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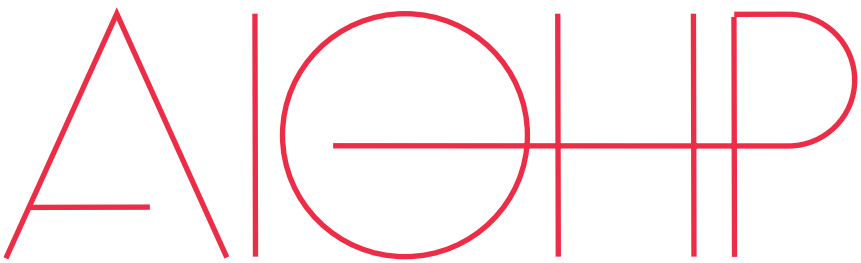

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Erasmus of Rotterdam and his Approach to Tolerance

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of the article is to study two of Erasmus' approaches to tolerance that are connected with the vision of unity and peace and the humanistic emphasis on dialogue. The justification of tolerance, which is most typical for Christian humanism as a whole, is to be found in many of Erasmus' works. Attention is initially paid to Erasmus' understanding of tolerance on the background of his central concept of *philosophia Christi* and around his antidogmatic and tolerant concept of Christianity. Tolerance is fundamentally connected to ideas about religious peace, piety and concord (*pax, pietas, concordia*). Tolerance also represents for Erasmus the beginning of self-mastery in the sense of enduring the differences and respecting the opinions and practices of others. Self-mastery is a prerequisite for a true dialogue. This does not mean unlimited tolerance for all opinions but a peaceful and moderate dialogue between opponents. This kind of dialogue is a necessity for the search for truth.*

* This is an extended and revised version of the paper presented in the conference of the annual meeting of American Philosophical Association in Baltimore, 4–7 January 2017. I would like to thank Prof. Mario Turchetti for providing me his study on tolerance. The abbreviations of the primary sources are as follows: ASD (Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami. Amsterdam, 1969-), LB (Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia. Leiden, 1703–6).

Let us resist, not by taunts and threats, not by force of arms and injustice, but by simple discretion, by benefits, by gentleness and tolerance (...sed simplici prudentia, sed benefactis, sed mansuetudine et tolerantia).[1]

INTRODUCTION

The question of tolerance is an inherent part of European history as there have been attempts to define tolerance from ancient times to the early modern period.[2] This article does not claim to be an exhaustive overview of the discussion on medieval and premodern theories on tolerance in general, its purpose is to focus on one kind of tolerance represented by the eminent humanist and one of the main figures of European intellectual life during the Renaissance, Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536). Erasmus occupies a highly important place in the history of tolerance, so important that Wilhelm Dilthey calls him the „Voltaire of the sixteenth century".[3] Some scholars include him among early modern theoreticians on tolerance and celebrate him for promoting religious tolerance.[4] The justification of tolerance, which is most typical for Christian humanism as a whole, is to

1 Epistola de philosophia evangelica (1527) in Erasmus 1961, p. 9. English citation from Huizinga 1957, p. 152.

2 Forst 2012.

3 Dilthey 1991, p. 42.

4 Zijlstra 2002, p. 209.

be found in many Erasmus' works and represents a kind of humanistic approach to tolerance. [5] Although Erasmus did not write a thematic treatise on tolerance, the very term is to be found throughout his works, in *Enchiridion militis christiani (1503), De libero arbitrio (1524), Institutio principis christiani (1516), Quarela Pacis (1517)* among others, in many *Letters* and commentaries of the New Testament.[6]

I will focus on two of Erasmus' main approaches to tolerance that are connected with the vision of unity and peace and the humanistic emphasis on dialogue.

TOLERANCE AS A PATH TO PEACE

After the breakdown of European religious unity in the 16th century, there arose a problem of religious tolerance, which would centre on peaceful coexistence in a divided Christian world.[7] In this situation, the first theories of religious tolerance were based specifically on an emphasis on unity among different people and the common acceptance of ethical aspects in order to weaken dogmatic aspects and legitimize diversity based on mutual brotherly love. Erasmus never stopped expressing his own anxiety in the face of barbaric manifestations of intolerance and violence in Christian society. Erasmus was seriously concerned about global political and religious conflicts and misunderstandings, as well as quarrels within Christianity itself.[8]

The pre-modern approach to religious tolerance can be defined from different theoretical backgrounds. Although the Middle Ages have a reputation of being an intolerant period, the simplified assumptions on unlimited intolerance during this epoch have been changed by modern scholarship.[9] However, Perez Zagorin argues that „the critical test of such a theory [of toleration] in Christian and Catholic Europe is its attitude to heresy and heretics and hence its willingness to argue against the long-standing Christian theory of religious persecution." Zagorin stands by the view that most medieval thinkers fail this test and „it was not until the religious conflicts generated in the sixteenth century by the Protestant Reformation... that genuine theories of religious toleration first made their appearance in Europe".[10] What was advocated by sixteenth-century defenders of religious liberty was not toleration in the modern sense, meaning the right of dissent, but toleration in the ancient sense, meaning a willingness to put up with dissenters until the truth is made clear.[11] The origins of the modern doc-

5 On the humanist theory of religious toleration see Remer 1996, particularly on Erasmus see pp. 43–101; Kamen 1967, pp. 24–30; Hoffmann 1982, pp. 80–106; Remer 1994, pp. 305–336.

6 Bejczy 1997, pp. 365–384.

7 Zagorin 2006.

8 Buzzi 2013, p. 29.

9 To mention some works and studies on pre-modern discussion on tolerance, Laursen 1999, especially the annotated bibliography in pp. 229–245; Kaplan 2007; Nederman, & Laursen 1996; Guggisberg 1983, pp. 35–50; Zagorin 2006; Bejczy 1997; Laursen, Nederman 1998; Solari, 2013, pp. 73–97.

10 Zagorin 2006, pp. 313–314.

11 Erasmus 1993a, p. 209n; Turchetti 1991a, pp. 15–25.

trine of tolerance can be found in the 15th century within a group of humanists devoted to themes of platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy. In particular, the idea of *concordance* between religion and philosophy and the idea of *pia philosophia*, in which they found the deepest meaning of the tradition of classical philosophy and Christian patristics, biblical revelation and ancient Jewish wisdom, became the theoretical ground for such intellectuals as Nicholas Cusanus, Marsilio Ficino or Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.[12] The *irenic* tendency, which also marked, for instance, Cusanus' writing on peace (though to a lesser extent) can be found most of all in Erasmus who spent his life in pleading for unity in balance and avoiding conflicts.[13] Erasmus, like other eminent sixteenth-century scholars of every confession, proposed a definition of the fundamentals that he hoped would reunite Christians. Erasmus' search for the unity of Christians (*unam sanctam*) is expressed in the principle that there is no other God than God but there are different perspectives on him.[14] For Erasmus the highest goal is *pax* or *concordi*a, the preservation of the harmonious unity of the Church. The *concord* is enjoyment of the goodness of all and the aim of Christian life:

> *Where mutual concord prevails, no one lacks for anything; where discord prevails, even those who have good things cannot enjoy them. Let us all, from the greatest to the least, labour to patch together peace and concord among Christians.*[15]

The preservation of unity comes at the cost of renouncing some traditional Christian practices and declaring them "things indifferent" (*adiaphora*). The "tolerant" acceptance of nonconformist religious views, beliefs and practices is based on the distinction between what is religiously essential and what is merely doctrinal. Tolerance is not primarily understood as a formal "declaration," or "edict" that protects practitioners of minority religions or dissenters. For Erasmus, heretics must be helped to return to true faith without coercion because the illness of heresy cannot be treated with violence. It is important to note that Erasmus claimed to have never said that capital punishment should not be inflicted on heretics. Rather, he only advocated preventive measures for heresy in order to cure it before heretics had to be put to death, which was only done if no other remedies were effective.[16] However, killing heretics, violence and war is in principle a greater evil than the evil of tolerating heretics. They should be tolerated or accepted until reconciliation and concord is achieved.[17] In a letter to Jean de Carondelet, Erasmus points out that:

12 Pintacuda 1985, pp. 131–151; Euler 1998; Cantimori 2009; Lecler 1960; Forst 2012, p. 77.

13 Forst 2012, p. 98; Lecler 1960, p. 103; Olin 1975.

14 Halkin 1987, p. 105.

15 Erasmus 1993c, LB X 1671A / ASD IX-1 208, p. 142.

16 Compare with Erasmus's Apologia ad monachos Hispanos (1527). Coroleu 2008, p. 89.

17 Laursen 1999, pp. 7–24, especially pp. 12–13.

> *The sum and substance of our religion is peace and concord. This can hardly remain the case unless we define as few matters as possible and leave each individual's judgment free on many questions. This is because the obscurity of most questions is great and the malady is for the most part intrinsic to our human nature: we do not know how to yield once a question has been made a subject of contention. And after the debate has warmed up each one thinks that the side he has undertaken rashly to defend is absolute truth.*[18]

The aim of a tolerant attitude towards heretics is "concord" and "peace", the practice of tolerance includes "charity", "lenity", "gentleness", "moderation" and "divine condescension, accommodation" (*synkatabasis*).[19] "Condescension" means, for Erasmus, that *sometimes the pious and simple minded ought to be tolerated, even if (they are joined) with some error* (*pius ac simplex affectus interdum tolerandus est etiamsi sit cum aliquo conjunctus errore*).[20] In his letters, Erasmus calls for moderation, discussion and patience with others.[21] Tolerance is understood as moderation, as a creation of a model atmosphere of peaceful coexistence among the followers of different religions.[22] He recommends moderation in serious issues: *whenever there was need for serious advice, I have, as I said, always advocated moderation*.[23], In another text, he even praises himself for his ability to approach various controversial issues in a moderate way: *I am thankful for one thing at least, that so far I have been able to preserve my old moderation in replying*.[24] In *The Sponge of Erasmus against the Aspersions of Hutten,* he also emphasises his moderate spirit*:*

> *I have constantly declared, in countless letters, booklets, and personal statements, that I do not want to be involved with either party. I give many reasons for my position, and there are others I have not disclosed. But in this respect my conscience does not accuse me before Christ, my judge. Amid all the upheavals of our day, amid so many dangers to my reputation and even my life, I have kept my counsels moderate, so as not to be the author of any disturbance, nor to support a cause of which I did not approve, nor in any way to betray the truth of the gospel.* [25]

Although the term *tolerantia* is found in Erasmus' work mostly in its classical and biblical sense as endurance or bearing of suffering, the term is fundamentally connected to ideas about religious

18 Erasmus 1979, pp. 100–101.

19 Turchetti 1991b, pp. 379-395; Lugioyo 2010, pp. 31–32. On the Old Testament and Patristic meaning of synkatabasis see Dreyfus 1984, pp. 74–86; Boersma 2017, pp. 72–73.

20 Erasmus 1533, 85; ASD V-3, 305, ll. 668–670.

21 Erasmus 1993b, LB X 1609e / ASD IX-1 374, p. 317: I have always urged people to moderation and tranquility, and still do.

22 Bejczy 1997, pp. 365–384; Turchetti 1991a, pp. 15–25.

23 Erasmus 1993c, LB x 1668b / ASD IX-1 202, p. 135; LB X 1639E / ASD IX-1 138, p. 60; LB X 1650B / ASD IX-1 162, pp. 88–89.

24 Erasmus 1992, p. 92.

25 See note 23.

peace, piety and concord (*pax, pietas, concordia*).[26] In *The Epistle against the False Evangelicals* he says:

> *As for the things that are pious, let us agree about them in a Christian spirit. In things not very conducive to piety, and yet not obstacles to it, let us allow each person to content himself as he sees fit; let each, testing all things, hold to what he supposes good. Difficult matters, and those that seem not yet fully discussed, let us put off until another time, so that, in the meantime, a benevolent harmony may prevail among people disharmonious in their opinions; until God may deign to reveal these things to some one.* [27]

Tolerance is the result of Erasmus' humanistic spirit and strong belief that *philosopia Christi* transcends all nationalisms and confessions in a supra-national and supra-confessional humanism.[28] Tolerance helps guarantee religious unity and demonstrates Christian solidarity which opposes nationalism, chauvinism and narrow-minded religious and political thought.[29] Erasmus' statements on excessive nationalism should be seen within the context of his persistent efforts to enhance *concord* among scholars all over Europe, to establish peace and unity among divided Christians and to unite Christian rulers.[30]

Tolerance springs from philosophy and from the Christian religion, from the *irenic* concept of the Church.[31] As Hilmar Pabel rightly points out, for Erasmus the ecclesiastical *concord* ranks above all other virtues, and no vice is more intolerable than that of discord in the church.[32] Peace, love and piety were central to Erasmus' *philosopia Christi,* the teaching that there is a simple Christian way of life, which is to be guided by studying the sacred Scriptures and classical thought.[33]

Around the central concept of *philosophia Christi*, Erasmus, created an

26 For "tolerantia" as a Christian virtue see Bejczy 1997, p. 358n. Bejczy states that in Epistola de philosophia evangelica "Erasmus retained the term at 2 Cor. 1:6 (Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. New King James Version) in his New Testament translation and added it at 2 Thess. 1:4 (...so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and [a]tribulations that you endure) and James 5:11 (Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord - that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful)."

27 Erasmus 1993a, LB X 1583D / ASD I -1 301, p. 245; Cf. Erasmus 1986, p. 302: Christ is consistent when he bids men learn one thing from him: to be gentle in spirit, not at all aggressive.

28 In Querela pacis (1516) he openly criticizes the armed conflicts between human beings of the same or of different faiths. Cf. Huizinga 1957, p. 152; Papy 2008, p. 41.

29 Kamen 1967, pp. 24–29.

30 These ideas are later echoed in visions of John Amos Comenius and his longing efforts to establish unity and peace through education and general emendation of all society. Cf. Matula 2011, pp. 209–229.

31 Pabel 1995, pp. 57–93.

32 Pabel 1995, p. 83.

33 Schoeck 1993, p. 37. For more on Christi philosophia see Eden 2001, p. 8.

antidogmatic and tolerant concept of Christianity, by returning to biblical and patristic sources. The concept of tolerance is essentially related to the ethical content of the gospel message and the commandment to love one another. Love as the supreme commandment calls for leniency/benevolence towards those of other faiths. Only love tolerates their differences while at the same time trying to lead them to truth with patience and modesty.[34] In *Querela pacis* Erasmus says:

> *Please note that Christ asks for his people a special sort of concord: he said not that they should be of one mind but that they might be one, and not just in any way, but, as he said, we are one who are united in the most perfect and inexpressible way; and incidentally he indicated that there is only one way for men to be preserved - if they unite among themselves to foster peace.*[35]

Erasmus' tendency towards pacifism compels him to search for grains of truth in both of the opposing parties in order to avoid conflict and extreme statements. The *irenic spirit* combined with the *moderate spirit* with regard to ultimate truth arose from the command of St. Paul to welcome weak believers, but not to criticize their opinions or perplex them with discussion.[36]

> *Nevertheless, if there is someone among you, perhaps a Jew by race, who, because he has grown accustomed for so long to his former practice and life, is still rather superstitious, and whose faith has not grown in him enough to enable him to exclude all observance of the former law, he must not be immediately excluded with contempt, but instead he must be attracted and encouraged by gentleness and courtesy until he too begins to advance and receive the strength of faith. This will come about more readily through good-will than through contentious arguing... In order that peace and concord exist everywhere among you some things must be ignored, some endured, some interpreted with more kindness. This forbearance and sincerity has great force to produce a mutual fellowship of life. Peace will never remain firm among many unless in some things one gives way in turn to another, inasmuch as there are various opinions among people.*

Erasmus, following St. Paul´s tolerance and support for anyone whose faith is imperfect until he advances to better things (Romans 14:1), emphasizes vigilance against the dangers of one's own pride as well as vigilance against infection with diseases of the soul, such as

34 Forst 2012, p. 106; Svatoš, & Svatoš 1985, p. 57; Bainton 1951, pp. 32–48.

35 Erasmus 1986, p. 330: In concord, small things grow; in discord, even great things decline. Compare with Sallust, Jugurtha, 10.6: Concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maxumae dilabuntur. See also Wiedemann 1993, pp. 48–57.

36 Romans 14: 1. Compare with Erasmus' paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans in Erasmus 1984, p. 373.

anger, envy and self-love.[37] In the *Enchiridion* Erasmus explains that anyone can succumb to depraved and violent behaviour, and that tolerance and leniency is a kind of remedy for personal injuries and for the destruction of personal and civil life.

> *When fierce sorrow of mind goads you to revenge, remember that there is nothing less like anger than what it falsely imitates, namely, fortitude. Nothing is quite so womanish, nothing has so much the quality of a feeble and degraded mind, as to take delight in revenge. You are zealous to appear brave by not suffering an injury to go unavenged, yet in this same way you display your childishness, for you are not able to temper your mind (an act proper to a man). How much stronger and more generous it is to reject another's folly than to imitate it! Yet someone has done harm, he is violent, he insults you. The more wicked he is, the more you should beware lest you become like him. What evil is this madness, that you avenge the depravity of another only to become more depraved yourself? If you hold abuse in contempt, all men will know you have been undeservedly abused. But if you are aroused, you will furnish a better reason for being inflicted with it. Then reflect upon what a thing it is, if an injury has been received, that it is in no wise removed by revenge, but is rather spread thereby. For what will be the end of mutual injuries if anyone continues to retaliate his own pain by revenge? Enemies increase on both sides; the pain becomes very raw. The more inveterate it is, surely the more incurable it becomes. Yet by leniency and tolerance sometimes even he who has done the injury is cured, and, having returned to himself, from an enemy becomes the surest of friends. ...*[38]

In the *Liber de sarcienda ecclesiae concordia* (1533) Erasmus recommended "a moderate condescension" to both sides in religious disputes, "moderate condescension" being a measured form of mutual accommodation that did not impinge on the essentials of Christian faith. An open dialogue with a respect for freedom and without threat or pretence is a path to avoiding the violent repression of dissidence. Erasmus understood that a Socratic emphasis on dialogue, on moderation instead of fighting (*polemos*), is a way to avoid pride and arrogance. It means that both sides of different parties (Catholics and Lutherans) must accept the essential religious teachings: the primacy of Gospel, the mission of the Church, purification of religious institutions and piety. In the name of peace and mutual tolerance, both parties must care about these religious essentials with charity and love, so as to avoid divisions and disturbances.

37 Pabel 2018, pp. 25–26. Cf. Erasmus 1984, ROM 14.23-15.4 / LB VII 826, p. 83: But whenever error arises out of weakness, he who is held in the grip of error deserves to be taught and admonished; he does not deserve to be despised or ridiculed. Schoeck 1993, p. 374; Martin 1998, pp. 249–290.

38 Erasmus 1953, p. 376.

[39] This kind of tolerance is based on the belief that saving Christian unity should be based on the recognition of the outward indifference to other religions.

Undoubtedly, Erasmus is a good example of mild-mannered views and arguments against the "forcing of consciences" in religious matters.[40] Christianity provided a cogent set of arguments in favour of forbearance, such as the conviction that the Christian's conscience should not be forced in matters of faith. Erasmus argues that the conversation about religion might go better if the participants adopt certain practices of speech, a sense of irony, an *irenic* approach to opposition and the habit of critical thinking.

TOLERANCE THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF DIALOGUE

Erasmus focuses on the impossibility of using power to force people to think in an orthodox fashion. This idea is indirectly linked back to the ancient and medieval idea that a reasonable dialogue guided by tolerance is the best way to make our "brothers of reason" more virtuous. Erasmus' pedagogy, which is the very basis of a new, humanistic search for the sources of Christendom itself and at the same time a new spiritual command to choose the rhetoric of dialogue, tolerance, understanding and self-criticism, is an invitation to inner change for the human being. Similarly to Peter Abelard, he revives and rephrases „saintly Socrates" and Christ for his own time.[41] Erasmus revived the old veneration of Socrates as a bearer of the Logos and made him an important model for Christians.[42] Erasmus often mentioned Socrates as an example of „tolerantia".[43] In *Disputatiuncula*, combining the humanistic spirit with the peace of Christian revelation, he draws a comparison between Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and Socrates in his cell.[44] Jesus is compared to Socrates and Erasmus suggests that one ought to be as patient as Socrates.[45] In *Adage* "Nosce teipsum" (*Know thyself*, I vi 95) moderation is celebrated and recommended as the middle state between two extremes (overestimation and underestimation of one's own abilities). The sources of all human troubles are blind self-love and despair:

> *The first of these [Delphi maxims] is γνῶθι σεαυτόν, Know thyself, which recommends moderation and the middle state, and bids us not to pursue objects either too great for us or beneath us. For here we have a source of all life's troubles: every man flatters himself, and blinded by self-love takes to himself*

39 Pabel 2018, p. 52.

40 Head 1997, p. 97.

41 Bartholin, & Christian 1972, pp. 1–10; Weintraub 2000, pp. 259–270.

42 Bakker, pp. 391–407; Edwards 2017, p. 141: It is no surprise that Erasmus, as a connoisseur of both Jerome and Augustine, should have grasped the latent analogy between the Christ of the Gospels and the Socrates of the aporetic dialogues.

43 Bartholin, & Christian 1972, pp. 1–10. See also Bejczy 1997, p. 358n.

44 See also Taylor 2019, p. 86; Lochman 1989, pp. 77-88. On Socrates and tolerance see Fiala 2005, pp. 4–17.

45 Eden 2001, p. 26 and 56.

without deserving it all the merit that he wrongly denies to others.[46]

Karl Popper, in his essay „Toleration and Intellectual Responsibility", characterized Erasmus as a follower of Socrates in his insights into human ignorance and moderation.[47] Erasmus' defence of tolerance derives from Socrates' insights and has ethical consequences such as self-awareness of the fallibility of human knowledge and openness to rational discussions which avoid personal attacks. Although scepticism is a persistent attribute of any philosophical dialogue, it does not mean that it necessarily leads to toleration. However, a philosophical dialogue is tolerant because toleration facilitates the discovery of what is most probably the truth.[48] *Dialogue* is an important rhetorical tool for Erasmus – he made use of it to deal with religious issues. It does not mean that Erasmus discussed all religious issues in a dialogue form because the fundamentals of faith cannot be discussed, only „the nonessential doctrines" (*adiaphora)* can be questioned.[49] When the issues debated are not essential to salvation, the speakers may adopt a sceptical attitude towards their own beliefs. Scepticism led Erasmus to the conviction that many theological debates cannot be decided and only the doctrinal *adiaphora* can be discussed in a tolerant and peaceful dialogue, not the fundamentals of faith.[50] The superstructure of the essential belief is too complex for a human being to judge. Erasmus' dislike of scholastic rational theological discussions led him to suggest a kind of sceptical or moderate position which should be used within the Church. In his most famous treatise *Praise of Folly*, where Erasmus pleads for tolerance and for light to shine on the dark areas of man's world, he states that:

...for such is the obscurity and variety of human affairs that nothing can be clearly known, as has been correctly said by my Academics, the least impudent of the philosophers.[51]

Dialogue is the best way in which to compare different opinions and decide which one is the most probable considering the strengths and weaknesses

46 Erasmus 2001, p. 95. Erasmus also wrote the famous 'Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis' in his Convivium religiosum (Colloquia 16), ASD I. 3, p. 455. Cf. Huizinga, 1957, p. 105.

47 Popper 2000, pp. 190–191.

48 Erasmus' De libero arbitrio, composed in the form of a diatribe is a kind of philosophical dialogue. The debate between Luther and Erasmus about the reality of free will shows Erasmus' moderate position. Cf. Erasmus, & Luther 2013; Murray 1920; Remer 1996, p. 92.

49 Remer 1994, pp. 305–336. On the difference between akineta and adiaphora see Rummel 2000, p. 129: Erasmus distinguished between akineta, "immoveable" articles of faith based on clear scriptural precepts; adiaphora, which allowed room for disputation; and human laws and customs that were subject to change and could be adapted to the circumstances. The last category contained many practices, he said, that could either be "tolerated or corrected." Some matters did not require an official pronouncement at all, but could simply be "left to the judgment of the individual."

50 Remer 1994, pp. 305–336.

51 Turchetti 1991b, pp. 379-395; Popkin 2003, p. 8; Erasmus 2015, p. 85.

of each position. The adoption of the ancient argument for the impossibility of epistemological certainty led the opponents to a peaceful solution of the religious issues that they discuss. Preference is given to making mistakes, since mistakes offer all participants of the dialogue the opportunity to learn about the truth. The so-called „sceptical view "should be understood as the consideration of several opinions before giving preference to the one that is most valid. Erasmus was not a sceptic in the sense of ancient pyrrhonism because pyrrhonism often took on the appearance of neo-socratism, Socrates being the most famous teacher of ignorance.[52] Erasmus´ familiarity with Academic scepticism led him to express his scepticism towards scholastic or intellectual theology. Anti-intellectualism and dislike of rational theological discussions led Erasmus to suggest a kind of sceptical basis for remaining within the Church.[53] It is important to point out that Erasmus clearly expresses his position on the limits of scepticism in connection with Scripture when he claims that:

> *Wherever the meaning of the Scripture is clear I will allow no scepticism. The same goes for the decisions of the church*.[54]

The aim of a philosophical dialogue is the search for truth; the gentleness of language and respect for each other eliminate any combat and personal humiliation. Erasmus´ type of *dialogue* aims at a common discovery of truth or the closest approximation of it. The participants of the dialogue searching for the truth adopt the sceptical stance towards the issue under discussion (Erasmus presupposed a monistic conception of truth, which excludes ideas that contradict accepted truth from the discussion). The dialogues open the sphere of doctrinal diversity. Another important point for philosophy is the active engagement of the participants of the dialogue to re-evaluate their opinions on various topics. To discover the truth, the speakers must be free to question the other speakers' views, as well as their own. They must respect each other because social interactions promote the discovery of truth. It should be emphasized that the philosophical *dialogue* is different from public oratory and speech. The philosopher is freed from political, juridical and personal issues and in this way shows his tolerance to other opinions. Philosophical *dialogue* should be restrained, free from all passions that conflict with human reason. The ideal of philosophical *dialogue* consists in the creation of a tolerant and peaceful environment for a debate where the interlocutor´s mind is not affected by any

52 According to Emmanuel Naya, it explains how Socrates was linked to the sceptical attitude and pyrrhonism. Cf. Naya 2008, p. 24.

53 On Erasmus´s scepticism and dispute with Martin Luther see Popkin 2003, p. 7 and 219.

54 Erasmus, Hyperaspistes I. Citation from Backus 2009, p. 67n. Erasmus described himself as one who loved dogmatic assertion so little that he would seek refuge in scepticism wherever this is allowed by the inviolable authority of Scripture and the church's decrees. Cf. Erasmus 1993, p. 410; Penelhum, 1983, pp. 18–22.

psychological disturbances. Intolerance is manifested in the emotional manipulation of an audience in public speeches.[55] Tolerance or moderation is closely connected to human wisdom and extended to self-understanding. The practice of an attitude tolerant to opponents comes from the knowledge of human nature and non-distance from ourselves. Distance from ourselves, indifference to our fellow beings and self-destruction demonstrate how little one understands himself. Tolerance represents the beginning of self-mastery in the sense of enduring differences and respecting opinions and practices of others. Self-mastery is a prerequisite for a true dialogue. For Erasmus it does not mean unlimited tolerance to all opinions, but a peaceful and moderate dialogue between opponents which is a prerequisite for the search for truth.

CONCLUSION

In the sixteenth century the word 'tolerance' (*tolerare*) should be understood as a grudging and temporary acceptance of an unpleasant necessity, rather than approval of pluralism or open-minded acceptance of multiple value systems.[56] In times of religious conflicts, intellectuals sought ways to reconcile hostile parties and subsequently to carry out a peaceful and stable organization of Christian society. Erasmus, like other great intellectuals between the 15th and the 17th century, such as Nicholas Cusanus or John Amos Comenius, was seen as a representative of humanistic ideals whose main aim was peace and reconciliation.[57]

The Erasmian vision of the restoration of religious consensus comes from various angles. The idea of the re-unification of divided Christians dominates in Erasmus' approaches on tolerance. The most important philosophical element of his vision of *concordia* is based on his view on human incapability to reach the definite truth.[58] Erasmus justifies toleration because he believes it reveals more truth and establishes peace.[59] Tolerance is then naturally connected with social contact which promotes the discovery of truth.

Consequently, tolerance does not mean indifference or passivity; on the contrary, it is a dynamic force, virtue, self-master, which creates individual respect for others, it helps to build a dialogue, peace and concord. Erasmus, as a follower of ancient philosophy (Socrates and the Stoics) is a promoter of tolerance as a kind of self-mastery. Tolerance is a virtue of the mind, which helps to attain self-mastery, to properly judge others and search for truth. Therefore, tolerance is not a weakness but a spiritual power of Christians. At the same time, tolerance as a form of patience with nonconformist religious views seems to be justified by reasons concerning the integrity and peace of the religious community.[60]

55 Remer 1994, pp. 305–336.

56 Head 1997, p. 97. Cf. Grell, & Scribner 1996.

57 Cf. Blum 2010, pp. 271–284; Matula 2005, pp. 381–399.

58 See note 54.

59 Remer 1994, pp. 305–336.

60 Heyd 2008, p. 173.

Erasmus' approach to tolerance should be seen against the background of its historical and ideological circumstances. He represents the form of tolerance founded on *irenism* and the principle of dialogue as a path to truth and reconciliation. Even though the achievements of Erasmus in the field of religious conciliation were minimal,[61] Manfred Hoffman emphasizes that „Erasmus' attitude towards toleration in general and toward religious toleration in particular has repeatedly been emphasized as one of the most significant elements, if not the singularly determinative factor, of his legacy for Western civilization."[62] If we agree with Henry Kamen's statement that the notion of toleration is one of the fundamental achievements of western civilisation, then we must see Erasmus as an essential part of this achievement.[63]

Despite the fact that his treatises are stigmatized by the conditions of his time, the historical situation and specific philosophical and theological resources, his endeavour to build the foundations for a peaceful and tolerant society should be appreciated even today when modern societies are threatened by a sophisticated suppression of human dignity, intransigent fundamentalism or religious sectarianism.

61 Kamen 1967, p. 28.

62 Hoffmann 1982, p. 80.

63 Kamen 1997, p. 36; Olsen 2007, pp. 1–20; Soifer 2009, pp. 19–35.

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Sperone Speroni's *Della Pace* and the Problematic Definition of Concord

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ABSTRACT

This paper contributes to the study of a mostly neglected work of the fifteenth-century Italian literature: Sperone Speroni's collection of short treatises ("trattatelli") published in the fifth volume of his *Opera* in 1740. In particular, I focus on *Della Pace* (*On Peace*), probably a draft of a never-written longer treatise. I provide a transcription and English translation of the text as well as an analysis of its content and linguistic aspects. The focus of Speroni's text is the discussion of the meaning of 'concord', which goes beyond the classical definition and brings to an unconventional analysis of also its opposite terms: discord and conflict. By reading Speroni's writing, we discover his original thought nourished by Machiavelli's and pre-Socratic influences. This paper looks at Speroni not only as an author involved in literary debates, but also as a philosopher with an original perspective to be discovered.

That which scholars consider disruptive in the history of ideas depends not on only on the level of accessibility of primary sources but also on what we decide to draw our attention to. We naturally resist the idea that an author whom the scholarly tradition and textbooks have placed in a specific category could, in fact, surprise us with unexplored writing containing revolutionary ideas that shed new light on his cultural profile and context. This is, I believe, the case of Sperone Speroni (1500–1588) with his short piece *Della pace*, which is one of several unexplored texts written by the Renaissance author which is still under-investigated.

Speroni is usually considered a member of the larger group of Aristotelian authors operating in the sixteenth century Venetian area. He is mostly known for his contribution to the so-called 'quarrel of language' in which he argued for the use of the Italian vernacular as a language that deserves to achieve the level of complexity of Latin and Greek, and which should replace them in discussing and writing about high culture and sciences. Speroni argues for this in his *Dialogo delle lingue* and contributes to the development of the vernacular by writing all his work in Italian and requiring the use of the vernacular for the discussions within the 'Accademia degli Infiammati' in which he played a central role and which he also led as its *princeps* for several months between 1541 and 1542. His interest and expertise in rhetoric as well as his practice of an exquisite eloquence plaid a central role in allowing him to

participate in the 'Accademia delle Notti Vaticane' in Rome between 1560 and 1564, where he gave speeches under the name of Nestor, the Homerian character which represents excellence in oratory. Speroni is also mostly studied for his literary production of dialogues, collected and published for the first time in 1542, and for the theory of dialogue in his *Apologia dei dialoghi* written between 1574 and 1575 to defend his dialogues before the Catholic Inquisition which considered some of them, especially the *Dialogo della Discordia* and *Dialogo della Usura*, a possible threat to Christian doctrine and public morality.[1] This is, in short, Speroni's cultural identity according to the scholarly tradition: an Aristotelian author who follows the sixteenth century preference for the dialogical genre and fights the humanistic tradition to impose the vernacular as a means of cultural communication. Only in recent years have scholars reached a better understanding of some original aspects related to his rhetoric and philosophy which have encouraged the addressing of Speroni's unexplored texts – in fact the majority of his literary production.[2] The more we explore, the more we discover that Speroni's intellectual profile is much more complex than what the scholarly tradition had offered to us up until few years ago. He uses, for example, Platonic figures of speech to express his anti-Platonic positions and Aristotelian ideas to go beyond Aristotle and even against him. He supports not only rhetoric but also the most extreme of the sophistic tradition against both the Platonic and Aristotelian condemnation of it, while his political theories seems to have much more place than we assumed in his literary production with a clear critical approach towards any idealistic approach to the subject.

This is an exciting moment in the investigation of the most original aspects of Speroni's style and philosophy and in order to elaborate further in this direction I will provide a study of his *Della pace* as an attempt to measure Speroni's originality using a political subject: the role and definition of concord in the life of a republic. Against the humanist background and beyond the Aristotelian legacy and even Machiavelli's influence, Speroni's text reveals aspects that deserve specific attention and stand as a case study to cast a light to a hitherto unexplored part of the Italian Renaissance.

SPERONI'S *DELLA PACE* AS A "TRATTATELLO"

The *Della pace* belongs to the collection of so-called "trattatelli", short treatises gathered in the fifth and last volume of the edition of Speroni's writings published in Venice in 1740 by Marco Forcellini and Natale Dalle Laste. The "trattatelli" are the part of Speroni's production which have received the least degree of attention by scholarship thus far, but which nevertheless contain surprising and innovative positions, for example a unique attack

1 For a general presentation of the author and his work, see Pozzi 1996 and Piantoni 2018.

2 The most recent studies are the monographs Katinis 2018 and Cotugno 2018.

against Socrates (*Contra Socrate*) and a surprising defense of the sophists (*In difesa dei sofisti*).[3] These short writings were in all probability drafts for what maybe Speroni intended to develop as more extensive treatises, or speeches to be delivered, or letters, or even dialogues to add to his collection published in 1542. A deeper understanding of the genesis and their final destination in Speroni's literary and intellectual trajectory would need an exploration and philological study of the 17 volumes of Speroni's manuscripts in the Biblioteca Capitolare of Padua, which goes beyond the purpose of this contribution.[4]

The transcription that I offer in the Appendix is from the 1740 edition which is much more readable than Speroni's autograph in manuscript E.13/XI (287r-288v) kept in the Biblioteca Capitolare of Padua, especially if one does not have access to a direct examination of the source. As a matter of fact, the library has been under restoration for a long time and it is currently not possible to consult its archive in person. Nevertheless, the reproduction is enough to verify that there is no relevant difference between Speroni's autograph and the 1740 edition, and it is also useful to reveal other aspects of the original. First of all, the title *Della pace* is written in a different hand and pen on the upper left-hand corner of the first page, the same hand that wrote the index of contents at the beginning of volume XI (IIIr-v) of Speroni's manuscripts. The same hand wrote a note above the index stating that those contents are copied in the 1740 edition. Speroni did not, however, provide any title for his text and the structure and disposition of his sentences suggest that this was mostly a list of private notes. The sequence of the first four sentences follows, for example, a symmetric order in the manuscript and they are ordered as a list of sequential thoughts ("La pace è … / comunemente …/ la guerra e' … / comunemente ….").

Even the collection title "trattatelli" is not in the manuscript but was instead provided by the editors of the 1740 edition (neither by Speroni nor by the later hand mentioned above). Although it is unclear how Speroni viewed this collection of short writings of his, it is worth noticing that for the text entitled (by someone else) *Della pace* the category "trattatello" fits quite well with what should have been the final result according to an indication in the very text (p. 438) in which Speroni refers to his work (or to the final version that would have emerged) as "questo trattato". I do not want to speculate about what the final version of this writing would have been, but I do have to admit that I regret that we do not have it. I believe that the implications and the further elaboration of what it is here *in nuce* would have been of the most interest for the history of Renaissance literature. This would in all probability also be true for several other "trattatelli" by Speroni which propose very original perspectives.

As a draft of some possible never-completed final work, Speroni's *Della*

3 See the textual Appendix in Katinis 2018, p. 149–160.

4 On Speroni's manuscripts, see Bellinati 1989 and Grata 2013.

pace presents some ambiguities in the writing and also in the logic of certain passages. These issues cannot be avoided but, nevertheless, the text appears to be quite clear in the points Speroni wants to make and allows for an outline of Speroni's work.

A WORK OUTLINE

Speroni begins his argumentation with certain clarifications: peace is commonly intended as a union, but not in the sense of unification in one substance of different things, but more in the sense of concord of different things. In particular, since this text focuses on the peace within a city, we deal with the concord of different citizens' opinions and wills. The internal conflicts between contraries, such as reason and affection or desire, is a natural state of being both in the city as well as in each man, while concord, even the imperfect one, is difficult to achieve. Indeed, the author claims as a universal truth, a *Weltanschauung* sketched in a few lines that echoes Heraclitus' idea of *polemos* as a universal law, that the entire world is ruled by conflict. According to Speroni, the world is made up of contraries, nevertheless concord is an effort to be done for specific political benefit. Speroni also invites us to consider that discord is created by God to give life to the world through contraries (night and day, different seasons, etc). The world would not exist without conflict and discord.

This reasoning echoes the self-defense that the goddess Discord provides in Speroni's *Dialogo della Discordia* in which Discord presents herself as a universal law that rules the natural and human world, a necessary and beneficial figure that is unjustly condemned by men and gods. This dialogue in Lucian style might have been inspired by Desiderius Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, although Speroni replaces Folly with a different character. Scholars have usually viewed the staging of Discord's self-defense before Jove as a paradoxical work and a rhetorical exercise that demonstrates the power of eloquence against common sense. This paradoxical aspect of Discord's defense is called into doubt, however, by the *Della pace* in which Speroni clearly recognizes discord as created by God for the benefit of the world at all levels and argues for this directly, involving no dialogical mask.[5] The uncertain date of composition of the *Della pace* does not allow for a determination of the chronological proximity to the *Dialogo della Discordia* but, regardless of the date of composition, the very presence of this "trattatello" in Speroni's literary production demonstrates that discord was for Speroni not only a mythological figure for a paradoxical *mise-en-scène* but instead a main factor to take into consideration when we talk about political life in a broader natural context.

In his *Della pace*, Speroni argues that if discord in nature exists for a good reason, one can argue the same about the disagreement between men's wills; indeed, this gives birth to the virtues. The political peace, in contrast, stems from

5 Katinis 2018, p. 92. On this dialogue, see also Fournel 1990, p. 191–195; Buranello 1999; Katinis 2015.

concord – and not from a true unification that is impossible to reach – of different wills, which allow for man's happiness, but only the type of happiness envisaged by the philosopher that looks at the interests of the public sphere, not by the Christian. The latter seeks out a perfect concord and true peace for each man, which is true well-being ("salute" from the Latin "salus" in the double sense of health and salvation) but impossible to achieve in the city and very difficult to reach for any individual. Speroni considers the ideal men proposed by Christianity above human possibilities, while the Christian principle that calls for treating others as you would want them to treat you is against human nature. Each man, as any other animal, wants by nature to control others and use them to satisfy his own desires, while he avoids the opposite. Taking a distance from the humanist ideal of human dignity above instinctual nature (or at least the possibility of that), Speroni does not perceive any difference between human behavior and any other animal that hunts and kills to survive, although men also need to build a republic to survive so that their instinct to subjugate each other has to also confront other needs. Given all this, true peace among men would only be possible in a Christian republic which is above the actual republics as an ideal Christian man is above men's nature. The actual republics do not strive therefore for true peace but only for the kind of concord that prevents any public harm. The purpose of Speroni's writing is precisely to clarify the meaning of the only peace possible in nature, a peace that, far from being perfect harmony, aims at establishing a safe environment for the citizens. This is a fictional ("simulata") and conventional peace which is not true friendship but only refrains from attacking each other.

It is worth noting that this disenchanted perspective does not spare biblical figures such as Job and the Apostles. Speroni wrote that the correct reading of the Sacred Texts to describe the former ("erat timens Deum") as well as the words pronounced by the latter ("quid erit nobis?") would demonstrate that even these high examples of sanctity demonstrate that our deeds always aim at obtaining a prize and avoiding a punishment. In other words, even the most religious men follow human nature that encourages them to act in their own interest which consists of avoiding destruction and prolonging life.

As it is for true peace, true friendship, harmony and virtue among men are also impossible to achieve. Indeed, towards the end of his writing, Speroni proposes several examples of earthly, i.e. imperfect, friendship ("mondana amicizia") among relatively vicious men ("viziosi", "non boni"), such as Theseus and Pirithous, Pylades and Orestes, and Patroclus and Achilles, to demonstrate that this kind of friendship is the norm among men. In summary, Speroni suggests being aware that when we talk about peace, friendship, concord, and similar concepts related to human nature and human communities, we should refer not to an ideal form but only to a version of them that is applicable in our imperfect earthly world.

MACHIAVELLI AND BEYOND

Speroni's disenchanted representation of human nature and the limits of any idealistic republic is a clear statement of anti-Platonism and suggests that his thought is under the influence of Niccolò Machiavelli's work. It should not be surprising, however, that Speroni never quotes Machiavelli. The date of *Della pace* is unknown, but even if Speroni wrote this before the inclusion of Machiavelli's writings on the Index of Prohibited Books (1559) by the Catholic Inquisition, the condemnation of the evil Segretario would have discouraged any explicit reference even before that date. As is the case for many other authors, however, who wrote about politics after the publication of Machiavelli's works, his revolutionary theories should not be disregarded and it is almost impossible to overestimate his influence in the fifteen century and beyond. Indeed, Speroni seems to have learned Machiavelli's lessons on many levels, but more than a repetition of his thought, he seems influenced by his disenchanted pragmatism upon which he built his own discourse. He follows Machiavelli's so-called "negative anthropology" as it is pictured in the treatise *Il principe* and in the play *La mandragola*. He implicitly agrees with Machiavelli's rejection of any imaginary republic (*Il principe* XV) and his consideration of conflicts as legitimate and useful aspects of political life (*Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* I, 4 and 6). Speroni also embraces the necessity of considering only the "verità effettuale", avoiding any discourse on what reality should be and focusing on what it actually is.[6] Speroni connects the political conflict to a more general state of being, beyond the political sphere, which consists of a representation of reality that goes beyond human nature and includes it in a broader prospective, a position confirmed in the dialogue on discord published in 1542 and already mentioned above. The entire subject of *Della pace* is also treated with a constant parallel reflection on the linguistic issues and the shifting meanings of discussing peace. Both these aspects (the almighty discord and the linguistic approach) go beyond Machiavelli's legacy and represent the most original contribution of Speroni to the subject.

THE AMBIGUITY OF LANGUAGE

Words are misleading and language is haunted by a paradox: it explains and hides, communicates and confuses at the same time. The first lines of Speroni's text point to a broader linguistic view in the background, and not an optimistic one, starting with the keyword in the title, peace, but also its opposite, war. The less than straightforward relationships between the words and their meaning might depend on the fact that

6 The most recent study on the role of conflict in Machiavelli is Pedullà 2018, while Vasoli (1996, p. 290) found analogies with Machiavelli's political thought in Speroni's *Apologia dei dialoghi* IV. A wider exploration of Machiavelli's influence in Speroni is still neglected as well as a study on his political philosophy spread not only in several of his "trattatelli", but also in his *Dialoghi* and *Apologia dei dialoghi*.

any word has several meanings, or nuances within the same meaning, including a common use but also other less common, so that it is impossible to find a permanent stable signification, metaphysically and meta-historically guaranteed, that reassures us on the meaning of each word.

Although the focus of the *Della pace* is not linguistic, this text begins with a linguistic concern ("la pace è nome equivoco ... La guerra anch'essa è equivoca") which emphasizes the equivocality of the two key terms that demarcate, as opposites and implying each other, the subject treated in Speroni's writing. The adjective "equivoca" reappears further in the text to qualify the term "concordia", while towards the end of the text the substantive "equivocazion" is used to express one of the aims of his text: to distinguish the equivocalness of the term peace.

Due to the frequency of the common misunderstanding and the semantic instability of the terms he is talking about, the author requires from himself and the reader an effort in maintaining an awareness of different meanings of peace, concord and the other main terms of the discourse. Indeed, shifting from the conventional meaning to a different one allows for a reshaping of the entire field of analysis so that we suddenly find ourselves on a new path which leads to unconventional conclusions, far from the humanistic thought. The idea that concord in the city does not have, for example, anything to do with true (in a platonic and Christian sense) harmony, but is rather a counter-instinctual effort to be carried out for the benefit of the community and finally for the survival of the citizens.

A different word meaning can lead to an uncommon thinking path. I do not want to emphasize too much this aspect of the text, but if we avoid the linguistic problem that Speroni himself poses at the beginning, we risk a misunderstanding of the entire text. This entanglement between *res* and *verba* leads us back to the dawn of the onto-linguistic problem discussed in Plato's *Cratilus*, a text that Speroni should have known, as well as all the rest of Plato's dialogues, thanks to Marsilio Ficino's Latin translation, if not directly from the original Greek. An echo of the problematic relationship between language and reality discussed in the *Cratilus* is clearly involved in Speroni's thought. It is not the aim of my contribution to investigate in detail the sources and the plurality of possible ancient references - either for the linguistic aspect or for any other aspect of *Della pace* – that Speroni could have taken into account (mostly to reject them), in writing on the meaning and applicability of peace in a city. But if I had to briefly summarize Speroni's position before antiquity, I would point to his strong anti-Platonism and anti-Augustinianism along with a more tolerated Aristotelianism, but with a strong taste of so-called pre-Socratic traditions along with the above-mentioned Heraclitism and even more a sophistic component (considering both linguistic concerns, i.e. Gorgias of Leontini, and the political pragmatism, i.e. Protagoras of Abdera). Having said that, I refrain from a deeper

investigation which goes beyond the two aims of my contribution: to provide the reader with direct access to Speronis' text (in the Appendix below) and shed light on its highlights (in my analysis above).

It is regretful that Speroni's notes never became a more articulated and refined work. Reading the *Della pace*, as well as many other of Speroni's "trattatelli", I regret not having the opportunity to know more extensively what Speroni would have written on the rejection of the simple and naive idea of political concord for a more realistic concept of peace in the context of a pragmatic political theory based on a realistic anthropology which anchors men to their animal nature. Speroni's "trattatelli" represent a cluster of unaccomplished, potentially revolutionary, writings which are still waiting to be explored. This paper would also like to encourage further investigation in this direction.

APPENDIX: SPERONI'S *DELLA PACE* (IN SPERONI 1740, P. 437–8)

I use modern punctuation in my transcription to facilitate the reading of the original text, while my English translation aims at balancing the literal textual meaning with the need to maintain a logical order and readability throughout Speroni's argumentation.

La pace è nome equivoco veramente. Comunemente si usa per l'opposto della guerra. La guerra anche essa è equivoca. Comunemente si usa per la battaglia mortale, ove si ammazzano li inimici. La pace significa comunemente anche concordia o di opinioni o di volontà, che è unione. Unione è quando varie cose si uniscono facendo una cosa, come quando gli elementi meschiandosi fanno il misto, o il corpo e l'anima a fare il vivo, o la materia e la forma a fare il composito. E questa unione non è nella pace di che si parla; perciocché questa unione non di contrarii, ma di due cose sostanziali, e per sé sussistenti e perfette. La pace adunque di cui si parla è concordia, la quale è nelli uomini di opinioni o di volontadi le quali si accordino come le voci nell'armonia. Concordia di opinioni non ha nome proprio volgar né latino. Concordia di volontadi è benevoglienza, e quando è compita si può dire amicizia.

Peace is a truly equivocal term, which is usually used as the opposite of war, but also this term is equivocal. War is commonly used to indicate a deadly battle in which one kills one's enemy. Peace commonly also means concord of opinions or wills, which means union. Union is when different things unify making one thing, which is when the elements blend and make a mix, or body and soul make a living being, or matter and form make a compound. And this union is not in the peace that we are here talking about, because this union is not made by contraries but rather two perfect substances that exist independently. The peace that we are talking about is therefore concord, which is in men's opinions or wills that can tune with each other like harmonic voices. Concord of opinion has no vernacular or Latin name. Concord of wills is benevolence and can be called friendship when

Ma questa è equivoca, ed anche quella di opinion, secondo le cose intorno alle quali sono le opinion e le volontadi. Alla concordia di due voleri si reduce quella della ragione e dell'affetto. La ragion vuole, ed appetisce l'affetto. L'uomo è composto di contrarii; anzi tutto 'l mondo. Però difficil cosa è trovar pace nell'uomo, cioè concordia. Ma se la contrarietà o discordia del mondo è fatta dalla natura o da Dio a fin di bene, cioè acciocché ne nascano diverse cose, e la diversità delle stagioni nell'anno, e di giorno e notte, e questo bene sono piante, bestie ed uomini, dovemo anche pensare che le discordie de' voleri delli uomini facciano effetti boni; e che perciò siano permessi e fatti da Dio. Li effetti che ne nascono son le virtù. Ben considera. E dalla discordia della ragione e degli affetti nascono, benché non si concordino, come è il martirio per la verità. In summa chi vuol ben parlar della pace diversa alla guerra, parli prima della pace di sé medesimo tra la ragione e lo affetto, e come il mondo è composto di contrarii a fin di bene, così qui si cerchi la pace tra li uomini non perché essi si concordino, ché ciò è difficile, se non impossibile, ma acciocché nasca la quiete della città, il che è fine e felicità dell'uomo. E questo basti al presente. Ma cercar pace che veramente sia concordia e benevolenza e salute dell'uomo particolare partiene a solo il cristiano, perché egli solo va alla salute particolare; ove il filosofo va alla specie, la felicità della quale, tal quale è, partiene alla città. E se 'l filosofo va al particolare, ponendo summa felicità nel filosofo contemplativo; il cristiano va al particolare religioso e di buon volere; e ciò nota bene. Il non fare altrui quello che a noi stessi non vogliamo esser

it is complete. But this is equivocal as well as the concord of opinions regarding the objects of these opinions and wills. The concord of reason and appetite is definable as a concord of wills: while reason wants, appetite desires. Not only the human being is made of contraries but also the entire world. This is why it is difficult to make peace, as concord, in the human being. But if contrariety and discord in the world are caused by nature and God for a good end, i.e. for the emergence of a variety of things, the different seasons of the year, day and night, and this good end is the plants, animals and human beings, we must also consider that the discords among different men's wills bring about positive results for which those discords are allowed and made by God, and the virtues derive from this state of being. Consider this carefully. And these virtues are caused by the discord between reason and passions, although they do not agree with it, like martyrdom for the truth. In summary, he who wants to speak correctly about peace different from war should first talk about the peace within oneself between reason and passions, and consider that the world is made of contraries for a good end, and, therefore, one should aim at peace among men not to make them agree (since this is difficult) but rather to build a peaceful city, which is men's aim and happiness. And this is enough at the moment. But looking for peace that truly is concord, benevolence and the health of an individual belongs only to the Christian, because he is the only one who considers the individual health, while the philosopher considers the species whose happiness, in itself, belongs to the city. And while the philosopher looks

fatto è cosa anzi sopra natura che naturale: è ben cosa ragionevole se la ragione domina l'appetito; e anche dominando ella lo affetto, non è vero generalmente; perciocché l'uomo vuol dominare e non esser dominato, massime se è signor, come si dice, per natura; vuol giudicare e non essere giudicato; ed esser uomo tra femmine e non femmina tra uomini. Le fere fanno altrui quel che a sé non vogliono che sia fatto, mangiandole e sforzandole. A far gli uomini particolari per lo comun civile e salute sua, come fa il mondo a ben della specie umana, saria bona cosa quando la repubblica fosse perfetta, ma quale delle tre note è perfetta? Certo niuna: sola la cristiana è perfetta. Dunque filosoficamente parlando, cessa la ragion della città in tutti gli uomini, specialmente ne' servi e ne' sudditi; e ciò nota bene. A questa sola si de' rimetter la vita, la roba, l'onore, e i figlioli, ché ciò facendo si acquista la vera ed eterna felicità. È dunque impossibile la vera pace tra gli uomini se non nella repubblica cristiana. Puossi inferire che vera pace per sé non possa essere ne' cori umani ma solamente per grazia di Dio. Né questa cercano le repubbliche, ma quella sola onde non possa nascere alcun male pubblico evidentemente, non curando dello intrinseco del core umano. E forse anche perciò non può essere in terra verace pace; perché noi facciamo il bene anzi con speranza di premio e timor di pena, che per ben fare, onde si dice di Job *erat timens Deum*; e dimandavano li apostoli *quid erit nobis*? {p. 438} E certo se la pace non può esser se non nelli uomini di bona voluntade e la bontà del voler nostro sia grazia di Dio, la pace è non è da noi ma da Dio. La vera pace vien da Dio, ma la

at the individual when it considers the highest happiness in the contemplative philosopher, the Christian instead looks at a specific believer and his good will; and consider this carefully. Do not do to others what we would not want done to us is something more above nature than natural: it is reasonable if the reason controls the desire; and even if it controls the passions this is not generally true, because man wants to dominate and not be dominated (even more if he is a lord, as we say, by nature). He wants to judge and not be judged, and wants to be male among females and not the opposite. The beasts do to others what they would not want done to them, by eating and forcing the others. It would be good to consider the individuals for common civic life and its well-being, as the world does for the goodness of the human species, if the republic could be perfect, but which of the three that we know is perfect? Certainly there is no perfect one except for the Christian republic. Hence, philosophically speaking, the reason of the city stops in all men, especially in the servants and subjects; and consider this carefully. Therefore, true peace is impossible except for in the Christian republic. One can infer from this that no true peace can come from the human heart but only from God's grace. And the republics do not look for this true peace but rather only for the peace that means absence of any public harm and, in so doing, does not deal with the intentions of man's heart. And this is perhaps also why true peace is not possible on earth, because we do good deeds not for ourselves but rather hoping for a prize and fearing a punishment, and this is why one talks about Job *erat timens Deum*, and the

pace che dà il mondo, la quale è diversa da quella di Dio, è sempre con peccato, perché ha l'occhio o alla vita o all'onore o alla facultà pubblica e private. Però in questo trattato si doveria distinguer la equivocazion della pace e mostrare che la naturale non è possibile essendo l'uomo composto di cose contrarie e discordanti, ciò sono li elementi, l'anima e il corpo, materia e forma, ragione e affetto, spirito e carne. La civile è simulata e non cordiale. La cordiale è da Dio, e ciò nota. Amicizia, mondanamente parlando, è più che la pace; perciocché ella è concordia di volontade e di vera benivolenza. Ma parlando per vero, ed in Cristo, non è buona quella amicizia dal mondo bona stimata, e non è virtù anche mondanamente, né con virtù. Vedi la ragione perché tal mondana amicizia può esser tra viziosi, il che appar per quella mondana amicizia di doi o tre para di amici: ché Teseo e Piritoo non furono boni, né Pilade ed Oreste, né Patroclo ed Achille. Di Pitia e Damone non trovo vita né opre. E nel far delle paci tali quali possono esser tra noi, bisogna considerare la diversità delle tre o quattro repubbliche, poiché la perfetta non è nota se non al cristiano. Però trattar di pace o guerra o duelli senza questa distinzione è cosa vana. Che le repubbliche diverse siano qui da considerare, Aristotile il dice nella *Rettorica* parlando della orazione.

apostles asked *quid erit nobis*? {p. 438} And of course if peace can be in men of good will and only this good will can come from God's grace, than peace comes not from us but from God. Hence true peace comes from God but the peace that comes from this world, which is different from the one from God, is always imperfect, because it aims at the life or honor or public and private spheres. This is the reason why in this treatise the equivocalness of peace should be avoided to demonstrate that peace in nature is impossible, given that man is made of contrary and discordant things: different elements, soul and body, matter and form, reason and passions, spirit and flesh. Civil peace is simulated and not cordial. The cordial one is from God, and note this. Friendship, worldly speaking, is more than peace, because it is concord of wills and true benevolence. But speaking truly, and in Christ, the friendship that the world considers good is not good and it is neither a virtue nor accomplished with virtue even in worldly terms. And the proof is that this worldly friendship could also be between vicious men, which is clear in the worldly friendship of two or three pairs of friends, since Theseus and Pirithous, Pylades and Orestes, and Patroclus and Achilles were not virtuous; while I do not find either life or acts of Pythias and Damon. And to carry out the peace that can be done among us, we have to consider the diversities among the three or four republics, since the perfect republic is known only by the perfect Christian. Therefore, talking about peace or war or duels without this distinction is a vain thing. Also Aristotle says that different republics must be considered when he talks about the oration in his *Rhetoric*.

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The Epistemology of Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy: The Case of Alessandro Piccolomini

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ABSTRACT

Until ten years ago, the existence of vernacular Aristotelianism as a philosophical movement in the Italian Renaissance was virtually ignored by scholarship. After a series of international research projects, we know much more about the Aristotelian vernacular tradition and of its impact on Renaissance and early modern thought, especially regarding its role in disseminating knowledge, in its settling into informal contexts like academies and artisanal workshops, and also in breaking the boundaries between high and low cultures. Vernacular Aristotelianism changed how Aristotle's works were read, understood and used, leading to a better grasp of specific disciplines usually ignored, like meteorology, biology, and mechanics, which promoted the transition from the old Aristotelian-Scholastic scientia to early modern science. This transition in a changing world reshaped the epistemology of intellectuals of the time. In this paper, I focus on one of the most brilliant exponents of vernacular Aristotelianism, that is Alessandro Piccolomini (1508–1579), examining the role he played in creating a new epistemology, which reflects on the most important issues that will come to dominate the discussion in the emergence of early modern science.

1. TOWARDS A NEW EPISTEMOLOGY

Until ten years ago, the existence of vernacular Aristotelianism as a philosophical movement in the Italian Renaissance was virtually ignored by scholarship, which believed that Aristotle was the domain of the clergy and university professors, who wrote and taught in Latin. Scholars assumed that what was written in the vernacular had only informational and divulgative purposes and, therefore, that it was by nature unoriginal and lacking in theoretical depth—not worthy of scholarly interest or of philosophical investigation. They made a simplistic distinction between "serious" scholars—those who read Aristotle in Greek, or at least his most accurate Latin translations, and discussed his philosophy in Latin—and the "popularizers" of Aristotle's philosophy, who did not care about philological questions and were generally ignorant of classical languages.[1]

There have been some exceptions to this general rule, which, however, have put an emphasis only on the linguistic and literary dimension of vernacular Aristotelianism.[2] Little or nothing, in contrast, was written on the philosophical and scientific contribution of this movement. The only study that took vernacular works seriously into consideration was Leonardo Olschki's survey of a number of vernacular Aristotelian

1 See Bianchi 2009 and Lines 2015 for the weaknesses in the study of vernacular Aristotelianism.

2 See the paradigmatic study of Wasik 1935.

writings, regarded as fundamental for the understanding of the development of early modern science and, in particular, for their impact on Galileo Galilei's early thought.[3]

However, Charles B. Schmitt, the most prominent scholar of Renaissance Aristotelianism, denied that vernacularizations and vulgarisations had any real impact on early modern philosophy and science:

> It may have a certain democratic and social value to make important scientific writings available in the language of the common people, but one wonders how often this has contributed to the significant advance of science. Even if important scientific papers were printed in the daily newspapers, I doubt if this would sensibly contribute to the advancement of science – to its diffusion, perhaps; to its advance, no. Those who are capable of making contributions are few, and they usually come into contact with the significant material that interests them. It is also an inescapable fact that during the sixteenth century – and even much later – Latin was the common language through which scientists communicated with one another. Serious scientific and intellectual work of international importance was written in Latin, for this was the language understood by scientific community. Vernacular treatises might have been appropriate for local shipbuilder or surgeon but, with few exceptions, anything important was still written in Latin.[4]

From the early 1970s when Schmitt wrote these words, the situation has changed considerably. After a series of international research projects[5] and the cataloguing and examination of more than 300 printed works and 200 manuscripts,[6] we know much more about the Aristotelian vernacular tradition and of its impact on Renaissance and early modern thought, especially regarding its role in disseminating knowledge, in its settling into informal contexts like academies and artisanal workshops, and also in breaking the boundaries between high and low culture.[7]

Somewhat inevitably, the fate of vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy followed that of Renaissance Aristotelianism more generally. Indeed, much twentieth-century historical research viewed Renaissance Aristotelianism in a negative light simply in counterpoint to the emergence of early modern philosophy and neglected to consider how it promoted the intellectual framework that facilitated and conditioned the

3 Olschki 1922, pp. 222–38.

4 Schmitt 1970.

5 AHRC project *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy c. 1400-c. 1650* led by David Lines, Jill Kraye and Luca Bianchi at the University of Warwick and the Warburg Institute, and the ERC project *Aristotle in the Italian Vernacular: Rethinking Renaissance and Early-Modern Intellectual History (c. 1400-c. 1650)* led by Marco Sgarbi and David Lines at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and at the University of Warwick.

6 https://vari.warwick.ac.uk/

7 Bianchi 2012; Sgarbi 2016a.

innovations and discoveries of the new philosophy. These studies understand Aristotelian culture as being stagnant, essentially in a context within which philosophers were obliged to teach the Peripatetic doctrine according to specific canons and standards imposed by the various university regulations. These Aristotelians could hardly be expected to bring radical novelties to their comments and explanations of the Aristotelian texts. In his popular book on Francis Bacon, Anthony Quinton explicitly declared that Aristotelians "saw themselves as orderers and preservers of knowledge, not as its creators."[8] Ultimately, they were organizers of knowledge, not philosophers: they were unable to uncover new ideas. More recently, David Wootton has asserted that for Aristotelian philosophy "there was no such thing as new knowledge" and that Renaissance Aristotelians lacked the notion of invention to produce new ideas and to understand the new discoveries being attached to the authority of the Stagirite, as if they were suspended in a world without development.[9]

A contextualist reading of this movement shows that things in fact happened differently.[10] Indeed, vernacular Aristotelianism changed how Aristotle's works were read, understood and used, leading to a better grasp of specific disciplines usually ignored, like meteorology, biology, and mechanics, which promoted a clear transition from the old Aristotelian-Scholastic *scientia* to early modern science. This transition in a changing world reshaped the epistemology of intellectuals of the time. Indeed, vernacular writings reflect an interaction and, at times, a merger between completely different scientific and philosophical traditions, showing a strong blend of eclecticism and promoting thus a new cognitive access to reality.

Recent investigations of Renaissance Aristotelian meteorological works reveal a different intellectual attitude towards the object of research in comparison with previous centuries. Authors such as Andrea Bacci, Girolamo Borro, Francesco de' Vieri, and Vitale Zuccolo published bestsellers on earthquakes, fires, floods, tides and winds. Vernacular meteorology was rich in anecdotes and shows the flexibility of Aristotelian scholars in considering provisional and revisable theories. These works emphasised the importance within the formulation of scientific conjectures of empirical experiments, such as those conducted in the chemical field to develop a more comprehensive explanation of nature. In fact, vernacular works on meteorology tried to elaborate scientific theories corresponding to empirical evidence and experiments, to ancient texts and to religious doctrines, in an attempt to make observation fit within certain epistemological structures, based only on chance and accident. In this epoch of transition, the Aristotelian epistemology applied to meteorological phenomena aims to bring reason to bear on experience in its totality, dissolving

8 Quinton 1980, p. 29.

9 Wootton 2015, p. 74.

10 On the contextual approach see Mercer 2019.

the distinction between sublunary and heavenly bodies.[11]

Studies of vernacular natural philosophy in the Renaissance pinpoint the strong relevance of the discussion of preternatural phenomena, which involved biological and medical considerations.[12] In particular, a debate of mounting importance in the Renaissance concerned monsters and wonders of nature. Generally, from Aristotle onwards, the appearance of a monster or a wonder of nature was taken as a rupture in the natural order of things, but during the Renaissance, thanks to authors such as Benedetto Varchi,[13] there was a change of perspective. Monsters and wonders of nature were no longer conceived as an extravagance of nature, but as evidence on which it was necessary to reflect in order to develop a broader explanatory theory of nature. The problem was not so much the monsters as the failure of human reason to explain them. Monsters, wonders and prodigies thus became the paradigm for the enlargement of scientific explanation and not something that had to be expelled from science.

Investigations within Renaissance mechanics show how artisans, architects and engineers were not merely manual workers, but specialists who employed sometimes even complex mathematical theories and techniques. Far from being mere practitioners, they were very much reliant on the scholarly book-based culture. By virtue of the works of Nicolò Tartaglia, Antonio Guarino, Giuseppe Moleti, and many others who reworked Aristotle's *Mechanical Questions*,[14] mechanics was elevated to a theoretical science from being a mere manual art, began to have recourse to mathematics for understanding the natural world, investigated preternatural effects, and indeed set about producing them for human ends.[15] By means of this new understanding of mechanics there arose a total reconsideration of practical skills and a re-evaluation of the mechanical arts, paving the way for a new idea of knowledge typical of early modern scientists such as Galileo Galilei.[16]

From this very brief overview we can begin to understand how in Italy most vernacular Aristotelians were wide-ranging intellectuals who did not simply passively receive and transmit Aristotelian philosophy but were actively engaged in reformulating ideas and thus creating a new epistemology, a vernacular epistemology, which influenced and shaped early modern thought.[17]

In this paper, I focus on one of the founders of vernacular Aristotelianism, Alessandro Piccolomini (Siena, 1508–1579). Studies in natural philosophy,

11 Craig Martin has provided the most important contributions in the field see Martin 2006; Martin 2010; Martin 2011; Martin 2012; Martin 2015.

12 Just to list some of the most important contributions see Daston, & Park 1981; Daston 1998; Daston, & Park 1998; Anafi 2000, pp. 16–33; Bitbol-Hespériès 2006.

13 Montemagno Ciseri 2008.

14 Among the many studies see Henninger-Voss 2000; Henninger-Voss 2002; Valleriani 2013; Pisano, & Capecchi 2016; Sgarbi 2016b.

15 Laird 1986, pp. 45–6.

16 Rossi 1997, p. 48. For the most exhaustive research on the topic see Valleriani 2010.

17 Smith 2003, p. 8.

meteorology, astronomy dominated his entire scholarly career, which was spent on the edge of the universities in the informal context of the new-born academies, especially in the Accademia degli Intronati in Siena and in the Accademia degli Infiammati in Padua. However, Piccolomini is much better known today for his literary contributions.[18] A brief list of Piccolomini's scientific and philosophical writings in vernacular and in Latin may provide a glimpse of the breadth of his scientific interests. While in Siena at the Accademia degli Intronati his business was mainly, if not exclusively, literary, but when he arrived in Padua in 1538 the situation radically changed. Piccolomini started his first philosophical and scientific investigation in connection with the university, in particular with the mathematician Federico Delfino, and with the Accademia degli Infiammati, which among its fellows had scientists of the calibre of physician Bernardino Tomitano and anatomist Andreas Vesalius.[19]

In 1540 Piccolomini published a Latin translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias's commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorologica*. It included the treatise *De iride*, which contained criticisms of the Bolognese professor Ludovico Boccadiferro.[20] Piccolomini's first and most popular work is *De la sfera del mondo*, published in Venice in 1540 with the treatise *Delle stelle fisse*.[21] There were more than fourteen editions during the sixteenth century (1548, 1552, 1553, 1559, 1561, 1561, 1564, 1566, 1570, 1573, 1579, 1595, and an additional two undated), as well as four French translations (1550, 1580, 1608, 1618)[22] and two Latin versions (1568, 1588).[23] The Latin and French translations are quite unique and testify both to the international resonance of his work and its urgency for an audience who did not read Italian.[24] It would be a similar fate for the Italian works of Galileo, which were soon translated into Latin. Another successful text was *In mechanicas quæstiones Aristotelis, paraphrasis paulo quidem plenior*, published for the first time in Rome in 1547 and subsequently issued in a second Venetian edition in 1565.[25] This writing contained the much-debated *Commentarium de certitudine mathematicarum disciplinarum*, which triggered vigorous disputes among the most important mathematicians of his time. Piccolomini's *Paraphrasis* was published in Italian translation by Oreste Vannocci Biringucci in Rome in 1582, but without the *Commentarium de certitudine*.[26] In the fifties Piccolomini started his major philosophical enterprise with the attempt to vulgarize the entire corpus of Aristotelian philosophy by rendering

18 Cerreta 1960, pp. 161–72; Belladonna 1972; Belladonna 1987; Buck 1983; Del Fante 1984; Baldi 2001; Cotugno 2006; Refini 2009; Refini 2012.

19 Cerreta 1960, pp. 19–38.

20 Alexander Aphrodisiensis 1540.

21 Piccolomini 1540.

22 Piccolomini 1550. On the importance of this translation see Pantin 2000.

23 Piccolomini 1568.

24 The 1568 edition also contains the translations of *Delle stelle fisse* and *Della grandezza della terra et dell'acqua*.

25 Piccolomini 1547.

26 Piccolomini 1582.

it into the vernacular. In 1551, in Rome he published *L'instrumento della filosofia*, which was a compendium of Aristotelian logic.[27] This textbook underwent seven further editions (1552, 1557, 1560, 1565, 1575) before the end of the century. Piccolomini revised his concept of logic in 1576, transforming it into a method, especially for natural philosophy, publishing *Instrumento della filosofia naturale*, which had a further edition of 1585.[28] In 1551 he also published *La prima parte della filosofia naturale*, which constituted a philosophical discussion of Aristotle's *Physica* and *De coelo*.[29] The three subsequent editions (1552, 1554, 1560) testify to the popularity of this work. In 1554, he published *La seconda parte de la filosofia naturale*,[30] which was issued with *La prima parte* in 1565 and 1585. The 1585 edition included Piccolomini's nephew Portio's *La terza parte della filosofia naturale*. In 1558 Piccolomini published *La Prima parte de le Theoriche ò vero Speculationi dei pianeti* and *Della grandezza della terra et dell'acqua*.[31] The former went through three further editions (1558, 1568, one without a date), while the latter had only one additional edition in 1561, though it was translated in 1608 and 1618 into French, and in 1568 and 1588 into Latin with *De la sfera del mondo*. Finally, in 1578 Piccolomini published his *De noua ecclesiastici calendarii* in Siena.

This concise overview shows Piccolomini to have been one of the most prolific and popular philosophers of his time. We can find his works in the libraries of famous intellectuals like Christoph Clavius, Giordano Bruno, Benet Pereira, Galileo Galilei – just to name a few – to gain a sense of his importance. In spite of his popularity, however, Piccolomini's natural philosophy and his scientific work have generally been neglected by the scholarship.[32] It is significant that no study was devoted to this philosophical and scientific figure before 1969.[33] His name seldom features in studies on the debate about mathematical certainty or investigations into the reception of Johannes de Sacrobosco's astronomy in the Renaissance.[34] Even the most important investigation into Piccolomini's contribution to science, published in 1969 by Rufus Suter, failed to understand Piccolomini real contribution in the promotion of a new Aristotelian epistemology, epitomizing him as a mere "popularizer of science", "a marvellously clear and entertaining expositor" of Aristotle.[35]

The objective of this paper is to provide an insight into Piccolomini's philosophical mind in his historical context, focusing in particular on the role he played in creating a new epistemology – that is, his theory of acquiring

27 Piccolomini 1551a.
28 Piccolomini 1576.
29 Piccolomini 1551b.
30 Piccolomini, 1554.
31 Piccolomini 1558; Piccolomini 1561.
32 Caroti's investigation of natural philosophy is an exception, see Caroti 2003.
33 See Cerreta 1960, pp. 19–48.
34 Giacobbe 1972; De Pace 1993; Mancosu 1999; Cozzoli 2007; Ferraro 2010; Biard 2011; Cozzoli 2011; Duhem 2015, pp. 81–83.
35 Suter 1969, p. 210.

and promoting scientific knowledge. In this way, it may be possible to follow the transformations of Aristotelianism in the crucial period of transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period.

2. NEW EXPERIENCES AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The first element to be assessed in Piccolomini's epistemology is his idea of the scientific method, which revises that of his many fellow exponents of Renaissance Aristotelianism. Indeed, Piccolomini made an important contribution to the elaboration of the Aristotelian methodology of regressus, considered by university professors to be the main tool for scientific discovery. In general, regressus theory comprises two main stages and has its origin in Averroes's interpretation of Aristotelian logic, for which science was possible only by a twofold process. The first step is a kind of resolution (or analysis) and mainly employs the tools of induction and of an argument from effects to cause (also called demonstration τοῦ ὅτι, *quia*, *quod*, *ab effectu*, *ab signo*, *prius nobis*). The second step is characterized by composition (or synthesis) and always employs the tool of arguing from cause to effect (also called demonstration τοῦ διότι or *propter quid*, *prius naturae*) in the form of a syllogism.

Scholarship has devoted a great deal of attention to these two steps, but there is as yet no detailed treatment of the origin and history of the intermediate process between these two stages, appearing at the end of the fifteenth century. This process is variously referred to as mental consideration (*mentalis consideratio*) or negotiation of the intellect (*negotiatio intellectus*). In spite of the absence of enquiry, it is on this intermediate stage of regressus that scholars have placed most weight in establishing continuity or discontinuity between the Aristotelian regressus and early modern epistemology. Among the supporters of the continuity thesis there is William A. Wallace, who saw mental examination as the forerunner of the modern *experimentum*.[36] Scholars such as Nicholas Jardine and Paolo Palmieri counter Wallace's interpretation of regressus, which transformed a mental examination into an experiment, implausibly tracing the *periculum* back to a process of controllable experimentation and measurement.[37] Jardine pointed out that in none of the regressus theorists is there a "hint that contrived experiment, or indeed any sort of elaborate or systematic appeal to observation, plays a role in scientific inquiry."[38]

What is, then, this intermediate stage? In 1547, in his famous *Commentarium de certitudine mathematicarum*, Piccolomini wrote against the supporters of regressus theory – in a section repeatedly ignored by scholars – that he had never understood what they meant by negotiation of the intellect, claiming that they were introducing an obscure element into a logical process, which should have been clear and distinct if it was to lead to scientific knowledge.[39]

36 Wallace 1998, p. 44.
37 Jardine 1976; Palmieri 2007, pp. 420–21.
38 Jardine 1976, p. 304.
39 Palmieri 2007, p. 421.

In his *L'instrumento della filosofia* (1551), Piccolomini sheds light on this obscure process. Here he stated that definition is the only tool that allows for reciprocity and connection between the two kinds of demonstration, providing not only the existence of the cause but also its essence, and thus identifying the convertible middle term for the demonstration *propter quid*. The main aim of the negotiation should therefore be that of finding the definition. Indeed, Piccolomini recognizes that it is hard and laborious to "make the definitions of things," and after the exclusion of Platonic division as a method for finding definition because it does not lead to necessary conclusions, he proposes a combination of "three methods, that is, division, composition and then syllogism."[40]

Piccolomini places great emphasis on the process of composition – in particular of the genus with the differences – and establishes two methodical rules. First, it is necessary to combine the differences gradually, without jumping to a conclusion, and according to their degree of extension, beginning with those closer to what is being defined. Second, the genus should be divided in an orderly way into the differences which are necessary in order to reconstruct what is being defined. The work of the mind by means of these two rules is called "negotio," which is an explicit reference to the negotiation of the intellect. However, Piccolomini points out that these two rational rules are not always sufficient. Indeed, it may happen that determining between two contradictory differences to attribute to a genus is not possible, and in this specific case one should appeal to sensation and experience.

Sensation and experience, therefore, can be helpful in an affirmative or negative way in selecting which of the two differences is the true one. Nonetheless, Piccolomini is aware of the weakness and provisional character of sensation, which can know only the accidents of things, and for this reason, since it cannot always be overriding, the intellect exchanges and substitutes common characteristics for essential and proper characteristics, falling in error and not determining the real definition and nature of a thing. The role of sensation remains pivotal, and this is the reason why

> philosophers sweated in discovering with long observations and care, with anatomies and dissections of animals, plants, stones and of any other thing, for understanding well which nature, part and condition were attributed to and followed by these or those accidents, in such a way as to know gradually the proper accidents of things.[41]

It is remarkable that Piccolomini should place such an emphasis on the analytical process of observation based on anatomies and dissections in establishing the true differences which made scientific knowledge possible. It has a precedent in the vernacular treatise of the Venetian physician and surgeon

40 Piccolomini 1551, p. 203.

41 Piccolomini 1551, p. 209.

Nicolò Massa, entitled *Loica* (1549), which represents one of the very few logical textbooks written in Italian before Piccolomini's *L'instrumento della filosofia*. But his knowledge of anatomy and dissection most likely comes from his personal acquaintance with Andreas Vesalius, who himself attended the reunion of the Accademia degli Infiammati during his stay in Padua.[42] Finally, thanks to Piccolomini's friend Benedetto Varchi we know about the scientific activities of the new-born academies, and among them we can list that of anatomizing and dissecting bodies in open daylight in the presence of a coterie of intellectuals – not only physicians, but also painters and natural philosophers, who were evidently interested in identifying the anatomical details that would then be portrayed in their paintings or described in their treatises.[43] Given the extent of this personal experience, it is not surprising that Piccolomini gave such weight to anatomical observation as being capable of distinguishing the most subtle details of matter.

In revising the Aristotelian notion of the negotiation of the intellect he opens up empirical and experimental approaches typical of early modern philosophy, not so far removed from what Wallace himself envisaged, and which we can recognize in important early modern philosophers like Galileo Galilei.[44]

In other works, Piccolomini terms these experiences based on diligent observation and sensate experiences (*sensate esperienze*). The expression should sound familiar to Galileo's scholarship since it represents one of the technical concepts of his epistemology, occurring more than a hundred times in his works. In *La sfera del mondo* (1540), Piccolomini states that when "frequent sensate experiences are lacking, there is also lack of certainty in the conclusion, and consequently robustness in the sciences."[45] Indeed, Piccolomini believes that every scientific conclusion should be based on sensate experiences.

But what are sensate experiences? Piccolomini illuminates the matter in the *Della grandezza della terra et dell'acqua* (1558). In the "Proem" he writes that the validity of sensate experiences is superior to the authority of Aristotle, and only when demonstrative reasons and sensate experiences are missing should one follow the Stagirite's words.[46] Moreover, in a paragraph entitled "Approach adopted by Aristotle to the things made manifest by sensation" he affirms that the idea that sensate experiences were superior to the authority of reason is identical to the approach used by Aristotle himself,[47] anticipating a central claim that we will find in Galileo's conception: "Aristotle, above all the philosophers, maintained the certainty of sensation [...] Supposing [sensate experience] to be most certain, he taught by philosophizing to discover its cause and what must follow from it."[48]

42 Carlino 2012.
43 Varchi 1859, p. 665.
44 Wallace 1992.
45 Piccolomini 1540, p. 4.
46 Piccolomini 1561, p. 1v.
47 Piccolomini 1561, pp. 7v–8r.
48 Piccolomini 1561, p. 8r.

Furthermore, Piccolomini points out that these sensate experiences concern the investigation of natural phenomena, and that the method of discovery should be that of the physicians:

> [...] medicine has risen to that level of excellence in which it stands because the experiences made by diligent and inquisitive observers from time to time have supplied the opportunity for the art of medicine to grow from hand to hand with the investigation of its causes.[49]

Sensate experiences, through diligent observations and experiments, are the only means of acquiring scientific knowledge, that is of discovering the causes of natural phenomena. The case of medicine clearly shows that the accumulation of experience is an essential condition for scientific knowledge. Through sensate experiences and diligent observations even the most disputed problem can be solved. Such is the case, for instance with Aristotle's belief that the equator was not habitable. Indeed, Piccolomini explicitly writes that "about the habitability below the Equinoxial [land], and in many other matters, I trust the sensate experiences that have been made, more than Aristotle himself."[50] His search for whether there was more earth or water on Earth was primarily led by sensate experiences made through "peregrinations and navigations."[51] He based his idea of science on the progressive acquisition of sensate experiences, indeed

> Geography, like any other science that knows more from sensation, does not depend on one observer and it cannot be acquired just once, but it requires the investigations of more persons, who from time to time, one person finding something that someone else did not, can improve it [Geography], providing more certainty."[52]

Piccolomini develops an idea of science grounded in the notion of progress, especially in relation to those arts and sciences based on sensation. Indeed, this was a conception itself rooted in the Aristotelian tradition, especially the peculiar interpretation of *Metaphysica* 993 b 2–3, 11–18, and in *Elenchi sophistici* 183 b 17–23, which the famous Pietro Pomponazzi gave of these passages. Pomponazzi continuously asserted throughout his *De naturalium effectuum causis sive de incantationibus* that "science is made by additional discoveries (*scientiae enim fiunt per additamenta*)," [53] gained by means of experience. Behind these words lay a conception of science that was provisional and conjectural, especially in the investigation of natural phenomena, which was alien to the previous Aristotelian tradition. Pom-

49 Piccolomini 1561, p. 9v.

50 Piccolomini 1561, p. 2r.

51 Piccolomini 1561, p. 8v.

52 Piccolomini 1561. p. 8v.

53 Pomponazzi 1556, IX, l. 9; Peroratio, l. 15. Roman numbers designate chapters, while Arabic numbers the lines.

ponazzi was very aware of the provisional character of the knowledge of natural phenomena, and for this reason he repeatedly stressed the need for experiments (*experimenta*) and sensate experiences (*sensata*) in order to find a better solution.[54] Furthermore, he believed in history as a necessary tool for improving the individual and personal experience of natural philosophers and in the necessity of sharing these experiences. Pomponazzi was mentor to many members of the Accademia degli Infiammati, and no doubt his ideas circulated widely at that time and affected Piccolomini's thinking.

Indeed, in Piccolomini's claim that geography cannot be the work of a single scholar lies the idea that science is a collective enterprise advancing across time. Thus he did not confine himself only to the authority of Ptolemy, Strabo, and Pomponius Mela, because they knew only a small part of the terrestrial globe. He based his knowledge on "the most diligent observers" and on "bold navigations made [...] not many decades ago, by the Genoese, and after them by the Portuguese, and finally the Castilians."[55] But reading about these voyages did not sate his intellectual curiosity, and so he spoke directly with many travellers, navigators and sailors, and had experience of marvellous artisanal armillary spheres, reproductions of the Earth, in the houses of the Cardinal of Carpi, of Cardinal Viseo, of the Archbishop of Corfu and of the Duke of Palliano.[56] It was by means of one of these spheres that Piccolomini conducted the experiment which proved his hypothesis.[57]

3. MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

Only if we very carefully consider Piccolomini's epistemological reliance on sensate experiences for the progress of science, can we understand another cornerstone of his epistemology – that is, the controversial relationship between mathematics and scientific knowledge. It is well-known that the *Commentarium de certitudine mathematicarum disciplinarum* rejects the identification of mathematical demonstrations with regressus theory, which means ultimately rejecting the identification of mathematics with natural philosophy based on sensate experiences. However, at the same time Piccolomini held onto the idea that mathematics had that highest degree of certainty of scientific knowledge. How is this possible?

While for Medieval and Renaissance philosophers the highest degree of certainty for mathematics was due to the peculiar form of the regressus' argumentation, for Piccolomini—who based his ideas on Proclus's *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements* published by Simon Grynaeus in 1533—the certainty of mathematical knowledge results from the fact that mathematical entities are constructed or abstracted in the mind, and thus the mathematician

54 On the importance of experiments and experience see Pomponazzi 1556, I, ll. 8–9; I, ll. 203–204; II, l. 8; IV, l. 178; X, ll. 14–25.

55 Piccolomini 1561, p. 9r.

56 Piccolomini 1561, p. 9v.

57 Piccolomini 1561, p. 10r.

knew these as truths since he himself had made them.[58] However, for Piccolomini it was impossible for mathematical demonstrations to lead to scientific knowledge because they did not involve any of the four Aristotelian causes by means of which sensate experiences had to be explained. Mathematics, in the wake of the "maker's knowledge" tradition,[59] was judged to be certain because its objects were constructed, yet it could not explain natural phenomena, because it did not involve sensate experiences, only artificial products of the mind.

Piccolomini's epistemological attitude is more fully fleshed out in his *La prima parte dele theoriche overo speculationi dei pianeti* (1558). In the digression "Of whether the representations invented by the astrologers to save the appearances of the planets are based on anything real in nature," Piccolomini maintained that the "Ptolemaic planetary theory is useful to the practical astronomer but represents nothing real," just as "Osiander had written fifteen years earlier in his brief preface to Copernicus' *De revolutionibus* about Copernican theory."[60] Piccolomini writes that

> Some [critics] hold that Ptolemy and the astrologers whom he followed, and the astrologers who have followed him, represent eccentrics and epicycles as existing in the celestial spheres because they really believe those spheres to be arranged thus [...] In this regard, first of all I do not wish to stop at this point to argue whether such representations are of possible things or of impossible things, of things friendly toward or inimical toward and repugnant to Nature. For their possibility or their impossibility does nothing, or very little, to secure to the astrologers their intention, which is merely to find some way to save if possible, the appearances of the planets, together with the ability to calculate them, compute them, and predict them from time to time. But I wish to be bold enough to say that if these critics think that Ptolemy and his followers have invented or conformed to such representations in the firm belief that in Nature it is thus, they resolutely deceive themselves. For it is more than enough for the aforesaid astrologers that their representations be able to save for them the appearances among the celestial bodies so that they can compute their motions, positions, and places, whether such representations be true or not true, provided that they succeed in saving the appearances. The other considerations, in which they have little interest, they have left to the natural philosophers.[61]

The validity of the astrologers' reasoning is not diminished simply on the grounds that their mathematical models do not correspond to reality. Piccolomini is clear in saying that while astrologers

58 Proclus 1970, pp. 11–2.

59 Pérez-Ramos 1988.

60 Suter 1969, p. 213.

61 Piccolomini 1558, pp. 22r-v, translated by Suter in Suter 1969, p. 212.

were in the process of inventing their representations, "they had little concern whether the things they were imagining were more necessary than probable or false."[62] Indeed

> as with logicians there can through force of inference arise a conclusion from false premises, so an effect can be inferred and deduced from a pretended cause. Logicians will conclude by a formally correct inference and a valid syllogism that since every stone is an animal and every man is a stone, therefore necessarily every man is an animal. This true conclusion, though it sustains its truth by itself, would nevertheless still sustain it on the strength of those propositions, if they were true. For the violence and force of the nature of good syllogism would entail it. Similarly, granted that eccentrics and epicycles are not in the nature of things and that the appearances of the planets derive from other proper and true causes which we do not know, nevertheless if they actually existed such same appearances would necessarily be inferable from them. And this suffices for the astrologers.[63]

In the following passage Piccolomini explains that astrologers, that is mathematicians, deal with "how" a natural phenomenon happens, rather than "why" it happens.

> [...] suppose that we should see a stone strike a wall and with great force, and not knowing the origin of such fury we should imagine that the stone had come from a bow or a crossbow. And suppose that our representations were false and that, as chance would have it, the stone had come from a sling shot. Nevertheless, it would have struck the wall with the same fury if it had come from the imagined bow. For the aforesaid fury of that stone could have derived from more than one cause. Thus again, though the real causes of the many appearances which we see in the planets in the sky are hidden to us, still it is enough for us that, supposing these representations to be true, these appearances which we see would just the same derive from them. This for us is more than sufficient for the calculations and for the predictions and for the notices which we must have for the positions, places, magnitudes, and motions of the planets.[64]

The search for the cause is an activity exclusive to natural philosophers, who deal with sensate experiences, while mathematicians provide only a numerical representation to fit with the movement of celestial bodies. In their description the real causes remain hidden to us. The reason for this ignorance

62 Piccolomini 1558, pp. 22r-v, translated by Suter in Suter 1969, p. 213.

63 Piccolomini 1558, 22v, translated by Suter in Suter 1969, p. 212.

64 Piccolomini 1558, 22v, translated by Suter in Suter 1969, pp. 212–3, slightly modified.

is the fact that "such bodies being too far from us for our senses to acquire truth and certainty about them, which would then have to sustain demonstration."[65] For this reason no scientific knowledge seems possible in the field of astronomy, to the extent that—following Lucretius—we should assign to celestial bodies only "some probable causes, or such that if they had been true those effects would necessarily have followed."[66] According to Piccolomini, "although an effect cannot have more than one proper, real, and necessary cause," in mathematical reasoning, "an effect can derive not only probably but also necessarily from more than one cause, not on account of the nature of the causes, but by force of supposition and inference," as he demonstrated in the case of the stone that strikes a wall.[67] Mathematical knowledge, therefore, is certain in describing how astronomical events happen, but provides only probable and not scientific, that is casual, knowledge of these events.

4. A NEW VISION OF KNOWLEDGE

In synthesis from what we have seen, Piccolomini developed some novel and original ideas about the importance of sensation, observation and anatomy for science, and about the relation between mathematical and scientific knowledge. He developed a somewhat fresh and innovative empirical and experiential epistemology, which, nonetheless, being based on sensate experiences, led him to deny the sun's central position in the universe and to defend the immovability of the earth. Regrettably, Piccolomini did not have Galileo's telescope for investigating the truth of celestial bodies and their movements. He did not have the technology to prove that Copernicus was right and Ptolemy wrong, to become one of the founders of early modern science and philosophy, but perhaps this is not the correct way to assess his philosophical standing. His strong attachment to the validity of sensation and observation allowed him to develop an epistemology capable of refuting abstract reasoning and authorities that would deny sensate experiences. Indeed, upon improbable principles and hypotheses, natural philosophers

> have so obstinately based the reasons for the effects of nature that[,] although they have not often looked at sense itself, but rather have preferred to deny sense, and, following the falsity of their principles, to arrive at inextricable entanglements, proceeding from those reasons they exhaust themselves inventing other principles which square with sense. However, on the contrary, every good philosopher ought always to build upon unimpeded and undeceived sense, and compare with that every discord with which one has to deal.[68]

65 Piccolomini 1558, 23r, translated by Suter in Suter 1969, p. 213.

66 Piccolomini 1558, 23r, translated by Suter in Suter 1969, p. 213.

67 Piccolomini 1558, 23r, translated by Suter in Suter 1969, p. 213.

68 Piccolomini 1560, 75r, translation by Suter in Suter 1969, p. 213, slightly modified.

In *Della grandezza della terra et dell'acqua*, in considering the novelties and discoveries of his time Piccolomini wrote that if the ancients had had the benefit of direct sensate experience (*sensatamente*) of the New Spain, the city of Tenochtitlan, the lands of Peru and Argentina, they would have changed their opinions on many scientific and philosophical problems.[69] These novelties were awkward and game-changing facts, which stripped ancient doctrines and books of their authority as repositories of infallible knowledge. There are clearly echoes of what we will find in Galileo when he wrote that if Aristotle were alive and could have looked into the telescope, he would have changed his doctrines. In endorsing Aristotle's epistemology by using sensate experiences against authorities in his *L'instrumento della filosofia*, Piccolomini states that

> in order to be more Aristotelian, I shall rely more on unerring sensation, rather than arguments, and I will trust these more than authority: which is as Aristotle himself always does, in the name of reason and sense abandoning all authority, even that of his own teacher.[70]

And again, in his *La prima parte della filosofia naturale* he declared that "to better imitate Aristotle, I will leave Aristotle and his reasons, which will be no more than likely ... each time the sense shows me the opposite to be true ... Nor do I believe that I can be deemed any less Aristotelian, this being the authentic Aristotelian way of philosophizing."[71]

Piccolomini did not fight only for freedom from the authorities, but also for the democratization of knowledge. For a long time in the Middle Ages, as well as later into Humanism, the man of learning was viewed as something akin to a magician who had the power to penetrate the inner nature of reality, the secrets of which had to be kept hidden from the common people to avoid its debasement. Aristotelian philosophy was restricted to a handful of people. This situation changed with the idea of the vulgarization of knowledge promoted by vernacular Aristotelianism, according to which to vulgarize does not simply mean to translate into the vernacular but also to popularize. Thanks primarily to Aristotle's vulgarizers, the value of scholarly secrecy in Renaissance Italy waned, and sharing knowledge became a moral obligation. Knowledge was no longer perceived as predominantly closed or aristocratic;[72] it is now more open, democratic and egalitarian, even if the access to knowledge was still difficult. In terms of opening up knowledge, Aristotelian vernacular works and authors such as Antonio Tridapale and Giovanni Battista Gelli were ahead of their time, anticipating certain aspects of early modern science and philosophy.[73] In 1547 the modest mid-sixteenth-cen-

69 Piccolomini 1561, pp. 28v.

70 Piccolomini 1551, pp. aiiiv-aiiir.

71 Piccolomini 1551, pp. 10–11. For a detailed discussion on this conception see Sgarbi 2017.

72 Rossi 1997, p. 19.

73 Sgarbi 2014; Sgarbi 2016a.

tury intellectual Antonio Tridapale dal Borgo-– whose only merit was to be the first to publish a textbook on logic in the Italian vernacular[74] – put this tendency of Aristotelian epistemology on display in commenting on Alexander the Great's letter to Aristotle, contained in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Alexander criticizes Aristotle for having divulged and taught his philosophy – once the prerogative of a few – among the common people and even his enemies. According to Alexander, philosophical knowledge is a form of power that dissipates once it enters the public domain. Tridapale is against the idea that knowledge be the exclusive preserve of a small group of people if it leads to power and domination over others: knowledge must be available to all and, thus, in order to reach as many as possible, it must be written in the vernacular as well as in Latin. According to Giovan Battista Gelli's *I capricci del Bottaio*, published in the same year (1547), whoever believed that "it is not good that every uneducated person should be allowed to know what another has acquired over many years with great effort from Greek and Latin books" was not only a bad Christian, but a terrible human being.[75] Alexander the Great's desire to keep all knowledge to himself and thereby maintain his power over other men is therefore to be considered inhuman. The highest ambition of Renaissance Aristotelians who published in the vernacular was not to conceal philosophical doctrines, but to assist others in gaining knowledge of those things that nature has made available to all human beings, even revealing the most difficult and arcane secrets of nature. Hence the need to popularize philosophy among the people.

Alessandro Piccolomini represents an exceptional exemplar of this tendency. In 1547 he published in Latin his *In mechanicas quaestiones Aristotelis paraphrasis paulo quidem plenior*, itself vulgarized in 1582 by Oreste Vannocci Biringucci under the title *Parafrasi di Monsignor Alessandro Piccolomini … sopra le Mechaniche d'Aristotele*. Biringucci maintained that in order to "satisfy Piccolomini's just and ardent desire to benefit all, without prejudice of any kind, easily and happily, he set about adorning our language with every kind of science," and above all "regretted having written in Latin, alongside certain other fine works, during his best years, and among his studies also this paraphrase of the *Mechaniche d'Aristotele*, because he saw that since it was in Latin it was not accessible to those who could have made the best use of it," that is "engineers and architects."[76] Biringucci discloses that Piccolomini believed it was a mistake to write in Latin rather than the vernacular, because the intended audience was unable to read it.

For Alessandro Piccolomini the purpose of vulgarizing was "bringing those [Aristotelian] doctrines … into our language, which is well suited … to every science," as well as "to untie, and open up, and illuminate a subject

74 Cf. Tridapale dal Borgo 1547, 2r; Sgarbi 2014, pp. 127–53.

75 Gelli 1976, p. 205.

76 Piccolomini 1582, p. 5.

so as to make it accessible, and so open in its intelligence that any who are not entirely uncouth and without ability may understand it, at least most of it."[77] The techniques that were employed to make knowledge more accessible to any "uncouth and incapable" intellect differ from those used in straightforward translation. In the words of Piccolomini, a text may be vulgarized by "translating, commenting, or even expounding, annotating, paraphrasing, and abridging ... be it with pure comments, annotations, epitomes, or summaries."[78] The objective of vulgarization was, first and foremost, to transmit knowledge to as large a section of society as possible. His targeted groups consisted not only of mature men: some of his works were written for women and youngsters, who for Piccolomini could contribute to the advancement of knowledge.

For Piccolomini, as for many other contemporary vulgarizers of Aristotle, it is absolutely clear that disseminating knowledge is not a case of casting the pearls of knowledge "before swine," as a certain kind of culture that claimed lordship over knowledge presumed; on the contrary, it is a matter of supplying a vast public that has a thirst for education with the knowledge and the means to achieve cultural emancipation, not only for the sake of progress, but also for the purpose of ethical and moral edification:

> It seemed to many ancient philosophers that to publish the sciences and make them clear to everyone was to throw away roses and pearls, and so they concealed what they knew with hieroglyphs, mysteries, fables, symbols, and enigmas, almost more than nature herself. And in so doing they showed themselves to be jealous of power and ungrateful, and unlike the giver of these and other graces. Even so there are some (albeit very few) who seek to defend them, saying that in this way the sciences maintained their reputation and dignity, because they were accessible only to fine minds and to the wealthy and important people .... And they say that by popularizing them and publishing them, good minds are put on a par with uncouth minds, and those who are notable and important with those who are low-caste and plebeian. Nor do they refrain from attacking those who have sought to defeat ignorance in the world and spread the sciences in all the languages.[79]

What emerges from Piccolomini's words is an idea of philosophical freedom in opposition to the obscurantism and subtleties of ancient philosophers and university professors alike. In Piccolomini there is a clear awareness that philosophy, and knowledge more generally, is not sectarian. Writing in the vernacular language is not a mere stylistic exercise, but a direct means of transmitting knowledge – a way of

77 Piccolomini 1565, pp. 4–5.

78 Piccolomini 1575, letter to readers.

79 Piccolomini 1582, p. 4.

increasing the stakes which might bring about new discoveries – a means of divulging knowledge to as wide a section of the population as possible. The vernacular epistemology claims full rights in terms of dignity and also in its capacity to express even the most complex philosophical and scientific concepts. Moreover, the use of the native tongue is increasingly felt to be necessary for the purpose of divulging knowledge outside the schools in order to conquer a different public, beyond the small coteries of university professors. Popularization of knowledge gives weight to the idea that early modern philosophy must proceed beyond a blind allegiance to ancient philosophical authorities, hiding behind what Sperone Speroni – Piccolomini's fellow at the Accademia degli Infiammati – describes as fables of words. Rather, its task is to add new content to ancient philosophy in order to "advance our industry," namely our knowledge.[80]

It is clear that within this thinking a new conception of knowledge was gestating, an idea that knowledge is not only power, but power that must be available to all, and here we can see the most radical rupture with a past in which knowledge was kept closely in the hands of clergy and university professors. It constitutes an indisputable impulse towards the democratization of knowledge generated by a new culture and a new Renaissance epistemology, which departed from the culture of Humanism, and which seems to portend Francis Bacon's ideas of knowledge, power and progress.[81] Power is the domination and taming of nature. In conclusion, Alessandro Piccolomini is a representative of a movement – vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy – which is far from being conservative, authority-based and stagnant, as the early modern philosophers proclaimed it to be. He is not only a man of the book, trained in the Latinate seclusion of universities. His mental world is not bounded by knowledge contained in the works of the ancient authorities and largely limited to the small world of the Near East, of the Mediterranean, and of Europe. However, we should be wary of hasty generalizations and conclusions. It would be anachronistic to detach Piccolomini from the scholarly book-based context of his time: even if he is out to criticise them, his references remain those of previous centuries – Aristotle, Ptolemy, Pliny and Sacrobosco. Piccolomini committed himself as ardently to new sensate experiences as to traditional ideas: he used both the new evidence and time-honoured classical authorities to support his theories.

Piccolomini's epistemology was anything but naïve or retrograde and it engages with the most important issues that will come to dominate discussion in the emergence of early modern science. We should not wait for Francis Bacon or Galileo Galilei for the development of an epistemology based on the activities of practitioners and on observations. His scientific thought within the context of vernacular

80 Speroni 1999, p. 184.

81 Vickers 1992.

Aristotelianism provides a glimpse as to how lesser traces and minor figures are often better indicators of the features of an age than major protagonists, since the latter are often unique, while the former represent a whole generation of intellectuals who supplied the impulse for a new way of thinking.

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Francesco Piccolomini's Platonism and Nicolas of Cusa in the "Peripatetic Exercise" of Johannes Jessenius *On Divine and Human Philosophy*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to analyse Johannes Jessenius' book (1565–1621) *De divina humanaque philosophia* (Padua 1591). The book is titled *progymnasma peripateticum* and was a product of Jessenius' philosophical studies in Padua. Although it was earlier characterized as a disputation written in a traditional Aristotelian-Scholastic way, the analysis shows that Jessenius followed up on Platonising the Aristotelianism of his teacher Francesco Piccolomini and incorporated certain Platonic elements into an Aristotelian pattern. In addition, the book contains passages that appear to be inspired by the works of Nicolas of Cusa at least with respect to philosophical terminology. Jessenius' Padua disputation thus confirms the dissemination of Cusanus' philosophy in 16th century Italy.*

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INTRODUCTION

Johannes Jessenius, a Physician, anatomist, politician and philosopher, (Wroclaw 1566 – 1621 Prague) is renowned as the intellectual who brought late Renaissance Northern Italian medicine and philosophy to Central Europe. His studies in Padua played a crucial role in his later activities in Wittenberg, Vienna, and Prague. Most of his works refer explicitly or implicitly to the education he acquired in Padua where he enrolled to study philosophy and medicine in 1588 and stayed there until the end of 1591. In medicine, Jessenius proudly mentioned Girolamo Fabrici ab Aquapendente as his teacher. In philosophy, although Jessenius was influenced by more authors, he considered himself a pupil of Francesco Piccolomini.[1]

A direct result of Jessenius' philosophical studies in Padua was *A Peripatetic Exercise on Divine and Human Philosophy (De divina humanaque philosophia progymnasma peripateticum)*. The book echoes both the philosophical education that Jessenius obtained in Padua and Jessenius' early philosophical thought.[2]

1 Jessenius explicitly refers to Piccolomini in his edition of Savonarola, see Savonarola 1596, p. 768. Francesco Piccolomini, together with other Padua Professors, namely Girolamo Fabrici ab Aquapendente, Aemilo Campolongo, Bernardino Petrella, and Cesare Cremonini, confirmed later in a specific document that Jessenius finished his studies in Padua. The transcript of "Jessenius' diploma" see in Pick 1926, pp. 274–75.

2 Jessenius' philosophy was later developing by means of the influence of Francesco Patrizi's book *Nova de universis philosophia* in particular. See Nejeschleba 2014.

This is the only book that Jessenius published in Italy, specifically in Venice.[3] Jessenius writes that it was publicly disputed at Padua university, but the publication of the book was in fact not meant for learned Italian readers. Its purpose was, rather, to find a patron in the Transalpine region and a good position in the Roman empire. Jessenius reached for the stars and dedicated the book to the emperor Rudolph II.[4] The dedicatory letter is dated on July 24, 1591, two weeks before Jessenius' public disputation on medicine which was held on August 8, 1591 in the Franciscan church in Padua.[5]

In my paper, I will analyse the content of Jessenius' book *On Divine and Human Philosophy*. Although the work was earlier labelled as a traditional Aristotelian-Scholastic work,[6] probably with respect to its title "Peripatetic Exercise", I will show that it contains both Aristotelian and Platonic elements as it was characteristic of Francesco Piccolomini's philosophy. I will also discuss a possible influence of Nicolas of Cusa's philosophy on Jessenius' book since it seems at least to be using Cusanus' specific philosophical terminology.

JESSENIUS AND PICCOLOMINI: PLATONISING ARISTOTELIANISM

Jessenius' teacher Francesco Piccolomini (1523–1601) was in no way a pure Aristotelian thinker.[7] Already his contemporaries characterize him as a philosopher "of Aristotle's soul and Plato's spirit."[8] Due to this ambiguity, it seems to be difficult for modern historians to characterize his philosophy unequivocally. The extreme interpretations oscillate between labelling Piccolomini a Platonist[9] or an Aristotelian,[10] while most interpreters strive to delineate the relationship between the two philosophical streams in Piccolomini's thought while holding the two sides together. His philosophy is then viewed as "eclectic Aristotelianism" combining Aristotelianism with non-Aristotelian elements,[11] or as mediating

3 Jessenius 1591a. Other two Jessenius' Italian prints do not have a character of books. Both were printed in Padua and are quite short. The first one is the elegy on a Czech noble man Zdeněk Vojtěch Popel of Lobkovic, the second one is a short medical disputation, see below.

4 Jessenius' dream to have a position at the court of the emperor Rudolph II has never fulfilled. Later in his career Jessenius worked as physician at the Vienna court of Rudolph's brother Matthias.

5 It was a medical disputation, see Jessenius 1591b. In addition, Jessenius at the same date allegedly held another disputation on philosophy, which he later published as *Pro vindiciis contra tyrranos oratio* in Frankfurt a. M. in 1614 and in Prague in 1620. To the modern Latin edition see Šolcová 2015 and Jesenský 2019.

6 As it was inaccurately maintained by Král 1923, p. 134 and Városová 1987, p. 77.

7 To Piccolomini's biography and different interpretations of his thought see Lines 2015b.

8 It is a quotation from the speech over Piccolomini's grave, see Baldini 1980, p. 389.

9 Referring to Pietro Ragnisco's description of Piccolomini as "a Platonist in a mask of Aristotle", see Garin 2008, pp. 437–438.

10 See Spruit 1995, 238–240.

11 With respect to moral philosophy in particular, see Kraye 2002. Cf. Lines 2002, pp. 254–288; Lines 2015a. To eclectic Aristotelianism in the Renaissance see Schmitt 1983.

between Aristotle and Neoplatonism,[12] or even as an attempt at a concord between Plato and Aristotle.[13]

One can see the tendency to incorporate both Aristotelian and Platonic thoughts also in Jessenius' book. It is titled "a Peripatetic exercise" on one hand, i. e. Jessenius proclaims an Aristotelian way of dealing with the topic. On the other hand, Jessenius' friend Theodor Collado Biturix, who wrote a celebratory poem introducing Jessenius' book, praises Jessenius for having surpassed Aristotle. Biturix's poem, certainly, may be no more than rhetoric meant to attract potential readers or donators and need not be an accurate description of the content of the book. The book itself, however, really shows a familiarity with Francesco Piccolomini's Platonising of Aristotelianism and even a dependence on it.

Firstly, the topic of Jessenius' book is in accord with one of Piccolomini's crucial philosophical themes, i.e. the issue of the hierarchy of disciplines. The book deals with the definition of the relationship between divine philosophy (as metaphysics was traditionally referred to) and human philosophy (meaning natural philosophy). In the introduction Jessenius attempted to justify the fact that they were referred to as two different kinds of knowledge (*duo scientiarum genera*). This distinction, however, did not reflect different modes of thinking, but the two different methods of processing researched material gathered from experience. Things can be contemplated in terms of what they are, which is the task of physics, defined by Jessenius as a science whose subject is nature. This natural philosophy thus deals with things in terms of their essences, which is basically the traditional Aristotelian concept of natural philosophy.

Jessenius' concept of metaphysics proves to be the key to interpreting his argument. He believed that metaphysics does not deal with the essences of things, but the differences between them, therefore it "orders" (*ordinat*) beings (i.e. puts them in order).[14] The characteristics of order as the subject of metaphysics provided by Jessenius in the first paragraph of his treatise confirm that the Padua university graduate was truly close to Piccolomini, who believed that *ordo* reflects the ontological structure of reality.[15]

As it is well known, Piccolomini's emphasis on *ordo* is the key point of his disagreement with Jacopo Zabarella. It concerns the issue of the hierarchy of disciplines and the meaning of natural philosophy, logic, and of metaphysics in particular. In the polemics, Piccolomini attacked Zabarella's notion of order as nothing more than a procedure applied to interpret knowledge and his notion that order has a purely instrumental role, being used together with the method by which we achieve knowledge. Piccolomini, on contrary, believed

12 See Kessler 2007, p. 528. Cf. Claessens 2012; Claessens 2014.

13 See Plastina 2002.

14 *Rerum autem essentiam Physica (quae naturae rerum scientiam definitur) explicat; earum vero ordinem et differentias, communis philosophia (metaphysica dicta) edocet.* Jessenius 1591a, c. 1, 1r.

15 Here, Piccolomini differs from Jacopo Zabarella with whom he polemized, see Jardine 1997.

that order stands above the method: the order of knowledge is an imitation of the order of nature, which, in turn, reflects the divine order. It is here that a very distinct Platonic element emerged in his concept: the idea of the relationship between the pattern and the image and the ontological dependence of the image on the pattern. This Platonic exemplarism then fully reflects itself in Piccolomini's concept of the hierarchy of knowledge and in the dependence of the disciplines of cognition on superior disciplines situated higher in the hierarchy. In contrast to Zabarella, Piccolomini required that metaphysics provide the backbone to all other sciences and serve as a cornerstone for natural philosophy which, in turn, is the foundation of other special fields. The activities of a natural philosopher respecting the divine origin of order have to imitate the fixed ontological structure of the arrangement of nature.

It is necessary to place Jessenius' book dealing with the relationship between natural philosophy and metaphysics in the context of Piccolomini's view on the nature of order. The affiliation – or rather reliance – on Piccolomini's philosophy in Jessenius' theories becomes apparent in the paragraphs that followed in his book. When Jessenius refers to differences, he distinguishes between differences inherent to individual things (i.e. existing as a part of their essence and their substantial form) and the so-called common differences (*differentiae communes*). Physics employs differences through which individual things are defined. These may be called properties of individuals, species and genera. However, in order to obtain the overall picture of the real situation, we must look for common differences that is the differences on the common level. Inherent differences only reveal the specifics of one thing, yet do not disclose how it differs from another. These common differences should obviously refer to general concepts that reflect reality and that have metaphysical validity and are not merely mental signs marking individual beings. Through these general concepts, we obtain the picture of an ontological order within the framework of which individual beings are set. Jessenius continued saying that natural philosophy, is therefore also bound to metaphysics, not being able to do without it since metaphysics instructs us about the relations between individual beings, which would otherwise be conceived of as isolated units.[16]

Jessenius' statement clearly echoes Piccolomini's idea of the subordination of natural philosophy to metaphysics, which is highlighted in the following chapter dealing with the "true order of things". All things suggest that they are a part of an order in a tiered arrangement that is revealed when differences between the individual beings are compared.[17] Each individual being represents the unity of its place which is its inherent difference, yet thus already referring to God who is the principle of this unity and in whose divinity the being participates and whom it resembles, since nothing dissimilar comes from God. God, Jessenius

16 Jessenius 1591a, c. 2, 1v.

17 Jessenius 1591a, c. 3, 1v.

continues, is the first and foremost being, a being in itself, the second being is an angel, coming from God, and the third being is man. In the hierarchy, man and angel share a common difference through which they both are like God. Their other differences, however, are unalike, therefore they bear different names and differ from one another.[18] At this point Jessenius, like Piccolomini, complements the Aristotelian structure of his treatise with distinct Platonic elements.

Let us move onto main differences between natural philosophy and metaphysics as perceived by Jessenius. Jessenius characterises "physics" as a science that deals with individual things, substances and accidents, however, disregarding their mutual relations and their arrangement within some order. Nevertheless, metaphysics has set a higher goal, as Jessenius himself puts it, to view individual things from the perspective of general principles. It will allow us to determine what is more and what is less perfect; what is substantial and what is accidental; what is earlier and what is later; what is subordinated and what is superior. Therefore, it is the "head of all sciences" and the discipline that determines their hierarchy.[19] There are numerous natural philosophies, since a natural philosophy always speaks of individual items. Yet, metaphysics is specific in that it is able to grasp all things in a unity.

Jessenius further defined the relationship between physics and metaphysics using the introductory chapter of Aristotle's *Physics*, where he referred to what came earlier and what will come later in respect to nature and cognition. Jessenius then, in purely Aristotelian terms (in the context of the discussion of the period), used the following distinction: "Since physics is closer to our cognition, it must be studied earlier. Metaphysics is then earlier from the perspective of nature, however, in temporal terms it follows later."[20] Following the aforementioned distinction, Jessenius' predecessors and contemporaries elaborated on the methodology of science, however, Jessenius sees it only as one of the characteristics of metaphysics and physics. Jessenius does not focus on the issue of the method[21] and he proceeds directly to more detailed reflections on the subjects of these different disciplines.

Physics, the aim of which is to analyse existence, defines its differences and achieves the definition of the genus, which serves as its object. Genera also represent the limit of the sphere of physics as an academic discipline, which is where metaphysics comes in, drawing from specifications on the level of genera but surpassing them to reach the transcendent Unity.[22] The main goal of physics is to define the species. Things are defined by means of the specification of the nearest genus and specific difference as traditionally represented

18 Jessenius 1591a, c. 3, 2r.

19 Jessenius 1591a, c. 6, 4r.

20 Jessenius 1591a, c. 7, 4v.

21 Jessenius touches the issue of the method in his later speech delivered to Wittenberg students of medicine and philosophy in Jessenius 1600, see Nejeschleba 2007.

22 Jessenius 1591a, c. 8, 5r.

by the Porphyrian tree. Physics is not capable of moving towards more general definitions, transcending the generic term, and, accordingly, metaphysics cannot descend to dealing with specific terms. Metaphysics proves the principles of other sciences.[23] This statement very clearly implies Jessenius' acceptance of Piccolomini's theories, since this is the point advocated by Piccolomini in order to refute Zabarella's separation of metaphysics and natural philosophy and the instrumentalist concept of scientific methodology.

NICOLAS OF CUSA IN JESSENIUS' PADUA TREATISE?

Let us delve further into the analysis of Jessenius' work. The differences between individual beings manifest themselves on the level of elements. The difference between fire, air, water and earth produces multiplicity, but Jessenius also emphasises the uniting impact of order – the entirety of nature thus appears as "discordant in concord and concordant in discord, multiple in unity and one in multiplicity, unequal in equality and equal in inequality, diverse in sameness and identical in diversity."[24]

Pronouncements of this type are a rather surprising occurrence in the works of a follower of Aristotle and are more reminiscent of the Renaissance Platonic tradition beginning with Nicolas of Cusa and continuing in the works of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and then ending with Francesco Patrizi.[25] This entire section concludes with the statement that everything which is common and serves as a principle to all other things, such as a unit (i.e. the principle of numbers) or fire (i.e. the principle of elements, which here refer to Heraclitus as mentioned in Aristotle's doxography) and of God as the principle of existence who, at the same time, serves as the foundation for general diversity. This ostentatious dialectic, proclaimed rather than thoroughly premeditated, shows that Jessenius was influenced by Platonism to a much greater extent than has been believed.

It may seem that Jessenius saw metaphysics as a science dealing with transcendental definitions (he himself used the term *transcendentia*). Jessenius viewed the term "transcendental" as a term that easily outstripped specification on the level of genera and which – or the unity of which as highlighted by Jessenius – enabled one to interpret the "order of genera".[26] Jessenius therefore once again advocated Piccolomini's concept of order and its relationship to metaphysics, although he did not further specify how this order of genera arises with reference to their transcendent unity, while previously seeing "general differences" as responsible for the constitution of order.

Jessenius' definition of metaphysics and its relationship with natural philoso-

23 Jessenius 1591a, c. 8, 5r.

24 Jessenius 1591a, c. 4, 2v.

25 Besides publishing an excerpt from Patrizi's *Nova de universis philosophia*, see Jessenius 1593, Jessenius later followed Renaissance Platonism, see Jessenius 1605.

26 Jessenius 1591a, c. 8, 5r.

phy has multiple facets. In Chapter XII of the treatise, he distinguished between physics and metaphysics and between the affirmative and negative science, as if referring to the Neoplatonist tradition of negative theology. Although the philosophy of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite distinguishes between a positive and a negative path to knowledge, both are a method for acquiring knowledge of God, in the first case through naming and in the second case through denial since it is easier to determine what God is not than to determine what God is. Despite using similar terminology, Jessenius endowed the aforementioned terms with a more Aristotelian meaning. Affirmative physics, drawing on sensory perception, sees its subject in things, as they are in themselves (*res in se ipsa*), that is it explores the essence, habitus, form, and activity of things – simply everything that may somehow be defined. On the contrary, metaphysics as a negative way, reflects on things outside itself (*res extra se*) and deals with privations, potentials, and matter.[27] Jessenius presumably wanted to express that physics analyses "positive facts", while metaphysics turns its attention to "things" which, in terms of sensory perception, "do not exist". This, however, does not entitle metaphysics to pride itself in attributes such as infinite, absolute and universal – since it is a discipline that necessarily complements the finite and limited physics. Hence, metaphysics explores spiritual substances, causes, and the first principles of reason.

The analysis of Jessenius' treatise produced during his studies in Padua titled *On Divine and Human Philosophy* allows us to discuss the statements which are, to a certain extent, reminiscent of the philosophy of Nicolas of Cusa who stands at the onset of the Renaissance perhaps influencing all generations of Renaissance Platonists. The aforementioned "sameness in diversity and diversity in sameness", etc. may be complemented with other no less remarkable statements by Jessenius; these statements attract attention since their inclusion is rather surprising.

The points where Jessenius distinguishes between affirmative and negative metaphysics reveal Nicolas of Cusa's somewhat "reshaped" idea about the coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*, in Jessenius' terms *coincidentia differentiarum*), but not as a characteristic of the deepest unity in God which can be seen in a spiritual vision, as in Cusanus' theories, but as a metaphysical methodology: "...physics observes the differences between things (as forms), whereas metaphysics reflects on their coincidence (as matters). Nevertheless, physics does not perceive things through differences as different, but as the same, and metaphysics does not see things in coincidence as coincidental but as different... this [metaphysics] grasps difference through coincidence, and [physics] sees coincidence in difference."[28] Despite employing similar terminology, Jessenius again moved away from Cusanus' line of thinking, methodically employing the available dialectic

27 Jessenius 1591a, c. 12, 7r.

28 Jessenius 1591a, c. 12, 7v.

to eventually describe a methodology of metaphysics based on coincidence as the understanding of differences. In this case, too, this shift relies on a strict adherence to Aristotle's ontology. Although Jessenius adopted the term "coincidence" used by Cusanus, it is set in a traditionally Aristotelian description of the relationship of mater and form. If it is true that physics is able to grasp the forms of things, then things are defined, or differentiated, by means of their forms which, at the same time, provide a general characteristic shared by things of the same kind as identical. Therefore, this differentiation is, in fact, a coincidence. Metaphysics that does not deal with specifications, but with negations – or indefinite matter – may see it as a coincidence of all things. On the other hand, matter is the principle of individuation while simultaneously being a principle giving rise to diversity.[29] It seems that matter as a uniting principle in this case is ascribed a higher status than pure potentiality. This section, influenced by Cusanus' theories, thus concludes with an Aristotelian explication, however it is entirely obvious that Jessenius must have drawn on a source that incorporated Cusanus' legacy.

Cusanus' terminology appeared also in the concluding part of Jessenius' treatise, one entire chapter of which was dedicated to the "minimum" and the following to the "maximum". The dialectic of the minimum and the maximum was introduced by Nicolas of Cusa in his treatise *On Learned Ignorance*, in which he developed his theory on the coincidence of opposites. In Chapter IV of Book I, divine unity is characterised through the coincidence of the absolute maximum and the absolute minimum. God is seen as the maximum beyond which there can be nothing greater, encompassing everything that exists. And just as God surpasses everything in his greatness, there is also nothing which can be lesser, hence he is also the absolute minimum. For Cusanus, the dialectic of the maximum and the minimum – while no contradiction can be attributed to the maximum thus coinciding with the minimum characterised as absolute simplicity – represents a sphere which transcends all terminological definitions.[30] Cusanus further elaborates on this theory in his later works, specifically the works titled *De coniecturis* and *De beryllo*. He sees coincidence as a quality of the intellect as opposed to reason (*ratio*) which employs opposites. The coincidence of the maximum and the minimum thus becomes a model that allows one to better grasp the first principle. Both great and small things can be greater or lesser and that is why they are divisible. However, the maximum, being also the minimum, excludes any potential divisibility. Therefore, when searching for a simple indivisible maximum, attention must be turned to the examination of the minimum. From the minimum, grasped as a microcosm, the path leads further towards insight (as if through a beryl) into the construction of the universe, the macrocosm. The entire

29 Jessenius 1591a, c. 12, 7v.

30 See Nicolas of Cusa 1932, 1.4.; Hopkins 1985, cf. Floss 2020.

doctrine is then perceived by Cusanus as a reform of philosophy including a sharp critique of Aristotelian metaphysics and dualistic hylomorphism.[31]

Let us now focus on the concept of this minimum and maximum as presented in Jessenius' treatise. The minimum is characterised in a truly Cusanian way: it is Oneness in that it is indivisible and has no parts. While it is possible to distinguish between what is greater and what is lesser, minimums are all equal. Hence, minimums are identical for all things; there is no differentiation between them. A minimum is the primary principle of all things – Oneness – which gives rise to everything. In this way, all things are connected with their primal origin. Beings differ from each other based on their differences, however, their Oneness is identical and it enables them to be one with all other beings.[32]

Jessenius further reproduced the image of concentric circles employed by Cusanus. If we draw multiple circles around a single point, all of them share one centre on which they participate and in relation to which they are identical, although each circle is different. The minimum thus represents this common centre of all the circles. In addition, it is impossible to give this centre a name and it is free of all interpretation, since it is where all opposites, used both for assertions and for rejections, coincide (i.e. it is existing and non-existing), yet not in predicative terms but without differentiation in relation to these differences. The minimum is thus considered by Jessenius to be the beginning and the goal of all existing things, the beginning of the "maximum". The minimum is existing and non-existing in potentiality, preceding actuality, and a negation of both since it is neither anything nor nothing. Jessenius therefore followed up on Cusanus' metaphysical concept, considering the minimum to be the very subject of metaphysics.

Nevertheless, Jessenius brought the dialectic of the minimum and the maximum to a different level than the one presented in Cusanus' theories. Most of all, he eliminated the theological context in which the entire doctrine originated and addressed the minimum and the maximum almost exclusively in the context of the relation between physics and metaphysics. While Nicolas of Cusa viewed God, the highest of beings situated above all opposites, as both the maximum and, thanks to the dialectic, the minimum, Jessenius made no explicit reference to God and reserved the term minimum to reflections on the first beginning and the principle of all existing and non-existing things. He did not identify the maximum as God, but saw it as the actuality of the minimum, which is, in fact, the maximum's potentiality. For Jessenius, the maximum is reduced to its second meaning attributed by Cusanus, that is only the universe, which Cusanus called the limited or contracted maximum as opposed to God as the absolute maximum. It suffices to note that Jessenius did not mention Cusanus' specific term of *contractio* at all. Jessenius illustrated the relationship between the

31 See Nicolas of Cusa 1988, 24–25, see Flasch 2001, pp. 37–38 and p. 101.

32 Jessenius 1591a, c. 12, 8r.

minimum and the maximum using the relationship between potentiality and actuality. A potentiality in the minimum becomes an actuality in the maximum. And this relation can be applied to human cognition: what is a potentiality in nature becomes an actuality in cognition; therefore, what is the maximum in cognition becomes a minimum in nature and vice versa. Jessenius used Cusanus' dialectic almost constantly without further expanding on the individual lists of potentialities and actualities, minimums and maximums, their successions and dependences.

Jessenius concludes: if conceiving the minimum as the subject of metaphysics, its actuality – the maximum – is then addressed in physics. Then he quickly came to distinguish two "spheres of knowing": the physical sphere (i.e. sensory perception which provide the grounds for physics) and the intellectual (i.e. the metaphysical sphere). Subsequently, in relation to the division between sensory perception and rational cognition, he provided the concluding characteristic of metaphysics and natural philosophy: physics proceeds from the effect to the cause whereas metaphysics moves from the cause to the effect. The difference between induction and deduction, however, is not discussed in further detail in Jessenius' book and so it will only be addressed in relation to his later work where the issue of methodology is mentioned. The chapters on the minimum and the maximum in Jessenius' treatise resemble Cusanus' theories, namely those included in Book I and II of *On Learned Ignorance.*

Jessenius revised Cusanus' theories for the purposes of his work. It was not his objective to further develop Cusanus' philosophy, but to promote Francesco Piccolomini's ideas about metaphysics and natural philosophy by means of the aforementioned dialectic, that is to point out the connection between these two disciplines and the superior position of metaphysics which defines the rules for physics. This purposeful inclusion of the "Cusanian" diversion appears to be a non-integral part of the treatise; it does not fit within the whole concept of the work. Jessenius did not dispute the legitimacy of his previous Aristotelian discourse and he apparently did not see any reason why his Cusanian exposé should affect the principles of Aristotelian philosophy. The coincidental dialectic thus did not result in any differentiation between the three levels of knowledge and the three powers of cognition, these being sensory perception, discursive reason, and intellect, which should have been able to see unity in the coincidence of opposites. Jessenius, on the contrary, sticks to the Aristotelian description of knowledge, which starts with sensory experience and ends with terminological analysis. Likewise, his treatise did not include Cusanus' critique of Aristotelian dualism of potentiality and actuality. Unlike Cusanus, who required a third principle which would combine both of the previous ones – connection (*conexio*), Jessenius employed the relation between the two principles, possibility and implementation, and he used it as a manual on how to interpret the

relationship between the minimum and the maximum, metaphysics and physics.

Still, the influence of Cusanus' philosophy on Jessenius' treatise is noteworthy for historical and philosophical reasons. It is clear that Cusanus' work was widespread in Italy in the 16th century and that the fact that Giordano Bruno came across the text during his studies did not occur merely by chance.[33] Moreover, Jessenius' treatise produced in Padua directly proves that the thinking of Nicolas of Cusa was well received not only outside the university (for example, in the works of French thinkers of the 16th century or in the theories of Giordano Bruno who was a solitary figure standing outside all of the philosophical trends pursued at the university), but that Cusanus' theories were partly discussed in academic circles. Regardless, there is not sufficient evidence to show that Cusanus' philosophy was studied by Jessenius' teacher, Francesco Piccolomini, whose theories might have served as Jessenius' inspiration.

Jessenius' disputation from the Padua period, which, according to Josef Král is not out of line with the traditional Aristotelian-Scholastic line of thinking, has, in the end, turned out to be a treatise defending the Platonised Aristotelianism of Francesco Piccolomini in his dispute with Jacopo Zabarella; furthermore, it even incorporates ideas from the philosophy of Nicolas of Cusa.

33 Jessenius' book confirms the domestication of Cusanus in 16th century philosophy, as it is stressed for instance by Flasch 2001, p. 150. However, although discussing Cusanus' influence in the Italian context, Flasch also only mentions the thinkers who lived at the cusp of the fifteenth century (Ficino, Pico della Mirandola), subsequently adding Giordano Bruno as the culmination of the Italian interest in Cusanus. See Flasch 2002.

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The Monstrosity of Vice: Sin and Slavery in Campanella's Political Thought

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ABSTRACT

This paper opens by reviewing Aristotle's conception of the natural slave and then familiar treatments of the internal conflict between the ruling and subject parts of the soul in Aristotle and Plato; I highlight especially the figurative uses of slavery and servitude when discussing such problems pertaining to incontinence and vice—viz., being a 'slave' to the passions. Turning to Campanella, features of the *City of the Sun* pertaining to slavery are examined: in sketching his ideal city, Campanella both rejects Aristotle's natural slave and is critical of the European institutions of slavery. The fact that slavery has no place in the City of the Sun takes on added significance when complemented with Campanella's remarks on dominion and servitude in his *Quaestiones de politiciis*: I show that Campanella's conception of slavery is intimately bound to sin, and consider whether his employment of the trope of slavery within the context of vice diverges from familiar usage.

SLAVERY AND FIGURATIVE USES OF SLAVERY IN ARISTOTLE AND PLATO

Many philosophical considerations of the theme of slavery in antiquity will inevitably, and naturally, look to Aristotle's treatment of the natural slave in *Politics* I. There we quickly learn that while a natural ruler is capable of rational foresight, those who are (only?) able to physically carry out labor are natural subjects and slaves.[1] A more thorough treatment of the slave follows in chapters 3–7, though it has been remarked that this so-called treatise on slavery "does not offer a freestanding analysis of slavery, but rather an auxiliary study meant to shed light on things other than the properties and the nature of servitude."[2] Nonetheless, we should be able to abstract some clear conclusions concerning slavery. Without being exhaustive, these include: (1) the slave is an animate possession or piece of property, and more specifically a living tool[3]; (2) the one who is by nature not his own but rather someone else's is by nature a slave[4];

1 *Pol.* I.2, 1252^{a31}.

2 Pellegrin 2013, p. 93. Pellegrin remarks that the treatment here amounts to a critique of the Platonic view, with Aristotle arguing that the different forms of rule are different in kind: "Slavery, then, acts in the *Politics*, as a kind of theoretical foil for the work's central question, the question of *political power*." Heath 2008 also recognizes that the question of slavery there is "incidental," offering a "sketch of the theory," p. 244.

3 *Pol.* I.4, 1253^{b30}.

4 *Pol.* I.4, 1254^{a15}.

(3) it is better for the natural slave—as naturally inferior—to be subjected to the rule of a master, and by being ruled he shares and participates in the reason of the master[5]; (4) it is possible to speak of legal slavery (or slavery by convention) in which the one in the state of servitude may not be a natural slave.[6] Later on, when discussing the character of a democratic state, Aristotle notes that the mark of liberty is that a man should live as he likes, "since not to live as a man likes is the mark of a slave."[7]

Outside of the *Politics*, Aristotle often speaks of slavery in a matter of fact and unsentimental manner. Aristotle very plainly enlists the master-slave relationship alongside that of double-half and larger-smaller as examples of relatives in the *Categories*.[8] When discussing the goodness and orderliness of nature, Aristotle employs an analogy of a house: "But it is as in a house, where the freemen are least at liberty to act as they will, but all things or most things are ordained for them, while slaves and the beasts do little for the common good, and for the most part live at random; for this is the sort of principle that constitutes the nature of each."[9] This here perhaps recalls the implied claim from the *Politics* that slaves are not capable of rational foresight. When discussing the process of nourishment, Aristotle—in a peculiar analogy—likens nature to the good householder who does not throw out useful portions: "Now in a household the best part of the food that comes in is set apart for the freemen, the inferior and the residue of the best for the slaves, and the worst is given to the animals that live with them."[10] At least here the slaves are given an elevated status to the beasts. And in the *Ethics*, while Aristotle does allow for friendship with a slave insofar as he is a man, friendship is explicitly denied *qua* slave furnishing the claim that the slave is an animate tool.[11] In these cases, Aristotle's employment of slavery points directly to the condition of servitude, especially in the context of the household.

Aristotle, however, also employs slavery in a figurative and analogical manner. When discussing the effects of fear in the *Rhetoric*, he remarks that most men tend to be slaves to greed; similarly, when comparing old age and youth, the claim is made that while most think that the elderly have a self-controlled character, in reality their passions have only died down and they have instead become slaves to the love of gain.[12] Such uses do not point to legal or *de facto* servitude, but rather are images which signify a loss of liberty (but not to another person or institution), an inability to rule oneself, and a situation in which the 'ruler' (a vice) in fact ought not rule. The said person is *as if* a slave to his greed. When returning

5 *Pol.* I.5, 1254^{b20}, 1255^{b1}. On this point, teasing out the peculiarity of the claim, see Heath 2008, pp. 265–267.

6 *Pol.* I.6, 1255^{a4}, 1255^{b5}

7 *Pol.* VI.2, 1317^{b10}, trans. Jowett, p. 2091.

8 *Catg.* VII, 6^{b30}, trans. Ackrill, p. 11.

9 *Meta.* XII.10, 1075^{a20}, trans. Ross, p. 1699.

10 *GA* II, 744^{b17}, trans. Platt, p. 1155.

11 *NE* VIII.11, 1161^{b2}.

12 *Rhet.* II.5, 1382^{b5}; II.13, 1390^{a13}.

to the theme of pleasure at the end of the *Ethics*, Aristotle says: "For some say pleasure is the good, while others, on the contrary, say it is thoroughly bad—some no doubt being persuaded that the facts are so, and others thinking it has a better effect on our life to exhibit pleasure as a bad thing even if it is not; for most people (they think) incline towards it and are slaves of their pleasures, for which reason they ought to lead them in the opposite direction, since thus they will reach the middle state."[13] Aristotle will reject that position, proceeding as he does in a dialectical manner; nonetheless, the image—being a slave to pleasure—holds up. In fact, it is precisely in the context of self-control, temperance, and continence where the image of slavery has its strength; or rather, the lack of self-control, intemperance, and incontinence. Aristotle's earlier treatment of continence and incontinence, states positioned between virtue and viciousness, was an answer to a problem Plato had pointed to in a number of different ways: how is it possible that someone can act contrariwise while possessing the knowledge (perhaps even only correct belief) of the right or good course of action? Aristotle begins his discussion in his usual manner: "Now we may ask what kind of right belief is possessed by the man who behaves incontinently. That he should behave so when he has knowledge, some say is impossible; for it would be strange—so Socrates thought—if when knowledge was in a man something else could master it and drag it about like a slave."[14] Here, of course, the simile is explicit: pleasures, passions, and bodily desires ought not rule insofar as they are inferior; if they did, the intellectual, superior part having knowledge would be *as if* a slave. Aristotle's solution, as is well known, allows for the possibility that man abandon his rational calculations.

Aristotle of course is not alone in employing this telling image pertaining to self-control or self-rule. The passage Aristotle referred to in the *Ethics*—"drag it about like a slave"—comes from the *Protagoras*, where Socrates explicitly refers to the passions (anger, pleasure, pain, love, fear) as ruling a man instead of knowledge: "they think of his knowledge as being utterly dragged around by all these other [passions] as if it were a slave."[15] This certainly is not the only such use in Plato. Famously, in the *Republic*, in what may be the culmination of the argument against injustice which highlights the character and wretched condition of the tyrannical man, Socrates draws the parallel between the tyrant and the tyrannical regime: "Then, if man and city are alike, mustn't the same structure be in him too? And mustn't his soul be full of slavery and unfreedom, with the most decent parts enslaved and with a small part, the maddest and most vicious, their master?"[16] That a soul

13 *NE* X.1, 1172^{a27}, trans. Ross, p. 1853.

14 *NE* VII.2, 1145^{b22}, trans. Ross, p. 1809. See also *Prob.* XXVIII: "So we blame a man who is slave to [pleasures] and call him incontinent and intemperate, because he is a slave to the worst pleasures," 949^{b10}, trans. Forster, p. 216.

15 *Prot.* 352^{c}, trans. Lombardo & Bell, p. 782.

16 *Rep.* IX, 577^{d}, trans. Grube, p. 1185.

be "full of slavery" implies precisely an improper ordering among ruling and subject parts. (Elsewhere, in a beautiful moment of irony, Socrates points out to Lysis the peculiarity of the slave-teacher: "a free man directed by a slave? Are they not in charge of you?"[17]) It is enough to be mastered by but one pleasure to become a slave to oneself.[18] Such a kind of slavery comes most into relief precisely in the case of incontinence, where one acts contrariwise to their reasoned intentions: he is thus not able to live as he likes.

In the *Republic*, Socrates concludes that the real tyrant is in fact a slave, unable to satisfy his desires and filled with fear, governed poorly "on the inside"—whereas the democratic man, for example, insofar as his enjoyment of pleasures is moderate, leads a life that is neither slavish nor lawless.[19] Even with such a strong condemnation of the tyrant, and equally strong claim that the tyrant is *actually* a slave, an unspoken 'as if' seems to linger in the background and such a use of slavery remains secondary and at the level of a metaphor. For less literary uses in Plato, one need only consult the treatment of the training and punishment of slaves by the unnamed Athenian in *Laws*.[20] Slaves there are always actual slaves of a household, and not intemperate and greedy fellows prone to backsliding in the garb of freemen. When Clitophon, commenting on Socrates' own words, suggests that slavery rather than freedom is preferred for the one who does not know how to use his soul well, "handing over the rudder of his mind [...] to somebody else who knows the skill of steering men [...]",[21] there too a condition of real servitude or subjection is indicated, though the figurative sense is not excluded since he cannot rule himself. Better for the 'slave' to be a slave? Have we circled round to a version of Aristotle's natural slave?

SLAVERY AND THE CITY OF THE SUN

We have so far highlighted analogical uses of slavery when applied to the human soul and the ability and difficulty in ruling one's self in some famliar Aristotelian and Platonic texts. We turn now to the political thought of the late Renaissance Dominican, Tommaso Campanella, whose body of work is prolific as it is extensive, and whose thinking resists facile demarcation. While he wrote on nearly all aspects of learning—metaphysics, natural philosophy, astrology, theology, religion, and ethics—perhaps it is his political thought which stands out to contemporary readers given the popularity of his peculiar 'utopian' work, *The City of the Sun* (1602). Ever the critic of Aristotle and stale Aristotelian

17 *Lysis*, 208^{c}, trans. Lombardo, p. 693.

18 In *Alc*. 1, the heir to the Persian throne is trained by four royal tutors—the most wise, the most just, the most brave, and the most self-controlled. The latter teaches the boy "not to be mastered by even a single pleasure, so that he can get accustomed to being a freeman and a real king, whose first duty is to rule himself, not to be a slave to himself," 122^{a}, trans. Hutchinson, p. 579.

19 *Rep*. IX, 572^{b}, 578^{e}.

20 *Laws* VI, 777ff.

21 Clit., 408b, trans. Gonzalez, p. 967.

doctrine in matters of physics and metaphysics, Campanella's distaste for the Stagirite does not exempt his political philosophy, and comes to the fore in his fierce rejection of the natural slave.[22] After presenting significant features of his *City of the Sun* which have to do with slavery, we will then turn to his theoretical treatments in a companion work and examine whether or not Campanella follows suit in employing the familiar figurative or analogical uses of slavery. His persistence in or divergence from the standard trope might shed further light on his understanding of servitude and conventional practices. To anticipate, it does turn out that his conception of slavery as such fits directly into the context not only of vice, but also sin.

The *City of the Sun* is Campanella's well-known 'poetic dialogue' on the idea of a commonwealth (*de Reipublicae Idea*). In a conversation between a Genoese helmsman and a Grand Hospitaller, Campanella presents details concerning the structure of this ideal city, the Solarian way of life generally and its political governance, their educational practices and military training, and their philosophical and religious beliefs. The city is meant to be in conformity with natural law and natural religion, and is presented as more just and humane than contemporary European cities.

In the dialogue, the Hospitaller displays much eagerness to learn more about the City of the Sun. He more than once asks for further information concerning their government and way of life. In response to one of these demands—still early in the dialogue, though following the introduction of the ruler-priest called the Metaphysician and his three auxiliary princes, Power, Wisdom, and Love, as well as the detailed description of the seven city walls and the various divisions of knowledge depicted on the six inner ones—the Genoese reveals that the Solarians are a people from India who fled a devastated region. In particular, they are refugees from the rule of tyrants: as a result, the Solarians decided to establish a "philosophical life in community" (*philosophicam vitam in communitate/viver alla filosofica in comune*).[23] This communal way of life constitues a distinctive and essential feature of the city: there is no private property, but rather all goods are shared insofar as they are received from the community (since the Solarians produce always a surplus of goods), dispensed by officials who ensure that no one person receive more or less than what is deserved or needed. Learning, honors, and pleasures are all held in common, as are wives following a practice that perhaps is reminiscent of *Republic* V. The Solarians believe that property—the possession of goods, holding individual homes, and even recognizing children and wives as one's own—lies at the root of selfish love and in fact inflames the love of self: "when we have freed ourselves from the selfish love, all that remains is the love

22 See, for example, Mahoney 2004, esp. pp. 29–32 for a concise treatment of Campanella.

23 Campanella 2008, p. 20

of community."[24] In fact, the social and pedagogical structures of the city have as their aim precisely the elimination of vice, in particular pride and greed.

With the elimination of all conceptions of property, so much so that even the family unit is unrecognizable, we can infer that the slave—at least the Aristotelian version of the slave—can in no way find a place in such a society. If there is no property in the City of the Sun, and a slave is an animate piece of property, there can be no slave in the City of the Sun. As it turns out, we learn in fact that the Solarians do not practice slavery. Working through the few explicit references to slaves, slavery, and subjection in the *City of the Sun*, we can briefly outline the following points: (1) the Solarians believe that the keeping of slaves leads to idleness and licentiousness in a given society; (2) the practice of slavery brings with it the corruption of morals (*foedantia mores*)[25]; (3) with respect to the communal production and distribution of goods, the Solarians are at the same time rich and poor, and thus are not enslaved to things (*rebus non serviunt/non s'attaccano a servire in ogni cosa*)[26]; and (4) concerning their trade and dealings with other regions and peoples, foreigners and their slaves are not allowed into the city, but rather are consigned to a space at or outside the city gates.

The first explicit mention of slaves (*servos/servidori*) occurs in the early account of how the magistrates are chosen. Before the Genoese sailor answers the Hospitaller's query directly, he first tells more generally of the Solarian lifestyle, their clothes, and methods of instruction. Led by masters, groups of Solarian children are instructed in language, exercise in gymnastics, and then practice various crafts according to their innate inclinations that are carefully monitored and evaluated by the masters. Even after the youth begin their study of mathematics and the natural sciences, they engage always in some physical exercise after their lectures. Those most proficient in a given mechanical art or science themselves will become masters of that respective discipline. It is here that we learn that the Solarians consider most noble the one who learns the most arts or crafts and practices them with expertise. Here the Genoese says: "On account of this it is they who laugh at us, for we refer to artisans as ignoble and hold to be noble those who have learned no craft, who live leisurely, and who keep so many slaves for their own idleness and licentiousness, as from this school of vices spring up many idlers and criminals who are a calamity for the commonwealth."[27] In this first use of *servus* in the text, then, the slave

24 "At cum proprium amorem amiserimus, remanet tantummodo amor communitatis," Campanella 2008, p. 20. Cf. also Campanella 1637, Q.4, a.3, p. 110.

25 Campanella 2008, p. 54.

26 Campanella 2008, p. 56.

27 "Quapropter irrident nos in eo quod artifices vocemus ignobiles ac eos habeamus nobiles, qui nullam addiscunt artem, vivunt ociose et tot servos suo ocio et lasciviae dedicatos detinent, unde sicut ex vitiorum schola prodeunt in reipublicae perniciem tot nebulones ac malefici," Campanella 2008, p. 28.

referred to is the European one: the Solarians denounce the European practice as a source of ruin for the state insofar as it nourishes idleness and decadence. Campanella's elevation of the status of artisans, craftsmen, and labor in general in his city constitutes a rejection and criticism of Aristotle's exclusion of artisans and workers from the class of citizens found in the *Politics*.[28]

Later in the text, slavery (*mancipia/schiavi*) appears explicitly following the strong condemnation of the vice of pride. Pride is chastised with the harshest contempt, and no labor in the city—such as waiting on tables or working in the kitchens—is deemed unworthy or ignoble. Any such service they call "discipline," and Campanella offers the following elegant examples: "they say that it is honorable for the feet to walk and for the anus to defecate, just as it is for the eye to see and for the tongue to speak: for even these latter functions [...] discharge excrement when it is necessary. Therefore, whoever is assigned to whatever service works at it as if it were the most honorable task."[29] We see again not a denigration of, but a genuine appreciation for all sorts of labor in the city. The Solarians are sufficient unto themselves and in fact produce a surplus of goods. The Genoese then introduces a comparison with Naples: he says that of the seventy-thousand souls residing in Naples, fewer than ten or fifteen thousand of these engage in labor, and that these are exhausted and ruined by an excess of uninterrupted and prolonged work.[30] The many vices among the non-working idlers are condemned—they are lost to sloth, avarice, sickness of body, licentiousness, usury; these idlers contaminate and pervert the others by detaining them in their servitude and reducing them to poverty. On the other hand, in the City of the Sun, the duties, crafts, and labors are distributed throughout the entire city, each person working for hardly four hours a day (even an improvement upon More's six-hour workday in *Utopia*); the remaining hours of the day are devoted to joyous leisure, learning, exercise, and

28 While there are implicit criticisms of Aristotle and his political philosophy in the *City of the Sun*, there are also explicit rejections of Aristotle as an authority: for example, the Solarians refuse to call the Stagirite a philosopher, and believe that the European dependence upon Aristotle's grammar and logic only leads to a stagnation of intellect. Besides these remarks in the *City of the Sun*, Campanella takes up these theoretical issues more directly in his *Quaestiones de politiciis*, the second of which is dedicated precisely to refuting Aristotle's political philosophy. John Headley rightly insists that "the *Quaestiones* [as a whole] need to be judged against the lifelong opposition of their author to the formidable Stagirite," Headley 1991, p. 29. Precisely when expressing his disagreement and disgust over Aristotle's devaluation of the crafts and the place of the artisans, Campanella refers to Aristotle in Q.2, a.1: "Aristoteles impius, naturae humanae hostis," Campanella 1637, p. 93.

29 "Sed vocant disciplinam onme ministerium et aiunt ita honorificum esse pedi ambulare et culo cacare, sicut oculo videre et linguae loqui: nam ille lacrymas et ista sputum, excrementa excernunt, cum opus est. Idcirco cuicunque quilibet ministerio deputatus operatur illud tanquam honestissimum," Campanella 2008, p. 54.

30 Tangentially, it should be noted that Campanella's statistical figures vary in the Italian and Latin versions of the text.

games. The crux of this point is that the Solarians participate in their respective labor in a communal fashion, producing even a surplus and making slavery in fact unnecessary. On this point, Blum has commented that with such a conception of labor and communal duty, the very existence of slavery in a society is indicative of insufficiency and incompetency, such that "slavery is the expression of a surplus that is enjoyed by one part of the population at the expense of the laboring part. Accordingly, such surplus could be distributed equally among the populace, which would amount to all citizens working and enjoying leisure at their fair share."[31] Campanella goes on to make the claim—through the mouth of the Genoese—that harsh poverty makes any man vile, cunning, deceitful, scandalous, and insidious, while exorbitant wealth makes man insolent, arrogant, ignorant, fraudulant, and boastful. Thus we see that a city is indeed deficient not simply when one class exploits the labor of another, but rather when its people are equally subjected to vice, albeit different ones. The ruling and rich class only apparently benefits from the labor of the subjected and poor class. It is not just that the slaves are exploited and made vicious, but rather that the masters too are corrupted by their attachment to their wealth. It is on this point that the Genoese remarks that the Solarian communal life renders each citizen to be at the same time rich and poor, "rich since they have everything, and poor because they possess nothing; and therefore they are not enslaved to things, but things are at their service [...]"—and here we happen upon a figurative expression of servitude (so long as we are able to treat *non serviunt* in this way) in the text.[32] It is not an inversion between ruling and subject parts of the human soul, but rather an inverted relationship between person and thing: the rich and poor alike, in their conventional meanings, inevitably are put into the service of things.

A final reference to slaves (*mancipia/schiavi*) occurs in the Genoese's consideration of the Solarians' trade practices and use of money. Commerce (*mercatura*) is for them of little use, he says. They do recognize the value of money and mint coints for the sake of their emissaries and spies; merchants from other parts of the world buy the Solarians' surplus of goods. However, they themselves do not accept money, but rather trade for items they might lack, and oftentimes themselves buy such things with money. The youth of the City of the Sun erupt into laughter when they see foreign merchants bestow a great amount of goods for so small a price. Here the Genoese states that the Solarians "refuse that slaves and strangers corrupt the city with their immoral behavior. They thus buy or sell those they capture in war only at the city gates, or they assign them to dig ditches or to other laborious work outside of the

31 Blum 2017, p. 565.

32 "divites quia omnia habent, pauperes quoniam nihil possident; ac simul rebus non serviunt sed res ipsis, et in hoc valde laudant religiosos christianitatis, maxime autem vitam Apostolorum," Campanella 2008, p. 56.

city [...]."[33] The little dealings they have with slaves captured in war are wholly kept ouside of the city walls. We might add, importantly, that elsewhere (in his *Quaestiones de politiciis*, a text we will soon consider in more detail) Campanella concedes that the keeping of captives as slaves is a lesser evil, and is a necessary consequence that follows from the fact that man engages in warfare.[34] The *City of the Sun* says little else, however it seems clear that such slaves or prisoners of war are quickly sold off (since they cannot be integrated well into the Solarian lifestyle and practices) and repeat that such slaves can only be the belligerents, and are not Solarians as the practice simply has no place inside the city. We might also infer that if the Solarians never engaged in battle with any neighbor, they themselves would never hold any slaves whatsoever.

CAMPANELLA ON SLAVERY AND SIN

The City of the Sun was not a self-standing speculative or satirical exercise, but rather constituted a kind of poetic appendix to Campanella's political thought as expressed in the work *De politica*. Additionally, in the 1637 edition of his *Philosophia realis* (dedicated to natural philosophy, ethics, political philosophy, and economics), Campanella's *De politica* and *Civitas solis* are in fact rounded off by the *Quaestiones de politiciis*—the fourth and final question dedicated precisely to a defense of his ideal city against a number of objections. The third question aims to show the many ways in which Aristotle's own vision of the polis is contradictory, while the second question is a broader rejection of Aristotle's political philosophy. For present purposes, we wish to draw attention to the first of these political *quaestiones*, in which we can clarify Campanella's understanding of the relation between vice, servitude, and sin.[35]

The first question is divided into two articles, the first asking whether to reign (*regnare*) and to have dominion (*dominari*) are the same thing. Campanella makes some important distinctions concerning relevant terminology—i.e., *dominium*, *usufructus*, *usus*, *ius*, and *regnum*. This is done to clarify his conception of tyranny as distinct from correct and legitimate rule. Campanella posits that reign (*regnum*) is a combination of right (*ius*) and dominion (*dominium*). Already here we find some important claims that will later furnish the ground for his rejection of natural slavery. Dominion is characterized as a relationship between superior and inferior, and only God possesses dominion in an absolute

33 "Nolunt a mancipiis et advenis civitatem pravis moribus labefactari. Idcirco mercantur in portis et vendunt quod bello capiunt aut excavandis fossis aut operosis laboribus extra civitatem ipsos destinant [...]," Campanella 2008, p. 78–80.

34 As will be emphasized in the next section, warfare and this lesser evil is a consequence of sin, and Campanella encourages that the captives be improved: "At quoniam peccata hominum sic ferunt, ut contra invicem bellum geramus, melius est captivare quam occidere: hoc est minus malum, sed meliores reddere captivos, si studueris, hoc probitatis erit," Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.2, p. 85.

35 For a brief overview of the *Quaestiones*, see Ernst's "Presentazione," in Campanella 2013, pp. 592–600.

manner; the legitimate ruler has dominion only in a participatory way and does not act in an arbitrary fashion; this legitimate form of rule (i.e., *regnum*) necessitates right (*ius*) insofar as men are equals, and without right such rule becomes tyranny, constituting rather a violation of right when a ruler does not aim at the good of the people. Campanella remarks that when a man acts contrary to human reason and introduces harm into his country and among his countrymen, "he is stripped of his humanity and clothes himself with what is bestial."[36] Although man is given dominion over the fish, the birds, and the terrestrial beasts (Gen. 1), man does not have dominion over man: unless, Campanella says, a man has made himself a beast through beastly acts (*nisi fiant bestiae per actus bestiales*), in which case Campanella does allow a 'medicinal' form of dominion which either punishes, corrects, or prevents sin. In short, the relationship between men is one between equals in which there is no natural superiority or inferiority; any legitimate form of political rule, then, must always be restrained by law and never be simply arbitrary. It is through sinful acts that man becomes as if a beast, and deserves punishment or correction for the good of the commonwealth, thus being subjected to a medicinal form of dominion—which Campanella notes "seems to be something more than government."[37]

The second article then moves to clarify the following questions: whether any man is able to be lord or master over another by some right, natural or divine? And, whether every form of dominion arises from violence? What follows is a very lengthy treatment in which Campanella presents and then takes on three distinct 'opinions' on the matter.[38] The first opinion argues that all dominion is violent and against nature; the second opinion is that dominion is the highest good and therefore natural, which, for Campanella, serves as the position of the Machiavellians; and the third is that dominion is natural since man is a political animal—this representing the Aristotelian position.

The core presentation of Campanella's answer is found at the midpoint of the article, after a *sed contra* which offers relevant biblical passages as well as comments of Ambrose, and before the responses to the three opinions. The opening text there is powerful, engaging the reader in the second person and offering a glimpse into a struggle between the commands of reason and those of our 'mistress'—viz., avarice personified. The reader is cast as an obedient slave to the monster avarice, despite the directives given by reason and by God. All vices deform life (*deturpant vitam*) and

36 "exuitur humanitate et vestitur bestialitate," Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.1, p. 73.

37 "medicinali, quod aliquid plus videtur, quam regimen," Campanella 1637, Q. 1, a.1, p. 73.

38 Since the *Quaestiones* follow a scholastic presentation of objections and replies, the second article in particular becomes somewhat amplified since each opinion (which functions itself as a sort of 'objection') lists a number of different opposing arguments, and then each response contains a kind of 'corpus' answering the whole of the opinion as well as individual responses to the specific arguments.

make man unhappy (*faciunt infelicem*). Campanella goes on to reify all vices as monsters, rendering the man unable to dominate his passions crippled, a vile slave in the service of such monstrous creatures. Campanella asks: "would you consider someone to be a master or a freeman if he serve these [monsters]?"[39] The tyrant again thus becomes the slave: "Nero [...] was enslaved to the appetite and its miseries,"[40] while Paul, though imprisoned, remained a master. Nero finds a place among Cesare Borgia, Liverotto da Fermo, and others, cast as the most unhappy of men. The familiar trope has here resurfaced and has been amplified. But we should pay attention to the precise claims made about what servitude consists in and its relationship to sin.

Campanella's response proper to the question at hand (viz., whether a man is able to be a master or possess dominion over another by some right) first affirms that all men share in reason, and thus participate in Christ: as such all are capable of beatitude by obeying God's law and thus becoming virtuous. He continues: "To obey, however, is common to both slaves and freemen, neither does assistance lack for those who desire it. For this reason, no one is a slave in the law of Christ, the highest reason, except he who sins, and thus he said: 'whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.' It is shown clearly that this alone is servitude. For the virtuous man is free, since he does not sin by obeying the passions, but rather dominates them. But what is more vile than submitting oneself to the most shameful avarice?"[41] Campanella joins the task of acquiring virtue with obedience to the law of God, and such obedience applies to all, whether free or slave in the conventional sense: this includes, then, the apparent masters and lords. Surely there do not exist slaves by nature since, *qua* man, all participate in reason and in Christ. (Only a small inference is required to determine that, on this basis, a conception of natural master can neither stand.) Invoking scripture (viz., Jn. 8:24), Campanella posits that what servitude consists in simply is sin. We should take this claim seriously. To be free, one pursues virtue and thus obeys God; to obey the passions instead, one sins, and is a slave. It seems that a figurative expression is here jettisoned.

What follows is precisely the dialogue between reason and lady avarice already indicated above, which of course is poetic, turning vices into foul monsters. However, in that passage the images of monstrosity reinforce the claim that sin is servitude: it is not that the man of vice is *as if* a slave to monsters,

39 "Tu ne putabis dominum et liberum, qui his serviet?" Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.2, p. 80.

40 "Nero [...] serviebat gulae suisque miseriis," Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.2, p. 80.

41 "Obedire autem servis et liberis est commune, nec auxilium deest volentibus. Quapropter in lege Christi, Rationis summae, nemo servus, nisi qui peccat, unde dixit: 'Qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati.' Convincitur autem haec sola servitus esse. Nam virtuosus ideo liber, quia non peccat obediendo passionibus sed illis dominatur. Quid autem vilius quam parere turpissimae Avaritiae?" Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.2, p. 79.

but rather that the man of sin is *in fact* a slave and servant to monstrous vice insofar as he fails in his obedience to God.

We must deal with conventional, legal, and *de facto* servitude, which will reinforce the claim that Campanella conceives of slavery primarily as sin. The short answer is that, for Campanella, all forms of slavery are consequent upon the fall: "servitude and dominion were made in the state of corrupted nature, after man had sinned."[42] Similarly, and interestingly, even legitimate forms of rule become necessary only after the fall, when the weak and sinful require the care, supervision, and correction by the wise. But again, rule over one's self (i.e., dominating one's own passions) is a prerequisite for ruling over others.

Perhaps shockingly at first glance, Campanella does introduce the concession that some might be considered instruments or slaves by nature: here Campanella emphasizes that he does not mean 'by nature' in an absolute consideration, but rather in a qualified respect. Campanella refers to the state of affairs following the fall and original sin. Again, the point is that sin simply is servitude. The one who rejects God, wishing to rule himself not restrained by any law, serves his passions instead and enters a state of sin and servitude. The resulting necessity that some ought to be ruled by a legimate governor stems from sin and the corrupted state, and the resulting form of rule is not absolute dominion (belonging only to God), but rather government or regime. Thus the vicious and wicked stand in need of not only punishment in extreme cases, but also direction and correction: "the virtuous man makes men good while he utilizes them: for he teaches them, preserves them, and cherishes them through correct doctrine, example, discourse, and correction."[43] Such a form of dominion is medicinal and aimed at the good of the whole, and the wise man posseses such dominion as a physician and not a tyrant. Again, even this dominion comes to be only as a result of original sin.

We are left to consider the significance of these claims when turning back to the *City of the Sun*. In both texts Campanella is explicit that the social structures, the removal of property, and instructional practices of the city have as their end the destruction of vices and the elimination of evils, in order that the citizens live a life more in line with nature—viz., a philosophical and communal way of life. But is there no sin at all? We might be tempted to think that the Solarians in fact live a life without sin, especially given the fact that they do not practice conventional forms of slavery. If we take Campanella's claim seriously that servitude consists in sin, this would be a tidy conclusion: to say that there is no slavery in the city is tantamount to claiming that there is no sin. But, we should recall, the Solarians are not fully free of the practice insofar as

42 "Postquam enim homo peccavit in natura corrupta, servitus et dominatio facta sunt," Campanella, 1637, Q.1, a.2, p. 80.

43 "virtuosus enim facit homines bonos, dum eis utitur: docet enim et servat, et fovet, doctrina, exemplo, oratione, correctione," Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.2, p. 80.

captive belligerents are kept (even if only temporarily) as slaves outside the city walls. In the fourth of the *Quaestiones*, Campanella recognizes that the city is not without sin: "I say that this is the truly best life [...]. Sins will be present, but not the grave ones as found in other places, nor even the kind that might ruin the commonwealth."[44] The city is almost without sin, as it is quite nearly without slavery. The Solarian way of life does not quite achieve the fullness of prelapsarian purity. Elsewhere, Campanella's vision perhaps is more enthusiastic: "all are by nature free, but one becomes a slave through sin and ignorance. But if at the beginning there had not been original sin, we would all live as if in our Republic, described in the *City of the Sun*, [...] we would all be limbs to each the other, and for each would be good that duty connatural to him; and we would live by right, which posits equality, not dominion."[45] (Campanella leaves out, prudently, the Solarian practice of sharing wives.) Campanella's city does not offer a portrait of the original state of innocence, but rather represents a way of life which has come very close to recovering such a state by cleasing its citizens of vice. He says, "in our republic, consciences would be made serene, avarice—the root of all evils—done away with."[46]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The way of life described in the *City of the Sun* is more just and more humane due to drastic measures that cleanse its citizens of monstrous vice and eliminate the gravest sins, rendering that way of life in conformity with reason and with nature. Campanella rejects any distinction among men between natural master and natural slave, and is repulsed by Aristotle's exclusion of the artisans from citizenship; Campanella insists that such craftsmen are not only capable of virtue and happiness, but also are owed proper respect and honor for their expertise. Artisans, in fact, become kings in their own craft insofar as they possess a piece of wisdom.[47] Armed with scripture and the Christian conception of sin, Campanella can truly diagnose the tyrant—the violent, illegitimate ruler—actually to be a slave, dispensing with any analogy. Complete and arbitrary license, for Campanella, inevitably results in tyranny with respect to others and servitude with respect to self. The condition of legal and political servitude is a secondary signification of slavery for Campanella, and becomes possible (and sometimes

44 "Dico etiam hanc etiam esse vitam optimam, [...]. Peccata aderunt, sed non gravia, ut in caeteris, nec quae saltem rempublicam pessundent," Campanella 1637, Q.4, a.1, p. 103.

45 "Omnis est liber natura, sed peccato et stultitia fit servus. Si autem non praecessisset peccatum originale, omnes viveremus sicuti in republica nostra De civitate solis inscripta, licet dubium sit de uxoribus quas communes non ponerem. At omnes essemus alter alterius membra, et bonum esset unicuique munus sibi connaturale, et iure, quod ponit aequalitatem, non dominio, quod imparitatem, viveremus," Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.2, ad.2, p. 82.

46 "Ergo ex nostra Republica serenantur conscientiae, tollitur avaritia radix omnium malorum [...]," Campanella 1637, Q.4, a.2, p. 106.

47 "Quod omnis artifex est Rex in sua arte, quoniam habet particulam sapientiae," Campanella 1637, Q.1, a.2, p. 81.

permitted) only in the postlapsarian state. So long as they are good and virtuous, Aesop, Diogenes, and Plato would never truly be slaves even if they were sold into a legal state of servitude. One of course cannot but draw a parallel between the state of servitude and imprisonment, and recall Campanella's own unfortunate circumstances as well as his estimation concerning the radical freedom and strength of the will: man possesses such freedom that he can even utter profanities against God.[48] In his discussions of rule and dominion, right and violation, servitude and sin, does not Campanella accomplish what Plato could only suggest by way of images? Is not the true tyrant, now, truly a slave?

48 "homo est adeo liber quod etiam blasphemat Deum," Campanella 2008, p. 159.

ABBREVIATIONS

Aristotle

Catg.	*Categories*
GA	*Generation of Animals*
Meta.	*Metaphysics*
NE	*Nicomachean Ethics*
Pol.	*Politics*
Prob.	*Problems*
Rhet.	*Rhetoric*

Plato

Alc. 1	*Alcibiades* 1
Clit.	*Clitophon*
Prot.	*Protagoras*
Rep.	*Republic*

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Jakob Böhme und das Böse

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ABSTRACT*

One of the central topics of Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) is the problem of evil. In contrast to the Neoplatonic tradition, which has inspired much of the Christian theology, he does not believe that evil can be explained simply as a deficiency of good. His innovative notion of „Ungrund" (the Divine „Abyss") has grown out of his strong belief that both has to be maintained: God is Good and evil is something real. Now, his fundamental question is: How is it possible that good and omnipotent God created the world in such a way that there can be evil in it? In this paper, I follow up the ancient, and more specifically, the Neoplatonic, concepts of the first principle. I try to understand why the divine being, the One, could have been called „good", and what it meant for the concept of evil. In this perspective, I analyze the innovative approach to evil, as it was developed by Böhme. Although his „Ungrund" is beyond good and evil, he explains that, and in which way, the metaphysical source of evil must be present already there.

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EINFÜHRUNG

Das Denken des philosophischen Autodidakten Jakob Böhme (1575—1624) kreist um das Problem des Bösen.[1] In welchem Sinn er das Böse versteht, und auf welche Weise sein Verständnis neu war oder nicht, soll in diesem Artikel angedeutet werden.

Ich habe „des philosophischen Autodidakten" gesagt und schon das bedarf einer Klärung. Böhme spricht gewiss zum Teil „philosophisch" (oder „theosophisch", wie er selbst sagt, was aber zumindest *formal* dasselbe ist), zum großen Teil sind jedoch seine Texte tief durch eine poetische und religiöse Sprache geprägt. Es ist sicherlich ein wenig gewagt, diese Ausdrucksweise bei ihm zu unterscheiden. Doch muss man solch eine fragwürdige Aufgabe auf sich nehmen, will man jene Adern ansehen, durch die sozusagen Leben in seine Texte strömt. Dabei muss manches beiseite bleiben, zuweilen auch das nicht ganz Unwesentliche. Alles, seine oft fast liturgische Sprache nicht ausgenommen, gehört untrennbar zu seinem *dynamischen* Denken.

Wenn ich nun das Böse bei Böhme als Thema dieses Artikels gewählt habe, sieht die Situation nicht anders aus. Etwas übertrieben gesagt: sollte diese für ihn zentrale Frage wirklich befriedigend dargestellt werden, so müsste man Böhmes eigene Sprache benutzen und ihn zitieren. Und doch wäre die Frage nicht

1 Vgl. z. B. bereits L. Feuerbach, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (1833–1837), in: Feuerbach 1906, S. 130; Koyré 1929, S. 72; Voigt 1924, S. 286; Schulze-Maizier 1938, S. 18; Wiesenhütter 1925, S. 22; Berdjajew 1932/33, S. 319.

befriedigend und eindeutig beantwortet, weil sie schon bei Böhme auf mehrerlei Weisen gelöst wurde.

Worauf ich also aufmerksam machen möchte, ist nur ein, aber sehr wichtiger Gedankenweg, auf dem sich Böhmes Denken bewegt. Um das Neue bei Böhme klarer hervortreten zu lassen, will ich zuerst ein wenig das „klassische" Konzept des Bösen untersuchen. Schon diese Erwägung wird es wohl ermöglichen, die grundsätzliche Umwandlung im Begriff des Bösen zu erkennen, die bei Böhme im Vergleich zu der zutiefst neuplatonisch geprägten Tradition stattfindet.

„KLASSISCHE" KONZEPTE DES BÖSEN

Für den ersten, der das „wahrhaft Seiende" auf eine ganz bestimmte Art verstanden hat, kann wohl Parmenides gehalten werden. Sein „Seiendes" wurde mit äußerst folgenschweren Merkmalen ausgestattet, die über Platon, Aristoteles, Neuplatonismus und Augustin in die mittelalterliche Metaphysik eingegangen sind: was *wirklich* „ist", ist „eines", „ganzheitlich" (*syneches*), „unbeweglich" (*akineton*), „ungeboren" (Fr. B 8). Bei Platon tritt anstelle des prinzipiellen „Einen" das „Gute".[2] Das Gute, das nichts Seiendes ist, sondern „jenseits der seienden Wesen" (*epeikeina tes ousias ... hyperechontos*).[3] Die mittelalterliche Metaphysik übernimmt diese Attribute und appliziert sie auf Gott, der somit zu dem Einen, Unbeweglichen, Ungeborenen und Guten wird. Was bedeutet aber das „Gute" bei Platon?

Der Begriff des „Guten" bezeichnet allgemein das, „was Leute begehren", sagt Platon.[4] Niemand tut etwas, was für *ihn selber* schlecht wäre.[5] Alle diese individuellen Begierden sammeln sich sozusagen in der einzigen Idee des Guten, „zu der jede Seele eilt und warum sie alles tut – sie ahnt zwar, dass es so etwas gibt, ist jedoch nicht sicher und kann nicht genügend begreifen, was für eine Sache das sein mag, und auch der dauernde Glaube reicht ihr nicht, wie es bei anderen Sachen der Fall ist" – lesen wir in Platons *Republik*.[6] Jede absichtliche Handlung zielt auf das Gute ab, abgesehen davon, wie sie moralisch gewertet wird. Das Gute bei Platon ist also keine *moralische*, sondern eine *ontologische* Größe.[7]

Aristoteles betrachtet diese Sache im Grunde genauso wie Platon. Das Schönste und Beste, die Fülle und Wirklichkeit – also Gott – muss das Erste sein; es kommt nicht in Frage, dass es erst aus einer („nicht seienden") Dunkelheit hervorgehe (*Met.* XII, 7, 1072b). Wodurch das ganze System sozusagen erleuchtet und *belebt* wird, ist der Glanz des Denkens, das sich selber denkt – ein immerwährendes und ewiges Leben, weil

2 Die folgenden Erwägungen wurden ursprünglich durch einige Passagen angeregt, die Radek Chlup in seiner nicht publizierten Diplomarbeit (Chlup 1996, S. 95 ff.) vorgelegt hatte (später wurden diese Analysen teilweise in Chlup 2007 übernommen).

3 Platon, *Rep.* 509b.

4 Platon, *Symp.*, 205e–206a.

5 Platon, *Prot.* 358c–d.

6 Platon, *Rep.* 505e.

7 Chlup 1996, S. 94.

wirkliche Verstandestätigkeit Leben ist.[8] Nun kann man sich jedoch fragen: Kann ein „unbewegter Beweger" *lebendig* sein? Als *causa finalis* kann dieser Gott ganz gut mit Aristoteles als „Gegenstand der Liebe" bezeichnet werden (*Met.* XII, 7, 1072a); auf solche Weise kann er alles in Bewegung bringen, ohne dass er selbst beweglich sein müsste. Aber gilt das auch für ihn als *causa efficiens*? Wir erfahren von Aristoteles, dass „das Bewegte und zugleich Bewegende in der *Mitte* steht, es ist also etwas, was bewegt, ohne selbst bewegt zu werden, und was ewig ist, Wesen und wirkliche Tätigkeit zugleich" (*Met.* XII, 7, 1072a).

Versteht man es als Bild eines sich bewegenden Rades mit unbewegter Mitte, so kann man solche Darstellungen später bei mehreren Autoren wiederfinden, zum Beispiel bei Plotin, bei dem dabei allerdings wieder um eine Bewegung zum *Ziel*, und nicht um eine *wirkende* Kraft geht. „Alles muss sich zu ihm [d.h. zum Guten] wenden," sagt er, „wie auch ein Kreis sich zur Mitte wendet, aus der alle Strahlen hervorgehen."[9]

Dieses Rad-Motiv finden wir auch bei Böhme und vor ihm bekanntlich bei Nicolaus Cusanus. In des Letzteren Schrift *De ludo globi* wird ein Rad mit den in die Mitte *zielenden* Strahlen beschrieben.[10] Im ersten Buch seiner *Docta ignorantia* kann diese Mitte zwar als eine *wirkende* Ursache begriffen werden, aus der alles hervorgeht, es handelt sich hier aber um ein *absolutes* Minimum, also um ein *nicht-physisches*, sondern *meta-physisches* Prinzip, also Gott.[11] So etwas ist kein „Seiendes", sondern *in diesem Sinne* eigentlich „Nicht-Seiendes" (*me on*), beziehungsweise ein „Nichts" – und nicht das „Gute".

In welchem Sinn kann also das platonische Gute als eine „Ursache" des Alls bezeichnet werden? Offensichtlich viel eher als ein *Zweck*. Das Gute ist das höchste Prinzip im Sinne der Finalität; das Eine im Sinne jener Quelle, aus der die ganze Welt hervorgeht. Die Tatsache, dass dieses „Gute" so eng mit einem bestimmten Gesichtspunkt verbunden ist, scheint mir wesentlich. Negative Theologie – mit der Jakob Böhme bekanntlich viel zu tun hat, wenn er sein Ur-Prinzip als „Nichts" bezeichnet – abstrahiert zuletzt von jeder Wesenheit, von jedem Seienden. Das „Nichts" erstreckt sich dort, wo keine „Sache" gefunden und genannt werden kann. Ähnlich liegt aber auch das platonische Gute „jenseits vom Seienden". Trotzdem wird hier nicht über das „Nichts" gesprochen, und zwar eben darum, weil der Blickpunkt, unter dem es uns genau so und nicht anders erscheint, einfach ganz verschieden, ja *umgekehrt* ist. Das Gute kann zwar alle Wesen bewegen, die nach ihm begehren, es bleibt jedoch unklar, *was* diese Bewegung im Innersten ist, was diese *Begierde* der Wesen nach dem Guten ist, und woraus sie quillt. Diese Beziehung der Seele zum Guten wird von Platon nicht nur als „Begierde" (*himeros*; *Phaed.* 251c, 255c), sondern vor allem als „Liebe" (*eros*; *Phaed.* 252b) bezeichnet. Diese

8 Aristoteles, *Met.* XII, 7, 1072b.

9 Plotinos, *Enn.* I, 7, 1, 17.

10 N. von Kues, *De ludo globi* II,69–75.

11 Vgl. N. von Kues, *De docta ignorantia* I, 2. Zum Thema siehe v.a. Mahnke 1937.

platonische Liebe aber ist – wie Pierre Hadot bemerkt – „nur ein Mittel, eine Methode [...], bei der jede Stufe zwar unabdenkbar ist, sie selbst wird jedoch beiseitegelassen, sobald das Ziel einmal erreicht ist".[12] Somit bleibt die Bewegung einer liebevollen Begierde für immer nur ein *relatives*, kein *absolutes* Prinzip.

Nach Platon bezeichnet auch Plotin sein Seinsprinzip als das „Gute", indem er gewissermaßen die Anschauungen des Parmenides und Platons vereinigt. Die Beschaffenheit des Guten verändert sich dabei wesentlich: das Gute „ist da kein Endpunkt, sondern das Absolute",[13] zu dem die Liebe strebt, nicht um in ihm aufzuhören, sondern um in ihm *fortzudauern*. Diese Liebe ist also nicht die platonische Begierde nach dem, „was fehlt", wie Plato in seinem *Symposion* sagt (*Symp.* 202d): das Gute ist ja „ohne Mangel, selbstgenügsam, ein Nichts-Benötigendes" (*Enn.* I, 8, 2). *Es selbst* ist die Liebe (*Enn.* VI, 8, 15, 1).[14] Das Gute ist also nicht nur das *Ziel*, sondern auch die *Quelle* der Liebe – *causa finalis* als auch *causa efficiens*. Von nichts genötigt bringt es alles aus sich hervor: Geist, Wesenheit, Seele, Leben und Geistestätigkeit; es ist „ein Maß und eine Grenze aller Dinge" (*metron panton kai horas*; *Enn.* I, 8, 2).

Bei einer derartigen Auffassung ist es jedoch nicht mehr ganz klar, warum da gerade vom „Guten" die Rede ist. Anders gesagt, es tritt hervor, dass das Gute hier, als letzter Grund der Welt, keine *ethische* Wertung bedeutet. Das Sein *ist* das Gute, und zwar nicht im Sinne einer leibnizschen „allerbesten Welt", sondern *ex definitione*.[15]

Von hier aus kann man auch den plotinischen Begriff des Bösen verstehen. Das Böse ist für ihn bekanntermaßen ein „Nicht-Seiendes". Sobald das Seiende als solches „gut" genannt wird, kann man streng genommen das Beiwort „böse" in der Welt gar nicht real benutzen. Das „Gute-Seiende" hat keinen *realen* Gegensatz; so etwas wie das „Böse" hat *von diesem* Blickpunkt aus gesehen keinen Sinn. Es ist *gar nichts*.

Dieser Aspekt ist jedoch nicht der einzige. Plotin weiß natürlich, dass das Böse in der Welt *irgendwie* präsent ist. Es geht aber – wie er bemerkt – darum, was wir unter diesem Worte überhaupt verstehen, und das sei zunächst zu erforschen (*Enn.* I, 8, 1). Hat dieses Böse eine Substanz? Ist es *etwas*? Plotins Meinung nach dürfen wir nicht das Böse als ein bestimmtes Böses begreifen, wie z. B. eine Ungerechtigkeit oder ein anderes Übel, sondern als etwas von all dem ganz Verschiedenes, das nur dessen bestimmte „Form" ist (*Enn.* I, 8, 5). Die Natur des Bösen und des Guten, das Seiende und das Nicht-Seiende, sind *zwei Prinzipien* des Alls – bemerkt Plotin sogar überraschend an einer Stelle (*Enn.* I, 8, 6). Wenn er nun sagt, dass das Böse nichtseiend ist, meint er damit nicht, dass es einfach nicht wäre, sondern nur, dass es

12 Hadot 1993, S. 36.

13 Hadot 1993, S. 37.

14 Hadot 1993, S. 41.

15 Vgl. z. B. Augustin, *De libero arbitrio* III, 7, 20 (die Dinge „sind gut gerade dadurch, dass sie sind"); ebda. II, 20, 54 („nach dem *vollständigen Wegnehmen* alles Guten bleibt nicht *etwas mehr als nichts*, sondern gar nichts").

etwas anderes „ist“, unterschiedlich von allem Seienden (*Enn.* I, 8, 3). In diesem Sinne beziehen sich aber diese Prinzipien nicht mehr auf das Sein der Welt, sondern vielmehr auf ihre *Erscheinungsweise*. So wird das Böse im Vergleich mit dem Guten als Maßlosigkeit gegen Maß bezeichnet, als Unbegrenztheit gegen Grenze, Formlosigkeit gegen Formierendes und das immer Ungenügende gegen das Selbstständige; das Böse ist immer unbegrenzt, immer unruhig, alles nehmend, nie befriedigt (*Enn.* I, 8, 3). Und das alles sind eben die Attribute der *Materie* (*Enn.* I, 8, 5) – und *nur* durch diese ist die Materie das, was sie ist. Sie ist das Letzte, in dem nichts mehr vom ursprünglichen Guten bleibt, und ist so – gerade durch ihre Attribute – *böse*, also *nicht-seiend* (*Enn.* I, 8, 7). Dieses „Nicht-Seiende“ hat viel gemeinsam mit dem „Nicht-Seienden“ des Parmenides; es bezeichnet ebenfalls einen „blinden Fleck“ des Denkens, ein Feld, wohin das Denken nicht durchdringen kann (*Enn.* I, 8, 9).

Das Gute und Böse begreift Plotin also als etwas, das nur ein Modus des (über)seienden Einen ist. Dass das Gute Seiendes, und das Böse Nicht-Seiendes genannt wird, geschieht durch ihre Ähnlichkeit beziehungsweise Unähnlichkeit mit jenem alleinigen wahrhaft seienden „Guten“ bedingt. Dabei ist jedoch nicht ohne Weiteres klar, woher die Macht kommt, welche imstande ist, gegen das Gute im Guten zu wirken. Und ist, wie Plotin vereinzelt behauptet, das Böse auch ein Prinzip, so muss es sich da dennoch um eine *tatsächliche Wirkung* handeln. Das Böse hat allerdings nach Plotin keine Qualität – und gerade dadurch ist es das Böse (*Enn.* I, 8, 10).

Plotin scheint in all dem jedoch mehr auf das *Ziel* zu schauen als auf die *Wurzeln*, auf das *Prinzip*. Auch seine Erklärung des Bösen ist daher vielmehr bestrebt, seine – später typische – *Rechtfertigung* zu finden als seine *Quelle*: „Das Drama wird nicht schön sein,“ sagt Plotin, „wenn wir von ihm die minderen Figuren wegnehmen. Nur mit diesen ist es vollkommen“; „Erfahrung des Bösen macht Erkenntnis des Guten deutlicher“ (*Enn.* III, 2, 11, 9; IV, 8, 7, 15);[16] das Böse ist *notwendig*, weil das Gute es als sein Gegenteil erfordert (*Enn.* I, 8, 6) – „*nicht* darum wurde es jedoch geboren“ (*Enn.* III, 2, 5, 15).[17]

Ähnlich wie später Spinoza widmet auch Plotin seine ganze Aufmerksamkeit dem Einen, und alle Vielheit und Verschiedenheit ist ihm nur eine Modifikation desselben. Pierre Hadot hat die plotinischen Abhandlungen für „geistige Exerzitien“ genommen[18] und bemerkt, dass Plotin nicht in Abstraktionen spricht, sondern seine eigene innere Erfahrung mitteilt. Diese Erfahrung will er jedoch im Bild des Einen vermitteln, im Blick, der ganz und gar auf das Eine konzentriert wird. *Von dort aus* wird alles andere erklärt.

Aus dieser Perspektive mag es jetzt deutlicher werden, warum Plotin das Böse als Nicht-Seiendes bezeichnet. Gerade die *Perspektive* ist wichtig. Plotin will das Allprinzip als etwas „Helles“,

16 Vgl. Hadot 1993, S. 75.
17 Hadot 1993, S. 75.
18 Hadot 1993, S. 10, 50 u.a.

Positives ansehen. So erblickt er es aber als *Ziel des menschlichen Strebens* – nicht weil wir und alle Wesen aus solchem positiven Grunde hervorgegangen sind. Sicher, man kann einwenden, dass es – wenn so ein Ziel überhaupt möglich sein soll – eine zu guter Letzt positive Abstimmung oder Einstellung *irgendwie* auch in diesem *Prinzip* geben muss. Es muss da aber nicht unbedingt *allein* sein, und außerdem ist es problematisch, *wie* hier eine solche positive Einstellung in diesem Zusammenhang überhaupt möglich ist.[19]

Auf diesem Wege kommen wir zur Auffassung Jakob Böhmes, wie er das Böse verstanden hat und warum so.

JAKOB BÖHMES VERSTÄNDNIS DES BÖSEN

„Wiewohl Fleisch und Blut das göttliche Wesen nicht ergreifen kann, sondern der Geist, wenn er von Gott erleuchtet und angezündet wird; so man aber will von Gott reden, was Gott sei: so muss man fleissig erwägen die Kräfte in der Natur, dazu die ganze Schöpfung, Himmel und Erde, sowohl Sterne und Elemente, und die Kreaturen, so aus denselben sind hergekommen, sowohl auch die heiligen Engel, Teufel und Menschen, auch Himmel und Hölle."[20]

Mit diesen berühmten Worten eröffnete Jakob Böhme im Jahre 1612 sein Werk. Alle seine Erwägungen wurden von einer intensiven Empfindsamkeit für alles Natürliche und Lebendige geleitet, die von einer tiefen christlichen Frömmigkeit begleitet wurde. Die kommende Synthese dieser Ausgangspunkte begann als Zusammenbruch zweier Welten: Soll Gott gut sein, soll er das Gute *selbst* sein – wieso kann etwas Böses in der Welt sein? Und ist in der Welt und in der menschlichen Seele das Böse so fühlbar, wie kann man erklären, dass Gott auch da, in unserer Welt, gegenwärtig ist?[21] Das Entscheidende für Böhme ist, dass gerade *beide* Prämissen zur Geltung kommen müssen: Gott als Gott ist gut; und das Böse ist etwas Seiendes. Der direkte Antrieb Böhmes zu seinem ungemeinen innerlichen Kampf wurde daher das Problem des Bösen – ein für den Görlitzer Schuster unmittelbares, sogar *existenziell* dringendes, nicht nur *theoretisches* Problem: jede Erkenntnis soll ja dem religiösen Leben dienen. Dass dieser Kampf größtenteils im *philosophischen* Feld stattgefunden hat, bezeugt eben die im Wesentlichen dem Denken zugewandte Stimmung dieses philosophischen Autodidakten *und* frommen Mannes.

Seine Philosophie – und das ist gerade das Charakteristische – beginnt nicht mit dem „Einen", oder besser gesagt: beginnt *nicht nur* mit der Einheitsvision, wie es bei Spinoza, Plotin oder etwa auch Eckhart der Fall ist. Wonach Böhme zunächst fragt, ist eine konkrete böse *Tat*, wodurch jemand oder etwas beschädigt wird, also das *moralische* Böse. Man kann sagen, dass dieses Begreifen des Bösen typisch lutherisch ist, es entspricht der Abneigung Luthers gegen große Spekulationen und

19 Vgl. dazu *JB* IV, 343; *De electione gratiae* 8,46.

20 *JB* II, 21; *Aurora* 1.

21 Vgl. Koyré 1929, S. 72.

seinem Betonen des Konkreten und Lebendigen.[22]

Dies wird vor allem in der ersten Schrift Böhmes deutlich, in seiner *Aurora oder Morgenröte im Aufgang* (1612), wo der erwähnte Widerspruch deutlich auftritt, zwiefaches aufrechtzuerhalten: einerseits den positiven Begriff des Bösen, andererseits aber auch die Gütigkeit Gottes. Solch eine Auffassung ist jedoch nur schwer mit dem grundsätzlich pantheistischen *und* durch Luthers Begriff der göttlichen Allmacht[23] gefärbten Ton der *Aurora* konsequent zu verbinden. Die Gedankenentwicklung Böhmes konnte demgemäß eigentlich nur in zwei Richtungen erfolgen: 1. Das Böse in dem Rahmen zu begreifen, der durch die Auffassung der Welt als göttliche Emanation bestimmt wird, wobei das Böse eine höchst wichtige Rolle bekommt; das heißt das Böse sich vom Moralischen ins Physische, beziehungsweise *Metaphysische* umwandeln zu lassen. 2. Den Blick von der theoretischen Kontemplation ins Innere seiner Existenz umzukehren und das Problem des Bösen von dort aus zu deuten, also als etwas, das überquert werden muss in *Richtung* zum göttlichen Guten. Schon darin liegt eigentlich die Antwort, warum Böhme sowohl von einem *guten Gott* als auch von einer *Gottheit* spricht, in der beides – Gut und Böse – ungeschieden liegt und die von Böhme neu benannt wird als „Ungrund". „Ungrund" ist in diesem Sinne nicht etwas, worauf man abzielen sollte. Er ist die *Quelle*[24] des Alls, eine wirkende Ursache, die jedoch kein „Seiendes" ist, sondern „Nichts". Dagegen ist der gute Gott, auch als Christus personifiziert, derjenige, dem zu folgen und der nachzuahmen ist. Er ist der Punkt, auf den hin nicht nur menschliches, sondern das gesamte Leben ausgerichtet wird. – Ich würde den ersten Weg „philosophisch", den zweiten aber „religiös" nennen. Dies soll keineswegs bedeuten, dass diese zweifache Einstellung bei Böhme *faktisch* getrennt wäre. Ganz im Gegenteil, es wird beides immer wieder aufs Neue verbunden – weshalb auch bei jeder Auslegung, die nur philosophisch oder nur religiös sein wollte, das lebendige Ganze verlorengeht.

Dem theosophischen Denken wird manchmal von einigen Theologen vorgeworfen, dass es das Böse als eine Tatsache ansieht, die „schon am Niveau einer Astrophysik oder Physik zu finden" sei; das Böse könne aber nicht in „Protonen oder Neutronen" wurzeln, weil wir annehmen müssen, dass das „Existieren an sich gut" und „das Böse Gegensatz der Schöpfung" sei; die Theosophen – so der Theologe – betrachten schon die individuelle Existenz als böse.[25] Für Böhme kann so etwas überhaupt nicht gelten, weil gerade die individuelle Existenz sein großes Thema

22 Dieses Thema fasst Bornkam 1925, S. 92 ff. zusammen.

23 Bornkam 1925, S. 106 ff.

24 „Quelle", verbunden mit „quälen", „quallen", „quellen", „Qual" oder „Quaal", aber auch „Qualität", in der für Böhme all die Bedeutungen enthalten sind (vgl. *DWB*, Bd. 13, S. 2308 ff.).

25 Tresmontant 1997, S. 9 und 11. Vgl. dagegen z. B. Buber 1901, S. 252, der die Welt bei Böhme als eine Harmonie der in ihren einzigartigen Tönen voll ausgefalteten Individuen ansieht.

darstellt und sie von ihm gar nicht als negativ angesehen wird. Was ihn interessiert (und was einigen Theologen zu entgehen scheint), ist die Frage des *aktiven* Bösen, die *Möglichkeit* eines bösen Vorhabens.[26] Auch die (nicht nur) leibnizsche Theodizee begreift das Böse in einer *theoretischen* Sichtweise, womit es nivelliert wird. Wenn Böhme jedoch über das Böse spricht, meint er zunächst etwas Aktives, eine böse *Tat*. Und in diesem Sinne muss das Böse *moralisch* begriffen werden. *Dieses* Böse zu substantivieren, ist eigentlich fehlerhaft; man muss vielmehr immer über diese oder jene konkrete böse Handlung sprechen – wie es zum Beispiel schon die einflussreiche Spätblüte der Rheinischen Mystik *Theologia Deutsch* oder dann auch ihr erster Herausgeber Martin Luther gemacht haben. Das Böse ist für Böhme nicht etwas Negatives, sondern eine echte wirkende Realität. Der Teufel, als das Böse selbst, ist in jeder bösen Tat, überschreitet sie jedoch auch, weil sie in ihm ihren ewigen Grund haben muss – und doch muss auch er irgendwie aus der ursprünglichen Einheit herausgekommen sein. Anders gesagt, die ursprüngliche böse Tat, die erste *bewusste* (also aktiv *gewollte*) Abweichung von der Einheit, muss ein Fundament haben, das Böse muss *metaphysisch* ermöglicht, auf etwas gegründet sein. Beides – das moralische und das metaphysische Böse – hängt im Innersten zusammen, und gerade die Antwort auf diese Frage gehört zu dem Tiefsten, das Böhme sucht.

26 Vgl. Augustin, *De libero arbitrio* I, 1, 1.

Wenden wir uns nun zurück zu seiner *Aurora*. In der Vorrede[27] benutzt er sein berühmtes Gleichnis von dem Baum im Feld, in dem sowohl gute als auch böse Kräfte strömen, die beide zusammen Früchte nähren und beleben – und wie in der Natur, so auch im Menschen. Böhme erkennt jene ewige Gegnerschaft zwischen Gut und Böse in der Welt. In Gott sieht er sie jedoch noch nicht, jedenfalls nicht ausdrücklich. Er weiß jedoch, und das wird sich als das Hauptproblem erweisen, dass wir fragen können: „Es ist ja Böses und Gutes in der Natur; weil denn alle Dinge von Gott kommen: so muss ja das Böse auch von Gott kommen."[28] Gott in sich kann jedoch nicht ein „zorniger" Gott sein,[29] es brennt in ihm nur „die triumphirende Freude":[30] „Nicht musst du denken, dass darum in Gott Böses und Gutes quelle und sei, sondern Gott ist selber das Gute, und hat auch den Namen von dem Guten, die triumphirende ewige Freude."[31] Daraufhin ruft er aber: „die ganze Natur mit allen Kräften, die in der Natur sind, dazu die Weite, Tiefe, Höhe, Himmel, Erde und Alles was darinnen ist, und über dem Himmel, sei der Leib Gottes; und die Kräfte der Sterne sind die Quelladern in dem natürlichen Leibe Gottes in dieser Welt."[32]

Wenn Böhme sich die Frage stellt, *wie* nun aus diesem guten Gott alles Böse und Gute ausgehen kann, antwortet er

27 *JB* II, 1 ff.; *Aurora* 1.
28 *JB* II, 31; *Aurora* 2.
29 Vgl. Ex 20,5 und Dt 4, 24; *JB* II, 31; *Aurora* 2.
30 *JB* II, 32; *Aurora* 2.
31 *JB* II, 31; *Aurora* 2.
32 *JB* II, 28; *Aurora* 2.

mit einem Gleichnis, in dem Böses und Gutes durch Freude und Zorn ersetzt werden. Im Menschen gibt es Galle, also ein „Gift"; er kann ohne diese Galle jedoch nicht leben. Zorn und Freude werden durch Bewegungen der Galle verursacht, die sich in einer gewissen „Qualität" „anzündet", wie Böhme sagt. Ähnlich ist es mit der aus Gott quellenden Kraft, die ursprünglich neutral ist,[33] und erst in der Schöpfung angezündet wird, indem sie zu Freude oder Zorn wird. Der göttliche Zorn bedeutet nicht, dass Gott „in sich erzürne", sondern dass des Zornes Feuer in der Schöpfung brennt.[34] Wenn dann Böhme erklärt, dass in der „Sanftmut", in „Demut" und „freundlichem Willen" „der Kern der Gottheit" ist, „und darum heißt er Gott, dass er süß, sänftig, freundlich und gütig ist, und darum heißt er barmherzig, dass seine süße Qualität in der herben, sauern und bittern aufsteiget und sie labet, erquicket, befeuchtet, erleuchtet, dass sie nicht ein finsteres Tal bleiben",[35] so nimmt er schon seine nächsten Schriften vorweg, in denen das Verhältnis zwischen dem *guten* Gott und der Gottheit, die, mit Nietzsche gesprochen, jenseits des Guten und Bösen ist, grundsätzlich wird.

Vielleicht hat sich Böhmes Luthertum auch so ausgewirkt – neben dem schon erwähnten moralischen Begriff des Bösen –, dass er sich vor Gott noch „scheute", ihn denkerisch voll zu ergreifen – ihn also bis in die Tiefe erneut auf seine eigene, originelle Weise zu untersuchen. Immer wieder begegnen wir in Spekulationen der *Aurora* der Ehrfurcht und Furcht vor diesem von der lutherischen Tradition geprägten Begriff Gottes. Trotzdem offenbart sich schon da der Antrieb, eine vorläufige Formulierung des künftigen Begriffs „Ungrund" als einer Wurzel Gottes anzugben. Schon da ahnte Böhme intuitiv, dass jene allwirkende und belebende Kraft im Grunde neutral ist, und dass das Böse nur eine ihrer Erscheinungen darstellt, obgleich er noch nicht vermochte, sie *philosophisch* zu begreifen.[36] Seine Hinweise auf einen „Grund" oder „Kern" Gottes bereiten schon den Weg für die kommenden Schriften, die dieses Problem philosophisch besser durchleuchten.

Doch bleibt es wahr, dass hier zumindest jene Idee fehlt, die später im deutschen Idealismus ausgearbeitet wird: die Idee, dass Gott eine Negation, einen Gegensatz, also eben jenes „Böse" *braucht*, um sich selber zu erkennen (eine Idee übrigens, die schon in der oben erwähnten und Böhme gut bekannten *Theologia Deutsch* angedeutet wurde). Was in *Aurora* das moralische Böse war, wird später zu einem *kosmischen Prinzip*, zum *metaphysischen* Bösen. Das bedeutet jedoch keine bloße Bedeutungsänderung, sondern vielmehr eine Sinneserweiterung: das Böse als böses Vorhaben ist nur eine der Erscheinungsgestalten eines ewig gegenwärtigen Urprinzips.

Nichts Neues, sicher; es genügt, hier an Empedokles und seinen „Streit" (*neikos*) zu erinnern. Aristoteles bemerkt

33 *JB* II, 31; *Aurora* 2.

34 *JB* II, 31; *Aurora* 2.

35 Zit. in: Schulze-Maizier 1938, S. 82.

36 Vgl. *JB* VII, 428; *Epistolae Theosophicae* 18, 13.

dazu an einer Stelle, dass ohne Streit alles nur Eines wäre. *Warum* aber alles nicht „Ein" sein sollte, das bleibt offen. Wenn die Wirkung des Streits „grundlos" ist, wie Aristoteles erklärt,[37] dann bekommt sie bei Böhme gerade eine höchste Bedeutung: nur durch die Gegensätzlichkeit ist Erkenntnis überhaupt möglich; nur durch das Böse kann das Gute zur Herrschaft kommen. Und „Erkenntnis" und „Überwältigung" sind für Böhme Denkfiguren, mit denen er die wesentliche Beschaffenheit des Universums beschreibt.[38]

Der Grundsatz Böhmes lautet dabei: „Kein Ding ohne Widerwärtigkeit mag ihm selber offenbar werden; denn so es nichts hat, das ihm widerstehet, gehet's immerdar vor sich aus, und gehet nicht wieder in sich ein. So es aber in sich nicht wieder eingehet, als in das, daraus es ist ursprünglich gegangen, so weiß es nichts von seinem Urstand."[39] Dass Erkenntnis einen „Gegenwurff" benötigt, hat Böhme sehr wahrscheinlich bei dem einflussreichen heterodoxen Lutheraner Valentin Weigel gefunden. Weigels kardinale, von ihm immer wiederholte Idee ist, „dass alle natürliche Erkendtnuß, oder Begreiffligkeit herkomme und fließe vom Auge selber unnd nicht vom Gegenwurff".[40] Was für Böhme an dieser Idee auch wichtig war, ist der Aktivismus seitens des sehenden „Auges", wie Weigel nicht nur das Sinnesorgan nennt, sondern auch Verstand (oder Intellectus) und Vernunft (oder Ratio). Bei Böhme ist jedoch diese Struktur auf *alles* angewendet – eine Sinneserweiterung, die für ihn übrigens ganz typisch ist. So sagt er:

„Der Leser soll wissen, dass in Ja und Nein alle Dinge bestehen, es sei Göttlich, Teuflisch, Irdisch, oder was genannt mag werden. Das Eine, als das Ja, ist eitel Kraft und Leben, und ist die Wahrheit Gottes oder Gott selber. Dieser wäre in sich selber unerkenntlich, und wäre darinnen keine Freude oder Erheblichkeit, noch Empfindlichkeit ohne das Nein. Das Nein ist ein Gegenwurf des Jah, oder der Wahrheit, auf dass die Wahrheit offenbar und Etwas sei, darinnen ein Contrarium sei, darinnen die ewige Liebe wirkend, empfindlich, wollend und das zu lieben sei. Und können doch nicht sagen, dass das Jah vom Nein abgesondert, und zwei Dinge neben einander sind, sondern sie sind nur Ein Ding, scheiden sich aber selber in zwei Anfänge, und machen zwei Centra, da ein jedes in sich selber wirket und will. (...) wenn der ewige Wille nicht selber aus sich ausflösse und führte sich in Annehmlichkeit ein, so wäre keine Gestältniss noch Unterschiedlichkeit, sondern es wären alle Kräfte nur Eine Kraft; so möchte auch kein Verständnis sein: denn die Verständnis urständet in der Unterschiedlichkeit der Vielheit, da eine Eigenschaft die andere siehet, probiret und will. Ingleichem stehet auch die Freude darinnen. Soll aber eine Annehmlichkeit urständen, so muss eine

37 Aristoteles, *Met.* III, 4, 1000b.

38 Vgl. *JB* VI, 454; *Theoscopia* 1, 9. Vgl. Berdjajew 1932/1933, S. 317.

39 *JB* VI, 454; *Theoscopia* 1, 8.

40 Überschrift der 11. Kapitel in Weigel 1615, S. 29. Böhme erwähnt diese Schrift, obwohl er ausdrücklich nur von dem zweiten, pseudo-weigelianischen Teil spricht; vgl. *JB* VII, 388; *Epistolae Theosophicae* IX, 14.

eigene Begierde zu seiner Selbst-Empfindlichkeit sein, als ein *eigener Wille* zur Annehmlichkeit, welcher nicht mit dem einigen Willen gleich ist und will. Denn der einige Wille will nur das einige Gut, das er selber ist, er will sich nur selber in der Gleichheit; aber der ausgeflossene Wille will die Ungleichheit, auf dass er von Gleichheit unterschieden und sein eigen Etwas sei, auf dass etwas sei, das das ewige Sehen sehe und empfinde: und aus dem eigenen Willen entstehet das Nein; denn er führet sich in *Eigenheit, als in Annehmlichkeit seiner selber*; er will Etwas sein, und gleichet sich nicht mit der Einheit (...)“[41] „In diesen beiden ist uns nun der gute und böse Wille in allen Dingen zu verstehen.“[42] Der einige Wille scheidet sich, „dass das Gute in dem Bösen empfindlich, wirkend und wollend werde, als nämlich sich wollen von dem Bösen scheiden, und wieder wollen in den Einiger Willen Gottes eingehen.“[43]

Wenden wir uns jetzt einigen Worten in diesem längeren Zitat zu: „Annehmlichkeit“, „eigene Wille“, „Eigenheit“, die mit dem bösen Willen verbunden sind. Es sind alles Ideen, die Böhme aus der *Theologia Deutsch* herausgelesen hat,[44] wo gerade die Begriffe „eigen“ und „annehmen“ eine ganz große Rolle spielen. Der „Deutschen Theologie“ nach ist es nämlich „nit anders, dan das sich die creatur (...) kert von dem volkommen tzu dem geteilten und unvolkommen und allermeist zu yr selber. (...) Was tett der teuffel anders (...)? Diß annemen und seyn ich und seyn myr und seyn mein, das was seyn abkeren unnd seyn vall.“[45] Im selben Sinne denkt bekanntlich auch Eckhart, wenn er über „dínesheit“, „sínesheit“ usw. spricht. Eine solche Idee eines Abfalls vom göttlichen Ganzen findet man jedoch bekanntlich schon bei Heraklit, wenn er über die *axynetoi* spricht, die also im *xynon* (d. h. *koinon*), im „Gemeinsamen“ nicht leben, und anstatt dessen sich ins *idion*, ins „Eigene“ einkehren.[46] Ähnliches steht übrigens auch im Johannes-Evangelium.[47]

41 *JB* VI, 597 f; *Theosophische Fragen* 3, 2–5.

42 *JB* VI, 458; *Theoscopia* 1, 28.

43 *JB* VI, 458; *Theoscopia* 1, 14.

44 Vgl. besonders *Theologia Deutsch* 47–51; Mandel 1908, S. 91: „eigen willen meynet (...) anders wöllen dan der einfeltig wille will“.

45 *Theologia Deutsch* 2; Mandel 1908, S. 10 f. „Icheyt“ und „selbheyt“ erscheinen gleich im ersten Kapitel (ebda., S. 9) zusammen mit z. B. „creaturlicheyt“, „geschaffenheit“ oder „meinheit“; das 20. Kapitel (ebda., S. 43) erklärt: „Icheyt und selbheyt das gehört alles dez teuffel zu (...)“

46 Vgl. *DK*, Fr. B 89 („die Aufgewachten haben einen gemeinsamen Kosmos, die Schlafenden wenden sich jedoch ins Eigene“) und *DK*, B 2 („trotz dem gemeinsamen Logos lebt die Menge, als ob jeder sein eigenes Verstehen hätte“).

47 Joh. 8,44 (nach Luthers Übersetzung): „Ihr seid von dem Vater dem Teufel, und nach eures Vaters Lust wollt ihr thun. Derselbe ist Mörder von Anfang, und ist nicht bestanden in der Wahrheit; denn die Wahrheit ist nicht in ihm. Wenn er die Lügen redet, so redet er von seinem Eigenen (*idion*).“ Siehe auch Joh. 7,16–18: „Jesus antwortete ihnen und sprach: Meine Lehre ist nicht mein, sondern deß, der mich gesandt hat. So Jemand will deß Willen thun, der wird inne werden, ob diese Lehre von Gott sei, oder ob ich von mir selbst rede. Wer von sich selbst redet, sucht seine eigene Ehre; wer aber sucht die Ehre deß, der ihn gesandt hat, der ist wahrhaftig, und ist keine Ungerechtigkeit an ihm.“

Dieser Aspekt kann noch eine andere Auswirkung haben. Schon in der *Theologia Deutsch* finden wir eine brisante, an Böhme erinnernde Antwort auf die Frage, warum Gott ins Paradies den Baum mit der verbotenen Frucht gestellt habe, also eine Erklärung der fundamentalen Präsenz der Sünde und des Bösen in der Welt.[48] In Gott ist der „ewige Wille", der „ohne Werk und Wirkung" ist; derselbe Wille ist aber auch im Menschen und in der Schöpfung, aber als „wirkend" und „wollend". Und weil zum Willen notwendig eine Wirkung gehört, ist auch die Schöpfung, in der dieser Wille wirken kann, *notwendig*.[49] Und so ist der Wille „im Menschen, und [ist] doch Gottes (...)". Weil, wie die *Theologia Deutsch* sagt, „Wer nit vernunfft oder wille yn den creaturen, werlich got belib und wer unbekant und ungeliebt und ungelobt und ungeeret, und all creaturen weren nichtz wert und tuchten nyndert zu got".[50]

Ganz ähnlich Böhme: „Wenn das natürliche Leben keine Widerwärtigkeit hätte und wäre ohne ein Ziel, (...) so bliebe der verborgene Gott dem natürlichen Leben unerkannt."[51] Die *Theologia Deutsch* spricht über den Willen und Verstand, Böhme über die Widerwärtigkeit. Aber schon die Frage in der *Theologia Deutsch*, warum ein Baum mit verbotenen Früchten im Garten Eden stand, geht von der Möglichkeit eines Widerstands gegen Gott aus, und die oben zitierten Worte werden da als eine „Antwort auf diese Frage" bezeichnet.[52] Denn nichts ist frei, außer dem Willen, und der Mensch steht in der Zeit zwischen Himmel und Hölle und kann sich wenden, wohin er will.[53] Der Wille selbst sollte aber Gott gehören, und er wurde nicht zu dem Zwecke geschaffen, dass er im menschlichen „Eigentum" wäre.[54] Nur diese Abkehr ist das *Böse* – nicht schon die *erschaffene* Welt als solche, in deren Rahmen der göttliche Wille sich überhaupt erst zu realisieren vermag. – Eine damit verwandte Idee hat übrigens auch Paracelsus angerührt, der für Böhme ebenfalls eine wichtige Quelle darstellt. Für Paracelsus ist die *separatio* des ursprünglichen „Mysterio Magno" nicht schlecht; schlecht ist, wenn sich der „freie Wille", der durch diese Separation entstanden ist, zum Bösen *wendet*.[55] Die Anerkennung der tiefen Bedeutung der *erschaffenen* Welt in Böhmes Gedankensystem hat später der lutherische Theologe F. Ch. Oetinger auf seine Weise hervorgehoben: „Alles zielt nicht auf leere Apparenz, sondern

48 *Theologia Deutsch* 48 ff.; Mandel 1908, S. 91 ff.

49 Das geht eigentlich schon aus dem Prinzip Valentin Weigels hervor, dem zufolge alles Äußere und Sichtbare aus dem Inneren und Unsichtbaren kommt, siehe Weigel 1613, Kap. 1 und öfters.

50 *Theologia Deutsch* 50; Mandel 1908, S. 94.

51 *JB* VI, 454; *Theoscopia* 1, 9.

52 *Theologia Deutsch* 50; Mandel 1908, S. 94.

53 *Theologia Deutsch* 51; Mandel 1908, S. 96.

54 *Theologia Deutsch* 50; Mandel 1908, S. 95.

55 Paracelsus, *Philosophia ad Athenienses*; Huser 1589–1591, Bd. VIII, S. 7: „Wiewohl auch also der frei Will der Dingen einer dem andern schad: Denn nichts ist ohne Freund, nichts ohne Feind: So schwebt der frei Will allein in der Tugend, und der Freund oder Feind in den Werken: So trifft solches die Separation nichts an, denn sie ist ein Austeilung ainem jeglichen sein Form und Wesen zu geben."

auf die körperliche Menschheit Jesu, damit sich alles körperlich solle darstellen, was in Gottes Tiefen verborgen ist."[56] „Die Beraubung der Philosophie ist das," erklärt er, „dass alles auf Idealismus, auf Erscheinungen, auf Apparenzen hinausläuft"; dagegen wurde uns Jakob Böhme gesandt, um uns zu lehren, „dass Gottes Herrlichkeit sich in leiblichen Eigenschaften veroffenbart: dass Leib ein reelles Bild der Gottheit sei".[57]

Das Böse hat also bei Böhme unmittelbar nichts mit der Welt zu tun, so dass er in diesem Sinne kaum mit alten Gnostikern verglichen werden kann. Der Vorwurf betrifft ihn gar nicht, dass die individuelle Existenz für Theosophen böse sei. Die Individualisierung gibt es, wie wir gesehen haben, für Böhme schon ganz am Anfang des kosmo-theogonischen Prozesses. Der einzige Wille macht sich einen Widerwillen und zersplittert sich weiter stufenweise in viele *relativ* selbstständige individualisierte Willen, die jedoch als ihr Ziel die Rückkehr zum absoluten Willen haben, eine neue Vereinigung. So sagt Böhme: „Wenn sich der verborgene Gott, welcher nur ein Einig Wesen und Wille ist, nicht hätte mit seinem Willen aus sich ausgeführet, und hätte sich aus der ewigen Wissenschaft im Temperamento [d. h. in der göttlichen Harmonie] (...) in eine Infasslichkeit zu einem *natürlichen und kreatürlichen* Leben eingeführet, und dass dieselbe Schiedlichkeit im Leben nicht im Streit stünde, wie wollte ihm denn der verborgene Wille Gottes, welcher in sich nur Einer ist, offenbar sein? Wie mag in einem einigen Willen eine Erkenntnis seiner selbst sein?"[58]

So scheint es, dass der absolute, ursprünglich jedoch unbewusste ungründliche Wille auf diesem Wege erst in der *geschaffenen* Natur, in der Welt zu vollem Selbstbewusstsein kommt. Diese Frage ist bei Böhme aber insgesamt viel komplizierter und wurde von ihm, meiner Meinung nach, niemals *philosophisch* eindeutig beantwortet.[59] Böhme versucht den Vorgang vom Ungrund zur Welt der Schöpfungen detailliert auszuarbeiten, indem er sich bemüht, einzelne Stufen der göttlichen Offenbarung zu beschreiben. Obgleich es manchmal so anmuten kann, als würde Gott zu seinem Bewusstsein ebenfalls das Böse *in der Welt* brauchen, weiß Böhme oft auch anders zu sprechen. „Leiblichkeit" ist ihm nämlich nicht dasselbe wie „Fleischlichkeit".[60] Gott bedarf eines Leibes, einer Gestalt, darüber besteht kein Zweifel; ob er aber auch dieser zeitlichen und sterblichen Welt, oder „nur" der „himmlischen" bedürfte, das scheint nicht so eindeutig zu sein. Sehr wahrscheinlich glaubt Böhme, trotz einigen Äußerungen, dass Gott dieser Welt nicht *bedürfe*, sondern sie vielmehr *wolle*, weil er darin seine „Kraft und Majestät" offenbaren will[61] – obwohl er seinem Wesen nach vielleicht auch *nicht* anders

56 F. Ch. Oetinger, *Kurzer Auszug der Hauptlehren Jakob Böhms* (1774), § 7, abgedruckt in: Kayser 1923, S. 61.

57 F. Ch. Oetinger, *Kurzer Auszug der Hauptlehren Jakob Böhms* (1774), § 16, 17, in: Kayser 1923, S. 87 f.

58 *JB* VI, 455; *Theoscopia* 1, 10.

59 Vgl. Koyré 1929, S. 420 ff.

60 Vgl. ebda., S. 355 ff.

61 Vgl. *JB* VI, 457; *Theoscopia* 1, 29.

wollen *kann* (mit *diesem* spinozischen Freiheitsmotiv beschäftigt sich aber Böhme nicht). Darüber hinaus deutet Böhme die Welt in dem heutigen brüchigen und unvollkommenen Zustand auch traditionell als Folge jenes ursprünglichen, durch missbrauchte Freiheit verursachten Abfalls von der göttlichen Harmonie. Und in diesem Sinne ist die heutige Lage der Welt von Gott nicht gewollt. In der zeitlichen Welt der „Sterne und Elemente", wie Böhme zu sagen pflegt, sollte der Mensch dem Willen Gottes nach wohl nicht leben.

Das Problem wurzelt, wie mir dünkt, gerade darin, dass Böhme nicht nur als ein philosophischer Kosmologe denkt, sondern zugleich als ein frommer Christ. Und aus diesem religiösen Standpunkt entsteht sein großes Bemühen, einen lebendigen Gott zu Grunde zu legen, der als das *Gute selbst* durch seine Gnade die Menschen zu sich lockt und zieht. Koyré bemerkt dazu: „was Böhme vor aller Doktrin glaubt, was er sucht, was seine ganze Lehre rechtfertigen soll, ist, dass Gott ein persönliches Wesen ist, ja *eine Person*, eine lebendige, sich selbst bewusste, wirkende und vollkommene Person".[62] Schon aus dem vorher Gesagten ist zu ersehen, dass auf dem ersten Gedankenweg der Autor sich an Gottes, oder besser gesagt, an der Gottheit Stelle setzt, wodurch er die ganze Kreation *von oben* beobachtet; im zweiten Fall aber spricht er als ein frommer und Gott suchender christlicher *Mensch*, als ob er das kosmische Geschehen *von unten* anschaue. So muss er fast unausweichlich zwischen der gnostischen Religiosität und einer gewissermaßen pantheistischen Philosophie schwanken.[63] Deswegen will er, und will zugleich nicht, die Welt als Leib Gottes bezeichnen.

Als Beispiel für diese Wege möchte ich die beiden ersten Kapitel der *Theoscopia oder Die hochteure Pforte der Göttlichen Beschaulichkeit* heranziehen. Dem ersten Kapitel nach würde man Gott zumuten, dass er erst in der Welt die vollkommene Erfüllung seiner Möglichkeiten findet. Böhme sagt in seiner besonderen Sprache: „Die ausgegangene Lust der göttlichen Kraft zur Natur, daraus die Natur und eigener Wille ist entstanden, sehnet sich, von dem natürlichen eigenen Willen los zu sein. Dieselbe Lust ist mit der Impression der Natur über ihren Willen beladen, um dess willen, dass sie Gott hat darein geführet, die soll am Ende dieser Zeit von der aufgeladenen Eitelkeit der Natur erlöset und in eine krystallische, klare Natur gebracht werden, alsdann wird offenbar sein, *warum sie Gott in eine Zeit geschlossen* und sie der Peinlichkeit zum Leiden unterworfen hat, als nämlich *darum*, dass durch das natürliche Peinen die ewige Kraft mit in Formen, Gestalt und Schiedlichkeit zur Empfindlichkeit gebracht werde, und dass Kreaturen, als ein kreatürlich Leben in dieser Zeit darinnen offenbar

62 Koyré 1929, S. 315.

63 Vgl. ebda., S. 359. – Die Gnosis beschäftigte sich bekanntlich mit dem Problem des Bösen von einem *religiösen* Standpunkt aus, während z. B. Spinozas sogenannter Pantheismus von Jakobi sogar als eine äußerste Möglichkeit der bloßen Philosophie als solcher bezeichnet wurde. Die Konsequenzen für das Konzept des Bösen sind bekannt.

würden, und also ein Spiel in dem Gegenwurf göttlicher Weisheit sei, denn *durch die Thorheit wird die Weisheit offenbar* (...) So wird das unendliche Leben also durch die Thorheit Schau getragen, auf dass darinnen ein Lob zur Ehre Gottes entstehe, und das Ewige, Beständige in dem Tödtlichen erkannt werde."[64]

Auch hier sehen wir aber, dass die gefallene Natur als etwas bloß Vorübergehendes begriffen wird. Die Welt ist sowohl wesentlich als auch zeitlich vorläufig. Doch scheint hier die „Thorheit" für das ganze göttliche Leben einen tiefen *Sinn* zu haben. Das können wir freilich nicht über die Behauptung im zweiten Kapitel sagen, dass „des Menschen Wollen sollte mit Gottes Wollen über alles natür- und kreatürliche Leben wollen und herrschen. Nicht in thierischer Essenz sollte es stehen, sondern in göttlicher Essenz".[65] Dieses Kapitel behandelt jedoch die Möglichkeit einer neuen Zuwendung des Menschen zu Gott, und geht somit genau umgekehrt vor als der vorige Teil. Außerdem haben wir auch oben gelesen, dass Böhme von einem „Spiel" spricht, wenn er die Beziehung Gottes „nach außen" erklären will. Wenn wir uns vergegenwärtigen, dass der Ungrund außer der Zeit liegt und alles in Fülle in sich hat, so müssen wir den ganzen Offenbarungsvorgang nur für ein zeitliches „Spiel" halten. Wie Böhme mehrmals wiederholt, in sich konnte Gott keine Entscheidung und keinen Vorsatz finden, einfach weil ein solches Finden sich schon in der Zeit abspielen müsse. Von der anderen Seite aus sieht dies aber ganz anders aus, weil es da um das menschliche Heil geht. Hier, in der „Thorheit" des Lebens, kann man kaum von einem Spiel sprechen. *Spiel* gibt es nur im *göttlichen* Leben, mit *göttlichen Augen gesehen*.

ABSCHLIESSENDE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wenn wir jetzt viele andere Teilthemen beiseitelassen und versuchen, eine möglichst einfache Antwort Böhmes auf die Frage nach dem Bösen zu konstruieren, so könnten wir vielleicht folgendes sagen: Weil, wie Böhme wiederholt, Ungrund *Freiheit*[66] ist und aus ihm alles entstand, so muss auch der Mensch mit seinem *ungründlichen* Willen ursprünglich frei sein. Die Widerwärtigkeit oder der Widerwille, der zur Offenbarung der Fülle der Gottheit in den Gestalten dienen sollte, jenes ursprüngliche „Nein" in Gott, sollte mit der Realisierung der „himmlischen Leiblichkeit" enden, in der der Mensch als das Ebenbild Gottes die göttlichen Wunder betrachtete und im göttlichen Wollen lebte. Bis dahin entstand alles nach Gottes Willen. Wegen seiner Freiheit und wegen der ursprünglichen Entzweiung konnte aber der Mensch vom göttlichen Willen abfallen, dem er nur zu folgen hatte. So hat er seine Zugehörigkeit zu diesem göttlichen Willen vergessen und ist somit unter den Einfluss der Sterne und Elemente, unter die Herrschaft des Todes, in die „Thorheit" gekommen. Und so wurde diese uns bekannte Welt zu einer unheilvollen Erbschaft des ersten

64 Vgl. *JB* VI, 459; *Theoscopia* 1, 32ff.
65 Vgl. *JB* VI, 464; *Theoscopia* 2, 14.
66 Vgl. *JB* V, 193; *Mysterium Magnum* 29, 1; *JB* VI, 7; *Psychologia vera* 1, 13.

Menschen Adam. Die Abkehr Adams (oder schon des Teufels, des bösen Zuflüsterers des Menschen) vom göttlichen Willen war das erste *Böse* im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes.

Das Problem ist nun aber, dass es zu diesem Fall jenseits von aller Zeit gekommen sein muss, weil Adam erst mit ihm in die Zeit getreten ist. Dieser Fall muss also *in potentia* im Ursprung gewesen sein, und somit ist die „Torheit" lediglich eine Erfüllung dieser Potenz – wenn sie auch in sich selbst schon die Notwendigkeit einer Überwindung trägt. Wenn also Böhme sagt, dass es zu diesem Fall nicht kommen sollte, kann das wohl nur bedeuten, dass dieser Zustand des Gefallen-Seins verlassen werden muss, und dass man sich wieder zu Gott wenden solle. Zu dem Fall ist es nun schon einmal gekommen und er gehört zur Offenbarung. Ja, *vielleicht* konnte Gott ganz gut auch ohne diesen zu einer bewussten Person werden. Bewusstsein ist jedoch für Böhme nicht *das* letzte Ziel. Worum es letzten Endes geht, ist *das Gute*, das sich aus der Erkenntnis gebären und gegen das Böse *bewähren* soll. Das Böse soll *überwunden werden*, und „in der Überwindung ist Freude".[67] Das ist, wie Koyré bemerkt, der Schlüssel zu Jakob Böhme.[68]

67 *JB* I, 150; *De vita mentali* 57.

68 Koyré 1929, S. 352, Anm. 2.

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Once Again: Paul Oskar Kristeller and Raymond Klibansky

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ABSTRACT

This article is a coda to Paul Oskar Kristeller's criticism of the scholarly behavior of Raymond Klibansky (d. 2005) found in my 2015 article "Kristelleriana: Two Biographical Notes." In a letter of 24 February 1995 to the independent scholar W. Cameron McEwan, Kristeller (d. 1999) accused Klibansky of refusing to acknowledge Kristeller's discoveries concerning the Renaissance philosopher Nicholas of Cusa and explained how he had been warned against Klibansky by the distinguished contemporary scholars Ernst Cassirer, Erwin Panoksky, David Ross, and Richard Walser.

Some years ago I published a memorandum that Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905–1999) left behind in his papers at Columbia University detailing the moral failings as a scholar of Raymond Klibansky (1905–2005), a *tabula peccatorum*, as I described it in the abstract of the article.[1] Recently, however, I have come across a passage in the correspondence between W. Cameron McEwen and Kristeller that adds significant details and color to Kristeller's complaints about Klibansky.[2] The two texts overlap only slightly even though they share the same basic theme, Klibansky's bad behavior as a scholar. The letter to McEwen is distinguished by Kristeller's much greater concern to record the agreement of other scholars concerning Klibansky's bad character. In a letter 18 February 1995, McEwan had posed a series of questions to Kristeller concerning his relationship with Martin Heidegger, Klibansky, and other figures in the years before World War II. Kristeller responded on 24 February in part as follows (I have introduced a sequential number between square brackets before each item to be discused so as to facilitate later reference):

> and is also from McEwen. A partner in an online publishing firm, McEwen published on modern philosophy as an independent scholar.

1 Monfasani 2015.

2 This correspondence can be found in Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Paul Oskar Kristeller Papers, Correspondence, Box 35, Folder 6. The earliest preserved letter in the collection is one of 19 April 1994 from McEwen; the last was written on 19 September 1996

My hostile relations with Klibansky go back to 1937. [1] In that year I found in the Biblioteca Civica in Bergamo ms. Gamma IV, 19 (Iter I, pg. 8b). This ms., written on paper in the XVth cent. of 10 fols., contains Proclus, Platonis Theologica translated by Petrus Balbus Pisanus, ep. Tropiensis, dated March 22, 1462. In his preface to Ferdinand I, King of Naples and Sicily (fols. 1-4v), inc. Nicolaus de Cusa Sancti Petri ad Vincula Presbiter cardinalis, prudentissime atque invictissime regum, in which he states that he undertook this translation on the request of Nicolaus Cusanus, but only completed it after his death in 1464. I communicated this important fact by word of mouth to Klibansky, and soon afterwards he repeated it in print without giving me any credit. [2] When I later found an important Cusanus Ms. in Brussels I published its description, including a preface of the respective text in my contribution to the anniversary conference on Cusanus in Bressanone in 1954. This Ms. had remained unknown before this to Klibansky. I remember that both [3] Cassirer and [4] Panofsky orally told me that they had reservations about him, and that [5] Sir David Ross from Oxford when he visited Columbia ca. 1939 told me that I should be very cautious in my dealings with Klibansky. I also remember that [6] Richard Walser who contributed an important edition to the series Plato Arabus edited by Klibansky had considerable trouble with him. [7] Finally, when Klibansky edited in 1964 a volume in honor of Cassirer on the 100th anniversary of his birth, it didn't[3] contain a contribution by me, although I should have normally been among those included. This means that Klibansky either did not invite me to contribute a paper or [had decided] not to include it in case I had sent him one.

Kristeller's recollection was not always accurate in recalling various moments of his life,[4] but in my earlier article on his criticism of Klibansky I found no misstatements. Indeed, more than half of his criticisms could actually be documented as being true, while the others could not be verified nor falsified for one reason or another, such as reports of personal conversation (e. g., "Klibansky offered to pay [Ernst Moritz] Morasse for finding errors in my Supplementum Ficinianum. Manasse refused and told me about it").[5] In the new *tabula peccatorum*

3 Kristeller wrote "it didn't" in the margin after deleting "does" in the text proper.

4 To cite three instances: in his oral history memoir *Reminiscences* (Columbia University, Oral History Archives, Rare Book & Manuscript Library) Kristeller mistakenly asserted that he came to America on the liner *Saturnia*, when in fact he sailed on the *Vulcania*, the *Saturnia's* sister ship; see Monfasani 2020, p. 373, n. 2. In several accounts of his life, he spoke of playing trio (he was an exceptionally capable pianist) in Marburg in 1926 with Karl Löwith and Hans Gadamer, when in fact Gadamer played no instrument and was not part of the group; see Monfasani 2018, p. 10, n. 8. Finally, as W. Cameron McEwen pointed out in his correspondence, Kristeller was wrong to say in an interview that Martin Heidegger came to Italy in 1938 when the date in fact was 1936; see Monfasani 2018, p. 22, n. 49.

5 Monfasani 2015, p. 407.

published in this article, Kristeller was certainly confused about one item as we shall see, but in the case of the other charges in the list he was either demonstrably correct or plausibly so. We can start with the first [1], concerning Klibansky's behavior when faced with Kristeller's discovery of a translation of Proclus.

Raymond Klibansky first made his reputation in 1929 with the announcement that he had discovered a medieval Latin translation of Proclus'commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* that preserves a segment of text no longer extent in the Greek. He would then go on to publish in 1939 a landmark guide to the history of medieval Platonism, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition during the Middle Ages*, which served as a programmatic statement for the grand editorial project *Corpus Platonicum Medii Aevi*, for which he served as the general editor. And finally, in 1953, in conjunction with Lotte Labowsky, he published the lost part of Proclus' *Parmenides* commentary preserved in the medieval Latin translation of William of Moerbeke. Having thus from the earliest stages of his career been intimately connected with Proclus and the scholarship of the medieval Platonic tradition, Klibansky knew well the great significance of Kristeller's discovery in Bergamo in 1937 of a manuscript of a known but previously anonymous translation of Proclus' *Platonic Theology* that bore a dedication of the translator, Pietro Balbi.[6] The dedication was to King Ferrante of Naples and explained how the great Platonist philosopher, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) had commissioned Balbi to make the translation.[7] Yet, when Klibansky announced the discovery in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* in 1949,[8] he said not a word about the discoverer or how he himself had learned of the discovery. Even such a learned specialist in Proclan studies as Father H.-D. Saffrey in his 1979 article on Balbi's translation could, without any knowledge of the true state of the facts, cite Klibansky for first announcing the discovery and Kristeller merely for the description of the manuscript fourteen years later in the first volume of his *Iter Italicum*.[9]

6 See Kristeller's description of manuscript Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica, Gamma IV 19 (now cod. MA 490) in Kristeller 1963, 8a. At the start of the section on this library, Kristeller records the years he visited. The first is precisely 1937. In the letter to McEwen, Kristeller was guilty of another error. Having obviously given a quick glance at the *Iter*, where Balbi's preface is correctly described as running to f. 10, he inadvertently described the manuscript to McEwen as having 10 folios when in fact it contains 179 folios.

7 Kristeller referred in a less precise manner to Klibansky's failure to acknowledge his discovery of the Bergamo manuscript in two of the list of twenty-six charges he laid against Klibansky in the memorandum published by me in Monfasani 2015, p. 406, item 2: "My work in Italy. I found a few Cusanus mss. and sent them to [Ernst] Hoffmann. Used by [Paul] Wilpert and Gerda von Bredow"; and Monfasani 2015, p. 407, item 4: "I may have given Klibansky the Bergamo manuscript of Proclus tr. Petrus Balbus of which he made so much fuss. His offer to give his extensive material on [Ludwig] Bertalot (my talk with [Gertrud] "Bing"."

8 In a report on *Plato Latinus*, Klibansky 1949, p. 11, he announced the discovery of the manuscript in Bergamo.

9 Saffrey 1979, p. 429, reprinted in Saffrey 2002. On the manuscript and translation, see also Pugliese Carratelli 2011.

Item [2] also involves a manuscript discovery by Kristeller, in this case, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, ms. 10817, containing a Latin translation of the treatise *De Fato* of the Byzantine Platonist George Gemistus Pletho made by the Greek *émigré* John Sophianos and dedicated to Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa.[10] That Klibansky did not know this manuscript before Kristeller discovered it would seem not to be an especially damning criticism save for the fact that Klibansky held himself up as an expert on Nicholas Cusanus as well as a master of the medieval and Renaissance Platonic tradition.

Item [3] is a very interesting case. Almost immediately after his entrance into the circle of scholars affiliated with the Warburg Library in Hamburg in 1926, Klibansky sought to associate himself publicly with the prominent Neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Cassirer. Already in 1927, with the publication of Cassirer's *Individuum und Kosmos*, we find Klibansky supplying an edition of Carolus Bovillus' *De Sapiente* as an appendix to the volume.[11] He and Cassirer were together in England in the first half of the 1930s. In 1936 Klibansky co-edited a volume of essays by distinguished contemporary thinkers and scholars in honor of Cassirer, at the end of which he included an essay by himself.[12] Later on in life he gave two interviews specifically about his relations with Ernst Cassirer in addition to discussing the same in the course of the retrospective of his life published in 1998, seven years before his death.[13] Cassirer's wife, Toni, also talks of Klibansky in a memoir on her life with her famous husband.[14] In contrast, Kristeller could not boast of a close relationship with Cassirer before World War II, though the two met in the early 1930s after Kristeller had published his doctoral dissertation on Plotinus and though Cassirer demonstrably thought well of him.[15] When he came

10 See Kristeller 1970; reprinted in Kristeller 1993, pp. 21–48. In the letter to McEwen, because of a typo or inadvertence, Kristeller gives the date of the conference as 1954 instead of 1964.

11 Cassirer 1927.

12 Klibansky & Paton 1936. Klibansky's article, "The Philosophic Character of History," is on pp. 323–37. In the Harper Torchbooks reprint of New York, 1963, Klibansky had a prefatory note in which he repudiated at least in part what he asserted in the article ("Among those who survive [since the original publication of the volume] some may have modified their views during the long interval—this is so in the case of the joint-editor who was also a contributor"). On the background to the volume see Whitaker 2018, pp. 86–90 ("The Cassirer *Festschrift*").

13 Klibansky, & Leroux 1998.

14 Cassirer 1981.

15 In his *Reminiscences*, Kristeller 1983, pp. 157–58: "I might say it was through this Bruno Cassirer family that I also had a kind of social contact with Ernst Cassirer, who was a professor in Hamburg, and when he came to Berlin stayed with his cousin Bruno. He was a close friend of my teacher Hoffmann, and when my dissertation was published, Hoffmarin urged me to send a complimentary copy to Cassirer, which I did, and Cassirer reacted in a very friendly way, and asked me to visit him when I was in Berlin. We had a very pleasant conversation, and I have been in touch with him ever since. He helped me to emigrate." Since Kristeller attended the University of Berlin 1928–31, Cassirer's invitation to meet in Berlin only makes sense after Kristeller moved to Freiburg to work with Martin Heidegger. Further on in *Reminiscences*, Kristeller

to England in 1933, Cassirer supported Kristeller's application for support of the Academic Assistance Council,[16] even writing a testimonial for him; and later, in 1937, when at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, he prepared the way for Kristeller's request for support for the project that would become the *Iter Italicum*, by writing Fritz Saxl, the head of the Warburg Institute, recommending consideration.[17] But only after Cassirer left Sweden to come to Yale University in New Haven in 1941 and then transferred to Columbia University in 1944, did he and Kristeller come into frequent contact.[18] Before Cassirer died of a heart attack on 13 April 1945, Kristeller had worked with him on a translation of some of his essays,[19] and had brought him into the project that would eventually result in the very successful volume, *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*.[20] Indeed, to commemorate Cassirer's participation in the project, his name was maintained as one of the authors.[21] So the only plausible time when Cassirer and Kristeller would have had a certain level of intimacy and the opportunity to talk about Klibansky would have been during Cassirer's American period, 1941–1945.

This is the place also to take up item [7], i. e., Kristeller's charge that Klibansky snubbed him when planning an anniversary volume on the occasion of the hundreth year of Cassirer's birth. Unless there was a movement afoot for such a volume in the 1970s that had reached his ears but has thus far escaped my knowledge, Kristeller was wrong here. The hundredth anniversary of Cassirer's birth was 1974, not, as Kristeller said, 1964. A volume in honor of Cassirer did appear near 1964, but it was a reprint in 1963 of the volume that Klibansky had co-edited in England in 1936. In fact, a copy of this reprint in Columbia's Butler Library is actually

1983, p. 157, Kristeller related: "Years later, both my teacher [Richard] Kroner and Ernst Cassirer said they would have been glad to do the same thing for me [i.e., sponsor Kristeller as a Privatdozent to write his Habilitationsschrift] if I had only asked them, but this I somehow could not know and Heidegger had a strong attraction for me at that time."

16 See Whitaker 2017, p. 346.

17 Whitaker 2017, p. 360, n. 24.

18 See Whitaker 2017, pp. 461–62; *Reminiscences*, Kristeller 1983, pp. 461–62: "he then had an invitation from Yale, and arrived during the war at Yale, and was made a visiting professor there for several years. I went to see him in New Haven, and he gave me a very friendly reception. Then when he reached the age limit at Yale he was invited to Columbia as a visiting professor, and spent an academic year — I think 1944–1945 in New York. They had an apartment I think on West End Avenue, and he often invited me, and it was on that occasion that I met his wife, Toni Cassirer, a very interesting person in her own right. My dealings with him were extremely congenial, and he did review my Ficino book when it came out in 1943 in a very friendly way, and when I received [Helmut] Kuhn's invitation to prepare a Renaissance volume I asked him and [John Herman] Randall to join with me to edit this volume, and he (Cassirer) had still time to give his opinion on the selection of the material, although he was dead when the actual work was done and finished, but his name is still associated with that."

19 See Cassirer 1945. Cassirer's preface is dated October 1944.

20 Cassirer, Kristeller, & Randall 1948.

21 See Kristeller's comments at the end of n. 18 above.

Kristeller's own, part of the legacy of books he left the University.[22] But this complaint may be more than simply false memory of a snub at the hands of the man whom Kristeller called "his best enemy."[23] Among Cassirer's correspondence preserved at the Warburg Institute is a three page typed letter from Cassirer dated 29 July 1934, the day after his sixtieth birthday, thanking his "younger friends and students" for the collection of philosophical essays (*Aufsätze*) they have presented him.[24] The problem is that no such *Festgabe*, as Cassirer called it, exists. Perhaps what Cassirer was talking about was the table of contents of a proposed volume. In any case, what is especially interesting for our purposes is that two copies of the letter survive in the correspondence of Cassirer with Leo Strauss and Paul Oskar Kristeller (one in the correspondence with Strauss and the other in the correspondence with Kristeller), neither of whom were invited to participate in the 1936 volume edited by Klibansky.[25] So it would seem that Kristeller was right to feel snubbed by Klibansky, though what happened in the 1930s remains murky and Kristeller's recollection of the 1963 reprint of volume edited by Klibansky is erroneous. A vague recollection of a reprint acquired thirty years before the letter to McEwen seems to have created in Kristeller's mind a false memory.

Item [4], on the other hand, although reflecting a private conversation, is more than plausibly true. Almost a third of a recent book on Klibansky and the Warburg Institute deals with the art historian Erwin Panofsky's long-standing rejection of Klibansky's desire to appear as a co-author on the title page of the famous book *Saturn and Melancholy*. Panofsky and Fritz Saxl had conceived and published the work in its first rendition as *Dürers 'Melencolia I.'* in 1923 before Klibansky entered the picture.[26] After a meeting between Klibansky and Panofsky in Princeton in 1955, the latter relented and approved Klibansky appearance on the title page as one of the three authors.[27] However, in the enormous edited correspondence of Panofsky in the subsequent thirteen years of his life after this meeting we see no evidence of a change in his general attitude towards

22 The copy has the Library of Congress shelf mark, D 16.8. K52 1963, with the name Kristeller written by hand at the bottom of the verso of the title page, i.e., the page with the publication data of the Harper Torchbook edition.

23 See *Reminiscences*, Kristeller 1983, p. 128: "I might mention that from Heidelberg I also know the man whom I might call my best enemy, named Raymond Klibansky, a quite prominent scholar in my field in which we were rivals already as students."

24 Whitaker 2017, p. 361, n. 27.

25 Whitaker 2017, p. 361, n. 27. I have consulted the copies to Strauss and Kristeller in PDF available online at the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg website http://agora.sub.uni-hamburg.de/subcass/digbib/ssearch. The text of the letter is edited as addressed to Strauss and Kristeller in Cassirer 2009, pp. 138–39.

26 See Despoix & Tomm & Méchoulan & Leroux 2018, pp. 197–288, for the articles of Elisabeth Otto, Claudia Wedepohl, Philippe Despoix, and Davide Stimilli. The full title of the book in its first version was *Dürers 'Melencolia I.' Eine quellen-und typengeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1923, see Panofsky & Saxl 1923.

27 See Klibansky, Panofsky, & Saxl 1964.

Klibansky; indeed, no mention at all of Klibansky appears in the post-1955 correspondence.[28] When Panofsky and Kristeller spoke of Klibansky is impossible to say. Kristeller was in contact with Panofsky for thirty years. When he he arrived in America in 1939, he found Panofsky already a member of the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton.[29]

As for item [5], Kristeller gives us a date as to when he talked with Sir David Ross, the famous philosopher, classical scholar, and Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, namely, on the occasion of Ross receiving an honorary degree from Columbia University in 1939.[30] The degree was award *in camera* on 13 February 1939.[31] But on that date Kristeller was still aboard ship sailing to America from Italy. He did not arrive in New York until 23 February 1939. He was whisked off that very day to New Haven by his host, Professor Hermann Weigand, in order to begin teaching the seminar on Plotinus at Yale which has been the justification for his receiving a non-quota visa to escape Italy and come to America on the eve of World War II.[32] Did Kristeller misremember? The answer is definitively no. Not only is it conceivable that Ross went up to New Haven on his America visit, but we also have proof that this is exactly what he did and that he spoke to Kristeller. In a letter on Columbia University stationary of 6 March 1939, Ross wrote Kristeller to set up a meeting made possible by his having to give a lecture at Yale on the night of 7 March.[33] Later that month, after returning to New York from New Haven, Ross wrote a testimonial about Kristeller that he hoped would "be of service" to the young German in securing a permanent position in America.[34] He and Kristeller

28 See Panofsky 2014. See also Wuttke's synopsis of the Panofsky-Klibansky correspondence at Panofsky 2014, 1, pp. 351–52.

29 See Panofsky 2014, 1, pp. 362–63, for a synopsis of the Panofsky-Kristeller correspondence.

30 On Ross see the entry by Warnock & Wiggins 2004; and the entry on him by Skelton 2012.

31 See Butler 1946, p. 195.

32 See his *Reminiscences*, Kristeller 1983, pp. 360–61.

33 The letter in Columbia's Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Paul Oskar Kristeller Papers, Box 49, folder 4, and is part of a correspondence between Kristeller and Ross that begins with a letter dated 2 May 1934, concerning Ross's discussion with the British Academic Assistance Council concerning Kristeller, and ends with a letter of 15 April 1954, in which Ross expresses the hope of meeting up with Kristeller "when you come to Europe next year." All the preserved letters in the collection are from Ross.

34 In a short note of 13 March on Columbia stationary, Ross wrote "I shall write a testimonial which I hope will be of service to you. [Signed]. W. D. Ross" The testimonial itself, again on the stationary of Columbia's Philosophy Department, is undated and written in Ross's nearly indecipherable hand, of which he sensibly arranged to have a typed copy made for general distribution. Ross's evaluation at this stage in Kristeller's career is worth publishing: "(Copy) / Columbia University in the City of New York / Department of Philosophy / Dr. P.O. Kristeller is known to me as one of the most promising of the younger German scholars in the field of history of philosophy. He had an excellent classical training, and has published very good contributions to the study of Plotinus. More recently he has for several years devoted himself to the intellectual side of the Italian Renaissance, and especially to the study of Marsilio Ficino. Any university interested in Renaissance

certainly would have reason to want to talk to each other. The correspondence between the two starting in 1934 shows Ross trying to help Kristeller in the dire circumstances at the moment. He had had read Kristeller's 1929 dissertation on Plotinus, and in 1937 he received from Kristeller in Italy the two volumes of his *Supplementum Ficinianum*. Moreover, Ross certainly was quite familiar with Klibansky. Klibansky must have made contact with Ross not long after arriving in England in 1933. Already in October of that year he visited Oxford as the guest of Clement Webb and so impressed the medieval historian Maurice Powicke that the latter proposed him for honorary membership in the Oriel Senior Common Room.[35] Then in 1936, at the invitation of Ross, Klibansky moved to Oriel College as a lecturer.[36] Nonetheless, in 1938 Klibansky left Oriel College to take up a lectureship at Liverpool University, suggesting that Ross as Provost of Oriel had cooled in his attitude towards Klibansky.[37] What is undoubtedly clear, however, is that the conversation between Ross and Kristeller concerning Klibansky in 1939 remained so vivid in Kristeller's memory that he could recall it with precision in ordinary correspondence forty-five years later.[38]

The remaining item, [6], concerns a long time friend of Kristeller's, the illustrious expert on Greek and Arabic philosophy, Richard Walzer, whom Kristeller first met when working under Werner Jaeger in Berlin in 1928–1931, and with whom he continued to be in contact until Walzer's death in 1975.[39] Once Walzer

studies would find him a valuable addition to its staff, and it is much to be hoped that some American university may find the opportunity to attach him permanently to its faculty: it would in doing so be making a valuable contribution to the study of the history of ideas. / (signed) W.D. Ross / Provost of Oriel College, Oxford / President of the British Academy."

35 Whitaker 2018, pp. 84–85. Ross was supportive of various scholars connected with the *Corpus Platonicum* project. He "accommodated at Oriel" Richard Walzer and Lornzo Minio-Paluello; see Teicher 2017, p. 329.

36 Whitaker 2018, p. 90. Klibansky was already living in Oxford by 1935; see Whitaker 2017, p. 350.

37 Multiple factors might have been involved. In 1937 the medievalist Richard Hunt, then at the University of Liverpool, had sought to raise funds in Liverpool for Klibansky's *Corpus Platonicum* and eventually was successful; see Whitaker 2018, pp. 94–95.

38 Kristeller himself recognized that in old age he suffered from the well known phenomenon of remembering better, as Roland Bainton once said, "yesteryear than yesterday." In a letter of 23 September 1996 to his nephew Edgar Ross, M.D., in the same folder as the correspondence with Sir David Ross, Kristeller remarked: "my memory [is] still pretty good ... Yet my memory of the last few days and weeks is unreliable."

39 On Walzer see Deitz 2004, pp. 231–32; on Kristeller's relationship with Walzer over time see Monfasani 2018, pp. 25-26. In his *Reminiscences*, Kristeller 1983, p. 156, Kristeller has this to say just before the passage quoted in n. 15 above: "The other one [Privatdozent in Berlin] was Richard Walzer. Richard Walzer was also a student of Jaeger and had written a good dissertation on Aristotle. He was Jewish, and I think even came from an Orthodox family. He developed an interest in Arabic philosophy, and already at the time when I knew him he had learned Arabic, and had made it a specialty to

arrived in England in 1938 and was esconced at Oriel College, Oxford with the support of Sir David Ross,[40] he became involved in the *Corpus Platonicum* project, editing with Franz Rosenthal in 1943 Alfarabi's *De Platonis Philosophia*, with Paul Kraus in 1951 *Galeni Compendium Timaei Platonis. Aliorumque Dialogorum Synopsis Quae Extant Fragmenta*, and with Francesco Gabrieli in 1952 Alfarabi's *Compendium Legum Platonis*.[41] Given his position at Oriel College from 1938 onward and his involvement in the *Corpus Platonicum* into the 1950s, Walzer could not but having gotten to know Klibansky fairly well. And given Sir David Ross's reservations concerning Klibansky by 1939, we may reasonably suppose that Walzer too shared his patron's opinion by that date, though he could not have shared it with Kristeller until Kristeller started to visit England after the war.[42]

The letter of 1995 to McEwen is, in short, a significant addendum to the memorandum that Kristeller had written a decade earlier concerning Klibansky, important not simply for understanding Kristeller's intellectual and personal biography, but also as something of a corrective to accounts of Klibansky in more recent times written—quite reasonably so given their context—from a sympathetic, if not to say, panegyrical perspective.

pursue the influence of Greek philosophy among the Arabs, that is – Arabic translations from the Greek and knowledge of Greek philosophers in Arabic, Arabic commentators on translated Greek texts and all that. He has in later years published extensively on this subject. I knew him also socially very well. He was married to Sofie, who was the daughter of the publisher Bruno Cassirer. And through Walzer I met not only his wife but also their parents."

40 See n. 35 above. Klibansky was also supportive; see Teicher 2017, p. 328.

41 The volumes, all published by the Warburg Institute, London, are numbers 1 (Galen, *Compendium Timaei*), 2 (Alfarabi, *De Platonis Philosophia*), and 3 (Galen, *Compendium Legum Platonis*) of the series *Plato Arabus* of the *Corpus Platonicum Medii Aevi*.

42 I have found nothing concerning Klibansky in the Kristeller-Walzer correspondence in the Kristeller Papers at Columbia, Box 58, folder. 19,

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