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## **ИНДОЕВРОПЕЙСКОЕ ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИЕ И КЛАССИЧЕСКАЯ ФИЛОЛОГИЯ–XXIII**

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профессора Иосифа Моисеевича Тронского

## **INDO-EUROPEAN LINGUISTICS AND CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY–XXIII**

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**IDEALISM (MENTALISM) IN EARLY GREEK METAPHYSICS  
AND PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY:**

**Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Xenophanes and others  
(with some remarks on the «*Gigantomachia over being*»  
in Plato's *Sophist*)**

**Abstract and table of contents:**

(1) Preliminary criticism of the presuppositions of the denial of existence of idealism in early Greek thought: pseudohistorical evolutionism, Platonocentrism that ignores the archaic features of Plato's metaphysics and psychology, and the modern stereotype of «Presocratics» as physicalists, a product of the late 19th century (excessive) positivist reaction against Hegelianism and German idealism in the English-speaking historiography of Greek philosophy.

(2) Demiourgos and creationism in Pre-Platonic philosophy. Creation by divine mind is a form of objective idealism (mentalism).

(3) The thesis of Myles Burnyeat and Bernard Williams (no idealism in Greek philosophy) is criticized. We point to scholastic and ancient (Platonic) roots of Descartes' substance dualism of body and mind, as well as to the even more ancient Pythagorean roots of Plato's doctrine of immortal soul.

(4) A provisional taxonomy of different types of idealism (mentalism) in ancient Greek philosophy is proposed. 11 types are distinguished.

(5) The evidence of the Orphic-Pythagorean graffiti from Olbia on the early Pythagorean substance dualism of body and soul proves its Preplatonic origin.

(6) Criticism of modern naturalistic interpretations of Pythagorean first principles *peras* and *apeiron* (Burkert, Huffman and others). *Peras* and *apeiron* (a geometrical analogue of later terms form and matter) are self-subsistent incorporeal mathematical essences, out of which physical bodies are «constructed» (ἀρμόζειν, another geometrical term for «construction») by the divine mind-demiourgos.

(7) The identity of Being and Mind in Parmenides. A refutation of the grammatically impossible anti-idealist interpretation of fr. B 3 by Zeller, Burnet and their followers. Parmenides' Kouros is a poetic image of Pythagoras as the originator of the Western Greek monotheistic theology of the noetic One, conceived as a Sphere of immutable thinking divine light (the conceptual metaphor of the *Invisible Sun of Justice* that «never sets»).

(8) The psychological and ethical dimensions of the Eleatic doctrine of Being, almost totally neglected in the mainstream of the post-Burnetean literature. The Pythagorean doctrine of the indestructible soul serves as a practical tool of military psychological engineering: the education of

fearless warriors. Strabo's commonly neglected report on invincible Eleatic warriors, educated by Parmenides' *nomoi*, is to be taken seriously.

(9) The «battle of gods and giants over being» (Gigantomachia peri tes ousias) in Plato's *Sophist* 246a as a testimony on the Preplatonic metaphysical idealism (mentalism). It is argued that the two warring camps should not be confined to contemporary atomists and academics only: the whole Ionian (naturalism) and Italian (idealism) traditions, mentioned in Plato's context, are meant, i.e. the whole history of Greek philosophy.

(10) Some clarifications on the use of the terms idealism, naturalism, dualism etc.

**Keywords:** Ancient Greek philosophy, Preplatonic philosophy, Pythagoras, Pythagorean school, Eleatic school, Parmenides, Melissus, Empedocles, Epicharmus, Heraclitus, idealism, naturalism, philosophical theology, body and mind.

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### **Идеализм (ментализм) в ранней греческой метафизике и философской теологии: Пифагор, Парменид, Гераклит, Ксенофан, Эмпедокл и другие (с истолкованием «Гигантомахии о бытии» в «Софисте» Платона)**

(1) Предварительная критика оснований для отрицания существования идеализма в ранней греческой философии. К ним относятся: псевдоисторический эволюционизм; платоноцентризм, игнорирующий архаические аспекты платоновской метафизики и психологии; стереотип о «досократиках» как физикалистах – пережиток позитивистской полемики против гегельянства и немецкого идеализма в англоязычной историографии античной философии конца 19 века.

(2) Демиург и креационизм в доплатоновской философии. Творение божественным умом как форма объективного идеализма.

(3) Критика тезиса Майлса Бернита и Бернарда Вильямса об отсутствии идеализма до Декарта вообще, и в греческой философии в частности. Указывается на схоластические и античные (платонические) корни картезианского субстанциального дуализма тела и духа, а также на еще более древние пифагорейские корни платоновского дуализма.

(4) Таксономия различных типов идеализма (ментализма) в древнегреческой философии. Предлагается различать 11 типов и/или аспектов идеализма (ментализма) в греческой мысли.

(5) Свидетельство Орфико-пифагорейских граффити из Ольвии (V век до н.э.) о субстанциальном дуализме тела и души документально доказывает его древность и доплатоновское происхождение.

(6) Критика современных натуралистических интерпретаций пифагорейских первоначал «предел и беспредельное» (Буркерт, Хафман и др.). Предел и беспредельное (геометрический аналог материи и формы) – самосущие бестелесные математические сущности, из которых божественный ум-демиург «конструирует» (ἀρμόζειν, геометрический термин) физические тела.

(7) Тожество мышления и бытия у Парменида (фр. В 3) – принцип идеалистического монизма. Критика как грамматически невоз-

можного анти-идеалистического толкования фр. В 3 Целлером, Бернетом и их последователями. Аполлонический Курос в проэмии Парменида – поэтический образ Пифагора, создателя монотеистической западногреческой философской теологии ментальной Сферы божественного света («Незримое Солнце Правды», которое «никогда не заходит»).

(8) Этическое и практико-психологическое измерение элейской онтологии. Пифагорейское учение о неуничтожимой-неуязвимой душе как основа для психологической инженерии и морального воспитания неустрашимых воинов. К словам Страбона (на которые не обращали внимания) о том, что элейцы побеждали в войнах благодаря моральному воспитанию в духе законов Парменида, следует относиться серьезно. Смерти нет, боль – только кажимость, учит философия Парменида.

(9) «Битва богов и гигантов о бытии» (*Гигантомахия*) в «Софисте» Платона (246a) как свидетельство о доплатоновском метафизическом идеализме. Определяя, каких именно философов Платон имел в виду, не следует сводить их, скажем только к академикам и атомистам. Анализ контекста (упоминание «Ионийских» и «Сицилийских» Муз) указывает на то, что речь идет об ионийской (натурализм) и италийской (идеализм) традициях в целом, то есть обо всей истории греческой философии.

(10) Терминологические разъяснения об употреблении терминов идеализм, натурализм, дуализм и т. д.

*Ключевые слова:* Древнегреческая философия, доплатоновская философия, Элейская школа, Парменид, Пифагор, Гераклит, Эмпедокл, Платон, Ксенофан, идеализм, философская теология.

**(1) Preliminary criticism of the presuppositions of the denial of existence of idealism in early Greek thought: pseudohistorical evolutionism, Platonocentrism that ignores the archaic features of Plato's metaphysics and psychology, and the modern stereotype of «Presocratics» as physicalists, a product of the late 19th century (excessive) positivist reaction against Hegelianism and German idealism.**

There is a widely held view that idealism did not exist and could not exist before Plato since the «Presocratics» did not yet distinguish between the material and the ideal etc.<sup>1</sup> There is also a more radical (and not so widely held) view that denies the existence of the Pre-

<sup>1</sup> This article grew out of a paper on idealism in Pythagorean and Eleatic philosophy presented at the 23-rd World Congress of Philosophy in Athens on August 7-th, 2013. It has been substantially reworked and expanded to cover more relevant material from early Greek philosophy and its relation to Plato's idealism. I am grateful to late Martin West, Dominic O'Meara, Myrto Dragona and to Carl Huffman for their thought-provoking comments on the early version.

Cartesian idealism altogether. The purpose of this article is principally to refute the first view (the second has been already recently criticized by different scholars), but since both of them use similar arguments and rely on similar methodological postulates, we will have to some extent to address the problem of idealism in a wider context of Greek philosophy as a whole.

The denial of the very possibility of idealism in Pre-Platonic philosophy is closely related to and is a logical consequence of another widespread stereotype inherent in the very notion of «Presocratics» as thinkers who allegedly dwelt almost exclusively on matters of cosmology, physics and natural history and, consequently, were all naturalists, physicalists or materialists. And so the prevalent notion of «Presocratics» is theoretically construed and essentially based on the denial of possibility of idealism in Early Greek Philosophy. It is impossible to discuss here all historical, chronological and philosophical problems and incongruities involved by this conventional term, a relic of the 19th century academic cult of the «classical» as something superior to both preclassical «not-yet» and post-classical «not anymore»<sup>2</sup>. In the history of Greek philosophy (centered at that time around Plato and Aristotle with their god-father Socrates) this conceptual scheme resulted in treating all early thinkers under the category of «Vorsokratisches» and those of the Hellenistic and Imperial periods under the equally strange category of «Nacharistotelisches»<sup>3</sup>. The 19th century was obsessed with historicism, evolutionism and «origins», in the history of philosophy – at the expense of structural typology and the study of recurrent and invariant forms of thought. As a result of the Platonocentrism in the theoretical construction of the notion of Presocratics was combined with a simplistic evolutionist scheme of a «gradual development» from something «simple», like material elements, to something «advanced» and «sophisticated», like immaterial forms and intelligible world.

<sup>2</sup> For more details see Lebedev (2009) «Getting rid of the «Presocratics». We are not the first to question the historical and philosophical validity of the conventional term «Presocratics» commonly used for the early Greek philosophers of the 6<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries B. C. Solomo Luria (С. Я. Лурье) in his *Democritea* (1970), Martin West (1967: 1 n. 2), Tony Long (in Long 1999: 5 ff.), among others, have criticized this term as inadequate. See also Lebedev 1989; 2013; 2018.

<sup>3</sup> This categorization defines the general structure of Zeller's great work. Zeller did not use yet the substantive Vorsokratiker which became standard after Diels' edition.



This evolutionist scheme is pseudohistorical<sup>4</sup>. It is to some extent influenced by a superficial reading of Aristotle's *Alpha* of *Metaphysics* and by Socrates's philosophical autobiography in Plato's *Phaedo* which contrasts the (allegedly) outdated era of «enquiry into nature» with Socrates' (allegedly new) ethical stance. However, we would not hold Plato and Aristotle wholly responsible for this stereotype. Neither Plato nor Aristotle ever claimed that all philosophers of the sixth and fifth centuries were *physikoi*. By «students of nature» (*physikoi* or *physiologoi*) Aristotle primarily means the early Ionians and their 5th century followers like Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Democritus. In the same book *Alpha* Aristotle clearly distinguishes from the Ionians and counterposes to them the «Italian» (*Italikoi*) philosophers, like Pythagoreans and Eleatics: Aristotle recognizes the influence of Pythagorean metaphysics on Plato's theory of ideas<sup>5</sup> and interprets Parmenides' One as immaterial<sup>6</sup>. Nay, in a lost work Aristotle characterized Parmenides and Melissus as «immobilizers of nature and anti-naturalists» on the ground that they denied the reality of process (*kinesis*), while «nature» is the principle of *kinesis*<sup>7</sup>. Plato, in his turn, ignores the early Ionian *physikoi*, like Anaximander and Anaximenes, altogether, but he speaks with admiration in elevated terms about Parmenides and Pythagoras, i.e. the forerunners of his idealism. The modern stereotype and misleading category of «Presocratics» that have become dominant in the 20th century mainstream interpretation of the early Greek philosophy is the result of a coalescence of Diels's term *Vorsokratiker* (1903) and – primarily – of John Burnet's anti-idealist physicalist reinterpretation of the Preplatonic philosophers in his «Early Greek philosophy» (Burnet 1930, first edition 1892).

Burnet's work is hardly quoted in modern scholarship, but until the late fifties and early sixties (when the works of Kirk-Raven and

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Lloyd-Jones in his «Justice of Zeus» (1983: 10) rightly calls for resistance to the evolutionist approach in the history of Greek moral thought (the alleged «primitivism» and absence of the notion of will in Homeric moral psychology). On similar lines Bernard Williams in his «Shame and Necessity» rightly criticizes evolutionist histories of Greek ethics.

<sup>5</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* 987a 30 τὰ μὲν πολλὰ τούτοις ἀκολουθοῦσα. 987b10 on methexis/mimesis; 987b23 on ἓν = substance.

<sup>6</sup> Arist. *Metaph.* A 5. 986b 18 κατὰ τὸν λόγον is counterposed to κατὰ τὴν ὕλην.

<sup>7</sup> Arist. fr. 952 Gigon ap. Sext. Emp., *Adv. math.* 10.46 «στασιώτας τῆς φύσεως καὶ ἀφυσίκους» κέκληκεν.

Guthrie appeared) it was considered as a standard treatment of the subject. It was criticized for its positivist bias already by Cornford (1912) and Jaeger (1949: 7 ff.), but many of Burnet's revisionist views (i.e. rejecting ancient tradition and replacing it with bold ill-founded conjectures) have won the day, and his legacy is still alive. It is alive in the physicalist interpretation of Heraclitus by Kirk, Marcovich and others, in the positivist interpretation of Parmenides by Popper (who is heavily influenced by Burnet), in the misdating of Parmenides, in the denial of the Eleatic affiliation of Xenophanes, in the current naturalistic interpretations of Pythagoreanism etc. Burnet was well aware of his influence and he writes proudly in the preface to the third edition (1920) making clear his anti-German (i.e. anti-Hegelian and anti-idealist) agenda: «When the first edition of the *Early Greek Philosophy* was published, twenty-eight years ago, the subject was still treated in this country from a Hegelian point of view, and many of my conclusions were regarded as paradoxes. Some of these are now accepted by most people...» (Burnet 1930: V). Burnet wrote this when the WWI just ended and his desire to present early Greek philosophy as supporting British empirical science rather than German idealism is psychologically understandable. Burnet's main theoretical opponent was Cornford, who, in a sense, was an even more ardent evolutionist, though of different (anthropological) type. In his «*From Religion to Philosophy*» (1912) Cornford clearly saw the fundamental difference between the «scientific» (Ionian, culminating in Atomism) and the «mystical» (Western) traditions in Early Greek thought, but his derivation of both from two different religious traditions (suspiciously resembling Nietzsche's «*Birth of tragedy*») was a serious mistake. Cornford created another, anti-positivist myth about «Presocratics» as «dogmatics» who were indifferent to experiment and observation (*Principium sapientiae*, p. 4 ff.) In this particular debate we side with Burnet rather than Cornford, but Burnet's mistake was to extrapolate the empirical and scientific character of the Ionian *historia* to all early Greek philosophy thus turning Western idealists into naturalists.

Aristotle in the book *Alpha* of *Metaphysics* conceived all history of Greek philosophy as a process of gradual discovery of his own four causes or principles (*arkhai*): the material cause was discovered first, because, in Platonist's view, matter is something primitive and simple. If we switch from the narrow-minded classicist view of the Greek intellectual history to a broader comparativist view, we will find that «sophisticated» religious and idealist (or spiritualist)

metaphysics and creationist cosmogonies were known long before Plato in different archaic traditions<sup>8</sup>, whereas «simple» physical theories of elements, like those of the Ionians, and naturalistic cosmogonies of the vortex-type, had been unknown to humanity until the Scientific revolution in the 6th century Miletus.

The «standard» evolutionist scheme does not square well with what evolutionist psychology and anthropology, as well as cognitive archeology, tell us about primitive mind and history of consciousness, either<sup>9</sup>. Metaphysical objective idealism is akin to panpsychism which in turn, cannot be separated from animism. Plato's metaphysics of two worlds appears in the dialogues of the middle period not alone, but as a part of a complex that comprises the archaic doctrine of transmigration of the soul held by many «primitive» tribes. To quote from the entry «Panpsychism» in *SEPh*: «Panpsychism seems to be such an ancient doctrine that its origins long precede any records of systematic philosophy. Some form of animism, which, insofar as it is any kind of *doctrine* at all, is very closely related to panpsychism, seems to be an almost universal feature of pre-literate societies, and studies of human development suggest that children pass through an animist phase, in which mental states are attributed to a wide variety of objects quite naturally»<sup>10</sup>. In a well-documented interdisciplinary study of the systems of

<sup>8</sup> On the «subjective», spiritualist and «magical» dimension of Ancient Egyptian creation stories see Allen 1988, p. IX et *passim*. The ancient wisdom of Upanishads with its principle «Tat Tvam Asi» (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7), identifying the subjective Self (Atman) with the Cosmic Absolute (Brahman) is a classic of ancient idealism.

<sup>9</sup> On «ancient mind» in general and cognitive archeology see, e.g. Renfrew and Zubrow (edd.) (1994/2000), Raaflaub, ed. (2016). Noble and Davidson (1996) in chapter 4 «Constructing the mind» (pp. 85–110) counterpose the «representational» theory of mind associated with Plato and Descartes, to the 20<sup>th</sup> century «social construct» interactive-dialogical approach associated with Wittgenstein and Vygotsky. The authors seem to underestimate the archaic features of the Platonic and Cartesian concepts of mind.

<sup>10</sup> Seager and Allen-Hermanson (2010) with reference to J. Piaget's «The Language and Thought of the Child» (with this we agree, but the modern dilemma panpsychism/emergentism should be used with caution when speaking about 5-th century Greek *physikoi*). Contemporary cognitive approach to religion reminds us how – because of our evolutionary past – in our perception of everyday life anthropomorphism still «pervades human thought and action»: see, e.g. Tremplin's «Minds and gods» (2006: 100) and especially Stewart Guthrie (1993). For a modern philosophical attempt to reconcile «panpsychism» with «physicalism» and science see the works of Galen Strawson (2017). For a similar attempt by a biologist see Lanza on «Biocentrism» (2009).

orientation and sacral symbolism of cardinal points in different archaic cultures of Eurasia from China to Rome, Alexandr Podossinov – bringing together data from historical linguistics, archeology, studies of myth and ritual, anthropology, psychology etc. – argues for their anthropomorphic, personal, «psychobiological» (rather than social) origin (Podossinov 1999). The ontological and epistemological foundations of any religion presuppose some kind of «idealism» since all gods are minds and religion is essentially a form of communication (through ritual or prayer) with these minds. Animism is implicit in the grammatical gender system of the Proto-Indo-European language inherited by the classical Greek. This system is based on a double dichotomy: (1) animate/ inanimate and (2) masculine/ feminine – a further subdivision of the animate<sup>11</sup>. The second of these dichotomies was a source of inspiration for Greek poets and mythmakers. The first can be taken as a linguistic evidence on the prehistory of the body/soul dualism which presupposes the animate/inanimate distinction. We have to point to this obvious and indisputable fact because some researchers attribute the invention of animate/inanimate distinction to Aristotle (Srbina 2005: 48–49). Neuroscience tells us that the distinction of animate/inanimate is a part of the «folk biology», i.e. of innate automatic capacity like face recognition<sup>12</sup>, and the same holds true for the folk psychology, including the «Theory of mind», i.e. a capacity to recognize the internal states of other people and to attribute their behavior to these states (Feist 2006: 46).

**(2) Demiourgos and creationism in Pre-Platonic philosophy. Creation by divine mind is a form of objective idealism (mentalism).**

Plato was a literary (and dialectical) genius who only gave new form to ancient metaphysical and psychological doctrines. His metaphysics of two worlds derives from the Eleatic dichotomy of the intelligible and the sensible, his notion of the immaterial form from the Pythagoreans: we agree with Jonathan Barnes that the

<sup>11</sup> From what we know, Protagoras was the first to describe the gender system of Greek as ἄρρενα καὶ θήλεα καὶ σκεύη (Arist. Rhet. 1407b 7) using for the neuter an interesting term σκεύη «utensils, instruments». Utensils, household items are manipulated by ensouled men and women and so lack soul or will of their own.

<sup>12</sup> «There is something intuitive and automatic about the distinction between the animate and inanimate. After all infants make such a distinction...» (Feist 2006: 47). See also Tomasello (1999: 78 ff.).

Pythagorean principles *peras* and *apeiron* prefigure the later distinction between form and matter<sup>13</sup>.

Historians of Greek Philosophy have often been prone to seriously exaggerate the originality of Plato's doctrines. It has been thought, e.g. that the notion of *demiourgos* has been invented by Plato and is typically Platonic<sup>14</sup>. In fact, it is an extremely archaic notion that has been revived, not invented by Plato. It was known to ancient Egyptians thousand years before Plato (see note 3), it is attested in Pherecydes of Syros who turns Zeus into craftsman (B 1. 2–3 DK). The divine cosmic mind in Heraclitus<sup>15</sup> and Anaxagoras, the *Philotes* (*Aphrodite-Harmonia*) of Empedocles function as a kind of *demiourgos* as well. The Stoic «fire-craftsman» (πῦρ τεχνικόν) and the related idea of *natura artifex* (φύσις τεχνίτης), in our view, derives from Heraclitus rather than from Plato's *Timaeus*<sup>16</sup>. We have tried to demonstrate elsewhere that the notion of the (non-religious) cosmic vortex-like *demiourgos* may have been not unknown to Thales of Miletus (Lebedev 1983). There are good reasons to believe that the doxographical evidence on *demiourgos*

<sup>13</sup> Barnes (1979), v. 2: 76. *Contra* Burkert 1972: 255 ff.

<sup>14</sup> David Sedley (2007) now correctly recognizes the Pre-Platonic origin of creationism in Greek philosophy, but Anaxagoras, in our view was preceded by the Pythagoreans, Heraclitus and Empedocles.

<sup>15</sup> B 41 DK with Γνώμη meaning «Intelligence, Mind», not «thought». I emend the text as follows: ἐν τὸ Σοφὸν ἐπίστασθαι· Γνώμην ἥτε οἷα ἐκυβέρνησε πάντα διὰ πάντων – «One should recognize only one Wise Being (i.e. God): the Mind which alone steers the whole Universe». Ἐπίστασθαι is *infinitivus quasi imperativus* (as in laws) and has the same meaning «to hold, to recognize» as in B 57. Πάντα διὰ πάντων (literally «all thing throughout», «all things to the last one») is an archaic idiom for the Universe, as in Parmenides B 1.32.

<sup>16</sup> A neglected fragment of Heraclitus cited by Aristotle in *De Caelo* 304 a 21 = Heraclit, fr. 116 Lebedev (all things are generated from the original fire «as if from gold sand that is being melted», καθάπερ ἂν εἰ συμψωμένου ψήγματος) shows that already in Heraclitus Fire was conceived as Craftsman: the cosmogonical process is analogous to χρυσοχοϊκή τέχνη. The alternative interpretation (smelting of ore with separation of gold from base) that tries to connect this simile with B 31 (separation of the sea into two halves) is less likely. See Lebedev (1979–1980). In favor of the Heraclitean source of the Stoic notion of Nature as craftsman also speaks the fact that in Plato the *demiourgos* is an immaterial entity (Nous), opposed to matter, whereas both Stoics and Heraclitus identify the creative principle with a physical essence, fire. Plato follows Pythagorean dualism, the Stoics and Heraclitus follow the tradition of the Ionian naturalistic monism, though they also reinterpret the *physis* of the Milesians teleologically.

*theos* in Philolaus' cosmogony is not a Platonizing interpretation, since it is based on the authentic analogy with ship-building in Philolaus' text<sup>17</sup>. The cosmic Ship-Builder in Philolaus may well have been identified with the «third principle», a kind of *causa efficiens*, introduced by Philolaus in B 6 DK under the name of *Harmonia*<sup>18</sup>. The incipit of Philolaus' *Peri physeos* reads (B 1 DK): Ἄ φύσις δ' ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἀρμόχθη ἐξ ἀπειρῶν τε καὶ περαινόντων, καὶ ὅλος ὁ κόσμος καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα. 'Nature in the cosmos has been fitted together (or «constructed») from unlimited and limiting (elements), both the whole cosmos and all things in it'.

This has been mistakenly interpreted by some scholars as a naturalistic cosmogony of the Ionian type (Burkert 1972: 250 ff.; Huffman 1993: 38 ff.). No Ionian naturalistic monist (like Anaximander, Anaximenes or Democritus)<sup>19</sup> could ever claim that *physis* or the material substance was ever «constructed» by someone or by something. In Anaximander the original φύσις ἄπειρος is «eternal and ageless (i.e. indestructible)», in Democritus φύσις is a collective term for atoms which are also unbegotten and indestructible.<sup>20</sup> The verb ἀρμόχθη used by Philolaus is not in middle voice, the use of ἀρμόζεσθαι in the sense of «to come into being by means of harmonizing itself» is both unlikely and unattested. ἀρμόχθη is a genuine passive which means «was fitted together» by some external agent, it is a creationist (or «constructivist») term that, like *peras* and *apeiron*, derives from geometry<sup>21</sup>. So Philolaus begins his

<sup>17</sup> Philolaus A 17 DK = Stob. 1.21.6d. No doxographer could ever invent *ad hoc* the image of keel (τρόπις) as a basis of the whole construction. *Contra* Huffman (1993) 96 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Note that in Empedocles too, *Harmonia* is an alternative name for the creative force of Love. Empedocles and Philolaus seem to depend on the same common source, i.e. on ancient Pythagorean tradition that may go back to Pythagoras. *Tetraktys*, which is recalled in the ancient Pythagorean oath (58 B 15 DK), almost certainly goes back to Pythagoras, and it is a symbol of divine Harmony on which «the whole kosmos» is built according to Aristotle's reliable evidence.

<sup>19</sup> Here and elsewhere we use the term «monism» in its metaphysical sense as opposed to «dualism», not with a reference to the number of elements in a physical theory of matter (a confusing usage introduced by some philologists). Democritus recognised infinite number of atoms, but he was a naturalistic monist, like Milesians. For details see our explanatory notice on the use of the terms monism, dualism, pluralism in Lebedev (2018: 782–4).

<sup>20</sup> Anaximander: I, 184, 1–2 DK (Hippol.) ταύτην δ' (scil. τὴν φύσιν) ἄϊδιον εἶναι καὶ ἀγήρω, cf. Lebedev (1978 and 1988). Democritus: φύσις = ἄτομα A 58, B 168.

<sup>21</sup> The use of (συν)αρμολογέειν vel sim. in Plato's *Timaeus* is instructive: it

treatise «On nature» with a refutation of the Ionian physicalism by deriving the so dear to the Milesians and atomists corporeal *physis* from incorporeal mathematical essences of the limit and the unlimited (i.e. from odd and even numbers).

**(3) The thesis of Myles Burnyeat and Bernard Williams (no idealism in Greek philosophy) is criticized. We point to the scholastic and ancient Platonic roots of Descartes' substance dualism of body and mind, as well as to ancient Pythagorean roots of Plato's doctrine of immortal soul.**

Those who deny the existence of idealism in Greek philosophy commonly refer to an influential and provocative article «Idealism and Greek Philosophy: what Descartes saw and Berkeley missed» by Myles Burnyeat (1982: 3–40) who follows Bernard Williams<sup>22</sup>. According to Burnyeat idealism was impossible before Descartes; it was unknown not only to the Pre-Platonic philosophers, but also to Plato and Aristotle, and to Greek philosophy in general, since no ancient philosopher ever doubted the existence of the external world. It is the merit of Myles Burnyeat to draw the attention of scholars to the problem of fundamental importance for the understanding of ancient metaphysics and epistemology. Burnyeat's thesis has been accepted by some<sup>23</sup> and criticized by others. Scholars working on different periods of ancient and medieval philosophy have raised serious objections to Burnyeat's thesis from different perspectives. Richard Sorabji has pointed to Gregory of Nyssa as a case that does not square with Burnyeat's bold thesis<sup>24</sup>. Moran emphasized the importance of Eriugena as a source of Modern idealism (Moran 2000). Students of Greek scepticism have severely criticized various aspects of Burnyeat's view, Gail Fine has convincingly argued against the alleged absence of the notion of

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presupposes a constructor (*demiourgos* – geometer) and is applied to geometrical figures and other «created» compounds, cf. *Tim.* 41b, 54c, 55c, 56d, 81d, etc.

<sup>22</sup> Williams (1981) reprinted in Williams (2006: 5): «Largely speculative though Greek philosophy could be, and interested as it was in many of the same kinds of issues as those which generated idealism, it did not form that particular set of ideas...».

<sup>23</sup> Burnyeat's view is quoted as a definitive solution in the *Oxford companion to philosophy*, s.v. «idealism philosophical», p. 414. See also Denyer 1991: 214.

<sup>24</sup> Sorabji 1983; Beierwaltes 1985; Emilsson 1996: 245 ff.

subjectivity in Greek philosophy<sup>25</sup>. Burnyeat's thesis has also been questioned on theoretical and terminological grounds<sup>26</sup>.

Descartes may have been original in supporting the substance dualism of mind and matter, body and soul with new epistemological arguments. But the doctrine of substance dualism itself was a part of the Christian orthodoxy with deep roots in the scholastic tradition. The originality of the Cartesian dualism should not be overstated. There is a historical connection between Descartes's substance dualism and ancient Platonism through Augustine and the Scholastic tradition<sup>27</sup>. Descartes' *cogito* argument is attested in Augustine<sup>28</sup>. The terminology of objective/subjective may be of late origin (Descartes did not know it, either!), but the problem of the objectivity of human knowledge formulated in terms of δόξα/ἀλήθεια appears early in the Pre-Platonic Greek philosophy (Parmenides, Heraclitus) and later as δόξα/ἐπιστήμη in Plato. Regardless of the non-philosophical usage of this term and regardless of its etymology, δόξα and its cognates (δοκεῖν, τὰ δοκοῦντα) in Heraclitus and Parmenides (i.e. in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) is a technical term for subjective opinion produced by sense perception as opposed to the objective reality that can be known by «pure mind», νοῦς. When Heraclitus says «nature likes to hide» (φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ, B 123), he does not mean that we cannot see birds and flowers, he means that objective reality (φύσις) is hidden from us behind the veil of appearances (τὰ φανερά, B 56). And Parmenides in the *Doxa* asserts virtually the same. There is no substantial difference between this idealist conceptual scheme of «Reality and Appearances» in early Greek philosophy and its 19-century versions in Schopenhauer or Bradley. In an important study of the epistemology of Cyrenaics Voula Tsouna demonstrates that «the Cyrenaics introduce a form of subjectivism which in some ways pre-announces Cartesian views, endorsed by Malebranche and Hume and developed by Kant» (Tsouna 2004: IX). Even Descartes'

<sup>25</sup> Groarke 1990; Prichard 2000; Fine (2001: 137 ff.; 2003: 192 ff. Fine is followed by Remes (2007: 75 ff.). Everson (unconvincingly) denies the notion of subjectivity in Pyrrhonism and in Cyrenaic concept of appearances.

<sup>26</sup> Hibbs 2009. I have no access to the complete text of this article, only to abstract.

<sup>27</sup> The influence of Augustine is emphasized by Menn (1998). On Descartes's dualism see Rozemond (1998), on scholastic sources of Descartes p. 38 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *De Trinitate* 10.10. 14–16 cf. Sorabji 2000: 270.



skeptical «dream» argument is prefigured by Plato's epistemological metaphor of «dream»<sup>29</sup> which goes back to Heraclitus (B 1 DK). Charles Kahn has pointed out the remarkable, almost verbal coincidences with Parmenides in Descartes' formulation of the correspondence theory of truth<sup>30</sup>. Vassilis Politis (2006: 14–38) has argued for non-subjective idealism in Plato (*Sophist* 248e–249d). John Dillon has shown that Natorp's interpretation still presents theoretical interest and should not be relegated to the archives of scholarship (Dillon in: Gersh, Moran 2006: 39–53). And the very fact of the publication by Gersh and Moran of a whole volume on Idealist tradition in Western philosophy stretching from Plato to Berkeley is a remarkable event in the contemporary historiography of ancient philosophy (Gersh, Moran 2006).

**(4) A provisional taxonomy of different types of idealism (mentalism) in ancient Greek philosophy is proposed. 11 types are distinguished.**

In our opinion, Burnyeat's thesis can be refuted in the case of the early Greek philosophers as well, since it is based on a selective and incomplete data from early Greek philosophy. For some reason Burnyeat understands by «idealism» only one and rather special form of idealism, the so called subjective idealism (though he does not use this term). Our impression is that by «idealism» Burnyeat means «anti-realism». This is admittedly not the form of idealism that is embraced by Plato, but it is not unknown in Greek thought. Ancient Greek rationalist idealism as a rule is a form of objective idealism, it supports realism and defends it from the alleged «subjectivism» and relativism of the sensationalism. Plato's polemics against supposed Protagoras' phenomenalism in epistemology is a case at point. In this study we understand by «idealism» a metaphysical or epistemological doctrine that the nature of reality is either (wholly or partially) mental (spiritual) or is otherwise thought-

<sup>29</sup> See instances collected by Tigner (1970).

<sup>30</sup> Kahn 1969: 722: «Consider Descartes who writes: «It is clear that everything which is true is something (patet enim illud omne quod verum est esse aliquid)». As for false ideas, says Descartes, they derive from non-entity: «Je les tenais du néant». The immediate ontological framework of these remarks in Descartes is scholastic and Augustinian, but its foundations are Greek, and ultimately Parmenidean». The two quotations from Descartes in Kahn's text are from *Meditations* V. ed. Adam-Tannery, vol. VII, 65 and *Discourse on Method*, Part Four, ed. Adam-Tannery, vol. VI, p. 34 respectively.

dependent and determined or structured by mind or knowledge. If we accept this broader definition of idealism, it will appear that there were many idealists in Greek philosophy, and that there was a plurality of different types of idealism, including those the existence of which has been denied by Williams and Burnyeat.

What follows is not a strict taxonomy, it contains not only formal types of idealism, but also inventory of topics related to the problem of idealism some of which overlap. However, we insist on the fundamental distinction of monistic/ dualistic and objective/ subjective (or metaphysical/ epistemological) idealism.

1) *Objective or metaphysical idealism*. The mainstream idealist tradition in Greek philosophy was that of Pythagoreans and Plato (in the *Timaeus*, *Philebus* and the doctrine of first principles of *Agrapha dogmata*) followed by later Platonists. It was objective idealism of dualist type. In our view Platonism in metaphysics was a fourth century B.C. revival of ancient Pythagoreanism in Athens<sup>31</sup>. In the long-term perspective metaphysical dualism of mind and matter has its roots in the body/soul dualism that may go back to Indo-European times at least, to judge by the cognate forms of archaic idealism attested in the Vedic tradition and the Upanishads.

2) *Monistic idealism (or immaterialism)*, the most sophisticated and radical form of objective idealism. It seems that from early times on within the Pythagorean school (and later within the Platonic tradition) there was a debate between dualistic and monistic tendencies in the theory of first principles. The so-called Eleatic school was a group of Pythagoreans who supported the monistic interpretation of Pythagoras' doctrine of principles, and so the idealistic monism was born<sup>32</sup>. Plato may have hesitated himself on this difficult subject: *Timaeus* and *Philebus* are clearly dualistic, but in the *Republic* *To Agathon* corresponds to One and has no negative counterpart. The debate between two trends continued in later Platonism (Dillon 2007). It ended with the final victory of the monistic trend in the philosophy of Plotinus.

3) *Panpsychism or cosmotheism (cosmological idealism type 1: monistic)*. This can formally coincide with pantheism, but in our opinion, one should distinguish two forms of pantheism in Greek thought: the ethical-religious and the naturalistic one<sup>33</sup>. A kind of

<sup>31</sup> See explanatory note 3 in section (10) below which explains why we regard substance dualism as a form of idealism.

<sup>32</sup> We argue for this in detail in Lebedev 2017<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>33</sup> For the confusion of these two types of pantheism that resulted in a serious misreading of the Derveni papyrus see Lebedev 2018: 718–719.

pantheism that Aristotle ascribes to «most of *Physiologoi*» in *Phys.* 203b 13 corresponds to the second type and does not imply teleology or personal agent behind the cosmic process. In the Milesian thought the original *physis* is «divine» only in the sense that it is immortal and indestructible. It was Heraclitus who – paving the way for the Stoics – reinterpreted the *physis* of the cosmos teleologically and made his «fire» endowed with consciousness (πῦρ φρόνιμον) and providential mind or will (γνώμη). *Pyr* in Heraclitus denotes «vital spirit» or demiourgical «energy» rather than material element in Aristotelian sense. Admittedly, this is not a Cartesian idealism, but even less it is materialism or scientific naturalism of the Milesian type. The doctrine that god is the finest form of matter (and matter is a crudest form of god), cannot be classed with strict idealism on formal grounds, but it can support the teleological understanding of nature with equal success, and it can provide a metaphysical foundation of ethics which will work no worse than any intelligible world (*kosmos noetos*) with immaterial souls.

4) *Demiourgism (cosmological idealism type 2: dualistic)*. This is a group of dualistic teleological philosophies of nature that assign the origin of the cosmos to an intelligent divine agent, usually conceived as Mind (Νοῦς in Anaxagoras and Plato's *Timaeus*, cf. Φρὴν ἱερή in Empedocles?), a psychic force of cosmogonic Eros (Philotes-Harmonia-Aphrodite in Empedocles), or *Harmonia* in Philolaus. This agent is distinct from matter, which is not created by him, but is eternally coexistent with him as a second (passive) principle. Heraclitus' Γνώμη and *Phanes-Eros-Metis* of the Orphic theogony do not exactly fit this scheme, since these cosmogonies are not formally dualistic. Bernard Williams writes: «(Greek philosophy)... did not form that particular set of ideas, so important in much modern philosophy, according to which the entire world consists of the contents of mind: as opposed, of course, to the idea of a material world formed and governed by mind, a theistic conception which the Greeks most certainly had» (Williams 2006: 5). So, according to Williams, a theistic cosmogony has nothing to do with idealism. But even if matter is not created by a Greek *nous* – *demiourgos*, the structure of the world is produced by mind, not by matter. The Greek word *kosmos* originally refers to the structure of a thing, so the *kosmos* of Plato or Anaxagoras is mind-dependent, conditioned by mind. And if we accept our definition of idealism («...mental or *mind-dependent*...»), we will have to admit that Greek «demiurgical» cosmogony (as opposed to the naturalistic

cosmogony of the Milesian type) is a form of objective idealism, or at least contains some elements of objective idealism or mentalism.

5) *Idealist theories of nature and matter (sic)*. We do find in Greek philosophy not only materialist theories of mind, but also idealist theories of matter. A classical example is Plato's theory of elements in the *Timaeus*. Physical elements (regarded as corporeal substances or bodies according to Greek common sense and most *physikoi*) are reduced by Plato to five geometrical regular solids and derived from incorporeal mathematical entities, the elementary triangles. This is a triumph of the Pythagorean mathematical mentalism over the Ionian naturalism (and an episode in the great «gigantomachy»). In this theory physical matter disappears. It seems likely that this idealist reductionism was already present on Philolaus' theory of *physis* (see below on fr. B1). Konrad Gaiser in his article on the origins of the «idealist concept of nature» in Plato arrives at the conclusion that «Platon modellhaft die Dichotomie zwischen der körperlich-materiell in Erscheinung tretenden Natur und der sittlich-gesellschaftlichen Menschenwelt aufgehoben hat durch die gemeinsame Begründung beider Bereiche im Seelischen, Geistigen, Ideellen. Für Platon ist gerade der seelisch-geistige Kern der Dinge ihre eigentliche Physis» (Gaiser 2004: 134). We would like to support Gaiser's thesis by pointing to the fact the very term φύσις is not a keyword or a fundamental concept of Plato's «philosophy of nature» because in his world view Plato has replaced the Ionian φύσις (especially as ἀρχὴ κινήσεως) with Italian ψυχή. He uses φύσις occasionally as an ordinary word, also in the sense of «substance» or «essence», but its referential meaning has changed: it can refer to the immaterial forms (εἶδη)<sup>34</sup> or to the divine nature of man (ἀρχαία φύσις)<sup>35</sup>. One should remember that Plato himself could never refer to his «philosophy of nature» (this is our modern term) as «physics», he would rather call it «eidetics» or psychology of cosmos. It was Aristotle who – in a move of reconciliation with the Ionians – brought back the exiled φύσις and made it a fundamental notion on his *Physica*, but in doing so he also reinterpreted it teleologically (*Phys.* B).

6) *Subjective idealism of anti-realist type, a kind of ontological nihilism or solipsism*. Something like this appears in Gorgias' script περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος (82 B 1–3 DK) and in Xenias of Corinth who

<sup>34</sup> Resp. 476b, *Phileb.* 44e, *Epist.* 7, 342c. Horn-Rapp 2008: 345.

<sup>35</sup> Resp. 611d on the «original» condition of the immortal soul unspoiled by the dirty body.

denied the law *ex nihilo* (which amounts to the assertion that there is no being) and held that «everything is false and all subjective appearances and opinions are deceptive»<sup>36</sup>. The Epicurean Colotes accused Parmenides of «eliminating» (ἀναιρεῖν) the reality (τὴν φύσιν) of the physical world including fire, water and «populated cities in Europe and Asia». He was rebutted by Plutarch who explained to Colotes that Parmenides eliminated nothing, but only distinguished, like Plato, a higher level of reality (νοητόν) from a lower one (δοξαστόν), so the populated cities in Europe and Asia are still there and have nothing to worry about<sup>37</sup>. Putting this in modern terms, Plutarch explained to Colotes that Parmenides was an objective, and not a subjective idealist. This type partly overlaps with linguistic idealism (see Nr. 8 below).

7) *Subjective or epistemological idealism also known as phenomenalism*. This is the doctrine that Plato ascribes to Protagoras and Heraclitus in *Theaetetus* and *Cratylus* (whether they held such doctrine themselves, is another question). Aristotle, in turn, ascribes it to Plato himself in *Metaphysics* A 987a 34 ὥς ἀπάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀεὶ ῥεόντων καὶ ἐπιστήμης περὶ αὐτῶν οὐκ οὔσης «since all sensibles are in constant flux and scientific knowledge of them does not exist». Closely related with this is the Pyrrhonian skepsis and the theory of Cyrenaics that we know only our own feelings (πάθη). Already Kant distinguished skeptical idealism from dogmatic one (and both from his own transcendental idealism): «Der dogmatische Idealist würde derjenige sein, der das Dasein der Materie leugnet, der skeptische, der es bezweifelt»<sup>38</sup>. Somewhat different is the skepticism of Democritus. When he declares that man «is cut off from reality» (τῆς ἐτεῆς ἀπήλλακται), he does not doubt that the «reality» (i.e. atoms + void) exists. But it is still implied that the phenomenal world is a construction of our mind imposed by the «form-changing opinion» (δόξις ἐπιρρυσμῆ)<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> 81 DK = Sext. 7.53 πάντ' εἰπὼν ψευδῇ καὶ πᾶσαν φαντασίαν καὶ δόξαν ψεύδεσθαι...

<sup>37</sup> Plut. *Adv Colot.* 1114 b., cf. Parmen. 28 B 10 DK; *Adv. Colot.* 1116a, cf. Parmen. 22 B 14 DK.

<sup>38</sup> *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, S. 319.

<sup>39</sup> Democr. fr. 49 Luria = B 7 DK. We follow Langerbeck and Luria in taking ἐπιρρυσμῆ as a derivative from ρυσμός, Democritus term for «form», rather than from ῥέω, contra Diels-Kranz («Zustrom»). I.e. the sense perception of each individual distorts the objective form of an object. But even if DK are right, ἐπιρρυσμῆ will refer to the (distorting) «influence» of perception, and the philosophical meaning will remain the same.

8) *Linguistic idealism*. This is a special version of the epistemological idealism, but it can also be used in support of immaterialism. We find linguistic idealism both in Heraclitus and Parmenides, and in both cases it serves the purpose of deconstruction of the phenomenal world of plurality and change. According to linguistic idealism (we mean its ancient form) our perception of the world depends on our language. The «names» of ordinary language used by unphilosophical *hoi polloi* are figments of poetic imagination, they do not correspond to objective reality, in Heraclitus' words they are not κατὰ φύσιν. Heraclitus states that most humans live in dream-like private worlds of doxastic imagination (fr.2L/B1 and context). Ordinary names of dissected opposites (which in reality cannot be separated), like «day and night», «summer» and «winter» etc., are similar to subjective «smells» in fr.43L/B67, i.e. our perceptions of the single underlying substrate. Heraclitus is a linguistic idealist with regard of the phenomenal world. For Heraclitus real is only the Universe as a whole conceived as Logos<sup>40</sup>. The phenomenal opposites, taken separately, are like letters, the pairs of opposites – like syllables (συλλάβεις). Syllables have no meaning of their own and therefore denote nothing. Only the Universal Logos in which all phenomenal syllables are integrated, has meaning and is real. The mysterious «dream theory» in Plato's *Theaetetus* 201d is an anonymous quotation from Heraclitus<sup>41</sup>. Socrates' remark that he «heard» this theory in a dream is a humorous and ironical allusion to the Heraclitean image of «dreamers» in B1. According to Heraclitus, all humans fail to understand the Universal Logos because they are dreaming. Socrates' remark means «since I am mortal, I am dreaming too, like those ἀξύνητοι, and cannot understand precisely the wisdom of Heraclitus' theory of logos» (in fact he refutes him). Incidentally, if our reconstruction of the grammatical analogy in Heraclitus' metaphysics is correct (as we believe it is, because it is confirmed by a remarkable consensus of independent ancient readers of Heraclitus), the claims of ancient sceptics (Aenesidemus) that Heraclitus' philosophy constitutes a «path» towards scepticism, are not totally unfounded<sup>42</sup>. Heraclitus denied the objective existence (κατὰ φύσιν) of the phenomenal plurality of things. He

<sup>40</sup> See Lebedev 2014; 2017<sub>1</sub> for details.

<sup>41</sup> For the attribution of the «dream theory» to Heraclitus rather than to Antisthenes see Lebedev 2014: 225–227 with commentary on p. 465 and Lebedev 2017<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>42</sup> On this much debated topic see Polito 2004.

believed that «letters» and «syllables» of the cosmic Logos (which stand for separate phenomenal opposites) cannot be known, only perceived by the senses. But in his henology Heraclitus was not a sceptic at all, he was utterly dogmatic. The essence of wisdom, he states in B 50, is «to know all things as one», ἐν πάντα εἰδέναι. On Parmenides' linguistic idealism see below after note 53, and for more details see Lebedev 2017<sub>2</sub>: 510–513. Linguistic idealism seems to be related to what Anthony Price (2009) terms projectivism.

Ancient linguistic idealism of Parmenides and Heraclitus may be compared with the hypothesis of linguistic relativity of Sapir-Worf, as well as with the linguistic idealism of Wittgenstein. Linguistic idealism is attributed to Wittgenstein particularly on the ground of his dictum «The limits of my language mean the limits of my world» (TLP 5.6) by G.E.M. Anscombe (1981) and Bloor (1997) 354 – 382 whom we follow; on the controversy around this thesis see Dilman (2002) 110 ff. Bernard Williams attributed to Wittgenstein a kind of Kantian transcendental idealism (Williams 1973), this thesis was accepted by many and contested by some (e.g. by Hutto 2003: 174 ff.). We find no contradiction between the approaches of Anscombe and Williams since the linguistic idealism is a form of transcendental idealism. In his *Philosophical investigations*, 46 Wittgenstein first quotes the passage from Plato's *Theaetetus* 201d about the «dream theory» allegedly «heard» by Socrates in his dream which contains an analogy between the structure of language and the structure of reality: both are built from simple «letters» or elements (*stoikheia*). After the quote Wittgenstein comments that both Russell's «individuals» and his «objects» in the *Tractatus* «were such primary elements». In our study of the alphabet analogy in Heraclitus' logos-fragments (Lebedev 2017<sub>1</sub>: 235 ff., on *Theaetetus* passage p. 242 ff.) we argue (contra Burnyeat and others) that the author of the «dream theory» in *Theaetetus* is Heraclitus rather than Antisthenes. If this attribution is correct (as we believe it is, because such analogy is directly attested in Heraclitus' authentic fragments, but is only hypothesised for Antisthenes without proof), then Wittgenstein admits the similarity of the philosophy of *Tractatus* with Heraclitus' theory of the cosmic logos which contains elements of linguistic idealism, although for Wittgenstein it was a theory of «Socrates» and Plato, and not of Heraclitus whose name is not mentioned in this Platonic passage. On Heraclitus' and Parmenides' theories of names in the context of philosophical «reform of language» see Lebedev (2009<sub>2</sub>).

9) *Ethical idealism* is a doctrine that genuine values and human good are immaterial and «internal», not external, i.e. spiritual; it is opposed to the popular hedonism and pursuit of material goods. Plato regards this as a theoretical innovation of Socrates. For classical Athens of the Sophistic period this may be true, but it can be traced back to Heraclitus, the Pythagoreans and the Eleatics; on the ethical-psychological dimension of Parmenides' imperturbable Being see below. Ethical idealism is also characterized by perfectionism, by postulating absolute and ideal paradigms/standards of moral values. Plato's theory of ideas, inasmuch as it is concerned with moral values like *to agathon* or *dikaiosyne* (and not with beds or similar objects), is a classical and probably unmatched example system of ethical idealism. The search for perfection and the attainment of absolute ideal will inevitably transform ethical idealism into political idealism, i.e. utopianism. Plato again is a classical case at point. The term «moral realism» in modern academic moral philosophy, also widely used by historians of ancient ethics, when applied to Plato's ethics, captures one of its significant features, namely the transpersonal objectivity of moral values, contrary to what contractarians (like the Sophists) or hedonists (like Epicurus) claim<sup>43</sup>. But it is a scholastic term which at the same time fails to express the more salient feature of Platonic ethics, its obsession with perfection and its search for absolute ideals, in other words its idealist character. So why not to call ethical idealism «idealism» rather than ethical «realism»? Aristotle's ethics was also to some extent «realist» (the function argument etc.), but it was a naturalistic rather metaphysical realism. Aristotle's ethics was anti-metaphysical and anti-idealist, it was based on specifically human nature and moral psychology rather than on cosmic or theological absolutes like Plato's idea of *To Agathon*, it was anthropological ethics that aimed at «human good», τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθόν.

10) *Theological idealism (mentalism)*. The corner stone of Greek philosophical theology from archaic times to Plato and Aristotle (and later) is the identification of god (θεός) with conscious mind (νοῦς). This revolutionary new mentalist or noetic theology appears from around 500 B.C. in Xenophanes<sup>44</sup>, Parmenides<sup>45</sup>, Heraclitus<sup>46</sup>,

<sup>43</sup> On moral realism in Plato and ancient ethics see, e.g. Rist 2012; Heinaman 1995 etc.

<sup>44</sup> Xenophan. 21 B 24–25 DK and the theological fragment cited by Philoponus, Lebedev 1985.

<sup>45</sup> The identity of (divine) being and mind is explicitly stated by Parmenides in fr. B3: see our defense of the ancient interpretation and criticism of



Epicharmus<sup>47</sup>, somewhat later in Anaxagoras<sup>48</sup>, Empedocles<sup>49</sup> and even in Democritus<sup>50</sup>. This new theology was strictly anti-anthropomorphic and therefore may have been perceived by many as a rejection of traditional Homeric gods: Epicharmus' parody of it in a comedy (see note 47) reflects the common people's distrust of such intellectual innovations (*sophismata*), a distrust that may have contributed to anti-pythagorean feelings in Magna Graecia and eventually to the demotic anti-pythagorean uprisings and pogroms. Given the original geography of the dissemination of this theology and the Pythagorean affiliation or close connections of most of its early representatives (Xenophanes, Parmenides, Empedocles, Epicharmus), its common original source must have been most probably Pythagoras of Samos. And if so, it was from the start inextricably linked with the contemporary doctrine of the immortality of the soul and provided a theoretical foundation for the latter since the *psyche* in Pythagoreanism was conceived as incorporeal divine being, a *daimon* in exile. Νοῦς with its derivatives is *par excellence* the Greek word for what exemplifies the incorporeal (ἄσώματον) and imperceptible by the senses. Therefore any Greek doctrine of immaterialism would naturally identify being with mind, νοῦς and νοεῖν. Such identification was also favoured and imposed by the archaic cognitive principle «similar is cognized by the similar» (τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ γινώσκεισθαι). From the Pythagorean point of view a Homeric god («immortal» by definition) with a body is an oxymoron since body is by definition mortal, and only the soul is immortal. The «true» god of Pythagoras can only be «seen» by the *noos* because of his own mental nature: and the human mind «sees» it as an immutable sphere of conscious divine light described by

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the Zeller-Burnet grammatically impossible reading in Lebedev 2017<sub>2</sub>: 513–515.

<sup>46</sup> Heraclitus fr. 140Leb (B 41): the «Wise being» (*To Sophon*), Heraclitus' word for supreme god, is identified with «Mind» (Γνώμη), for details see commentary in Lebedev 2014: 443–445 and note 15 above.

<sup>47</sup> A neglected fragment quoted by Stobaeus, see Lebedev (2017<sub>4</sub>): θεός = νόος = φρόνησις, god = mind = prudence.

<sup>48</sup> Anaxagoras never explicitly calls Nous «god», but its function of creator is obvious.

<sup>49</sup> Empedocles B 134.4 god is a «sacred mind» (φρὴν ἱερή), in a context with strong polemics against anthropomorphism of god.

<sup>50</sup> Democrit. 68 A 74 (= Placit. 1.7.16) god is «mind inside the spherical fire», νοῦν τὸν θεὸν ἐν πυρὶ σφαιροειδεῖ. Note that the «sphericity» of god is a Pythagorean feature attested in Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles' Sphairos.

Parmenides in his «Aletheia» as the vision of Kouros, i.e. of Pythagoras during his ascension to the celestial Gates of Day and Night. Like the Platonic philosopher who managed to escape from the darkness of the cave of the sensible world (cf. «the abodes of Night» in Parmenides' proem), Kouros saw behind the Gates the Invisible Sun of Justice «that never sets», of which the visible sun is just an imperfect copy. This Pythagorean conceptual metaphor, attested in Heraclitus and Parmenides, is alluded to by Plato in the Pythagorizing analogies of the Cave and the Sun in the *Republic* books 6–7.

11) *Mystical, transpersonal or theosophical idealism (mentalism)*. The doctrine of the special relation of philosopher's mind with the divine mind and a hope to become god or like god after death or even in mortal body. The motive of *apotheosis of philosopher* through the acquisition of the extraordinary knowledge or *sophia* is very important in the archaic period; it is almost exclusively connected with Apollo and Magna Graecia<sup>51</sup>. Pythagoras probably regarded himself a reincarnation of Apollo Hyperboreios, Parmenides describes in the Proem the ascent to Heavens of the disembodied philosophical mind of Apollonian Kouros, Empedocles declares that he is an «immortal god, no mortal anymore»<sup>52</sup> and Heraclitus, presumably, alludes to the *apotheosis* with his advise «to hope for the hopeless»<sup>53</sup>.

Surprisingly, Greek philosophers sometimes combine objective and subjective idealism. Parmenides' theory of Being in the first part of his poem is a classical example of objective (metaphysical) idealism of the monistic type (immaterialism). But in the second part of his poem (theory of the phenomenal world) he develops the doctrine of linguistic idealism which is a version of epistemological idealism and may be interpreted as a form of subjective idealism. In Parmenides B 8.54 the revealing goddess explains to Kouros that the illusionary world of *doxa* is a result of a linguistic mistake

<sup>51</sup> With the exception of Heraclitus. But he was influenced by Pythagoras. Recent treatment of this topic in Herrman (2004) and Miller (2011). The discussion of Heraclitus in Miller is not sound, and the strange terminology like «hiastic self» makes Heraclitus even more obscure than he was. Snell 1982: 136–152 correctly placed this topic in its historical context: the archaic opposition between «divine and human» knowledge.

<sup>52</sup> B 112 DK ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός.

<sup>53</sup> Heraclit. fr. 157L = B 18 DK = 11 Marcovich. We read εἰ μὴ ἐλπεται ἀνέλπιστον, οὐκ ἐξευρήσει ἀνεξεύρετον (Theod.) εὐὸν καὶ ἄπορον. Self-apotheosis of Heraclitus is alluded to in Ps.-Heraclt. *Epist.* 4,2.

committed by mortals when they wrongly assigned a name to a non-entity. Night is the absence of Light, not a separate substance. The doctrine of linguistic idealism is also clearly formulated in *Aletheia* (B 8. 38 ff.) τῷ πάντ' ὄνομα ἔσται κτλ. «Therefore (empty) name will be all that mortals have set (in their language) persuaded that it is true: generation and passing away etc.» The belief in the reality of the phenomenal world derives from the linguistic convention: plurality and change are illusions produced by viewing the world through the «dirty lens» of ordinary language consisting of false names with no referential meaning<sup>54</sup>.

**(5) The evidence of the Orphic-Pythagorean graffiti from Olbia on the early Pythagorean substance dualism of body and soul proves its Preplatonic origin.**

A new light on the Pythagorean roots of Plato's doctrine of the soul is shed by the so called «Orphic» graffiti on bone plates from Olbia (5th century B.C). These plates combine Orphic/Bacchic symbolism of the *sparagmos* myth of the Orphic theogony with Pythagorean-style pairs of opposites resembling Pythagorean «double columns»<sup>55</sup>. One of these plates contains the Pythagorean symbol of *psyche* (square, *tetragonon*) on the one side, and the words ψυχή – σῶμα on the other. We reconstruct from them a four-pair table of opposites similar the Pythagorean συστοιχίαι quoted by Aristotle in *Metaph. Alpha*.

Ψυχή	–	Σῶμα	Soul	–	Body
Βίος	–	Θάνατος	Life	–	Death
Εἰρήνη	–	Πόλεμος	Peace	–	War
Ἀλήθεια	–	Ψεῦδος	Truth	–	Falsehood

This means that the soul is related with life and therefore is immortal. The body is liable to death. The soul rests in piece because its nature is harmony and self-identity. The body, composed of fighting opposites, belongs to the world of Strife and decay. The soul belongs to reality (*aletheia*), the body is an illusion (ψεῦδος), a «shadow of smoke» (σκιὰ καπνοῦ). Note that in Pythagorean

<sup>54</sup> We follow the traditional interpretation, *contra* Vlastos 2008: 367 ff.

<sup>55</sup> Editio princeps: A. S. Rusjaeva (1978). An important addition to the *editio princeps* in VDI was made by J. Vinogradov (1991): the word σῶμα as an opposite of ψυχή. It is this pair of opposites that makes the plates philosophically interesting and proves their connection with Pythagoreanism. We analyze these graffiti in detail in a forthcoming paper «The «Orphic» bone plates from Olibia as kleromantic *sortes* with Pythagorizing *systoikhai*».

eschatology Ἀλήθεια is a mystical name for the divine reality, the abode of souls where they live before their incarnation in mortal body. Here we have a brief summary of Platonism known to a street diviner in Olbia in the last quarter of the 5th century B.C. We identify this «Olbian chresmologue» with «Pharnabazos, the diviner if Hermes» known from another Olbian graffito (Lebedev 1996).

**(6) Criticism of modern naturalistic interpretations of Pythagorean first principles *peras* and *apeiron* (Burkert, Huffman and others). *Peras* and *apeiron* (form and matter) are self-subsistent incorporeal mathematical essences, out of which physical bodies are «constructed» (ἀρμόζειν) by divine mind-demiourgos.**

We will argue against the modern naturalistic interpretations of Pythagorean first principles by Burkert, Huffman and some other scholars<sup>56</sup>. Both in the Table of opposites (58 A 5 DK) and in Philolaus (44 B 1) πέρας καὶ ἄπειρον (or ἄπειρα καὶ περαίνοντα) denote self-subsistent mathematical essences, «out of which» (cf. ἐξ ἀπείρων κτλ.) physical bodies (cf. φύσις *ibidem*) are composed. It is impossible to interpret «the limit and the unlimited» (or «limiters and unlimiteds») as physical bodies themselves or as properties of physical bodies. This is confirmed by the clear evidence of Aristotle (*Metaph.* 987 a 15–19, cf. *Phys.* 203a 4–6; a16 ff.) who says that in

<sup>56</sup> Burkert 1972: 252 ff.; Huffman 1993: 37 ff. A renewed attempt to dismiss the early Pythagorean philosophy of number as a 4th century Academic invention (Zhmud' 2012) is inconsistent and hypercritical. More sensible is the approach of Kahn (2001) and Schibli (1996). Burkert's approach, unfortunately, is influenced by Cherniss' hypercriticism (cf. Burkert 1972: 354), the stereotype about «Presocratics» and the evolutionist scheme. Burkert speaks about objective «philological» approach allegedly opposed to ahistorical «philosophical» interpretation (Burkert 1972: 255). We agree that a serious historian of ancient philosophy should be well trained in classical Greek and historical knowledge of the ancient world, but this a necessary, not a sufficient condition. It is impossible to distinguish various forms and schools of ancient thought without a structural typology of all ancient philosophical theories, and such typology cannot be constructed on formal philological grounds alone, since it is based on theoretical concepts, not on words. A case at point: typological considerations immediately cast doubt on Burkert's attempt to interpret Philolaus' theory of the first principles (*peras* and *apeiron*) on the ground of «Leucippus's» atomism (Burkert 1972: 259) since teleology (*harmonia* is a teleological concept) and mechanistic determinism are incompatible. There is no place for Philolaus' *harmonia* in the infinite amorphous Universe of the atomists, just as there is no place for the atomistic blind force of necessity (*ananke*) in Philolaus' beautifully constructed musical-mathematical *kosmos*.

Plato and Pythagoreans *hen*, *peras* and *apeiron* are self-predicative substances (οὐσίαι), whereas the naturalists regard *apeiron* as an attribute of «another» *physis* (like ἄπειρος ἀήρ of Anaximenes). The Olbian Orphic-Pythagorean graffiti provide a key to the interpretation of the classical Table of 10 opposites preserved by Aristotle<sup>57</sup>. There are only two basic first principles with 10 modes of manifestation each. The left column is that of the divine indivisible substance (*peras*, light, *agathon*, *tetragonon* = *psyche* etc), the right one of the mortal divisible substance (*apeiron*, darkness, *kakon*, *heteromekes* = *soma* etc.). Square and oblong rectangle were Pythagorean symbols of the immortal soul and mortal body respectively<sup>58</sup>. The soul is immortal because it consists of substance that has no parts and therefore can never be divided, the body is mortal because its substance is liable to infinite division and decay. Plato's *demiourgos* in the *Timaeus* creates human soul mixing these two substances. Therefore it consists of an immortal (rational) and a mortal (irrational) part.

**(7) The identity of Being and Mind in Parmenides. Refutation of the anti-idealist interpretation of fr. B 3 by Zeller, Burnet and their followers. Pythagoras as the originator of the Western Greek monotheistic theology of the noetic Sphairos.**

We believe that the «materialist» interpretation of Parmenides' Being is not «one of», but «the» most serious mistake ever committed in the study of Greek thought<sup>59</sup>. It has had catastrophic

<sup>57</sup> We follow Diels-Kranz in keeping the words καὶ γὰρ ἐγένετο τὴν ἡλικίαν Ἀλκμαίων ἐπὶ γέροντι Πυθαγόρῃ in Arist. Metaph. 986a 29 (= 24 A 3 = 58 A 5 DK) as part of Aristotle's text, *contra* Ross and Primavesi (2012: 484). For details see Lebedev (2017<sub>3</sub>). But the addition of νέος is superfluous, and so Alcmaeon's *acme* is meant (circa 500 B. C.). It follows that Aristotle ascribes the Table of opposites to the generation of Pythagoras. Despite some 4<sup>th</sup> century verbal editing, conceptually this is invaluable evidence on the earliest Pythagorean metaphysics. Both Aristotle and Plato in *Plilebus* 16c ascribe to Pythagoras, not just Pythagoreans, the metaphysics of *peras* and *apeiron*. It is hard to see how this remarkable consensus can be neglected.

<sup>58</sup> This is clear from the Pythagorean experiment with «superimposition of gnomons» around odd and even numbers: 58 A 28 DK compared with the tradition that ascribes to Pythagoras the definition of human soul as square: Lydus, *De mensibus* 2,9 ψυχὰ γὰρ ἀνθρώπου, ὡς Πυθαγόρας ἔφη, ἔστι τετράγωνον ὀρθογώνιον.

<sup>59</sup> It was John Burnet in his «Early Greek Philosophy» who for the first time declared Parmenides «the father of materialism»: «Parmenides is not, as some have said, the «father of idealism»; on the contrary, all materialism

consequences and resulted in the serious distortion of the history of development of Early Greek philosophy. The root of this mistake is the misinterpretation of the non-being (or *kenon*) as *absence of body*, and the consequent identification of *ἔόν* with body or material substance. But Parmenides never and nowhere states that *τὸ ἔόν* is corporeal. The basic opposition of the *Aletheia* (being vs. non-being) exactly corresponds to the basic opposition of *Doxa*: Light vs. Night). Light (or celestial fire) is the spiritual and thinking element, Night is the «heavy», dense, corporeal substance. Light and Darkness are roughly the soul and the flesh of the sensible cosmos. There can be little doubt that Being of the *Aletheia* corresponds to the Light in *Doxa*, and Non-Being of *Aletheia* corresponds to the Night in *Doxa*. This means that – exactly as in the Olbian graffiti – body is *ψεῦδος*, an illusion and a non-entity. By «emptiness» Parmenides means not the empty space of Democritus, but the «absence of mind», i.e. body. Thus, the philosophy of Parmenides is a radical form of immaterialism and idealistic monism. It is important to emphasize that this immaterialist doctrine is formulated in the symbolical language of the Pythagorean *Lichtmetaphysik* which conceives the spiritual element in man and cosmos as «light» and the corporeal element as «darkness». *Aletheia* in Parmenides is more than epistemic truth. It also has a specifically Pythagorean connotation of the «other world» or transcendental «Reality», i.e. the original abode of the sojourn of the immortal souls before their violent expulsion into the earthly region («the meadows of Doom») as a punishment<sup>60</sup>.

The fragment B 3 means what it clearly says in plain Greek «to be and to think (or to be aware) is one and the same», i.e. «Being and Mind (or Awareness) are the same thing», i.e. all being has mental nature. We now turn to the text which in a sense is crucial for

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depends on his view of reality» (Burnet 1930: 182). By «some» Burnet means Hegelians and 19<sup>th</sup> century idealists, as becomes clear from his preface to the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (1920) quoted in section (1) above. For a history of modern approaches to Parmenides see the work of Palmer (2009), chapter 1. A modern version of Burnet's thesis is Popper (2001).

<sup>60</sup> Empedocles B 121 Ἀληθείας λειμῶν opposed to λειμῶν Ἄτης. Whether Plato, *Phaedrus* 248b (Ἀληθείας πεδίων) derives from Empedocles (as Diels-Kranz I, 374 think) or from a common Pythagorean source cannot be established with certainty, but in any case the original source is old Pythagorean since this usage of *Aletheia* is closely tied to the transmigration myth which was not invented by Empedocles. The Olbian graffiti apparently follow this usage by correlating ἀλήθεια with ψυχή and ψεῦδος with σῶμα.

the problem of the idealism in Early Greek philosophy, Parmenides fragment B 3 Diels-Kranz:

... τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι.

From ancient times to the late 19th century all philosophers and scholars have always understood this as «for it is the same to think and to be», i.e. «thinking and being are the same thing», taking νοεῖν καὶ εἶναι as grammatical subject, and ... τὸ ...αὐτὸ... ἐστίν «is the same» as predicate. This is indeed the most obvious and natural meaning of the Greek text. And since the identity of thought (mind, consciousness, awareness) and being is the classical doctrine of idealism, ancient and modern, Parmenides was commonly regarded as «the father of idealism». It was Eduard Zeller who for the first time proposed a syntactically (and philosophically) different interpretation: «denn dasselbe kann gedacht werden und sein», i.e. «for the same thing can be thought and be» (Zeller 1919: 687 n.1). According to Zeller, ἔστι means ἔξεστι «is possible», and the two infinitives are used as «datives» with final meaning. This reading eliminates «idealism» from Parmenides' text and turns it into a positivist platitude, namely that the object of thought must be something real. Zeller' interpretation was accepted by Burnet in *Early Greek philosophy* and through his influence has become dominant in the English-speaking literature on Parmenides<sup>61</sup>. The ancient reading, however, has been defended and retained by Diels-Kranz, Mario Untersteiner, Gregory Vlastos, Charles Kahn, Marcel Conche, Ernst Heitsch, Cordero among others<sup>62</sup>. Zeller's interpretation is grammatically impossible and should be rejected without hesitation. His translation «gedacht werden» requires a passive form νοηθῆναι, not an active νοεῖν. And besides, νοεῖν is a transitive verb, but εἶναι is not. How can αὐτό at the same time be the object of νοεῖν and the subject of εἶναι? <sup>63</sup> Some scholars have proposed a

<sup>61</sup> Burnet 1930: 173, note 2; Guthrie 1965: 14; Tarán 1965: 41 (with detailed doxography of modern interpretations); Mourelatos 1999: 75, n. 4.

<sup>62</sup> DK I, 231 «Denn dasselbe ist Denken und Sein» (this is Kranz' translation, Diels in the 4th edition has «Denn *das Seiende* denken und sein ist dasselbe»). Vlastos 1953: 168; Kahn 1969: 721; Long 1996: 134 ff.; Conche 1996: 88; Persuasive criticism of Zeller's interpretation in Heitsch 1995: 144 ff.

<sup>63</sup> O'Brien (in: Aubenque, O'Brien, Frère 1987: I, 20) tries to solve this difficulty by citing alleged parallels from Homer and Aristotle, but all quotations, interesting as they are, do not provide a single instance of the (supposed) construction at issue, i. e. two infinitives (joined by καί) with «dative» meaning, one transitive and another intransitive. The passages quoted by O'Brien contain either a single infinitive with dative meaning, or

modified version of Zeller's reading taking ἔστι simply as «there is», not as «it is possible», and translating: «for the same thing is there for thinking and being»<sup>64</sup>. But this is still a forced interpretation, and the Greek, being construed grammatically in this way, cannot mean «the same thing is there for thinking (of)», either. If we admit that τὸ αὐτό is indeed the subject (which is unlikely) and ἐστί means simply «is», τὸ αὐτό will be the subject, not the object of the *active* νοεῖν, i.e. the text will mean «one and the same thing exists in order to think (i.e. to be thinker) and to be». If only a thinking thing (i.e. a *res cogitans*!) can exist, it follows that only mind can be real and nothing else. Thus after much torturing the text we return to the ancient «idealist» interpretation of B3. Isn't it more sensible to obtain the same meaning from the natural reading of the Greek text supported by the unanimous consensus of the ancient hermeneutical tradition and all modern commentators up to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?

All ancient authors who quote B 3 (Clemens, Plotinus, Proclus) unanimously understood it as asserting the identity of thought and being. There are reasons to believe that Plato and Aristotle also regarded Parmenides as idealist (i.e. someone who asserted mental nature of Being) and read B3 in the same way<sup>65</sup>. To begin with, Plato would have never declared Parmenides «great» (Παρμενίδης ὁ

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two infinitives which are subjects, i.e. have no dative meaning.

<sup>64</sup> So Barnes 1979: I, 157 and note 4; Curd 1998: 49; Coxon 2009: 58; The translation in Kirk-Raven-Schofield (1983: 246 n. 2) and O'Brien (in: Aubenque, O'Brien, Frère 1987: I, 19) differs from this modified version only in rendering νοεῖν as «to be thought» or «for being thought» rather than «for thinking». Graham (2010: I, 213) while recognizing that «the most obvious translation would be «thinking and being are the same thing», nevertheless rejects it on the ground that «the metaphysically extreme idealism... seems anachronistic without antecedents» (Graham 2010: I, 236). Palmer (2009: 118–122 with a useful survey of different views) dismisses the traditional (ante-Zellerian) interpretation of B 3 on the ground that such thesis is an «utter nonsense» (p.119). There are many theories in ancient philosophy and science that from the point of view of the modern academic philosophy or science would appear to-day as «utter nonsense», but this is not a good reason to deny their historicity. The identity of Being and Mind was asserted by many idealist philosophers from antiquity to the 20th century both in Western and Oriental philosophy. But the strange theory of being conceived as a lifeless lump of invisible solid matter ascribed to Parmenides by Burnet and his followers is indeed an «utter nonsense», since it makes no sense absolutely, either in philosophy or science, or religion. It does not differ much from a «theory» that the world, e.g., is in fact one huge invisible potato. Such doctrine is unparalleled in the history of the world philosophy.

<sup>65</sup> Contra Taran 1965: 198.



μέγας *Soph.* 237a), if Parmenides had a strange doctrine that reality is a changeless bulk of lifeless dead matter. There can be little doubt that Plato regarded Parmenides as a «friend of ideas» in the great battle of the materialists and their idealist opponents (see section 9 below). Aristotle, too, understood Parmenides' One as immaterial. In *Metaph.* A 5. 986b 18 he contrasts Parmenides conception of One with that of Melissus as τὸ κατὰ λόγον ἓν with τὸ κατὰ ὕλην<sup>66</sup>. In Aristotle's usage λόγος opposed to ὕλη denotes the formal cause, therefore Parmenides' ἓν, i.e. τὸ εἶν, according to Aristotle, is immaterial<sup>67</sup>. Not only ancient friends and sympathisers of Parmenides, but also his enemies regarded him an idealist. The Epicurean Colotes accused Parmenides of denying the reality of the external world (see above).

The traditional rendering of Parmenides' νοεῖν as 'to think' is a simplification that narrows to logical thought the meaning of the term which covers a wide spectrum of mental states from intellectual intuition to perception of internal states of consciousness<sup>68</sup>. A more precise rendering of νόος would be 'consciousness, awareness', and of νοεῖν as 'to become aware of', 'to perceive', 'to realize'. Accordingly, fr. B 3 can be translated as

«For awareness and being are one and the same thing»,

i.e. «I am aware of *x*» involves «*x* is», and in turn, «*x* is» involves «I am aware of *x*».

Parmenides' main thesis displays a certain affinity both with Berkeley's «esse percipi» and the Indian formula of subject/object identity «Tat Tvam Asi». It seems to be based on one of the fundamental principles of Greek epistemology τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ γινώσκεισθαι<sup>69</sup>.

The lines B 8.34 ff should be interpreted in the same way, as asserting the intelligible nature of the objects of mind:

Ταὐτὸν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.

'The same thing is to perceive and what causes perception',

<sup>66</sup> Palmer 2009: 222 mistranslates κατὰ λόγον as «in account». For λόγος opp. ὕλη in Aristotle (ὁ κατὰ τὸ εἶδος λεγόμενος λόγος) see Bonitz, Index Aristotelicus, 434b 53 ff., cf. b 32 ff.

<sup>67</sup> Bonitz, Index Aristotelicus, 434b 53.

<sup>68</sup> More accurately, Coxon (2009) renders «conceive», Kahn and Heitsch «to know», «Erkennen». In B16 νόος refers to the changing states of consciousness (awakening and sleeping, i.e. seeing light or darkness) caused by the internal prevalence of the *phaos* or *nyx* elements in man. Νοεῖν is used of perception in Xenophanes B 24.

<sup>69</sup> This was suggested by Vlastos 1953: 168.

The idealist interpretation of Parmenides' Being also solves the riddle of Plato's identification of matter with space (χώρα) in *Timaeus* 52a 8<sup>70</sup>. Such identification makes sense and becomes intelligible only within Pythagorean and Eleatic conceptual framework. Plato's dualism of form and matter derives from the Pythagorean dualism of *peras* and *apeiron*. These were originally geometrical concepts: *peras* corresponds, e.g. to the shape of a square, and *apeiron* to the «empty space» enclosed within it. Since it lacks a shape of its own, it cannot be an object of thought, we can only «dream» about it (πρὸς ὃ δὴ καὶ ὀνειροπολοῦμεν βλέποντες, *Tim.* 52a 11). This is the continuum that is divisible *ad infinitum* (εἰς ἄπειρον). *Peras*, on the contrary, is indivisible. Platonic form and matter thus correspond to the indivisible and divisible substance of Pythagorean metaphysics which denote spiritual (soul) and the corporeal (body). Exactly as in Parmenides, the body is «emptiness» (*kenon*), i.e. a receptacle of the shape (soul).

It becomes clear that Parmenides' τὸ ἕν is a cryptic name for the divine Absolute. Greek philosophers for some reasons (fear of γραφή ἀσεβείας or just mystical language for «initiates» into philosophical mysteries, εἰδότες φῶτες) sometimes preferred to avoid in their philosophical theology the word θεός. Heraclitus speaks of τὸ Σοφόν, Plato of τὸ Ἀγαθόν. In Parmenides τὸ Ἑόν means the real god of the philosophers as opposed to the imaginary gods of the poets: let us not forget that the second part of the poem, the way of Doxa, contained a complete polytheistic theogony (28 B 13 DK) which exposed the traditional mythopoetic gods as an illusion and poetic fiction. Both in Parmenides and Xenophanes god is conceived as a mental sphere<sup>71</sup>. Xenophanes' god οὔλος νοεῖ (21 B 24) because he is 100% νοῦς, and Timon describes Xenophanean god as «more intelligent (or spiritual) than mind», νοερώτερον ἢ δὲ νόημα (21 A 35 DK). Although Parmenides may have been partly influenced by Xenophanes, it seems more likely that both depend on the common ancient Pythagorean tradition. And another «Italian» philosopher with Pythagorean background, Empedocles, also speaks of divine Σφαῖρος<sup>72</sup>. From this it follows that the ancient tradition

<sup>70</sup> On different approaches to this see Algra 1995: 76 ff.

<sup>71</sup> The sphericity of Xenophanes' god is attested by the consensus of doxography MXG 971 b21, 978a20; Hippolytus (21 A 33 DK), Alex. Aphrod. ap. Simplic. (A 31 DK), Sextus (A 35 DK). Timon's ἴσον πάντῃ also may allude to the spherical shape. For additional theological fragments of Xenophanes see Lebedev (1985) and (2000). Cf. Cerri (2001).

<sup>72</sup> Empedocles, however, breaks from the Eleatic idealistic monism. His

about Parmenides' Pythagoreanism is to be taken seriously<sup>73</sup>. And so a conjecture lies at hand that the father of the Greek philosophical idealism was Pythagoras of Samos. In our view the so-called «Eleatic school», τὸ Ἐλεατικὸν ἔθνος in Plato's words, was a branch of the Pythagorean school. The Eleatic philosophers accepted the basic doctrine of Pythagoras (immortality and divinity of the soul, the «shadowy» nature of body)<sup>74</sup>, but introduced two innovations: 1) they replaced the orthodox dualistic metaphysics by a strict idealistic monism, 2) in philosophical theology they replaced mathematical models and numerological symbolism by pure logic and deductive method. The subsequent history of the Eleatic school confirms this and demonstrates the adherence of its members to the Pythagorean idealistic paradigm. Melissus by no means was an original thinker, he just compiled a summary exposition of the Eleatic doctrine in prose. In fr. B 9 he states explicitly that τὸ ἕν is incorporeal (σῶμα μὴ ἔχειν). Zeno's paradoxes in all likelihood were not a «disinterested» intellectual enterprise or a scientific investigation of the problems of motion and plurality. They served dogmatic purposes of the Pythagorean creed and defended Parmenides' philosophical theology from the mockery of the profane. Zeno's intention was to demonstrate that the material world is an illusion and the body is a falsehood (ψεῦδος) produced by the deceptive senses.

### **(8) The psychological and ethical dimensions of the Eleatic doctrine of Being.**

Unlike the classical German idealism, the Ancient Greek idealism (mentalism) of the archaic and early classical period (Pytha-

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philosophy of nature is an attempt to reconcile Ionian naturalism with Pythagorean dualism. It is not clear whether the «holy mind» (φρὴν ἱερή) in B 134 refers to the Sphairos (according to Primavesi 2006: 71 or not, according to Rangos 2012: 323 ff.). In any case this text is a remarkable early instance of the immaterial conception of divinity in the Western philosophical tradition and so once again refutes the physicalist myth about «Presocratics». On mystical and supernatural elements in Empedocles and the Pythagorean tradition in general see Kingsley (1995).

<sup>73</sup> Parmenides had a Pythagorean teacher Ameinias, Sotion ap. D.L. 9.21; not only Neoplatonists (28 A 4 DK), but also Strabo regards Parmenides and Zeno as members of the Pythagorean brotherhood, ἄνδρες Πυθαγόρειοι (28 A 12 DK).

<sup>74</sup> A kind of reincarnation in Parmenides is attested by Simplicius in the context of B 13: καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς πέμπειν (scil. τὴν Δαίμονα) ποτὲ μὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἐμφανοῦς εἰς τὸ ἀειδές, ποτὲ δὲ ἀνάπαλιν φησιν. This text should be treated as a separate fragment of Parmenides (though not a *verbatim* quotation).

gorean and Eleatic) was not just an intellectual movement and had no romantic stamp. It served practical – both ethical and political – purposes, its aim was education of ideal citizens and ideal warriors. Life in the new Greek colonies of the West was full of dangers and the polis required heroic and ascetic ethics from its citizens in order to survive. The Eleatic doctrine provided a necessary spiritual discipline for this both by placing the One above the many (thus subordinating the individual to the community) and by teaching that pain, suffering and death are not to be feared because our bodies are non-entities, a «shadow of smoke» (σκιὰ καπνοῦ). A Pythagorean or Eleatic warrior would face death without fear because he knew that if he is killed, his immortal soul would suffer no harm, on the contrary it would be embraced by the sphere of divine Light and he would enjoy eternal bliss (τερπνὸν ἔχει βίον 36 B 4 DK, as Ion of Chios describes Pherecydes' life after death according to Pythagoras). Now we can better understand the connection between Parmenides' philosophy and his role of a legislator (*nomothetes*). According to Strabo's commonly neglected report, Elea, despite the scarcity of resources, enjoyed political stability (*eunomia*) and military victories over her neighbors thanks to the laws of Parmenides<sup>75</sup>. We can better understand why a professional military man, admiral Melissus, was an ardent adherent of the Eleatic doctrine. And again, we can better understand why the biographical tradition depicts Zeno as a legendary hero who is indifferent to pain and overcomes the fear of death. Typologically Pythagorean and Eleatic ethics prefigures the Stoic spiritual discipline of endurance and eradication of emotions (ἀπάθεια)<sup>76</sup>.

The ethical dimension of the Eleatic doctrine of being becomes transparent: the *peirata* of Dike refer to the Pythagorean correlation of *agathon* with *peras*, the ethics of moderation and self-control. An Eleatic philosopher who follows the Pythagorean moral principle «follow god» ἔπου θεῶι (ὁμοίωσις θεῶι in later formulation), models his soul on the divine paradigm of the immutable (self-identical) sphere of intelligible light. The immutability of the eternal

<sup>75</sup> Strabo 6.1.1 δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ δι' ἐκείνους [scil. Parmenides and Zeno] καὶ ἔτι πρότερον εὐνομηθῆναι· διὸ καὶ πρὸς Λευκανοὺς ἀντέσχον καὶ πρὸς Ποσειδωνιάτας καὶ κρείττους ἀπήγεσαν καίπερ ἐνδεέστεροι καὶ χώραι καὶ πλήθει σωμάτων ὄντες.

<sup>76</sup> On the connection between Stoic philosophy and military mind see Sherman 2005. On the eradication of passions in Greek thought in general Sorabji 2000. On early Pythagorean ethics see the important article of Huffman (in: Sassi 2006: 103 ff.).

Being has nothing to do with physical theories of change and rest, it is a paradigm for the *tranquillitas animi: ataraxia and harmonia*. As in Solon's parable about *thalassa* and the winds (fr. 12.2 West), the elimination of external disturbances makes one δικαιοτάτος. By becoming ἀτρεμής – like τὸ Ἐόν – the Eleatic warrior will be fearless – ἀνδρεῖος – in war. And by imposing «limits» (πείρατα – Parmenid. B 8, 26; 8,31; 8,42) on the desires of the body (i.e. *apeiron*) he will attain *apatheia* and the virtue of *sophrosyne*. According to Sotion, Parmenides was converted to ἡσυχίη «tranquility», i.e. Pythagorean virtuous life of contemplation, by his Pythagorean teacher Ameinias (D.L. 9.21 = 28 A 1 = Test. 96 Coxon). One may guess that Pythagoreans and Eleatics practiced spiritual exercises and meditations contemplating with the internal ὄμμα τῆς ψυχῆς the intelligible «Sun of Justice» described in Parmenides' *Aletheia*. The idea of the «Sun that never sets» is attested earlier than Parmenides in Heraclitus and therefore may go back to Pythagoras<sup>77</sup>. The Pythagorean/Eleatic source of Plato's analogies of the Sun and the Cave in the *Republic* seems obvious<sup>78</sup>. Plato's theory of moral virtues in the *Republic* IV is also symbolically prefigured in Parmenides' *Aletheia*. The metaphysical grounding of virtues and the concept of *dikaiosyne* as *harmonia* of the soul are also unmistakably Pythagorean/Eleatic in origin.

It is conceivable that the poem of Parmenides may have been composed for the local community of Pythagoreans in the literary form of a *Sacred Discourse* (*Hieros Logos*) of the great teacher Pythagoras, hence the first-person language in the speech of Kouros-Pythagoras. The first part may have been intended as a practical guide for everyday spiritual exercises (*askeseis*) like those described in the Pythagorean *Golden Verses*, 40–53 and Aristoxenus' reports on Pythagorean practical ethics including prophylactic eradication of passions (58 D 6 DK)<sup>79</sup>. By repeating like prayer the inspired words of Kouros-Pythagoras and by contemplating regularly inside their *noos*, detached from all sense perceptions and external disturbances, the divine Absolute *To Eon* conceived as The invisible Sun of Justice, the Eleatics would sustain in their souls the virtues of

<sup>77</sup> Heraclit. fr. 152Leb/B 16 = 81 Marc. Τὸ μὴ δῶνον ποτε (scil. φῶς) πῶς ἄν τις λάθοι 'How can one hide himself from the light that never sets?'

<sup>78</sup> In the case of the Sun analogy we do not exclude Heraclitean influence as well, cf. the preceding note.

<sup>79</sup> On the tradition of spiritual exercises in Hellenistic and Roman time philosophy see the important work of Pierre Hadot (1995).

justice, temperance and courage transforming them into ideal law-abiding citizens and fearless warriors. The tradition of philosophy as a way of life does not start with the Stoics and Epicureans in Hellenistic times<sup>80</sup>. It originated with Pythagoras of Samos already in archaic times in 6<sup>th</sup> century B. C., and it was continued in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century B. C. by Heraclitus and Parmenides. Socrates and Plato were the heirs of this tradition in classical times.

Far from being a detached metaphysical exercise in the abstract analysis of the «problem of one and many», Parmenides' «much-contesting examination» (πολύδηρις ἔλεγχος, B 7.5) of the deceptive appearances concludes with the ethically, existentially and religiously significant proclamation of the non-existence of death: «So birth has been quenched and death is unheard of», τὼς γενεῖς μὲν ἀπέσβησται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος (B 8.21).

Both Xenophanes' monotheistic theology and Melissus' heno-logical doctrine of being provide a clear and undeniable evidence on the «anthropopathic» health-related, psychological and mental qualities and dispositions of the Eleatic-Pythagorean divine reality or philosophical god. In Xenophanes the new god is described not only is immobile, immutable etc., but also as omnipotent, endowed with providential mind<sup>81</sup>, omniscient, omnipresent<sup>82</sup>, and – according to Timon – as «immune to disease, unscathed and more intelligent than intelligence itself», <ἄνοσον> ἀσκηθῇ νοερώτερον ἢ δὲ νόημα<sup>83</sup>.

The case of the admiral (ναύαρχος) Melissus is especially instructive for the purpose of our argument since he was a professional military man. To begin with, Melissus in plain words and unambiguously states that the Eleatic 'Being' is incorporeal: it «has no body», σῶμα μὴ ἔχειν (B 9). The followers of Burnet's mistaken 'materialist' interpretation of the Eleatic Being, blinded by the stereotype of «Presocratics» as physicalists and by the dogma of Platonocentrism, according to which the concept of 'incorporeal' or

<sup>80</sup> To say this is not to diminish the value of Hadot's illuminating work, just to correct the widespread mistaken association of the philosophy as a way of life exclusively with Socrates and Hellenistic schools. This is one of the many misconceptions resulting from the misleading stereotype of «Presocratics» as physicalists and cosmologists.

<sup>81</sup> Xenophan. B 23–26 and additional fragment from Philo (Lebedev 2000).

<sup>82</sup> Omnipresent and omniscient: the additional fragment from Philoponus (Lebedev 1985).

<sup>83</sup> ἄνοσον scripsi, ἀτρεμῇ Diels, DK alii. Sext Emp. *Pyrrh Hyp.* I, 224 = Timon fr. D. = Xenophan. A 25 DK.

‘ideal’ (intelligible) was inaccessible to human mind before Plato, either try to deny its undeniable authenticity<sup>84</sup> or propose some fantastic interpretations in their attempt to purge the text of all traces of undesirable ‘idealism’<sup>85</sup>. Melissus denies the corporality of being because he follows the ancient and the only correct interpretation of Parmenides B 3 that identifies being and mind (see above). He also denies it because he follows the common trend of the Eleatic monotheistic mentalist theology that conceives god as *nous*, i.e. as something radically different from «body». He apparently conceives the Eleatic Being as a living being, as a thinking being and as a personal god. The incorporeal nature of the divine Being accords well with the fact that it is not accessible to the senses which means that it can only be apprehended by pure mind (*nous*). And it is in perfect agreement with such attributes as healthy (ὕγιες), free from pain (ἄλγος) and free from grief or suffering (ἀνιᾶσθαι), attested by *verbatim* quotations in fragment B7<sup>86</sup>.

Those who still dogmatically deny the obvious spiritualist and theological implications of Melissus fr. B7 and B9 have been misled by the quasi-physicalist language of the henological arguments, and primarily by the denial of «void» which allegedly implies that *to eon* is a corporeal *plenum*. This might have been the case if Melissus were an Ionian *physikos* and an adept of naturalistic monism. But he wasn’t. He followed «Parmenides the Pythagorean» whose concept of being was idealist (mentalist) and anti-naturalist (anti-materialist). Like all Eleatics, he was an *a-physikos*, as Aristotle characterised them, i.e. a metaphysician who denied the reality of ‘nature’, the

<sup>84</sup> Kirk-Raven-Schofield, 400–401; Rapp 2013: 580 ff.; Palmer 2003. For a survey of modern opinions and a persuasive defense of the authenticity of the text of B9 as printed in DK see Harriman (2018) 117–144. The truth was seen by Gregory Vlastos in his review of Raven as early as 1953: Vlastos 1953/1996: 186–187. Vlastos rightly connected the hypercritical denial of the authenticity of B9 with «Burnet’s dogma» about the alleged «materialism» of Parmenides.

<sup>85</sup> Laks and Most, *Early Greek Philosophy* V/2, 245 wrongly athetize the second part of the fragment and propose the following interpretation of σῶμα μὴ ἔχειν: «does not mean to be incorporeal... but rather not to have a definite shape». But σῶμα never means «shape» in classical Greek. The authenticity of the second part is also proved by the rather early (Pre-Aristotelian) use of the simplistic word πάχος instead of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (and later) standard philosophical term ὄγκος for the volume or mass of the body.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. also the paraphrase in Ps.Arist. *De MXG* 974a 18–20 τοιοῦτον δὲ ὄν τὸ ἐν ἀνώδυνόν τε καὶ ἀνάληπτον ὑγιές τε καὶ ἄνοσον οὔτε μετακοσμούμενον θέσει οὔτε ἐτεροιοῦμενον εἶδει κτλ.

Ionian concept of which comprises both material (corporeal) substance and self-motion (evolution). In the language and the conceptual world of Pythagoreans and Elatics, the «void» (*to kenon*) is an abstract term for ‘what is devoid of being’, where ‘being’ has nothing to do with the Ionian *physis*, a term which is demonstratively, in defiance of the Ionian naturalism, absent both from the fragments of Melissus and from Parmenides’ *Aletheia* and replaced with a logical-metaphysical term τὸ ἐόν ‘*what is*’ (in Parmenides *physis* appears only in the delusory world of *Doxa*). The Eleatic ‘being’ refers to the idealist ‘true being’, i.e. to the supersensory divine reality which has incorporeal mental nature. Therefore Melissus’ denial of «void» should not be compared with Empedocles’ or Aristotle’s denial of the physical void. It should rather be compared with Berkeley’s claim that nothing really exists except the divine mind: all the rest, including matter and bodies, is an illusion produced by the tricks played by the divine mind on our perception. This is the doctrine of immaterialism introduced already by Parmenides in his denial of the reality of ‘Night’, i.e. of the corporeal substance according to the Pythagorean Table of opposites (Parmen. B 8.53–54, cf. 58 B 5 DK), and explicitly formulated in fr. B 4 where the mysterious «absent» objects (ἀπεόντα), the imaginary «black holes» in the ontological continuum, refer to sensible bodies, the deceptive appearances produced by the sense-perception, a «shadow of smoke» (σκιὰ καπνοῦ)<sup>87</sup>.

Once we return to the authentic ancient tradition untouched by Burnet’s dogma, once we take into account the Pythagorean background of the Eleatic doctrine of being, the alleged «puzzle» of Melissus fr. B 9 is immediately solved. Thus far we have criticized the «semantic» aspects of the mainstream anti-idealist and physicalist approach to the Eleatic ontology. Let us turn now from «semantics» to «pragmatics» of a philosophical theory, i.e. to the

<sup>87</sup> The proverbial phrase καπνοῦ σκιά originally meant «something worth of nothing» as in Sophocles, *Antigone* 1170 «I wouldn’t buy it even for a shadow of smoke», cf Soph. *Philoct.* 946, Eupol. Com. fr. 51, Phryn. Attic., *Praep. soph.* p. 83,4 explains καπνοῦ σκιά as οὐδενί. From this popular usage should be distinguished a more philosophical usage in contexts that contrast the «nothingness» of human nature with the divine, as in Aeschylus, fr. 399 Radt τὸ γὰρ βρότειον σπέρμ’ ἐφήμερα φρονεῖ / καὶ πιστὸν μᾶλλον οὐδὲν ἢ σκιά καπνοῦ. The latter «philosophical» usage seems to be influenced by Pythagoreans or Heraclitus. Plato probably alludes to this saying in his Pythagorizing cave analogy which represents physical bodies as «shadows» on the wall thrown by the flames (with fumes!) of a fire (*Rep.* 514bc).



historical-cultural context and *Sitz im Leben* of the Eleatic doctrine. Here we encounter a real «puzzle» or rather a real stumbling block which the defenders of the post-Burnetean approach have to face, but which they commonly pass in silence and leave unexplained. The question is what might have triggered the interest of a legislator like Parmenides or of an admiral like Melissus, i.e. of men of political *praxis* and military command, in a strange and extravagant «theory» asserting that the world we live in (and the world in which we act) is an illusion produced by the senses whereas the real world, which lies behind the veil of appearances, is a dead lump of immobile and immutable matter? What kind of moral motivation or psychological inspiration could Parmenides and Melissus get from such doctrine? What might have been its practical purpose? Was it of any use for Parmenides when he was making laws for the polis of Elea? Could Melissus raise the combatant spirit of his sailors before a naval battle by offering them a «consolation» and promise that the fallen in battle will be absorbed by a lifeless mass of dumb immobile matter? These questions admit no satisfactory answer, that is why they have been rarely if ever addressed. Let us face the truth: the theory at issue has no scientific or philosophical value, and at the same time it is deprived of any ethical, psychological or religious/theological meaning. It is just an extravagant absurdity which never occurred to anyone either in ancient or modern times (before 1892) and which results from Burnet's polemically biased and grammatically impossible misreading of Parmenides, especially of fr. B3. Once we recognize the Pythagorean background of the Eleatic doctrine of being, all these difficulties are immediately solved and all difficult questions find an easy answer. Yes, Parmenides could use as a theoretical foundation of his legislation the Pythagorean doctrine of natural law that is inextricable bound with the Eleatic ontology: «The invisible Sun of Justice (Dike)» is alluded to in B 8.14. Yes, Melissus could use the Eleatic doctrine of true reality both for personal meditation and calming his passions, since as a Pythagorean he knew that his own *psyche* and especially his mind (*noos*) in its original state was a fragment of the universal divine being that is not liable to death, disease, wounds (cf. ἀσκηθής), pain or suffering. The pain and suffering that we experience in the incarnated state, belong to the ephemeral body, and not to the immortal soul. And if there were other *andres Pythagoreioi* or Orphic initiates among his men, admiral Melissus could raise their combatant spirit by reminding them that the brave souls of the fallen will be awarded with «greater portions» (μείζονες

μοῖραι) in afterlife. Such was the promise of Heraclitus to Ephesian warriors at the time of the Ionian revolt against Persians<sup>88</sup>. The poet or *mantis* who composed the epigram for the fallen at the battle of Potidaea (432 B.C.), apart from glorifying the «beautiful death» of the heroes<sup>89</sup>, alludes to the same aetherial Valhalla as in Heraclitus' doctrine of celestial immortality, a reward for the wise and heroes «slain by Ares» whose dry souls have been purified from the «wetness» of passions:

αἰθήρ μὲν ψυχὰς ὑπεδέξατο, σώματα δὲ χθών<sup>90</sup>. 'Aither has received *their* souls, and earth has received *their* bodies'.

The chances are that the author of this verse either was a Pythagorean/Eleatic himself or was influenced by Pythagorens or Heraclitean philosophy. Note that the opposition between the earthen body and aetherial nature of souls is exactly paralleled in Parmenides' *Doxa*: «heavy, dense» Night contrasted with the light celestial *phaos* or Fire.

In the Old Norse mythology Valhöll «The hall of the slain» is presided by Odin (Lindow 2001: 308–309). In Heraclitus' eschatology the souls of the «slain by Ares» (ἀρηϊφάτοι) and of the wise «rush» to the region of the Sun which Heraclitus identifies with Apollo<sup>91</sup>. In Valhalla the slain heroes drink mead, in Heraclitus they join the «symposium of the gods»<sup>92</sup>. Odin and Apollo share many similar features/functions (prophecy, poetry, healing, speaking in riddles etc.) and have often been compared in the Indo-European comparative mythology. The special champions of Odin, called *einherjar*, that will lead the ranks of warriors in the last great battle of gods against monsters and giants, can be compared with noble dead in Heraclitus who are said to «raise up at the time set by god and to

<sup>88</sup> Heraclit. fr. 105 Leb/B25 μῦροι γὰρ μέζονες μείζονας μοίρας λαγχάνουσι 'The greater deaths receive greater allotments', i.e. the more noble is death, the greater is the reward in afterlife. The rewards promised by Heraclitus include not only «eternal glory among mortals» (κλέος ἀέναον θνητῶν, fr. 102L/B29), but also *apotheosis* and becoming *symposiotai* of the gods in the region of the Sun. Heraclitus' fragments on the heroic ethics and death in battle: fr. 101–105 Leb. On Heraclitus as one of the ideologues of the Ionian revolt see Lebedev 2014: 13–21.

<sup>89</sup> On this topos see Loraux 2018.

<sup>90</sup> IG 12.945.6. For a different approach see Mihai 2010.

<sup>91</sup> Heraclitus fr. Probab.13 Leb. with commentary. Apollo and the solstices in Delphic and Delian cult (Bilic 2012: 517 ff. 525 ff.).

<sup>92</sup> Heraclitus fr.158–160 Leb. with commentary (2014: 456–462).

become guardians of mortals»<sup>93</sup>. The demise of the cosmos and gods at the *Ragnarök* Doomsday and its subsequent rebirth finds an exact parallel in Heraclitus' cosmic cycle in which the universal conflagration is followed by the rebirth of the cosmos. This parallel becomes especially striking if we take into account that Heraclitus interpreted the traditional Homeric gods as allegorical personifications of elements, stars etc., therefore Heraclitus' *ekpyrosis* also implies the destruction of all «gods», except one: they all return to the original single «ever-living fire»<sup>94</sup>. Heraclitus was an offspring of the ancient family of Androclidae and held a hereditary hieratic title of *basileus*, he therefore may have been a bearer of ancient oral tradition and *hieroi logoi* going back to Late Bronze age (Lebedev 2014: 12 ff.). The Pythagoreans venerated their teacher as an incarnation of Apollo Hyperboreios, the Northern Apollo, and held in great respect the Northern Greek miracle-workers and ecstatic prophets of Apollo Hyperboreios like Aristeas and Abaris (Burkert 1972: 141). Aristeas of Proconnesus, «possessed by Phoebus», followed his god transforming himself into a raven (Herod. 4.15), a striking parallel to Odin's sacred bird. The legends of Abaris and Aristeas have been plausibly connected with the cult of Hyperboreans at Delos. In this context Burnet's emphasis on the Delian roots of Pythagoras' religious doctrine deserves some attention (Burnet 1930: 81).

**(9) The «battle of gods and giants over being» (*Gigantomachia peri tes ousias*) in Plato's *Sophist* as a testimony on the pre-Platonic metaphysical idealism.**

The picture of what happened in Early Greek Philosophy that emerges from our reconstruction of the idealist tradition in the Western Greek metaphysics comes very close to what Plato dramatically describes in the famous myth/parable about the fight of gods and giants on the nature of being in one of the «Eleatic» dialogues, where the Eleatic Stranger says: *Sophist* 246 a 4–246 c 3:

Καὶ μὴν ἔοικέ γε ἐν αὐτοῖς οἷον γιγαντομαχία τις εἶναι διὰ τὴν ἀμφισβήτησιν περὶ τῆς οὐσίας πρὸς ἀλλήλους.

{ΘΕΑΙ.} Πῶς;

<sup>93</sup> Heraclit. fr. 156L/B63 ἐν θεοῦ δέοτι (scil. χρόνῳ) ἐπανίστασθαι καὶ φύλακας γίνεσθαι ἐγερτί...

<sup>94</sup> On Heraclitus' cosmic cycle see Lebedev 2014: 98–102, 114–121, 319–350.

{ΞΕ.} Οἱ μὲν εἰς γῆν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀοράτου πάντα ἔλκουσι, ταῖς χερσὶν ἀτεχνῶς πέτρας καὶ δρυὺς περιλαμβάνοντες. τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων ἐφαπτόμενοι πάντων δισχυρίζονται τοῦτο εἶναι μόνον ὃ παρέχει προσβολὴν καὶ ἐπαφὴν τινα, ταῦτόν σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ὀρίζόμενοι, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων εἴ τίς <τι> φήσῃ μὴ σῶμα ἔχον εἶναι, καταφρονοῦντες τὸ παράπαν καὶ οὐδὲν ἐθέλοντες ἄλλο ἀκούειν.

{ΘΕΑΙ.} Ἡ δεινοὺς εἴρηκας ἄνδρας· ἤδη γὰρ καὶ ἐγὼ τούτων συχνοῖς προσέτυχον.

{ΞΕ.} Τοιγαροῦν οἱ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀμφισβητοῦντες μάλα εὐλαβῶς ἄνωθεν ἐξ ἀοράτου ποθὲν ἀμύνονται, νοητὰ ἅττα καὶ ἀσώματα εἶδη βιαζόμενοι τὴν ἀληθινὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι· τὰ δὲ ἐκείνων σώματα καὶ τὴν λεγομένην ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀλήθειαν κατὰ σμικρὰ διαθραύοντες ἐν τοῖς λόγοις γένεσιν ἀντ' οὐσίαςφερομένην τινὰ προσαγορεύουσιν. ἐν μέσῳ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα ἄπλετος ἀμφοτέρων μάχη τις, ὃ Θεαίτητε, ἀεὶ συνέστηκεν.

‘VISITOR: It seems that there’s something like a battle of gods and giants among them, because of their dispute with each other over being. THEAETETUS: How?

VISITOR: One group drags everything down to earth from the heavenly region of the invisible, actually clutching rocks and trees with their hands. When they take hold of all these things, they insist that only what offers tangible contact is, since they define being as the same as body. And if any of the others say that something without a body is, they absolutely despise him and won’t listen to him any more.

THEAETETUS: These are frightening men you’re talking about. I’ve met quite a lot of them already.

VISITOR: Therefore, the people on the other side of the debate defend their position very cautiously, from somewhere up out of sight. They insist violently that true being is certain nonbodily forms that can be thought about. They take the bodies of the other group, and also what they call the truth, and they break them up verbally into little bits and call them a process of coming-to-be instead of being. There’s a never-ending battle going on constantly between them about this issue.

THEAETETUS: That’s true». (transl. Cooper 1997: 267).

It has been thought by some that this is a fictitious dramatization of two purely theoretical tendencies in metaphysics with no reference to real historical schools or particular thinkers<sup>95</sup>. But the question of historicity of heroes in this philosophical epos has to be differentiated. At least the two original protagonists, the groups of

<sup>95</sup> Contra McCabe 2000: 76 ff.

radical materialists who hold that only bodies exist and nothing else, and the opponent group of «friends of ideas» who claim that all reality consists of intelligible incorporeal patterns only (νοητὰ καὶ ἄσώματα εἶδη), are represented as historical, and their debate, metaphorically conceived as mythical *gigantomachia*, is depicted as a global battle that has existed always and still continues: this points to what has always happened in history and still goes on, not to a mental experiment or particular event. A different and more difficult question is who are the «reformed materialists» that are introduced only later in 246d 4 and who, unlike the original unreformed «giants» are the more civilized ones and open to a dialogue. It is only in their case that Plato uses a quasi-hypothetical language ...λόγῳ ποιῶμεν, ὑποτιθέμενοι... («will make them better in our discourse, having supposed etc.») which may indicate that they are theoretically constructed *ad hoc*. We leave aside this mysterious second wave of «giants» and will focus on those who in all probability represent two historical schools of thought. According to the traditional view the «earth-born giants» stand for Democritus and the atomists, and the Olympian god-like friends of ideas who fight the giants from above (i.e. from the sphere of the divine, because they defend morality and religion), for Plato himself and the Academy (Guthrie1978: 138 ff.). Some scholars specify that the reference is to the theory of forms in the middle dialogues, i.e. to Plato in the past, which means that he may be not taking part in the battle himself anymore. But the opponents of the giants in Greek myth are gods: can Plato speak about himself and his disciples in such dithyrambic language of self-apotheosis? It is more likely therefore that the Olympian warriors primarily refer to the Pythagoreans (Proclus, *ad loc.*) and/or Eleatics (Parmenides) (Politis 2006: 154), whereas Plato and the Academy are their followers. A close parallel to the *gigantomachia* in the *Sophist* is found in the philosophical autobiography of Socrates in *Phaedo* (96 a ff.) in which *all* Ionian *peri physeos historia* is rejected as meaningless, self-contradictory and false from the point of view of a moral philosopher whose subject are exactly the εἶδη or moral concepts and who refuses to conceive man as a collection of bones, phlegm and tendons rather than a moral agent endowed with immortal soul and a free will. Since in *Phaedo* Socrates in a similar context attacks not one particular thinker, but the whole of naturalistic (predominantly Ionian) tradition, we believe that the «perennial» and global intellectual battle described in the *Sophist* refers to the history of all Preplatonic philosophy, and primarily to the clash of

Ionian monistic naturalism (first of all, Milesians and Atomists) with the Western Greek idealism, primarily with the Eleatic monistic idealism of Parmenides as reconstructed above. This is made even more plausible by the fact that the dialogue person who tells the story of the great battle is the Eleatic Stranger who quotes Parmenides three times, the second time right before the digression on «gigantomachy»<sup>96</sup>. In favor of the identification of the two camps primarily with the Ionian and Italian traditions in Pre-Platonic philosophy also speaks the juxtaposition of the «Ionian and Italian Muses» (Ἰάδες καὶ Σικελικαὶ Μοῦσαι) in the preceding context *Soph.* 242 d-e. We say «primarily» because from Plato's point of view the original theoretical debate on the nature of being between «Ionian and Italian» schools is paradigmatic and relevant both for the time of Socrates and his own time. In Plato's dialogues Socrates is the chief opponent of the Sophists who for the most part were heirs of the Ionian naturalism; the Sophistic *Kulturgeschichte* was a sequel to the Ionian evolutionist cosmogony. In Greek myth the gigantomachy was won by the gods thanks to Heracles. In later Socratic tradition Socrates was often compared with Heracles. Does Plato allude to Socrates as a new Heracles in the philosophical gigantomachy? There are reasons to believe that the Sophists (at least in Plato's view) were friends of «those who are in flux» (οἱ ρέοντες) and opponents of «those who put nature to rest» (οἱ τῆς φύσεως στασιώται), the two opposing each other groups that in Plato's history of philosophy roughly correspond with the two camps of the gigantomachy. If so, the great battle refers to several generations of Greek philosophers: Plato and his Academic friends in the 4th century fight against Democritus, as Socrates in the 5th was fighting against Protagoras, as Melissus was fighting against 5th century *physikoi*, as Zeno was fighting against the critics of Parmenides, as Parmenides circa 480 B.C. was fighting against Heraclitus and the Ionians in general<sup>97</sup>, as Philolaus was fighting against the Ionian concept of the material substance (*physis*) by reducing it to immaterial mathematical essences of *peras* and *apeiron*<sup>98</sup>, as Pythagoras in the 6th century (conceivably) was

<sup>96</sup> *Soph.* 237a (= 28 B 7.1–2 DK), 244e (= B 8.43–45 DK), 258d (= B 7.1–2 DK).

<sup>97</sup> By Heraclitus we mean here the Platonic «Heraclitus» of *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus*, not the authentic philosophy of Heraclitus.

<sup>98</sup> Who are the «reformed» materialists is an intriguing question, but it is not essential to our argument. According to Guthrie (loc. cit.), ordinary people of common sense are meant. If any historical persons are meant at

fighting against the Milesians and Anaximander's concept of φύσις ἄπειρος by imposing on it a superior principle of *peras* and divine harmony of the cosmos.

We possess a unique Pre-Platonic (and independent from Plato) evidence on the two dominant philosophical schools circa 400 B.C. The author of the sophistic *Dissoi Logoi* in chapter 6 refutes the «mistaken» view that «wisdom and virtue» cannot be taught. Refuting one of the arguments in support of this thesis, namely that «there are no approved teachers», he replies citing two empirical facts or proofs (τεκμήρια) of the contrary (6.7–8): τί μὰν τοῖ σοφισταὶ διδάσκοντι ἢ σοφίαν καὶ ἀρετάν; ἢ τί δὲ Ἀναξαγόρειοι καὶ Πυθαγόρειοι ἦεν. ‘What, for God’s sake, the sophists are teaching, if not wisdom and virtue? And what about followers of Anaxagoras and Pythagoras?’ Philosophers are represented by what seems to be two dominant schools of the time, the Anaxagoreans and the Pythagoreans. Like sophists, they teach theoretical wisdom (science) and practical virtue. It is not clear whether each school teaches both wisdom and virtue, or the Anaxagoreans specialise in science, and the Pythagoreans in moral education. The point is that both Anaxagoras and Pythagoras are ἀποδεδεγμένοι διδάσκαλοι, commonly recognised teachers, since generations of their disciples call themselves by the name of the founders of the school. We see that the division of Greek philosophy into Ionian and Italian traditions is some 600 years earlier than Diogenes Laertius (*contra* Sassi 2011). The author of *Dissoi logoi* probably classed Parmenides and Zeno with *Pythagoreioi*, and Democritus (if he was known to him) with *Anaxagoreioi*. In any case these two schools exactly correspond with the two camps of Plato’s «gigantomachia». That Plato regarded Pythagoras as the founder the idealist Greek metaphysics is made clear by the passage in *Philebus* 16c where the «divine gift» to mortals, the philosophy of *peras* and *apeiron*, was brought to humanity by a certain «Prometheus» of old days dwelling «closer to the gods»<sup>99</sup>. In such elevated terms Plato can speak only of Pytha-

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all, Anaxagoras would fit the bill since he admitted – alongside with the material *panspermia* – the existence of mind and living beings. Other candidates might be some Sophists of the Periclean age: they were predominantly «Ionians» (i.e. «giants») in their philosophy of nature (Protagoras, Prodicus and the Derveni author), but at the same time they were teaching ἀρετή.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. ἐγγυτέρω θεῶν οἰκοῦντες in *Philebus* with «friends of ideas» who fight with materialists «from above, out of the invisible», i.e. from celestial region.

goras himself<sup>100</sup>. The preceding remark of the Eleatic stranger about Ἐλεατικὸν ἔθνος, ἀπὸ Ξενοφάνους καὶ ἔτι πρόσθεν ἀρξάμενον (*Soph.* 242d) in all probability also alludes to Pythagoras. And the Parmenidean Kouros who strikingly resembles Pythagoras in the form of flying Apollo Hyperboreios, receives the idealist metaphysics of τὸ ἐόν as a divine revelation from Heavens (cf. ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀοράτου in Plato).

#### **(10) Explanatory notes on the use of the terms idealism, naturalism, dualism etc.**

##### **Explanatory note 1: Idealism, but not irrationalism or «shamanism».**

To avoid misunderstanding we should emphasize that idealism is not to be identified with irrationalism, magic and «shamanism». Therefore, our approach to the problem is somewhat different from that of P. Kingsley (1995). Some of the greatest and powerful philosophical minds in the history of Western philosophy were idealists, but they were not irrationalists or shamans. The same holds true for most Greek idealists. Even the ancient Pythagoreans of the 6<sup>th</sup> century were religious *philosophers*, but not inspired gurus. The Pythagorean Table of opposites (which Aristotle attributes to the generation of Pythagoras) employs extremely sophisticated abstract concepts, and it seems likely that the Pythagoreans used demonstrations and «proofs» of their doctrines, as Philolaus certainly did. With all his dislike of the Pythagorean philosophy of number, Aristotle respected Pythagoreans as philosophers (i.e. classing them with οἱ δι' ἀποδείξεως λέγοντες) and occasionally agreed with them on some issues. Otherwise he would have dismissed them without mention as he did dismiss the Orphics and other μυθικῶς σοφιζόμενοι.

<sup>100</sup> *Contra* Huffman (2001:70 ff.). Plato cannot refer primarily and exclusively to Philolaus, a contemporary of Socrates, as an ancient sage who lived «closer to the gods», but Pythagoras who lived (as Plato, no doubt, knew) as one of his incarnations (Euphorbus) already before the Trojan war, fits the bill. The precise separation of the original Pythagorean elements from Platonic developments in *Philebus* 16c is a difficult task. According to Huffman only the basic opposition of *peras* and *apeiron* has Pythagorean roots. We believe that at least the *causa conjunctionis* of the opposites (Harmonia or divine *demiourgos* in Philolaus) also belongs to Pre-Platonic Pythagorean tradition.



**Explanatory note 2: Naturalism, but not «materialism» in early Greek philosophy.**

Idealism has been contrasted with realism and materialism. In our view, in the case of Greek philosophy, especially Preplatonic, the term «materialism» should be avoided or used sparingly with great caution. Early Greek *physiologoi* referred to the primary substance as φύσις (= natura), not ὕλη (= materia). The Aristotelian notion of matter (passive and devoid of immanent ability to move and change) is a bad rendering of the Ionian *physis*. Therefore, it is preferable to use the term naturalism or physicalism, not materialism. And besides, in Modern times «materialism» was often associated with «atheism», a view that by no means is always compatible with the Greek concept of *physis*, especially when *Physis* is identified with providential god, as in Heraclitus and the Stoics<sup>101</sup>. But there is nothing wrong with the term idealism which derives from the Greek word ἰδέα. Plato refers to the philosophers who supported τὰ νοητὰ καὶ ἀσώματα εἶδη as φίλοι τῶν εἰδῶν. The semantical difference between «idealists» and «friends of ideas» is rather insignificant. Therefore «idealism», unlike «materialism», is a historically accurate and acceptable term in the typology of Greek metaphysical systems. If an objection is made that *idea* is Platonic term, «idealism» can be replaced with more authentic «mentalism», since Parmenides identifies in B3 Being with νοεῖν. On the other hand, Parmenides himself identified true Being with only one of the two «forms» (μορφαί), the «form» of Light, and μορφή is synonymous with ἰδέα.

**Explanatory note 3: Dualism entails idealism.**

Drawing a typology of basic Greek metaphysical systems Bernard Williams admits the existence in Greek thought of materialism (only matter exists), dualism (both matter and mind exist independently), but denies that the Greeks ever had developed «idealism, the monism of mind, which holds that nothing ultimately exists except minds and their experiences. It is this kind of view, with its numerous variations, descendants, and modifications, which we do not find in the ancient world» (Williams 2006: 5 ff.). To avoid misunderstanding we should note that in Williams's text «idealism» stands for what we call «idealistic monism». We use the

<sup>101</sup> Brunschwig rightly points to the «difference between the Stoic version of «materialism», a vitalist-teleological one, and a mechanistic-antiteleological one like the Epicurean version (Brunschwig in: Inwood 2003: 211).

term «idealism» in broader sense that covers both idealistic monism (or immaterialism) and dualism. In Williams' sense of the term Descartes was not an idealist, in ours he was. The same holds true for Plato and Pythagoreans. Not only the one who claims that the nature of reality is throughout mental or thought-dependent, but also the one who recognizes that apart from physical reality studied by science there is another kind of reality, incorporeal, accessible only to mind or internal  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta\varsigma$  ὄμμα etc., is also an idealist. Dualism, especially in the case of Pythagoreans and Platonic tradition, entails idealism. This is because formally acknowledging two kinds of being, the Greek dualists assert the axiological and ontological primacy of soul over the body, of mind over the matter. The body is denigrated as something both axiologically and ontologically inferior. It is not an ὄντως ὄν. And being constantly in flux, it is almost non-existing. As a result of this the dividing line between idealistic monism and dualism often becomes blurred. *It must be emphasized that the dualism of body and soul, the opposition between spiritual and corporeal, is more fundamental and philosophically more important than the formal differences (if any) between Cartesian and non-Cartesian concepts of mind and soul. Even if the mind is conceived not as Cartesian res cogitans, but as a «finest» substance (or spirit) permeating physical cosmos (as Anaxagoras' Nous or Heraclitus' Gnōmē, or Stoic pneuma), it is still mind, and the opposition between mind and body remains valid and retains all its implications. In practical terms the implications of such doctrine in the philosophy of nature, in ethics, philosophical theology etc. will be the same (or very similar) as in the case of Cartesian (Platonic) dualism. In the philosophy of nature such doctrine will imply teleology and «intelligent design», in philosophical theology it will restore the divine world (denied by strict naturalistic monists) and providentialism, in ethics it can support ascetic anti-hedonism and eradication of passions. This was the case of Heraclitus and the Stoics*<sup>102</sup>.

#### **Explanatory note 4: Idealism and historicism.**

Right after concluding that idealism did not exist in Greek philosophy Bernard Williams makes similar remarks about historicism (Williams 2006: 5 ff.). According to Williams, Greek philosophy

<sup>102</sup> Cf. the important observations of Algra on the «dualistic perspective» in Stoic theology, despite their general metaphysical monism (Algra in: Inwood 2003: 167).

was rich in ideas and anticipated many problems of the subsequent periods, but lacked these two concepts which are important and characteristic for the Modern philosophy only. This second thesis of Bernard Williams seems to us questionable no less than the first one. To begin with, general statements of the type «ancient Greeks did not have the concept of x» (e.g. idealism, historicism, subjectivity, linear concept of time, idea of progress, concept of free will, moral conscience etc.) are always to be checked for pseudo-historical evolutionism and in most cases turn out to be precarious generalizations based on incomplete (and sometimes arbitrary selected) evidence or (very often) on the confusion of word and concept. Ancient Greece, unlike ancient Egypt or Medieval Europe, was an open society with a plurality of political, cultural, religious and intellectual forms and trends. Whenever an ancient Greek **A** proposed a theory or thesis, another ancient Greek **B** immediately started to refute it, and they were soon approached by a third ancient Greek **C** claiming «you both are wrong»! Those who speak about «ancient Greeks» without specification commonly have in mind some passage from Plato, although Plato's views on many subjects (e.g. on love or justice) would seem strange and unfamiliar to most ancient Greeks. Plato's idealism was ahistorical, yes. The intelligible world is static by definition, since the objects of *episteme* cannot move or change<sup>103</sup>. But this view is not typical for the whole Greek philosophy, it is typical for Platonic idealism only. Historicism and creationism do not mix together. Historicism and naturalism are two sides of the same medal. Plato was a creationist, hence his ahistorical stance. Ionians, and their intellectual heirs in the second half of 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the ancient Sophists, were naturalists. A naturalistic (evolutionary) cosmogony of the Milesian type requires a naturalistic (evolutionary) historical anthropology. Xenophanes summarizes the common Ionian view on the progress of civilization in fr. B 18. All Sophistic *Kulturgeschichte* of the human race, like Protagoras' treatise *Περὶ τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ καταστάσεως* dwelled on this subject. Unfortunately, Williams ignores all this evidence, as he also ignores the case of Aristotle. Plato replaced history with philosophical myths, but Aristotle was – even by modern standards – a great historian, to judge by his *Athenaion politeia*. The 158 constitutional histories of Greek and barbarian states produced in the Peripatos constituted the empirical basis for Aristotle's theoretical «Politics» (Dovatour 1965). Can this grandiose historical research

<sup>103</sup> We mean the middle period theory of ideas, of course.

project be seen as a sign of absence of historicity in Greek thought? And what about Democritus and Epicureans who continued the Ionian tradition of the history of civilization? What about *Histories* of Posidonius which in a quasi-Hegelian way conceived the Roman conquests as a teleological civilizational process directed by the Universal Logos?

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