῆ περὶ τούτων ἐπιστήμην ἔκ τε τῶν Πυθαγορείων καὶ τῶν Ὀρφικῶν γραμμάτων. Su questa tradizione cf. Abbate (2019: 1018, n. 63 e 1091, n. 43).

⁹³ Per la presenza di Orfeo e dell'Orfismo all'interno della *Theologia Platonica* di Proclo si veda Abbate (2019: LXII, CXXX, n. 159 e il relativo indice degli autori e dei passi citati a p. 1183). Per uno sguardo sinottico sullo sterminato numero di loci dell'*in Timaeum* di Proclo che Otto Kern considerò *fontes fragmentorum* orfici si vedano le pp. 371–373 della sua edizione degli *Orphicorum fragmenta*.

⁹⁴ Suidas, pi. 2473, 7–8.

⁹⁵ Cf. Brisson (1987: 48–53); Scarpi (2002: 632).

⁹⁶ Cf. Marin. *Procl.* 26–27, in cui Marino testimonia della nota vicenda secondo la quale Siriano aveva proposto ai suoi due discepoli prediletti, Proclo e Domnino di Larissa, di scegliere quale, fra i poemi orfici e gli

cosiddetti *Discorsi sacri in ventiquattro rapsodie*, risale in ogni caso, come è noto, almeno a Giamblico.⁹⁷

A partire quindi da Giamblico e Siriano, in particolare, ed è questo l'aspetto significativo per noi, si era affermata la tendenza a fornire una interpretazione dei miti, e segnatamente di quelle parti dei miti che implicavano considerazioni relative alle origini del cosmo, in termini di equivalenza e trasponibilità con i concetti della filosofia neoplatonica, nel senso della traducibilità delle divinità – tanto di quelle olimpiche quanto di quelle eponime (o “parlanti”, come ad esempio Tempo, Urano, Terra e via dicendo) –, in concetti prettamente filosofici (Uno, essere, eternità etc.). Sicché venne avviata una concettualizzazione del mito e, specularmente, una trasposizione della concettualità filosofica neoplatonica nei termini delle più remote tradizioni sui miti dell'antica Grecia.⁹⁸ Se dunque, come si è detto, assumono una particolare centralità quelle parti dei miti che implicavano considerazioni relative alle origini del cosmo, ecco allora spiegato perché il *Timeo*, in particolare, costituiva il terreno di verifica della fattibilità di questa spregiudicata operazione ermeneutica. Entriamo, dunque, nel merito dell'identificazione operata da Proclo tra l'Uovo orfico e l'essere platonico.

* * *

Proclo (*in Ti.* 1.428, 8–9; cf. *Pl. Ti.* 30c7–d1) asserisce che l'Uovo orfico e l'essere di Platone sono *la stessa cosa* (ταὐτὸν τό τε Πλάτωνος ὄν καὶ τὸ Ὀρφικὸν ὄν). «L'essere di Platone» significa qui l'essere intelligibile, quello che con espressioni equivalenti Proclo chiama altrove «l'essere vero»⁹⁹ o, più frequentemente, «l'essere autentico (τὸ ὄντως ὄν)», locuzioni che diverranno correnti, nella scuola di Atene, fino a Damascio e Simplicio, per designare, indifferentemente, la realtà intelligibile di Platone, la seconda ipotesi neoplatonica, l'ambito di realtà individuato dalla seconda ipotesi del *Parmenide* e, infine, l'essere parmenideo. Torniamo ora, però, più in dettaglio, al contesto esegetico del *Timeo* per precisare questa affermazione.

Il passo di riferimento è quello in cui Platone introduce per la prima volta, nel *Timeo*, il celebre concetto di vivente intelligibile, archetipo perfetto ed eterno di tutto il cosmo sensibile, verso il quale si è rivolto il Demiurgo per produrre tutti gli esseri viventi – sia

Oracoli Caldaici, avrebbero preferito che il maestro commentasse. Proclo, come è noto, avrebbe optato per gli *Oracoli*, mentre Domnino per gli *Orphica*. Il progetto di Siriano, si sa, non fu mai realizzato, ma l'aneddoto getta una luce importante sul prestigio e l'incidenza che avevano gli scritti orfici presso i neoplatonici ateniesi già al tempo di Siriano.

⁹⁷ Brisson (1987: 44). Anche Plotino e Porfirio, come Giamblico, conoscevano e citavano Orfeo ma, a differenza del filosofo di Calcide, non vedevano in lui un precursore di Platone (cf. Brisson 1987: 51). Sui *Discorsi sacri in ventiquattro rapsodie* si veda quanto detto in nota nel paragrafo precedente.

⁹⁸ Cf. Brisson (1987); Runia, Share (2008: 12).

⁹⁹ Procl. *in Alc.* 281, 12: τὸ τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἀληθὲς ὄν.

gli individui che le specie - che abitano il cosmo sensibile.¹⁰⁰ Il lemma commentato da Proclo recita: «quello [*scil.* ciò di cui fanno parte gli altri viventi, οὗ δ' ἔστιν τὰλλα ζῶα - Pl. *Ti.* 30c5-6, cioè l'insieme dei viventi], appunto, contiene in se stesso, comprendendoli, tutti i viventi intelligibili¹⁰¹ nel modo in cui questo mondo contiene noi e le altre creature visibili». ¹⁰² Hanno una certa rilevanza, ai fini del nostro discorso, le pagine 1.427, 6-431, 9, del relativo commentario di Proclo, pagine nelle quali viene sviluppato il commento al lemma *Ti.* 30c7-d1, dal momento che in esse Proclo stabilisce l'identità tra il concetto platonico di «vivente-in-sé» (αὐτοζῶον) e il Phanès orfico.¹⁰³

Ora, proprio il concetto di vivente intelligibile, o di «vivente-in-sé», a prescindere dalla funzione specifica che ricopre nel *Timeo*, riveste una importanza nel sistema metafisico procliano per come esso verrà poi ripreso nella *Theologia Platonica* (e, più in generale, della filosofia del tardo Neoplatonismo).¹⁰⁴ È necessario, pertanto, fare una breve digressione intorno ad alcune notazioni dottrinali ivi contenute al fine di una migliore comprensione del discorso esegetico ed ermeneutico¹⁰⁵ contenuto in queste pagine dell'*in Timaeum*.

Proclo, a partire da una interpretazione ontologico-teologica del *Sofista* di Platone,¹⁰⁶ suddivide la realtà intelligibile (che viene, nell'ordine, dopo l'Uno e dopo le Enadi di Limite e Illimitato) in tre distinti livelli. Ora, la sommità di questa realtà è occupata dall'Uno-che-è (ἔν ὄν), ovvero l'essere considerato nella sua unità (uniforme in sommo grado, ἐνοειδέστατον - Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 3.14.50, 2), che tuttavia è intimamente connotato da una dualità la quale scaturisce dal fatto che l'Uno-che-è è, per l'appunto, sia uno sia essere. A questo stadio prevale il carattere del *limite*. Al livello intermedio troviamo l'«eternità» o l'Intero (ὄλον), in cui è implicita, anche se non ancora dispiegata, la nozione di molteplicità delle parti. A questo stadio prevale, invece, il carattere dell'*illimitato*. Al terzo livello, infine, troviamo il Tutto (πᾶν), ossia l'essere considerato come insieme

¹⁰⁰ Come Platone chiarirà più avanti (Pl. *Ti.* 39e7-40a2), le specie del mondo sensibile sono state prodotte per somiglianza con quelle del vivente intelligibile, e sono quattro: la stirpe degli Dèi celesti, fatti di fuoco; la stirpe degli uccelli, che si trova nell'aria; quella dei pesci, che vive nell'acqua; quella, infine, degli animali terrestri, che popolano la terra. Le quattro specie corrispondono ai quattro elementi fondamentali.

¹⁰¹ A differenza dell'edizione di Burnet, Proclo omette πάντα (Pl. *Ti.* 30c8) dopo ζῶα (Pl. *Ti.* 30c7), omissione che non cambia, però, la sostanza del testo.

¹⁰² τὰ γὰρ δὴ νοητὰ ζῶα ἐκείνο ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιλαβὼν ἔχει καθάπερ ὄδε ὁ κόσμος ἡμᾶς ὅσα τε ἄλλα θρέμματα συνέστηκεν ὁρατά.

¹⁰³ Nella parte restante del commento a *Ti.* 30c7-d1, cioè 1.430, 18-431, 9, Proclo si distende sull'unità e sulla separatezza degli enti intelligibili.

¹⁰⁴ Il discepolo e biografo di Proclo, Marino (*Procl.* 13), ci informa che già a 28 anni Proclo, il quale era diventato diadoco alla Scuola di Atene a 25 anni, aveva composto molte delle sue opere, tra le quali certamente il *Commentario al Timeo* [cf. Abbate (2004: XXV; 2019: XX)] che, stando al biografo Marino (*Procl.* 38), era l'opera che Proclo anteponeva a tutte le altre. È ragionevole collocare l'opera sistematica, la *Theologia Platonica*, successivamente ai lavori esegetici. Entrambe le opere, cioè la *Theol. Plat.* e l'*in Timaeum* sono, come è noto, monche, in quanto furono eseguite per circa la metà in relazione ai rispettivi piani originari; cf. l'*Introduction* in Saffrey, Westerink (1968: LXV ss.) e Reale (1989: 16).

¹⁰⁵ Sull'accezione strettamente tecnica che in questo contesto assegniamo ai concetti di esegesi ed ermeneusi si rinvia a Romano (1985: 37-42, 57-62); Licciardi (2016: Commenti 10, 30 e 31; 2017: 160 e *passim*).

¹⁰⁶ In particolare Pl. *Sph.* 244b-245b. Su questa interpretazione del *Sofista* da parte di Proclo si veda Steel (1992: 51-64).

unitario intrinsecamente composito. A questo stadio prevale, infine, il carattere del *misto*, ed è proprio qui che si colloca il «vivente intelligibile» (o «vivente in-sé»).¹⁰⁷

Questa triade, a sua volta, viene giudicata da Proclo trasponibile in un'altra triade, quella di Essere-Vita-Intelletto.¹⁰⁸ Sicché, l'Uno-che-è corrisponde alla sommità intelligibile intesa come Essere, l'Intero corrisponde alla Vita e alla Potenza sconfinata degli intelligibili, mentre il Tutto corrisponde all'Intelletto intelligibile,¹⁰⁹ che Proclo riconduce proprio al concetto di vivente intelligibile formulato da Platone nel *Timeo*.¹¹⁰ Si tratta, come è dato di vedere, di un sistema di corrispondenze analogiche all'interno del quale ogni triade concettuale richiama e si armonizza con le altre.¹¹¹ In questa triade, peraltro, si rispecchia un'altra importantissima triade, quella di manenza, processione e conversione, nella misura in cui l'Essere corrisponde alla manenza, la Vita (in quanto dispiegarsi della potenza dell'essere) alla processione, mentre l'Intelletto esprime la conversione e il ricongiungimento all'essere.¹¹²

Qualche ulteriore considerazione va fatta, poi, sulla triade, discendente dal *Filebo* di Platone, quella di limite-illimitato-misto,¹¹³ poc'anzi evocata a proposito della triade composta da Uno-che-è, Intero e Tutto. Essa svolge, come è noto, una funzione essenziale nella filosofia di Proclo. Come si apprende dalla *Theologia Platonica*, la processione della realtà dall'Uno ai molti si articola, oltre che secondo la dialettica di manenza-

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Procl. *Theol.Plat.* 3, §§ 12–28, Beierwaltes (1990: 137–161) e Abbate (2019: XXXVI, XL, XLVI–XLVII) e l'efficace schema sinottico a p. LIII).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Procl. *Theol.Plat.* 3.14.49, 12 ss. Sui tre livelli fondamentali della realtà intelligibile cf. *Theol.Plat.* 3.14.50, 1–4. Si ricordi che già Plotino aveva ammesso una articolazione interna della seconda ipostasi in Essere, Vita e Intelletto, ma solo in quanto distinzione concettuale, non intendendo queste come realtà ipostatiche, come invece avviene in Proclo (e, forse, anche Giamblico, a cui per primo si deve, all'interno del Neoplatonismo, la tendenza alla moltiplicazione delle ipostasi – plausibilmente, al fine di dare una giustificazione metafisica al politeismo). Sulla triade Essere-Vita-Intelletto si veda anche Procl. *Inst.* 101.

¹⁰⁹ Dall'Intelletto intelligibile va distinto, nel sistema metafisico procliano, l'Intelletto intellettivo che, contemplando il modello intelligibile, può così dar vita all'attività di generazione del cosmo. Esso corrisponde per Proclo, nel *Timeo*, al Demiurgo, e ha il suo corrispettivo mitologico in Zeus (Ζεύς, infatti, sarebbe «colui in virtù del quale v'è il vivere», δι' ὃν ζῆν, giusta l'etimologia proposta da Platone in *Cratylus* 396b1 e ripresa da Proclo, che ha commentato il *Cratilo*, in *Theol.Plat.* 5.22.81, 3 ss.). Cf. anche Procl. *Theol.Plat.* 5.15.51, 23 ss., su cui vd. Abbate (2019: XCIII–XCIV). La triade Crono-Rea-Zeus, di matrice orfica (e reperibile in parte anche nella *Teogonia* di Esiodo), è la prima triade intellettiva. La seconda è composta dai Cureti, i sacerdoti «implacabili» e «incontaminati», i quali difesero e tutelarono Zeus dal padre Crono quando questi era intenzionato a divorare i suoi figli; a seguire, v'è la monade intellettiva, principio di divisione e di differenziazione. Quest'ultima, congiuntamente alle due triadi, forma l'ebdomade, che esprime la struttura e l'articolazione della realtà intellettiva (Proclo pretende che siffatta struttura ebdomadica della realtà intellettiva sarebbe stata individuata e teorizzata da Platone nel *Parmenide*). Sulla struttura ebdomadica della realtà intellettiva si veda Abbate (2019: XCII–XCVI).

¹¹⁰ «Tale livello – spiega Abbate (2019: LXXXII) – corrisponde al Tutto intelligibile e al Vivente-in-sé, che contiene le Forme intelligibili». Cf. Abbate (2019: XC).

¹¹¹ In *Theol.Plat.* 3.27, Proclo riassume la deduzione delle triadi intelligibili a partire, rispettivamente, dal *Timeo* (di cui aveva discusso in 3, § 17), dal *Parmenide* (di cui aveva discusso in 3, § 24) e dal *Filebo* (di cui aveva discusso in 3, §§ 8–9).

¹¹² Cf. Reale (1989: 56).

¹¹³ La triade di Essere, Vita e Intelletto si rispecchia anche in questa, dal momento che l'Essere corrisponde al limite, la Vita alla sconfinata potenza dell'illimitato, mentre l'Intelletto, in quanto mediato ricongiungersi all'Essere, corrisponde al misto (cf. *ibid.*).

processione-conversione (descrizione della realtà da un punto di vista dinamico), come una mescolanza, cioè come un un misto (con esplicito riferimento, appunto, al *Filebo*) di limite e illimitato, principi rispettivamente di determinazione e di indeterminazione della realtà,¹¹⁴ che sono le prime due manifestazioni (sovraessenziali e pre-intelligibili) dell'Uno (descrizione della realtà da un punto di vista statico).¹¹⁵ L'essere intelligibile stesso, archetipo dal quale dipendono tutti gli enti, è il primo in sommo grado tra i misti, quindi il primo in sommo grado tra gli enti.¹¹⁶ Damascio, invece, come si è detto, riterrà che il «misto» (l'antecedente del concetto di Unificato) non scaturisce dalla combinazione di due principi anteriori ad esso, cioè limite e illimitato, e che a rigore esso non sarà da considerarsi nemmeno come essere in senso stretto, bensì piuttosto come una «manifestazione» (ἐκφάνσις),¹¹⁷ dell'Uno, sicché il μικτόν-ήνωμένον sarebbe, assieme all'Uno-Tutto e al Tutto-Uno, esso stesso Enade. Si tratta di una differenza di un certo rilievo, dal momento che Damascio identifica l'Uovo orfico con il μικτόν-ήνωμένον, che è Enade (ἐνοειδής), non ancora Essere. Proclo, invece, nell'*in Timaeum* pone l'Uovo come equivalente dell'Essere platonico (più precisamente, il limite inferiore dell'intelligibile, cioè il vivente intelligibile, ossia il terzo livello dell'ordinamento intelligibile, che preso complessivamente costituisce la prima manifestazione in senso compiuto dell'Essere). Torneremo dopo su questa differenza tra Proclo e Damascio e sulle sue conseguenze relativamente alla traduzione in termini speculativi dell'immagine orfica dell'Uovo. Torniamo, invece, all'interpretazione procliana del *Timeo*.

Ora, nell'interpretazione di Proclo, il *Timeo* di Platone avrebbe per oggetto l'atto del Demiurgo di plasmare il cosmo, a partire dalla realtà intelligibile, il quale sarebbe metafora dell'attività di Zeus, il terzo dio (successivo, nell'ordine, a Crono e Rea) della prima triade intellettuale.¹¹⁸ Più precisamente, alla luce della concezione sistematica di Proclo, il Demiurgo realizzerebbe il cosmo a immagine del vivente intelligibile, ossia quel livello di realtà, interna all'ordinamento intelligibile, nella quale prevale il carattere del «misto» e nella quale si trova, in forma ancora non compiutamente dispiegata, la molteplicità delle forme intelligibili.¹¹⁹ Detto, pertanto, nei termini più concisi possibili: in Proclo αὐτοζῶον è un altro modo per nominare il μικτόν, il che connette il *Timeo* con il *Filebo*.

Torniamo, adesso, all'interpretazione, da parte di Proclo, di *Ti.* 30c7–d1. Il contesto di discorso è relativo al concetto di «vivente-in-sé» (αὐτοζῶον che, come è stato scrit-

¹¹⁴ Cf. Procl. *Theol.Plat.* 3.7.30, 11–32, 7.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Procl. *Theol.Plat.* 3.9.34, 21–35, 7. Sul rapporto tra la triade di limite-illimitato-misto e quella di manenza-processione-conversione si veda Reale (1989: 40–42).

¹¹⁶ Procl. *Theol.Plat.* 3.9.35, 4–5: τὸ πρόωτιστον τῶν μικτῶν πρόωτιστόν ἐστι τῶν ὄντων; *Theol.Plat.* 3.9.36, 20: Οὐσία τοίνυν ἐστὶ νοητὴ τὸ μικτόν.

¹¹⁷ Per l'impiego di questo termine nel de *Principiis* cf. Dam. *Pr.* 2.151, 20 e 3.42, 16.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Abbate (2019: LX–LXI).

¹¹⁹ Cf. Procl. *Theol.Plat.* 3.3, 12–28 e Abbate (2019: XLVI–XLVII). Come si è detto, l'ordinamento intelligibile è composto da tre triadi intelligibili, per cui considerato dal punto di vista del prevalere del carattere del limite, esso sarà «uno-che-è»; considerato, in secondo luogo, dal punto di vista del prevalere del carattere dell'illimitato, esso sarà «eternità» (o «intero»); considerato, infine, dal punto di vista del prevalere del carattere del misto, esso sarà «vivente intelligibile», o «vivente in-sé»; cf. Abbate (2019: LIII).

to¹²⁰ sulla scorta di *in Ti.* 1.428,9–10,¹²¹ trova il suo corrispettivo mitologico in Phanês), con relativo confronto delle posizioni di Plotino (3.9.1 e 6.6.8)¹²² e di Teodoro di Asine (Test. 13 Deuse),¹²³ platonico del IV sec. d.C., discepolo di Porfirio e, successivamente, seguace di Giamblico e, con quest'ultimo, esponente eminente della scuola siriana del IV sec. d.C.¹²⁴ Prima di esporre la sua posizione, infatti, all'inizio del commento a al lemma di Platone, Proclo fa riferimento proprio a una diatriba interna alla tradizione platonica, fra Plotino e Teodoro, relativamente al concetto di αὐτοζῶον – più precisamente, relativamente alla posizione di superiorità o subalternità di questo rispetto all'Intelletto. A tal proposito Proclo riassume una certa oscillazione o tensione teorica interna alla posizione di Plotino, il quale, da un lato, in *Enneadi* 3.9.[13].1,¹²⁵ capitolo relativo a *Timeo* 39e ss., sostiene la superiorità del vivente-in-sé (o vivente intelligibile) sull'Intelletto (τὸ αὐτοζῶον [...] τοῦ νοῦ κρεῖττον – *in Ti.* 1.427, 6–7), mentre dall'altro lato, nel trattato *Sui numeri* (6.6.[34].8), lo pone come inferiore (καταδέεστερον, *in Ti.* 1.427, 8) rispetto all'Intelletto.¹²⁶ Teodoro, invece, sostiene che nella disposizione degli intelligibili il vivente-in-sé sia terzo (τὸ τρίτην αὐτὸ τάξις ἔχειν ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς – *in Ti.* 1.427, 13–14). La posizione di Proclo è di mediazione:¹²⁷ bisogna assumere, con Teodoro, che il vivente-in-sé occupa il terzo posto all'interno dell'ordinamento intelligibile; da Plotino, invece, bisogna accogliere il fatto che il vivente-in-sé è inferiore a un Intelletto, ma trascendente rispetto a un altro Intelletto,¹²⁸ nel senso esso «rivelandosi a partire dalla vita intelligibile nei pressi del

¹²⁰ Cf. Runia, Share (2008: 312–313, n. 596). Sul concetto di αὐτοζῶον; cf. Runia, Share (2008: 30–31).

¹²¹ Procl. *in Ti.* 1.428, 9–10: ὁ Φάνης, κατὰ τὸ αὐτοζῶον τεταγμένος.

¹²² Proclo cita Plotino, nell'*in Timaeum*, circa una decina di volte, con un interesse prevalentemente rivolto all'interpretazione proprio di *Enneadi* 3.9.

¹²³ L'edizione è quella di Deuse (1973).

¹²⁴ Sullo sviluppo del platonismo fra III e IV secolo si veda l'efficace sintesi presente in Bonazzi (2015: 114–119). Per una disamina dei commentatori del *Timeo* si vedano Dörrie, Baltus (1993: § 81) e Runia, Share (2008: 9–12, dall'antica Accademia fino al V sec. d.C., cioè fino a Proclo).

¹²⁵ Esso, assieme ad un'altra ventina di trattati, fu composto nel decennio 254–263, e cronologicamente si pone immediatamente dopo il 2.4 (sulle due materie) e prima del 2.2 (sul moto celeste). Si tratta di un trattato alquanto eterogeneo (Ἐπισκέψεις διάφοροι, cioè «Considerazioni varie», è il titolo che Porfirio (*Plot.* 24, 77) dà a questo trattato, titolo ripreso in metatesi – Διαφόροι Ἐπισκέψεις – proprio da Proclo (*in Ti.* 1.427, 7), dal momento che, scorrendone rapidamente l'articolazione interna, si nota che esso spazia dall'identità fra intelletto e intelligibile (§ 1) a varie questioni concernenti l'Anima (§§ 2–3 e 5), all'Uno (§§ 4, 7 e 9), all'Intelletto (§§ 6–7) e alle realtà che passano dalla potenza all'atto e a quelle che sono sempre in atto (§ 8). Sulle ragioni di questa eterogeneità e sulle possibili ipotesi di spiegazione si rimanda a Igal (1985 [19992]: 261–262, nn. 2 e 4–6).

¹²⁶ Proclo si riferisce al fatto che Plotino concepisce come primo l'Essere, poi l'Intelletto, poi ancora il vivente intelligibile (ὁπότεν λέγει πρῶτον εἶναι τὸ ὄν, εἶτα <τὸν> νοῦν, εἶτα τὸ αὐτοζῶον (Procl. *In Ti.* 1.427, 9–10). Il riferimento testuale preciso, nel testo di Plotino, è 6.6.8, 17–20 (Εἰ δὴ τὸ ὄν πρῶτον δεῖ λαβεῖν πρῶτον ὄν, εἶτα νοῦν, εἶτα τὸ ζῶον – τοῦτο γὰρ ἤδη <πάντα> δοκεῖ <περιέχειν>; cf. Pl. *Ti.* 31a4: τὸ γὰρ περιέχον πάντα] – ὁ δὲ νοῦς δεύτερον – ἐνέργεια γὰρ τῆς οὐσίας – etc.).

¹²⁷ «Bisogna prendere, invero, da entrambi, ciò che è vero» (ληπτέον δὴ παρ' ἀμφοῖν τὸ ἀληθές – Procl. *in Ti.* 1.427, 12–13).

¹²⁸ Procl. *in Ti.* 1.427, 15: τὸ τινὸς μὲν νοῦ καταδέεστερον εἶναι, τινὸς δὲ ἐπέκεινα.

limite degli intelligibili, produce tutto l’ammontare delle realtà intellettive, sia i viventi ipercosmici sia quelli encosmici». ¹²⁹

Nella scansione dell’essere presentata da Proclo nella *Theologia Platonica*, si ricordi, dopo l’ordinamento intelligibile¹³⁰ seguono l’ordinamento intelligibile-intellettivo (composto da tre triadi),¹³¹ l’ordinamento intellettivo (composto da una ebdomade),¹³² l’ordinamento ipercosmico (composto da quattro triadi),¹³³ l’ordinamento ipercosmico-encosmico (composto da una dodecade),¹³⁴ l’ordinamento encosmico (composto dai cosiddetti «dèi giovani» del *Timeo*, principalmente gli astri)¹³⁵ e, ancora a seguire, le realtà sottoposte agli dèi (angeli, demoni, eroi, anime di essere umani, animali, piante ed esseri inanimati).¹³⁶ L’αὐτοζῶον costituisce, dunque, una cerniera fra l’intelligibile (νοητόν) e l’intellettivo (νοερόν), ossia i due poli ipostatici nei quali si sdoppia l’Intelletto (νοῦς). «La realtà intelligibile – scrive Abbate – per Proclo non coincide, come invece in Plotino, completamente con l’Intelletto. Quest’ultimo, nella *Theologia Platonica*, risulta, per così dire, “sdoppiato”: da un lato v’è l’Intelletto intelligibile che [...] compare all’ultimo livello dell’ordinamento intelligibile e coincide con il vivente intelligibile; dall’altro lato v’è l’Intelletto universale contemplante, che fa parte della dimensione intellettiva, che ha come oggetto della propria *attività* intellettivo-contemplativa l’intelligibile». ¹³⁷ Il fatto che Proclo “salvi” su questo aspetto la posizione di Plotino non toglie nulla, naturalmente, a questa importante distinzione dottrinale fra i due filosofi neoplatonici. Stabilita, dunque, la corretta “topologia” dell’αὐτοζῶον, entra in scena, a questo punto, Phanès.

Si legge, in *in Ti.* 1.427, 20–428, 21 che:

[...] anche Orfeo mostra siffatte cose intorno ad esso [*scil.* al vivente-in-sé] nel corso della sua esposizione teologica intorno a Phanès. Il dio per primo [πρῶτος], appunto, porta presso di sé molte teste d’animali [ζῶων κεφαλὰς] ¹³⁸

emettendo muggiti di toro e <ruggiti> di fiero leone, ¹³⁹

¹²⁹ Procl. *in Ti.* 1.427, 16–18: πρὸς τῷ πέρατι τῶν νοητῶν ἐκφανέν ἀπὸ τῆς νοητῆς ζωῆς πάντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἀπογεννᾷ τῶν νοερόν τε καὶ ὑπερκοσμίων καὶ ἐγκοσμίων ζῶων.

¹³⁰ Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 3.7–28; *in Prm.* 7. 26, 1–46, 18.

¹³¹ Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 4; *in Prm.* 6.1089, 17–1134, 12.

¹³² Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 5; *in Prm.* 7.1133, 13–1152, 14.

¹³³ Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 6.5–13; *in Prm.* 7.1191, 10–1201, 21.

¹³⁴ Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 6.14–24.

¹³⁵ Cf. Procl. *in Ti.* 3.53, 1–199, 12; *in Prm.* 7.1201, 22–1212, 4.

¹³⁶ Per un efficace riepilogo sinottico di queste articolazioni si rimanda a Abbate (2019: LIII–LIV).

¹³⁷ Abbate (2019: XC).

¹³⁸ Phanès, dunque, è il primo ζῶον.

¹³⁹ Orph. fr. 79 Kern: <βρίμας ταυρείους ἀφιεῖ<ς> χαροποῦ τε λέοντος>. Il sostantivo βρίμη può significare tanto «muggito» quanto «ruggito», ragion per cui sembra lecito supporre, qui, nel testo greco, una ripetizione sottintesa del termine.

[1.427, 25] e proviene dall'Uovo primigenio, nel quale si trova, allo stato seminale, l'essere vivente; anche Platone, avendolo compreso, denominò vivente-in-sé questo grandissimo dio; infatti, che differenza c'è nel chiamare "Uovo" la causa nascosta e "vivente" ciò che si manifesta [τὸ ἐκφαίνε]¹⁴⁰ a partire da quella? Infatti, che cosa, fra tutte, potrebbe generarsi da un Uovo se non un essere vivente? Quell'Uovo, poi, era discendente di Etere¹⁴¹ e Caos, [1.428, 5] di cui l'uno è stato situato (ἵδρυται)¹⁴² nel limite degli intelligibili, mentre l'altro nell'illimitato; l'uno, infatti, è radice di tutte le cose [ρίζωμα τῶν πάντων],¹⁴³ mentre al di sotto dell'altro non si spalancava alcun limite».¹⁴⁴ Se, dunque, ciò che per primo <discende> da limite e illimitato è ciò che è in modo primario [τὸ πρῶτως ὄν], l'essere di Platone e l'Uovo orfico saranno, allora, la stessa cosa.¹⁴⁵ Se, poi, da questo [scil. dall'Uovo orfico] <discende> Phanês, il quale è stato ordinato secondo il vivente-in-sé,¹⁴⁶ [1.428, 10] bisogna indagare che cosa, secondo Orfeo, corrisponde all'Eternità, che secondo Platone è intermedio tra il vivente-in-sé e l'essere.¹⁴⁷ Ma di questo tratteremo altrove. Ora, invece, riguardo a Phanês, bisogna stabilire in modo più chiaro se costui è il vivente-in-sé, e bisogna dire che il vivente-in-sé non è altra cosa rispetto a Phanês secondo il teologo [scil. secondo Orfeo]; [1.428, 15] se, infatti, per primo e da solo <Phanês> procede dall'Uovo, ciò che secondo quello [scil. Orfeo] rivela il primissimo intelletto intelligibile, e ciò che per primo e da solo procede da un Uovo altro non sarebbe, di necessità, che un vivente, è chiaro che anche il grandissimo Phanês altro non è che il primissimo vivente

¹⁴⁰ È chiaro che Proclo, qui, gioca destramente con l'etimologia comune tra il nome Φάνης e il verbo ἐκφαίνω.

¹⁴¹ Si ricordi che, come abbiamo visto, anche Damascio (*Pr.* 2.55.40, 14–19 Westerink = Orph. fr. 70 Kern), seppur con variazione su tema, pone l'Uovo come discendente di Etere.

¹⁴² L'impiego di questo verbo richiama implicitamente il termine ἔδρα del fr. 66b Kern riportato da Simplicio (cf. la nota sotto).

¹⁴³ Questa espressione richiama linguisticamente le quattro «radici di tutte le cose» (πάντων ρίζώματα) di cui aveva parlato Empedocle (DK 31 B 6.2), ma il termine era di uso corrente anche presso i Pitagorici (DK 58 B 15). Per un collegamento tra il contenuto orfico di questo passo di Proclo e le dottrine di Empedocle e dei Pitagorici si veda Bernabé (2002: 220).

¹⁴⁴ Sull'equivalenza tra χάσμα e χάος cf. Simp. *in Ph.* 528, 12–19 (= Arist. *Ph.* 4.1, 208b29–a2) = Orph. fr. 66b Kern, e quanto detto in nota nel paragrafo su Damascio.

Quale sia la natura di questa voragine è spiegata dallo stesso Proclo, *in Ti.* 1.385, 29–386, 8 (= Pl. *Ti.* 30a3–6): «essa [scil. la materia, cf. 385, 28], infatti, è una voragine, in quanto spazio e luogo delle forme [οὔτε δὲ <πεῖρα> οὔτε <πυθμῖν> οὔτε <ἔδρα>], e non c'è per essa né limite, né fondo, né sede, in quanto essa è instabile, illimitata, indeterminata; la si potrebbe ben chiamare oscurità ininterrotta [ἀζηχὲς δὲ αὐτὸ σκοτός], dato che ricevuto la natura informe – cosicché, anche Orfeo, in base a questo ragionamento, fa derivare la materia dalla prima fra tutte le ipostasi degli intelligibili: là, infatti, sono l'oscurità ininterrotta e l'illimitato ed essi sono in modo superiore a ciò che viene di seguito, mentre la materia ha oscurità e illimitato a causa di una mancanza, non secondo una sovrabbondanza di potenza, ma secondo difetto».

¹⁴⁵ Orph. fr. 70 Kern.

¹⁴⁶ *Scil.* il quale corrisponde al vivente-in sé.

¹⁴⁷ È presente qui un richiamo alla tripartizione della realtà intelligibile per come essa viene configurata in Cf. Procl. *Theol. Plat.* 3.12–28, e di cui abbiamo detto sopra.

e, come direbbe anche Platone, il vivente-in-sé. [1.428, 20] Questo, dunque, è stato mostrato. Esaminiamo, adesso, le cose a seguire dopo di questo.

Segue un'analisi relativa, appunto, agli ordini di realtà posteriori al vivente-in-sé, che qui tralasciamo. Riprendiamo il testo, però, poco dopo più di una pagina, all'altezza di un passaggio in cui Proclo torna a parlare del rapporto che il vivente-in-sé-Phanês intrattiene con ciò che gli è immediatamente anteriore, ossia l'Uovo. Si legge, in *in Ti.* 1.429, 26–430, 9: «e perciò il teologo plasma nuovamente un vivente universalissimo, ponendogli sul capo teste di capro, di toro, di leone¹⁴⁸ e di serpente, e <assegnando> a lui per primo, in quanto primo vivente, il sesso maschile e quello femminile:

[1.429, 30] *femmina e genitore il potente dio Erichepeo*,¹⁴⁹ dice il teologo; ad esso, per la prima volta, attribuisce anche le ali;¹⁵⁰ e cosa mai bisogna dire di più? Infatti, se <Phanês> ebbe la processione a partire dall'Uovo primigenio, questo mito rende chiaro anche che egli è in assoluto il primo dei viventi, se è lecito conservare l'analogia; [1.430, 5] come, infatti, l'Uovo precomprensive [προείληφεν] la causa seminale del vivente, così l'ordine nascosto [κρύφιος διάκοσμος]¹⁵¹ abbraccia in modo uniforme [ἐνοειδῶς]¹⁵² ogni intelligibile, e come il vivente possiede in modo già distinto [διηρημένως] quante cose erano nell'Uovo allo stadio seminale [σπερματικῶς], così anche questo dio fa procedere [προάγει] verso la luce [εἰς τὸ ἐμφανές]¹⁵³ ciò che, nelle cause prime, è indicibile e ineffabile.

L'Uovo, dunque, cinge, cioè comprende ogni intelligibile ἐνοειδῶς, *enadicamente*, e precomprensive (προείληφεν) ciascuno di questi intelligibili σπερματικῶς, *seminalmente*, cioè non ancora al livello dell'essere quale manifesto e dispiegato, bensì ad uno stadio, appunto, seminale. Per giungere a questo livello occorre attendere, poi, Phanês. Tutto questo vuole significare, nella sostanza, che è con Phanês che ha luogo la prima manifestazione in senso pieno dell'essere (giusta, come si è detto, l'etimologia comune tra il nome Φάνης e il verbo ἐκφαίνω) ed è grazie a lui che si creano le condizioni di intelligibilità, a partire dal basso, del mondo intelligibile. La figura di Phanês, infatti,

¹⁴⁸ Cf. supra, Orph. fr. 79 Kern.

¹⁴⁹ Orph. fr. 81 Kern. Per un rapido schizzo sinottico sulla figura di Erichepeo, nome applicabile sia a Protogono sia a Dioniso, si rimanda a Ricciardelli (20123, 1a ediz. Milano 2000: 253). Su Erichepeo in relazione a Protogono cf. Orph. *H.* 6, 4 (*Inno a Protogono*) e 52, 6 (*Inno a Eracle*), mentre su Erichepeo in relazione a Phanês cf. Dam. *Pr.* 3.160, 7 WC (è la sezione in cui il filosofo discute delle rapsodie orfiche) = DK 1 12.26. Per una suggestiva ipotesi di relazione, invece, tra il λόγος di Aristofane contenuto nel Simposio di Platone (Pl. *Smp.* 189e–190b) e alcuni tratti attribuiti nella tradizione orfica a Phanês e a Erichepeo, si veda Colli (2005¹, 1977¹: 417–418).

¹⁵⁰ Cf. l'inno orfico a Protogono (Orph. *H.* 6, 2).

¹⁵¹ Sulla presunta origine caldaica (evocata dall'editore Diehl in app. cr.) di questa espressione, cf. Majercik (Leiden 1989: in particolare la n. 198 delle «Various Chaldean Expressions», ma la provenienza caldaica viene considerata dubbia dallo stesso Majercik) e Runia, Share (2008: 316, n. 312).

¹⁵² In modo, dunque, «enadico».

¹⁵³ Proclo, anche in questo caso, gioca destramente con l'etimologia comune tra il nome Φάνης ed ἐμφανής.

ripropone su un piano mitico i rapporti fra diversi livelli di realtà e rappresenta, per così dire, una cinghia di trasmissione tra il mondo intelligibile e i livelli successivi di realtà che rende conoscibili, appunto, gli intelligibili. Più precisamente, lo sguardo che il Demiurgo rivolge al mondo intelligibile per dare luogo al cominciamento delle cose sensibili (Pl. *Ti.* 28c3–29a3) è del tutto equivalente, sotto un profilo simbolico e al contempo filosofico, all'atto di Zeus di ingoiare Phanês, atto che nelle rapsodie orfiche coincide con l'inizio del suo regno. Guardare e inghiottire vengono considerati da Proclo come due modi di appropriarsi di qualcosa.¹⁵⁴

A seguire, ecco la chiusa del lemma (Procl. *in Ti.* 1.430, 11–18), in cui Proclo spiega questo ruolo specifico di Phanês: «come, infine, questo cosmo abbraccia [περικτικός] tutte le cose visibili, così quello [*scil.* il cosmo intelligibile, cioè il vivente-in-sé] <abbraccia tutte> quelle intelligibili.¹⁵⁵ Il modo dell'abbracciare [τῆς περιοχῆς] è, però, come abbiamo detto,¹⁵⁶ diverso in ciascuno dei due casi, ma nondimeno anche il visibile in sé si riferisce a queste secondo analogia rispetto a quelle <intelligibili>,¹⁵⁷ e, infatti, [430,15] Phanês, che fa risplendere in alto, su quelle, la luce intelligibile [ἐπιλάμπων τὸ νοητὸν φῶς], rende visibili e mostra <come> *manifesti, da nascosti* <che erano>,¹⁵⁸ tutti <gli dèi>,¹⁵⁹ proprio come anche quaggiù tutti i colori, generati attraverso la luce conferiscono ai corpi la prerogativa di essere visibili». Lo stesso Proclo aveva scritto, in modo chiarissimo, diverse pagine prima: «visibili secondo natura,¹⁶⁰ realmente conoscibili e illuminati da una luce divina: tali sono gli intelligibili».¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Procl. *in Ti.* 1.324, 14–19 e Brisson (1987: 73).

¹⁵⁵ È una parafrasi del lemma in esame (Pl. *Ti.* 30c7–d1): «quello [*scil.* ciò di cui fanno parte gli altri viventi, οὗ δ' ἔστιν ἄλλα ζῶα – Pl. *Ti.* 30c5–6], appunto, contiene in se stesso, comprendendoli, tutti i viventi intelligibili nel modo in cui questo mondo contiene noi e le altre creature visibili».

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Procl. *in Ti.* 1.429, 15–26.

¹⁵⁷ Proclo riprende qui un'analogia presentata poche pagine prima, in 1.426, 27–29.

¹⁵⁸ ἐξ ἀφανῶν φανερούς, Orph. fr. 109 Kern. L'espressione qui estrapolata da Proclo si trova citata, in un estratto più ampio e in contesto diverso, in Herm. *in Phdr.* 154, 26–27 (= Pl. *Phdr.* 247d), ma anche in 148, 24 = Pl. *Phdr.* 247c, seppur in minor estensione, contesti nei quali si parla della generazione, cioè del rendere manifesto ciò che prima era occultato, di Urano e Gea da parte di Phanês o, alternativamente, da Notte. Questa contraddizione è solo apparente, si può sciogliere in due modi: o intendendo che Urano e Gea vengono generati da Notte e, indirettamente, da Phanês, nella misura in cui Notte viene generata da Phanês, come si evince dai due passi di Ermia e dallo stesso Proclo, *in Ti.* 1.450, 22–26 (= Pl. *Ti.* 31a4–5), in cui si legge che Phanês «fa procedere le Notti» (παράγει δὲ τὰς <Νύκτας> – Procl. *in Ti.* 1.450, 25; la linea precedente è accolta come frammento orfico 81 Kern); oppure, in alternativa, intendendo, come viene suggerito dallo stesso Proclo, *in Ti.* 1.450, 22 ss. = Orph. fr. 98 Kern, che Urano e Gea scaturiscono dall'unione incestuosa di Phanês e sua figlia, la terza delle Notti.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Runia, Share (2008: 316, n. 316).

¹⁶⁰ In questo contesto il concetto di visibile e conoscibile «secondo natura», κατὰ φύσιν, è contrapposto a quello di visibile e conoscibile «rispetto a noi», πρὸς ἡμᾶς (cf. τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁρατά, τὰ δὲ κατὰ φύσιν – Procl. *in Ti.* 1.400, 7–8). È una chiara variazione su tema, in chiave platonizzante, della distinzione aristotelica di *Ph.* 1.1, 184a16–18.

¹⁶¹ Procl. *in Ti.* 1.410, 9–11: τὰ δὲ κατὰ φύσιν ὁρατὰ ὄντως γνωστά καὶ τῷ θεῷ φωτὶ καταλαμπόμενα τοιαῦτα δὲ τὰ νοητὰ ἐστὶ (= Pl. *Ti.* 30b1–3).

5. Epilogo

In conclusione, sembra ragionevole asserire che Proclo e Damascio, congiuntamente al fugace riferimento in Simplicio, offrono una lettura sostanzialmente unitaria e convergente relativamente all'incastonamento dell'Uovo orfico all'interno della processione ipostatica neoplatonica. Anche Proclo così come Damascio, infatti, conferisce all'Uovo uno statuto enadico, e purtuttavia tra i due filosofi permane sullo sfondo una differenza d'un certo rilievo. In Proclo, infatti, abbiamo letto che «se [...] ciò che per primo <discende> da limite e illimitato è ciò che è in modo primario [τὸ πρῶτως ὄν], l'essere di Platone e l'Uovo orfico saranno, allora, la stessa cosa» (*in Ti.* 1.428,7–9). L'Uovo, dunque, è l'essere in senso primario. In Damascio, invece, si è visto che il Misto-Unificato, con cui si identifica l'Uovo, non scaturisce dalla combinazione dei due principi ad esso anteriori, il limite e l'illimitato, e a rigore non sarà da considerarsi nemmeno come essere in senso stretto, bensì, piuttosto, come una «manifestazione» (ἐκφανσις) dell'Uno, sicché il ruolo dell'Uovo, al contempo «concepito e concepente il dio» (τὸ κρούμενον καὶ τὸ κύον ᾧὸν τὸν θεὸν – *Dam. Pr.* 3.160, 1–2), rimane fundamentalmente ambiguo.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Non a caso, infatti, appare poco chiara, in Damascio, come si è visto e come ha sottolineato Brisson, la traduzione in termini orfici della seconda triade intelligibile, quella nella quale fa la sua comparsa l'Uovo.

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Parmenides and the Silver Egg of the Orphics in Simplicius, Damascius and Proclus

When commenting on Aristotle *Ph.* 1.3, 187a1, Simplicius *in Ph.* 1.3, 146, 29–147,2 establishes an equivalence between the shining «silver egg» (ᾠεον ἀργύφειον) of Orpheus (fr. 70 Kern) and the Parmenidean being or, rather, one of the determinations with which Parmenides, in the section of his Poem devoted to the so-called Way of Truth, indicates the ἐόν, i.e., «resembling the mass of a well-rounded sphere» (εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκωι – DK 28 B 8.43). The equivalence established here is found in the great digression about Parmenides (*in Ph.* 142, 28–148, 24), where Simplicius puts forward an interpretation of Parmenides that identifies the Parmenidean being-one (τὸ ἐν ὄν) with the intelligible (τὸ νοητόν), which, in another passages of the same commentary, is also qualified with the metaphysical concept of “unified” (τὸ ἡνωμένον) that is taken from Damascius. The aim of the present paper is to trace back the Neo-Platonic assumptions of this identification. In particular, we will focus on Damascius *Pr.* 2.55.40, 14–19 and 3.123.160, 1–3 Westerink, since these passages contain insights into the Orphic theology that is referred to as “usual”, “common” or “rhapsodic”, as well as a contextual “translation” of various Orphic concepts (e.g. ᾠεον ἀργύφειον) in terms of Neo-Platonic metaphysics. The metaphysical transposition of the mythical image of the silver egg goes back, however, to Proclus (*in Ti.* 1.428, 8–9), who assumes the identity between Plato’s being (“being in the primary sense”, τὸ πρῶτως [...] ὄν) and the Orphic egg (ταῦτόν τό τε Πλάτωνος ὄν καὶ τὸ Ὀρφικὸν ᾠόν). One cannot, at the same time, exclude *a priori* the possibility that the Orphic motif of the silver egg circulated in the Magna Graecia of Parmenides already from at least the 6th century BC. It is possible, as Colli hypothesised, that already Ibycus (who certainly knew Orpheus, fr. 25 Page) betrays a certain knowledge of it in fr. 4.4–5 Page, where we find the expression ἐν ᾠέωι ἀργυρέωι. This article demonstrates that Proclus and Damascius embedded the Orphic concept of ᾠεον ἀργύφειον into their Neo-Platonic metaphysics by showing its potential for speculative order.

KEY WORDS

Egg, Orphism, Parmenides, Proclus, Damascius, Simplicius.

How to Be an Unsuccessful Ancient Philosophy Scholar in Uneasy Times: The Case of S. Lisiecki (1872–1960)*

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The history of classical studies in Central-Eastern Europe is, in many regards, a research field still waiting to be discovered. This area remains largely unexplored by scholars in Western Europe, but even more surprisingly, it still has numerous white spots for researchers in Central and East European countries. What will be presented below is one of the recent discoveries in this area: the personality of a forgotten scholar in classics, in

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historiography of Greek philosophy, and a translator of the most important Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, whose name for decades was almost completely unknown, even to his compatriots. The person in question is Stanisław Lisiecki (1872–1960), a Polish classics scholar, teacher and translator whose life, as is announced in the title of this paper, can serve as an example of a life devoted to research work that only to a very limited extent saw the light of day.

His life was long and fruitful, yet his biography proves that adverse conditions and the adoption of difficult personal decisions that are hard for the society of the time to accept can result in the name of a prolific writer and devoted scholar being consigned to oblivion for decades. Below, some significant details of Lisiecki's biography will be presented as these are indispensable for our understanding of the fact that so few scholars in Polish humanities are able to recall his name and his works.

Stanisław Lisiecki was born on November 7th, 1872, as the oldest of four siblings, in Poznań (Posen), then under Prussian rule. He received his education and finally his “maturity diploma” in the well-known Gymnasium ad sanctam Mariam Magdalenam, renowned for the high quality of its teaching. This prestigious school had a long tradition in teaching the classical languages, Greek and Latin. It is worth noting that decades earlier this very school could pride itself on having among its teachers Antoni Bronikowski (1817–1884), the most productive Polish translator of Plato and Xenophon in the 19th century.

It is possible that it was his mother's wish that Lisiecki, as the eldest son, should enter the priesthood, and he began his studies at a Catholic seminary in Poznań, where he was ordained in 1899 and subsequently worked in various parishes in the archdiocese of Poznań. The life of an ordinary priest did not satisfy Lisiecki's ambitions and the church authorities allowed him to start theological studies at the University of Wrocław (Breslau). Thanks to his education in classical languages, he was able to complete his dissertation in a short period of time, and in 1910 he was awarded a doctoral degree in theology. His supervisor was Joseph Pohle (1852–1922), a specialist in apologetics and dogmatics, but it is likely that Matthias Baumgartner (1865–1933) also had an influence on Lisiecki, for the dissertation was devoted to the views of Ambrose of Milan on the nature of the Eucharist¹ and one of Lisiecki's first papers published after his doctorate was devoted to Alexander of Hales.² Both works may be considered as the fruit of Lisiecki's studies in Wrocław and the influence of his professors.

Armed with a doctoral degree, Lisiecki could have started a successful clerical and academic career as a specialist in the history of theology and the Church Fathers. His qualifications as a teacher of Latin, Greek and the Catholic religion could also have stood him in good stead in this career. This, however, was not to be, though teaching classical

¹ Lisiecki (1910). The dissertation attracted the attention of another expert on Ambrose, Wilhelm Wilbrand (1880–1949), who wrote quite a favourable review of this work (Wilbrand 1912: 146–148).

² Lisiecki (1913: 343–404).

and modern languages was to become his main or minor source of income for the rest of his life.

In 1921 with the death of his mother, who may have induced him to embark on a clerical career, he decided to leave the clergy. Whether his decision resulted from a crisis of faith or was induced by meeting the right woman cannot be unambiguously determined, but in a letter written in 1926 Lisiecki made the following confession: “Before I took up teaching I was a Catholic priest, but I entered the priesthood without a calling, so for almost twenty years I was tormented by pangs of conscience, for I felt unworthy of celebrating mass or conducting other holy sacraments at the Altar.”³ It was on the advice of his confessor that Lisiecki eventually became a Protestant and subsequently married. At the dawn of Polish independence, that is, after the World War I, he moved with his wife to Warsaw, where he taught classical and modern languages in schools at various levels and started to work on Plato.

Another letter revealed the probable reasons for Lisiecki’s change of research focus to ancient Greek topics. The turning point in this regard was marked by his meeting with Tadeusz Zieliński (1859–1944), who in the early 1920s had taken up a post at the University of Warsaw. Zieliński was a Polish classical philologist, who – thanks to his German works on Cicero – had gained an international reputation, and moved to Warsaw from Saint Petersburg. Lisiecki must have met him at that time, for he wrote: “When I saw Tadeusz Zieliński for the first time, his Olympian character left me speechless. That forehead, that face, that odd composure, the dignity of the whole figure. *Ich will auch so einer werden*, I said to myself, unfortunately already in my fifties: I wish he could have accepted me just as a lector so that I could have seen him up close. This Man appears to be in constant contact with the Divinity: when Moses, after talking to God, came down from the mountain, the people were afraid to look at him, for his face shone with such a heavenly brightness that he covered it with a scarf when he spoke to them. I am equally afraid to look Zieliński in the face because I get a sense of my own misery in his presence.”⁴ Lisiecki realised that, being already too old to become one of his students, the only way for him to get close to Zieliński, the ideal figure in classical studies, was to redouble his efforts to win for himself a place in the Olympian world of classical scholars. And indeed, he started the work on translating, analysing and commenting on Plato’s dialogues that was to last for over two decades.

Whether it was, indeed, his meeting with Zieliński and his admiration for this recognised and well-known scholar that brought about Lisiecki’s change in interests from the history of theology and medieval studies to ancient Greek philosophy, or whether there were other reasons, is debatable, but there is no doubt that Lisiecki fervently threw

³ Lisiecki, *List z 1 czerwca 1926 r. do Stanisława Kota* [A Letter of June 1st, 1926, to S. Kot], in: Lisiecki (2021: 342).

⁴ Lisiecki, *List z 4 grudnia 1937 r. do Marcelego Handelsmana* [A Letter of Dec. 4th, 1937 to M. Handelsman], in: Lisiecki (2021: 352).

himself into the task of translating Plato and publishing minor works on his philosophy in Polish and Latin.

The list of Lisiecki's works in classical studies that appeared in print is relatively short. It includes the following (in chronological order): *Nauka Platona o prabycie duszy* [Plato's Doctrine on the pre-Existence of the Soul] (Lisiecki 1927a), *Układ oraz zagadnienia w Platona Fedonie* [Structure and Issues in Plato's Phaedo] (Lisiecki 1927b), *Demosthenes orationes suas salibusne condiderit* (Lisiecki 1927c), *Plato boni ideam quatenus in Civitate illustraverit* (Lisiecki 1928a), Plato, *Republic*, translation and introduction by S. Lisiecki (Lisiecki 1928b), *De Atlantidis Platonicae nota mythica* (Lisiecki 1929), *Plato duasne mundi animas professus sit* (Lisiecki 1930–1931). With the exception of the paper on Demosthenes and the two papers focused on specific issues from the *Critias* and the *Laws*, Lisiecki concentrated on the dialogues composed in the mature period of Plato's philosophical development, that is, the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. Moreover, in 1929 he was able to publish a small translation of Pseudo-Plutarchus' *De liberis educandis*, which was included in a collection of source texts on the history of education selected by Stanisław Kot (1885–1975). It should also be mentioned that the first book listed above served as Lisiecki's doctoral dissertation in philosophy at the University of Warsaw.

This list of publications does not look impressive, especially for a scholar who lived until his late eighties. It seems that Lisiecki was highly active in publishing in the late 1920s and was almost completely focused on Plato's dialogues. He appears, then, to have been only a moderately successful scholar in the field of classics in general and Platonic studies in particular. Therefore the following question arises: what happened that Lisiecki's enthusiasm for classical studies, which had possibly been inspired by his meeting with Zieliński, was ultimately thwarted and manifested itself only in a limited number of translations and studies?

Before answering this question, it may be useful to present a brief outline of Polish studies on Plato in the interwar period.⁵ To mention just a few of the most important names: Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954) was still active after World War I, though his focus was no longer on Plato, for he had turned to national philosophy and Messianic metaphysics, only to return to Plato after the World War II. Throughout his life Lutosławski enjoyed recognition as the author of a widely discussed book titled *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic with an Account of Plato's Style and of the Chronology of His Writings* (Lutosławski 1897) which vaulted him into prominence as a Polish philosopher in the international academic world. His work is still referred to by authors researching the chronology of Plato's dialogues and even belongs to the 'canon' of stylometric studies in this area.⁶ Lisiecki referred to Lutosławski's results even though Lutosławski no longer took the lead in Polish research on Plato at that time.

Although Lisiecki's studies on Plato could not compete with the success of Lutosławski's works, the two scholars shared a similar attitude to Plato's philosophy, for

⁵ An exhaustive treatment of this topic can be found in: Mróz (2021).

⁶ Thesleff (2009: 150).

in various ways they tried to reconcile Platonism and Christianity. In the 1930s Lisiecki had succeeded in completing a huge monograph volume on Plato. Unfortunately, the manuscript was irreparably lost at the time of the destruction of Warsaw during the war. However thanks to Lisiecki's publications and his short manuscript texts on particular dialogues, originally intended as introductions to the translations of the dialogues, it is possible to stitch together his image of Plato.⁷

Unlike Lutosławski, Lisiecki was more of a philologist than a philosopher, and we may suppose that his book consisted of a general presentation of Plato's dialogues, one after another, in chronological order. Lisiecki's Plato was a poet and visionary who produced a religious concept of the Good resulting from his divine visions. Considering the metaphysical and ethical role that Good played in Plato's philosophy and the religious language he used to describe it, Lisiecki identified Plato's Good with God and Divine Providence. At the same time, when discussing the *Timaeus*, Lisiecki also seems to have ascribed divinity to the Demiurge. He also commented on the difficulties of the theory of Forms, yet regarding the sources of the theory as irrational, he absolved Plato for not providing an unambiguous concept of the ideas and their relation to the material world. As an ex-priest, Lisiecki devoted special attention to the problem of reincarnation, which he considered to be irreconcilable with Christian theology. Plato's views on the human soul and its life were assessed by Lisiecki as mythical and unverifiable on the basis of rational arguments. He added, however, that Plato's arguments stemmed from his discerning observations of the phenomenon of learning, though the conclusions concerning reincarnation itself were untenable. Lisiecki nevertheless found some solace in this theory, for it gave hope to all those who lived in unsatisfactory conditions and hoped for a better future life. Despite all his criticism of Plato, Lisiecki considered himself to be a true, wholehearted Platonist and quoted Cicero (*Tusc.* 1, 17), with whom he agreed that *errare mehercule malo cum Platone ... quam cum istis vera sentire*.⁸ To sum up, Lisiecki was indeed very enthusiastic about Plato, and his enthusiasm was intensified by his Christian faith, which seemed to dovetail with Plato's elevated thoughts. Admiration for Plato, however, did not blind him to the deficiencies of Plato's arguments, which he criticised mostly from a common sense point of view, for he was not a very insightful philosopher, and his interest in the dialogues was rather that of a philologist and a moralist.

So much for Lisiecki's philosophical views on Plato. We now turn to the history of his translations of the dialogues, which is more interesting. In the early 1920s, when Lisiecki

⁷ These translations, which will be discussed below, fortunately survived the war. A selection of Lisiecki's introductions to the dialogues, three introductions to Aristotle's works, Polish translations of three Latin papers and some of his personal documents have been published as a single volume ed. by T. Mróz (2021).

⁸ Lisiecki (1927a: 108).

started to translate Plato, Polish readers had at their disposal a number of dialogues available in renderings of varying quality.⁹

The opening publication in the history of Polish translations of Plato was F. A. Kozłowski's book containing the *Apology*, *Crito* and the *Phaedo*, preceded by a general introduction to Plato and forewords to the particular dialogues (Kozłowski 1845). For Kozłowski, the translations of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) were too literal, and he himself preferred the French translations of Victor Cousin (1792–1867), who succeeded in avoiding the errors of the German scholar. Kozłowski's general introduction to the dialogues was, at that time, the most comprehensive Polish presentation of Plato's philosophy. His contemporaries spared no words of praise for his translation of the three dialogues and counted it among the best in Polish, being in a fluent and clear style. The translation itself stood the test of time until the end of the 19th century when it was still recommended. In later decades, however, when Plato came to be studied more intensively in Poland, the work of Kozłowski was barely mentioned, and today it has been largely forgotten.

A. Bronikowski, already mentioned above, worked most of his life in Prussian Gymnasia in Poznań and Ostrów Wielkopolski and was the most productive translator of Plato into Polish in the 19th century. His method of rendering Plato was different from that of Kozłowski, for he claimed that philosophical works should be rendered as literally as possible so as not to distort or transform them. In view of this approach to translation, nothing resembling the artistry of Plato's dialogues could be expected from his productions. Bronikowski started his long series of translations with the *Menexenus* and the *Ion* (1857a–b), then volume I of Plato's *Works* was published (Bronikowski 1858a) and it included the *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*, *Hippias minor*, *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Euthyphro*, and the two previously published dialogues, the *Ion* and the *Menexenus*. In the same year his *Theaetetus* saw the light of day as a separate book (Bronikowski 1858b). Between 1860 and 1866 the translations of the *Crito* and the first three books of the *Republic* were all published in the annual reports of his gymnasium. Subsequently, in 1871 vol. II of Plato's *Works* appeared in print, containing four books of the *Laws* (Bronikowski 1871). In 1879, the next volume appeared in print, again numbered II, which was somewhat confusing for readers. It included the *Alcibiades I*, *Gorgias*, *Meno*, *Laches*, *Euthydemus*, and the *Protagoras* (Bronikowski 1879). Volume III of Plato's *Works* in Bronikowski's rendering appeared in print posthumously, in 1884, being finalised by his son. The whole volume consisted of the *Republic* (Bronikowski 1884). Throughout his entire career as a translator Bronikowski met with severe criticism, and was even ironically advised to learn his own native tongue to the same degree as he had mastered Greek. He was reproached for verging on incomprehensibility in his attempts to stay faithful to the source texts. Another disadvantage of the volumes he published was the absence of any philosophical introductions. His *Republic* was generally considered to be a failure, such that the subse-

⁹ A more detailed presentation of the Polish history of translating Plato can be found in: Mróz (2023); while a simple chronological list is included in: Mróz (2021: 475–480).

quent translator of this dialogue, Lisiecki, while appreciating the enormous effort of his predecessor, referred to his work as an example of and warning against literal translation. Bronikowski's rendering of Plato ultimately failed to gain success among the wider public and even among professionals. His translations of Xenophon or Herodotus fared better, though today they are all regarded as little more than an antiquarian relic.

At the turn of the 20th century some of the dialogues, mostly from the early phase of Plato's literary and philosophical production (the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Laches*, *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Symposium*, *Phaedo*, *Philebus*), were translated into Polish by various gymnasium teachers. Although their effort did not go unnoticed, their output was too meagre to change significantly the availability of Plato's works in Polish. None of them could compete with the translator of Plato who is still widely read in Poland, that is, Władysław Witwicki (1878–1948).

Witwicki belonged to the first generation of students of Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938), the founder of the Lvov (today: Львів) and, consequently, Lvov-Warsaw school of philosophy. Witwicki, a philosopher and a psychologist, followed a similar scheme in all his translations: each dialogue was preceded by an introduction presenting the situation, *personae*, character or chronological position of the dialogue. In the case of the first dialogue he translated, the *Symposium* (Witwicki 1909), the introduction even included an outline of the development of pre-Platonic philosophy. After the introduction, the text of the dialogue appeared, followed by Witwicki's summaries of each chapter, explanations, comments, philosophical deliberations, including ridicule of popular morality and anticlerical remarks. It was in the *Phaedrus* (Witwicki 1918), the second published dialogue, that Witwicki's drawings started to appear in the text, for he was also a talented artist. The *Symposium* was the inaugural work in the long series of Plato's dialogues translated and published by Witwicki and it immediately sold out, and even an almost instant reprint did not help to satisfy the demand for this book. Like many of Witwicki's other renderings of Plato's dialogues, it subsequently had numerous reprints and re-editions. In 1920, a volume was published containing three of the most frequently read dialogues, the *Euthyphro*, *Apology* and the *Crito* (Witwicki 1920). The next dialogues translated by Witwicki were devoted to the disputes between Socrates and the Sophists. These were the *Hippias minor*, *Hippias major* and the *Ion* (Witwicki 1921). The *Gorgias* appeared in the following year (Witwicki 1922), and in the subsequent year the *Protagoras* was published (Witwicki 1923). Then followed the *Phaedo* (Witwicki 1925), and by that time Witwicki's reputation as a Plato translator was well established. In general, the reactions of the reading public to Witwicki's translations were positive, the more so because reading Witwicki's Socrates was a far cry from the torment they had experienced learning ancient Greek at school. Even critical philologists had a high regard for his work, with only minor reservations of a philological nature. Lisiecki can be counted among them because he not only dedicated one of his works to Witwicki,

Platonis interpreti subtilissimo, but also indicated inaccuracies, e.g. in the *Phaedo*, which were corrected by Witwicki in subsequent editions of this dialogue.

It was about the mid-twenties when Lisiecki started to translate Plato. His undertaking was not exactly pioneering, but many dialogues had still not been translated into Polish and many others were considered incomprehensible. Lisiecki, himself a teacher of classical languages, managed to publish only one dialogue, though admittedly a long one. He had far-reaching ambitions to translate all of Plato's dialogues, but failed to pursue an academic career or to publish his translations of classical Greek philosophical texts, including Plato's dialogues, despite his qualifications and devotion to academic work. This failure to achieve his aims can be put down to psychological and biographical factors: his renunciation of the priesthood, which was frowned upon by many representatives of the academia of that time, and his intensifying inferiority complex, which was the result of his inability to adjust his Prussian-style teaching methods, based on discipline and rote learning, to the more modern ways of teaching in Warsaw, or to adapt to the Warsaw mentality in general.¹⁰

In spite of unfavourable circumstances Lisiecki managed to publish a translation of the *Republic* (Lisiecki 1928). All the other dialogues, unfortunately, remained in manuscript form. Although Lisiecki did all he could to change this situation, it was difficult for someone on the margins of academia to find the resources necessary for publishing. Moreover, the reception of Plato's *opus* in Lisiecki's rendering was not all positive. On the one hand, its language was considered to be a great improvement on Bronikowski's productions, while on the other, his translations could not rival the increasing number of dialogues published in W. Witwicki's translation. Lisiecki had learned from Bronikowski's errors and his *Republic* is still not only readable, but also supplemented with a good introduction and footnotes. Nevertheless, it was believed that his translation of the *Republic* could not compete with W. Witwicki's works.

It must have been Tadeusz Sinko (1877–1966) who helped Lisiecki to publish the *Republic*, because it was included in a series run by the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which Sinko was a member. He was a renowned classical scholar, a professor at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, and he encouraged Lisiecki to continue his translation work. It was, in fact, not necessary to convince Lisiecki to do more translation work, for he was himself sufficiently motivated and soon translated the *Laws*, *Timaeus* and the *Critias*. All the manuscripts were sent to Sinko, as subsequently were the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* in 1930, the *Theaetetus* and the *Parmenides* in 1931, and the *Cratylus*, *Euthydemus* and the *Meno* in 1932. With every year, however, hope of publishing these dialogues was diminishing and Sinko openly asked Lisiecki not to send him new translations, although he did advertise them in his huge study, *Greek Literature*.¹¹ This did not discourage Lisiecki, for very soon, in 1933, Sinko received a parcel with the *Laches*,

¹⁰ S. Lisiecki, *List z 1 czerwca 1926 r. do Stanisława Kota*, (Lisiecki 2021: 343); *List z 4 grudnia 1937 r. do Marcellego Handelsmana* (Lisiecki 2021: 352).

¹¹ Sinko (1932: 611).

Menexenus, *Charmides*, *Philebus*, *Lysis* and both *Alcibiadeses*. All these works made him the most productive Plato translator at that time, although among the translations available in print there was still only a single dialogue, the *Republic*.

In the meantime, Witwicki was not idle and continued translating Plato and publishing his books. Apart from reeditions of the dialogues published in previous years, Witwicki finished new ones: the *Meno* (Witwicki 1935), *Theaetetus* (Witwicki 1936), *Charmides*, *Lysis* (Witwicki 1937a), *Laches* (Witwicki 1937b) and the *Philebus* (Witwicki 1938). Lisiecki took this as a threat to himself personally and to his work. What was even worse was that the professors whom Lisiecki admired and trusted, Zieliński and Sinko, wrote very positive reviews of some of Witwicki's translations. It is little wonder, then, that Lisiecki eventually came to the conclusion that he had been deceived by the academic community, and especially by Sinko, who despite words of support and encouragement expressed in his book and letters, eventually turned his back on the hardworking translator, disregarding his work and directly promoting his most important competitor in the field of translations of Plato's dialogues. In these circumstances Lisiecki gave up on Plato and turned to Aristotle, translating the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *On the Soul* and *Metaphysics*. This last work, or at least some parts of it, was subjected to analysis at a philosophical seminar conducted at the Lvov University in 1938 by the phenomenologist, Roman Ingarden (1893–1970). As one of the results of this seminar, Ingarden advised against the publication of this work by the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. His objections were serious and he assessed the text as demanding further corrections.¹² The outbreak of World War II stopped all publication plans, and Polish readers had to wait until 1983 for Kazimierz Leśniak's (1911–1987) rendering of *Metaphysics*.

Lisiecki and his wife remained in Warsaw until the final days of World War II, when they were forced to leave the city, never to return. They stayed in Łowicz, a town about 60 kilometers west of Warsaw, where Lisiecki died on June 9th, 1960. For some time he had worked there as a language teacher, while attempting to collect together all his manuscripts, only to sell them eventually to the new Polish Academy of Sciences, which supported him financially until his last days.

The list of Lisiecki's yet unpublished translations of Plato's dialogues includes: the *Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Laws*, *Parmenides*, *Statesman*, *Sophist*, *Theaetetus*, *Cratylus*, *Euthydemus*, *Meno*, *Laches*, *Menexenus*, *Charmides*, *Philebus*, *Lysis* and the *Alcibiades I & II* and other works of doubtful authenticity. In selecting the dialogues, Lisiecki's fundamental intention was to translate those that had not previously been accessible to Polish audiences in their native tongue. Had they been published in Lisiecki's rendering, the *Parmenides*, *Cratylus*, *Laws*, *Sophist* and *Timaeus* would have been available for the first time in Polish. Polish audiences had to wait to read these dialogues for many years: until 1951 for the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*, 1956 the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, 1961 the *Parmenides* – all in Witwicki's translation; 1960 the *Laws* in M. Maykowska's translation were published

¹² Cf. Kuliniak, Pandura (2020: 100 ff.).

and it was not until 1990 that two translations of the *Cratylus*, by W. Stefański and M. Brzostowska, appeared in print. Although Lisiecki's plan of translating the dialogues was impressive and his style was readable and regarded as a step forward in the history of Polish reception of the dialogues, the majority of his translations of the dialogues nevertheless remained unpublished. His translations in general can be considered as taking the middle path between the verbatim renderings of Bronikowski and the accessible and even light productions of Witwicki. Moreover, Lisiecki took time to provide the readers with a number of philological comments in footnotes, which were almost absent from the works by Bronikowski and Witwicki. Lisiecki's introductions to the dialogues (and to his translations of Aristotle) consisted of general remarks on the setting and persons, and preliminary presentations and analyses of the problems, arguments, structure of the text *etc.* They aimed to prepare the reader for the material they were about to assimilate, while Witwicki's commentaries provided summaries of the dialogues and focused on issues that were of interest to his 20th century audience.

To sum up, reception of Lisiecki's translations was, naturally, very limited, for readers in Poland knew only his *Republic*, while even some foreign researchers were aware of the amount of work that remained in manuscript.¹³ If we take into account his long life, his career can be assessed as almost completely unsuccessful, though he had devoted his life to scholarly work. He decided to become a classical scholar on impulse after a meeting with T. Zieliński, and although they met when Lisiecki appeared to be too old to change his research focus, he started to work fervently on Greek philosophers and produced a considerable corpus of texts consisting of translations, commentaries and studies in Polish and Latin. Why only about one fourth of this production appeared in print is another matter. One reason is related to his cultural and educational background and the effect this had on his state of mind when he moved to Warsaw. Having been educated in a Prussian gymnasium and having received a doctorate from a German university, Lisiecki found it difficult to adapt to the teaching environment in Warsaw, which had been under Russian rule for over a century and had developed, in Lisiecki's view, more casual methods of working with schoolchildren. Moreover, as a person with a complicated life history, that is, the abandonment of the priesthood and the Catholic church, he was disregarded by some representatives of Polish academic institutions and thus his feeling of isolation intensified. His attempts to become a member of the academic community ultimately failed and he had no other choice than to accept that his translations of Plato, and later of Aristotle, would be pigeonholed. Unfortunate circumstances also played their part in his lack of success. Lisiecki's career as a Plato translator started at a time when W. Witwicki was quickly developing his career in this field. Another stroke of bad luck was the loss of the manuscript of Lisiecki's monograph book on Plato, which was burnt during the Warsaw Uprising. All these factors taken together meant that the name of Lisiecki

¹³ Novotný (1977: 593); cf. Mróz (2018: 141–143).

fell into oblivion even among his compatriots, despite his arduous, though unpublished, efforts to become recognised as a scholar at least comparable to T. Zieliński.

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How to Be an Unsuccessful Ancient Philosophy Scholar in Uneasy Times: The Case of S. Lisiecki (1872–1960)

The paper provides a brief outline of the biography and works of Stanisław Lisiecki (1872–1960), a little-known Polish classics scholar, who is remembered only, if at all, as a translator of Plato's *Republic*. In his early fifties, having given up his career as a Catholic priest, he started working in the field of classics and managed to publish several minor works on Plato in Polish and Latin. His decision to abandon the clergy was not welcomed by many members of the Polish academia and most of his translations of Plato and Aristotle remained unpublished. His renderings of Plato could not compete with the highly accessible translations made by W. Witwicki, which were becoming increasingly popular at that time. Furthermore, Lisiecki's translations of Aristotle, despite the pioneering nature of his undertaking, met with strong criticism at various university seminars.

KEY WORDS

S. Lisiecki, Plato, history of translations, reception of ancient philosophy in Poland

DYSKUSJE

Marina Marren's *Plato and Aristophanes*

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Marina Marren. 2021. *Plato and Aristophanes: Comedy, Politics, and the Pursuit of a Just Life*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

In *Plato and Aristophanes*, Marina Marren of the United Arab Emirates University has produced an exciting new reading of Plato's *Republic* by taking the dialogue's humor seriously. The humor begins, for her, with Socrates and his companions looking for the light of justice in the darkness of Hades. In the same vein, it continues with the irony of Plato having Socrates imagine an almost perfect city run by almost perfect people – philosophers – when at the time Plato wrote the dialogue, Glaucon, Alcibiades, Charmides, Theaetetus and other young men with whom Socrates had associated in fact had come to bad ends. For Marren, Socrates' failure with his youthful interlocutors makes the *Republic's* whole effort to create a beautiful city as laughable to Plato's contemporary readers as looking for justice in hell.

Other comic elements Marren finds include intellectual ideals conflicting with the reality of desires and passions when communal sex and property are instituted; the comically ambiguous status of the decent man who desires only simple pleasures but due to his simplicity is subject to the schemes of cheaters, corrupters and demagogues;

the humor of the simple man's exploitation by rulers who simply give back to him what he already wants; the comedy of rulers being philosophers (lovers of wisdom) when the eros of candidate philosophers more likely extends to the earthly pleasures of tyranny than to philosophic rule and divine philosophic pleasures; the laughable inconsistency between Glaucon's own intellect and passion made evident when he proposes that the best citizens of the beautiful city be allowed to kiss whomever they wish without there being any right of refusal; the tense and sadly comic intellect-passion inconsistency evidenced in the philosopher-kings's tight elitist control over sexual and poetic expression and benevolence-exclusion inconsistency manifest in his elitist exclusion of many from full civic participation, for example, the artisans; and the ironic inconsistency of an imagined city run by human beings who are better even than the gods – since they are led only by what is beyond being – being licensed to act in terrible ways because their 'divine' nature gives them leave to act without being contested.

Marren's comedic approach diverges from that of others who have seen the *Republic* as a critique of idealism and have found in it resources for a type of Cold War conservative critique of what they see as the problematic idealism of twentieth century leftist and communist movements. Such interpretations emphasize the tragedy of the rise and fall of the *Republic's* best city in speech and construe the rise to represent idealism and the fall to represent critique. For Marren, instead, the *Republic's* critique is of any kind of idealism and its antidote is not conservatism but democracy and democratic education. According to Marren, it is Plato's Socrates, not Plato the author of the *Republic* himself, who thinks the many cannot philosophize. In addition, for her it is Glaucon and Adeimantus who accept the idea of the beautiful city while we are not supposed to but are to see that city's origin in the somewhat tyrannic desires and passions that Glaucon and Adeimantus have – and we share.

For Marren, the positing and taking back of positions in the *Republic* as well as the dialogue's overall comedic tenor are meant to educate *us*. We share the posited views at first and then see them refuted, educating us about our views and feelings. Platonic comedy, for Marren, redirects apparently serious passages and turns their initial meaning on its head leaving us to wonder and think about our own views given our likely initial acceptance of the posited views. Actions in the dialogue such as Glaucon blurting out a desire to have sex with whomever he wants undermine the high-minded tone of stated views and positions. They give us a political education on the contrast between the purity of the pursuit of perfection and the desires that are sublimated into that pursuit. From such comedy we achieve freedom from inscribed concepts and idealistic views, specifically, the freedom that comes from laughing at them. Such a freedom is not disinterested, however, since the retraction of positions previously affirmed and the inconsistency seen in a character previously admired have an emotional effect similar to that of reversal and recognition in tragedy. What seems true or admirable turns out to be false or base

in strikingly funny, ironic and laughable ways that enable the dialogue to educate our passions, including the darkest and most tyrannical among them.

Where do Aristophanes' comedies fit in Marren's account? Her goal is not to take a position on scholarly disputes concerning the exact debate between Plato and Aristophanes but instead, taking for granted the view that Plato was familiar with Aristophanes and his comedies, to use specific comedies as interpretive spurs to rethinking Plato's *Republic* and giving it its comedic due. Specifically, she treats the *Assembly Women*, the *Knights* and the *Birds* each as providing motivation and resources for noticing the *Republic's* comic features – the *Assembly Women* providing a bawdy portrait of unrealistic egalitarian innovation, the *Knights* displaying how the people are sweet-talked and swindled, and the *Birds* portraying characters who aim for the high life of the birds but end up on the road to the underworld. What results both from using the comedies as such a spur, along with thinking about how features of the dialogue would have been received in its time of composition, is the *Republic* as a democratic critique of (for us) both left and right idealism on behalf democracy itself and as an exhortation to face, not flee, the ambiguities of human personality and political life.

Finally, *Plato and Aristophanes* is commendable for the range of interpretations, as well as related books and articles, consulted in it, from North American interpreters who take a 'Continental' approach such as John Sallis, Michael Naas and Marina McCoy, to Italian interpreters such as Claudia Barrachi and Cinzia Arruzzo, to U.S. interpreters out of the Anglo-American tradition such as Julius Moravcsik, Gregory Vlastos and Debra Nails, to classicists and classical historians such as Michael Vickers, Helen Foley, Arthur Pickard-Cambridge and Arnaldo Momigliano, to various interpreters influenced by (and including) Seth Benardete and his teacher, Leo Strauss, such as Drew Hyland, Charles Griswold and Michael Davis. *Plato and Aristophanes: Comedy, Politics, and the Pursuit of a Just Life* is a well-informed, ambitious and appealing book, one that holds out promise of more good work to come.

Kolejny podręcznik do filozofii Platona*

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The Bloomsbury Handbook of Plato, G.A. Press, M. Dusque (eds.), Bloomsbury Academic: London – New York – Oxford – Sydney 2023, s. 521.

Do rąk czytelnika trafia drugie wydanie książki przedstawiającej w ogólnym zarysie filozofię jednego z największych filozofów starożytności — Platona. Z jednej strony wydaje się, że praca jest bardzo obszerna (ponad 500 stron), z drugiej jednak, biorąc pod uwagę przedmiot — filozofię Platona oraz jej recepcję — oraz współczesny stan badań nad nim, to owa ilość stron nie robi wrażenia, a nawet pozwala się zastanowić nad celowością takiego przedsięwzięcia. Jak sami redaktorzy zwracają uwagę (s. 2) w stworzenie tej pracy zaangażowano aż 110 autorów, którzy napisali 164 teksty dotyczące rozmaitych aspektów związanych z filozofią Platona. Już prosta arytmetyka pozwala na dostrzeżenie, że poszczególne teksty nie mogą być długie, i tak rzeczywiście jest, a redaktorzy uzasadniają to chęcią uzyskania wielopłaszczyznowego (i dialektycznego — s. 7) oraz możliwie kompletnego ujęcia przedmiotu (s. 2). Zapewne takie ujęcie

* Zob. także: *Platon-Handbuch. Leben – Werk – Wirkung*, Horn, Müller, Söder 2009, 2017.

podyktowane jest również grupą docelową, do której ma trafić ta publikacja, a są nią przede wszystkim studenci oraz osoby tylko ogólnie interesujące się filozofią (s. 7)¹. Praca ta zawiera w tytule słowo „Handbook”, co już zakłada, że podstawową jej wartością jest informowanie o danym przedmiocie, a więc jest ona również swego rodzaju encyklopedią, przewodnikiem czy też poradnikiem dotyczącym filozofii Platona (s. 6)².

Ponieważ jest to bardzo obszerna praca i przedstawia tak wiele wątków, w niniejszej recenzji nie będę odnosił się do wszystkiego, co w niej zostało zawarte, a zwrócę uwagę jedynie na kilka kwestii, które mogą budzić kontrowersje czy też wątpliwości. Całość podzielona została na pięć sekcji, z których w pierwszej omawia się przede wszystkim historyczny, literacki i filozoficzny kontekst twórczości Platona. W drugiej przedstawiona zostaje zawartość poszczególnych pism, w trzeciej — rozmaite cechy dialogów Platona, w czwartej — rozmaite zagadnienia podejmowane w dziełach Platona, a w piątej uwzględnia się recepcję, strategie interpretacyjne oraz recepcję filozofii założyciela Akademii (szczegółowy spis treści znajduje się na stronie: <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/bloomsbury-handbook-of-plato-9781350227231/> [dostęp: 1.11.2023]).

W pierwszej części moją uwagę przykuł przede wszystkim artykuł J.B. Waugh *Orality and literacy* (s. 23–25). Pięć akapitów wprowadza czytelnika w sam problem oralności i w kontekście filozofii Platona wskazuje na ważne opracowanie w postaci monografii Havelocka *Preface to Plato* (1963 [przekład polski: 2007]). Jedynie dwa ostatnie akapity wskazują (i to niestety nieco powierzchownie) na to, że zwracając uwagę na wymienioną w tytule kwestię oralności można uzyskać różne wyniki interpretacyjne i to tylko w odniesieniu do kilku miejsc (np. *Fajdros* 274b–e; *Listy* II i VII) czy zagadnień (*technē, paideia*). Wydaje się, iż w ten sposób albo kwestia oralności jawi się jako coś marginalnego w odniesieniu do interpretacji *Corpus Platonicum*, albo wymaga to jeszcze dużego nakładu badań. Przy czym ta druga możliwość wydaje mi się o tyle mało atrakcyjna badawczo, że kiedy sięgnie się po ustalenia czołowych badaczy tego zagadnienia w literaturze pozafilozoficznej (np. przywoływana przez Waugh Thomas [1992]), to zasadniczo pojawia się bardzo dużo wątków sceptycznych, wskazujących na przykład na ogromną trudność w rozdzieleniu (zwłaszcza w czasach Platona i późniejszych) porządku oralnego i literackiego, a więc na to, że oba aspekty kultury się przenikają i powinny być uwzględniane łącznie (Thomas 1992: 4)³. Warto również pamiętać o rozróżnieniu między oralnością pojmowaną jako swego rodzaju tradycją (z czym mamy do czynienia przede wszystkim w przypadku pierwszych poetów greckich), a oralnością pojmowaną jako komunikacja oralna. Wydaje się, że w przypadku twórczości Platona zasadniczo mamy do czynienia z drugim wspomnianym elementem, bo przecież jest on autorem

¹ Dlatego też do spisu skrótów dodałbym jeszcze używany w kilku miejscach MS[S] (np. s. 49, przyp. 67), gdyż osoby nie specjalizujące się w literaturze starożytnej mogą go nie znać.

² Pod względem zakresu prezentowanych zagadnień z pewnością wyróżnia się na tle innych przewodników – zob. np. Kraut (1992), Benson (2006), Ebrey, Kraut (2022) – chociaż ceną jest dużo bardziej okrojone przedstawienie poszczególnych zagadnień.

³ Warto jednak odnotować, że badania próbujące wskazywać na aspekty oralne w dziełach Platona pojawiają się od czasu do czasu; zob. np. Verano 2018.

dialogów, a więc rozmów między *X* a *Y*, gdzie z jednej strony *X* i *Y* są osobami obecnymi w dziele literackim, a z drugiej strony, przynajmniej w starożytności, gdy czytano dzieła na głos, a być może nawet niektóre z dialogów przedstawiano (Ryle 1966: 23 nn.), *X*₁, *X*₂... są osobami w dialogu, a *Y*₁, *Y*₂... słuchaczami, którym dostarcza się właśnie na drodze oralnej treści filozoficzne. Oczywiście można uznać, iż jest to oralność pozorowana (Sandbach 1985: 492), a otwarte pozostaje pytanie, na ile taka forma komunikacji ma wpływ na rozumienie tekstu założyciela Akademii.

Jak już wspomniano, druga część przedstawia poszczególne dialogi Platona, a ich układ ma porządek alfabetyczny. Niewątpliwie konieczność zwięzłego przedstawienia treści stanowi ogromne wyzwanie w przypadku najobszerniejszych pism — *Państwa* i *Praw*. Chociaż *Prawa* są dziełem objętościowo większym do *Państwa* (*R.* = 294 strony, a *Lg.* 345 stron w wydaniu Stephanusa), to ich przedstawienie w *Handbook...* jest nie tylko objętościowo odwrotne (*R.* ok. 7 stron, a *Lg.* nieco ponad 2 strony), lecz także odmienne pod względem sposobu ujęcia. W przypadku prawdopodobnie ostatniego dialogu założyciela Akademii niewiele dowiemy się na temat jego treści (wyjątek stanowi ostatnia – X księga tego dzieła), a więcej na temat ogólnych problemów metodologicznych. Natomiast w przypadku *Państwa* autor – N. Pappas – zdecydował się w sposób systematyczny ująć pojawiające się w tym dziele zagadnienia, a są nimi kolejno: (I) polityka (s. 117–118), (II) psychologia i etyka (s. 118–119), (III) korzyści ze sprawiedliwości (s. 119–120), (IV) poezja i inne sztuki (s. 120), (V) metafizyka (s. 120–121), (VI) dobro (s. 121–122). Zapewne różnica ta wynika z postulowanego we wstępie przez redaktorów pluralizmu metodologicznego, ale w przypadku tych dwóch bardzo ważnych (o ile nie najważniejszych) dzieł *Prawa* z pewnością zasługują one na co najmniej równą uwagę. Jeszcze inna różnica w omówieniu tych dwóch dzieł polega na tym, iż w przypadku *Praw* pojawia się wskazanie na możliwość sięgnięcia po zbiorczą bibliografię (Saunders & Brisson 2000), natomiast w przypadku *Państwa* wskazówki bibliograficzne odnoszą się do raczej do poszczególnych zagadnień niż do całego dzieła. Być może warto było uzupełnić odnośniki do takich całościowych ujęć, zwłaszcza że kilka takich pozycji znajduje się w bibliografii⁴.

W tej części podręcznika zwrócił moją uwagę jeszcze jeden drobiazg w artykule poświęconym *Hippiaszowi Więszemu* autorstwa Jaques A. Duvoisin. Po omówieniu treści i formy tekstu, na koniec zwraca się uwagę na zagadnienie jego autentyczności, które wielokrotnie była podważana (np. Heitsch 2011). Dlatego też słusznie Duvoisin zauważa, że „the question of textual provenance should not be simply forgotten” (s. 83), ale wydaje mi się, iż warto było podkreślić w tym miejscu wyraźnie, że jeśli nawet zdecydowanie nie podważa się autentyczności tego dzieła, to jednak można za uzasadnione

⁴ Zob. np. Annas 1981, Benardete 1989, Ferrari 2007, McPherran 2010. Warto również wspomnieć o wielotomowym, włoskojęzycznym dziele pod redakcją M. Vegettiego (1998–2007).

uznać powątpiewanie w autentyczność, a więc zaliczanie tego dialogu do grupy zwanej *dubia*⁵.

Trzecia część podręcznika poświęcona została różnym literackim cechom dialogów Platona. Tutaj zwrócili moją uwagę na trzy teksty, poświęcone kolejno: humorowi, ironii i zabawie. W pierwszym z nich David Roochnik zwraca uwagę na to, iż elementy komediowe zawarte są w tekstach Platona, a nawet uznaje założyciela Akademii za „invertebrate punster” (s. 149). Dobrym i przedstawianym przez Roochnika przykładem jest mowa Arystofanesa z *Sympozjonu*, w której jednej strony znajduje się wiele elementów mogących nawet dziś wywołać uśmiech na twarzach czytelnika, ale z drugiej strony jej wymowa jest ponura (s. 150), a można by nawet rzec tragiczna (np. Strauss 2001: 134 n.). Arystofanes na początku swojego wystąpienia jest świadomy tego, że postrzegany i odbierany jest przede wszystkim jako komediopisarz, ale chce, żeby jego mowa była uznana za poważną (*Smp.* 189a–b). Warto jednak pamiętać o pewnym historycznie subiektywnym elemencie obecnym w przypadku rozpoznawania tego, co wywołuje wesołość – nie wszystko, co śmieszyło ówczesnego czytelnika, będzie śmieszne dzisiaj, aczkolwiek można zakładać, iż mistrzostwo literackie Platona pozwalało mu na takie skonstruowanie Czytelnika Modelowego (by posłużyć się terminologią U. Eco [1979; przekład polski: 1994: 72 nn.]), by efekt komiczny miał wymiar możliwie jak najbardziej uniwersalny. Ujęcie wesołości, jakie dostrzec można w *Sympozjonie*, sugeruje uznawanie za przeciwieństwo powagi i wesołości (*geloion*), a nawet śmieszności (*katagelaston*). Ale za przeciwieństwo powagi można uznać również ironię, która przedstawiona została oddzielnie przez Samuela Scolnicova. Wyróżnia on trzy jej typy: ‘simple’, ‘complex’ and ‘open’ (s. 151). Pierwsza z nich ma proveniencję starożytną, a dwie pozostałe – współczesną. Te typy odnaleźć można w dialogach, ale Scolnicov wskazuje również na ironiczność obecną na metapoziomie, a mianowicie tę, która dotyczy relacji dialog – czytelnik. W tym przypadku ironia pozwala domniemywać, że nie wszystko, co Platon napisał, należy uznawać za wyraz jego poglądów (s. 152), lecz może być po prostu pewnym zaczynem rozważań, które czytelnik powinien przeprowadzić samodzielnie. Pojawia się jednak pytanie, z którym z trzech typów ironii mamy do czynienia na tym metapoziomie?

Wreszcie powadze można przeciwstawić zabawę, chociaż – jak zwraca uwagę Holger Thesleff – to, co Grecy określali mianem *paidia*, może zawierać pewną dozę powagi (s. 167). Thesleff słusznie wskazuje na wielowarstwowość zabawy w dialogach Platona, której celem jest przede wszystkim uzyskanie dystansu względem danego zagadnienia oraz którą często widać w konfrontacji różnych stanowisk (w ten sposób powiązana jest również z ironią). Założyciel Akademii był w pełni świadomy korzyści i zagrożeń, jakie może on przynieść człowiekowi. W pierwszym przypadku pomaga na przykład w procesie wychowawczym opanować rozmaite dyscypliny naukowe. W drugim natomiast może

⁵ Dialog ten wymienia się w rozdziale: *Dubia and Spuria* autorstwa John M. Dillona, a przeredagowanego przez M. Joyala (s. 66).

być źródłem kłopotów, jeśli na przykład będzie się oceniać estetycznie dzieła sztuki, bez uwzględnienia elementów intelektualnych. Warto tu zwrócić uwagę (czego nie robi Thesleff), że z zabawą ściśle powiązana jest kwestia przyjemności i to w tym związku można wyraźnie wskazać na pozytywny i negatywny aspekt zabawy (Pacewicz 2016: 199 nn.). Dodatkowo, Thesleff świetnie zwraca uwagę na zabawowość obecną w relacji dialog – czytelnik (s. 168–169). W tym przypadku użyte w dziełach metafory, przenośnie i analogie mogą być same odbierane jako *thought-play* albo mogą zawierać elementy zabawowe, których obecność czytelnik powinien wydobyć i rozważyć to, na ile ważą one na interpretacji danego sposobu wyrażenia przekonań autora.

W czwartej części podręcznika zawarte jest aż 74 (*sic!*) pojęć, zagadnień i kwestii obecnych w dialogach Platona. Poszczególne elementy opracowane są świetnie, ale zwróciłbym uwagę na dwie rzeczy. Po pierwsze, rozdział *Orphism* autorstwa Gabriele Cornelli (s. 311–313) można było przenieść do części pierwszej, gdyż po pierwsze, bardzo trudna jest precyzyjna rekonstrukcja przekonań związanych z religią orficką, a po drugie, obecność tych przekonań w twórczości założyciela Akademii można uznać za marginalną należy (choć z pewnością przy interpretacji przynajmniej niektórych miejsc kontekst orficki warto uwzględnić). Po drugie, w rozdziale *Pleasure* autorstwa Dorothei Frede autorka wskazuje, że ujmowanie tytułowego zjawiska przez Platona zmienia się. Autorka akceptuje standardowy chronologiczny podział dialogów na trzy grupy. Wśród dialogów sokracyjnych wyróżnia pod względem ujęcia przyjemności *Gorgiasa*, a za konsekwencję prowadzonych w tym tekście rozważań uznaje zasadniczą krytykę przyjemności. Wydaje się jednak, że krytyka przedstawiana w *Gorgiasie* nie ma tak totalnego wymiaru. Można argumentować, że przedmiotem odrzucenia przez Sokratesa jest więc ta szczególna postać koncepcji przyjemności, jakim jest skrajnie subiektywny proces nieograniczonego napełniania, ale nie wypowiada się on ani o hedonizmie w ogóle, ani o innych możliwych jego formach. W świetle wypowiedzi Sokratesa można stwierdzić, że istnieją takie przyjemności, które mogą być wartościowane pozytywnie — są pożyteczne. W konsekwencji, przynając w perspektywie antropologicznej wyższą wartość duszy niż ciała, należy, jak się zdaje, odnieść tego rodzaju przyjemności przede wszystkim do duszy, ale nie można całkowicie wykluczyć, że niektóre z nich mogą dotyczyć ciała. Zhierarchizowanie zostaje również uwzględnione na poziomie duchowym, gdzie dominującą rolę odgrywa *phronēsis*, podporządkowująca sobie emocjonalność [*epithumia*], przez co ukształtowana zostaje postawa zwana *sōphrōsunē*. Na czym jednak polega to podporządkowanie oraz rządzenie sferą emocjonalną? W miarę jasną odpowiedź można dać w odniesieniu do przyjemności pojmowanej jako proces, którego źródłem są wrażenia zmysłowe. W tym wypadku chodzi o niedopuszczenie do przepełnienia — przekroczenia właściwej miary. Jeśli na przykład nabieram ochoty na coś słodkiego i zaczynam spożywać cukierki, to moja *phronēsis*, stanowiąca o kresie (jeden, dwa czy więcej), decyduje o tym, kiedy pragnienie zostaje zaspokojone. Proces takiego

zaspokajania jest przyjemnością, która w pewnym momencie osiąga granicę (Pacewicz 2016: 103–104).

Ostatnia część podręcznika poświęcona jest recepcji Platona i została podzielona przez redaktorów na trzy części: (A) recepcja w starożytności, (B) recepcja w Średniowieczu i Renesansie, (C) recepcja w okresie Nowożytnym i współczesności. Co do (A), to zastanawiające jest to, iż pojawił się oddzielny rozdział poświęcony właściwie tylko Filonowi z Aleksandrii (choć za tytułowany jest *Jewish Platonism (Ancient)*, (s. 374–377), a nie ujęto w ogóle zagadnienia tzw. Medioplatonizmu, który wydaje się kluczowym momentem w rozumieniu przejścia od Starej Akademii do neoplatonizmu⁶. W części (B), podkreśla się przede wszystkim obecność myśli Platońskiej w różnych systemach religijnych – Islamie, Judaizmie i Chrześcijaństwie oraz niezmiernie krótko przedstawia się odnowienie Platonizmu we Włoszech. Niejasne jest jednak, dlaczego w tej części znalazł się rozdział poświęcony platonikom z Cambridge. Z jednej strony, historycznie rzecz biorąc⁷, ten ruch filozoficzny ma swoje źródła w okresie odrodzenia – jeśli za jednego z pierwszych przedstawicieli uznaje się Johna Coleta, ale sama autorka tego rozdziału (Sarah Hutton) historycznie sytuuje tę postać „[...] in early modern England” (s. 391). Część (C) zawiera świetne przedstawienie całego wachlarza interpretacji twórczości założyciela Akademii od Kartezjusza po czasy współczesne. Uwagę zwracają aż trzy artykuły poświęcone temu, co Platon prawdopodobnie nie spisał. W pierwszym (*Plato's unwritten doctrines*, s. 416–418) Hayden W. Ausland wskazuje najpierw na źródła wskazujące na istnienie nauki, która swą treścią wydaje się odbiegać od tego, co zawierają dialogi, a następnie przedstawia możliwe podejścia do rekonstrukcji tej nauki przez współczesnych badaczy. Głównym problemem interpretacyjnym jest w tym przypadku określenie wiarygodności świadectw Arystotelesa (a także późniejszych filozofów starożytnych).

⁶ Dodatkowo warto wskazać, iż pogłębienie rozumienia recepcji filozofii Platona w starożytności można uzyskać dzięki monografii *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plato in Antiquity* (Tarrant, Layne, Baltzly, Reanud 2017).

⁷ Problemem w tym przypadku oczywiście jest wyznaczenie granicy czasowej między epokami. Można tego dokonać w nieco arbitralny sposób, co czyni się np. w przypadku końca starożytności ustalając go na 395 r. (podział Cesarstwa Rzymskiego), 476 r. (śmierć ostatniego cesarza zachodniorzymskiego) lub w przypadku filozofii 529 r. (zamknięcie Akademii). W przypadku przełomu Renesansu/Nowożytności może być to data 1517 r. (wystąpienie Lutry) lub 1548 r. (Sobór Trydencki), ale można pierwszą z tych epok rozciągać aż po wiek XVII i filozoficzno-naukowe publikacje Bacona, Galileusza czy Campanelli (Hankins 2007: xii–xvi). Ale wiek XVII uznawany jest też właśnie za epokę wczesno nowożytną, u której początków pojawiają się dzieła Bacona, Hobbesa i Descartes (Rutherford 2006).

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Another Handbook on Plato's philosophy