



UDC 101

## Whom did Plato Mean in the Parable of ‘Gigantomachia over Being’ (*Sophist* 246a4 ff.)?\*

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The mythopoetic parable of ‘Gigantomachia over being’ in Plato’s *Sophist* 246a4 ff. is neither a theoretical construction ad hoc of some general trends, nor a reference to a single contemporary debate, e. g., between Plato’s Academy and atomists in 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The controversy on the nature of being is described as a real battle on epic scale (ἄπλετος μάχη) between two camps, as a debate about fundamental problem of philosophy, that has always existed (ἀεὶ συνέστηκεν) and is still going on. In favor of the identification of the two camps primarily with the Ionian and Italian traditions in the pre-Platonic philosophy speaks the juxtaposition of the ‘Ionian and Italian Muses’ (Ἰάδες καὶ Σικελικαὶ Μοῦσαι) in the preceding context *Soph.* 242de. The ‘unreformed giants’ are the Ionian *physikoi* from Anaximander to Democritus, while their ‘divine’ adversaries, who reduce being (*ousia*) to immaterial forms, are the Pythagoreans, Eleatics and Platonists, as well as Socrates, who dismisses the Ionian *περὶ φύσεως ἰστορία* in Plato’s *Phaedo* and who upholds the theory of ideas in the *Republic* and *Phaedrus*. The ‘improved’ giants of the second generation are metaphysical dualists like Anaxagoras and Empedocles who admit incorporeal causes like Mind and Love alongside with matter, as well as Heraclitus, the Ionian Sophists and Antisthenes who combined ontological naturalism with teaching *arete*. The general scheme of the development of theories of *archai* in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is very similar: from those who recognized only material causes to those who admitted incorporeal moving cause (Anaxagoras and Empedocles).

*Keywords:* Plato, ‘Gigantomachia over being’, *Sophist*.

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\* I am grateful to John Dillon and the anonymous reviewer who have made a number of helpful comments on the text of the present study. This paper relies on some general presuppositions which are argued for with more detail and precision in a series of my publications concerned with the study of the commonly neglected idealist (mentalist) tradition in early Greek metaphysics, epistemology, philosophical theology and theories of the soul in Lebedev 2000, 2014, 2017<sup>1</sup>, 2017<sup>2</sup>, 2019<sup>1</sup>, 2022<sup>1</sup>, 2023.

The famous mythical paradigm of the philosophical debate on the nature of being in Plato's *Sophist* 246a4–246c3 γιγαντομαχία περι τῆς οὐσίας 'Gigantomachy over being' (henceforward *GoB*) has become in modern scholarship a subject of heated debate itself.<sup>1</sup> The Eleatic Guest speaks to Theaetetus:

Καὶ μὴν ξοικέ γε ἐν αὐτοῖς οἶον γιγαντομαχία τις εἶναι διὰ τὴν ἀμφισβήτησιν περὶ τῆς οὐσίας πρὸς ἀλλήλους. {ΘΕΑΙ.} Πῶς; {ΞΕ.} Οἱ μὲν εἰς γῆν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀοράτου πάντα ἔλκουσι, ταῖς χερσὶν ἀτεχνῶς πέτρας καὶ δρῦς περιλαμβάνοντες. τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων ἐφαπτόμενοι πάντων δυσχυρίζονται τοῦτο εἶναι μόνον ὃ παρέχει προσβολὴν καὶ ἐπαφὴν τινα, ταῦτὸν σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ὀρίζόμενοι, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων εἴ τις <τι> φήσει μὴ σῶμα ἔχον εἶναι, καταφρονοῦντες τὸ παράπαν καὶ οὐδὲν ἐθέλοντες ἄλλο ἀκοῦειν. {ΘΕΑΙ.} Ἡ δεινὸς εἴρηκας ἄνδρας· ἤδη γὰρ καὶ ἐγὼ τούτων συχοῖς προσέτυχον. {ΞΕ.} Τοιγαροῦν οἱ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀμφισβητοῦντες μάλα εὐλαβῶς ἄνωθεν ἐξ ἀοράτου ποθὲν ἀμύνονται, νοητὰ ἄττα καὶ ἀσώματα εἶδη βιαζόμενοι τὴν ἀληθινὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι· τὰ δὲ ἐκείνων σώματα καὶ τὴν λεγομένην ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀλήθειαν κατὰ μικρὰ διαθραύοντες ἐν τοῖς λόγοις γένεσιν ἀντ' οὐσίας φερομένην τινὰ προσαγορεύουσιν. ἐν μέσῳ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα ἀπλετος ἀμφοτέρων μάχη τις, ὧ Θεαίτητε, ἀεὶ συνέστηκεν.

VISITOR: It seems that there's something like a battle of gods and giants among them, because of their dispute with each other over being. THEAETETUS: How? VISITOR: One group drags everything down to earth from the heavenly region of the invisible, actually clutching rocks and trees with their hands. When they take hold of all these things, they insist that only what offers tangible contact is, since they define being as the same as body. And if any of the others say that something without a body is, they absolutely despise him and won't listen to him anymore. — THEAETETUS: These are frightening men you're talking about. I've met quite a lot of them already. — VISITOR: Therefore, the people on the other side of the debate defend their position very cautiously, from somewhere up out of sight. They insist violently that true being is certain nonbodily forms that can be thought about. They take the bodies of the other group, and also what they call the truth, and they break them up verbally into little bits and call them a process of coming-to-be instead of being. There's a never-ending battle going on constantly between them about this issue. — THEAETETUS: That's true. (Transl.: J. Cooper 1997, 267.)

I will start with those whom Plato *did not mean*. It has been thought by some that this is a fictitious dramatization of two purely theoretical tendencies in metaphysics with no reference to real historical schools or particular thinkers (contra McCabe 2000, 76 ff.). But the question of historicity of heroes in this philosophical epos has to be differentiated. At least the two original protagonists, the groups of radical materialists who hold that only bodies exist and nothing else, and the opponent group of "friends of ideas" who claim that all reality consists of intelligible incorporeal forms only (νοητὰ καὶ ἀσώματα εἶδη), are represented as historical, and their debate, metaphorically conceived as mythical gigantomachia, is depicted as a global battle ('immense, boundless, ἀπλετος μάχη) that has existed always and still continues (ἀεὶ συνέστηκεν): it points to what has always happened in history and still goes on, not to a mental experiment or to a single particular debate.

<sup>1</sup> A clear survey of modern opinions is given by Crivelli 2012, 86 ff. See also: Cornford 1935, 228–232; Bluck and Neal 1975; Guthrie 1978, 138–143; Brown 1988, 181–189; Notomi 1999, 216–221; Palmer 1999, 179–180, 197–198; McCabe 2000, 73–79; Gill 2012, 95–100; Politis 2013, 154–155.

Theaetetus' remark that he has met 'many' philosophical 'earth-borns' of the first type in person also points to real people. A different and more delicate question is who are the "improved" earth-borns introduced only later in 246d4 (βελτίους γεγονότας 246e2) who, unlike the original unreformed "giants" are more civilized and open to dialogue. It is only in their case that Plato uses a quasi-hypothetical language ...λόγω ποιῶμεν, ὑποτιθέμενοι... ("will make them better in our discourse, supposing that that etc.") that might be thought to indicate that they are theoretically constructed *ad hoc*. However, after defining with more precision the identity of the original radical materialists and their opponents it will become clear that the description of the 'improved giants' also fits some historical persons of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (see note 20 below).

Plato did not mean by giants 'ordinary people' or *hoi polloi*, either.<sup>2</sup> Ordinary Greeks did not engage in debates concerning the problem πόσα τὰ ὄντα which is typical for Plato's Academy. Ordinary Athenians would have laughed at such controversy, as they laughed at the comic scene from the life of Plato's Academy in which the disciples of Plato debate the correct definition of the pumpkin (Epicrates, fr. 10 A.-K.). And if confronted with the problem of the second debate, an 'average' unphilosophical Greek would probably reply that both our bodies and the dreams sent by Zeus, as well as spirits of dead, are 'real', so there is nothing to discuss. It is also unlikely that a controversy is between two persons only: the image of a grand battle would be inappropriate in this case. The controversy on the nature of being is described as a battle of epic scale between two camps, a debate about fundamental problem of philosophy, that existed always (ἀεί) and still goes on.

In favor of the identification of the two camps primarily with the Ionian and Italian traditions in pre-Platonic philosophy speaks the juxtaposition of the «Ionian and Italian Muses» (Ἰάδες καὶ Σικελικαὶ Μοῦσαι) in the preceding context *Soph.* 242de.

The ironical-metaphorical use of 'Muses' here in the sense of poets or myth-makers takes over the preceding statement that every philosopher 'tells us a kind of myth' (μῦθόν τινα... διηγείσθαι 242c7) and exemplifies it with another group of 'inspired by Muses', i. e., those who combine 'one and many' rather than assert that being is only one or many. The poetic image of gigantomachia itself pertains to the same metaphorical code: Plato engages in a contest (*agon*) with all those 'story-tellers' by producing his own mythos about their debate.

It would be a serious mistake to take the ontological doxography in 242b10–243a5 and the gigantomachy in 246a as covering two chronologically distinct periods (an earlier and a later one) of the continuous history of pre-Platonic theories of first principles.<sup>3</sup> They cover one and the same period, that of the Greek philosophy before Plato as a whole, but focus on two distinct debates: the first on the 'one vs many' (πόσα τὰ ὄντα), and the second on the nature of reality (οὐσία) or πῆι ὄντα. This being so, the juxtaposition of 'Ionian' and 'Italian' Muses in sketch (1) reveals the names of debating camps in sketch (2).

Plato in 245e does not say that he turns from philosophers engaged in the first debate to "others" (ἄλλους). He says that he turns to philosophers who consider the problem of being in "another way" (ἄλλως λέγοντας), i. e., from a different perspective; not a word about the second debate following the first one, nothing like ὕστερον δέ, μετὰ τούτους vel sim. Plato refers to two fundamental ontological problems discussed in Greek philosophy

<sup>2</sup> *Contra* Taylor, 1955, 384: "Plato has in view the crass unthinking corporealism of the 'average man' rather than the doctrine of any particular 'school'".

<sup>3</sup> This mistake was committed by Bluck 1975, 88, and it makes his objections to Cornford invalid.

from the start, and not to the two consecutive periods with a shifting interest from the number of existing entities to the qualitative nature of reality. The brief preface to the entire “doxographical” excursus at 242b–c from the start makes it clear that the discussion will be about the views (τὰ δοκοῦντα) of “*Parmenides and everyone else who has ever undertaken to determine how many essences there are and what their nature is*”, where πόσα corresponds to the first debate (πόσα τὰ ὄντα), and ποῖα to the second one (πῆι ὄντα). In other words, both disputes are from the start announced as two original fundamental problems of ontology, and not as following one after another in two different periods. Among the participants of the first debate we recognize the Ionian *physikoi* positing “the hot and the cold, the wet and the dry” (i. e. plurality of sensible stuffs), Xenophanes, and the entire “Eleatic tribe” including Parmenides positing one, and probably the founder of the Italian tradition Pythagoras alluded to by the phrase καὶ ἔτι πρότερον (“and even earlier” than Xenophanes), Heraclitus and Empedocles positing one and many, either co-existing or alternating in time. ‘Those who posited three original beings’ (τρία τὰ ὄντα) is most probably a reference to Pherecydes of Syros with his original triad of Zas, Chronos and Chthonie, the ‘marriage’ of Zeus and Gaia as cosmogonical act of central importance, and the subsequent *polemos* of Zeus’ army against the army Ophioneus. Aristotle in a similar context also cited the primordial triad of Hesiod (Chaos, Gaia and Eros) interpreted as three *archai*: space, matter and moving force. To sum up: the participants of the first dispute include virtually all pre-Platonic thinkers, except, perhaps, the atomists, although formally the atoms and the void of Democritus fit the case of “two principles”.<sup>4</sup> The second dispute involves the same Pythagoreans and Eleatics ‘fighting’ against the Ionian physicists and atomists (giants), i. e., the whole Italian and Ionian traditions including their followers in the fourth century. The sympathy with which the Eleatic guest speaks about heroic celestial warriors and the disgust with which he refers to their ‘brutal’ opponents, leaves no doubt with whom he stands, and Theaetetus repeatedly nods to him with approval. This is only natural, since *in the Greek perception*, Parmenides and Zeno were ‘Pythagorean men’ (ἄνδρες Πυθαγόρειοι), while Theaetetus was primarily known as a geometer who was working in the tradition of Pythagorean stereometry and by his discovery of ikosaeder brought to perfection the Pythagorean-Platonic theory of five regular solids.

According to the widespread view the ‘earth-born giants’ stand for Democritus and the atomists,<sup>5</sup> and the Olympian god-like ‘friends of ideas’ (οἱ τῶν εἰδῶν φίλοι) who fight the giants from above (i. e. from the sphere of the divine, because they defend morality and religion), stand for Plato himself and the Academy.<sup>6</sup> That Plato has in mind primarily Democritus, among other naturalistic monists, is made clear by the emphasis on ‘tangible’, ‘hard to the touch’ essential property of the primordial substance. Many scholars admit that the reference is to the theory of forms in the middle dialogues, i. e. to Plato in the past, which means that he may not be taking part in the original battle himself anymore, or even that he has abandoned the classical doctrine of changeless forms and opts for a new ontology integrating change and changelessness.<sup>7</sup> The connection with Plato’s own theory of immaterial εἶδη in *Phaedo* and *Republic* cannot be denied. But the

<sup>4</sup> The atoms and the void, τὸ πλήρες καὶ τὸ κενόν are often referred to in doxography as δύο ἀρχαί.

<sup>5</sup> So rightly Cornford 1935, 232, n. 1, with persuasive refutation of Burnet’s objection.

<sup>6</sup> Guthrie 1978, 138, n. 2; Cornford 1935, 242 ff.; Brown 1998, 194 (‘irresistible’). With reservations Notomi 1999, 218 ff., Gill 2012, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Politis 2013, 155.

opponents of the giants in Greek myth were gods: can Plato speak about himself and his disciples in such dithyrambic language of self-glorification and divinization? It is more likely therefore that the Olympian warriors primarily refer to the ‘divine Pythagoras’<sup>8</sup> and Eleatics (Παρμενίδης ὁ μέγας),<sup>9</sup> whereas Plato and the Academy are modestly alluded to as followers and allies of ‘those παλαιοὶ divine men’. A close parallel to the gigantomachia in the *Sophist* is found in the philosophical autobiography of Socrates in *Phaedo* (96a ff.) in which all Ionian *Peri physeos historia* is rejected as meaningless, self-contradictory and false from the point of view of a moral philosopher whose subject are precisely the εἶδη or moral paradigmatic forms, and who refuses to conceive man as a collection of bones, phlegm and tendons rather than a moral agent endowed with immortal soul and a free will. Since in *Phaedo* Socrates in a similar context attacks not one particular thinker, but the whole of naturalistic (predominantly Ionian) tradition, it seems that the ‘perennial’ (ἀεὶ) and ‘grand scale’ (ἄπλετος) intellectual battle described in the *Sophist* refers to the history of all preceding and contemporary Greek philosophy, and primarily to the clash of Ionian naturalistic monism (first of all, Milesians and Atomists) with the Western Greek idealism, primarily with the Eleatic idealist monism of Parmenides<sup>10</sup> and, conceivably, with its revival by the Megarians: Euclides identified Socratic τὸ ἀγαθόν with Parmenides’ immaterial and immutable ἔν.<sup>11</sup> This is made even more plausible by the fact that the dialogue person who tells the story of the great battle is the Eleatic Guest who quotes Parmenides three times, the second time right before the digression on ‘gigantomachy’.<sup>12</sup> In Plato’s perception the original theoretical debate on the nature of being between ‘Ionian and Italian’ schools is paradigmatic and relevant both for the time of Socrates and his own time. In Plato’s dialogues Socrates is the chief opponent of the Sophists who for the most part were heirs of the Ionian naturalism; the Sophistic *Kulturgeschichte* was a sequel to the Ionian evolutionist cosmogony.<sup>13</sup> Once the anthropomorphic gods of the mythopoetic tradition have been eliminated from the origins of the world, they ceased to play any role in the history of the human race and civilization as πρῶτοι εὐρέται, as well. Xenophanes, who popularized the Milesian science of nature in his poetry, dismissed the myths about divine gifts to mortals, and proclaimed humans themselves creators and inventors of all cultural and technological achievements (B18 DK).

I have argued elsewhere that Parmenides’ τὸ ἐόν ‘what really is’ (unlike the imaginary Homeric gods) is a cryptic name for the divine *Sphairos* of Western Greek philosophical theology, the immobile and immutable sphere of intelligible light, conceived as ‘Invisible Sun of Justice’ and imitated in Plato’s analogy of the Sun in the *Republic*. There is explicit evidence of Melissus that the so-called Eleatic Being is incorporeal (σῶμα μὴ ἔχειν, B9). The divine *Kouros* in Parmenides’ proem receives the revelation of *Aletheia* from the

<sup>8</sup> Pythagoreans and Eleatics are also favored by Cornford, *loc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Politis 2006, 154. Palmer 1999, 179, has rightly pointed out that Eleatics and ‘friends of ideas’ are twice grouped together in the *Sophist*. Eleatics are also favored by Gill 2012, 95–100, and Larsen 2019, 115.I.

<sup>10</sup> For details and ancient evidence see Lebedev 2017 and 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Euclid. Socr. fr. 30–31 Giannantoni. But the *exclusive* identification of ‘friends of ideas’ with Megarians in Zeller and Schleiermacher (cited by Praechter, 297) is incorrect.

<sup>12</sup> *Soph.* 237a (= 28 B 7.1–2 DK), 244e (= B 8.43–45 DK), 258d (= B 7.1–2 DK).

<sup>13</sup> The three intellectual leaders of the ‘Athenian enlightenment’ in the second half of 5<sup>th</sup> century BC were ‘Ionians’, either in the strict sense (Anaxagoras from Klazomenai), or ‘Ionians’ in their world-view and dialect: Protagoras and Prodicus. On Prodicus’ authorship of Derveni papyrus see Lebedev 2019<sup>2</sup>. Democritus’ theory of the origin of civilization and religion was very similar to that of the Ionian sophists; this becomes palpably clear once we restore the authentic text of his fragment 580L. (B30DK) in Lebedev 2020.

celestial habitat of the ‘friends of Ideas.’ There is also a piece of external evidence often neglected in the present case: Aristotle in his lost *Περὶ φιλοσοφίας* characterized the Eleatics as οἱ τῆς φύσεως στασιώται ‘immobilists of nature’ and ‘anti-naturalists’ or ‘deniers of nature’ ἀφύσικοι, since they denied *kinesis* which is essential to the notion of *physis* as ἀρχὴ κινήσεως καὶ πάυλας.<sup>14</sup> Some scholars attribute these terms to Sextus himself (e. g. Laks 2018, 12), but the words at issue must be a verbatim quotation for the following reasons. 1) Unlike the words φησί and λέγει which may introduce both a paraphrase and quotation, the words καλεῖ, κέκληκε ‘calls by name’ always introduce a verbatim quotation. 2) The word στασιώτης never occurs in Sextus elsewhere, while the word ἀφύσικος occurs only once in *Math.* X. 250 not in the specific ontological sense of one who denies the reality of nature (as in Aristotle), but in the ordinary pejorative sense of ‘unnatural’ or ‘absurd.’ 3) After the quotation Sextus proceeds to explain the meaning of these unusual expressions. Why would he write a commentary of his own words? Aristotle’s οἱ στασιώται τῆς φύσεως in the lost ‘On philosophy’ echoes and is suggested by Plato’s οἱ τοῦ ὄλου στασιώται ‘immobilizers of the Universe’ in *Theaetetus* 181a7, also applied to Eleatics and contrasted with Heraclitizing theorists of the Universal Flux. But the dispute between the partisans of the ever moving and always immobile being in inextricably linked with the *GoB* in the *Sophist*. It seems therefore very likely that Aristotle in his *On philosophy* contrasted the Italian ἀφύσικοι with the Ionian φυσικοί in the context of a discussion of fundamental nature of being similar to the relevant Platonic passages in the *Theaetetus* and the *GoB* in the *Sophist*.

In our search for the identity of historical participants of *GoB*, we should be constantly aware that we are reconstructing *ancient historiography* of Greek philosophy, and not doing history of Greek philosophy in the strict sense. Plato’s views may not only differ from, but also contradict commonly accepted modern views. According to a widespread modern view, the theory of ideas did not exist before Plato. But Plato himself did not think so, he knew nothing of Vlastos’ ‘ten criteria’ and did not distinguish ‘historical’ Socrates from Socrates of the middle dialogue. It follows that Plato may well have intended Socrates as one of the ‘friends of ideas’, and he actually depicts him as the champion of the theory in *Phaedo*, *Republic* etc. There are reasons to believe that the Sophists (at least in Plato’s view) were friends of flux theorists (οἱ ῥέοντες) and opponents of the ‘immobilizers of the Universe’ (οἱ τοῦ ὄλου στασιώται, *Theaet.* 181a7), the two opposing groups that in Plato’s history of philosophy roughly correspond with the two camps of the gigantomachy. In Greek myth the gigantomachy was won by the gods thanks to Heracles. In later Socratic and Platonic tradition Socrates is often assimilated to Heracles who becomes a mythical paradigm of Socratic virtue, τὸ καρτερικόν, τὸ ἀπαθές that exalts him to the heavens and deifies him.<sup>15</sup> It is conceivable that Plato alludes to Socrates as a new Heracles in the philosophical gigantomachy.

The grand battle refers to several generations of Greek philosophers: Plato and his Academic friends in the 4<sup>th</sup> century were fighting against Democritus and atomists (possibly, also against Antisthenes), as Socrates in the 5<sup>th</sup> century was fighting against Protagoras and Ionian Sophists, as Melissus was fighting against 5<sup>th</sup> century naturalists *physikoi*,

<sup>14</sup> Sext. Emp. *Math.* X. 46 = Aristot. fr. 9 Ross; 952 Gigon.

<sup>15</sup> Two classics of Socratic exhortation to ἀρετὴ by Xenophon and Antisthenes bear the title ‘Heracles’. In Plato’s *Euthydemus* 297b Socrates ironically assimilates his dialectical ‘fight’ against sophists to Heracles cutting off the heads of the ‘sophistic Hydra’.

as Zeno was fighting against the critics of Parmenides, as Parmenides circa 480 BC was fighting against Heraclitus and the Ionians in general,<sup>16</sup> as Philolaus was fighting against the Ionian concept of the material substance (*physis*) by reducing it to immaterial mathematical essences of *peras* and *apeiron*,<sup>17</sup> as the author of the Derveni papyrus (Prodicus of Ceos) was fighting against Diopieithes and the religious conservatives during the Peloponnesian war. Pythagoras, conceivably, was fighting in the sixth century against the Milesians and Anaximander's concept of φύσις ἀπειρος by imposing on it a superior principle of divine *peras* and divine harmony of the cosmos.

We possess a unique pre-Platonic (and independent from Plato) evidence on the two dominant philosophical schools circa 400 BC. The author of the sophistic *Dissoi Logoi* in chapter 6 refutes the 'mistaken' view that 'wisdom and virtue' cannot be taught. Refuting one of the arguments in support of this thesis, namely that «there are no approved teachers», he replies citing two empirical facts or proofs (τεκμήρια) of the contrary (6.7–8): τί μὲν τοι σοφισταὶ διδάσκοντι ἢ σοφίαν καὶ ἀρετάν; ἢ τί δὲ Ἀναξαγόρειοι καὶ Πυθαγόρειοι ἦεν; “What, for God's sake, are the sophists teaching, if not wisdom and virtue? And what about the followers of Anaxagoras and Pythagoras?” Philosophers are represented by what seems to be two dominant schools of the time, the Anaxagoreans and the Pythagoreans. Like sophists, they teach theoretical wisdom (science) and practical virtue. It is not clear whether each school teaches both wisdom and virtue, or the Anaxagoreans specialize in science, and the Pythagoreans in moral education. The point is that both Anaxagoras and Pythagoras are ἀποδεδεγμένοι διδάσκαλοι, commonly recognized teachers, since generations of their disciples call themselves by the name of the founders of the school. We see that the division of Greek philosophy into Ionian and Italian traditions is several centuries earlier than *Placita philosophorum* and Diogenes Laertius. The author of the *Dissoi logoi* probably classed Parmenides and Zeno with *Pythagoreioi*, and Democritus (if he was known to him) with *Anaxagoreioi*. In any case these two schools exactly correspond with the two camps of Plato's 'gigantomachia'. That Plato regarded Pythagoras as the founder the idealist Greek metaphysics is made clear by the passage in *Philebus* 16c where the «divine gift» to mortals, the philosophy of *peras* and *apeiron*, was brought to humanity by a certain “Prometheus” of old days dwelling “closer to the gods”.<sup>18</sup> In such elevated terms Plato can speak only of Pythagoras himself.<sup>19</sup> The preceding remark of the Eleatic Guest about ‘Eleatic tribe that started from Xenophanes and even earlier’ Ἐλεατικὸν ἔθνος, ἀπὸ Ξενοφάνους καὶ ἔτι πρόσθεν ἀρξάμενον (*Soph.* 242d) in all probability also alludes to Pythagoras. And the *Kouros* of Parmenides' proem, who strikingly resembles Pythagoras in the form of flying *Apollo Hyperboreios*, receives the idealist metaphysics of τὸ ἔὸν as a divine revelation from Heavens (cf. ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀοράτου in Plato' *Gigantomachia*).

<sup>16</sup> By Heraclitus we mean here the Platonic “Heraclitus” of *Cratylus* and *Theaetetus*, not the authentic philosophy of historical Heraclitus.

<sup>17</sup> 44B1–2 DK. Lebedev 2019, 658–661.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. ἑγγυτέρω θεῶν οἰκοῦντες in *Philebus* with “friends of ideas” who fight with materialists “from above, out of the invisible”, i. e., from the celestial region.

<sup>19</sup> *Contra* Huffman (2001) 70 ff. Plato cannot refer primarily and exclusively to Philolaus, a contemporary of Socrates, as an ancient sage who lived “closer to the gods”, but Pythagoras who lived (as Plato, no doubt, knew) as one of his incarnations (Euphorbus) already before the Trojan war, fits the bill. The precise separation of the original Pythagorean elements from Platonic developments in *Philebus* 16c is a difficult task. According to Huffman only the basic opposition of *peras* and *apeiron* has Pythagorean roots. I believe that at least the *causa conjunctionis* of the opposites (*Harmonia* or divine *demiourgos* in Philolaus conceived as ‘ship-builder’ A17 DK) also goes back to the Pre-Platonic Pythagorean tradition.

A close parallel to the *GoB* debate is the debate between adherents of *kinesis* or *stasis* of Being in *Theaetetus* and *Cratylus*. The ‘mobilists’ posit plurality of ὄντα which comprise opposites, the immobilists recognize only one ὄν which excludes polarity and is ἀδιαίρετον. The juxtaposition of the metaphysical paradigm one/stasis/no opposites vs the paradigm many/kinesis/opposites is found already in the two parts of Parmenides’ poem where it contrasts divine and human knowledge. The mention of Heraclitus and Empedocles who dissent from Parmenides in trying to bridge the gap between one and many, foreshadows the ‘heretic’ (for an Eleatic philosopher) introduction of μέγιστα γένη which admit the possibility of *kinesis* and polarity in the realm of being (οὐσία). Admitting this, the Eleatic Guest (EG) does commit a ‘patricide’. And if he is just a voice of mature Plato, Plato commits his own intellectual ‘patricide’, ‘killing’ his own philosophical ‘father’ Socrates of the middle dialogue with his theory of immobile and immutable forms.

Once we admit that the parable of *GoB* covers the whole history of Greek philosophy, it becomes palpably clear that the first and second (‘improved’) generations of ‘giants’ in Plato’s account correspond to the earlier and later generation of *physikoi* in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* Alpha: the ‘first philosophers’ (οἱ πρῶτοι φιλοσοφήσαντες) who posited ‘principles relating exclusively to the class of matter’ (τὰς ἐν ὕλης εἶδει μόνας ὡήθησαν ἀρχάς) according to Aristotle (*Met.* 983b6 ff.), correspond with original ‘tough corporealists’ of Plato, whereas the subsequent generation of philosophers, who discovered immaterial causes (the *causa movens and formalis*) in Aristotelian story, correspond to the ‘reformed giants’ in Plato who admit that side-by-side with physical bodies exist immaterial things. The second generation of *physikoi* in Aristotle (often misnamed ‘pluralists’ in modern literature)<sup>20</sup> admit that beside material elements exist cosmic mind (νοῦς of Anaxagoras) or cosmic powers like Love and Strife in Empedocles that are conceived as incorporeal and perceived by the internal ‘eye of mind’ / ‘mind’s eye’ only (31B21 τὴν σὺ νόῳ δέρκευ, μηδ’ ὄμμασι...). Another Ionian thinker who rejected the substance dualism of the Pythagoreans, who remained formally a ‘naturalistic monist’, but transformed the mechanistic naturalism of the Milesians into a new teleological naturalism by identifying physis with god, was Heraclitus who proposed the earliest attested by his own words system of ‘virtue ethics’, anticipating Plato and putting on the top the *aretai* of *sophia* and *sophrosyne*.<sup>21</sup> But he dissented from Plato by making *physis* (and not transcendental idea of *to agathon*) the fundamental moral, political and theological standard of happy life and ideal state. Ionian sophists of the 5<sup>th</sup> century like Protagoras and Prodicus, who firmly stood by Ionian naturalistic monism in their general world-view, but at the same time specialized in ‘teaching virtue’ (ἀρετή), fit exactly into Plato’s portrait of ‘improved giants’, too. And the same holds true for his contemporary and rival Antisthenes who combined Socratic ethics with the denial of existence of Platonic forms.

I will now turn to the theological/religious implications of the *GoB* parable. The importance of these implications was seen by Cornford, who interpreted the words 246d4 ἔργῳ βελτίους αὐτοὺς ποιεῖν in the sense of moral correction (‘to bring about a real change of heart’) citing *Laws* 889 ff. (materialism leads to atheism and ‘lawlessness’) and 663c: the decision between righteous and pleasant life depends on whether it is χεῖρονος

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed criticism of the confusing modern terminology of ‘monists’ and ‘pluralists’ in historiography of early Greek philosophy see: Lebedev 2017<sup>1</sup>, 524–526; Lebedev 2022<sup>2</sup>, 694–696.

<sup>21</sup> The ethical section of Heraclitus’ book in strict sense (theory of ethos and virtues) includes fr. 82–105 of our edition.



or βελτίονος ψυχῆς.<sup>22</sup> The emphatic antithesis between ‘gods’ dwelling in invisible celestial heights, on the one hand, and the ‘earth-born’ giants speaks for itself. The giants were the enemies of the gods, a transparent allusion to atheists. Plato, who prescribes death penalty for persistent atheism in the *Laws* 909a, does not mention the dark sides of the real *GoB* in the ideological battles in Athenian society during the Peloponnesian war. The *psephisma* of Diopieithes (ca 432 BC) sparked a whole series of persecutions of intellectuals on the ground of ‘charge of impiety’ (γραφὴ ἀσεβείας). Virtually all victims of these trials were from the camp of ‘earth-born’ Ionian naturalists and humanists: Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia. Only the last victim of this charge, Socrates, was from the camp of the ‘friends of ideas.’ It was a real, not a metaphorical war, with fallen heroes (Socrates) and real blood: according to the new papyrus evidence of Philodemus, Anaxagoras ‘showed the judges his blood-stained scars’ on his back after torture.<sup>23</sup>

Another startling document that sheds new light on this Athenian phase of philosophical Gigantomachy is a sophistic treatise on the origin of religion, which is known under the conventional name of the *Derveni Papyrus*. I have argued elsewhere in detail that the author of this idiosyncratic text is Prodicus of Ceos: his theory of the origin of religion from agriculture is attested in the column XXVI of the papyrus, and there are numerous quotations and reminiscences of *PDerv* which connect it with Prodicus.<sup>24</sup> It is a sophistic treatise on the origin of religion and language and at the same time a polemical pamphlet written in 430–420 BC in defence of Prodicus’ friend and teacher Anaxagoras who was charged with ‘impiety’ (ἀσεβεία) for his naturalistic Ionian astrophysics outlawed by the *psephisma* of mantis Diopieithes. Most ‘impious’ was found Anaxagoras’ doctrine of the Sun as ignited ‘lump’ (μύδος) or ‘rock’ (πέτρα) that was ruptured from the Earth by the cosmogonic vortex and sent into its present orbit, while the high speed of motion ignited it and set ablaze.<sup>25</sup> Here is a real historical case of a fight between a ‘pious’ ‘friend of divine images (εἶδη)’ with a telling name ‘he who obeys Zeus’ (Διο-πειθής) and an Ionian ‘Giant’ who denied the divinity of the god Helios. The ‘impious’ giant was tortured at the trial and sentenced to death converted to exile to Lampsacus thanks to the intervention of his friend Pericles. In Plato’s Gigantomachy the giants use as heavy artillery against the friends of ideas ‘oaks and rocks’ (πέτρας καὶ δρυὲς περιλαμβάνοντες) which they throw into the sky in order to ‘drag down’ to earth Olympian gods. This is more than just a reminiscence of the proverbial Greek phrase ἀπὸ δρυὸς καὶ ἀπὸ πέτρης (of someone who was born ‘from oak and rock’, i. e., is of ignoble origin).<sup>26</sup> I would venture to guess that Plato alludes to Anaxagoras’ scandalously famous theory of the origin of the Sun which literally ‘throws a rock’ from earth to the sky thus ‘killing’ the sun god Helios. This interpretation

<sup>22</sup> Cornford, 1935, 231.n1.

<sup>23</sup> Phld. *De rhet.* 4, *PHerc.* 245, fr. 7 = Vassallo 2021, *CPH*, 14 (with commentary on pp. 354–355). Αναξαγόρας μαστιγωθείς μώλωπας ἐπέδεικνυε τοῖς δικασταῖς, reading restored by Edoardo Acosta Méndez and confirmed by Vassallo. Pace Vassallo, the evidence of Philodemus on the torture of Anaxagoras, is neither isolated nor suspicious: it comes from a list of philosophers’ misfortunes that are commonly recognized historical facts (the uprisal of Kylon against Pythagoras, and the conviction of Socrates), and it is confirmed by cryptic allusions in two passages of Euripides’ *Orestes* which assimilate the ‘rock’ over the head of Tantalos punished by Zeus for his ‘licentious tongue’ to Anaxagoras, that speak about torture of an ‘ancient sage’ Tantalos. For details see Lebedev 2019<sup>2</sup>, 561–568.

<sup>24</sup> See *testimonia* 1–19 in Lebedev 2019<sup>2</sup>, 508–532.

<sup>25</sup> Anaxag. A42.6; A72 DK etc.

<sup>26</sup> Hom. *Il.* 22.126; *Od.* 19.163. Commonly used with negation to emphasize one’s respectful social status. Socrates makes use of it in this sense in *Apology* 34d5.

is supported by the word ἀτεχνῶς ‘really’ by which the mythical image is introduced in Plato’s text (246a9 ἀτεχνῶς πέτρας καὶ δρυῶς περιλαμβάνοντες): in Anaxagoras’ theory of the sun it is a *real rock, really ‘seized’ from Earth (by vortex) that is ‘thrown’ to the celestial region exactly as (ἀτεχνῶς ὡσπερ) in the myth of gigantomachy by giants.*<sup>27</sup> Anaxagoras’ authentic word was μύδος, a metallurgical technical term for ‘lump of metal’ (cf. Kranz, Index, s. v.), in later tradition often replaced by a more familiar words πέτρα or λίθος. Another striking verbal coincidence between the text of *GoB* and Anaxagorean doxography: the giants ‘embrace’ or ‘grasp’ rocks by hand from earth (περιλαμβάνοντες), in Anaxagoras A42.6 DK “the sun, the moon and all the stars are ignited stones grasped (λίθους εἶναι ἐμπύρους συμπεριληφθέντας) by the whirlwind of *aither*” (*scil.* from earth). In two cryptic allusions to the trial and torture of Anaxagoras Euripides assimilates the ‘rock’ of Anaxagoras’ astrophysics to the ‘rock’ over the head of the paradigmatic ‘enemy of the gods’ Tantalos (*Orestes*, 4–10; 982–84, cf. Lebedev 2018, 779). The Ionian science indeed denied the divinity of heaven by recognizing the primordial substance (*physis*) as the common source of all celestial and earthen bodies alike and by admitting the universality of physical laws in the homogeneous infinite Universe without absolute ‘up’ and ‘down’, and so without ‘Olympus’ and ‘Tartarus’ (Lebedev 2022). For Anaxagoras the Moon was a ‘celestial earth’ with ‘mountains and ravines’, and not a fairy bird-woman with wings and ‘beautiful hair’ (as well as a lover Endymion) of the poets.

Who are the ‘reformed’ and ‘improved’ giants-materialists? According to Guthrie (*loc. cit.*), ordinary people of common sense are meant (see our objections above). If any historical persons are meant at all, Anaxagoras and Heraclitus from the Ionian camp would fit the bill. Anaxagoras departed from the ‘hard’ mechanistic physics of Anaximander by admitting alongside with the material *panspermia* the existence of cosmic mind and living beings. Other candidates might be some Sophists of the Periclean age: they were predominantly ‘Ionians’ (i. e., ‘giants’) in their philosophy of nature (Protagoras, Prodicus and the Derveni author), but at the same time they were teaching ἀρετή.

Who are the friends of ideas that gave up their radical immaterialism and admitted the reality of physical bodies and change? The defector from the Italian/Pythagorean camp was Empedocles who made two important steps in reconciliation with Ionians: he admitted that the four corporeal elements (derived from immaterial principles of *peras* and *apeiron* in orthodox Pythagoreanism, as in Philolaus) are divine and eternal ‘roots’ of all things, and he made the ‘immobile’ *Sphairos* of Western Greek theological metaphysics<sup>28</sup> subject to eternal cyclical change, alternation of ‘one and many’. Heraclitus, in turn, constructed a ‘westernalized’ teleological philosophy of nature by synthesizing Ionian naturalistic cosmology with Pythagorean cosmic harmony and divine intelligence (Γνώμη) of the ruling ‘Wise Being’ (Τὸ Σοφόν).<sup>29</sup> The reconciliated ‘Ionian’ and ‘Italian’ ‘Muses’ in

<sup>27</sup> The suggestion of R. McKirahan quoted by McCabe 2000, 74, n. 49 (allegedly a word pun on ἀτεχνῶς), is linguistically unlikely and philosophically pointless. Ἀτεχνῶς is abbreviated form of the set phrase ἀτεχνῶς ὡσπερ introducing images and similes, standard in Plato: 11 instances *teste* TLG-online.

<sup>28</sup> In Lebedev 2017<sup>1</sup> I have argued that the first part of Parmenides’ poem describes ‘the god of Pythagoras’, i. e., the divine *Sphairos* conceived as ‘invisible Sun of Justice’. The immutability of the spherical god-mind was part of Pythagorean dogma attested both in Xenophanes (neglected fragment in Philo, see Lebedev 2000) and Epicharmus (Lebedev 2017<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>29</sup> In my edition of Heraclitus (Lebedev 2014) I have argued that the cyclical cosmogonies of Heraclitus and Empedocles are virtually identical, see especially the diagram on p. 343.

*Sophist* 242de (Heraclitus and Empedocles) anticipate both the ‘reformed’ giants and gods in *GoB* (246) and Plato’s own new dynamic ontology of the five μέγιστα γένη.<sup>30</sup>

It is a late nineteenth-century positivist (anti-Hegelian, anti-idealist) myth that substance dualism and the very notion of incorporeal or intelligible were unknown before Plato. The so-called ‘Orphic’ (in fact Pythagorean) graffiti on bone tablets from Olbia dating back to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC correlate ‘soul’ (ψυχή) with ‘truth’ (ἀλήθεια), and ‘body’ (σῶμα) with ‘falsehood’ (ψεῦδος).<sup>31</sup> Ἀλήθεια was a mystical name for the abode of disembodied souls before their expulsion (for carnivore sin) from the celestial paradise (λειμῶν Ἀληθείας) into sublunar ‘meadow of Doom and Delusion’ (λειμῶν Ἄτης) in Pythagorean eschatology.<sup>32</sup>

Plato’s parable of *GoB* in the *Sophist* is in many respects anticipated and prefigured in the poem of Parmenides, even by its structure, the antithetical division into *Aletheia* and *Doxa* after initial axiomatic dilemma of ‘two ways of search’. The two ways have been commonly interpreted as a theoretical-methodological, as a logical and epistemological dilemma. But ‘theoretical’ and ‘historical’ in the present case need not be mutually exclusive alternatives. We have seen that in Plato’s *GoB* two conflicting ontological and epistemic paradigms are linked with their prominent historical representatives. The name of Heraclitus in Plato is repeatedly used metonymically for the *theory* of universal Flux, the names of Parmenides and Melissus often stand for the ontological theory of absolute monism (ἔν τὸ πᾶν). There are several reasons to suppose that the ‘two ways’ are theoretical methods adopted by two historical philosophical schools: the Ionian tradition of naturalism-empiricism and the Italian tradition of mentalism-rationalism.

First of all, it seems surprising that Parmenides with such pathos insists that the way of non-being is impossible. His tone is apparently polemical, but who on earth ever claimed that the subject of inquiry should be “what-is-not”? Since the way of being is explicitly associated with *Aletheia*, a term heavily laden with Pythagorean connotations, it would be reasonable to suppose that in this case again Parmenides speaks as Pythagorean, so ordinary words have unusual meanings accessible only to εἰδότες. If the way of being refers to the philosophy of Pythagoras, then its opposite should refer to the Milesians and the Ionian naturalism. According to Plato’s philosophical “gigantomachy” the “materialists” deny the existence of anything incorporeal, whereas their opponents, “the friends of ideas” literally try to annihilate corporeal matter reducing it to processes. In other words, for the Italian philosophers matter (corporeal substance) is a kind of non-being. Contrary to the modern tendency to downplay, minimize or even to deny the Pythagorean influence on Plato’s metaphysics and theory of the soul, to propose naturalistic interpretations of Pythagorean first principles and to present Philolaus as a ‘Presocratic’ physikos — all this in line with pseudo-historical developmentalism and hypercritical projectionism — all early Pythagoreans, starting from the Master himself, have been mentalists and adherents of substance dualism of god and matter, of the immortal divine substance of the soul, on the one hand, and of the ever-changing mortal substance of the body and material world, on the other. The ‘meonization’ of matter and change in the Platonic school followed Eleatic

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<sup>30</sup> Hülsz 2013, 111–115, makes some pertinent remarks on this point with regard to Heraclitus and his influence on Plato’s late ontology.

<sup>31</sup> For a new (kleromantic) interpretation of these tablets based on a superior (to that of the editio princeps) photograph see Lebedev 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Lebedev 2017<sup>1</sup>, 509–510.

lines (Eleatic school was just a local branch of Pythagorean that replaced Pythagorean numerology and mathematical metaphysics with logical arguments in support of the same doctrine), and so did the whole theory of ‘two worlds’ and the primacy of the immutable intelligible world over the sensible world of change. Parmenides’ insistence on the non-existence of τὸ μὴ εἶναι is not trivial at all: it is an argument in support of immaterialism and mental nature of ‘true being’ explicitly stated in fr. B3. Another strong argument in favor of both theoretical *and* historical reading of the ‘two ways’ in Parmenides B2 is provided by second ‘warning’ of Goddess to Kouros. After refuting the ‘way of non-being’, i. e., the Ionian trust of senses and the reality of change, Parmenides in B6.4 with sarcasm attacks the ‘two-headed’ philosophers, the proponents of a theory of dialectical identity of being and non-being, and thus violate the law of non-contradiction. There can be no doubt that this is a polemic against Heraclitus. Παλίντροπος κέλευθος is a quotation from Heraclitus and refers to the ‘way up down’ of the cosmic stadium (ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω), the constant cyclical change of opposites.<sup>33</sup> It is hard to imagine that a ‘warning’ against two wrong ‘ways’ combines a reference to an easily recognizable historical representative of one of these ways with a hypothetical construction invented *ad hoc*. Not only the second debate on the nature of being, but also the first debate on the number of beings in the *Sophist* is also prefigured in the poem of Parmenides: one only (ἕν) in *Aletheia* vs ‘two forms’ (μορφὰς δύο) in *Doxa*. Now we can better understand why Plato put both debates in the mouth of Eleatic guest, a disciple of ‘father Parmenides’ (241d5). He only slightly changes the metaphorical language in the case of *GoB*. In Parmenides’ poem the dispute is conceived not in military terms as ‘battle’ (μάχη), but in legal terms as litigation or λογομαχία as one might expect from a legal expert and a lawgiver. This becomes clear from the words κρίναι δὲ λόγῳ πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα ‘decide (or ‘pass judgment’) by reasoning the much-contesting examination pronounced by me’ (B7.5) and the following mention of *Dike* (B8.14). Note, however, that in Homer δῆρις is used of ‘battle, contest’ (Il.17.158). Democritus pictured the contest between the personified Mind (Φρήν) and Senses employing metaphors from wrestling. The Senses are defeated, the Mind puts them on their shoulder blades, but they cry: ‘Poor Mind, you’ve got confirmations [i. e. ‘firm ground’] from us, and you lay us down? You victory is your fall! (τάλαινα Φρήν, παρ’ ἡμέων λαβοῦσα τὰς πίστεις ἡμέας καταβάλλεις; πῶμα τοι τὸ κατάβλημα).<sup>34</sup> The same metaphor underlies the alternative title of Protagoras’ *opus magnum* Ἀλήθεια ἢ Καταβάλλοντες, scil. λόγοι ‘The overthrowing arguments.’ It is conceivable that Protagoras’ ‘Overthrowing’ arguments targeted Parmenides and Eleatics by defending the validity of human senses and proclaiming human mind the only source and criterion (‘measure’) of all truth.<sup>35</sup> This explains why Plato repeatedly links Protagoras *Aletheia* and the ‘homo mensura’ principle with sense-perception as the source of knowledge. *Theaetetus* was Plato’s systematic reply to Protagoras. Plato’s interpretation of Protagoras B1 was a polemical reduction of anthropological principle to subjectivism and relativism never held by historical Protagoras. In the authentic part of the quotation there is no mention of ‘each man’ (ἐκάστῳ) and no

<sup>33</sup> Heraclit. Fr. 29Leb (B51 DK). ‘The road up and down’: fr. 50–53Leb.

<sup>34</sup> Democrit. B 125 DK = 79 Luria.

<sup>35</sup> This polemic is attested by Porphyrius’ ap. Eusebius, *PE* X,3,25 = Protag. B2 DK. Πρωταγόρου τὸν περὶ τοῦ ὄντος ἀναγινώσκων λόγον πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τὸ ὄν εἰσάγοντας κτλ. If Καταβάλλοντες is an alternative title of Ἀλήθεια, the περὶ τοῦ ὄντος λόγος read by Porphyrius must be the same work, and not a separate title Περί τοῦ ὄντος (contra DK).

trace of words δόξα or αἴσθησις. Ἄνθρωπος in B1 means ‘man’ as a species (contrasted with god), and not a particular man whose *doxa* differs from the *doxa* of others. A modified quotation of B1 in Plato’s *Laws* 716c proves that he perfectly understood the true meaning of Protagoras’ words. Democritus states in a shortened version the same principle in the beginning of one of his works: ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν ὃ πάντες ἴδμεν ‘man is what we all know’ (fr. 65 Luria = B165 DK). By proclaiming all knowledge human knowledge Protagoras abolished the archaic hierarchical distinction of superior ‘divine’ and inferior ‘human’ knowledge shared by Pythagoreans, Parmenides and Heraclitus. In a similar vein the author of the *Sacred disease*, 1, dismisses claims to superhuman knowledge of ‘those who pretend to know something more’ (προσποιέονται πλεον τι εἰδέναι).

The ‘mixed’ character of the doxographical medley in *Soph.* 246 and the general categorization of the two groups of opponents as corporealists vs incorporealists does not exclude occasional allusions to some particular concepts and arguments of this or that thinker. The special emphasis on the ‘hardness’ of ‘resistance in touch’ in the description of corporeal substance in 246a11 (ὃ παρέχει προσβολὴν καὶ ἐπαφὴν τινα) most probably alludes to Democritus’ conception of atoms. In later doxography it is the ‘principles’ of the atomists that are regularly defined as ‘the full and the void’ (τὸ πλήρες καὶ τὸ κενόν), where πλήρες connotes ‘solid’. Democritus’ atoms are indivisible due to their physical hardness. Most early *physikoi*, on the contrary, conceived the primordial physis as gaseous, airy or liquid stuff, that becomes solid due to subsequent ‘compression’ (πύκνωσις). Democritus authentic term in Ionian dialect was ναστά ‘close pressed, firm’, from νάσσω ‘press, squeeze close’.<sup>36</sup> The most precise and accurate piece of evidence on Democritus’ terminology is Simplicius, *In De caelo* 294,33 προσαγορεύει... τῶν οὐσιῶν ἐκάστην τῷ τε δὲν καὶ τῷ ναστῷ καὶ τῷ ὄντι. Democritus described atom not only as ναστόν, δέν (opp. μηδέν ‘void’), ἄτομος ἰδέα ‘indivisible form’ and τὸ ὄν ‘what is’ opposed to void as μὴ ὄν. The last term seems to be a polemical *peritrope* of Parmenides’ use of τὸ ἔόν with reference to immaterial intelligible being. Democritus’ paradoxical claim that non-being is no less real than being, and the somewhat humorous neologism δέν also look like a polemical reply to Parmenides. The Eleatic guest ‘fights back’ defending his intellectual ‘father’ Parmenides, the ‘gigantomachia over being’ still ‘goes on’.

As regards Plato’s source for the main weapon of celestial warriors against the giants, the procedure of the ‘meonization’ of corporeal substance ‘in their arguments’ (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις 246c1) by polemical reduction of the alleged *ousia* to a process of becoming (*genesis*), we can discern several generations: 1) Plato of the middle dialogues and his disciple in Academy in the fourth century; 2) Parmenides and Zeno in the fifth (ἄνδρες Πυθαγόρειοι, according to Strabo); 3) The Pythagorean table of opposites which Aristotle distinguishes from the doctrine of principles of later Pythagoreans of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and attributes to Pythagoras and 6<sup>th</sup> century Pythagoreans (οἱ πρὸ τούτων).

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<sup>36</sup> Authentic term preserved in *S-Placita* I. 3.16 (ἀρχὰς ναστὰ καὶ κενά), Simplicius’ doxography of “Leucippus” In *Phys.* 28,4 τὴν ἀτόμων οὐσίαν ναστὴν καὶ πλήρη. In geometry Democritus used ναστὰ in the sense of common στερεά, cf. the title of his work Περὶ ἀλόγων γραμμῶν καὶ ναστῶν (D.L. X.47). I agree with Luria that ancient separate tradition on Leucippus did not exist. In Lebedev 2020 I have argued that “Leucippus” (a name of an ‘ancient sage’) was Democritus’ pseudonym attached to his edition of *Megas diakosmos* during his visit to Athens as a precaution against the possible charge of impiety on the ground of *psephisma* of Diopieithes ca 430 BC. Empedocles held that all bodies in sublunary world are consist of solid parts (ναστὰ) intermingled with ‘voids’ (πόροι, B92).

The *aporiai* of Zeno were not just dialectical exercises or logical paradoxes proposed for their own sake. Zeno, like Parmenides, was ἀνὴρ Πυθαγόρειος. His paradoxes had a purpose, to defend the Pythagorean substance dualism, or rather its radical form of immaterialism developed by Parmenides, the metaphysical foundation of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. When the Eleatic guest says that the icorporealists “in their arguments” (ἐν τοῖς λόγοις) “break down the bodies into small pieces” (κατὰ σμικρὰ διαθραύοντες 246c1) he probably alludes to Zeno’s paradoxes of infinite division of magnitudes, e. g. Zeno B1: εἰ πολλά ἐστίν, ἀνάγκη αὐτὰ μικρὰ τε εἶναι καὶ μεγάλα· μικρὰ μὲν ὥστε μὴ ἔχειν μέγεθος κτλ.

Plato’s fundamental metaphysical antithesis of εἶναι and γίνεσθαι (οὐσία and γένεσις) with a correlative epistemological antithesis of episteme and doxa is explicitly stated in Parmenides’ poem. The phenomenal world of constant change and flux is not a true being and therefore cannot be the object of precise scientific knowledge (episteme). Once we accept the ancient tradition of the Pythagorean affiliation of Parmenides and Zeno, as well as Aristotle’s early date of the Table of opposites, it becomes clear that the great debate on the nature of being started as early as second half of 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Table of opposites is not about ‘ten principles’ (*pace* Aristotle), but about two fundamental principles of peras and apeiron and their various manifestations in mathematics, cosmos, living beings etc. A fragment of Epicharmus (276 K.-A.) contains a parody of a pre-Eleatic theory of constant change of all bodies, it is the earliest attestation of the so-called λόγος ἀξανάμενος, argument about ‘growing man’. The target of parody cannot be Heraclitus, since it does not contain the image of river, but assimilates the bodily change to mathematical operations of addition/subtraction of magnitudes. The target can be only the contemporary Pythagoreans in Syracuse. This is confirmed by the words ἕτερον μάκος ‘another length’ that echo ἑτερόμηκες in the Pythagorean table of opposites. The ‘square and oblong rectangle’ of the last opposition are geometrical symbols of identity and progressive change, of self-identical psyche and ever-changing body (for details see Lebedev 2017<sup>2</sup>).

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## Кого имел в виду Платон в притче о «битве богов и гигантов за бытие» («Софист» 246a4)?

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Мифопоэтическая притча о «гигантомахии за бытие» в «Софисте» Платона (246a4 ff.) не является ни теоретической конструкцией, схематически отображающей некие общие тенденции, ни отсылкой к какой-то одной современной дискуссии, например между Академией Платона и атомистами в 4 в. до н. э. Спор о природе бытия описан как грандиозная битва эпического масштаба (ἄπλετος μάχη) между двумя лагерями, как спор о фундаментальной проблеме философии, который всегда существовал (ἀεὶ συνέσθηκεν) и продолжается до сих пор. В пользу отождествления двух лагерей прежде всего с ионийской и италийской традициями в доплатоновской философии говорит противопоставление «ионийских и италийских Муз» (Ἰάδες καὶ Σικελικάι Μοῦσαι) в предшествующем контексте *Soph.* 242de. Неспособные к диалогу бескомпромиссные «гиганты» — это ионийские физики от Анаксимандра до Демокрита, а их «небесные»

противники, сводящие бытие (οὐσία) к нематериальным формам, — это пифагорейцы, элеаты и академики, а также Сократ, отвергающий ионийскую περὶ φύσεως ἰστορία в «Федоне» Платона и принимающий теорию идей в «Государстве» и «Федре». «Исправленные» гиганты второго поколения — это метафизические дуалисты типа Анаксагора и Эмпедокла, допускающие наряду с материей бестелесные первопричины, такие как Разум и Любовь, а также ионийские софисты и Антисфен, сочетавшие онтологический натурализм с учением о добродетели. Сходная схема развития теорий первоначал наличествует в Альфе «Метафизики» Аристотеля: от «признававших одни только материальные причины» — к тем, кто одновременно признавал бестелесные движущие начала бытия.

*Ключевые слова:* Платон, «гигантомахия за бытие», «Софист».

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